

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY TEACHERS IN THE TEACHING OF READING
COMPREHENSION IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUSAKA DISTRICT

BY

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of the Degree of Master of Education in Applied Linguistics

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Declaration

I, Akombelwa Nakwambwa Muyangana do solemnly declare that this dissertation is a product of my own work which has not been submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my father Mr. Nakwambwa Muyangana and my mother Mrs. Christine Kwala Muyangana. I am what I am because of your great love and support. I also dedicate this work to young my brothers and sisters Mukumbuta, Mutanekelwa, Lungowe, Mwiitiwa, Munyinda, Nawa and Muyangana, as well as my spiritual leaders at New Apostolic Church-Apostle Munsaka District.

Approval

This dissertation of Akombelwa Nakwambwa Muyangana is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Applied Linguistics by the University Zambia.

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Abstract

This dissertation reports a study that was carried out to investigate how reading comprehension was taught in selected secondary schools of Lusaka district in Zambia. Data was collected from three secondary schools-all single sex schools. From the three, one was a boy's school and the other two girls. The researcher used qualitative methodology in data collection as well as data analysis. Lesson observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were the methods used to elicit information from the respondents. The findings of the study revealed that reading comprehension was not taught in the manner it is supposed to. Most comprehension lessons were characterized by testing instead of teaching. The morale of most teachers' vis-à-vis their topic was low and that was portrayed by the manner in which they started and ended their lessons. Some noticeable features of comprehension lessons observed were poor lesson presentations, unsatisfactory general lesson delivery, poor teaching techniques, teacher's non-reading culture and pupils' lack of confidence in some teachers. Others were insufficient reading materials in some schools and the prevalence of outdated books. In a bid to address the challenges of teaching reading comprehension in secondary schools, it was recommended that Ministry of Education should introduce short refresher courses for teachers of English aimed at ensuring effectiveness in teaching methodology and hence improving the quality of their lessons. That should be done after every two years. To make that achievable, government should allocate more funds to Teacher Education in order carry out such projects. It should also devise a policy that promotes reading at pre-school, lower and middle basic school so as to make pupils already familiar to reading as they get into secondary school. Government should further motivate teachers by improving their conditions of service.

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Contents

page

<i>Declaration</i>	i
<i>Copyright</i>	ii
<i>Dedication</i>	iii
<i>Approval</i>	iv
<i>Abstract</i>	v
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	vi
<i>Acronyms</i>	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	1
1.3 Statement of the problem	3
1.4 Purpose of the study	4
1.5 Limitations of the study	4
1.6 Research Questions	4
1.7 Objectives	4
1.8 Significance of the study	5
1.9 Conceptual Framework	5
1.10 Operational Definitions of Terms/Concepts	6
1.11 Summary	7
CHAPTER TWO	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Review of Literature Related to the study	8
2.3 Summary	15
CHAPTER THREE	16
METHODOLOGY	16
3.1 Introduction	16
3.2 Research Design	16
3.3 Target Population	16

3.4	Sample And Sampling Procedure	16
3.5	Data Collection Procedure	17
3.6	Data Analysis	18
3.7	Ethical Considerations	19
3.8	Summary	19
CHAPTER FOUR.....		20
PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS		20
4.1	Introduction.....	20
4.2	How Reading Comprehension was taught (Lesson Procedure).....	20
4.2.1	Introduction to the passage	21
4.2.2	Silent Reading	23
4.2.3	Loud Reading of the Passage	24
4.1.4.	Oral Questioning and Discussion of the passage	26
4.1.5	Written Class Exercise	28
4.1.6	Status of reading comprehension	30
4.2	Teacher Competence in Reading Comprehension	33
4.2.1	General Organization	33
4.2.2	Presentation of the Lesson	34
4.2.3	Teaching Techniques	39
4.2.4	Class Management	41
4.2.5	Teacher/Pupils Relationship	42
4.2.6	General Lesson Delivery	43
4.3	Selection Of Reading Material.....	44
4.3.1	Selection of materials for reading comprehension lessons	44
4.3.2	Features of Grade Nine English Book 1 ad 2 Textbooks.....	44
4.3.3	Role of the school library in promoting reading comprehension.....	45
4.3.4	Role of the departmental library in promoting reading comprehension.	46
4.4	Challenges that teachers face in teaching Reading Comprehension	47
4.4.1	Teacher’s Erosion of Technical skills.	47
4.4.2	Teachers poor reading culture	47
4.4.3	Pupils’ Little interest in reading.....	48
4.4.4	Lack of Teacher Initiative in promoting reading.	49
4.4.5	Poor co-ordination in discussing problem topics in English Language at school level	49

4.4.6 Teacher Inability to publish books, articles and relevant reading comprehension materials.....	50
4.4.7 Insufficient text-books in some schools.....	50
4.4.8 Failure to instill discipline among pupils.....	51
4.4.9 Heavy workload by some teachers.....	51
4.2.5 Teachers poor condition of service	51
4.5 Summary.....	52
CHAPTER FIVE	53
DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	53
5.0 Introduction.....	53
5.1 How Reading Comprehension was taught in secondary schools.....	53
5.1.1 Initial Teaching Point(s).....	53
5.1.2 Introduction to the Passage	54
5.1.3 Silent Reading	56
5.1.4 Reading of the Passage	57
5.1.5 Oral Questioning and Discussion of the passage	58
5.1.6 Written Class Exercise	61
5.1.7 Status of reading comprehension.	62
5.2 Teacher competence in reading comprehension	63
5.2.1 General lesson organization	63
5.2.2 Presentation of the lesson.....	64
5.2.3 Teaching Techniques	67
5.2.4 Class Management	69
5.2.5 Teacher/Pupils Relationship	71
5.2.6 General Lesson Delivery.....	71
5.3 Selection Of Reading Material.....	73
5.3.1 Selection of materials for reading comprehension lessons	73
5.3.2 Features of Grade Nine English Book 1 ad 2 Textbooks.....	73
5.3.3 Role of the school library in promoting reading comprehension.....	74
5.3.4 Role of the departmental library in promoting reading comprehension.	74
5.4 Challenges That Teachers Face In Teaching Reading Comprehension.....	74
5.4.1 Teacher’s Erosion of Technical skills.....	74
5.4.2 Teachers poor reading culture.....	75
5.4.3 Pupils’ Little interest in reading.....	75

5.4.4	Teacher Inability to publish books, articles and relevant reading comprehension materials.	76
5.4.5	Insufficient text-books in some schools	78
5.4.6	Failure to instill discipline among pupils	78
5.4.9	Heavy workload by some teachers.....	79
5.4.1.0	Teachers poor condition of service	79
5.5	Summary	80
CHAPTER SIX		81
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....		81
6.1	Conclusion	81
6.2	Recommendations.....	82
REFERENCES		88
APPENDIX A		91
APPENDIX B		94
APPENDIX C		97
APPENDIX D.....		99
APPENDIX E		102
APPENDIX F.....		105
APPENDIX G		107
APPENDIX H.....		109
APPENDIX I		110

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1 Bar Chart showing the status of English skills

Table 1 showing pupils ability to follow the lesson

Acronyms

AIMES	Action to Improve Mathematics, English and Science
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
DSTV	Digital Satellite Tele-Vision
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
HOD	Head of Department
JSSES	Junior Secondary School English Syllabus
JSSLE	Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Finance
ZNBC	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation
PRP	Primary Reading Programme

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a historical development of reading programme in Zambia. Firstly it highlights the importance of reading to an individual, before pointing out the expectations of the Ministry of Education to a pupil that has undergone the primary and secondary school education system. The chapter furthermore looks at the different recommendations made by the Ministry of Education with regard to reading. The chapter also highlights key findings found by local researchers on reading in Zambia. Finally the chapter explains the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, limitations of the study, the objectives and significance of the study.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 General Context of the Study

Shortly after Zambia attained her independence in 1964, English language was adopted as the official language of instruction (Chanda, 2008)

From a Zambian educational point of view, English takes centre stage in teaching and learning. Although there are a number of different ethnic groups and languages in the country, all subjects in the educational curriculum must be taught in English and pupils in all secondary and high schools are expected to communicate intelligibly both in their written and spoken language. The role of education as observed by (MOE 1992: 7) should be to promote active student participation rather than passive reception. From the onset, pupils must therefore develop the art of reading well and communicating effectively (MOE, 1997: 17)

Pupils, at whatever level, should possess the necessary comprehension skills that will enable them to understand the English language completely, to write it correctly and to speak it fluently. Foersts (1998) observes that learning to read means learning to pronounce words and to identify and get their meaning. In line with his views, an assumption can be made that pupils who learn English and reading comprehension are expected to bring meaning to a text in order to get meaning from it.

Pupils' performance in reading comprehension at high school is poor (ECZ 2004/2005 report). Most research on reading in pre-school, lower basic and middle basic schools of Zambia reveal that the reading levels are low. In his research, Lungu (2006: 40) observed that "over the years, many educators in English language teaching and learning in the lower primary school sector have expressed fears that the reading levels are low especially in grades 1 to 4." The National Reading Programme conducted a pilot project for initial literacy in Chibemba and the other one in Chinyanja in 1995. Based on this research, the Zambian Reading Appraisal Team came up with a number of proposals, one of which was "establishing reading objectives at appropriate levels in primary schools and developing appropriate assessment procedures and encouraging the development of a cadre of Zambians with practical and theoretical expertise in reading" (MOE, 1996: 17).

According to the 2006 National Assessment Survey on Learning Achievement (2006), the revelation was that there was more of testing reading comprehension instead of teaching. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) carried out a study on reading achievement in grade five (Chanda 2008). According to the results of the test which was designed by reading specialists, 97.6% of the grade six pupils did not meet the minimum and desirable performance standards. In Eastern Province, parents complained that grade seven pupils were not able to read and write (Kelly, 1998).

The low reading levels of reading were not only in Zambia, but in other countries such as Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mauritius where similar studies were undertaken. From these countries, Zambia and Zimbabwean children showed the poorest performance, with 28 percent of boys and 23.1 percent of girls performing at the minimum level and 5.6 percent of boys and 4.8 percent of girls performing at desirable level (Nkamba and Kanyika, 1998).

1.2.2 The Zambian Situation

In 1993 Eddy Williams conducted a study on reading levels of pupils in grades three, four and five in both English and Nyanja, one of the Zambian local languages. The findings of the study were that there were very low reading levels (Kotze & Higgins; 1999). Another study was carried out by the National Reading Committee in four primary schools of Lusaka district. The study showed that there were indeed poor reading levels, with grade seven pupils displaying poor reading prevalent in primary schools (Kotze & Higgins, 1998).

It should always be borne in mind that reading comprehension is yet another important area of language teaching. According to Nkosha (1992), the essence of teaching reading comprehension is to help pupils to understand fully and learn from a particular piece of writing. Seeing that there was a national reading crisis in primary schools in the country, the government through the Ministry of Education put up deliberate measures aimed at raising reading achievement levels in the country. The Primary Reading Programme (PRP) together with the New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL) were introduced (Matafwali, 2005). The major objective of these programmes was to improve the reading skills of all Zambian school going children. From its inception, PRP aimed at teaching children how to read and write in their first grade, through the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction. A pilot study was carried out in Kasama and evaluated in 1999. According to the evaluation report, (Matafwali, 2005) highlighted that Non-NBTL grade two pupils were virtually unable to read while those under the NBTL could read.

Most research conducted on reading comprehension had been in primary schools. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there has not been any research conducted on the teaching of reading comprehension in Zambia. However, Chazangwe (2010) conducted a research on the performance of pupils in reading comprehension in selected high schools of Kalomo district of Zambia. His research findings were that the performance of pupils in this area is poor. He attributed the poor performance to pupil's poor reading culture, unavailability of relevant textbooks, pupil's poor reading background and teacher's poor teaching strategies.

Other than poor performance in reading comprehension in secondary and high schools, the low reading levels can also be reflected in pupils' poor performance in the School Certificate Literature in English Examinations. According to the Examination Council of Zambia report, (ECZ Report 2000-2010), there has been declining standards in pupils performance in Literature in English. The number of pupils taking literature keeps reducing from year to year. Although a number of reasons have been highlighted for pupils' poor performance, the overriding one is that the reading levels in the country are very low and Literature in English which is a reading subject has of late been stigmatized by both teachers and pupils. Reference to Literature in English is cardinal considering the close interrelationship between it and reading comprehension.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The English language programme in secondary schools teaches all pupils the English language. There are various skills that are taught in an English lesson. These include reading

comprehension, composition, structure and summary. One major role of teachers of English language is to teach reading comprehension well. There are concerns on what happens during reading comprehension lessons. The teaching strategies employed by teachers in teaching reading comprehension in the selected schools are not known, hence this study.

1.4 Purpose of the study

To establish teaching strategies employed by teachers in teaching reading comprehension in selected secondary schools of Zambia.

1.5 Limitations of the study

There were a number of factors which hindered the researcher from collecting all the data needed for the research. Most of the school administrators could not allow him to collect data as freely as he wanted because they thought doing so would disturb the normal operations in the school. Therefore, the researcher was given limited time to collect data in their schools. To make matters worse, most respondents (teachers) were not very cooperative and the researcher had to plead with them even after being given permission to go ahead with the research. Some respondents (teachers) even declined to be observed twice. Therefore, the researcher could not tap all the data he was craving for before the commencement of data collection. However, that did not affect the findings of the research in any way.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What teaching strategies do teachers employ in teaching reading comprehension
in secondary schools of Zambia?
2. What are the competences of teachers in reading comprehension?
3. How do teachers select reading materials available in the school?
4. What challenges do teachers face when teaching reading comprehension?

1.7 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Establish teaching strategies employed by teachers in teaching reading in secondary schools of Zambia.
2. Access teacher competences in reading comprehension.

3. Establish the way teachers select reading material available in the school.
4. Establish the challenges that teachers face when teaching reading comprehension.

1.8 Significance of the study

The study has seriously focused on how reading comprehension is taught in Zambian secondary schools. Among the major things highlighted are teachers' attitude and competences in reading comprehension. It has further identified the manner in which teachers select reading materials for comprehension lessons as well as the many challenges that they face when teaching reading comprehension. Having identified the strengths and weaknesses of how the topic is handled, the researcher has made recommendations aimed at improving the teaching of reading comprehension in Zambian secondary schools. The study has above all broadened the understanding of this very important topic by both teachers and policy makers in the Ministry of Education hence providing room for further research in future.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

Reading is one of the fundamental skills that people have to acquire. In any social setting, the purpose of reading is to connect the ideas with an individual's background knowledge. Reading is a complex process. The complex interaction between the text and the reader is in most instances shaped by the reader's previous knowledge, life experiences, attitudes and language community. Manguel (1996) says reading is an individual activity, although in certain occasions, a person can be called to read out aloud for the benefit of other listeners. Before endeavoring to read to themselves and later read to others, readers should be well grounded in reading comprehension. They may use morpheme, semantics, syntax and context clues to identify the meaning of unknown words. Afterwards, they can now integrate the words they have read into their own framework of knowledge.

Pupils in basic, secondary and high schools should have a deeper insight in reading comprehension. In this era, people are expected to be proficient in reading comprehension and hence the role that basic and secondary schools play in this matter should not be underestimated. The investment which the Ministry of Education puts in trying to produce pupils capable of reading efficiently with understanding should be supported by every stakeholder in educational provision.

Reading comprehension in secondary schools should enable pupils go through close reading of selected text and thus deepen their understanding of the way writers use language to provide both

meaning and pleasure for them. Once this is achieved, the quality of graduates from secondary schools will be very high indeed.

1.10 Operational Definitions of Terms/Concepts

Reading: The ability to extract visual information from the page and comprehend the meaning of the text.

Comprehension: The ability to understand the passage of text and answer questions on it, especially as a class exercise in schools.

Reading Comprehension: The kind of reading where the whole text has to be understood in detail.

Teaching: Showing the way, direction and guidance to pupils through instruction.

Pupils: Learners who are under the guidance of the teacher.

Decoding: Finding the meaning of words that have been written in the passage of a text.

Teaching Procedure: The manner and steps that the teacher follows when teaching a reading comprehension lesson.

Effective Teaching: Teachers ability to use appropriate teaching methodology hence providing real learning for the pupils.

Extensive Reading: The kind of reading in which the text is read not so much in detail, but rather for specific pieces of information.

English Medium: An educational system which uses English language as the sole or main medium of instruction.

Teaching Reading: The activities which are intended to bring about reading and learning.

Basic School: A school that provides education from grade one up to grade nine.

High School: A school that only provides education from grade ten up to grade twelve.

Secondary School: A school that provides education from grade eight up to grade twelve.

1.11 Summary

The chapter has explained the role of reading to an individual and also highlighted the expectations of the Ministry of Education to a child who learns reading in secondary schools. Most research conducted on reading has revealed that there were very low reading levels in the country. The chapter has further explained the statements of the problem, purpose of the study and its limitations. It has moreover explained the objectives and significance of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter gives an elaborate explanation on what reading is and what literary scholars have said on reading. Firstly, it gives the different types of reading and the reading procedure for a reading comprehension lesson. Thereafter, the chapter analyzes research done by authorities on reading and their research experience on this subject. An analysis of the expectations of an effective reading comprehension lesson is also given in the chapter. Finally the chapter explains the measures that can be undertake to measure a successful reading comprehension lesson in line with the arguments that literary scholars have advanced.

2.2 Review of Literature Related to the study

By the 1930s and 1940s, comprehension skills had been introduced in core programmes in the United States of America after classroom teachers were surveyed about what students needed to comprehend content material (Gray, 1925, as cited in Smith, 1986). Owing to poor comprehension skills prevalent among school going students, deliberate programmes were introduced aimed at finding the main idea, determining the author's purpose, drawing conclusions distinguishing fact from opinion or comparing and contrasting what was read. The emphasis on comprehension skill instruction increased over the decades and after the post-world war II period (Chall and Squire, 1991). The increase was as the result of poor reading comprehension abilities by most students.

There are different types of reading just as there are different types of books. Williams (1979) gives the three major types of reading which are: reading for pleasure, reading for information and reading for study. The first type, reading for pleasure is done without much concentration and aims at deriving a great deal of pleasure and enjoyment by the reader. The second one, reading for information is where the reader aims at locating specific information within a text. The techniques of skimming are employed where the reader reads some sections of the text very quickly and slows down to read the relevant section for close understanding (Ellis and Tomlinson 1980). The third type, reading for study calls for close understanding of the passage or text by the reader. This is done quite slowly, but very carefully so as to extract as much information as possible from a text.

Reading comprehension which is also referred to as intensive reading has a procedure on how it is supposed to be taught. Ellis and Tomlinson (1980) and O'Neill and McLean (1984) give a teaching procedure for a comprehension lesson. A reading comprehension lesson commences with initial teaching point. This is the point where the teacher first orients the pupils to the passage which they might meet for the first time. To avoid pupils experiencing difficulties which could be lexical, structural or conceptual, the teacher gives explanations before the pupils read the passage. The initial teaching point is followed by the introduction. The major role of the introduction is to naturalize the study of an isolated text. The pupils are encouraged to think about the topic before being asked to read by the teacher. For this to be achieved, Ellis and Tomlinson (1980: 157) suggests the following steps to be done by the teacher:

- (i) Tell a short story or anecdote which is related to the content of the passage.
- (ii) Ask a number of oral questions related to the passage.
- (iii) Display a picture based on the content of the passage and asks the pupils to say what they can see in the picture. The pupils can also be asked to guess how the situation portrayed in the picture came about and how it might be resolved.
- (iv) Read a few sentences from the passage and then ask oral questions to make the pupils think about the content of the passage.

When the teacher has finished giving the introduction to the comprehension passage, he should go to the next stage which is silent reading by the pupils. During this stage, the teacher should see to it that pupils practice silent reading skills. Williams (1979) highlighted these skills which include non movements of the lips; non movement of the head and non-pointing of the words with the fingers. The aim of silent reading is to make pupils practice silent reading skill and not the skill of reading aloud. It also avoids exposing pupils to poor readings when they are asked to read aloud.

The fourth stage that comes after the silent reading is the teacher's reading of the passage. The teacher's reading helps clarify certain parts of the text which should have earlier on confused the pupils. When reading, the teacher is expected to read accurately, fluently, dramatically and at the right volume and speed (Ellis and Tomlinson 1980: 158). As this happens, the pupils should follow in their copy of the text.

Oral questioning is the fifth stage that comes in a comprehension lesson. During this stage, the teacher makes some simple oral questions aimed at helping pupils remember what they have read in the passage. It is done before pupils answer the written exercise. When this has been successfully done, the teacher can then move to the next stage which is doing of the printed questions. The teacher must be in a position to answer and explain all the questions himself before asking the pupils to write so as to avoid embarrassment during revision time.

After the pupils have written the answers to the questions in their exercise books, a class discussion or group discussion can follow depending on the type of questions at hand. Whereas multiple-choice questions are more suitable for class discussion, objective questions are highly suitable for group discussion. In a class, the teacher should be firm and control the discussion. At the end he should summarize the main arguments and clarify on the correct answer. In a group discussion the teacher can ask group members to appoint a group secretary whose role is to write down the group answers. The decisions of group members should be done with careful reasoning and commitment.

When either class discussion or group discussion has been done, the teacher can start answering the printed questions together with the pupils. At this stage he can ensure that the pupils identify the relevant section of a text and help them to deduce the correct answer (Ellis and Tomlinson 1980: 159). However, it should be pointed out that it is not possible to have both class discussion and group discussion in one lesson. Therefore, the teacher has to choose which one is suitable and be mindful of time as he teaches, for example, be able to meet his objectives.

Reading involves many complex skills that have to be brought together in order to be rendered successful. Gibson and Levin (1975:232) quoted by Lynn (2008) asserts that “to learn to read is to learn a system of rules and strategies for extracting information from a text”. Therefore reading requires a great deal of active participation on the part of the reader. Leipzig (2001: 1) argues that “reading is a multifaceted process which involves word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation”. He goes on to say that reading calls for the making of meaning from a print. In order to achieve this, three things have to be done. Firstly, words have to be identified in print through a process called word recognition. Secondly, the understanding of the words has to be instructed through the process called comprehension and thirdly, reading has to be automatic and accurate through identifying words and making meaning out of them.

Research on reading comprehension tells us that the time spent on reading is highly correlated with comprehension. Nicolson (1991) in Pressley (2000) argues that before learners read, they have to be aware of the letters and sounds represented by letters so that sounding out and blending of sounds can occur to produce words. After they have learnt how to correctly pronounce the words, good readers should know whether the words in the sentence make sense or not. Following these explanations on reading, we notice that reading goes beyond the mere parroting what is written in a text. An individual should go much further by tapping information from a text, analyzing it, interpreting it and storing it in his memory (Lynn 200). Reading, therefore, is a skill that can be mastered over long period of time. It requires much patience and determination on the part of the learner.

In a reading comprehension lesson, there are certain expectations that should come from both the teacher and the pupil. According to Perren (1968: 149) the children should be taught to read and to write. This entails that if a child or pupil does not understand what he reads then writing could be far-fetched phenomenon. As Keith Johnson in Luangala (1986: 42) says “we cannot write successfully unless we know at each point how the readers will interpret our words and what he will be expecting us to say next”. Basically, what pupils say and write is a reflection of what they know. The amount of what they know is to a large extent determined by what they have been taught. With this mind successful reading comprehension does not only equip pupils with the skills of knowing English passages, but enables them to comprehend educational literature of any kind. Thus, if reading comprehension is to have any practical meaning and value in secondary schools, pupils must be taught the skills effectively. As MOE (1977: 17) reports, “they (pupils) must be able to develop the art of reading and communicating effectively and develop the skill to write properly and without mistakes in order to communicate accurately”.

The teaching procedure for the comprehension lesson as explained in the earlier part can be used as a major yard stick in determining how reading comprehension should be taught in Zambian secondary schools where English is used a medium of instruction (Chanda, C. 2008: 3). As Ellis and Tomlinson (1980) points out, the steps to be followed in teaching reading comprehension include: the initial teaching points were teacher exemplifies key issues (lexical, structural and conceptual) which he feels pupils may have difficulties before they read the passage. This is followed by the introduction to the passage aimed at encouraging the pupils to think about the topic before they begin to read. Silent reading which follows later is aimed at making pupils practice the skills involved when not reading aloud. Teacher reading of the passage aims at

bringing practical clarity of various parts of the text which could not have been understood by the pupils. Oral questioning, class discussion or group discussion can then follow depending on the objectives made by the teacher and how he intends to meet them.

O'Neill and MacLean (1984) suggest that in both intensive and extensive reading, students should have a clear reading purpose. In other words, the teacher should make it clear to the class why they are reading a particular text and what they are expected to learn. To this effect, Lee (1967: 126) observes that, "students who are trained to do this learn to apply and acquire the art of reading quickly, but at the same time with understanding and appreciation". The secondary school teacher of English must in this vein give his pupils plenty of advice on reading. Important though this advice can be, it should not consume much time during reading comprehension lessons because the teacher's objective might not be met. The teacher should also guide pupils during their reading. Layton (1968) argues that the teacher can only discharge such tasks if he himself has read widely.

It is also very important to note that both teachers and pupils have a strong memory capable of bringing effectiveness in both the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. One way of producing improved memory in pupils is by generating questions about ideas in the text while reading, constructing mental images representing ideas in a text and analyzing stories read into story grammar components of setting (Pearson and Dole; 1987). Pressley (2000) says that teaching elementary, middle school and secondary school learners should call for use of a repertoire of comprehension strategies so as to increase their understanding of text. With regard to his view, Pressley (2000) further highlighted the point that:

"Teachers should model and explain comprehension strategies, have their students practice using such strategies with teacher support and let students know they are expected to use the same strategies when reading on their own. Such teaching should occur across every school day, for as long as required to get all readers using the strategies independently".

Failure to explain the strategies to pupils, may tempt the teacher to test instead of teach reading comprehension. This view is shared by Lungu (2006) who argues that in Zambian Basic Schools, there is much testing of reading comprehension as opposed to teaching.

Learning how to comprehend passages does not only emerge from the passage provided by the teacher, but also every learner's background knowledge. If the teacher has very little background knowledge of the passage he teaches, the morale of the learners gets dampened thus destroying the mood of the lesson. This argument is also shared by Anderson and Pearson (1984) who observed that readers who possess rich prior knowledge about the topic of reading often understood the reading better than their counterparts with low prior knowledge. The richer a pupil's background knowledge is, the greater his reading comprehension abilities.

The teaching of reading comprehension in secondary schools calls for much devotion and dedication on the part of teachers. As Chanda (2006: 66) points out, "teachers are reminded to find out what individual pupils already know and understand about the topic or concept; use appropriate language register with choice of words, phrases appropriate to the context and find out about misconceptions which need to be unlearned because the pupils' perspectives are especially important." In situations where pupils are helplessly confused or simply cannot handle a comprehension passage at hand, the teacher must step in and exert leadership. Karplus and Their (1967: 94) with regard to this situation argues that "rather than telling the child what to do, which would probably do little to help him handle the next situation, the teacher must consider the source of his difficulties." Whereas some of these problems could be personal, others could be school or system based. One of the personal problems could be one where there is insufficient reading materials and poor infrastructure that promotes reading. As Mood (1970: 1) observes, "You need to be able to read and understand your text books..." Therefore, availability of books is very important in a school set up if effective reading is to be realized.

A mature reading comprehension lesson should comprise a variety of questioning techniques, which range from verbal to non-verbal. Verbal questions can be objective, meaning that they can have only one correct answer or free response where a number of answers could be allowed. Ellis and Tomlinson (1980) point out that the advantage of free-response questions is that it involves pupils to express themselves as they produce their own sentences. Their natural manner of articulation demonstrates their understanding in real life. Types of objective questions include: multiple choice; true/false; sentence completion and putting statements into the correct order. Others are Yes/No questions which are a variant of the true/false question and WH questions, those which begin with WH words such as 'what', 'where', and 'why'. Although Ellis and Tomlinson (1980) provide detailed procedure on how reading comprehension is supposed to be taught, they do not explain the shortcomings of teaching it in Zambian secondary schools.

If reading comprehension is to be fully achieved in any school set up, the school should provide an enabling reading environment. As O'Neill and McLean (1984) observed, the school should have a variety of reading texts. These should range from letters, newspaper articles, advertisements, public notices, travel brochures and different kinds of authentic reading materials. Availability of such materials in a school makes it easy for the teacher of English to perform his duties.

Lee (1967: 126) argues that, "of the four skills in language learning-listening, speaking, reading and writing-the one which is likely to be the most useful for students of a foreign language is reading." He further contends that specific training in the art of reading should commence and more time should be given to the readers. Once pupils have been well grounded in reading strategies, it becomes easier for them to read on their own whether at school or at home. During a comprehension lesson understanding can be enhanced if pupils are familiar with reading. Anderson (1990) says a comprehension passage is a connected piece of writing. He further argues that if pupils understand the whole passage, they are more likely to understand the parts on which questions are asked. Thus, it is important to note that different comprehension passages can have different types of questions.

The effectiveness of a comprehension passage can be measured by the performance of pupils in that passage. Hence, testing is one way of establishing whether the pupils have understood the passage or not.

Testing can either be oral or written. Buzzle.com (2008) argue that testing enhances the self ability to judge teachers, as long as tests are carefully designed. They further argue that carefully designed comprehension test is a cleverly constructed set of questions targeted at the summary, overall meaning of text including most important meaning of words. Their argument marries with Ellis and Tomlinson (1980: 50) who says that "testing questions should be designed to distinguish differing abilities of the pupils to understand written English..... The main aim of question designed for teaching is practice the major comprehension skills and cover the information items in the passage." When teaching, therefore, the teacher can gauge if the pupils have understood the passage when his lesson gets into the testing stage. However, that should not be the only goal of teaching.

2.3 Summary

The chapter has sufficiently outlined the procedures for a comprehension lesson such as initial teaching points, introductory silent reading, reading aloud of the passage, oral questioning, class exercise and class discussion. The essence of teaching reading comprehension is to make pupils understand the passage. Understanding of the whole passage makes pupils understand on which question asked. It has also been observed that the essence of testing is to gauge whether the pupils have understood the passage or not. The length of the passage is yet another factor that teachers should consider when coming up with a comprehension passage. That has been well explained in the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the methodology used during data collection as well as the mode in which the data was analyzed. Methodological components to be looked at in this chapter include research design, target population, sample as well as the sampling procedure. There was use of both purposive and interval sampling. Respondents involved in the sample were teachers, school administrators and pupils. Data collection procedure is also elaborated in this chapter and this includes lesson observation, semi-structured interviews and focused group discussion. The schedule of activities and ethical considerations are also explained in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

The study was mainly qualitative research through observation of what went on in the classroom during a comprehension lesson. An oral survey was also conducted through face to face interviews with both teachers and school administrators. The interviews were conducted using semi-structural interview guide. Focused group discussion was also done using a focus group discussion guide.

3.3 Target Population

The target population consisted of all the grade teachers of English who teach reading comprehension in three selected secondary schools of Lusaka District. It also comprised all grade nine pupils from each of the three schools, as well as the school administrators.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Information pertaining to the teaching of reading comprehension was collected from a representative set of teachers of selected secondary schools of Lusaka District. The three schools sampled were St. Mary's, Roma Girls and Matero Boys Secondary Schools. The three schools were selected because they are the only ones in the district ran by the government. The rest of the schools which used to be secondary were elevated into high schools. The sampling procedure was divided into three parts:

The first part of the sampling procedure was purposive and included all teachers of English in the three schools where the research was conducted.

The second part of the sampling procedure was also purposively done because it targeted the school administrators from each of the three schools.

The last part was interval sampling of grade nine pupils from each class of the three schools.

A total of 124 respondents participated in the study. Out of this total number, 18 were teachers of English from all the three schools where the research was conducted. Others were 6 school administrators who were available in the three respective schools during data collection period. The rest of the respondents, which is 100, were grade nine pupils from all the three schools. There were a total number of 10 grade nine classes from all the three schools in the study and hence 10 pupils were purposively selected from each class.

Out of the 18 teachers that participated in the study, 6 came from each of the three schools, and out of a total number of 6 school administrators, and 2 came for each school. The 6 school administrators comprised one head-teacher; two deputy head teachers and three careers masters.

Teachers of English were chosen because they are the ones who teach the pupils English language and reading comprehension in particular. School administrators were chosen because they are the ones who know and implement the school culture and ethos. Pupils were chosen because without them a reading comprehension lesson could not take place. Moreover, they are the recipients of reading comprehension lessons and have an informed view of what they are taught.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collected was done between 17th January and 25th February 2011. Written permission was granted to the researcher from the Assistant Dean Post-Graduate Studies, School of Education and the Provincial Education Officer, Lusaka Province. The Head Teachers from the respective schools where the research was conducted were also well notified in advance.

All the data collected in the study was qualitative. The data was collected using the following procedures:

Lesson observation: That was done by observing comprehension lessons using an observation checklist as a guide. The researcher observed a total number of 12 lessons for grade nine pupils. From each school, 4 lessons were observed. From the 12 lessons observed, 10 were done in the morning and remaining 2 were in the afternoon.

- 1) Semi-structured Interview: All the 18 teachers of English who participated in the study were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Other interview guides were used to collect information from school administrators who comprised Head teachers; Deputy Head teachers and Careers Masters. Whilst conducting the oral interviews, the researcher recorded the data that emerged using a tape-recorder. To avoid taking risks of losing the data that could have emerged due to technical factors of the tape recorder, the researcher decided to write the data on some pieces of A4 plain papers. Teachers were asked to give their general concerns regarding reading comprehension which were not captured in the interview schedule.

Focus Group Discussion: There were a total of 10 focused group discussions with the grade nine pupils from all the three schools where the study was conducted. Two schools had each 3 grade nine classes and the third one had 4 grade nine classes bringing the total number of grade nine classes to 10. From the ten classes, 10 pupils were purposively chosen to take part in the focused group discussion. Since each class had an average number of 40-42 pupils, the researcher asked the pupils to give each other numbers from 1 to 4 until everyone had a number. After that was done, the researcher asked those who had same number to go out for instance number ones. All the interviews were done with the aid of a focused group discussion guide. Pupils openly and freely gave out their views because the researcher created an enabling environment for that. Matters related to reading comprehension, but not included in the discussion guide were also brought out by the pupils.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by identification of themes from all the qualitative data in the study. The researcher then categorized the data according to the themes that had emerged. There was a process of disassembling and reassembling.

The Disassembled data was then broken apart into lines, paragraphs and sections. The fragments were then rearranged, through coding to produce a new understanding that explores similarities, differences, across a number of different cases. In the end, the progression of coding brought about the emerging of themes, hence making the analysis become more organized and structured (Ezzy: 2000)

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality: During the research, the Head teacher, Teachers and Pupils were assured that the information they gave would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

3.8 Summary

The chapter has described the manner in which data was collected from the three secondary schools in Lusaka district. Being a qualitative research, the research used lesson observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. Observation was done when teachers of English taught reading comprehension in the grade nine classes. Semi-structured interviews were done to all teachers of English that were available at the time the research was being conducted. Focus group discussion was done to grade nine pupils in all the three schools. The method of data analysis has been discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter gives a complete presentation of research findings. Since most of the findings came from the lesson observation, various activities that took place in class in line with the research objectives. It will also be noticed that use of percentages have been used. The research comprised twelve lesson observations made and percentages have been calculated from those lessons. Other views that teachers gave during semi-structured interviews as well as those that were given by the pupils during focus group discussion. The school administrators' views with regard to the teaching of reading comprehension shall also be given in this chapter.

4.2 How Reading Comprehension was taught (Lesson Procedure)

4.2.1 Initial Teaching Point(s)

An initial teaching point is one where the teacher psychologically reads the difficulties pupils may face when they begin to read the passage. Ellis and Tomlinson (1980: 157) says that these points should be explained and exemplified before the pupils read the passage.

In all the 12 lessons which the researcher observed, this step was not followed. No explanations were made by the teacher. Therefore, it was not surprising to note that lexical and grammatical problems emerged as the lesson unfolded. For example, in one of the lessons in school B, where the topic was "Cricket in the Road", one pupil asked the meaning of the word "dumbfounded". The teacher threw the question to the class and when they failed he said it meant maless (in Nyanja "mau" literary means words and hence "mau" plus "less" means "no words to say").

In another school (School A) where this step was not followed, pupils kept interrupting the teacher as she was reading. The topic was "Ancient Civilizations of the Middle East." As the passage was read, pupils asked questions, thus disturbing the flow of reading. Some of the questions asked were 'Madam where do we find Mesopotamia? What are Sumerians? What are Palaeothic times?' and many more other questions of this nature.

One of the teachers from another school (School C) equally faced hurdles as she was teaching because she too consciously or unconsciously overlooked this step-initial teaching point. She was teaching the topic "The Advertiser's Point of View" found in English 9 Book 1. As the reading

was going on, some of the pupils were heard from the background saying “its whiter, its brighter....boom boom” in an apparent reference to some of the advertisements they watch and hear on Zambia National Broadcasting Co-operation Television (ZNBC). As this happened, there was chorus laughter from the class and the teacher did not monitor the pupil who was reading at that particular time. What transpired was that reading, background comments and laughing were going on at the same time. The teacher did not explain the context from which the passage was written.

Still in another lesson (School C) one of the teacher plunged into teaching the topic “The Goldsmith” found in the same book, English 9 Book 1 Pupils Book 1. He asked one of the pupils to read the first paragraph. Just as she began reading the first line some pupils asked the following questions to the teacher: What is Goldsmith and who is a Goldsmith? The reading had to be curtailed for a short while because most of the pupils in class had no clue of what a Goldsmith is. As a result, he was at pains trying to explain to the class what a Goldsmith is. The teacher said “it’s a person who deals with gold-related things.” One of the pupils secretly checked the word in the dictionary and without being pointed at by the teacher said, “a person who makes, repairs or sells articles made of gold.” The teacher commended her by saying “very good, have you heard what she has said class? She was asked to repeat the answer she had given. When an atmosphere of contentment was arrived at, normal reading then started and the pupils concentrated.

Similar situations of the above nature were observed in the other lessons. The repercussion of not having the initial teaching point in a reading comprehension lesson was that most, if not all pupils started reading without having a clue of what the passage was all about.

4.2.2 Introduction to the passage

Out of all the lessons that were observed, 25% had very good introduction, 25% good and the rest poor. The score sheet which was in the lesson observation guide was used to calculate the given percentages. In one of the lessons, the teacher asked a number of oral questions related to the content found in the passage. Some of the questions asked were: How many of you have travelled out of Lusaka?; What did you see when you left Lusaka?; What did you see in Kabulonga?; How many of you have been to Kanyama? and What did you see in Kanyama? After exhausting the discussion with the pupils, yet mindful of time, the teacher introduced the

topic “Civilization” and wrote it on the Chalkboard. The introduction really captured class attention because it was excellently done.

The other teacher whose lesson was also very good discussed with pupils a short story that was related to the content of the passage. In a bid to provoke thought among the pupils one of these two teachers asked the pupils who had watched the film “Shaka Zulu” to raise their hands. Three quarters of the hands were up and the teacher started asking questions on how they dressed: the kind of water they drank and many more. The pupils gave a variety of responses and by the time the teacher introduced the topic “Civilization” nearly everyone in class was alert and active.

In the third lesson which was also rated as being very good, the teacher narrated a story which was related to the topic-“The Advertiser’s Point of View.” He gave a scenario at a market place where marketers advertise the goods to whoever comes to their stand or passes nearby. As he was narrating, he went round the class and his eloquent words inspired the pupils to be attentive. After he had finished, he asked a few question to the class, commended pupils responses and he wrote the topic on the chalkboard. Thereafter, reading of the passage began.

From the 12 lesson observed, 3 were rated as having introductions which were good. In one of these introductions the teacher asked the pupils to comment on advertisement that they watch on ZNBC. Although many were eager to give comments on that advertisement the teacher did not give them an opportunity to do so. She just gave a few highlights and got into the reading of the passage. The pupils had an idea of the passage, but the zeal to read the passage was not sufficiently addressed by the teacher. The topic was “The Advertiser’s Point of View.”

In the other lesson that was taught and which was considered good, the teacher gave competitive comparison between developed and developing countries. He gave an example of Britain, which is a developed country and Zambia, which is a developing country. Briefly talked about the standard of living in Britain and compared it to Zambia. Thereafter he introduced the topic “civilization”. Most pupils followed that introduction, although the only weakness he showed was lack of activeness when he was giving the introduction.

One of the teachers in a lesson asked to mention the minerals that they know. A number of responses came out for instance; Copper, Gold, Diamond, Zinc, Aluminum, Silver and Cobalt. The teacher then asked the pupils what gold can be used for. Still a number of responses came out for example: Jewelry; wrist watches; houses; spoons; cups and so on. The teacher then introduced

the topic “The Goldsmith”. That was also a good introduction which captured the attention of the class before reading commenced.

4.2.3 Silent Reading

Silent reading is a very important step in a reading comprehension lesson especially at Junior Secondary School level because it trains pupils to practice good reading habits before entering high school. This skill was practiced in 75% of the lessons observed although not effectively in some lessons. The rest of the lessons had no silent reading.

In one lesson, the teacher asked the class to read the passage silently. The topic was “Civilization”. No sooner had she asked the pupils to read silently than she began making phone calls. She briefly went outside and attended to the phone calls. A similar incident was also noticed in another lesson where after giving the introduction the cell phone rang and the teacher quickly asked pupils to read the passage silently. She too went outside to answer the phone call and by the time she finished, silent reading was over and she then went into reading of the passage. She spent four minutes answering the phone. As that happened some pupils read silently and others chatted freely. The topic was “The Advertiser’s Point of View”.

In two of these lessons, the teacher asked the pupils to read the passage silently. One of them stood in front of the class and gave the pupils five minutes to go through the passage silently. During that step, some pupils were not practicing good reading habits. While sited at the back, the researcher saw four pupils mouthing whilst reading and six were moving their heads as they read. The teacher did notice that and therefore did not give any comment. The topic was ‘Civilization’. The other teacher who taught on the same topic also did similar things. He too stood on one spot in front of the class, folded his arms and asked the pupils to read silently. Instead of reading silently, some pupils at the back whispered among themselves. Then he went into the next step of reading the passage.

One teacher asked the pupils to read silently and went round the class. However, her eyes were constantly fixed by the window and seeing what was going on outside the class. Her authoritative nature prompted the pupils to read silently and no one made noise or whispered. The class was given five minutes to do silent reading.

Silent reading was perfectly done in 37.5% of the lessons observed. Teachers displayed exemplary behavior and technique during this step. One of the teachers passed comments which

were of great educational value in instilling the value of silent reading. For example as pupils read, she confidently went round the class and told two pupils that we read with the eyes and not the fingers. The pupils found wanting grasped the point. She also discouraged pupils from reading whilst laying the head on the desk. She encouraged good reading posture. She strategically made comments without disturbing the rest of the class that read the passage. Two of the other teachers also did manage silent reading successfully. They guided the pupils into practicing good reading and that motivated the pupils.

From the observed lessons, two had completely no silent reading. To make matters worse, one of these lessons had no introduction. The teacher just went into reading of the passage after greeting the class. That was very strange indeed. In the other lesson, without silent reading the teacher asked the pupils to read one after the other.

4.2.4 Loud Reading of the Passage

In 67.5% of the lesson observed, the teacher asked the pupils to read the passage one after the other whilst the rest followed. From pupil's reading, 75% read fluently and the rest had difficulties. They were helped by the teacher and at times by fellow pupils. Only 25% of the teachers read out the passage to the class after silent reading had ended.

In one of the lessons which had no silent reading, the teacher asked the pupils to read loudly to the class one after the other. The comprehension topic was "Cricket in the Road" from English 9 Book 1 Pupils Book. Shortly after the reading had started, the teacher corrected pupils' mistakes and the pupils followed the reading. As the reading progressed, pupils started correcting pupils' mistakes without getting permission from the teacher. Such attitude was tolerated by the teacher and hence many voices would be heard whenever the reader mispronounced a word or said something not found in the passage. One of those mispronounced words was "wiped". The pupils pronounced it as "whipped" thus sending a different meaning altogether. In that lesson, the teacher at times paused and explained certain terms which he thought could be difficult for the pupils. Among them were "hedge", "fluency" and many more. At times he could give an explanation and at other times he threw the questions to the class.

Similar characteristics were observed from all the three schools under study. The goal of most teachers was to see to it that pupils read the passage. As to whether they understood the passage or not were highly questionable. In another lesson, the teacher did not include "reading of the

passage” in her lesson procedure. She just gave the pupils ten minutes of silent reading and when they had finished, she wrote words and phrases which she thought could be difficult for the pupils. These included; consumer goods, persuade, disrespect, disillusioned, household names and advertising company. She even wrote the lines where those words and phrases were found. However, she made a very serious blunder of writing “campaign” instead of “company” on the chalkboard. The teacher was also in the habit of throwing questions to the class and as pupils were still thinking of the meaning, she gave the answers herself. The topic was “The Advertiser’s Point of View.”

Reading of the passage by the class was in a few isolated cases characterized by poor reading habits of some pupils who were asked to read aloud by the teacher. These included fingering and head movement. In one such lesson which had no silent reading, the teacher asked one pupil to read aloud the first paragraph. Selection of pupils to read the remaining paragraphs was done randomly. She did not monitor the behavior of the pupils during reading because she sat on the same position in front of the class throughout the lesson. The topic was “The Goldsmith”. Although the pupils read, a few did not display good reading habits and the teacher did not notice that because she paid more attention to listening to what was read and neglecting how the reading was done.

There was comedy in one of the lessons that the researcher observed. Teaching on the topic “Civilization”, the teacher read the opening paragraph after which he asked the pupils who sat in the middle to read. The pace at which she read was so fast that other pupils could not follow and ended up saying, “we are not singing, but reading”. When she finished, the teacher randomly pointed at a very slow reader who was constantly pushed to read by the class as they dragged her by mentioning the words she was struggling to read out. Uncontrollable laughter could be heard from certain sections of the class. Such spontaneous outbursts of laughter made some pupils to request certain pupils with reading problems to read so as to increase the amount of pleasure and negative entertainment during the lesson. They really enjoyed such scenario. It was further observed that when a pupil was asked to read, the others just followed out of sheer pleasure and not necessarily determined to understand the passage.

In 42.5% of the lessons, the teacher read out the entire passage to the class. Out of these, 25% explained the passage whilst reading. The rest made the explanations after reading of the passage was done. Some of the teachers who made clarification during reading time took so much time

that they did not get into the next stage of the lesson. In an effort to make pupils understand, they brought in pupils' personal experiences and later their own experience. Although that was good, the elaborations in some lessons were too long that some topics ended up being covered in 2 weeks (which is 160 minutes) since each reading comprehension takes 80 minutes and is usually done on a weekly basis.

The teacher who taught on the topic, "The Advertiser's Point of View" gave an analogy of how his friend used to advertise the goods at the market, before moving to advertising done on the public media Zambia National Broadcasting Co-operation. During focused group discussions, the pupils complained that the teacher was too slow because he made them read the same passage over and over again. It really became boring for them in the end.

However, there were some lessons where the teacher effectively used the reading of the passage. Such teachers' maintained order and pupils who had difficulty in pronouncing words and reading in general were not humiliated by their fellow pupils. When the pupils failed to read properly, the teacher chipped in and corrected that pupil. At times they asked one of the pupils to give an explanation without giving room for others to look down on the one that had erred. Such pupils felt motivated and not discouraged.

4.1.5. Oral Questioning and Discussion of the passage

This step was followed in all the lessons that the researcher observed. However, the time it was given determined its effectiveness. In 67% of the lessons, it was given more than five minutes. Others went to the extent of giving it two minutes because the teacher did not devise oral questions. Instead they resorted to the traditional rhetoric questions like: have you understood the passage? And then the pupils responded in a chorus fashion "Yes".

In one of the lessons, the teacher wrote all the words that she thought would be difficult to the learners on the chalkboard. She then asked the pupils to define those words. After the definitions were given, the teacher asked the pupils to locate the words from the passage and then read them out to the class. This was in the lesson which had no reading aloud of the passage. The topic was "The Advertiser's Point of View". All the words were defined with pupils' involvement. Almost 90% of the lessons were dominated by explaining the meaning of words and some phrases. During the oral questioning and discussion time, there was a knock on the door and after the teacher said "come in", five pupils who came late entered the class. As they went to their desks,

the teacher called them to the front and asked them if she had allowed them to sit down. They all gave some cosmetic apologies of saying “sorry madam am late”. Without finding out why they came late, she told them to sit down. There was no fear or remorse in their coming late.

In another lesson, whose topic was “The Importance of Sleep” from English 9 Book 2, the teacher asked the pupils to ask questions after reading of the passage was done. The pupils asked questions especially on the meaning of words like “altered” “disturbed” and others. The teacher threw the questions to the pupils. When they failed, she gave the explanations without using the chalkboard. Instead she just stood still on one position when explaining. Questions were asked from paragraph to paragraph and so did the explanations.

During the oral answering session, one of the pupils said “to my own understanding” instead of saying “in my understanding”. The teacher took no notice of that and therefore did not make any comment. A few pupils were secretly using the dictionary and at the end of thirty minutes when the definition of terms was thoroughly done, she asked the class to write the exercise in their books. She did not ask them whether they had understood the whole passage; neither did she ask them to explain what they had learnt from the passage.

There were two lessons that did not have oral questioning and discussion of the passage. In one of those the teacher briefly explained the nature of the passage shortly after reading aloud of the passage had finished. Pupils were not accorded an opportunity to either ask questions or comment on the passage. After the brief explanation which came from the teacher, pupils were asked to write the class exercise. The topic was “Cricket in the Road” from English 9 Book 1. In the other lesson whose topic was “The Goldsmith” the teacher never made any comment after reading of the passage had come to an end. He straight away told pupils to do the class exercise which was in the text book.

Pupils in one of the schools were asked to identify the words they did not understand in the passage. The teacher then asked them to give their contextual understanding and as soon as this task was done, they were asked to write the comprehension exercise. Trends of this nature were noticed in three other lessons where pupils had to give contextual meaning of some words found in the passage. Pupils were then asked to write the class exercise. Teachers accepted most of the answers that that came from the pupils and that enabled them relate their knowledge with the explanation they got from their teachers.

There was total disorder in one of the lessons whose topic was “Cricket in the Road”. During oral questioning and discussion stage, the discussion was mainly centered on giving the meaning of words found in the passage, and there was untold drama in that lesson. As the pupils made very disturbing noise, the teacher had to pause for a moment and warn them about their bad behavior. He talked of slapping, as he said “If I slap you-paaa, then you will know who I am?” The fruitful discussion of the passage was constantly disrupted because of the teacher’s inability to gain class attention. Comments like “he is a monk” came from the class and went through the teacher’s ears without him passing any comment. The lesson ended unceremoniously.

4.1.6 Written Class Exercise

From all the lessons observed, 75% of the teachers asked the pupils to write the exercise whilst the comprehension period was in progress and the rest (which is 25%) asked them to write during prep-time after which they had to handover the books to the class monitor, who in turn had to take them to the departmental office for marking by the teacher. All the teachers who asked the pupils to write class exercise did not finish marking because most pupils did not finish writing during the two periods (80 minutes) of the lesson.

In one lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to write the class exercise after the oral question stage had finished. She then started moving round the class to check on pupils writing, but that was just done for a short while. She went back to her usual place, teacher’s table and chair and sat down. She then started preparing a marking key for the same exercise. Upon finishing, she started going round the class and quietly marked pupils work. The marking lasted 50 minutes, although half the class had not finished writing. She asked the class monitor to take the books of those that had not finished to the English departmental office at lunch time for marking. The topic was “The Goldsmith”.

Writing of the class exercise in another lesson commenced twenty five minutes after all the earlier stages were done. As the pupils began writing, noise making also started. Some pupils were standing and others were asking questions like “Sir what’s the date today?” Teacher distracted pupil’s attention when he made the following comment, “Manchester United lost finally”. This comment opened the Pandora’s box for discussion of European Football. Writing went on at a very slow pace. The teacher again distracted pupil’s attention when he asked the following question, “Did I get your details-birthday?” and the pupils responded “Yes”. Instead of going round to check and mark pupils’ work, he reminded the pupils on the need to write fast in

their final examination. That was good advice, but done at the wrong time when pupils were supposed to concentrate. Teachers kept disturbing the class exercise because of his continuous talking especially on things that had nothing to do with the passage.

Still in the same lesson, one of the pupils finished on time and when he told the teacher, the rest of the class started murmuring. The pupil took his book to the teacher for marking and as soon as that was done, he went back to his desk, fished out a novel and started reading silently whilst his friends were struggling with writing the class exercise. Some pupils who were sited close to the researcher continuously consulted each other. The teacher asked the class to collect the text books although half the class had not finished writing. That was done five minutes before the end of the period. The lesson ended abruptly.

Another teacher that was observed from another school asked pupils to begin writing the exercise shortly after the oral questioning and discussion had ended. Some few pupils began discussing the passage, but the teacher paid no attention. Some pupils took long time before they could start writing (15 minutes) and others were answering questions with the aid of a dictionary. The teacher took no notice of that because he was sited at the front. About ten minutes before the end of the lesson the teacher left the class. When the bell rang, she came back and asked whether the pupils had finished writing. The pupils in chorus fashion responded “no”. She then asked the class monitor to collect the books for marking after they had finished writing later in the afternoon.

During class exercise time, one teacher left the class for a while and when she came back, some pupils asked her to clarify on the task they were supposed to do. Of all the teachers observed, she was the only one who beat pupils who misbehaved. She marked pupils’ work that finished early and told them to make corrections. She further admonished pupils with poor handwriting to improve and three minutes before the end of the period, she told the pupils to stop writing. She asked the monitor to collect the books for marking.

In another lesson, after the oral questioning was done, the teacher asked the pupils to write the class exercise. Almost a quarter of the pupils were not doing the work. Instead they did other things for example doing the tasks they were given by teachers who took them in other subjects. Upon telling the pupils to write the exercise, the teacher took a small book and began reading silently. When the period came to an end, the teacher wished the pupils well and left. Such attitude raised much concern on the researcher and during focused group discussion the pupils justified their unbecoming behavior. They said most of the time she did not mark their exercise

books and because of that there was no revision done. Some even said there were times when the pupils had to get the unmarked books from the teacher and that really demotivated them.

However, the other lessons whose class exercises were marked in class showed a different picture from the ones above. What was prominent in those lessons was that teachers marked the work and went round monitoring the progress of each pupil. Pupils were made to get down to work and hence there was no disturbances whatsoever. In two of these lessons, the teacher cautioned the pupils who had their work marked not to let their counterparts copy from them. They were both very strict on that.

With the other two lessons, the teachers held on to the books after marking so that they could not let their friends copy from them. As they sat on the teacher's chair in front they individually corrected pupils work and pointed out the areas of weaknesses and where they needed to improve. All in all marking of every pupil's work could not be finished on account of time. The written class exercise was well handled and pupils' performance was good.

4.1.7 Status of reading comprehension.

Among the four skill that are taught in English-Structure; Composition, Reading Comprehension and Summary, the former is liked most by teachers. From the eighteen teachers that were interviewed eight liked and enjoyed teaching structure; six preferred composition and three opted for reading comprehension. Only one teacher expressed her undying love for summary. Figure 1 below summarizes the preferences by the teachers of English.

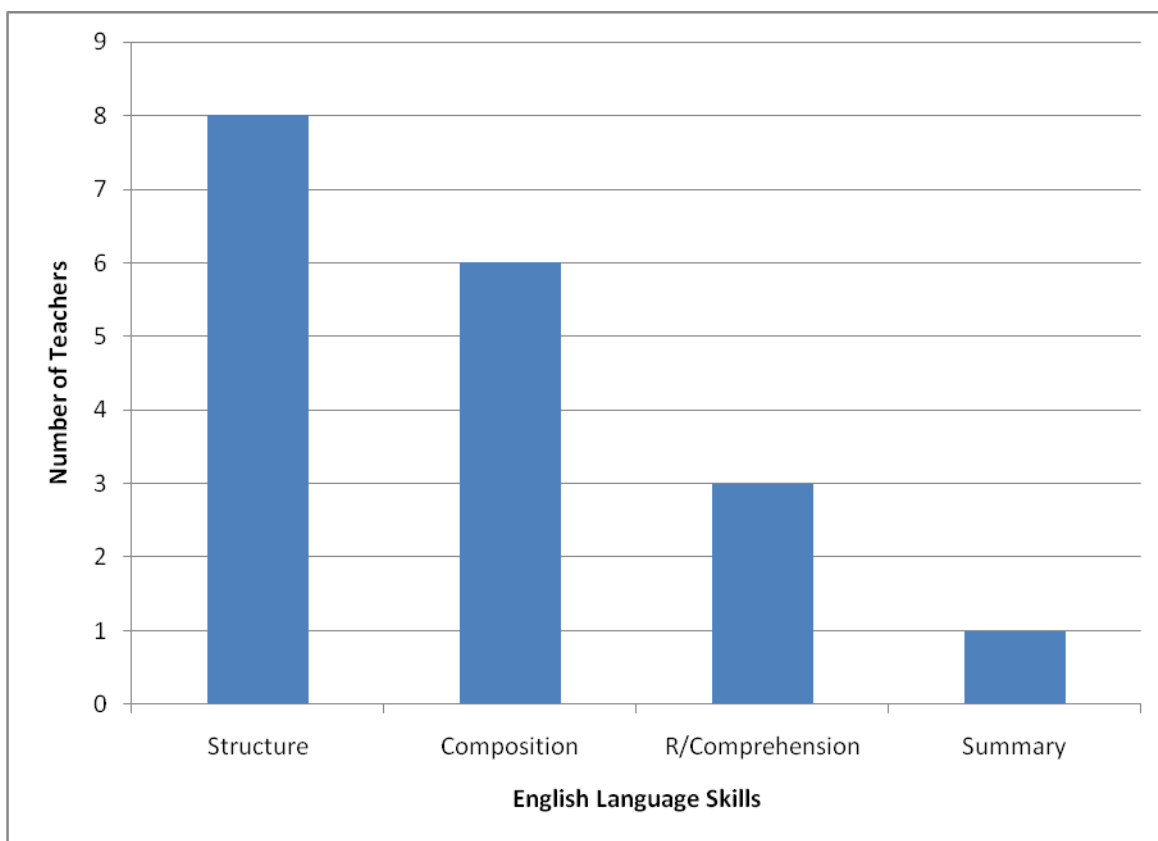


Figure 1 Bar Chart showing the status of English skills

4.1.8 Reasons for their preference

A number of reasons came from the respondents (teachers) as to what made them prefer the skill more than the others. The following was the information given by the teachers of English from the three schools.

a) Structure

The first teacher said “it makes me feel that I know the language because that is where the rule explanation is.” She further said “the rule explanation (for example the rudiments underlying the use of each particular structure) makes teaching easy and further makes pupils alert during lesson delivery.” The second respondent said “I always find structure to be dynamic and very technical and moreover, I always find myself with much time to prepare.” The third respondent just said he preferred structure because it was just more stimulating and the fourth respondent said structure was his favorite because it is the core foundation of every branch of English.

The fifth respondent said “I prefer structure because one’s understanding of structure leads to better understanding of other skills.” The sixth respondent said “I like structure more than the

other skills because it is unique and that pupils display maximum concentration when learning it as opposed to other skills.” The seventh said “structure is very interesting and easy to teach.” The eighth respondent said “the rule explanation which is the cornerstone for teaching structure makes it easier for pupils to have the knowledge structure of the English language.”

b) Composition

Different reasons were given from the six respondents that preferred teaching composition to other skills. The first respondent said “composition is my favorite because I enjoy the art of writing and I understand it.” The second respondent said “composition makes me see the creativeness of the girls when they are discussing and the way they write and present their imaginative ideas.” The third respondent said “when teaching composition, it is interesting to see how young people share ideas through writing.” He further said that composition was very interesting.

The fourth respondent said “I like composition because I am able to deduce how knowledgeable a child is in other areas of structure such as punctuation, spellings and grammar.” The fifth respondent said “composition makes me understand the approaches pupils use in other learning subjects.” The sixth respondent said “composition sharpens pupils' ability to build complex essays from simple structures of letters, sentences and paragraphs.”

c) Reading Comprehension

Only three respondents preferred reading comprehension to the other skills. The first respondent said “I like reading comprehension because I am able to gauge the intelligence of the pupils from their (pupils) thinking and analysis strategies.” The second respondent said “I like reading comprehension because of the stages involved when teaching it for example the process of reading of the passage, answering of questions by pupils, the marking part and finally the class discussion involved.” The third respondent said “reading comprehension encompasses everything and when teaching it, I still refer to structure and composition.”

d) Summary

As alluded to earlier on, only one out of the eighteen teachers preferred teaching summary to other skills. She said “I find it easy to teach and it helps learners to copy notes.”

4.2 Teacher Competence in Reading Comprehension

The following section presents the data that the researcher got while observing lessons of the teachers of English as well as the semi-structured interviews with the teachers of English in the three schools. Presentation of the data will go hand in hand with discussion. All teachers were qualified to teach English language.

4.2.1 General Organization

(a) Lesson Planning-Bio-data Section

All the teachers interviewed said they prepare their lesson plans for reading comprehension. When the term commenced, they were all expected to present their schemes of work to their HOD in English who later submitted these to the Deputy Head-teacher. The CDC recommends that Reading Comprehension be given two consecutive periods (80 minutes) in a week on the school time-table. Most schools that were under study followed that recommendation. The teachers further said they prepare lesson plans on a weekly basis. However, the researcher was not availed any copy of the lesson plan, hence, it was difficult to ascertain the truth of their statements. Neither the schemes of work nor the records of work were also availed to the researcher.

(b) Initial reading Activities and Introduction

Being aware of the initial reading activities and introduction, teachers gave various ways in which they handle them. The general consensus was that the topic and type of pupils in a class determined the manner in which they are handled them. Others said they brainstorm on the topic to be read so that pupils are aware of what is to be tackled. They also said they try as much as possible to bring real life situation to the pupils before they begin to read. Discussion and bringing ideas related to the passage is what others said they do. After giving a slight account of a story or ideas related to the passage, they explain certain key words relevant to the passage. Still, one respondent talked of giving pupils a general background of the passage so that they could create a picture of what was to be read. There were some who said they even went to the extent of giving the pupils role-play.

(c) Relevance of the Passage to the learners

Passages used were got from the same source-English 9 Book 1 and 2 Pupils Book. All the teachers in the three school got the passages from those text-books. One of the authors of those books in preface points out that the course had been written in order to satisfy the need for a

comprehensive and locally produced set of teaching materials based on the Examinations Council of Zambia's Junior Secondary School English language Syllabus (Grades 8 and 9). He further contends that the course was produced at the Curriculum Development Centre by a team of experienced teachers of English and curriculum specialists.

Although all teachers from the three schools under study used those text books, they had different perceptions on the passages found in them. From the eighteen teachers interviewed ten said they were very satisfied and eight had their reservations. Those with reservations argued that the text-books were designed in such a way that they train pupils how to pass their Junior Secondary School leaving Examinations, instead of equipping pupils with the mastery of the various English skills. One respondent even said they are test oriented and not application based. She substantiated her point by saying that whenever pupils begin to read they passage, the exercises that follow later are the ones that come into their mind hence compromising the natural standards which go with reading. Another respondent argued that pupils read, not for their personal benefit, but to please their teacher during the oral question and written class exercise stage.

On the other hand some teachers repeatedly pointed out that most passages were not authentic to pupils and hence adding less value to the education system. They called for revision of the Junior Secondary school English language syllabus. Some pupils during focused group discussions also repeatedly said some passages were not exciting to them.

(d) Contents of the Passage

There was general satisfaction of the contents of the passage, both to the learners and the teachers. Most of the teachers interviewed expressed satisfaction on the content, although some argued that some of the contents are slowly outliving their usefulness. Those teachers further argued that coming up with new text-books could help add flavor to the pupils' personal experiences.

4.2.2 Presentation of the Lesson

(a) Pupils ability to follow the lesson

The ability to determine as to whether the pupils follow the lesson or not largely depend on the activities that take place in the introduction, development and conclusion of the lesson. The following table gives the general rating of the lesson.

Table 1 showing pupils ability to follow the lesson

Rating	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
No. of teachers	6	2	2	2

(b) Teachers' ability to capture class attention

Most teachers had difficulties in capturing class attention due to a number of factors. These factors include:

(i) Casual Greeting:

It was observed that some teachers had a very casual approach in the manner they greeted the class. Just when entering the class, they could greet the class by saying “Good morning Class?” One quarter of the class would respond to the greeting and in some class, half the class would do so. The fact that most pupils did not respond to the greeting entailed they did not move with the teacher. Therefore class attention was not captured and the trend continued up to the end of the lesson.

There were, however, a few teachers who greeted the class confidently and the pupils responded vigorously. Some teachers even re-greeted the class when they noticed the first greeting was received with apathy. There was one school (A) where pupils had to stand up whenever the teacher entered the class. All pupils in those classes from that school were attentive at the beginning of the lesson. In some classes, they remained attentive up to the end.

It was observed that the manner in which greeting was done by the teachers had serious bearing on pupil's attentiveness. All the teachers whose lessons were observed greeted the class just upon entering.

A number of teachers lacked confidence when presenting their lessons. Female teachers were the main culprits. They lazily walked to the front and took time to settle down. Everything did during the course of the lesson was without passion.

Some made running sentences and hence pupils were unable to get the points which they were trying to put across. Some of those sentences were “what I am trying to say is.....you see class, my point is...” and many more. However, before they could finish what they wanted to say, those

teachers switched into another topic altogether. That lack of confidence impacted negatively on the pupils.

Teachers' lack of confidence was also portrayed in the manner they walked. From their lazy and aimless kind of walking, one could tell that they did not have much to offer to the learners. Others did not even walk at all. They just stood on one spot during their lesson presentation hence affecting the mood of the learning process.

The manner in which some teachers pointed at some pupils to read was not inspiring. It took time for them to decide on who should do the reading. Such lack of confidence left pupils wondering. As they were deciding on whom to point, they smiled unnecessarily for a long time.

During the oral questioning stage, some teachers failed to give direction to the pupils. It was noticed that when the pupils failed to give correct answers, the teacher would give an answer at the end. To the surprise of the researcher, those teachers were not fully convinced that their answers were correct. Most of their answers started with "May be... I think... In my view" and phrases related to that. That lack of confidence in the way they answered the questions impacted negatively on the learners.

(ii) Lack of teacher's in-depth knowledge of the passages

About half of the teachers observed lacked in-depth knowledge of the comprehension passages. After the reading was done as well as the oral questioning stage, they could not give a satisfactory summary of the passage. Some did not even attempt to give a summary. Pupils were left wondering as to what the main ideas in the passage were.

It was also observed that most teachers could not coherently connect the ideas in the passage. By the time they were reading the last paragraph, the contents of the first and second paragraphs were fast forgotten. These weaknesses were noticed during the oral questioning and discussion period. They could agree with most answers that came from the pupils, even wrong ones. In such instances, class attention was gained at the beginning of the lesson, but destroyed towards the end due to teacher's failure to give satisfactory answers. Some teachers were challenged by the pupils who proved the answers from the passages and the poor teacher was left with no option, but to agree with the said answer.

Some teachers, however, had in-depth knowledge of the comprehension passages. Those teachers did attract and capture the attention of the class. Pupils could ask where they did not understand and the teacher could give satisfactory answers at the end.

(iii) Lecturing method of teaching by some teachers.

There were some teachers who presented their lessons in form of a lecture. After the usual introduction and reading of the passage, some did about ninety percent of the talking. It was observed that during the oral practice stage, all the questions came from the teacher as well as most of the answers. The pupils were not given enough time to digest some of the question before answering. The teacher took most of the show. Teachers' over-dose of information made some of the pupils in the different classes to have little or no attention to the lesson.

During semi-structured interviews most, if not all teachers gave elaborate explanation on how reading comprehension was supposed to be taught. Most of the views tallied with those raised by Ellis and Tomlinson (1980). After a successful interview with the teachers, using a semi-structured interview guide, the researcher was tempted not to observe the lessons. Their arguments were well articulated. Unfortunately what some of those respondents said did not correspond with what they did in class.

It was also noticed that teachers who used the lecture method of teaching did not get appropriate responses from the class. After talking for a very long time, the teacher would ask pupils to ask questions and the pupils would remain quiet. Contented with pupils' quietness, the teacher would resume the talking. When asked to write the class exercise, the pupils would begin making noise. Such behavior was seen in most of the lessons where the teachers used the lecture type of teaching.

However, 67% of the teachers observed did not use the lecture method of teaching. Instead they used the teacher/pupil interaction method of teaching. Their lessons were characterized by active participation of the pupils as compared to those who had used the lecture method of teaching. They created an enabling environment for pupils to participate freely by both asking and answering questions

(c) Use of appropriate methodology

From all the three schools, there was similar teaching methodology. Most lessons started with introduction to the passage, reading of the passage and class exercise that came in form of answering the printed work in their exercise books. Most, if not all followed the teaching methodology which was given by the Curriculum Development Centre.

It was noticed that the main aim of teaching reading comprehension was to test the pupils. There was no lesson which was aimed at teaching a comprehension skills for example reasoning skill where pupils are expected to understand the reasoning, sequence or logic that unite the sentences into a whole (Ellis and Tomlinson 1980). Yet in the class exercise, pupils were expected to apply their reasoning skills. The clearest example of such type of question would be *Question 7 page 42, English 9 Pupils book on the topic “The Goldsmith”*.

Paragraph 10. The writer’s father probably stroked the little snake because:

- A. He believed this would make him stronger.
- B. He believed this would help him complete his work successfully.
- C. The snake was his pet.
- D. He didn’t want the snake to disturb him.

In order to arrive at the right answer, pupils must be able to relate the ideas in the paragraph and deduce addition meaning from what is stated in the text. The following is a complete extract of the passage under discussion.

When the gold had cooled in the hollow of the brick, my father would begin to hammer and stretch it. This was the moment when his word as a goldsmith really began. I stroke stealthily the little snake coiled up under the sheepskin; one can only assume that this was his way of gathering strength for what remained to be done, and which was the most difficult.

(d) Timing of the lesson

There was different timing on the reading comprehension in the three schools. School A had two lessons early in the morning before break-time (before 10:10 hrs) and the other two where between 10:30 and 13:00 hrs. School B had the two comprehension lessons between 10:30 and

12:30 hours and the last from 14:00 hrs to 15:30 hours. On the other hand, school C had the three comprehension lessons before break time (before 10:10 hours) and the last one between 10:30 and 13:30 hours. Timing was arrived at by the school administrators who delegated a few teachers to make the school time-table.

4.2.3 Teaching Techniques

(a) Introduction to the lesson

Varied from one lesson to the other, as discussed in 4.1.2. The different introduction that the teachers gave determined how their lessons ended. There were, however, still some teachers who are weak in this area. In other words, they were not competent enough to instill interest in the learners. Some did not perhaps know how valuable an introduction is to a lesson. Teachers need to show expertise in this area so that learning interest is kept alive from the beginning right up to the end of the lesson

(b) Pupil Alertness

In about half of the lessons that were observed, pupils were not alert. In some classes, pupils were busy chatting while the lesson was going on. Some teachers failed to draw pupils' attention because they lacked confidence.

There were about three pupils from different schools who were drawing pictures when the comprehension lesson was in progress. Others were watching pictures in magazines without being spotted by the teacher. The majority of pupils that were not alert did not even make educational contributions to the lesson.

In the other classrooms, the pupils were alert and participated in the learning process even though a number of errors and mistakes could be seen by the researcher. Others looked very lost when questions were thrown to them by the teacher, a sign that they were not alert. Pupils' lack of alertness was attributed to the uncaring attitude of some teachers. For instance some teachers kept concentrating on the pupils who sat in front and neglected those who sat behind. They could not go round the class so as to make every pupil alert. The end result was that some pupils were not attended to or given attention by the teacher and they ended up doing their own things which was very unfortunate indeed.

Some pupils pretended as if they were listening and following the lesson and yet their minds were very far from what was going on in class. It was noticed that when the teacher asked them a question, they asked him or her to repeat because they did not get it and hence the teacher either had to reprimand them or re-ask the question.

(c) Teacher Creativity

There were very few teachers who were creative in their teaching. Majority of them were passive. In their lesson introduction, they could not create stories relevant to the reading comprehension passages. Instead they struggled to recall and tell pupils their life experience hence taking more time.

Some teachers could also not make pupils open up to learning. They also failed to create visual situations from what was read. There was some short circuit by some teachers shortly after the reading had finished. Apart from the usual “Any question Class?” they allowed dull moments to dominate certain stages of their lessons.

Teacher creativity is an integral aspect in any lesson, including reading comprehension. Pupils like teachers who are creative and bring life to the lesson. However, there were teachers who displayed creativity by involving various activities in the lesson. Other asked pupils to shed more light on the responses they gave thus making pupils learn from amongst themselves. That was done especially in the introduction stage before reading of the passage commenced.

(d) Use of teaching aids

Most teachers seem not to know the value that use of teaching aids has on the pupils. Other than the usual chalkboard and the text-books most of the teachers did not use any teaching aids. They entered the classes with pieces of chalk in their hands.

(e) Use of appropriate examples

The examples which came from most teachers were closely linked to the passages that were taught. Certain topics like “Civilization” and “The Advertiser’s Point of View” had very rich examples and illustrations. Some teachers gave an example of the “Egyptian Civilization” which many pupils were very familiar with in their history lessons. Still others gave example of radio and television advertisement which pupils were familiar and were also very appropriate to the lessons. Examples of political nature were also given.

(f) Voice Projection

About 67% of the teachers had good voice projection. Their voices were loud and clear, making pupils get what they said. That helped pupils to be attentive and follow the lesson. Some were exceptionally good that there was precision in what they said.

However, there were a few teachers whose voice projection was poor. They swallowed words when speaking making pupils, especially those that sat at the back not get what they said. Therefore, pupils kept asking questions so that they could not miss what was said. Some pupils who felt shy to ask the teacher were heard asking their friends in class what was said by the teacher. That was very unfortunate indeed.

(g) Teacher Appearance

Most teachers dressed smartly and they presented themselves as acceptable individuals before their pupils. Male teachers were dressed formally and the researcher never saw any teacher dressed in a T-shirt. Moreover, during the time the research was conducted, there was no teacher who was dressed in a jean trousers or skirt. Two female teachers wore trousers, but looked presentable before the class. They did not distract pupil attention.

However, there were three teachers who had exaggerated their dress code. Their dressing was so overdone that they became very particular in the manner they taught. Even holding the piece of chalk was done with much caution and so was their class movement. There was one teacher who never even touched the chalk, therefore, not making use of the chalkboard. That was the same teacher who maintained the same position throughout her lesson delivery.

4.2.4 Class Management

(a) Learning Atmosphere

All the three schools under study had a very good lesson atmosphere. Some classes were neatly maintained with good doors, windows and desks. The school and class infrastructure was a conducive for learning in all the three schools.

(b) Gaining of class attention

Most teachers from the schools failed to gain the attention of their pupils when they were teaching. However, about a quarter of the teachers observed at least managed to gain class

attention. There was chorusing in some classes. In other classes some pupils looked to be lost when the lesson was going on. From a physical point of view, all the schools had well built classrooms with good infrastructure.

Discipline and control

During lesson observation, most of the pupils in the three schools displayed a good and acceptable code of conduct. They had mutual respect for their teachers. However, there were a few cases of academic indiscipline, for example pupils not writing the class exercise at the right time and also fidgeting during the class exercise.

4.2.5 Teacher/Pupils Relationship

a) Learning Atmosphere

The learning interaction was dependent on the teacher's personality and what he intended to achieve at the end of the teaching. Some teachers could freely interact with the pupils who in turn freely asked where they did not understand. At times, those teachers would throw the questions back to the pupils so that learning interaction could be created amongst the pupils.

To other teachers, the relationship with pupils was tense because they (teachers) were too authoritative and serious.

b) Eye Contact

That was another area that seemed to be difficult to most teachers. Eyes are perceived to be the mirror of the heart and therefore they speak volumes of what is someone's heart. Most of the teachers observed eye contact with their pupils. Some kept staring through the window as they delivered their lessons. Some were looking at the class ceiling while others kept looking downwards as they taught. Very few teachers maintained eye contact with their pupils. Others looked at one or two pupils for a long time.

c) Teacher attitude to mistakes/error

Whereas some teachers were tolerant to pupils' mistakes and errors, others were not. Those who tolerated the mistakes tried to help the pupils by identifying the root cause of those mistakes and errors. They did that with much tenderness, thus enriching the quality of their lessons. On the other hand, others who did not take keen interest in the origin of those mistakes and errors kept

looking for correct responses. To them, getting correct answers from the pupils was considered as the best method of teaching.

Other teachers did not reprimand the pupils who laughed at their friends' mistakes for example mispronunciation of terms. That made those who had erred to feel ashamed and have less enthusiasm for active participation in learning. Others, however, did reprimand the pupils' bad behavior of laughing at their friends.

4.2.6 General Lesson Delivery

(a) Treatment of new vocabulary

This was the area that most teachers enjoyed handling. After the reading was done, the teachers asked the pupils to identify the terms which they did not understand. They were also asked to identify the lines where those words were found. Teachers wrote pupil responses on the chalkboard and thereafter those words were discussed as a class.

Furthermore, it was noticed that most pupils considered understanding the meaning of new vocabulary as the core aspect of reading comprehension. Contextual analysis of new vocabulary was not given much attention. It was not surprising to see pupils secretly using the dictionary when answering questions so as to keep up appearances in class.

(b) Reading and individual task

As pointed out earlier, some teachers prefer reading the passage to the pupils whilst others ask pupils to read. Some employed both silent reading and reading aloud. All the reading which took place in class was followed by a written class exercise found in the text-books. Pupils were tasked to answer the questions by silently writing down the answers in their exercise-books.

Some teachers read whilst going round the class. Others read the passage whilst making comments in between. From those who asked pupils to read, some commented on the pupils sitting posture whilst others remained silent. As a result, different types of reading postures were seen. Some pupils read whilst holding their cheeks with both hands and others read with a jumbo-like sitting posture (sitting like a very old man). Others brought their heads very close to the passage and others maintained a reasonable distance.

(c) Class discussion of questions

Due to time factor, the researcher only observed the class discussion of oral questions. He did not have time to observe any lesson which discussed the questions of the written class exercise because most teachers were only observed once except those who taught English language in more than one class. The teachers did not want to have more than one lesson observation in the same class.

(d) General summary of the lessons

Most of the lessons were characterized by different activities taking place. Some were helpful to the learners and others were detrimental. Some teachers were competent while others were incompetent.

4.3 Selection of Reading Material

There were two ways of selecting reading materials for reading comprehension from all the schools under study. The first one was the selecting of reading materials that were used during school prep-time. The reading materials come into two forms, one used for testing and the other for extensive reading. People involved in the issuing out of the reading materials were the teachers of English; the school librarians and school administration.

4.3.1 Selection of materials for reading comprehension lessons

There were only two text-books that teachers had to use when teaching reading comprehension in all the three schools for grade nine pupils. These were English 9 Pupils Books 1 and 2. Book 2 was basically a continuation of book 1 and all the two books were supposed to be taught in the three terms of the year. That is the government policy which teachers are expected to follow as part of their oath of allegiance to working under the civil service. Teachers of English were answerable to their Head of Department who in turn was answerable to the school administrators (Head Teacher and his Deputy). The two text-books both had a teacher's handbook. As far as teaching reading comprehension to a grade nine class is concerned, these books are as sacred as a constitution is to any country.

4.3.2 Features of Grade Nine English Book 1 and 2 Textbooks

As far as reading is concerned, those books have two kinds of reading passages, one that promotes extensive reading and the other intensive. Most of the extensive reading passages have

an average of three to four passages. The other types of passages promote intensive reading or reading comprehension. These passages as pointed out earlier are always followed by a written class exercise. These are the passages that teachers used when teaching reading comprehension. The questions in the class exercise are designed in such a way that they cover most of the comprehension skills for example understanding the meanings of lexical items, grammatical meaning, reasoning abilities and selection and evaluation skills.

4.3.3 Role of the school library in promoting reading comprehension

In school A, the school library was there quite alright, but most teachers during semi-structured interviews bemoaned its poor management due to availability of old out-dated books. Pupils were nevertheless expected to borrow at least one book in a week so that they read. That was one of the school rules and the rationale behind was that pupils had less time to read when at home. Other than the school library, pupils had no access to a class library. Most pupils confessed that the books they borrowed from the school library had no direct relevance to them and ended up borrowing them to satisfy the school requirements. Little interest was attached to reading.

The school administrators in that school argued that their library, coupled with the teaching was aimed at making pupils pass examinations (Junior Secondary school Leaving Examinations). They again bemoaned lack of book donations from government and well wishers. Another major problem they faced as a school was having insufficient funds to buy new books for the existing library.

A different story was got from school B. Pupils had a school library, but teachers and pupils bemoaned pupils' poor reading culture. The school regulations expects each pupil to borrow a book from the school library. Borrowing a book is one thing and reading it is another. From the semi-structured interviews, most teachers in that school (B) traced the poor reading culture to the pupil's lack of exposure to reading and also the poor reading culture in Zambia.

There was a reading programme in that school and pupils who excelled in that programme were those from the elite group. Those from a poor background were taken to counseling department so that they could be assisted.

In that same school, they received a new confinement of books from the United Kingdom. Books written by African writers were also found hence pupils found much familiarity of what they read with what they experienced in their lives.

Donated books which were brought to school B were scrutinized before being taken to the library. Those which posed to be serious threat to pupil's moral fibre were burnt in order to uphold good moral standards among the pupils. With a sense of pride most teachers and school administrators commended the excellent performance of their pupils in their Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations.

In school C, a similar story like one given in school A was found. The school library had old outdated textbooks. Mixed feelings came from among the respondents (teachers) about the relevance of the books in the school library. About half argued that they were irrelevant. When asked whether they had read those books, majority said they did not. Therefore, the researcher could tell that those were sweeping statements from teachers who do not read.

Unlike school B which regularly received book donations, school C rarely received new books making both teachers and pupils to lose interest in utilizing the library. There was also no reading programme in School B. Both school administrators and teachers confessed that teaching comprehension was aimed at making pupils pass their Junior Secondary Leaving Examinations instead of appreciating reading.

4.3.4 Role of the departmental library in promoting reading comprehension.

All the schools under study had a departmental library. That was mostly used by the teaching staff in the English department. Most of the books found in the departmental libraries were textbooks for the various grades in the school.

In school A, pupils were free to borrow books from the departmental library. During focused group discussions, pupils pointed that they made use of the departmental library. There were also mixed feelings among pupils as to how interesting the books were. Some said they were interesting whereas others said they were not. Pupils were obliged to borrow and read a book from the departmental library.

In school B, the class teachers appointed class reading monitors whose role was to promote reading in class. Those were tasked to select good supplementary reading books from the departmental library. The reading programme of the pupils was also closely monitored by the teachers. Asked whether they enjoyed the reading, pupils said they did, although others said there were many things to read from the other subjects making it difficult for them to read according to teacher expectation.

In school C, the departmental library was well stocked with books that were out- dated and had little relevance to both teachers and the pupils. Most teachers did not even encourage pupils to borrow books form the department because they had no faith in those books. All the semi-structured interviews were conducted in the departmental library. Books on the shelves had accumulated dust and the teachers told the researcher that he could even see for himself the kind of books available.

4.4 Challenges that teachers face in teaching Reading Comprehension

4.4.1 Teacher's Erosion of Technical skills.

From all the lessons observed, it was extremely difficult to see teachers' expertise in handling reading comprehension. Teaching reading comprehension involves a number of skills which should be exercised by the teacher. The lessons were designed in such a way that the teaching of skills was not tackled accordingly. What it takes to understand a passage was a non-factor because the goal of reading was to test the pupils. Most pupils looked forward to giving correct answers during both the oral exercise and the written exercise.

During focused group discussions, a number of teachers gave an elaborate view on how reading comprehension was supposed to be taught. In their explanations, they gave vivid pictures on how pupils must understand the lexical, reasoning and the many other skills involved in teaching reading comprehension. However, when it came to actual teaching, what they explained to the researcher did not match with what they knew about reading comprehension because of fearing to be at logger heads with the expectations of the school administrators with regard to their teaching.

4.4.2 Teachers poor reading culture

It was quite disappointing to note that most teachers of English did not read. Most of the teachers interviewed confessed that they rarely read books or novels other than those which had relevance to what they taught. A few respondents said they used to be regular readers, but that culture dwindled because of economic factors. Moreover, others argued that they had some other things to attend to and hence they could not find enough time to do serious reading. Others just had no interest in reading.

Apart from verbal information that the researcher got from the respondents, the behavior of most teachers if not all, spoke volumes about their attitude to reading. Since most of the interviews

were conducted in the departmental office, the researcher could also observe teachers attitude to reading. At no time did the researcher find teachers of English reading books as a pastime in the two schools. Instead, when they were free (for example did not have classes to teach) they busied themselves with idle chat and gossip. Others propounded the political events in the country. The same teachers again complained of not having enough time to read at home because of the domestic activities that take place there.

However, school B, had three teachers who displayed contrary attitude to reading both in their speech and actions. Two of those teachers were expatriate Christian brothers from Kenya and the third one was a Zambian, and also a Christian brother. During separate interviews, the three bemoaned the poor reading culture of pupils, at their school. They were the same ones that were instrumental in keeping alive the vision and aspiration of the reading programme in their schools. The three teachers had a habit of encouraging their colleagues who appeared to have found solace in chatting. Individual reading seemed to have just been given lip service.

4.4.3 Pupils' Little interest in reading

There were a number of reasons that made pupils to have little interest in reading. One of them was non available of interesting books in the school. Some said they struggled to finish reading the books they borrowed from their school library because they were not interesting. Majority said there were too many things for them to read and hence they focused on those that they thought could shape their future-what they were taught by their teachers in the other subjects.

A conducive media environment in most of the pupils' home impacted negatively on pupils reading. Most pupils argued that it was extremely difficult to overcome the temptation of not watching television and listening to the radio. They said by the time they finished watching some television programmes, they became too tired to read. A few pupils, however, pointed out that their parents were firm enough in controlling their time spent on watching television and listening to radio. They even forced them to be reading at least a novel in two weeks so that they improve their reading techniques. They argued that parental intervention streamlined their personal attitude to reading.

Still many pupils interviewed argued that the introduction of many television stations for example Super Sport; Digital Satellite Tele-Vision (DSTV) and many more made most of their interest in reading decline. They pointed out that the programmes that most of those stations aired were too

attractive to overcome. Some even said most of the information found in books could be adequately explained by the media. For that reason they saw no reason of engrossing themselves into reading. They felt they had to move with technology.

4.4.4 Lack of Teacher Initiative in promoting reading.

As pointed out earlier, there is a crisis of books in the school libraries under study. Faced with this challenge, what should teachers do to eradicate the existing problem? Should they continue commemorating the problem year in, year out?

During focused group discussion, it was observed that many teachers from the two schools A and B were not pleased with the reading levels in their respective schools. Pupils, especially the weak ones struggled when reading and that brought about tension in some lessons. The weak pupils did not get what they read, but the strong ones did. About half of the respondents (teachers) attributed pupils' failure to read to lack of interest. Others attributed pupils' failure to understand to their lack of concentration when reading.

One of the respondents argued that pupils had a narrow vocabulary because of poor reading culture. The other one argued educational background contributed to some pupils' loss of interest in reading. The problems ranged from: coming from broken homes, lack of basic needs of life, lack of pocket money to compete on the world market of the tuck-shop in the school, being orphaned and many more. For example one of the pupils during focused group discussion said "my parents are poor and they do not give me money to buy food when I come to school and this makes me feel bad."

It was also argued that early childhood education was yet another factor that affected pupil's reading effectiveness. One teacher cited an example of a twelve year old pupil from his class who had reading problems. He argued that the child was just too young to handle reading matters at grade nine levels.

4.4.5 Poor co-ordination in discussing problem topics in English Language at school level

Most of the teachers interviewed in the three schools said they did not have departmental meetings where information sharing on how to teach certain topics was done. The only meeting which aimed at addressing teacher difficulties was one called the zonal cluster meeting. In those meetings teachers from different secondary and high schools would meet and discuss problem

topics in their teaching of English. The zonal meetings were accompanied by an allowance for teachers that participated. Those meetings took place every term.

The major role of the Head of Department appeared to have been that of seeing the teachers in his department prepare lesson plans, schemes and records of work. The other role was making sure that the departmental office was well maintained and taking good care of the available books. Teaching disparities among the ranks of members in his departmental office was not a cardinal issue. There was more of individual work than teamwork in handling problem topics.

4.4.6 Teacher Inability to publish books, articles and relevant reading comprehension materials.

The teachers of English that were interviewed have all not published any book, neither have they published any article in an English textbook. They also did not produce any pamphlets of reading comprehension. Some, however, said they did write/produce pamphlets in structure especially when looking at transformations.

Inadequate financial provision was the major reason attributed to their not publishing. The other reason was lack of sheer interest in writing. Such situation has made them rely very much on the existing text-books. Majority of teachers even feel writing is not part of their job description and have therefore become content with the status quo.

4.4.7 Insufficient text-books in some schools

It was observed that not all the three schools had enough text-books to cater for all the pupils. It was only one school (B) that had enough English text-books to cater for all the grade nine pupils. Reading of the passage was made easier because there was no sharing of books. However, the other two schools (A and C) had a shortage of text-books.

In school A, four lessons were observed in three classes. The first lesson to be observed had 42 pupils. From that number, 32 pupils each had a copy and the rest had to share one copy per two. The second observed class had 41 and out of those 35 pupils, each had a copy and the rest were sharing. The third class had 40 pupils with 34 having a copy and the rest sharing.

In school C, four lessons were also observed in three classes. One class was observed twice. Here it was noticed that the first class had 40 pupils. From those, 32 pupils, each had a copy and the rest shared. The second class also had 40 pupils with 30 having a copy and the rest sharing (one

copy per two pupils). The third class had 41 pupils. Out of those, 36 pupils each had a copy and the remaining 6 shared three copies of text-books.

4-4.8 Failure to instill discipline among pupils

The so called pupil entitlement to human rights has negatively impacted on pupils learning, not only in reading comprehension, but other subjects as well. With the abolishment of corporal punishment in Zambian schools, most pupils have taken learning as a by-the way activity. From all the lessons observed, only one teacher used corporal punishment to pupils and her lessons were outstanding. Pupils were serious right from the beginning of the lesson up to the end. The beating was not exaggerated, but pupils knew what their teacher wanted to achieve at the end of the lesson and those who tried to disturb the lesson were dealt with accordingly. There was no one who lagged behind deliberately. Every pupil tried his level best to participate in the lesson and get the best results at the end.

4.4.9 Heavy workload by some teachers.

Whereas some teachers had a fair workload, others had a very heavy workload which ended up making them inefficient. When the researcher made appointments on when to observe the lessons, the respondents had to show him their time-table. “It’s very difficult to get hold of me, just look at how overloaded my time-table is” said one respondent after he showed his time-table to the researcher. That was when it dawned on the researcher that some teachers were being over-used in some of the schools due to shortage of manpower. For example, some teachers interviewed and observed said they had 35 teaching periods in a week. There were some with 33 and 31. To the contrary, other teachers’ periods ranged from 18 to 24 in a week.

4.2.5 Teachers poor condition of service

Some confessed that their reading habits were seriously compromised because they were constantly looking for measures that could help cushion on their low income.

From the three schools observed, there was one which motivated teachers by giving them a come together free meal every Friday in a week. A variety of delicious food was prepared and the researcher was also cordially invited. Although teachers had to make contributions for that, the general excitement which culminated the event was beyond description.

4.5 Summary

From the findings, we notice that different teachers of English present their reading comprehension lessons differently. Although all the three schools use the same prescribed books, the teaching procedure differ. The various steps of teaching reading comprehension has been presented for example initial teaching point, introduction to the passage, silent reading, reading of the passage, oral questioning and discussion of the passage and written exercise. The status of reading comprehension was low. Other items prominent in the chapter was teacher's levels of competence in reading comprehension. From the presentations, we notice that testing as opposed to teaching takes more dominance in most reading comprehension lessons in secondary schools of Zambia.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter discusses all the findings that have been presented in the previous chapter. The teaching procedure that was done by each respondent (teacher) who was observed is discussed as well as the strengths and shortcomings of the lesson. In the discussion, the researcher substantiates his views in line with what other linguists have said in the literature review in chapter two. However, instead of just acknowledging what has been said by others, the researcher shall logically present his own views with regard to how best reading comprehension should have been taught. The strengths and weaknesses of teacher's views during semi-structured interviews will also be discussed in this chapter as well as pupil perception of how reading comprehension was taught.

5.1 How Reading Comprehension was taught in secondary schools

5.1.1 Initial Teaching Point(s)

From the data presented, we can see that some teachers lacked confidence on how to handle unexpected difficulties that emerged when the reading was going on. For example, in the first case where the teacher was at pains to explain the meaning of the word “dumbfounded”, he would have paused, and involved more pupils in the explanation. After the pupils had failed, perhaps the teacher could have broken the word into two parts “dumb” and “found”. The pupils might have been in a better position to explain the meaning of the two terms separately. If such initiative was taken, he would have avoided the embarrassment that he went through by saying “maules”.

In the case of School A, where the teacher explained what Mesopotamia was and what Sumerians were, the map which precedes the passage on the page before could have helped a lot. Before reading of the passage started, the teacher could in one of her initial teaching points asked the pupils to look at the map that show the areas Mesopotamian and Sumeria. Pupils could have easily inferred that the people who live in Sumeria are called Sumerians. Unfortunately, the teacher just went straight into the reading of the passage without taking such things into consideration. In as much as we appreciate the fact that pupils understand through reading and listening, sometimes understanding can be enhanced by seeing. As Newton A. C (1975: 13)

observes “students learn through the eye as well as through the ear, by deduction as well as induction.” Therefore, provision of maps in reading comprehension help enhance understanding.

With regard to the situation where pupils gave running commentaries on the topic, “The Advertiser’s point of View” the teacher could have avoided that by initially asking pupils to give comments on their knowledge with regard to adverts, and advertisement. If such comments and views had come during this stage-initial teaching point, the reading stage could not have been interrupted by the pupils. The situation that happened during the lesson was as a result of poor timing by the teacher. She omitted a very important step in her lesson.

In reference to the case where the pupils asked the teacher the meaning of the word “Goldsmith” on the topic “The Goldsmith” much research was not done by the teacher. In the first place, the teacher did not explain to the class what the passage was all about. Secondly, from the title of the passage, most pupils still failed to have an idea of what the passage was all about. Thirdly, when asked to explain to the class, the teacher did not give a satisfactory and convincing answer to the learners, when she said “it’s a person who deals with gold related things.’ That could have been the more reason that prompted one of the pupils to check the word in the dictionary and later give a satisfactory explanation to the class, much to the approval of the teacher herself. Teachers should read and do research before they teach any topic to the class especially in reading comprehension. Such observation is also supported by Newton A.C (1975: 15) who argues that “research is needed if we are to come to an understanding of the facts of instruction in English as a second language throughout the world, so that the total worldwide dimension of the problems can be appreciated and the various efforts of individuals and organizations can be appraised.”

Therefore, the importance of the Initial Teaching Point by the teacher greatly determines the manner in which the pupils relate to the passage as has been shown. Since this very important stage was omitted in all the lessons that were observed, it was not surprising to note that problems in terms of understanding emerged both during the reading and testing stage.

5.1.2 Introduction to the Passage

The introduction as pointed out earlier naturalizes the study of an isolated text. As James et al (1979) observes the introduction helps the pupils to get an overview of the contents of the passage before they start to read. A good introduction sets the mood for effective reading and comprehension.

It was unfortunate that some lessons had no introduction to the passage. Of all the lessons observed, 50% had no introduction to the passage. Those lessons were characterized by teachers entering the class, greeting the pupils and asking them to take out their English 9 Book 1. In all those lessons, there was noise making and fidgeting of the pupils as teachers asked them to open on a certain page.

It was interesting to note that the above trends were identified in all the three schools. The three teachers who gave introductions which were very good all came from different schools. From the three who gave good introductions to the passage two came from the same school (School B) and the other one came from a different school (School C). The graph below summarizes how teachers performed in the introducing the passage to the learner.

From the above explanation we can see that there is little attention given on how to introduce the passage to the learner. The teachers who took keen interest in giving powerful introductions to the learners was very minimal (25%). Those who at least do something to this subject (introduction) is also minimal (25%). The rest of the teachers (50%) did not even follow the procedure of giving an introduction to the passage, which is very sad indeed. They just plunged into reading of the passage.

It was observed that the mood of the pupils in the lessons with the introduction to the passage was much higher than those without introductions. However, it took time for pupils to settle down in the lessons without introductions. Many of them appeared not even to be concerned. When it was time for reading, some did not follow what was going on making the teacher to call for attention. That was done by constantly saying, “May I have your attention”, “can you please concentrate” so on and so forth. Teachers should always aim at giving powerful introductions to the reading comprehension lessons. An introduction is part and parcel of teaching reading comprehension procedure and should, therefore, not be made as an option. Teachers need to be constantly guided and reminded on this issue.

In an introduction, the teacher can either present a linguistic situation (in form of a short story or dialogue) or visual situation, for example a pictorial chart (Ellis and Tomlinson 1980). From most of the lessons that were observed, teachers did not make an effort to prepare adequately so as to enrich their lessons.

As for lessons that did not have any introductions, there were a number of reasons that could have attributed to that. One of them could be that the teachers are not properly guided by the school administrators. The other reason could be that they deliberately ignore this step. Such attitude compromises the quality of their lessons.

5.1.3 Silent Reading

From the data presented, we notice in some lessons it was just given a ceremonial routine without the teachers taking pains to arrive at its effectiveness. The casual attitude displayed by such teachers has far reaching consequences on the learners who in future would be exposed to wider reading. Just as a person's character has to be molded when young, a pupil's reading progress has to be sharpened when young so that the bad reading habits (fingering, mouthing head movement and many more) are curtailed from growing.

Some teachers were to blame for pupil's failure to concentrate when they were asked to read silently. How does one explain teacher's behaviour of answering phone calls during a very sensitive topic like reading comprehension, especially during silent reading? School Administrators should do something that would curtail the gross indiscipline displayed by some teachers because they are the ones who retard development of the learners. With such behavior, pupils learn to underrate the value of reading hence greatly contributing to their poor reading both at school and out of school.

Idling in class during silent reading is another cause for concern. It was very disgusting to observe a teacher who just stands on one spot and ask pupils to read silently. By standing on one spot entails that the teacher is thinking of other things not related to what he is teaching or doing the step as a ritual. Teachers should get down to serious work. Silent reading not only enables pupils to practice good reading habits, but also helps pupils to increase their reading speed (Williams D. J. 1979). As they read, the teacher gauges their reading speed because under normal circumstances, they are supposed to do that in 4 to 5 minutes. This type of reading where the sole aim is to get an idea of what the passage is all about is called skimming (Dawson D 1988). The rough idea they get from the passage helps the pupils to know certain items they need to focus on when they read the passage as a class.

The teachers who productively used silent reading during the lessons need to be encouraged. Their lessons were characterized by seriousness from the beginning up to the time the lesson

ended. It was a moving experience when observing their lessons. Both the teacher and the pupils were alert. From the researcher's further observations, the pupils who effectively utilized the short time for silent reading formulated intelligent questions during the other stages of the lesson. For example one of the pupils in class asked whether it was only goods that need to be advertised. In response, the teacher said other human characteristic traits could also be advertised, that is foolishness, cowardice, love, courage and many more. Although majority of the pupils in class laughed, there was real learning taking place.

5.1.4 Reading of the Passage

This is one of the most critical stages in a reading comprehension lesson because the outcome of it determines the manner in which the pupils interpret the passage. As Widdowson (1978: 80) points, "communicative abilities presuppose linguistic skills and part of the ability to read lies in the skill of comprehending". He further argues that care must be taken in ensuring that passages do not pose some difficulties to the learners.

James K. (1979: 88) argues that "whether pupils follow a lecture or not depends on the style of reading comprehension lesson the teacher uses." If the teacher reads without understanding, the pupils will also follow without understanding; such teachers accept answers that are not correct or close to being correct. To the contrary a teacher, who has prepared and knows the answer, will wait and give the correct answer at the right time. He would not allow the reading stage to be disturbed by his ignorance.

We further notice a number of differences on how reading stage is handled in the three schools under study. Whereas other teachers show much seriousness, others show much complacency. The researcher strongly feels that pupils who were disturbing the reading through weird comments and unpalatable laughter deserved to be either punished in one way or the other or strongly reprimanded by the teacher. Instead some teachers entertained that and those who disturbed lessons did not answer questions during the oral questioning period. A number of teachers did not take note of that.

Although the researcher was not accorded an opportunity to go through the lesson plans and schemes of work the passage portrayed that there was inadequate preparation. It was difficult in some lessons to distinguish the reading of the teacher and that of a pupil. Some did not read fluently and dramatically and hence not inspiring confidence to the pupils. Some went to the extent reading a passage to the class as if they were reading "The Post Newspaper." Ellis and

Tomlinson (1980) points that good reading of the passage by the teacher helps the pupils understand parts of the text.

It was also observed that in the lesson where there was no reading of the passage, the teacher heavily relied on normative definitions in explaining the meaning of the words and phrases. The pupils were not given sufficient support and encouragement in giving contextual meaning. Most of the teacher's questions were characterized by asking questions such as "what does this word mean?" "What does this phrase mean?" Pupils who had a clue on the meaning feared to give responses because certain teachers had specific answers in mind. It was going to be wise if he had twisted the questions to suit learner understanding-for example how do you understand the meaning of this word or phrase? Where else do we use this word? Pupils would have responded favorably.

There was again another teacher who mispronounced the word "advertisement." This term was pronounced the Zambian way as "advetaizment." That happened when the teacher was handling the lesson whose topic was "The Advertiser's Point of View." The error was noticed by few intelligent pupils, but they could not correct their teacher because of fear. That was, however, echoed by the pupils during focused group discussions. There is indeed great need for teachers to read widely and understand what they teach. As pointed out earlier, they should see to it that they pronounce words correctly, read at the right volume and speed. Their reading should inspire confidence in the pupils.

There was a situation where the teachers wrote "campaign" instead of "company". Although one can argue that to err is human, perhaps that error could have been avoided if the teacher had read the passage with the pupils. Reading could have made her repeatedly meet the word in the passage and therefore enhanced the possibility of her writing the correct word on the chalkboard. After all reading comprehension is all about reading and not testing.

5.1.5 Oral Questioning and Discussion of the passage

Oral questioning should be done before the pupils attempt to answer the written questions (Ellis and Tomlinson 1980).

From the findings, it was noticed that the stage of oral questioning and discussion was mainly dominated defining key terms found in the passage. Most teachers in all the three schools assume that once the pupils have known the meaning of words, then the passage has been understood

which is very wrong. In as much as pupils should know what the terms in the passage mean, the prime factor of reading comprehension is to make readers have the ability to fully understand what they read. This implies that most of the passages pupils read are not authentic to them and hence posing great misunderstanding even after the passage has been read. According to Widdowson (1978: 82), “one solution to this dilemma and one which is quite commonly resorted to, is to provide a list of words and phrases and their meanings for the learners to go through before they begin to read. The words and phrases in a glossary of this kind are those which are judged to be outside the learner’s current competence and which would otherwise, therefore, pose a comprehending problem.” Once that has been done, pupils not only enjoy the reading, but also understand the passage, hence effectively contributing to the quality of questions and discussions that follow thereafter.

It has also been observed that most teachers are to blame for pupils’ inability to understand the passage. Most of them have no clear purpose on why they are teaching reading comprehension, thus making their lessons boring. It was observed that most lessons lacked teaching variety aimed at always stimulating interest in pupils. During the discussion stage, pupils asked same questions over and over. For example, “Identify some of words you do not understand? What does this word mean? Pupils end up asking questions so as to appease the teacher and not necessary to learn. Such pupils know that their teachers do not make follow up questions so that they could further explain factors relating to their understanding.

Lesson interruptions by pupils who come late disturb the concentration levels of other pupils. Since English lessons mostly come in the first and second period in most schools and therefore, teachers should make sure that their pupils come early. Some pupils came late and gave lame excuses, as was the case in one of the schools. Once this wrong habit is curtailed, pupils will attach seriousness to the lessons. For meaningful understanding to be realized, a number of activities need to be employed by the teacher during the discussion period. To sustain class attention, teachers need to be well prepared and provide as many teaching aids as possible. The lecture method of teaching which was seen in some lessons does very little in making pupils concentrate and participate actively in the discussion. Teachers should provoke productive discussion of the passage and later give a summary of the main arguments that arise (Ellis and Tomlinson 1980). Very few teachers gave a summary of the arguments. The rest failed to even control pupils’ arguments because they were blank.

Reading comprehension should not just be centered on the passage. Other problems that come along the way need to be attended to as well. Structural difficulties that pupils have should be dealt with there and then. When pupils construct grammatically incorrect sentences, the teacher should correct the errors and mistakes without embarrassing the pupil. For example one of the pupils when giving an answer to a question asked by the teacher said “The passage talks about” instead of saying “The passage is about”. In the other one, a pupil said “Sir, you marked me wrong” instead of saying “Sir, you marked my work wrong”. Unfortunately, most teachers just overlooked those errors and mistakes.

Lessons that had no oral questioning and discussion are typical examples of teachers whose main objective is to test instead of teach reading comprehension. For them pupils’ understanding of the passage is not a factor and hence defeating the objective of teaching reading comprehension. Such dictatorial type of teaching should be avoided at all costs. Pupils need to enjoy the lesson and give their views on matters which need clarity. It was observed that such teachers did not carry anything when going to teach, not even a piece of chalk. Such attitudes should have been checked by the school administrators because during focus group discussion, pupils aired that poor teaching procedure.

As for the lessons characterized by general disorder, one wonders whether teachers are aware of what they are supposed to do or are just forced to do so by virtue of being public servants. Weaknesses of that nature on the part of the teachers need to be checked so as to save pupils from irreparable damage on reading comprehension skills. Leadership skills need to be imparted on them so that they command full control and respect as they stand in front of the class.

Although a few lessons had a good oral questioning and discussion session, the researcher did not have an opportunity to observe a class discussion, which mainly comes after the exercise has been written and pupils’ exercise books marked. The problem arose because most teachers of English who taught grade nine shunned being observed twice. To make matters worse, the school administrators had given limited time to the researcher to conduct research in their schools. Sometimes teachers kept procrastinating when the date to be observed came. There were only a few who co-operated. Moreover, teachers did not avail their lesson plans, schemes of work and records of work to the researcher. They thought that was asking too much from them. To mitigate that problem the researcher effectively utilized the periods he made lesson observations hence capturing as much information as possible. Also during semi-structured interviews a few relevant

questions, though outside guide arose owing to the unexpected responses that emerged. Such initiative helped increase and enrich the amount of data collected.

From the observations, teachers need to give more time to the oral questioning and discussion stage so that understanding does not go into hiding for the pupils. This is the stage that enables the teacher to know pupils' problems and hence deal with them squarely. This stage further enables the pupils to completely understand the passage before they begin to write the class exercise in their exercise books. It is a stage where problem questions are thrown back to the pupils so as to promote pupil involvement and participation and also where the teacher comes in and give guidance when teaching. It is a stage where the pupils employ the skills of scanning and skimming as they answer the oral questions that come from both the teacher and the pupils themselves. Therefore, giving this stage very little time or worse still omitting it should not be the case. More time should be given to this stage so as to maximize learning.

5.1.6 Written Class Exercise

All the reading comprehension passages found in the English 9 Pupils Book 1 and 2 are followed by an exercise. The type of questions in them range from multiple choice, true/false, sentences for completion, putting statements into the correct order and WH questions. All the exercises that teacher used came from the above mentioned books.

There was indeed lack of uniformity in the manner which teachers handled the class-exercises. Some treated it with dedication whilst others as a traditional activity without considering its essence. What most teachers should bear in mind is that most grade nine pupils are not mature enough to take responsibility of what they are supposed to do in a lesson. They just need constant monitoring and supervision. If a teacher gives a class exercise, he has to go round and monitor pupils' writing progress and where he notices a problem he could easily assist.

Idle chat does not help pupils when they are writing the class exercises. If anything it disturbs their levels of concentration especially if it has been initiated by the teacher. Lazy pupils take advantage of the situation and eventually end up failing to do their work. Teachers should not use the comprehension lesson as a platform to give social commentaries. They should stick to their initial objectives and find ways of achieving them. Once a story has received blessings of the teacher, pupils lose their heads over it, especially if it's closely related to their interest. Therefore, teachers should be careful with what they present to the class. Irrelevant stories which encroach

in the lesson could be as a result of inadequate preparation by the teacher. Instead of helping the pupils, they destroy their ability to learn. That is a very dangerous attitude which needs to be checked.

Teachers who try to prepare a marking key during lesson time need to check on that negative attitude. Although those text books (English 9 Book 1 and 2) have teachers handbook which has the answers, such preparation or counter-checking need to be done either in the departmental office or the staffroom. That will enable them avoid unnecessary or careless mistakes especially when work is been done in a hurry.

In situations where a quarter of the pupils do not do the exercise after being told by the teacher, serious disciplinary measures need to be imposed on the culprit who in this case is the teacher. Some of the challenges that pupils see on their teacher should be forwarded to the school administrators so that a lasting solution could be found. The “I do not care” type of attitude by some teachers could permanently ruin pupils’ future if not checked.

However, a few who followed all the rudiments of a class exercise imparted great enthusiasm among the pupils and therefore the lessons turned to be effective. The appropriate comments they made during marking inspired pupils to even learn more. Mutual respect among teachers and learners was evidenced and was a good indicator to effective learning.

5.1.7 Status of reading comprehension.

From the data presented in the previous chapter, we clearly see that most teachers of English prefer teaching structure which to them is perceived as the simplest and most enjoyable. That is followed by composition; reading comprehension and then summary. Only 17% of the total respondents prefer reading comprehension.

The little percentage that reading comprehension receives should have an effect on how it was taught. Naturally people excel in what they enjoy most. If reading comprehension is not sufficiently enjoyed by many teachers, then its teaching is adversely affected and pupils are the ones who suffer most.

One of the reasons for not liking teaching reading comprehension would be perhaps the technicalities that are involved in teaching it. In the first place teachers need to have read widely before they attempt to teach it because the reading comprehension in most cases is just excerpts

from other books. As one of the respondents said, it involves knowing other skills like structure and composition. However, from the researcher's point of view, lesson planning appears to be the greatest enemy of most teachers. The lessons observed showed that 83% of the teachers did not prepare in advance. The data they gave during semi-structured interviews was aimed at appeasing the researcher and at the same time keep up appearances.

Teachers of English should seek ways of elevating the status of reading comprehension so that most teachers can have a positive attitude to it. If that is not done most teachers will continue covering their weaknesses in reading comprehension by excelling in the other skills. Ways of elevating it include teacher awareness on why reading is important.

5.2 Teacher competence in reading comprehension

5.2.1 General lesson organization

a) Lesson Planning-Bio-data Section

However from the researcher's point of view, lesson planning appears to be the greatest enemy of most teachers. The lessons observed showed that 83% of the teachers did not prepare in advance. The data they gave during semi-structured interviews was aimed at appeasing the researcher and at the same time keep up appearances.

b) Initial reading Activities and Introduction

However, true competence of a teacher is not determined by what one says, but what he does. The observations discussed in the previous section with regard to this subject speak volumes of what happens in secondary schools. Had the researcher relied on verbal information from the respondents, he would not have got the actual truth of what happens in a real classroom situation.

c) Relevance of the Passage to the learners

. It has been observed that most teachers who expressed complete satisfaction of the text-books were the very ones who had many lapses in their teaching. Most of them did not justify what was so unique about the books. On the other hand those with divergent views argued that change need to be made. When asked by the researcher why they did not bring about change in their lessons instead of just being armchair critics, they gave reasons for that. They said it was impossible to go against what the department and school recommended, because whatever they taught had to be scrutinized by the school administrators who in that case were the Heads of Department; Careers

Master; Deputy and Head Teacher. One respondent even said there was no democracy when teaching at secondary school level. That in turn made them to appear incompetent, even though they were not. Any free approach to teaching would warrant disciplinary action from the school hence putting their employment at stake.

d) Contents of the Passage

Those books have been used for eighteen years (since 1992) and hence becoming less stimulating to pupils.

There are no variations in the content of the passages to the learners because all the teachers in these schools use the same materials for teaching reading comprehension. The content only differ when they set the end of term test because they use different materials to come up with those tests. It also avails teachers an opportunity to have their learners write what they think is suitable to them. Most teachers also argued that there was great variety in coming up with the content of the passages during testing.

5.2.2 Presentation of the lesson

(a) Pupils ability to follow the lesson

From the table 1 in the previous chapter, we notice that most of the pupils were unable to follow the lessons. A number of reasons could be attributed to that failure. To begin with such pupils should have known the weaknesses of their teachers. Such teachers presented their lessons in a very idle manner and hence some pupils could not follow the lesson from the beginning right up to the end. In some classes, there was noise making as the lesson was presented whilst in others pupils were still writing work given to them in the previous lesson in their other learning subject.

Lack of concentration during the reading stage in most of the lessons showed that they did not follow the lesson. Chatting and laughing was the order of the day in some lessons. The so called “small meetings in class” when the lesson was going on showed that pupils had no interest in what was happening. Teachers’ lack of firmness contributed to such unwarranted behavior especially in lessons where pupils slept during the lesson.

Pupils’ inability to ask intelligent questions shortly after the reading of the passage had finished showed that they did not follow the lesson. When the teachers allowed them to ask questions from the passage, they remained quiet and yet when they (teachers) asked questions, most pupils

failed to answer. Lack of pupils' sense of remorse when giving wrong answers also showed that they did not follow the lesson.

It is, however, important to note as evidenced by table 1 in the previous chapter that not all lessons were poorly presented. There were two good lessons, two very good ones and the last two which were outstanding. There was much effort from the teachers in the manner they presented the lessons. Pupils were able to follow and ask where they needed clarification.

The ability of pupils to follow lessons should be the prime concern of every teacher. That is the only way effective learning can be fostered in schools. If pupils develop a habit of not following comprehension lessons, Zambia would be headed for disaster because such attitude will encourage them not to follow written literature of any kind. Erring teachers in this area need to check their weaknesses and that of the pupils and change were need be.

(b) Teachers' ability to capture class attention

(i) Casual Greeting and Lifeless teaching

The style in which some teachers read the comprehension passages did not inspire confidence in the pupils. There was lack of uniformity in what they read. Confidence is a very important aspect on anyone who stands before an audience. By virtue of one being a teacher, he stands before an audience, who in this case happens to be the pupils. Anyone who stands before an audience must always have something for his listeners. Therefore to sustain concentration of the audience, the speaker, who in this discussion is a teacher must have unwavering confidence throughout his lesson presentation.

Sentence construction need to be given much thought by any public speaker. Wehmeier, S. (2006: 1331) defines a sentence as "a set of words expressing a statement, a question or an order usually containing a subject and a verb". It is advisable that teachers should think before they make an utterance to the pupils. They should cultivate a culture of constructing meaningful sentences. Teacher confidence in the way they construct sentences, as well as the way they make their utterance has a great impact on their ability to gain class attention.

The failure of some teachers to give satisfactory answers to the pupils is another cause for concern. When pupils fail to give correct answers or responses that are close to being correct, teachers should confidently give the correct response so that everyone in class is satisfied. They

should be sure of what they are saying and leave no traces of uncertainty in the minds of the pupils. Teachers' failure to give convincing answers makes pupils doubt their competence. Such approach creates a very bad procedure.

However, it is worthwhile to note that a few teachers displayed outstanding confidence in the way they taught. Those were the ones who had prepared and were eager to teach. They gained class attention and one could visibly read from pupil's minds that they could follow the lesson throughout.

(ii) Lack of teacher's in-depth knowledge of the passages

From the observations, one sees the correlation between teacher's in-depth knowledge of the passage and pupil's ability to be enthusiastic throughout the lesson. Most teachers whose in-depth knowledge of the text was lacking did not sufficiently capture the attention of the class and those who had in-depth knowledge captured class attention.

Teacher's lack of in-depth knowledge of the passage could be attributed to lack of serious reading and preparation. Such attitude shows that they have little interest in what they are doing. Teachers' mastery of the passages is very important because it helps sustain the attention of the class. It also motivates the teacher in his lesson delivery. In short it adds value to the teaching process.

(iii) Lecturing method of teaching by some teachers.

It should be brought to the attention of teachers who use the lecture method of teaching to stop this method and use other types. Practical problems of lecturing is that it cannot be appreciated by pupils at secondary school level. Teacher/pupil interaction is what counts to them most. No matter how rich the lecture might be pupils concentration will always be low as was the case from the three schools.

Another spectacular observation was that lecturing made some teachers get possessed by the spirit of talking and hence giving themselves less time to listen to what pupils had to say. They did not even give themselves time to listen to what they were saying. As such, an overdose of information encroached in teaching hence disadvantaging the pupil. They as well failed to capture the attention of pupils.

(c) Use of appropriate methodology

A look at an illustration in the previous chapter shows how ideas are closely interconnected and therefore it was not easy for pupil to just arrive at the correct answer from the given options. He must employ the reasoning skills which are inherent in him. The correct answer in the question is B- he believed this would help him complete his work successfully.

As hinted out early on, there are many reading comprehension skills which need to be taught to the learners. The school curriculum should be designed in such a way that these skills are taught to the learners. Giving plenty of class exercises and hoping to give the correct answers found in teachers' handbook does very little to help pupils learn. That is the more reason why pupils in secondary schools do not do well because they are not taught and exposed to the nitty gritty found in reading comprehension.

(d) Timing of the lesson

Comprehension lessons presented early in the morning, first two periods turned to be more live and interesting than those which came towards lunch time when the pupils were tired and looking forward to having their lunch. Those after lunch time were a little bit more live because pupils had just finished having their lunch. Three teachers, (two from one school and the other from another) had to change time so as to accommodate the researcher in his data collection processes.

5.2.3 Teaching Techniques

a) Introduction to the lesson

As pointed out earlier on teacher's introduction determined the development of the lesson as well pupils' attitude. Those whose introduction was outstanding yielded greater results than their counterparts who had weak introductions.

b) Pupil Alertness

Pupils' alertness could be seen during questioning time. When questions were asked, they could not answer or give a clue to what was asked. Such pupils roared into laughter when the teacher cracked a joke. Some even had the audacity to tell the teacher that they had no idea. Their ignorance was not genuine, but a product of not being alert. Because such pupils were satisfied with their ignorance, they ended up not learning anything during the lesson.

Pupil alertness starts with teacher alertness. As long as the teacher is not alert, the pupils will also not be alert because there is nothing to learn from their teacher, who is supposed to be a role model. For example, those who were drawing pictures could not have done that had their teacher been alert. The best way to keep pupils alert is to keep them busy right from the beginning of the lesson up to the end.

One of the reasons that make pupils look completely lost when asked questions could be the way the teacher delivers his lessons. Lack of a caring attitude could be among the main reasons of pupil's failure to be alert. If a teacher does not bother to know the problems that their pupils face, individually and severally the latter's alertness levels will be affected as was the case in the schools. Some teachers even do not know the damage they create when teaching pupils who are not alert. Teachers should try as much as possible to draw pupil's minds to the lesson. They should also stop concentrating on the few who are privileged to sit in front.

Nevertheless, some teachers were alert and so were their teachers. This attitude helped boost the learning effectiveness which should be a requirement in any given lesson.

c) Teacher Creativity

Teacher creativity is an integral aspect in any lesson, including reading comprehension. Pupils like teachers who are creative and bring life to the lesson.

d) Use of teaching aids

The teaching aids come in form of pictorial charts, maps and situations found in the classroom which the pupils can look at. They also come in form of linguistic teaching aids such as printed dialogues or narration of a story. Pupils learn something from the story.

The culture of not using teaching aids could have greatly contributed to teacher incompetence. It is not easy to come up with a teaching aid especially in teaching reading comprehension because much thought and steadfastness has to be exercised by the teacher. Every passage should have an appropriate teaching aid that could help add quality to the lesson.

e) Use of appropriate examples

However, examples of political nature diverted pupils' attention because of the plural politics in the country. About two teachers who discussed politics did not fully help the pupils because those discussions were prolonged. Moreover, they were discussions that did not reach a conclusive end

hence pupils' attention to the passage was diverted. Others gave examples of soccer events which were out rightly irrelevant to the lesson.

f) Voice Projection

To have good voice projection is one thing and to have substance in what is said is another. Some teachers combined both good voice projection and substance in what they said. Others had good voice projection with a desert of educational content related to what they taught. At the end of their talking, pupils could not grasp information which could have helped them to answer questions. Therefore teachers should ensure that they speak fluently with good voice projection accompanied with rich and relevant information.

g) Teacher Appearance

We appreciate that teachers should be modest in their appearance, but over doing it could affect the lesson. Instead of concentrating on the lesson, pupils end up admiring the features of the teacher as well as the dress code. There is need for moderation. It should also be pointed out that teachers should not be too scruffy too. Teacher appearance has an effect on pupil perception and attitude to the lesson.

5.2.4 Class Management

a) Learning Atmosphere

It was purely up to the individual teachers to create a learning atmosphere. About half of the teachers managed to create a good learning atmosphere whilst the rest did not mainly because of their own personal weaknesses which have been discussed in this same chapter. The schools also had no activities that disturbed the learning process.

A good learning atmosphere is very important in a comprehension lesson because pupils should not be distracted from the lessons. All teachers of English should strive at creating a conducive learning atmosphere so that they could meet their objectives.

b) Gaining of class attention

This was dependent on the individual teachers, their background, professional orientation, attitude to work and personal traits. Some teachers observed celebrated pupils' habit of giving chorus answers whilst others demanded individual pupil responses with pupil attention. Those

that allowed chorus responses did not fully capture the attention of pupils because of noise making and unauthorized comments from the class. On the other hand, those who were firm and did not allow chorusing by the pupils gained class attention.

Some teacher's lack of adequate knowledge of the passage also contributed to their failure to gain class attention. In situations where pupils desperately needed guidance from them, they failed thus creating a conducive environment for murmuring and shouting.

The absent mindedness of some teachers also contributed to their failure to gain class attention. Those who did not put emphasis in what they said and how they spoke disillusioned some pupils. Expressions that were accompanied by doubt brought about individual pupil consultations, hence undermining what the teacher said.

Other teachers, however, gained class attention and did not exhibit the above referred weaknesses. They were firm, composed, well prepared and knowledgeable.

c) Discipline and control

No cases of gross indiscipline were observed by the researcher from all the three schools under study. By gross indiscipline the researcher means a situation where the pupils would trade strong words with their teacher or show that they are more knowledgeable than the teacher. At no time did they embarrass their teachers in class especially when they realized that some of the errors which came from their teachers were deep-rooted. They only poured their concerns during the focused group discussions with the researcher. They had mutual respect for their teachers.

Few cases of indiscipline and lack of control were caused by the teachers themselves. The teachers had allowed certain habits to grow and reach levels where they became socially acceptable in class. For example late coming, noise making, sleeping during the lesson, having multiple speakers at a time and many more. Teacher's failure to control these habits negatively affected the teaching of reading comprehension.

5.2.5 Teacher/Pupils Relationship

(a) Learning Atmosphere

(i) Eye Contact

It is very important for every teacher to maintain eye contact with his pupils. The truth and genuineness of what they say can be read through their eyes by the pupils. It is useless to look through the window when teaching a very delicate skill like reading comprehension. It is also through eye contact that pupils gauge the confidence of their teachers. Teachers who had poor eye contact with pupils met hurdles during the oral questioning period because some pupils had watered down the lesson altogether.

There were few cases in which teacher's eye contact was overdone. Such teachers were seen to be looking at a few pupils whom they associated closely with. They pointed at such pupils and called them by name. The problem of overdoing eye contact with some pupils is that it sends wrong messages to the class. Pupils who do not receive such attention from their teacher might feel sidelined and hence lose concentration. Every pupil in class always wants to receive attention from his teacher.

(ii) Teacher attitude to mistakes/error

Making mistakes and errors is part of learning and therefore pupils who find themselves in such predicament should not be scorned at either by the teachers or the pupils. Pupils should not fear making mistakes because doing so would discourage their learning process. However, the teacher should not allow stupid mistakes which pupils make deliberately. He should be firm in the manner he handles the mistakes and errors. Mistakes which come in grammar form should be corrected at during a comprehension lesson and not wait until it comes in a structure lesson.

5.2.6 General Lesson Delivery

(a) Treatment of new vocabulary

Although new vocabulary should be given time for discussion, it should not be the only activity that takes place during the discussion period of the lesson. There is more to a comprehension lesson that needs to be done for instance giving general summary of the passage, relating ideas in

the passage and identifying both major and minor themes of the passage. This is the only way wholesome understanding of the passage could be achieved.

To broaden pupils' knowledge of new vocabulary, words synonymous to those being discussed should be given so that pupils compare and relate to what they already know. To achieve this, teachers need to read the passage in advance and know the answers in advance. Good pronunciation of new vocabulary should also come from the teachers in order to make pupils copy the right thing. It is very embarrassing for the teacher to ask the class to pronounce words for him which he feels he cannot pronounce properly. Inculcating such attitude makes pupils lose confidence in him.

(b) Reading and individual task

There was less individual attention given to pupils because the written class exercise was the goal of the lesson. Just at the commencement of the lessons all teachers looked forward to testing the pupils.

Although different teachers use different methods of reading and giving individual tasks, they should all ensure that the pupils understand the passage individually and collectively. Reading should not be used as a pastime, but done with much enthusiasm and effort to understand. Teachers must always take a leading role in that.

(c) Class discussion of questions

The data pertaining to this subject came from the pupils during the focused group discussions. That was because class discussions of questions in most Zambian Secondary Schools comes after the teacher had marked the pupils' books and then pupils are expected to make a follow up on where they went wrong. The researcher did not have the opportunity to observe a lesson that had a class discussion of questions. The reason behind that was respondent (teachers) did not want to be observed twice.

(d) General summary of the lessons

Lack of uniformity in the teaching of reading comprehension in secondary schools suggests how the skill was perceived and handled by the teachers. There were many lapses in the teaching of reading comprehension which ranged from lesson interruptions by some teachers, teacher's inability to use appropriate methodology, thus making pupils do different steps within the same

lesson and some teacher's poor voice projection. Others included pupils' heavy reliance on the dictionary to check the meaning of words during the oral questioning stage of the lesson, teacher's poor lesson procedure which hindered pupils' concentration and poor marking procedure which created a copying atmosphere in some lessons.

Failure of some teachers to ask questions that appeal to pupils' critical mental analysis made them resort to rhetoric questions like "is the passage clear?" and pupils answered "Yes". Based on those simple questions, pupils were made to write. Omission of certain critical steps in the lesson made the researcher wonder what kind of teachers Zambia has in secondary schools. For instance, not discussing the passage after reading defeats the purpose of teaching reading comprehension.

The negative attitude of teachers in handling their lessons outweighs the positives. Most of these negatives highlighted above appear to be deep-seated among teachers. Those with good lesson procedures need to be encouraged by the school administration so that they are not tempted to become complacent, especially when they find themselves in an environment which does not promote effective teaching.

5.3 Selection of Reading Material

5.3.1 Selection of materials for reading comprehension lessons

Selection of reading materials was narrow in all the three schools due to insufficient relevant text books. Therefore, pupils were not interested in reading old outdated textbooks available. As for the purpose of teaching reading comprehension all the three schools had English 9, books 1 and 2.

5.3.2 Features of Grade Nine English Book 1 and 2 Textbooks

The purpose of those passages was to make pupils read for enjoyment purposes. The passages were surely extracts from books dealing with different topics. Those passages were not followed by written exercise because their aim is to encourage pupils develop the culture of reading. However, there were some reading comprehension passages that were always followed by an exercise.

5.3.3 Role of the school library in promoting reading comprehension

Effective reading does not only arise during the learning process in the classroom. There are a number of external wings that could help produce an effective reader within school. The school library is such a wing that could help pupils to develop their reading skills provided a conducive environment is created. A pupil who does not know how to read cannot understand any passage no matter how committed a teacher is to teaching. In other words the ability to read is the gateway to understanding any written literature. Libraries are perceived as gateways to reading materials. They are also perceived as being hospitals for the mind.

The role that the school library has in enhancing effective reading comprehension cannot be underestimated. Teaching pupils who have very high interest in reading yields better results. That was evidenced from school B whose performance outweighed that of the other schools according to the teachers and school administrators report. School libraries should not be left as white elephants, but be stocked with books so that pupils effectively benefit. The motivation to read is also enhanced by the quality of books available. School B had up-to-date reading materials. Moreover, it had school reading programme and there was specific time for reading when pupils were in class.

5.3.4 Role of the departmental library in promoting reading comprehension.

Departmental libraries should be stocked with relevant and appropriate books to each grade. The books should stimulate pupils' interest in reading. The key factor in reading is having relevant books and boosting the reading culture among pupils. That could greatly ease the teaching of reading comprehension in secondary schools.

5.4 Challenges That Teachers Face In Teaching Reading Comprehension

5.4.1 Teacher's Erosion of Technical skills.

The teachers' fears were as a result of the syllabus that was arranged to test and not teach reading comprehension. The general misconception of considering testing to teaching becomes a serious challenge to the stakeholders involved in education provision. For the teacher, the skills that he might have learnt may erode because of not being practiced. The essence of education especially at tertiary level (College and University) should be to train people who would be of practical value to their society. They must implement what they have learnt to their society. Therefore, the

skills that they had learnt at the time when they were doing their training should be practiced and not pushed to the side. If they are not practiced, they would end up getting eroded.

It was further observed that teachers who had recently graduated from their training institutions appeared to be more effective than those who had been in the teaching system for a number of years. The reason could be that the so called “fresh teacher” still had the zeal to expound their intellectual knowhow to the classes they taught. On the other hand, their counterparts who had served the ministry for a long time had become very much used to the traditional method of teaching. Even before they could explain what they intended to do, the pupils already knew the direction of the lesson.

5.4.2 Teachers poor reading culture

Perhaps most of the problems that emerged in the lesson observed were attributed to teachers’ poor reading culture. For instance a teacher’s mispronunciation of terms in a lesson cannot be considered as a mistake, but something with external factors. Other errors and mistakes could also be attributed to lack of reading.

What most teachers do not seem to understand is the fact that a person who does not read cannot teach reading comprehension effectively no matter how brilliant he is. Lack of reading will affect his reading speed and make him forget some of the skills and knowledge he had acquired previously. Such a scenario makes the pupils suffer because what they get from their teacher may not be of high standard.

In one of the schools, there were a few pupils who happened to read more fluently than their teachers and such situations could only be avoided if the teachers practice reading both at school and at home. Failure to do so might make pupils lose confidence in them and hence dampening their learning morale. Teachers should therefore be teachers by word and by action, especially those who teach English language. They should also lessen their habit of idle chat in the departmental offices. Reading could be a very good replacement to that.

5.4.3 Pupils’ Little interest in reading

Technological advancement in the area of computers also hindered pupils reading progress and interest. Uncontrolled use of computers, both at school and at home made pupils resort to playing computerized games at the expense of reading. Although some pupils said the computers make

them much busy during their free time, one might assume that playing games and computer music could be one of the reasons for liking computers. On the other hand, one may further argue that reading could be done on the computer; the kind of reading done cannot be compared to reading books. If anything computers make pupils to be lazy because most of the information from it lacks chronological sequence. There is also no consistence when reading materials found on the computer and internet.

The fact that very few pupils in secondary schools read widely and with interest, entails that their exposure to reading mainly comes during a reading comprehension lesson. Pupils' learning is not done with enthusiasm because reading is not part and parcel of most pupils' culture. Teaching a non motivated pupil in reading does not yield positive results because the pupil is a prime factor in meeting lesson objectives.

Testing of reading comprehension is not a bad idea, but it should not be done at the expense of teaching. The best way to handle the problem might be to come up with two components. These are the teaching of reading comprehension as well as the testing of reading comprehension. These two components should also have different time-allocation in the school time-table and taught separately. The Curriculum Development Centre could also re-design the syllabus to accommodate the new change as mentioned earlier, because it is difficult to teach and test pupils in the same lesson. One component will be bound to suffer.

Both the school and the home should do something to motivate pupils' reading interest. If pupils reading levels are left unchecked, our Zambia will end up having children who will take reading as a by the way phenomenon and not a priority in an individual's life. Therefore, teachers should monitor the activities pupils do in the computer room and so should parents do at home. Frantic efforts should be employed to divert pupils' attention from trusting the media to reading written materials, short stories and novels in particular. That is one of the best ways in which the teaching of reading comprehension could be improved.

5.4.4 Teacher Inability to publish books, articles and relevant reading comprehension materials.

Although various arguments could be raised as to why teachers do not write, the devastating effect of not doing so has far reaching consequences on the pupils. Book and article writing is not a cheap exercise. It requires a concerted effort on the part of the individual endeavoring to write.

He has to read widely and broaden his knowledge base. He needs to have an analytical mind capable of distinguishing right from wrong. His joy must not only be derived from what other people have written, but also his written work. The ability to publish books and write articles equips the scrutiny of written materials and hence gives him the teaching confidence.

The fact that most, if not all teachers, do not publish in secondary schools entails that they are either satisfied with the existing reading comprehension materials or the writing culture is alien to them. Therefore if writing is a strange culture to teachers, then teaching reading comprehension naturally becomes a difficult task because reading in most cases goes hand in hand with writing. The best way to exhaust on any topic is to have as many reference points as possible. Having one or two reference points narrows the level of debate and hence reducing the number of solutions to the problem.

Teachers' wholesome reliance on the grade nine English 1 and 2 pupils' textbooks narrows their ability to provide adequate knowledge on comprehension matters. It also makes them become less incompetent because they move at the same pace with the pupils who have text-books. Once pupils notice this problem, teaching them becomes a difficult task. They end up realizing that there is nothing difficult in teaching reading comprehension. The role of a teacher is reduced considerably by himself and the pupils at large.

The other remarkable disadvantage of not writing books and articles is that it makes pupils not get exposed to authentic reading materials. Pupils in most cases always want to move with time and follow the events that happen in their community and the outside world. If the events are not written so that they could be discussed as lessons, pupils end up bringing them when learning the different topics prepared by their teachers. That disturbs the lesson as was the case in two schools under study.

Lack of writing in most instances makes teachers to be lazy. It is a well known fact that writing does not only make the mind sharp, but also makes the teacher active. Teachers who write will always be on the thinking side as well as the reading side and hence gain more mastery of their field of specialty. Just as the English saying goes "an idle mind is the devil's workshop" so is the mind of a teacher who does not write a workshop for non-academic activities. Non-academic activities include gossiping, sharing latest sports events and idle chat. Therefore, teachers need to preserve the integrity of their profession through writing.

5.4.5 Insufficient text-books in some schools

During the lessons from the two schools, it was observed that pupils sharing text-books faced challenges because those reading at a fast speed had to wait for their friends to finish reading before moving on to the next page. Even during the oral questioning and answering session similar problems emerged. The problem worsened during the written class exercise when the pupils were expected to answer the questions found in the text-books. That was the more reason why they dragged in writing the exercise, hence, spending much time on work which should have been completed on time. Some even had to borrow text-books from their friends who had finished on time.

It was further observed that sharing of text-books limited some pupils' concentration because their reading of the passage was not adequately done. They could not give satisfactory answers during the oral questioning stage. Funny, but unfortunate situations could be seen where the paper of the text-book had to be kept perpendicular with one pupil reading one side of the page and another one reading the other. For other pupils, they gave each other chances. One pupil would read the page for a minute or so while the other one waited patiently. After she had found what she was looking for, she would give the other chance to her friend to use the book.

Reprimanding pupils who shared books proved to be a difficult exercise because the existing circumstances hindered their progress. Some pupils felt discouraged when they saw their friends who did not share books participate actively during the lesson. It was a marathon for them.

The best way to handle reading comprehension is to make sure all pupils have an individual access to the reading material because pupils move at different paces when reading and should therefore be given a copy each. The school should not be satisfied when three quarters of the pupils each have access to a copy. They should, if anything, make sure that all the pupils have a personal copy. That is the only way pupils could learn and enjoy their lessons. A lesson that could have turned out to be excellent can be spoiled by one or two pupils who had no access to the other privileges that the rest have. The schools should allocate more money to buying of text-books so that the problem could be eradicated.

5.4.6 Failure to instill discipline among pupils

The rest of the lessons which had no corporal punishment had their fair share of weaknesses. Pupils were at liberty to make foolish jokes which disturbed the lesson and the culprits were not

punished. Others could not concentrate in the lessons and teachers just looked as if nothing had happened. For some, it was too late coming while others were busy making noise at the height of the lesson. There was no form of punishment instigated on the offenders.

However, it should be borne in our minds that corporal punishment is not the only way of disciplining the pupils. Other forms of discipline can be used by the teacher, for example making the pupil stand, do frog jumps and many more. Leaving pupils to be at liberty does not help them in any way. Pupils' lack of fear to both the teacher and the lesson in general waters down the learning mood. The school rules need to be modified so that teachers are given authority to instill discipline when they are teaching.

5.4.9 Heavy workload by some teachers.

The researcher could visibly see physical and mental fatigue from most of the teachers who had a bumper to bumper work schedule. They were struggling to bring life in their lessons and some pupils were also struggling to move with the teacher. However, some pupils took advantage of the situation and jeopardized the learning atmosphere by not concentrating. Most of the teachers with lesser number of periods in a week proved to teach better than those that those who were overworked. There was a bit of life in their lesson delivery. Their voice projection and class movement could tell that they were not exhausted.

It was discovered that one of the reasons that brought about heavy workload for some teachers was the teaching of other subjects other than English or Literature in English. For instance one teacher in school A had to teach English, Art and Design and History. Most of them taught three subjects. The lack of manpower in the other departments made them get overloaded with work.

Recruitment of more teachers is only solution to shortage of manpower. That is an exercise that cannot be done by the school, though the school can make requests through the Ministry of Education to have more teachers in their school. A teacher of reading comprehension should have a fresh mind and also energetic enough to deliver his lesson successfully.

5.4.1.0 Teachers poor condition of service

Some of the weaknesses that some teachers displayed in their lesson delivery were largely caused by the poor conditions of service. Their low salary income demotivated them. To help them come

out of the financial quagmire, some teachers engaged in private business activities and hence the teachers' commitment to their professional responsibilities was adversely affected.

Any teacher should have a huge salary so that he could command respect from his pupils. It's not only the quality of what they say which matters to the pupils, but also how they appear before their pupils. They need enough money which could enable them buy good clothes and hence help them keep up appearances before their pupils. That becomes very important especially when they are teaching pupils from the elite group. They also need enough money which could enable them buy good food and hence make them always look healthy and presentable before their pupils.

Poor conditions of service for teachers is one of the major reasons that make people shun the profession. The poverty mentality can be detected by the manner in which someone speaks for example lack of enthusiasm and absent mindedness. Physical poverty can be detected by someone's facial expression and general movement.

Just as the above school motivated its teachers by bringing them together through partying, so should government bring teachers together by improving their conditions of service. The best way to scatter the teachers is by giving them poor conditions of service because the end result is perpetual strikes and bringing political issues in the staff room and departmental offices. There is no two-way about it. For example, when teachers scatter and find solace in issues outside their profession, bringing them together could be very difficult. Improving their conditions of service could greatly make them become very proud of their professions.

5.5 Summary

From the discussion, we notice that it was not all teachers that followed the expected teaching procedure for reading comprehension. The chapter has clearly shown how certain teachers had followed all the steps and how others had omitted some steps. The unserious activities that took place in some lessons have been adequately discussed. These include lack of concentration by some pupils, poor reading, some teachers failure to gain class attention, and many more. The chapter further more discussed the shortage of reading materials in schools as well as the many challenges that teachers of English face when teaching reading comprehension. These challenges include poor condition of service, poor reading culture and many more.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The study has revealed many lapses in the teaching of reading comprehension in Zambian Secondary schools. The lapses range from various teachers' technical knowhow on reading comprehension as well as the learning atmosphere which determine lesson delivery in the class. The manner in which reading comprehension was taught did not meet the required standard. Surprisingly enough, very little expertise was shown by the teachers because most lessons were centered on testing rather than teaching. As a result most teachers of English ended up believing that the continuous testing they did every week during comprehension lessons was of value to their pupils. On the other hand pupils ended up believing that by faring well in the reading comprehension exercises, so was their learning achieved. That was a fallacy, as far as understanding of reading comprehension is concerned.

Moreover the study has further revealed that most pupils who pass through the secondary school education system of Zambia were well grounded in reading and also pronouncing words correctly, but not trained in understanding the skills needed to bring about effective comprehension during reading. The disorganized and uncoordinated oral questions which most teachers ask pupils had no direct relevance to the skills of reading comprehension. Some of the questions were tailored on rote learning hence disadvantaging the pupils. The main objective of teaching reading comprehension in Zambia secondary schools appears to be that of making pupils pass their leaving examinations

Apart from noting the dominant part of testing as opposed to teaching, the study has also identified a number of unserious activities that take place in most comprehension lessons. These come from both teachers and the pupils. Among these unserious activities are late coming, poor lesson introductions by teachers, irrelevance during lesson delivery, poor time management, lack of teacher concern, lack of teacher lesson preparation, limited knowledge by some teachers, pupil indiscipline and laissez-faire kind of teaching by other teachers. The study has further showed that the number of teachers not dedicated to duty far outweigh the number of those dedicated.

There was a wide range of teacher competences in reading comprehension. Some teachers who taught reading comprehension were not competent enough to inspire confidence in the learners.

The study has shown that poor reading comprehension was caused by both teacher and pupils' poor reading culture. Both teachers and pupils do not know what it takes to have an upgraded reading comprehension lesson. The teaching of this sensitive topic has been reduced to a ceremonial routine instead of actual teaching of imparting knowledge to the learners. That is why its status was among the least in the English skills for example structure, composition, and summary.

It has also been noted during the study that most of the libraries in secondary schools had become white elephants to most of the pupils. The old and out-dated books found in them had made most pupils not make use of them. Insufficient text-books in some secondary schools had hindered the effective teaching of reading comprehension. The problem was worsened by lack of literature on reading comprehension both by local, national and international authors. The passive role that teachers play in improving the effectiveness of teaching reading comprehension has also been highlighted.

Furthermore, the study has highlighted a number of challenges that teachers face in teaching reading comprehension. These include, teachers' erosion of technical skills, lack of teacher initiative in promoting reading in schools, shortage of manpower in some schools hence exploiting the few available teachers, and generally, teachers poor conditions of service. All these challenges have seriously affected the teaching of reading comprehension. In addition, it has been observed that it is not necessarily the school infrastructure that contributes to pupils' poor performance in reading comprehension as well as teachers' failure to deliver, but the attitude that teachers have in reading comprehension. The teaching that goes on in schools vis-à-vis reading comprehension is very far from producing a graduate who has comprehension skills in analyzing different types of literature presented to him. If anything it is one that aims at satisfying the expectations of the Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ), which also ends up not making the pupil get satisfied.

6.2 Recommendations

When teaching, teachers should take into account the length the passage and also the suitability of the passage for questions. It must always be borne in our minds that the level of understanding of a passage is and remains the primary goal of reading comprehension. Buzzle.com (2008) argues that reading at the rate of 200 to 220 words per minute is considered as normal speed of reading. They further say that normal reading rate of 75% is an acceptable level of comprehension. It therefore follows that if a child can understand the meaning of at least 75% of

the total text, then such a child has reached acceptable limits for reading comprehension. A pupil having good comprehension skill is considered an active reader, with an ability to interact with words by understanding their complete meaning and concept behind them.

From the data gathered, we notice that reading of the passage should not only be done by teacher alone. Pupils, once in a while could be asked to read out the passage while the teacher monitors the reading. Teachers should try as much as possible stick to what is found in the passage so that by the end of the reading pupils understand what the passage is all about. They should not use reading comprehension periods as platforms to narrate their life experience and that of their mentors, neither should they narrate what they want them to hear, but what the passage is all about. Time and again, the teacher should always bear in mind that the main aim of reading comprehension is to equip pupils with the skills of reading as well as understating what they read.

Teachers should be firm especially in this die and age where giving corporal punishment to pupils is unlawful.

Such teachers should be assisted by the school administrators in liaison with members of staff so that they could be reminded on the teaching techniques thus enabling them to meet their lesson objective.

At no time should teachers be allowed to read novels or any other literature which is not related to what they teach. Those that did do so should have done out of ignorance and lack of fear of reproach from the school administrators. Such teachers should always bear in mind that there is time for everything and that if they fail to discipline themselves, it will even be very difficult for them to discipline the pupils.

Teachers need to cultivate the culture of reading so that they could become effective writers. They should not be too ordinary. Adjusting their personal programmes could help them identify the main problems pupils face and find a way in which they could be of greater help to the nation.

Teachers should also be confident in the way they choose pupils to read. They should gauge the situation quickly and make appropriate decisions. There is no need of raising the anxiety of pupils for a long time and then come up with an unnecessary show because as that happens pupils begin to make unnecessary noise.

Exemplary behavior is another important aspect that teachers should display. They should show scholarly behavior especially in the manner they read the comprehension passages. There must be a clear distinction between the reading done by a teacher and that done by a pupil. Teacher expertise in reading should be displayed so that pupils learn how to read fluently and with understanding. Once confidence is shown by the teacher, pupils will easily get motivated and follow the reading process.

There is need, to revise the teaching methodology for reading comprehension so that an appropriate one is made, and later followed by the teachers.

Teachers of English need to take keen interest in the drafting of the time-table 3.....during the holiday or the first week when schools open. Reading comprehension needs to be taught when both the teacher and pupils' minds are fresh. Where there is need adjustments to the time-table can be made. Teaching reading comprehension in the last two periods before lunch disadvantages both the teacher and the learners. This is because the teacher is mentally and physically tired after teaching other classes and hence cannot put in his best when teaching. Secondly, most pupils lose concentration when learning because they had been taught different subjects prior to the comprehension lesson. Instead of learning with enthusiasm, they learn with despondency. During lesson observations, it was noticed that it was during such periods that some pupils constantly sought permission to go out of the room.

To enforce the use of teaching aids, English Heads of Department should monitor the teaching of their staff in the department. As a department, they should discuss the effective method of teaching and where need be buy charts, manila papers, markers and other teaching materials that should be effectively used. They should also agree as a department on the disciplinary measures that should be taken to teachers who do not abide by what has been agreed.

Teachers with poor voice projection should practice oral communication skills so that they could improve their teaching skills. They could ask fellow teachers to guide them and later evaluate their performance. Although some could argue that poor voice projection is their nature, they must try as much as possible to change because their profession demands good voice projection. That is the only way they can improve their teaching.

Teachers should endeavor to maintain good eye contact with every pupil in class. Teachers should summon enough courage to do that. Before reading of the passage commences, pupils first

read the objective of the lesson through the teacher's eye. The clarity of those objectives then determines the attitude in which they will read the passage.

Although the need to have relevant books in the department should not be underestimated, maximum use of the available materials should be made so that reading becomes an on-going activity in the school. At Junior Secondary level, pupils should be exposed to as much reading as possible so that they do not become reading misfits in society through their unpalatable comments on the available reading materials. Instead they should encourage the pupils to read as was the case in school B whose reading programme was run passionately by both the school Administration and the teachers of English in particular.

Both the school and the home should do something to motivate pupils' reading interest. If pupils reading levels are left unchecked, Zambia will end up having children who will take reading as a by the way phenomenon and not a priority in an individual's life. Therefore, teachers should monitor the activities pupils do in the computer room and so should parents do at home. Frantic efforts should be employed to divert pupils' attention from trusting the media to reading written materials, short stories and novels in particular. That is one of the best ways in which the teaching of reading comprehension could be improved.

Although a number of reasons could be raised for pupils inability to read, deliberate mechanisms should be employed by the teachers to promote reading. In spite of not having relevant books in the library, teachers could still come up with a solution to the problem. In other words, the problems of teachers' lack of initiative in promoting reading should be mitigated.

One of the initiatives that teachers should employ would be to photocopy articles from newspapers for example on wildlife and present them as reading comprehension passages to the pupils. In that way, there could be variety in pupils reading. However, controversial articles should not be photocopied because they might bring anarchy instead of learning in class.

The other alternative would be to come up with a class library not necessarily to be initiated by the school, but the individual teacher. The kind of reading materials in that library should be magazines bought using the school funds or by the pupils themselves. Other materials could be books which the teacher ask from pupils' homes so that they could be specifically used for reading activates in class. The teacher must read most of the books in the class library so that he builds pupils' interest in their reading. He should also monitor their progress.

During the reading programme, the teacher should see to it that his pupils practice both silent reading and reading aloud. Those pupils given reading materials to read for a week should be asked thought provoking questions aimed at ascertaining whether they have read. Once this culture has been established in pupils, it remains inherent in them throughout their lives.

The fact that many teachers did not like teaching reading comprehension means that they did not appreciate the skills involved in it. Such teachers need to be helped by their fellow teachers in order to improve their effectiveness in teaching. The best way is to have departmental meetings every fortnight where problem topics like reading comprehension could be discussed. Teachers should not wait for an outsider to organize things for them. The spirit of teamwork should be inculcated among the teachers. The time spent on unproductive discussions could best be replaced by meetings of productive nature.

Discipline is a very important aspect in the learning process of a child. No matter how eloquent a teacher might be, he may not achieve his goals if discipline is not maintained in his class. It should not be overdone because pupils may develop fear instead of naturally willing to learn. Beating should not be viewed as being wrong for a grade nine pupil. If anything it makes pupils get alert to what they are expected to do. During focused group discussions, some pupils commended the female teacher who beat them saying she made them get down to work and they justified her reasons for beating them.

The Ministry of Education should define the topic, 'Reading Comprehension' both from a narrow and broader point of view. That would enable teachers of English know what is expected of them when they are teaching. Skills of reading cannot only be learnt in a school set up, but through a person's entire life. In other words it should be a lifelong task. Government should therefore create a reading environment in all spheres of human endeavor. Particular interest has to be inculcated among pupils in secondary schools because of the challenges they are to face as they prepare for their future. To achieve this, the following recommendations should be made:

- (1) Ministry of Education should reinforce teacher group meetings where teachers can share information on how they could improve the teaching of reading comprehension in schools.
- (2) Ministry of Education should devise a policy that encourage reading at lower and middle basic so as to make pupils already familiar to reading when they enter secondary school.

- (3) Ministry of Education should consider allocating more funds to teacher education, for example empowering teachers with refresher courses aimed at improving the quality of their lessons.
- (4) The Curriculum Development Centre should revise the Junior English 9 text-books and come up with relevant books that promote reading.
- (5) The Examination Council of Zambia should revise the Junior Secondary School English Syllabus and include items that train pupils to acquire study skills for understanding language.
- (6) Ministry of Education should stock school libraries and departments with relevant books that promote reading.
- (7) Government should lobby for donor funds which would help revisit viable programmes such as Action to Improve Mathematics English and Science (AIMES)
- (8) Government through the Ministry of Finance should motivate teachers by improving their conditions of service.
- (9) Ministry of Education should constantly send standards officers to monitor, supervise and evaluate teacher's performance.
- (10) Teachers should be encouraged to use other forms of punishment to pupils and where need be use corporal punishment in order to make pupils get down to serious learning.

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APPENDIX A

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The following interview schedule is aimed at finding out how you feel on the teaching of reading comprehension among grade nine pupils in your schools. You are therefore requested to be open and honest as could be during the discussion of this very important subject. Bear in mind that the information you give will purely be used for academic purposes. We thank you in anticipation to your positive cooperation.

Interview schedule for Grade Nine Teachers of English

Identification Data (For official use only)

District:..... Identification No:.....

School:.....

Date of Interview:.....

Time of Interview: Start:..... End:.....

Sex of respondent:.....

PART ONE

Background Information

1. Where did you do your training as a teacher of English?
2. When were you appointed as a class teacher?.....
3. How long have you served as a teacher?.....
4. When did you start teaching at this school?.....

5. What are your other teaching subjects?.....
6. Do you teach these subjects?.....
7. What is your highest academic qualification?.....

PART TWO

Content

8. How often do you do teach reading comprehension?
.....
9. Do you teach it before or after break time?
.....
10. What procedure do you follow when teaching reading comprehension?
.....
11. How do you start your introduction to a reading comprehension lesson?
.....
.....
.....
12. How do you motivate the learners in your introduction so as to sustain attention in your lesson delivery?
.....
13. What major activities do you do during the development stage of your lesson?.....
.....
14. Do pupils follow your lesson from the beginning up to the end?
.....
15. Do you at times face lexical problems with the comprehension passages?
.....
16. Under such situations what do you do?
17. Do your pupils have access to relevant text books?
.....
18. If not how do you handle this problem?

19. Do you read any books during your spare time?
.....
20. What kind of literature do you read during your spare time?
.....
21. How relevant is that literature in sharpening your comprehension skills?
.....
22. If you do not read during your spare time, what hinders you from doing so?
.....
23. When teaching do you think pupils understand what they read?
.....
24. Does your department hold meetings or cluster workshops where problem topics are discussed and solutions offered?
25. How is the sitting posture of your pupils during reading comprehension lessons?
.....
26. Do you have a class library?
27. If you have, is it well stocked and does it help learners improve their comprehension skills?
28. Other than text books, do you use other teaching aids such as charts, tables, manila paper e.t.c. so as to increase the richness of your lesson?.....
29. What are your comments on the text books used?
30. Do you publish books, articles or any reading materials?
31. If not, what are your reasons for not doing so?
.....

APPENDIX B

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GRADE NINE PUPILS

The following interview schedule is aimed at finding out how you feel about the learning of Reading Comprehension in your school. You are therefore requested to be open and honest as could be during the discussion of this very important subject. Bear in mind that the information you give will purely be used for academic purposes. We thank you in anticipation to your positive cooperation.

District:..... School:.....

Date of Interview:.....

Time of Interview: Start:..... End:.....

Sex of respondent:.....

Age of respondent:.....

PART ONE

Background Information

1. When did you come to this school?.....
2. Since you came to this school, how many teachers of English have taught you?.....
3. Did you enjoy their lessons?.....
4. Do you have a school library?.....
5. If yes how often do you borrow books from this library?.....
6. Do you have a debate club in your school?.....
7. What can you say about the the English texr-books used for reading comprehension?
8. What do mostly do during your spare time?

PART TWO

Content

9. What can you say about reading comprehension lessons?.....
10. Do you find it interesting of boring?.....
11. If they are boring, what makes them to be boring?.....
12. How often do you learn reading comprehension?.....
13. How often does your teacher give you comprehension exercises?.....
14. How often does he mark your comprehension exercises?.....
15. Do you understand the comprehension passages that are taught in class?.....
16. How many books (short stories) do you read in a month?.....
17. Does your teacher force you to read at school?.....
18. Do your parents provide you with reading books and encourage you to read at home?.....

19. Do you have a class library?.....
20. Do you have a school library?.....
21. Does your school have enough reading materials?.....
22. How often do you visit the library?.....

APPENDIX C

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CAREERS MASTERS/MISTRESSES

The following interview schedule is aimed at finding out how you feel on the teaching of reading comprehension among grade nine pupils in your schools. You are therefore requested to be open and honest as could be during the discussion of this very important subject. Bear in mind that the information you give will purely be used for academic purposes. We thank you in anticipation to your positive cooperation.

Identification Data (For official use only)

District:..... Identification No:.....

School:.....

Date of Interview:.....

Time of Interview: Start:..... End:.....

Sex of respondent:.....

PART ONE

Background Information

1. How long have you served in this position?.....
2. How long have you worked for this school?.....
3. What is your highest qualification?.....

PART TWO

Content

4. Do pupils in your school know how to read?.....
5. Do they have a purpose in mind when reading?.....
6. How often do you meet them to guide them on career development?.....
7. How supportive are your colleagues in creating a reading culture in your school?.....
8. Are pupils familiar with books that are relevant to their ambitions?.....
9. How do you help shape their mindset in an effort to promote reading?.....
10. Does your office have a database on different reading materials?.....
11. Do you at times disseminate this data to teachers?.....
12. Is the reading culture alive or dead among pupils in your school?.....
13. If its dead, what brings about this?.....

APPENDIX D

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DEPUTY HEAD TEACHERS

The following interview schedule is aimed at finding out how you feel on the teaching of reading comprehension among grade nine pupils in your schools. You are therefore requested to be open and honest as could be during the discussion of this very important subject. Bear in mind that the information you give will purely be used for academic purposes. We thank you in anticipation to your positive cooperation.

Identification Data (For official use only)

District:..... Identification No:.....

School:.....

Date of Interview:.....

Time of Interview: Start:..... End:.....

Sex of respondent:.....

PART ONE

Background Information

1. For how long have you worked as Deputy Head Teacher for this school?.....
2. Which subject are you specialised in?.....
3. What is your highest qualification?.....

PART TWO

Content

4. What kind of pupils do you have at this school?.....
5. Do they regularly attend classes?.....
6. Do you have prep time at your school?.....
7. If there is, do you go round to check what goes on or assign the master on duty?.....
8. Are you satisfied with the performance of teachers in the English department?.....
9. Are you satisfied with the results of Grade Nine pupils in English?.....
10. Do teachers show an exemplary behaviour to the pupils in terms of dress code and behaviour?.....
11. Do all teachers in the English department submit the lesson plans, schemes of work and records of work on time?.....
12. Is what is submitted corresponding to what is found in pupil's exercise books?.....

13. Do teachers use the staffroom for professional activities e.g. consulting from each other, marking exercise books and reading?.....
14. Do teachers often use the staffroom to discuss community politics and domestic issues?.....
15. Do teachers, especially those in the English department have the zeal to teach?.....
16. Do pupils have the passion to read both in class and outside the classroom?.....
17. What measures have you undertaken to promote reading in your school?.....
.....
18. Have you ever observed comprehension lessons?.....
19. If YES, what were some of the strengths and weakness of such lessons?.....
.....
20. Are you satisfied with the staffing levels in the English department?.....

APPENDIX E

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

The following interview schedule is aimed at finding out how you feel on the teaching of reading comprehension among grade nine pupils in your schools. You are therefore requested to be open and honest as could be during the discussion of this very important subject. Bear in mind that the information you give will purely be used for academic purposes. We thank you in anticipation to your positive cooperation.

Identification Data (For official use only)

District:..... Identification No:.....

School:.....

Date of Interview:.....

Time of Interview: Start:..... End:.....

Sex of respondent:.....

PART ONE

Background Information

1. For how long have you been heading this school?.....
2. What is your subject speciality?.....
3. What is your highest academic qualification?.....

PART TWO

Content

4. What kind of teachers do you have at this school?
.....
5. Do they have the zeal to teach?
.....
6. Are you impressed with the manner reading comprehension is taught?
.....
7. Do you at times receive complaints from pupils on how reading comprehension is taught?
.....
8. What are some of the major challenges that teachers face in teaching reading comprehension?
9. Does the English department receive sufficient funding from your office to make it operate effectively?
.....
10. Do teachers initiate projects and clubs that are aimed at promoting reading in your school?

11. Does the English department hold meetings that aim at promoting reading in the school?
.....
12. Does your office encourage such meetings by giving an allowance to teachers?
.....
13. Do you have enough reading materials in your school?.....
14. If there is not much, what do you do to remedy the situation?.....
15. Are you satisfied with the performance of pupils in English language?.....
16. If you are not, is the unsatisfactory performance of pupils also echoed by parents during
PTA Annual General Meetings?.....
17. What do you think teachers need to do to improve the teaching of reading
comprehension?.....
18. What do think should be the parent's role to improve reading
comprehension?.....
19. Are the concerns of reading comprehension aired by other teachers during staff
meetings?.....
20. What are these concerns and what do you think all stakeholders need to do to improve
reading comprehension?.....

APPENDIX F

Lesson Observation Checklist

School:..... Grade:.....

Topic:.....

Date:..... Number of Pupils in Class:.....

Sex of Teacher:..... Day:..... Time:.....

COMPETENCES		1	2	3	4
1	General Organization				
a.	Lesson planning – bio- data section				
b.	Initial reading activities				
c.	Relevance of the passage to the learners				
d.	Suitability of the content of the passage to the learners				
e.	Suitability of linguistic levels to learners				
2	Presentation of the Lesson				
a.	Pupils ability to follow the lesson				
b.	Teacher's ability to capture class attention				
c.	Use of appropriate methodology				
d.	Timing of the lesson				
3	Teaching Techniques				
a.	Introduction of the lesson				
b.	Introduction of the comprehension passage				
c.	Spreading of questions				
d.	Pupil alertness				

e.	Teacher creativity				
f.	Use of teaching aids				
g.	Use of appropriate examples				
h.	Lesson procedure				
i.	Marking Techniques				
j.	Lesson conclusion				
k.	Voice projection				
l.	Teacher appearance				
4.	Class Management				
a.	Learning atmosphere				
b.	Gaining of class attention				
c.	Discipline and control				
5	Teacher / Pupil relationship				
a.	Learning interaction				
b.	Eye Contact				
c.	Pupil confidence towards the teacher				
d.	Teacher attitude to mistakes/ error				
6	General Lesson Delivery				
a.	Pre- reading stage				
b.	Reading of the text				
c.	Post reading activities				
d.	Treatment of new vocabulary				
e.	Reading and individual task				
f.	Class discussion of questions				
g.	General summary of the lesson				

KEY

- a. 1..... **Poor**
- b. 2..... **Good**
- c. 3..... **Very Good**
- d. 4..... **Excellent**

APPENDIX G

Documents Review Check list

School:..... Grade:.....

Topic:.....

Date:..... Number of Pupils in Class:.....

Sex of Teacher:..... Day:..... Time:.....

COMPETENCES		1	2	3	4
1	Lesson Plans				
a.	Preparation of lesson plans				
b.	Format				
c.	Content				
d.	Whether checked by Head of Department				
e.	Timing of the lesson				
f.	Reading comprehension teaching procedure				
2	Schemes of Work				
a.	Format				
b.	Direct linkage with lesson plans				
c.	Achievability				
3	Records of work				
a.	Preparation of Record of work				
b.	Whether reading comprehension lessons are recorded				
c.	How often reading comprehension is taught				

d.	Whether checked by supervisor				
4	Pupils Exercise Books				
a.	Written reading comprehension class exercise				
b.	Whether marked				
c.	Pupils performance in reading comprehension class exercises				

KEY

e. 1..... Poor

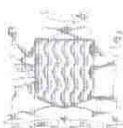
g. 3.....Very Good

f. 2..... Good

h. 4..... Excellent

APPENDIX H

*All communications should be addressed to the
Provincial Education Officer*
Telephone: 250653



REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICER
LUSAKA REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
Private Bag RW 21E
LUSAKA

12th November 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

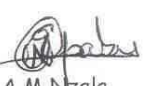
RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER: AKOMBELWA MUYANGANA

The bearer Akombelwa Muyangana is a student at the University of Zambia in the school of Education.

Mr Muyangana is pursuing a Masters programme in Applied Linguistics and is currently on fieldwork as part of the programme.

Permission has been granted for him to go around the High Schools in Lusaka to collect the necessary data on the teaching of reading comprehension.

Kindly assist him.

PP 
A M Nzala
PROVINCIAL EDUCATION OFFICER
LUSAKA PROVINCE

APPENDIX I

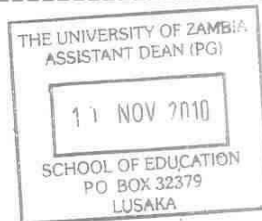


THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Date: 11/11/2010



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS/ PhD STUDENTS

The bearer of this letter Mr./Ms. AKOMBELWA MUYANGANA Computer number 528.000528 is a duly registered student at the University of Zambia, School of Education.

He/She is taking a Masters/PhD programme in Education. The programme has a fieldwork component which he/she has to complete.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to him/her/.

Yours faithfully


fn/

Sophie Kasonde-Ng'andu (Dr.)
ASSISTANT DEAN POSTGRADUATE STUDIES- SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Cc: Dean-Education
Director-DRGS