

**THE EFFECTS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT
OF PUPILS' READING SKILLS IN ENGLISH: THE CASE OF GRADE THREE
CLASSES IN SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN MUFULIRA AND
LUSAKA URBAN DISTRICTS**

BY

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2011

DECLARATION

I, Georinah Njapau, do hereby solemnly declare that this dissertation presents my own original work as it does not contain any work that has ever previously been submitted for a degree at the University of Zambia or any other university. Furthermore, this dissertation does not reflect any published work or materials from any other dissertation.

I, further, declare that all sources cited are indicated and fully acknowledged through a detailed list of references.

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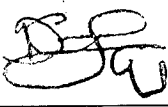
APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving mum, friend and mentor, Anah Mayongo Njapau, for encouraging and supporting me during my studies. It is also dedicated to husband, George Poggy Simpungwe, my grandchild Kumbutsolathu Elizabeth Tembo, and my lovely children Daisy, Justine, Keyenu, Chisuwa, Zango, Maria, Itemo, Mathias, Kazanga, Prisca, Miji and Chilungo for enduring my absence during my studies when they needed me most.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BTL	:	Break Through to Literacy
CDC	:	Curriculum Development Centre
DEBS	:	District Education Board Secretary
GRZ	:	Government of the Republic of Zambia
MoE	:	Ministry of Education
NBTL	:	New Break Through to Literacy
PRP	:	Primary Reading Programme
PTA	:	Parents Teachers Association
ROC	:	Read On Course
SACMEQ	:	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SITE	:	Step In To English
SPSS	:	Statistics Package for Social Sciences
TG	:	Teacher's Guide
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	:	United National Education Scientific Organization
ZATEC	:	Zambia Teacher Education Course
ZBEC	:	Zambia Basic Education Course
ZNBTL	:	Zambia New Break Through to Literacy
ZPC	:	Zambia Primary Course

ABSTRACT

The study was mainly focused on Learning to Read in English in Different Environments. The study addressed itself to the two major questions. These were: a) in what environment does the Grade 3 learner in public and private schools learn how to read in English? b) how is reading in English taught in both sets of the schools?

This was a case study of selected public and private schools in Lusaka and Mufulira urban districts, Zambia. The population of the study comprised all the Grade 3 learners at the selected schools. The main research tools used in the study were reading tests, semi-guided interviews, focus group discussion guide and a check list for lesson observation. It involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A qualitative approach was used in order to probe several issues and to get deep insights of how reading in English was taught; tests were used to determine learners' performance in reading. The qualitative data was analyzed through the identification of common themes from the respondents, descriptions and presentation of their experiences. Later, conclusions were reached and analyzed with reference to research questions on which the study was based. Quantitative data was analyzed using a t-test to compare the reading levels between learners in public basic and private schools.

The findings seem to indicate that learners in private schools have conducive learning environment for learning how to read in English. This was evidenced by the learner's performance in the reading tests. The study found out that public basic schools do not use the recommended PRP, while private schools use most of the PRP features. Teachers and learners in public schools did not have enough teaching and learning materials. Most teachers in public schools wrote part of the stories on the board for learners to practice reading.

The study further established that learners in public schools did not read according to their reading levels. However, learners in private schools were able to read effectively.

The study concluded that it's not only a rich language policy which the government of Zambia changed which can make learners read according to their levels, but more is needed in the environment. Learners in private schools read better than their counterparts in public basic schools due to a number of facts: teaching and learning materials, time spent on reading, good conducive environment, and parental support. It is therefore desirable that public schools improve in the teaching of reading by providing appropriate teaching and learning materials, spending enough time on reading in class and at home, and providing a conducive environment.

The study therefore, made the following recommendations: There is need for the Ministry of Education to provide enough desks, learning and teaching materials. School administrators should encourage parents to be more actively involved in their children's welfare.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a synopsis of the background to the study. The chapter further presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, objectives and the significance of the study. The delimitation and limitations of the study are also outlined in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Problem

The recurring evidence of exceptionally low levels of literacy among learners in the lower school grades in the sub-Sahara region are of great concern. Zambia is one of the countries in this region. The Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) reported poor reading performance at Grade 6 level in the Zambian basic schools (Nkamba and Kanyika, 1998). The countries involved in the study were Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Namibia and Mauritius. The study showed that in 1995, of the 148 Grade 6 learners in the defined target population in Zambia, only 25 per cent could read at defined minimum levels and only 3 per cent could read at a desirable level. These results were consistent with those of Namibia and Mauritius. The SACMEQ study demonstrated that Zambian and Zimbabwean learners showed the lowest performance in reading, both in English and their local language.

Kelly (2000) also reported that Grades 1 to 6 pupils performed below the level expected in literacy in both English and a Zambian Language. For instance, in English, learners in a given grade obtained scores that would be expected of learner's two grades lower, while in a Zambian Language, learners in a given grade obtained scores that would be expected of learner's three grades lower.

The National Assessment Report (2008) says that the low levels of learning achievement are deeper and earlier, having their origin achievements in the lower

grades. If little learning has occurred in grade 1-4, it was be extraordinary difficult to remedy the situation in grade 5. Hence, all necessary steps should be taken to prevent the problem from developing. This can only be done by concentrating efforts on ensuring that real, substantial learning occurs in grades 1-4.

The current policy in Zambia is that initial literacy for a school child is supposed to be acquired in a local language most familiar to the child, through a specially designed programme called the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). The choice of which language should be used for initial literacy depends on the location where the child lives and the language used in education in that province. The following are the recognised official local languages for education in Zambia. Bemba is used in Luapula, Northern, Copperbelt, and the eastern parts of Central Province. Nyanja is used in the Eastern Province and eastern parts of Lusaka Province. Lozi is used in Western Province. Tonga is used in Southern Province and western parts of Central Province. Kaonde is used in the eastern parts of North Western Province, and Lunda and Luvale in the western parts of North Western Province. However, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has maintained English as the medium of instruction (MoE, 1996).

The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) decided to change the language of initial literacy from English to a familiar local language due to among other things the conclusions arrived at in a study by Williams (1993) which suggested that learning initial literacy in the familiar local language may aid acquisition of literacy in a second language. There has been evidence indicating that learning to read in unfamiliar language is assumed to be a big challenge for young learners because they have to learn two complex skills simultaneously – learning the language and the skill of reading. Studies in literate societies have made discoveries that a high level of proficiency in the language of instruction is required for learners to benefit from reading instructions in school (Dickson, *et. al.*, 2003).

From 1999 when GRZ implemented the change of policy on the language of initial literacy in all public schools, initial literacy has been taught in a familiar local

language in all public schools while English is used in all private schools. This implies that the government has recognized the critical role of Zambian languages to enhance literacy levels by introducing the PRP. The government also committed itself to provide adequate infrastructure and equipment to all public learning institutions. In support of this, the Ministry of Education (1996:vii) states that “In order to run a responsible democratic education system, there is need to pay particular attention to capacity building through training and re-training, provision of infrastructure and equipment, logistics and adequate funding.” However, despite all these efforts by the government, literacy levels among Zambian children are still low. In support of this, research conducted by Matafwali has shown that despite the existence of a rich literacy programme in Zambia, the reading level of the majority of Zambian children is remarkably low (Matafwali, 2010). This study further revealed that 50% of grade one and two children involved in the study scored zero or only one word on reading subset testing Zambian language or English.

However, no study has been done to establish how the government has provided the needed supportive environment to implement the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) policy in schools as provided for in *Educating Our Future*. Hence, this study sought to find out and describe the environments in which learners in public and private schools learn to read in English; and the possible effects the varying environments might have on the learners’ ability to acquire the reading skills.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Not enough is known about the environment in which children learn how to read in English among Grade 3 learners in public and private schools. Therefore, the problem under investigation, stated as a question is: In what environment do Grade 3 learners in public and private schools learn how to read in English?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out the type of environments in which the learners in public and private schools learn to read in English and the possible

effects the varying environment might have on the learners' ability to acquire the reading skills.

1.4 Main Research Question

What is the effect of the different learning environments in which learners in grades 3 learn to read English?

1.5 Research Questions

The following were the questions that this study sought to address:

- (i) In what environment do the Grade 3 learners in public and private schools learn how to read in English?
- (ii) How is reading in English taught in private and public schools?

1.6 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- (i) To observe the environment in which the Grade 3 learners in public and private schools learn how to read in English.
- (ii) To observe how reading in English is taught in both sets of the schools.

1.7 Research Hypotheses

H₁ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading English words.

H₂ - Grade 3 pupils in private schools perform better than those in public schools in word initial sound.

H₃ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading the word final sound.

H₄ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading sentences.

H₅ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in English reading comprehension.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study may help in the formulation of other strategies on helping learners how to read in English according to their grade levels. The findings may also add to the body of knowledge on implementation process of teaching how to read in English. The study might stimulate further research on the subject.

1.9 Delimitation

This study was restricted to five private and five public schools in Mufulira and Lusaka. It only involved pupils in grade three in these schools

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Given that the study only involved 10 schools out of thousands in the country, the conclusions from the findings cannot be generalized beyond the schools visited.

1.11 Operational definitions of concepts

In this study, the following will be operational definitions of concepts:

1.11.1 Absenteeism

This is used to mean the non-appearance or non-availability of a pupil in the classroom. It also means non attendance of a lesson by the pupil including such a pupil who is present in the school but not physically in the classroom learning when he/she is supposed to be learning.

1.11.2 Environment

Environment is described as all external factors influencing the life and activities of learners. In this study, it will mean learning and teaching materials, time, teacher-commitment, attendance, language, classroom space and actual methods used in teaching reading in English

1.11.3 Initial literacy

Is the component of Initial Literacy in the Primary reading Programme, which is the process of learning to read and write in Grade 1 done by the learner in local language with the intention of transferring the reading and writing skills to English in Grade 2

1.11.4 Journal

A journal, in this study, is a pupil's exercise book organised like a diary for daily record of his/her activities in school or at home and read aloud by him/her in class on Monday or Friday.

1.11.5 Language Experience Approach

Language Experience Approach is a learner-centered approach that recognises learners' own particular experience and learning needs, allows for cooperative learning, and allows learners to develop at their own pace.

1.11.6 Literacy

Literacy will focus on teaching the skills involved in the process of reading and writing. These skills include things like familiarity with the shapes and sounds made by letters, how to make meaning from printed words, and to put someone's thoughts on paper in written form to minimum skills required by an individual in order to read fluently and write legibly for mutual

1.11.7 Local familiar language

In Zambia, there are seven regional official languages: Bemba, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga. These are the languages used in schools in Grade 1. Depending on what location, the language that is used by children during play is the one accepted for use in the classroom.

1.11.8 Official language

A language used in government functions such as parliamentary debates, executive or judicially. In Zambia, the official language is English, and is also the medium of instruction in schools from Grade 2 onwards.

1.11.9 Paired Reading

Paired Reading is a practice used in the Zambian schools in which a learner is required to grow by proximal contact with an older or more able peer. The method is used in the classroom where the teacher pairs slower learners with the faster ones.

1.11.10 present

In this study, present is when the learner has attended the day's learning session.

1.11.11 Reading

Reading is the process of identifying and understanding the meaning of the characters and words in written or printed material. In the primary school, the activity is an elaborate one involving PRP in which courses like NBTL, SITE and ROC are practiced.

1.11.12 Reading Signing Book

The Reading signing book is an exercise book in which the Librarian indicates words, phrases or sentences that are challenging to the learner for the teacher and the parent to help. Books that the learner has read are also recorded in it.

1.11.13 Talking walls

Talking walls is the displayed teacher's and learners' work, including actual objects from the environment, on inner classroom walls in easy view to stimulate learners. These are changed regularly.

1.11.14 Break through

When children are enrolled in Grade 1 they can hardly read or write in public schools. However, they gradually begin to recognise words and develop phonemic awareness which act as tools for reading with more fluency and attain a relative reading speed of an average adult literate person. This process constitutes breaking through on the part of the learner

1.11.15 Word-World

The Word-World is a wall chart with newly introduced words for the term, written on the chart by the teacher immediately after introducing them to the learners, left for learners to read aloud at the beginning or at the end of each period.

This chapter has presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and limitation of the study. Further, an attempt has been made to explain certain concepts that are used in the study in order to make them clear to the reader. The next chapter focuses on literature review. This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature to the problem under discussion.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the topic under study: to establish the nature of the environment in which Grade 3 learners in selected schools learn how to read in English.

This chapter is organised in terms of the following sub-headings: learning and teaching materials, time, teacher commitment, attendance, language, classroom space, and actual teaching methods. These sub-headings capture the key characteristics that define a learning environment. Before we discuss these sub-headings, let us look at the importance of reading.

The ability to read is the key to educational achievement. Without a basic foundation in literacy, children cannot gain access to a rich and diverse curriculum. Poor literacy limits opportunities not only at school but throughout life, both economically and in terms of a wider enjoyment of opportunities in life.

There is a wide variation in the results achieved by schools with apparently similar intakes. This differential achievement suggests that problems do exist, either in the implementation of the Zambian government's strategies or inherently in the methodology that it promotes.

2.1.1 Classroom environment

Classroom environment can be defined as the mood or atmosphere created by a teacher in his or her classroom, the way the teacher interacts with learners, and the way the physical environment is set out (Dean, 1997). The classroom environment influences the learner achievement, their self-esteem and participation in the lesson. The most important aspect of classroom environment is the relationship between teacher and learners. There must be elements of caring, trust and respect in the

interpersonal relationships between teachers and learners. An effective classroom environment is one in which the teachers' authority to organise and manage the learning activities is accepted by the learners, there is mutual respect and good rapport, and the atmosphere is one of purposefulness and confidence in learning. A key consideration is the extent to which the teacher is able to foster favourable perceptions towards learning among learners, by establishing in learners self-respect and self-esteem regarding themselves as learners.

Research on effective schools in United States of America reveals that the schools share common characteristics according (Dean, 1997); which include the following:

- i) safe and orderly environment, strong leadership, high expectations for learner achievement,
- ii) an emphasis on academic uninterrupted time about sixty to one hundred twenty minutes devoted to literacy instruction,
- iii) use of assessment to evaluate learner progress and guide instruction, use of small flexible homogenous literacy skill-based groups and good classroom management.

This study, therefore, was done to also establish the classroom environment in which learners learn how to read in English.

2.1.2 The classroom organizational environment

This refers to the physical arrangement of the classroom. A classroom should be attractive, and comfortable. Comfortable in this study will mean two learners sitting on the desk for easy maneuverability of learners as they try to interact with each other and write or as the teacher tries to correct the learners' work or to guide the learners during lessons. Clean and tidy classrooms, hall-ways and toilets can create a better atmosphere across the school. The physical aspects such as temperature, and noise, that affect our ability to concentrate and maintain attention also influence classroom environment (Dean, 1997). How the internal features of a classroom

(desks, chairs, tables) are arranged is also important. Although teachers have no control on the size of their classrooms, they can control the seating arrangement within the classroom. The seating arrangement should accommodate the learning activity. Rigid one-size-fits all physical facilities will not meet the needs of many learners and may impede their learning. For example, inside the classroom there should be ample space to make alternate in seating arrangements and lighting intensities. The excellent classroom environment in terms of physical space exists in that classroom where the space has been maximally adjusted to meet learner diversity and where space arrangement promotes interactivity, and active learning (Preedy, 1991). It must also permit all learners to see instructional presentations and allow the teacher to be close to all learners. It has been found that when the environmental conditions are appropriate for learning, the likelihood of disruptive behaviour is minimised. Teachers should observe the impact of the space on learners as they engage in learning activities and on learner performance since that will help them adjust the learning environment. Classroom environment can also be improved by displaying learners' own work on the wall, as this can encourage learners to take pride in their own work, can motivate them. However, care should be taken to see that all learners get chance to have their work displayed (UNICEF 2009).

The school environment strongly influences what happens in classrooms. Children learn in and find achievement from within the classroom. Likewise, Kelly (1994) states that it is in classrooms that children experience school failure and underperformance. The framework for what goes on in a classroom consists of a network of school related and other characteristics, each of which can contribute significantly to performance. Three of these in the Zambian context are singled out for attention. These are teachers, learning materials and school facilities.

Besides classrooms, libraries are cardinal for learners to practice reading skills. A class library for Grade 3 learners can be established as a reading corner that

contains the story books. Teachers can build up a collection of textbooks in the local languages and English (MoE, 2002).

A good learning environment has a significant impact on attendance and learning outcomes. Adequate school facilities contribute to a stimulating and healthy learning environment and have positive impact on attendance and learning achievements. The Ministry of Education in Zambia (MoE, 1992 and 2007) acknowledges lack of infra-structure development as one of the main constraints in the provision and expansion of education in Zambia. Carmody (2004) also reports that by 2003 many schools lacked such infra-structure, stressing the need for them.

According to (MoE 1992) an ideal classroom should have an average of 40 pupils; all classrooms should have 20 two-seater desks in addition the recommended student-to-book ratio is 2to 1, with the effective life of school text books being 3years.

The study investigated the organization in the classrooms in which the learners were learning reading in English at the selected schools.

2.1.3 Value of the library in learning to read

The aim of the study, in regard to the value of library reading, was to find out the places which the learners used to read in English.

It is impossible to over-emphasise the importance of reading. In order to be successful in school as well as in virtually any future vocation, it is necessary for learners to possess strong literacy skills. Furthermore, printed materials constitute an enormous source of personal pleasure and an aid to personal progress through self-selected and self-promoted entertainment and enlightenment. A library is a very important resource in the learning process of every child. It is always advisable to have a library at every school. Children and their teachers need library resources and the expertise of a librarian to succeed. School libraries help teachers teach children (Keith, 2004). A school library is an academic library that supports the

teaching and learning process. School libraries serve learners by providing materials to read and encouraging reading (Clark, 1999). Martin (1996), notes that research shows that the reading scores for learners in schools that focus on improving their library programmes are, on average of eight to twenty-one per cent, higher than similar schools with no such development. Adomi (2006) stresses the importance of adequate collections. Marit (2003) studies on libraries show that schools that succeed in their work on literacy, tend to have teachers that initiate discussions about the texts and motivate the pupils to read by presenting a great amount of books of different kinds.

In the United States of America, learners are encouraged to discuss, write about, and report on the books they read. Library staff does help learners to select reading materials and provide literacy-enhancing programmes such as storytelling, music, creative arts, and performances. This is in keeping with Stanovich (2000) who advocates the provision of as many reading experiences as possible especially for children whose verbal abilities are most in need of bolstering. He reiterates that it is the act of reading that can build these capabilities, and that these can be provided through reading.

2.1.4 The importance of successful reading experiences

In their studies on children's reading development, McGill-Franzen and Allington (2003) cite the importance of extensive, successful reading experiences in the development of reading proficiency. If children have the opportunity to discuss, and read books on topics that they select, they will develop extensive background information which can serve as a platform from which to engage in their own independent reading. According to Guthrie and Anderson (1999), less successful reading experiences produce a lessened interest in voluntary reading, but successful reading experiences encourage a person to read. Stanovich (2000) also agrees that a positive reading development is shown by the success attained when one is learning to read coupled with the numerous opportunities and experiences with reading. Children who enjoy reading will read more and become proficient at the same time.

A report from the National Institute of Education (1988) concluded that the amount of reading done out of school is consistently related to gains in reading achievement.

The said survey by the National Institute of Education (1988) shows that most learners who responded were not satisfied with the services and collections of their school library. Literature demonstrates the importance of a good school library in learners' academic achievement. Based on the importance and the benefits of the school library to both staff and the learners, Stanovich (2000) has the following recommendations:

- i) The school library should have a professional librarian to render effective services to staff and learners.
- ii) The teacher/librarian should organise orientation, films, exhibitions, and displays to create awareness of the library service to users.
- iii) The library should take steps to enhance its collections and resources with material for both staff and learners that meets their educational needs and developments and augments classroom teachings.
- iv) Learners need audiovisual materials as well as print and other formats.
- v) The library should provide adequate recreational and information materials to arouse learner interest.
- vi) The library should provide adequate reading and study space.

Unfortunately, not every learner has an easy journey on the road to literacy; some learners never learn to read properly (Matafwali, 2010, Dean, 1997). Other learners may manage to master the skills involved eventually, but the process is so difficult and unpleasant that they view reading as a dreadful chore instead of a cherished activity (Dean, 1997).

It was part of the study to establish whether the selected schools in the study had libraries and how learners were using them.

2.2 Organising a Conducive Learning Environment

Environment might be described as all external factors influencing the life and activities of people. In this case and in reference to a learning environment, it is the natural world exhibiting a set of external conditions, especially those affecting a particular activity. In this study, it will mean materials, time, teacher-commitment and actual methods used in teaching reading in English.

Therefore, a learning environment is the available circumstances which encourage pupils' learning. This involves:

- (a) Appropriate desk arrangement which allows enough working space.
- (b) Carefully laid out teaching and learning materials, well arranged and marked so that the appropriate function of the materials are labeled according to the level of difficulty or progression. In this way, the materials can be used by learners without difficulty and without a great deal of attention from the teacher.
- (c) An organisation in which it is easy to keep materials and equipment clean, tidy and in order and easy to check over to see that everything is in the right place.
- (d) A discriminating use of display which provides standards to aim for, for instance, demonstrates what the teacher wants from the learners, and offers encouragement to those who most need it, for example the display of less good work from time to time to encourage an individual learner. It should provide materials of all kinds which stimulate and extend knowledge and thinking (Dean, 1997). It was part of the study's aim to establish whether and to what extent the schools visited provided an environment that was conducive for learning.

2.3 L1/Familiar Language environment.

In 1999, the Ministry of Education (MoE) launched a major literacy initiative, which aimed at improving the reading and writing levels of learners in Zambia's lower and middle basic schools (Kelly, 2000). The general purpose of the initiative

was to improve the reading skills of all Zambian primary school children, as a major contribution to the goal of children learning more effectively across the school curriculum. The initiative that involves initial reading in Li is Primary Reading Programme. The main primary activity in PRP has been the development and implementation of linked literacy courses from grade 1 to 7 that are child centred and incorporate continuous learner assessment strategies. A striking feature of this new programme is the strong emphasis on learner participation, creativity, independent group work, collaborative sharing, and improved gender equity.

According to MoE (1996:39), “there is strong evidence that children learn literacy skills more easily and successfully through their mother-tongue, and subsequently they are able to transfer these skills quickly and with ease to English. Successful first language learning is, in fact, believed to be essential for successful literacy in a second language and for learning content–subjects through the second language”.

The researcher used Step In To English (SITE) which is one the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) Grade 2 teacher’s textbook to test the learners. The typical feature of a PRP class should have the following:

- i) The class should be divided into four social or pace separate groups
- ii) The teaching corner for teaching individual groups and to be used by the whole class at starting and sharing time
- iii) The class library should contain story books and stories written by the learners themselves, parents, teachers and older students.
- iv) Talking walls means that the walls of the classroom should be educative and interactive. The teacher’s work and that of the learners should be displayed on the walls according to subject areas, and they should be changed regularly. The teacher should try to display work at an appropriate height where learners in class can see it easily (MoE, 2002).

2.3.1 Literacy hour

The literacy hour in PRP is the same from Grade 1 to Grade 7. The class is organized in 4 pace groups. Each group will be taught according to their level of competence, one group at a time at the teaching station. Learners who are not with the teacher at the teaching station are given relevant learning activities to work on at their own pace. Learners are encouraged to read books from the class library.

2.3.2. The structure of the literacy hour

(How reading should be taught in Public schools according to PRP)

Organising work in the classroom involves not only managing the children and planning the curriculum, but also managing time, space and resources. The national curriculum has created pressure on time for teachers. There is now a great deal to do in the time available and since a primary teacher usually has considerable freedom to plan the programme of work in the way that seems best for the children, the use of time requires a good deal of planning. In a ROC literacy hour, for example, time is allocated as follows:

Starting time - 15 minutes

Teaching Station 1 (TS1) - 20 minutes

Teaching Station 2 (TS2) - 20minutes

Sharing Time - 5 minutes

The arrangement is that:

For the starting time, all the four groups would stay in the Teaching Station (TS) for 15 minutes. The teacher is supposed to do the following things during the starting time:

- i) Appropriate story should be read to the class using appropriate technique,
- ii) Explain the learning activities to the whole class,

iii) Send three groups away to their desks one by one, and retain one group that the teacher will work within the Teaching Station.

Learning takes place at the Teaching Station. The teacher conducts focused teaching with one pace group at a time. This allows the teacher to work according to the group's ability level.

For the TS1, the teacher would only teach one group for 20 minutes while the other three groups do Independent Learning Activities (ILA).

For the TS2, the teacher would teach another group for 20 minutes while the other groups do Independent Learning Activities (ILA). The other two groups would be at the Teaching Station with the teacher the following day while the two other groups would be doing ILA.

For the Sharing Time, all the four groups would come to the TS to share the work done for five minutes. During sharing time, the following things happen:

- a) Group leaders bring the exercise books from their groups, teacher uses this session to motivate fast and slow learners.
- b) Teacher selects some work to show the class and the learners comment on their work. The teacher also praises good work and makes constructive criticism of poor work.
- c) Learners learn from each other's mistakes and the teacher will end the lesson with a song or rhyme (MoE, 2002).

All public schools are supposed to follow this arrangement. The present study, therefore, was done to establish how the literacy hour was spent by the teachers and what activities the learners performed.

2.4 Materials

The importance of textbooks and other school learning materials cannot be overemphasised. The teaching and learning materials are the basic resources for

teaching and learning. Teachers' notes serve as pupils libraries. Teachers struggle to put ideas across to learners in abstract things that should vividly be seen in order to enhance easy understanding (World Bank, 2000)

Students cannot reach "relatively satisfactory levels of learning to read in the absence of appropriate learning materials" (MoE, 1992:31). There are many objects that constitute learning materials in formal education delivery. These may include: textbooks, supplementary readers, crayons, pens, manila papers, pencils, exercise books and other forms of literature providing information for the learners to interact with and act on. All teachers make some use of books and materials in their work with children. Most frequently they use books and work cards to provide practice and reinforcement of leaning, so that something is taught to a group or class and children practice what they have learned in some way using materials.

In a context of free education delivery, such as the case in Zambia from Grade 1 to Grade 7, all these things are supposed to be provided by the government. The textbooks and other requisites needed by the teacher in his work is still the responsibility of the government. (MoE, 1996).

Research done on learning and teaching has shown that the availability of textbooks in schools appeared to be the most consistent school factor in predicting academic achievement. The World Bank (1979), for example, established that learning was severely affected by lack of basic textbooks; it also revealed that children who did not have their own textbooks to study and take home did not do well as those who had. Preedy (1991) observed that the availability of resources in schools might motivate teachers to work hard and improve on the performance of pupils.

Lungu (2005:23) observes that for the schools to function well, they require adequate education materials to satisfy pupils' demands. When these are in short supply or deficient, it leads to ineffective delivery of educational goals. Ministry of Education (1996:40) states that the quality of education requires the availability and use of textbooks and other educational materials. These include: books, chalk,

charts, maps, classroom furniture as well as those for sports and extra-curricular activities. Ministry of Education (2001) argues that the availability of learners' textbooks, exercise books, and teachers' manuals were among the greatest determinants of effective learning. Bus *et. al.*, (1994) observed that the central prerequisites for quality improvement in education infrastructure at all levels are the availability, affordability and proper use of relevant textbooks and other learning materials.

Effective teaching and learning require the use of the teaching aids. For example, a teacher of English needs supplementary readers for learners to practice reading. A teacher of science may also need laboratory apparatus to conduct experiments in order for learners to see the reality of science. Subjects like History and Geography also require the use of maps for learners to understand the location of certain places in the world. When these subjects are taught in abstract, it encourages rote learning, thereby making the education outcomes less qualitative. According to Sikwibele (1991:35), "the quality of education declines considerably when learning materials are not available to learners." Availability of teaching and learning materials in schools makes both teaching and studying easy. This study aimed to establish availability of books at the selected schools since this can contribute to the good learning environment.

2.5 Teachers' Qualifications

Teacher quality encompasses a range of skills, competencies and motivation. As common sense suggests, specific training, on the part of teacher trainee, is required in order for the trained teacher to give quality service to the learners.

The types of data on teachers that are most widely collected by Ministries of Education, including teachers' academic credentials and whether or not they are certified to teach, are only weakly linked to student achievement in countries where this relationship has been studied (UNESCO, 2003).

The teacher quality indicator most often collected is the proportion of trained teachers, or those who have received the minimum organized teacher-training (pre-service or in-service) required by a given country.

Research studies have shown positive correlations between student achievement and teachers' academic skills, level of content knowledge, years of experience and participation in content-related professional development opportunities (Brock-Utne, 2000 cited in Nkamba and Kanyika, 1998). Research further shows that children tend to learn more from teachers with strong rather than weak academic skills (Ballou, 1996, cited in Nkamba and Kanyika, 1998).

In Zambia, the qualifications of teachers range from pre-school teachers to tertiary institutions lecturers. Those that teach at pre-school obtain a certificate at Pre-school training institutions while those who teach in the basic school sector undertake a two-year basic school teacher training or a three-year primary teacher degree from the University of Zambia. In addition to these qualifications, the Ministry of Education recommends that teachers who teach Grades 1 to 7 should be trained in the use of the Primary Reading Programme (MoE, 2002).

2.6 Parental Support

Involving parents in the education of their children is an important aspect in the learning process for the children. Parents are able to contribute valuable information to the teacher about their children such as their likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses because they had known the children from birth. The first responsibility for educating a child rests with parents and thereafter with the school.

Zellaman and Waterman (1998) reported on the study conducted in America in 1994 by Fruchter, Galletta and White on the role of parents in schools. The findings were that: in general the role of parents was to work as helpers and supporters of what teachers and schools were doing. In particular, parents were encouraged to help with homework, join Parents-Teachers Associations (PTA), conduct bake-sales

and show up at times at the school when required at the schools. The result was that the communication between the school and parents improved very much and their children's performances at school improved in the subjects in which parent's efforts were involved.

Senechal and Le Fevre (2002) reported that the study by Tighe and Childs (2000) showed that involving parents in the education of their children such as decision making, provision of information and in curriculum design was important in improving the education of their children. The parents supported the school programmes because they knew the advantages of the programmes and what their children might achieve if the programmes are successful.

Hornby (1995), reported on a study conducted in 1968 by Glynn and Glynn in New Zealand on the involvement of parents in their children's education. Five children and their mothers, who had just come from Cambodia, were in study. Before the study, none of the mothers could either read or speak any word of English. A teacher taught both the mothers and children how to use the *shared-reading* procedure in order to learn how to read. Every night, after school, both the parents and the children engaged in shared reading. The results of the study showed that over a period of twenty-four weeks, the children made gains of one to two years in their reading attainment. Parents and their children helped each other learn to read in English through shared reading.

Senechal and Le Fevre (2002) reported on a study conducted by Lonigan and Whitehurst in 1998. The topic of the study was parent and teacher involvement in a shared reading intervention for primary school children. The objective of the study was to determine whether parents and teachers could collaborate in the education of children shared reading intervention. Shared reading was an intervention for increasing the reading skills in children in grade 3 and 4. The results of the study showed that parents and teachers could work together to educate children. In addition, the intervention was found to be effective in increasing the reading skills of children.

Zellaman and Waterman (1998) reported on the work of Stevenson and Stigler on involving parents in education of their children that was done in 1992 in the United States of America on Chinese and Japanese schools. The main objective of the study was to determine whether the degree of parental involvement in the education of their children could contribute to higher academic achievement in school. The findings of the study indicated that Asian mothers were more actively involved in their children's education. The mothers, most of who were not working for pay outside the home, often purchased texts to work along with their children. Ultimately, Asian children attained higher achievements levels in Mathematics than the children from United States. Zellaman and Waterman therefore, concurred with Stevenson and Stigler to believe that high levels of parental involvement in education of their children could be attributed as a significant contributing fact to improve students' academic achievement.

Laurie, Funk and Janet (2000) reported a study they conducted in 1997 in the United States of America on early literacy learning initiative. The main objective of the study was to find out how parents could support their children on the path to literacy. The target of the study was parents whose first-grade children had low reading-skills. Laurie, the first-grade teacher, conducted a brief discussion of 'pause, prompt and praise method' with parents. Afterwards Laurie, Funk and Janet demonstrated how parents could use the pause, prompt and praise method to support their children on the path to literacy. The result of the study showed that parents greatly increased their use of praise, delayed their attention to errors caused by their children by pausing, and provided prompts rather than supplying the words to the children to repeat. For children with low reading skills, outcomes included a dramatic increase in self-correction rates and improvement in text reading levels. The parents were able to contribute to their children's better reading levels through collaborating with the teachers by reinforcing classroom programmes. This was done through the home-school reading programmes, at home. The children improved their reading levels.

Parental support is always crucial even in free basic education. Even if the government may provide the school requirements such as textbooks and pencils, parents and guardians may be required or expected to at least give parental support to their children. This may include bringing their children forward for enrolments, and make arrangements for their children to have space at home for homework, both in terms of actual physical space and in terms of the time to study, the latter by not overburdening the child with household chores such as sending him or her to go round selling fritters (MoE, 2002). The community in which a school is situated is also expected to render support to the school through the PTA by getting involved in debating and making decision on issues concerning the operations of the school, to ensure that the child receives a high quality of education (MoE, 1996 and 2007). Artkin *et al.*, (1988) also observes that schools need to recognise support and strengthen the crucial role of parents as educators. This is because parents have a view of their children which is much more comprehensive than a teacher's can possibly be. Teachers, therefore, have a good deal to learn from parents about the children they teach, but little opportunity is usually provided for this.

The ecology system theory, by Bronfenbrenner (1979) offered valuable lessons for conceptualising linkages between home and school. Consistent with the ecological system theory, it was concluded that development of a child would effectively be facilitated when parents and teachers work together. Another lesson was drawn from the statement by UNICEF (1999) which states that, education begins at birth and natural teachers of the children were parents. It provided a good lesson for both teachers and parents to realise that collaboration between them was beneficial to academic performance of the children. Throughout literature on parental support has showed that the outcome of involving parents in education had been; improved academic performance, positive behaviour change and improved reading abilities. In the study being reported efforts were made to find out parents' involvement in their children's education. We do not know if parents in Zambian schools do what parents in America do. This study wants find out and establish whether this could be a factor or not.

This chapter set out to review literature and define the concepts involved in the study on learning to read in English in different environment. The literature indicates that school environment is cardinal in providing a platform in which children learn how to read. The literature also indicates that adequate, up to date relevant reading material should be available in school to help both teachers and learners to sharpen their skills in reading. The next chapter describes the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant and related literature to the problem under discussion, to compare the environment in which the Grade 3 learners in selected Public and Private schools learn to read in English. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology used in this study. It describes the study area, study design, the methods used to collect data, population, sampling procedure, instruments used to collect data and the procedure for data collection. In addition, methods on how data was analysed are presented.

3.1 Research Design

This study was a case study of Grade 3 pupils from selected public and private schools in Mufulira and Lusaka districts. A case study seeks to describe a unit in detail, in context and holistically (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Naturalistic observation was used to observe live lessons. This allowed the subjects to be studied in their state. The researcher observed reading lessons at the selected schools and later had interviews with the class teachers based on the lessons observed. The study was also comparative because it compared the reading performance of learners in private schools and public schools.

3.2 Target Population

The population consisted of all Grade 3 pupils at the ten selected schools (five public and five private) in Mufulira and Lusaka urban districts. Mufulira urban has twenty-three public basic schools and fourteen registered private schools while Lusaka district has two hundred and eleven public basic schools and sixty-seven registered private schools (MoE, 2009).

3.3 Study Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to target Grade 3 pupils in Public basic and private schools. The study sample consisted of ten classes, one from each selected school, located in Mufulira and Lusaka urban districts. The researcher looked at Grade 2 end of year results in reading to establish the highest, medium and lowest achievers, using stratified random sampling. Then the researcher sampled the learners from each group (highest, medium and lowest achievers) by giving them numbered pieces of papers to choose from. The pieces of paper were put in a black plastic bag and shuffled several times. The sample size from the three groups was 15 learners from each selected school and the total was 150 learners. The observations of the lessons were done in the classes where the 150 learners tested were sampled from. Grade three teachers from the selected schools were used as informants in the study.

3.4 Research Instrument and Data Collection Procedures

Before gaining entrance to the schools, an elaborate procedure for permission was engaged in. The procedure included the researcher obtaining a letter from the Assistant Dean of Postgraduate Studies in the School of Education at the University of Zambia. The letter introduced the researcher to the relevant authorities concerned with schools management, starting with the office of the District Education Board Secretary down to the head-teachers of the individual schools investigated.

The quality of research depends, to a large extent, on the quality of the data collection tools. There are two main sources of data in this study, namely, secondary and primary. Secondary data on reading abilities in different environments; were collected from archival materials from the textbooks, internet, journals and articles. Such data were obtained from the main University of Zambia library; Department of Literature and Languages, University of Zambia; Ministry of Education and various Internet websites. From these sources, various types of literature on reading abilities were consulted. Primary data was gathered from the

respondents through the use of semi-guided interview schedules, focus group discussions, and comprehension sentences. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to collect data in the study. The present study used a mixture of data collection instruments. The different types of data collection techniques used were as follows:

- i) Quantitative data was collected through tests in reading whole words, sentences, word initial sound, word final sound, and reading for comprehension. The work was based on Step in to English (SITE) grade two works.
- ii) Lesson observation guide was used to observe literacy lessons. Thereafter, the researcher interviewed the teacher basing on the lesson observed in class for reading in English.
- iii) Face to face unstructured interviews were held with teachers to find out more on reading abilities of their pupils.
- iv) A focus group discussion guide was used to collect data from informants consisting of Grade 3 teachers, for different feelings and opinions on the learners' reading abilities. The discussions were tape recorded.
- v) Observation check list was used to observe the learning environment: sitting arrangement, number of learners in class, learning resources, time tabling of reading lessons, talking walls or anything which could either encourage or discourage learning.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the following procedures: for each selected school the number of Grade 3 learners in the class and the desks were counted. The number of furniture used by the teacher was also recorded. Data from the focus group discussions was categorized and interpreted in terms of common themes. Specific information was structured in terms of common patterns and inter-relations.

Quantitative data collected from the pupils' reading tests were analysed using the t-test.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Authority to conduct research was sought and granted by University of Zambia Research Ethics committee. This was done in recognition of their authority and to gain their support and cooperation during the study. Written consent from the office of District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) in Mufulira and Lusaka was provided to allow the researcher to conduct a study in schools in both districts. The researcher introduced herself to the respondents and explained the purpose of the study. In addition, verbal permission was sought from each participant who was selected in the sample and confidentiality was ensured in that no names have been indicated in the dissertation. No respondent was forced to give information when he or she was not willing to do so. The names of the participants and study sites have not been included in this study. All participants in this study, therefore, remained anonymous.

This chapter has discussed the methodology, selected sample, sampling procedures and research instruments used in the study. The instruments used were ideal for gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study. The presentation starts with addressing the two questions (1) in what environment do the Grade 3 learners in public and private schools learn how to read in English? And (2) how is reading in English taught in both sets of the schools? For the purpose of clarity of presentation the following sub-headings will be used; infrastructure, organising a conducive learning environment, teaching of reading in English, time tabling, materials and parental guidance. Then the results obtained for each of the hypotheses investigated are presented separately. These results were arrived at by using the data analysis procedure discussed in Chapter Three.

4.1 Infra-structure

The purpose of doing an investigation of infrastructure was to find out whether the buildings which the learners were exposed to were appropriate to learn how to read in English. The study looked at the following under infrastructure;

4.1.1 Classroom

The study made the following observations of the classrooms in which the Grade 3 learners from the 10 selected schools were learning to read in English. Schools 1 to 5 were private schools, and schools 6 to 10 were public basic schools. Tables 1 and 2 give a summary of factors affecting classroom space.

Table 1: Summary of factors affecting classroom space availability in private schools

Schools	Number of Pupils	Number of desks	Teacher's table	Teacher's chair	Desks Needed	Differences of Desks Needed
1	20	12	1	1	Nil	None
2	22	12	2	1	Nil	None
3	22	12	2	1	Nil	None
4	20	12	2	1	Nil	None
5	28	14	1	1	Nil	None

Source: Field data, 2010

Schools 1 to 5 had enough desks and learners sat comfortably, two learners at each desk.

Table 2: Summary of factors affecting classroom space availability in public schools

Schools	Number of Pupils	Number of desks	Teacher's table	Teacher's chair	Desks Needed	Difference of desks Needed
6	49	20	1	1	25	05
7	58	18	1	1	29	11
8	59	20	1	1	30	10
9	57	20	1	1	29	09
10	47	16	1	1	24	08

Source: Field data, 2010

Schools 6 to 10 had insufficient desks. Table 2 above shows the number of desks that each school needed and the deficits.

The researcher took account of the sitting arrangement of the learners in the classrooms. It was established that in public basic schools learners were crowded in all the selected classrooms, as evidenced in Table 2. All the schools 6 to 10 had a deficit of desks or had a number of learners who were not comfortably accommodated in class. A comparison of the number of desks in schools 1 to 5, established that the learners were comfortably seated unlike their counterparts in

public basic schools. Three to four learners sat on a desk meant for 2 learners in public basic schools.

School 5 had an interesting setup. The desks were arranged in 3 rows at school 5 which made it difficult for the learners to work in groups. Some learners could not concentrate because they were squeezed together and it was difficult for them to pay attention and listen to the teacher as others were making noise. There was communication breakdown when it was time for group work. School 5 had 2 small windows and a small bookshelf in front. The rest of the 9 schools had classrooms which were spacious with good ventilation.

The study established that schools 6 to 10 which are public basic schools had insufficient desks for the learners to comfortably participate effectively in learning how to read.

4.1.2 Supporting Libraries facilities

Libraries are cardinal to enhance the reading process. Both learners and teachers benefit a lot if their school environment has a well-stocked library. The study intended to find out if the selected schools had a well-stocked library. The researcher asked the class teachers at each school whether they had a school library. The researcher further observed how the Grade 3 learners utilised the library where there was one. Table 3 and 4 show the schools which had libraries and librarians

Table 3: School libraries in private schools

School	Library	Librarian	Number of pupils
1	1	1	20
2	1	1	22
3	1	1	22
4	1	1	20
5	1	1	28

Source: Field data, 2010

Schools 1 to 5 had well stocked libraries with a qualified librarian, furthermore each grade had a library lesson on the time table.

Table 4: School libraries in public schools

<i>School</i>	<i>Library</i>	<i>Librarian</i>	<i>Number of pupils</i>
6	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	49
7	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	58
8	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	59
9	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	57
10	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	47

Source: Field data, 2010

Schools 6 to 10 did not have the library infra-structure or the librarian.

Each private school had the library infra-structure and a qualified librarian to manage it. The study reviewed that the librarian helped the learners choose and read books according to their reading levels and interest. The old readers from the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) were also used by learners who usually took them home to read over the weekend. In addition, teachers managed a class library for the learners with books enough to go round, and work cards for their individual practice. At schools 1 to 4 the library period was used for extensive reading where learners used the Oxford Reading Tree co-books, for each grade from grades 1 to 4. The teacher's duty was to ensure that he/she listened to the learners read so as to identify difficulties (words, phrases, sentences) which would be included in the learner's 'Reading Signing Book' for the attention of the librarian and the parents or guardians. Then, parents signed the books after assisting the learners. The learners showed willingness and actively participated in reading lessons at these schools. Learners read the books at home with the help of a more knowledgeable other

(MKO) persons. This is called 'Shared Reading'. In addition, the study found that the learners recorded whatever happened at school and home in their 'journals'. Each learner read aloud his/her journal to the class on Friday or Monday. A journal is a pupil's exercise book organized like a diary for daily record of his/her activities in school or at home. In these private schools, each learner kept records of books read successfully. At school 5 it was observed that the learners were not allowed to carry the library books home. The learners were only allowed to read the books during the library lesson.

On the contrary, public school did not have library infrastructure but a few them in the study had class libraries managed by the class teachers only. Most of these libraries did not have sufficient and appropriate reading books for the particular grade. All the public schools had many English readers from the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) and other readers in English which were packed in the teachers' offices without being used. At school 10 the class teacher gave the Grade 3 Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) books to the learners to read home on Fridays with the help of their parents or someone older and they were requested to bring them back on Monday. This particular teacher did not have enough time to hear the learners read these books because she managed a double session arrangement of teaching.

It was also observed that learners in private schools spend more time practising reading, for instance, at the library, home and classroom than their counterparts in public schools who did not have enough books to practice in class or home.

It was found that nine schools had the classrooms for effective reading programs. Only one private school (School 5) used a very small room with two small windows in front of the class with a chalk-board in between. The learners sat in three rows, making group-work difficult. The private schools (1-5) had school library infrastructure with adequate books and managed by qualified librarians as well as class libraries. The public schools (6-10) had class libraries only with inadequate books. These class libraries are different from school libraries in that each teacher in public schools had a collection of books which only pupils from his or her class

could read unlike in private schools where there was one central library that all the pupils at school could access books for reading.

4.2 Organizing a Conducive Learning Environment

Part of the study's aim was to establish whether and to what extent the schools visited provided an environment that was conducive for learning. A learning environment that is conducive might be described as all external factors influencing the life and activities of people. In this case and in reference to a learning environment, it is the natural world exhibiting a set of external conditions, especially those affecting a particular activity. It must be functional with regard to learners' learning. It should provide materials of all kinds which stimulate and extend knowledge and thinking (Dean, 1997).

To determine if the environment was conducive for learning, the researcher physically went into the classrooms and met the teachers and learners, then observed lessons on learning how to read in English, and later discussed the lessons with the teachers.

4.2.1 Class-management

The researcher observed that all the schools involved in the study divided their classes into four reading groups with each group given an identifying name having a given number of members for each group.

4.2.1 (a) In private schools

In the private schools, the classes had between 20 and 28 learners. There were two learners occupying a desk meant for two, while teachers kept a class library for the learners with books enough to go round and work cards for their individual practice. School activities were well-organized and learners kept time for all activities. Learners were divided into groups of not more than seven for each group. Moreover, the learners were well-disciplined because they followed instructions

from the teachers and had well-ordered desks during lessons. It was rare for the researcher to observe instances of absenteeism.

4.2.1 (b) In public schools

The public schools, however, presented a different scenario concerning class enrolment. The numbers ranged between 47 and 59 learners per class. Here also, as in the private schools, the classes were divided into four reading groups with the minimum of thirteen learners in a group, each given an identification name. However, most of the schools did not have a common library but instead had class libraries which also did not have sufficient and appropriate reading books for the particular grade. Furthermore, it was observed that quite often learners were absent from lessons due to reasons such as a rainy day. Besides, activities such as sports and others that are entertainment in nature took prime stage hence replacing lessons.

The researcher discovered that furniture in the public schools, especially desks for the learners, was insufficient in that there would be three learners sharing a desk meant for two and some pupils preferred to sit on the mat or carpet when writing Individual Learning Activity (ILA).

4.2.2 Teacher qualification

Included in determining an environment that is conducive was teacher quality. Quality of education depends very much on the quality of the teachers.

4.2.2.1 Private schools

In this study, it was found that teachers who taught at most private schools (schools 1, 2 and 4) were trained as pre-school teachers. At school 3, the teacher was a secondary school diploma holder and these teachers were acquainted with the Oxford Reading Tree methods which is a British Reading Programme. At school 5 the teacher was a qualified primary school teacher with Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) certificate.

Table 5: Teacher qualifications in private schools

Schools	Teachers' qualifications
1	Grade 12 Pre-school teacher. Trained to teach Oxford reading tree
2	Grade 12 Pre-school teacher. Trained to teach Oxford reading tree
3	Grade 12 Secondary School Diploma Certificate teacher. Trained to teach Oxford reading tree
4	Grade 12 Pre-school teacher. Trained to teach Oxford reading tree
5	Grade 12 Zambia Primary Course (ZPC)

Source: Field data, 2010

Teachers at schools 1 to 4 are pre-school teachers who have been trained to teach Oxford Reading Tree syllabus. In private schools all classes have back-up teachers to attend to the class when the class teacher is absent.

4.2.2.2 Public Schools

In public schools, all teachers were qualified primary school teachers with full grade twelve school certificates. However, they were not fully trained to handle NBTL and SITE classes or PRP. At schools 7, 8, and 9 public schools, teachers were not trained to teach the PRP classes. The teachers who were trained to teach the PRP had been transferred to other schools, retired, seconded to teach upper primary, died or promoted to head schools.

Table 6: Teacher qualification in public schools

Schools	Teachers' qualifications
6	Grade 12, Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC)
7	Grade 12 Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC)
8	Grade 12 Pre-school teacher at Kitwe college of Education
9	Grade 12 Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC)
10	Grade 12 Primary Diploma, Zambia Primary Course (ZPC)

Source: Field data, 2010

Another phenomenon observed was the lack of back-up teachers in public schools. This was in the event of the absence of a practising teacher who had gone on vocational leave, maternity leave or any other statutory leave.

4.3 Teaching of Reading in English

One of the objectives of the study was to investigate how reading in English lesson in Grade 3 was taught in public basic schools and private schools. The ministry of education has recommended ways in which English should be taught to lower grades at primary level (MoE, 2002). Some of the features of this recommended method are that classes should be divided into four social or pace separate groups, there should be a teaching corner for teaching individual groups and to be used by the whole class at starting and sharing time, there should be a class library which should contain story books and stories written by the learners themselves, parents, teachers and older students and the walls of the classroom should charts that display the skills that learners need to learn in reading

The researcher observed that in private schools some of these features were prominent in the teaching of reading in English. All the private schools (schools 1 to 5) had well stocked class libraries which learners used effectively. Learners were divided in groups of not more than seven in each group with an identifying name; a desk was occupied by two learners. The learners interacted with teacher freely during the lessons. The classrooms had talking walls covered with learners' work and new work learnt in class which was changed every week, and learners learnt new work at the teaching station. The private schools had two or more English readers from the recommended list of the Ministry of Education.

It was observed that in public basic schools the recommended features were not taught as it was expected. The learners were divided in reading groups with the minimum of thirteen learners in a group; each group given an identification name, a desk meant for two learners was occupied by three or four learners most of the learners preferred to sit on the mat or carpet when writing individual work. The class libraries had insufficient books. The public schools had only one English reader recommended from the Ministry of Education list. Most of the learners were unable to read. One teacher from school 9 during focus group discussion attributed learner's failure to read to lack of learning and reading materials, and not breaking

through in Grade 1. The reason was that school administrators did not enforce the rule that those children who did not breakthrough in Grade 1 should repeat the grade and not proceed to Grade 2.

The researcher observed the teachers teach while taking note of the methods they used. The learners' actual responses were also noted against the expected responses based upon the postulates of pedagogies.

4.4 Time Tabling

The purpose of finding out about the time tabling was to determine whether the teaching and learning of reading was timed and documented.

In most of the private schools (schools 1 to 4) that were sampled in the study, reading in English on the time table was taught four times in a week. Each lesson lasted for 40 minutes. At school 5 reading in English was taught 5 times in a week. Hand-writing was also treated as a subject and lasted for forty minutes. In addition, schools 1 to 4 had one library period of one hour, while at school 5 it lasted for 30 minutes where the librarian helped learners choose and read books according to their reading levels and interest. In these private schools, the time table was strictly followed and each learner kept records of books read successfully.

Time spent by learners on learning anything is cardinal (Thomas and Collier, 2002). The study found out that the learners at private schools reported at school as tabulated in Table 9. This was according to the time schedule for these schools. Hence, it was observed that the school learning schedule was strictly adhered to by the learners. Revision and remedial work was given to the learners in the afternoon. During this period, the teacher listened to each learner read a given task. Thereafter, the teachers remained behind to prepare lessons to teach the next public day consequently knocking off at 16:30 hours. This strict adherence to the time table ensured that time was left to offer remedial teaching to those pupils who had difficulties in reading.

Table 7: Time spent at school in private schools

School	Classes begin	Lesson Periods for English reading/week	Time spent learning reading in English	Classes end
1	07 : 10 hours	4	40minutes	15:30 hours
2	07:10 hours	4	40minutes	15:30hours
3	07:30 hours	4	40minutes	12: 30hours
4	07: 30 hours	4	40minutes	15:30hours
5	07:30hours	5	1hour	15: 00hours

Source: Field data, 2010

Table 8: Time spent at school in public basic schools

School	Classes begin	Lesson periods For English/week	Time spent learning reading in English	Class end
6	11:00hours	5	1hour	15:00hours
7	07:00hours	5	1hour	11:00hours
8	07:00hours	5	1hour	11:30hours
9	07:00hours	5	1hour	11:30hours
10	11:30hours	5	1hour	15:30hours

Source: Field data, 2010

In the public schools (schools 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10), learners reported at 06:45 hours and knocked off at 10:45 hours. Usually, many learners reported late and absconded from classes. This especially became worse during the rainy season when they would stay away completely for days. In public schools 6, 8, 9 and 10, teachers taught double class without receiving double class allowance for several years of their service; this is a de-motivating factor to the teachers.

The public schools had five English Reading periods in a week which lasted one hour each. In addition, the learners had one in-class period of library which lasted thirty minutes. The public schools in the study only had class libraries managed by the class teachers. It was observed that the time table was not followed. Some

reading lessons observed lasted one hour thirty minutes. However, many learners were not able to read given tasks in these lessons.

All in all, the time table was seen to be adhered to only in the private schools, whereas the schedules for the public schools were often flouted by both the teachers and the learners.

4.5 Materials

The reason for seeking to know if the investigated schools had learning to read materials in English was to discover if the schools had the appropriate and adequate books, charts and other equipment.

The researcher observed that the Ministry of Education recommends books from different publishers and the public schools were at liberty to choose and buy a title of their choice. The following are some of the recommended books for Grade 3: *Breakthrough to English* by Longman, *English Grade 3* by Macmillan, *Stepping Stones Grade 3* by Maidens, *Grade 3 English* by Insaka, and *New Progressive English Grade 3* by Oxford University Press.

In private schools 1 to 4, learners used a variety of reading materials. They used a combination of Oxford Reading Tree and Zambian reading books. At school 5 they used English Grade 3 books and Read On Course (ROC) activity books. At these schools reading books in English were sufficient for all learners. The learners were also involved in reading games and reading clubs. Wednesday or Friday afternoons were spent on reading new words from the “talking walls” for that week. It was observed that at private schools they had “talking walls” for all subjects. The teachers changed the “talking walls” every week replacing the old with new ones. At school 3, learners were encouraged to read the Zambian language vowels which were written on some of the talking walls although it was not taught as a subject at this school. Parents and guardians requested the school administration to teach the learners how to read in Zambian language so that they could pronounce their Zambian names properly, not like aliens.

The researcher also found that it was standard practice in the private schools administration to inform parents/guardians about the kind of books required for the following term for them to buy. Table 9 shows the books that were used in private schools.

Table 9: Books used by learners in private schools

School	Textbook title	Number of copies	Number of pupils
1	Break Through To English Stepping stones ZPC, Work book 1, ROC Activity book according to level.	30 24 20 6 in each level	20
2	New Progressive English 3, ZPC workbook 1, ROC Activity book according to level.	25 22 08 in each level	22
3	Stepping stones Ginn level 6, New Progressive English 3, Junior English 1, Explore English, ZPC workbook 1 ROC Activity book according the level	25 22 23 23 23 22 06 in each level	22
4	Ginn level 6, New Progressive English 3, Junior English 1, Explore English, ZPC workbook 1 ROC Activity books	20 25 25 22 19 5 in each level	20
5	ROC Activity book according to level, English Grade 3 by Macmillan	8 in each level 29	28

Source: Field data, 2010

It was a different story for the public schools where, ten years after the inception of the PRP, there had not been any replenishing of the reading books' kits that were received in the schools. In most public schools, it was observed that reading books in English were not enough for the learners to read individually. It was observed

that at schools 7 and 10 learners in Grade 3 were using books meant for Grade 2 at starting time and sharing time. At these schools, teachers wrote part of the story of the day's lesson on the chalk board. The teachers then read the story aloud and allowed few learners to read aloud after them. Most learners were not able to read the given tasks. Instead, the teacher asked the learners to answer questions based on the story in their books. Inadequate of learner's textbooks and other teacher's supporting materials made teachers feel that a variety of possible approaches to teaching reading were limited and inadequate. The study observed that in all public schools studied learners were slow in performing the writing tasks assigned to them by the teacher.

Table 10: Books used by learners in public basic schools

School	Textbook title	Number of copies	Number of pupils
6	Break through to English, ROC Activity: Red level, Yellow level Green level	15 02 05 06	49
7	English Grade 3 by Macmillan, ROC Activity: Red level, Yellow level Green level	20 06 04 08	58
8	Stepping stones ROC Activity book: Red level, Yellow level Green level	18 05 03 02	59
9	English Grade 3 by Macmillan, ROC Activity: Red level, Yellow level Green level.	20 08 02 03	57
10	English Grade 3 by Macmillan, ROC Activity: Red level, Yellow level Green level	16 05 03 01	47

Source: Field data, 2010

In conclusion, the research established that the private schools had adequate reading materials and could easily obtain more, while the public basic schools did not have enough materials for their large learner numbers.

4.6 Parental Support

To find out if parents were involved in their children's learning of English at their respective schools, the researcher worked with the teachers and school administrators who willingly provided the information.

The researcher observed that parents and guardians of learners at private schools, unlike those in public schools, were actively involved in the welfare of their children. They gladly bought books for their children, were involved in the signing of 'Reading Signing Books' and whenever called upon by the school authority, they responded quickly and positively. Teachers and parents or guardians worked as partners in helping the learning improve their reading welfare of learners. At school 5 (private school) parents were allowed to find out how their children fared in reading in class every Wednesday.

Generally, parents and guardians of learners at public schools did not cooperate with school authorities. They rarely reported when called to school and did not often buy any prescribed textbooks for their children.

During focus group discussion a teacher from school 6 commented that the home had a big influence on the children and if parents did not care about the education of their children such children did not get motivated at school. For example, some parents did not check the learners' books. As a result there were instances of children not attending school but only playing football the whole term and parents would not know because they did not check their children's books.

Commenting on involving children in the house chores, a teacher from school 9 said it was not a good practice because some parents used the children to sell things when they knocked off up to the late hours. When such children went to school the

following morning, they would be too tired to perform well in class, and that had brought bad influence on their class work. The teacher also added this has prompted some school administrators to work with some parents to solve the problems by telling the parents that they should find other means of finding money other than sending children to sell.

One class teacher from school 4 suggested some of the ways in which parents are expected to support their children in learning how to read. She explained that parents should make sure that their children did their reading homework, went to school regularly, and were provided with adequate food before going to school and those learners had all the requirements needed for their learning to read, including school fees. Both the home and school environment should be conducive and learner friendly enough for learners to learn reading and live without fear. The teacher also noticed that one of the practices that made children not to learn to read well at school was fear corporal punishment, which has been banned by the government but was still being practiced with impunity by the teachers and being encouraged by parents. She commented that you cannot expect learners to learn to read properly where they felt insecure.

A teacher from school 6 commented that parents of learners in public basic schools had other reasons for not involving themselves in the education of their children. For instance some parents had financial problems, since most of them in Mufulira have been retrenched. This contributed to most of them being preoccupied with looking for money for food instead of participating in the education of their children. There was also a lack of sensitization about school activities which contributed to parents not being motivated to participate in the affairs of the school.

The study, through the focus group discussion, revealed that all the teachers from the selected schools said they themselves were willing to work with the parents of their learners through Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) meetings and other school activities such as, homework, cost sharing, and Open Days. It was noted that the enthusiasm of private schools could be attributed to its spending lots of money

on their children's education. These findings are consistent with those of Hornby (1995) who found that most parents collaborated with teachers by reinforcing classroom programmes at home such as reading programmes. It can, therefore, be argued that if parents were involved in school activities, it could, to a greater extent, solve the problem in the education of their children.

It was observed that parents in private schools gave enough guidance to their children but were lacking in the public schools.

4.7 Attendance

The researcher observed the presence of learners and checked their names against the class attendance register. This was to determine whether learning and absence from reading lessons correlate.

In addition to parental guidance outlined earlier, contact time between the learners and their teacher is also critical in learning how to read. A class register is an official document in school which contains the names of the learners, date of birth, date of first entry into school, addresses of the learners, sex, names of parents or guardians, nationality, status and number of weeks of the term. The registers looked at revealed that most of the learners in public basic schools were absent or not attending classes every school day as evidenced by the mark 'X' indicated against names for those learners who absented themselves from school. The registers revealed that most of the learners were being kept by their guardians and not their biological parents as evidenced by the information found in the register.

The registers have columns with the following letters;

- a) **P** refers to the number of learners who are present on that day;
- b) **A** refers to the number of learners who are absent on that day;
- c) **Total present** refers to the number of learners present throughout the week;
- d) **Total absent** refers to the number of learners absent during the week; and
- e) **H** stands for public holidays.

4.7.1 Private schools

There were few cases of absenteeism recorded for schools 1 to 5, and this was accounted for by the transportation system provided by the schools or their parents. Another contributing factor was that the parents of the learners were actively involved in their children's welfare at school. The following series of tables (11-15) shows pupils school attendance for school 1 to 5.

Table 11: School 1 register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no. of PP s	Days										T/t Pr ese nt	T/tAbse ntees
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
18 Jan	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
25 Jan	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
01 Feb	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
08 Feb	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
15 Feb	20	19	01	19	01	20	00	20	00	20	00	18	02
22 Feb	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
02 Mar	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
08 Mar	20	MID-TERM BREAK										20	00
15 Mar	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
22 Mar	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
29 Mar	20	18	02	17	END OF TERM							15	05
05 Apr													

Source: Field data, 2010

Table 12: School 2 register

Date	T/t no. of pps	Days										T/t Present	T/t Absentees
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
18 Jan		22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
25 Jan	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
01 Feb	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	20	02	20	02	16	04
08 Feb	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
15 Feb	22	22	00	22	00	18	04	18	04	18	04	10	12
22 Feb	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
02 Mar	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
08 Mar	22	Mid-term break										22	00
15 Mar	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
22 Mar	22	22	00	22	00	20	02	19	03	22	00	17	05
29 Mar	22	End of term											
05 Apr													

Source: Field data, 2010

Table 13: School 3 Register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no of pps	Days										T/t present	T/t Absentees
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	22	17	05	20	02	22	00	22	00	20	02	17	05
18 Jan	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
25 Jan	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
01 Feb	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
08 Feb	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
15 Feb	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
22 Feb	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
02 Mar	22	22	00	22	00	19	03	20	02	20	02	15	07
08 Mar	22	Mid-Term break											
15 Mar	22	20	02	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	20	02
22 Mar	22	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00	22	00
29 Mar	22	End of term											
05 Apr	22												

Table 14: School 4 register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no. of pp s	Days Total Present										T/t Pres ent	T/t Abse ntees
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	20	16	04	18	02	20	00	20	00	20	00	14	06
18 Jan	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
25 Jan	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
01 Feb	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
08 Feb	20	20	00	20	00	19	01	19	01	18	02	16	04
15 Feb	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
22 Feb	20	18	02	18	02	20	00	20	00	20	00	16	04
02 Mar	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
08 Mar	20	Mid Term break											
15 Mar	20	20	00	18	02	20	00	20	00	20	00	18	02
22 Mar	20	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00	20	00
29 Mar	20	End of term											
05 Apr	20												

Source: Field data, 2010

Table 15: School 5 register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no. pps	Days										T/t Pres ent	T/t Abs ente es
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	28	23	05	23	05	23	05	26	02	26	02	09	19
18 Jan	28	27	01	27	01	28	00	28	00	28	00	26	02
25 Jan	28	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00
01 Feb	28	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00
08 Feb	28	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00
15 Feb	28	27	01	27	01	28	00	28	00	28	00	26	02
22 Feb	28	24	04	24	04	28	00	28		28		20	08
02 Mar	28	28	00	28	00	28	00	28		28		28	00
08 Mar	28	Mid-term break											
15 Mar	28	26	02	27	01	24	04	28	00	28	00	21	07
22 Mar	28	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00	28	00
29 Mar	28	End of term											
05 Apr	28												

Source: Field data, 2010

4.7.2 Public basic schools

The researcher observed that there was a lot of absenteeism in the 5 public schools. The learners gave a lot of reasons why they were absent from school. The major causes of learner's absenteeism were house chores, rainy days; sports days; arts festivals; health immunization days. Most of the chores had to do with survival strategies like selling of fritters at the market, buying from the market. It was surprising that the parents chose to send their children to sell at the market or to go and buy items from the market during schools times and hence their absenteeism.

The general trend in the observed public schools is that most of them are those that used to be Whites-only schools within the Whites-only residences and were meant for the white children. The situation obtaining is that these residences are currently occupied by the affluent. These 'well-to-do' residents usually prefer to take their children to private schools. The result is that public schools in these neighborhoods are attended by children from high density areas that are very far-away from these schools. Children from these areas usually do not attend school regularly because of

lack of money for transport to go to the schools. This lack of consistency in attendance results in learners missing learning time and school programs including reading suffers.

The following series of tables (16-20) shows attendance registers for school 6 to 10

Table 16: School 6 register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no. of pps	Days										T/t Present	T/t Absentes	
		M		T		W		Th		F				
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A			
11 Jan	49	40	09	39	10	39	10	40	11	40	11	02	47	
18 Jan	49	40	09	44	05	48	01	48	01	48	01	32	17	
25 Jan	49	47	02	47	02	47	02	47	02	45	04	37	12	
01 Feb	49	48	01	48	01	48	01	48	01	48	01	44	05	
08 Feb	49	48	01	48	01	48	01	48	01	48	01	44	05	
15 Feb	49	47	02	45	04	45	04	45	04	40	19	23	26	
22 Feb	49	48	01	48	01	48	01	48	01	39	10	35	14	
02 Mar	49	47	02	47	02	47	02	47	02	40	09	32	17	
08 Mar	49	H	H	47	02	47	02	47	02	H	H	43	06	
15 Mar	49	48	01	48	01	48	01	48	01	47	02	43	06	
29 Mar	49	47	02	47	02	47	02	47	02	H	H	41	08	
05 Apr	49	End of term												

Source: Field data, 2010

Table 17: School 7 register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no. pps	Days										T/tal Prese nt	T/t Absente es
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	58	48	10	47	09	47	09	47	09	47	09	04	54
18 Jan	58	45	13	45	13	48	10	48	10	48	10	02	56
25 Jan	58	50	08	56	02	56	02	55	03	50	08	35	23
01 Feb	58	57	01	57	01	50	08	50	08	49	09	31	27
08 Feb	58	57	01	57	01	57	01	57	01	57	01	53	05
15 Feb	58	57	01	57	01	57	01	57	01	57	01	53	05
22 Feb	58	56	02	55	03	55	03	55	03	55	03	44	14
02 Mar	58	57	01	57	01	55	03	52	06	50	08	39	19
08 Mar	58	H	H	50	09	52	06	49	09	H	H	34	24
15 Mar	58	45	13	49	09	50	08	51	07	42	16	05	53
22 Mar	58	54	04	54	04	54	04	50	08	45	13	25	33
29 Mar	58	49	09	49	09	50	08	47	11	H	H	21	37
05 Apr	58	End of term											

Source: Field data, 2010

Table 18: School 8 register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no. pp s	Days										T/t present	T/t Abse ntees
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	59	45	14	49	10	52	07	52	07	42	17	04	55
18 Jan	59	52	07	52	07	52	07	49	10	46	13	15	44
25 Jan	59	57	02	57	02	59	00	59	00	44	15	40	19
01 Feb	59	54	05	56	03	55	04	55	04	49	10	33	26
08 Feb	59	55	04	55	04	55	04	55	04	50	09	34	25
15 Feb	59	56	03	56	03	56	03	54	05	52	07	38	21
22 Feb	59	57	02	57	02	49	10	50	09	52	07	29	30
02 Mar	59	52	07	55	04	56	03	54	05	49	10	30	29
08 Mar	59	H	H	49	10	49	10	48	09	H	H	30	29
15 Mar	59	50	09	50	09	49	10	49	10	47	12	09	50
22 Mar	59	51	08	50	09	50	09	50	09	48	11	13	46
29 Mar	59	54	05	54	05	55	04	56	03	H	H	42	17
05 Apr	59	End of term											

(Source: Field data, 2010)

Table 19: School 9 register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no. of pp s	Days										T/t Pre sen t	T/t Ab sen tee s
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	57	49	08	48	09	49	08	49	08	49	08	16	41
18 Jan	57	50	07	48	09	44	13	56	01	39	08	19	38
25 Jan	57	56	01	57	00	57	00	48	09	40	17	30	27
01 Feb	57	54	03	54	03	54	03	45	12	40	17	19	38
08 Feb	57	50	07	49	08	49	08	48	09	40	17	08	49
15 Feb	57	54	03	54	03	54	03	54	03	54	03	42	15
22 Feb	57	54	03	52	05	52	05	53	04	54	03	37	20
02 Mar	57	50	07	54	03	50	07	53	04	49	08	28	29
08 Mar	57	H	H	56	01	56	01	50	07	H	H	48	09
15 Mar	57	53	04	56	03	55	02	40	17	39	18	13	44
22 Mar	57	44	13	53	04	50	07	47	10	41	06	17	40
29 Mar	57	54	03	54	03	54	03	50	07	H	H	41	16
05 Apr	57	End of term											

Source: Field data, 2010

Table 20: School 10 register

Date Wk Beg	T/t no. p/p s	Days										T/t Pre sen t	T/t Abs ente es
		M		T		W		Th		F			
		P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A		
11 Jan	47	40	07	38	09	39	08	39	08	39	08	08	39
18 Jan	47	46	01	46	01	47	00	47	00	45	02	43	04
25 Jan	47	47	00	47	00	47	00	47	00	40	07	40	07
01 Feb	47	42	05	42	05	42	05	42	05	42	05	22	25
08 Feb	47	44	03	42	05	44	03	40	07	39	08	21	26
15 Feb	47	47	00	47	00	47	00	47	00	45	02	45	02
22 Feb	47	47	00	47	00	47	00	47	00	47	00	47	00
02 Mar	47	47	00	47	00	47	00	47	00	47	00	47	00
08 Mar	47	H	H	43	04	42	05	40	07	H	H	31	16
15 Mar	47	45	02	40	07	35	12	45	02	39	08	16	31
22 Mar	47	47	00	47	00	47	00	45	02	47	00	45	02
29 Mar	47	35	12	39	08	39	08	40	07	H	H	12	35
05 Apr	47	End of term											

To conclude, it was found that there were more absenteeism in public basic schools than was observed in private schools.

4.8 Testing of Hypotheses

The researcher needed to compare the English reading levels between learners in the investigated public basic schools and private schools. A t-test was used for this purpose. Each of the reading components (reading whole words, sentences, word initial sound, word final sound, and reading for comprehension) was tested separately and the results are presented separately as indicated below.

4.8.1 Words

H_1 = Grade 3 pupils in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in reading English words.

Table 21: Paired Samples Test for Reading Words

		Paired Differences in words					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Private school – Public school	37.76000	16.66510	1.92432	33.92571	41.59429	19.623	74	.000

The Grade 3 learners in Private schools performed better than the Grade 3 learners in Public schools because the p-value (0.001 is less than alpha (0.05). Therefore, we can accept the hypothesis and conclude that the Grade 3 learners in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in reading words in English, $t = 19.623$; $df = 74$; $p < 0.05$.

4.8.2 Word Initial Sound

H₂ = Grade 3 pupils in private schools significantly perform better than those public schools in word initial sound.

Table 22: Paired Samples Test for initial sound

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Private Public	2.00000	1.40463	.16219	1.67683	2.32317	12.331	74	.000

The Grade 3 learners in Private schools perform better than the Grade 3 learners in Public schools because the p-value (0.001 is less than alpha (0.05). Therefore, we can accept the hypothesis and conclude that the Grade 3 learners in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in reading initial sounds of words, $t = 12.331$; $df = 74$; $p < 0.05$.

4.8.3 Word Final Sound

H₃ = Grade 3 pupils in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in reading the final sound.

Table 23: Paired Samples Test for final sound

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Private Public	2.74667	5.19900	.60033	1.55049	3.94285	4.575	74	.000

The Grade 3 learners in Private schools perform better than the Grade 3 learners in Public schools because the p-value (0.001) is less than alpha (0.05). Therefore, we

can accept our hypothesis and conclude that the Grade 3 learners in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in final sound of words in English. $t = 4.575$; $df = 74$; $p < 0.05$.

4.8.4 Sentences

H_1 = Grade 3 pupils in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in sentences.

Table 24: Paired Samples t Test for sentence

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Private Public	13.37333	5.66825	.65451	12.06919	14.67748	20.433	74	.000

The Grade 3 learners in Private schools perform better than the Grade 3 learners in Public schools because the p-value (0.001 is less than alpha (0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted and we can argue that the Grade 3 learners in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in reading sentences in English. $t = 20.433$; $df = 74$; $p < 0.05$.

4.8.5 Comprehension

H_5 = Grade 3 pupils in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in English reading comprehension.

Table 25: Paired Samples t Test on Reading Comprehension

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Private Public	4.62667	3.10524	.35856	3.91222	5.34112	12.903	74	.000

The Grade 3 learners in Private schools perform better than the Grade 3 learners in Public schools because the p-value (0.001 is less than alpha (0.05). Therefore, we can accept our hypothesis and state that the Grade 3 learners in Private schools significantly perform better than those in Public schools in English reading comprehension. $t = 12.903$; $df = 74$; $p < 0.05$.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in the same sequence in which they were presented in chapter four; however, it starts with a brief outline of the purpose and scope of the study.

The main objective was to find out the environment in which learners in public and private schools learn how to read in English and how this environment affects their reading. The researcher investigated the infra-structure, organization of the learning environment, the teaching of reading in English, time tabling, learning and teaching materials, parental support. Learner-absenteeism and also tested the learners' ability to read. The study was guided by the two questions listed below;

- (i) In what environment do the Grade 3 learners in public and private schools learn how to read in English?
- (ii) How is reading in English taught in private and public schools?

The study advanced five hypotheses thus:

H₁ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading English words.

H₂ - Grade 3 pupils in private schools perform better than those in public schools in word initial sound.

H₃ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading the word final sound.

H₄ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading sentences.

H₅ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in English reading comprehension.

5.1 Infra-structure

Under infrastructure were included such structures as classrooms and libraries.

5.1.1 Classroom

From the findings of the study it was observed that most private schools had a learning environment in the classrooms that was conducive for reading. For instance Schools 2, 3, and 4 which were private schools had big tables where the learners' exercise books were kept, this allowed the teacher to organize and manage reading activities to the benefit of learners. This is in agreement with Dean (1997) who states that the seating arrangement should accommodate the learning activity. Although teachers have no control of the size of their classrooms, they can control the seating arrangement within the classroom. School 5 had enough desks arranged in three rows however the classroom was small and not well ventilated. This prevented the Learners could not effectively participate in group work. Dean (1997) rightly argues that inside the classroom there should be ample space to make alternate seating arrangements and lighting intensities. The excellent classroom environment, as regards physical space, is where the space has been maximally adjusted to meet learner diversity and where space arrangement promotes interactivity and where active learning and positive interaction are present. It must also permit all learners to see instructional presentations and allow the teacher to be close to all learners.

The study further found out that all five public basic schools (school 6-10) did not have enough desks to comfortably accommodate learners. Each desk was occupied by three to four learners, instead of the recommended two learners per desk. Such a classroom environment does not promote interactivity, active learning and positive interaction. In terms of reading the cramped space does no allow the teacher to go round and correct wrong reading habits as the pupils read silently. The lack of space

also does not permit all learners to see instructional presentations and allow the teacher to be close to the learners in congested classroom space. If there is not enough space in the classroom, maneuverability of teachers as they try to correct the learners' work or to guide the learners is limited.

The study also observed that the classrooms in schools 5-10 had higher temperature which made many learners doze during the teaching/learning process. Congested warm classrooms tend to make learners become more sleepy, inattentive, and consequently bored and disruptive.

5.1.2 Supporting Library facilities

A library is a very important aspect in the learning process of every child in learning how to read. All the five private schools had class libraries which were well stocked and had enough books for all learners. These libraries were managed by class teachers. In addition, the five private schools had school libraries managed by librarians. The librarians worked in cooperation with the teachers and parents/guardians to help the learners improve their reading skills through shared reading. It was also observed that learners in private schools spent more time practising reading, for instance, at the library, home and classroom than their friends in public schools who did not have enough books to practice in class or home. Library staff helped learners select reading materials and provided literacy-enhancing programmes such as story-telling, music, creative arts, and performances. This is in line with what Ministry of Education (2002) recommends as part of PRP in Zambia.

It is always advisable to have a library at every school. Learners and their teachers need library resources and the expertise of a librarian to succeed in learning how to read in English. Keith (2004) strongly argues that school libraries help teachers teach children. Similarly, Clark (1999), states that a school library is an academic library that supports school programmes as well as the teaching and learning

process. School libraries serve learners by providing materials to meet their various needs and encouraging reading and the use of libraries.

All the public basic schools (school 6-10) in the study had class libraries only managed by the class teachers. Most of these libraries did not have sufficient and appropriate reading books for the particular grade. This lack appropriate and adequate reading material likely affected the reading ability of learners in public schools. Furthermore the teachers tasked to be in charge of some libraries in public schools do not make a follow-up to determine if the pupils make use of these books. For instance in this study it was discovered that at school 10 the class teacher gave Zambia Primary Course (ZPC) books to the learners to read home on Fridays with the help of their parents or someone older, and they were requested to bring them back on Monday. This particular teacher, however, did not have enough time to listen to the learners read these books because she managed a double-class session arrangement of teaching. This teacher lamented that she did not receive double-class session allowance, a sign of a de-motivated teacher. In his Oxfam Education Report, Preedy (1991) cites “motivated teachers” as one of the five key elements associated with quality education. More so, it is well recognised that the efficacy of education anchors on teachers. If these teachers are not motivated, quality education would suffer and ultimately, the nation’s sustained social-economic development would be almost impossible because development cannot be divorced from education. Although there are other factors affecting quality education, Bennell (2004) points out competency and commitment of teachers as two of the important determinants of quality education. The word “commitment” can only be associated with well motivated teachers who enjoy their job.

The issue of teacher motivation is quite critical in that a motivated teacher is directly linked to quality education, of which teaching how to read is part of. A de-motivated teacher, observes Bennell (2004:8), is manifested in “deteriorating standards of professional conduct, including poor performance, absenteeism, lateness, low time on task, and general misbehavior.” The 2000 World Bank

Development Report adds on that, “these concerns about teachers are distressing: teachers show up drunk, physically abusive or simply idling around school doing nothing,” (World Bank, 2000:4). The above-mentioned trends are vivid in Zambia and are unlikely to decrease in the near future unless critical measures are taken to motivate teachers.

It can be concluded then, that learners in private schools were exposed to many supplementary readers than their counterparts in public schools. It was also found out that public schools teachers were not motivated to make them innovative since the prescribed materials were not available and were not paid for double class allowance they had worked for.

5.2 Organizing a Conducive Learning Environment

The findings of the study indicate that there was a disparity between private schools and public schools in terms of learning environments. Generally private school had well organized learning environment that were conducive. The study found that pupils reading were influenced by external conditions, especially those affecting activities related to teaching reading skills.

5.2.1 *Class-management*

For effective teaching of reading the class is supposed to be organized in four to five groups. Each group will be given reading material according to their level of competence. Learners who are not with the teacher at the teaching station are supposed to be given relevant reading activities to work on at their own pace. Learners are encouraged to read books from the class library. The findings of the study indicate that to a large extent this practice was adhered to in most private schools. This was mainly due to the fact that the teacher-pupil ration was ideal and they had adequate reading materials. However in public schools, this practice is there on paper, but due to the large number of pupils, class teachers rarely use this method of teaching reading. The result is that there is a disparity in the pupils reading ability between private and public school learner. Apart from the big classes

public schools also have little or no reading material. The importance of textbooks and other school learning materials cannot be overemphasized. The review of literature showed that teaching and learning materials are the basic resources for teaching and learning to read. Teachers' notes serve as pupils libraries. Teachers struggle to put ideas across to learners in abstract things that should vividly be seen in order to enhance easy understanding (World Bank, 2000). The Ministry of Education (1992) also adds that appropriate reading materials are cardinal for pupils to reach satisfactory levels reading competence.

5.2.2 Time Tabling

Organizing work in the classroom involves not only managing the children and planning the curriculum, but also managing time. The national curriculum has created pressure on time for teachers. There is now a great deal to do in the time available and since a primary teacher usually has considerable freedom to plan the program of work in the way that seems best for the children, the use of time requires a good deal of planning. According to Thomas and Collier (2002), time spent by learners on learning anything is cardinal. This study found out that the learners at private schools adhered to times allocated for teaching reading. This allowed the teachers to conduct revision and remedial work for the learners in the afternoon. During this period, the teacher listened to each learner read a given task. Thereafter, the teachers remained behind to prepare lessons to teach the next public day consequently knocking off at 16:30 hours. This strict adherence to the time table ensured that time was left to offer remedial teaching to those pupils who had difficulties in reading. public schools on the other hand had only five periods for reading in a week which lasted one hour each. In addition, the learners had one in-class period of library which lasted thirty minutes. However the set time table for reading was not followed. Some reading lessons observed lasted one hour thirty minutes. However, many learners were not able to read given tasks in these lessons.

All in all, the time table was seen to be adhered to only in the private schools, whereas the schedules for the public schools were often flouted by both the teachers and the learners.

5.2.3 Learning and Teaching Materials

The importance of textbooks and school learning materials cannot be overemphasized. As stated by the Ministry of Education (1992), learners cannot reach relatively satisfactory levels of reading in English and achievement in the absence of appropriate and adequate learning materials. It was clear from this study that the selected public basic schools had limited class textbooks to be utilized as reading resources for the learners within the classrooms (see Tables 9 and 10). The tables show that private schools had a one-to-one correspondence of book to learner, while the public schools had an average of 3 books for an average of 52 learners. The study further established that learners in public basic schools were not allowed to carry the textbooks home. This practice did not, therefore, offer learners a reading advantage as learners seldom encountered books in their homes. Additionally, the difficulty in obtaining a wide variety of story books, which is a typical characteristic of a Zambian public school, may reinforce difficulties to learning to read as learners hardly practice reading at home. Pretorius and Currin (2009) in their South African study have noted that, although some changes in reading are possible without financial support for instance, making reading a priority involving learners, teachers and parents in the programme the one crucial factor that necessitates financial outlay, is that of making books accessible to learners.

Further, in *International Studies in Educational Achievement*, differences in reading ability were consistently associated with the availability of books: “ the general message is that books are essential, no matter how rich or poor a nation is ”(Pretorius and Currin, 2009:142).

Materials play a vital role in the improvement of education. Learning is severely hampered by an undersupply of basic text books. Quoting Theisen *et. al.*, (1983:29) they say “put simply, students who do not have their own texts to study and take home do not do as well as those who have them”. This was also evident in this study where learners from the private schools had better reading skills than the learners in public basic schools.

On the other hand, the availability of books appears to be the most consistent school factor in predicting achievement. It was observed that most of the private schools were still using text books from Zambia Primary Course which most of the public schools had in big numbers but were just packed or not being used. The researcher observed that it was not only the question of the availability of books, but how the books were being used by the teachers, and how relevant those books were to the learners. For example, the researcher found that public basic school which used to be for the whites, like school 6, 7, and 10, had lots of textbooks and other learning materials compared to some private schools. Yet the correlation for private schools with learner performance on reading was stronger than that for public schools. Obviously, other factors than availability was at play in the two types of school studied.

5.2.4 Parental Support

The study found out that in private schools the parents or guardians of learners were committed to the school welfare of their children than those parents or guardians in public basic schools. They gladly bought books for their children, were involved in the signing of ‘Reading Signing Books’ and whenever called upon by the school authority, they responded quickly and positively. Teachers and parents or guardians work as partners in the learning welfare of learners. At school 5 parents were allowed to find out the welfare of their children in school every Wednesday.

Generally, parents and guardians of learners at public schools did not cooperate with school authority. They rarely reported when called to school and did not often buy any prescribed textbooks for their children.

Communities from where the learners come play an important role in the education of their own children. They are, therefore, expected to exhibit such enthusiasm and responsibility for the education of their children as would encourage the learners in their learning. This includes parents encouraging their children to attend school regularly as opposed to sending children to do house chores like selling of fritters, sweeping the house or cleaning plates (MoE, 2002), when they are supposed to be at school. In some cases, this has helped to improve the reading levels of learners. Parents should also be encouraged to regularly check on their learner's homework and help with any other school work. The communities are expected to support the teachers in areas where such support is requested.

During focus group discussion a teacher from school 6 commented that, the home had a big influence on the children and if parents did not care about the education of their children such children did not get motivated at school, for example, where parents did not check the learners' books. As a result there were instances of children attending school but only playing football the whole term and parents would not know because they did not check the learner's books.

Commenting on involving children in the house chores, a teacher from school 9 said that it was not a good practice because some parents used the children to sell things when they knocked off up to the late hours. When such children went to school the following morning, they would be too tired to perform well in class, and that had brought bad influence on their class work. The teacher also added on that, in some cases school administrators have worked with some parents to solve the problems by telling the parents that they should find other means of finding money other than sending children to sell.

One class teacher from school 4 suggested some of the ways in which parents are expected to support their children was to make sure that their children did their homework, went to school, were provided with adequate food before they go to school and that learners had all the requirements needed for their learning, including school fees. Both the home and school environment should be conducive and learner-friendly enough for learners to learn and live without fear. The teacher also noticed that one of the practices that made children not to learn well at school was fear of not properly administered corporal punishment, which in spite of its being banned by the government, was still being practiced with impunity by the teachers and being encouraged by parents. You cannot expect learners to learn to read properly where the learner felt insecure.

A teacher from school 6 commented that parents of learners in public schools had other reasons for not being involved in the education of their children. For instance, parents own financial problems, i.e. low in-come, since most of them in Mufulira have been retrenched and the lack of sensitisation about school activities has contributed to their being demotivated to participate in the affairs of the school.

The study, through the focus group discussions, revealed that all the teachers from the selected schools said they themselves were willing to work with the parents of their learners through PTA meetings and other school activities such as homework, cost sharing, and in Open Days. It was, however, observed and confirmed through the same discussions that parents of learners in private schools attended Open Days while those of public schools did not. It was noted that the enthusiasm of private schools could be attributed to its spending lots of money on their children's education. These findings are consistent with those of Hornby (1995) who found out that most parents collaborated with teachers by reinforcing classroom programmes at home such as home-school reading programmes. It can therefore be argued that if parents were involved in school activities, it could, to a greater extent, solve the parent-support problem in the education of their children.

5.2.5 Attendance

The study established that there was much absenteeism in public basic schools than in private schools and that there was a relationship between poor performances of reading and constant absenteeism.

Absenteeism of the learners includes those learners who arrive at school late and miss parts of the lesson. This becomes inconveniencing for the teacher who may want to recap the lesson for the sake of the pupils who come late. In most cases, however, teachers do not recap. They do not have that time, so the learner has to make do with whatever part of the lesson has remained.

There is the case of a learner absconding from a lesson. Any reduction in lesson time also reduces the time of learning received in reading. This was particularly observed in the cases of schools 6 to 10, which were public schools. When it rained, pupils stayed away from school, and on designated Fridays when the school administration stipulated them as 'civilian days' and 'sports days', learners came to school in non-uniform wear. On such days, if a pupil went to school in uniform, they were fined or detained in school, or sent away from the school premises and the activities of the day. Private schools did not experience such practices.

Some comparison of absenteeism is drawn here between school 1 of a private school and school 6 of a public school. School 1 registered 20 present and 00 absent out of a total of 20 learners in the class on the week beginning 11th January, while school 6 which had a total number of 49 learners registered 47 absences and 2 present in the same week. This was the trend in both types of school at the beginning of the term.

5.3 The Effect of the Different Learning Environments on Reading

To determine the effect of the difference in learning environments between private schools and public schools, the study used a t-test to test the following hypotheses:

H₁ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading English words.

H₂ - Grade 3 pupils in private schools perform better than those in public schools in word initial sound.

H₃ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading the word final sound.

H₄ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in reading sentences.

H₅ - Grade 3 pupils in Private schools perform better than those in Public schools in English reading comprehension.

As observed in all the cases, the p values were less than 0.05 in all the cases, therefore the all the hypotheses were confirmed, implying that the learners in private schools performed better than learners in public basic schools.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter a summary of the study is given. Conclusions drawn from the investigation are also outlined. In addition, recommendations, based on the findings of the study are given.

6.1 Summary

The purpose of this study was to find out the type of environments in which the learners in public and private schools learn to read in English and the possible effects the varying environment might have on the learners' ability to acquire the reading skills. The study was guided by two main questions. These were as follows; (a) In what environment do the Grade 3 learners in public and private schools learn how to read in English? (b) How is reading in English taught in private and public schools?

The reviewed literature indicated that a learning environment that is conducive to teaching reading should be one that has adequate infra-structure, a well organization learning environment, a time management system that's ideal for reading, learning and teaching materials and parental support.

Qualitative data were collected through direct observation of lessons, non-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were collected from the sample using tests. Children were tested in five reading components; reading whole words, sentences, word initial sound, word final sound, and reading for comprehension. A t-test was used to test the hypotheses.

The analysis showed that a good learning environment has a significant impact on

learners reading ability and other learning outcomes. Adequate school facilities contribute to a stimulating and healthy learning environment and have positive impact on children achieving competence in reading.

6.2 Conclusion

The ability to read is the key to educational achievement. Without a basic foundation in literacy, children cannot gain access to a rich and diverse curriculum. Poor literacy limits opportunities not only at school but throughout life, both economically and in terms of a wider enjoyment of opportunities in life. One important factor that can improve literacy levels is pupils acquiring competency in reading. Pupils' reading ability is affected by the learning environment, and as such it is important for schools to provide a conducive environment in which learners have access to adequate reading materials. Schools should also provide an extensive reading experience that will help them improve their reading proficiency.

The study concluded that it is not only a rich language policy which the government of Zambia changed which can make learners read according to their levels, but more is needed in the environment, such as adequate supply of appropriate reading material, enough reading classroom space, enough desks and an appropriate teacher-pupil ratio.

6.2 Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education (MoE) should facilitate a sustainable system to increase the number of desks in public basic schools.
2. Libraries infra-structure need to be constructed at these public basic schools or some classrooms should be used as school libraries and up to date books should be regularly provided by the relevant authorities (school authorities or Ministry of Education).

3. Parents and guardians in public schools should be encouraged and actively participate in all school activities. Parents should not just attend PTA meetings but take part even in helping build a conducive environment to ensure their children learn how to read at school and at home.

4. The Ministry of Education should try to make the school environment in public basic school conducive for learning by supplying all the needed materials to learn to read in English by all means

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APPENDIX A.

Introductory letter from the school of Education.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 291381
Telegram: UNZA, LUSAKA
Telex: UNZALU ZA 44370

PO Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia
Fax: +260-1-292702

22nd September, 2009

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS/ PhD STUDENTS

The bearer of this letter M./Ms. NSAPAY GEORGINAH Computer number 329000106 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

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

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

Dear Respondent,

This serves to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and procedures that will be followed. Further implications for your participation are explained. Finally you are being asked to sign this form to indicate that you have agreed to participate in this exercise.

Thank you in advance.

1. Description

This exercise is an educational research; the researcher is a student at the University of Zambia pursuing a degree in Literacy and Learning. This research is a major requirement for the researcher to complete his programme. Thus this exercise is purely academic.

2. Purpose

The researcher wishes to find out how literacy learning is carried out in preschools. The researcher is interested in looking at the classroom environment, curriculum, learning materials and classroom activities.

3. Consent

Participating in this exercise is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this exercise.

4. Confidentiality

All data collected from this research is treated with utmost confidentiality. Participants are assured that they will remain anonymous and untraceable in this research.

5. Rights of Respondents

All effort will be taken to ensure that the rights of participants are protected and respected. Participants are assured that they shall suffer no harm as a result of participating in this exercise. Participants are free to ask for clarification at any point of the exercise and to inform the research if they feel uncomfortable about any procedure in the research.

6. Declaration of Consent

I have read and fully understand this document. I therefore agree to participate in this exercise.

.....

Signature

.....

date

APPENDIX C.

Lesson Observation Check list.

School:Grade:

Topic:

Date:Number of pupils in Class:

Sex of the teacher: Time of Day:

1. Organisation and analysis of subject matter

a) Lesson plan:

b) Number of relevant books:

c) Pre reading activities:

d) Suitability of the content of the passage to the grade level:

e) Suitability of linguistic level to the learners of presence of illustration in the text and the length of the text:

2.) Presentation of the lesson.

a) Ability to follow the lesson

b) Use of appropriate methodology

c) Time keeping of the lesson.

3.) Teaching strategies.

a) Lesson organization

b) Lesson introduction

c) Use of questioning techniques

- d) Pupils' participation
- e) Use of teaching learning and teaching materials
- f) Voice projection
- g) Lesson procedure or development stages
- h) Post reading activities
- I) Explanation of difficult vocabulary
- j) Lesson conclusion
- k). Teachers appearance

4. Class Management.

- a). Class atmosphere
- b). Discipline and control.

5. Pupil / Teacher relationship

- a). Interaction types used during the learning process
- b). Self confidence in learners
- c). Reinforcement
- d) Teachers attitude

APPENDIX D

Focus Group Discussion Guide.

Preliminary questions. The researcher will be free to ask any question deemed necessary.

- 1) Are there any challenges in teaching English reading in Grade 3 at your schools?
- 2) If there are any mention them and explain how you overcome them?
- 3) What English reading materials do Grade 3 pupils use at your school?
- 4) How are the slow learners helped at your schools?
- 5) Explain how you would like English reading to be taught in Grade 3 at your schools?

Classroom Observation Schedule

TEACHER ACTIVITY	LEARNER'S ACTIVITY	DURATION	OBSERVER'S COMMENTS	
			TEACHER	LAERNERS

1. at
2. on
3. is
4. me
5. do
6. bad
7. run
8. car
9. now
10. dry
11. pig
12. see
13. cup
14. and
15. they
16. baby
17. frog
18. what
19. jump
20. clean
21. table
22. touch
23. uncle
24. dirty
25. love
26. train
27. about
28. eyes
29. brother
30. eggs
31. Jersey
32. banana
33. wearing
34. Kitchen
35. bicycle
36. Splashed
37. television
38. basket
39. learn
40. Caught
41. roared
42. Speak
43. Lizard
44. guava
45. Playing
46. because
47. Sometimes
48. afternoon
49. groundnuts
50. toothbrush
51. Children
52. Policeman
53. Butterfly
54. Sweeping
55. Paraffin
56. trousers
57. Quickly
58. Grandfather
59. Umbrella
60. thank you

Reading word initial and word final sounds

C2. Discriminates initial sounds in		C3. Discriminates final sounds in words:	
Words:		Score	
a. a pple		a. n pen	
b. s nake		b. f ife	
c. p aint		c. b ag	
d. b asket		d. f ish	
e. l egs		e. Q uick	
TOTAL SCORE: INITIAL SOUND DISCRIMINATION (max5)	<input type="text"/>	TOTAL SCORE: END SOUND DISCRIMINATION (max.5)	<input type="text"/>

5. The man is selling sweets and eggs.

7. I can see some books and pens on the table.

8. The hare ran fast but the tortoise walked slowly.

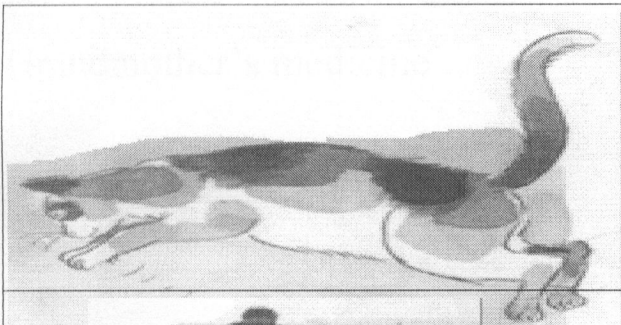
9. My cousin has a yellow shirt and brown shoes.

10. Father is chopping food and mother is washing dishes.

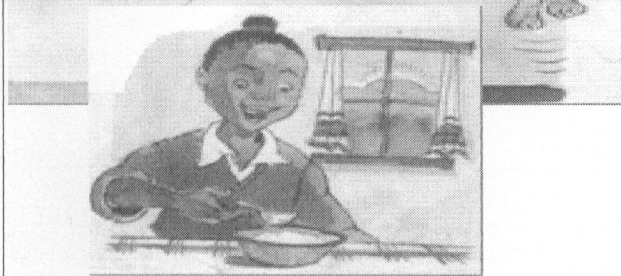
Reading sentences.

For each sentence '2' marks, if the learner reads the sentence perfectly and '1' mark if the learner commits only one minor error. Otherwise mark '0'.

1. The boy has a ball.
2. I am saying a prayer.
3. The truck is stopping at the bus station.
4. The babies are crying and fighting
5. We stopped and jumped in the water.
6. The man is selling sweets and eggs.
7. I can see some books and pens on the table.
8. The hare ran fast but the tortoise walked slowly.
9. My cousin has a yellow shirt and brown shoes.
10. Father is chopping wood and mother is washing dishes.



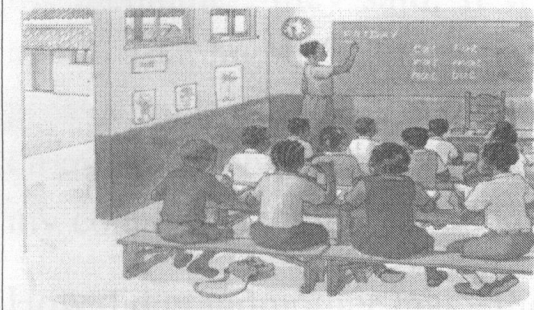
- a) The cat is jumping.
- b) The cat is sitting.
- c) The cat is running.



- a) The girl is eating meat.
- b) The girl is eating carrots.
- c) The girl is eating rice



- a) Mother and father are playing with the babies.
- b) Mother and father are feeding the babies.
- c) Mother and father are crying.



- a) The teacher is drawing on the board.
- b) The teacher is rubbing the board.
- c) The teacher is writing on the board.



- a)Mrs Tembo is a doctor.
- b)Mrs Tembo is a farmer.
- c) Mrs Tembo is a driver.



Grandmother's medicine



One day I had a bad cough. Grandmother picked some leaves from our guava tree. She boiled the leaves to make some medicine for me. "Look what Grandmother has made for your cough," said mother. The medicine did not look good. Father tasted the medicine. "It tastes like guavas," he said. But I did not want to drink it. Mother tasted the medicine. "It tastes like sugar," she said. But I did not want to drink it. My brother tasted the medicine. "It tastes like tea," he said. But he didn't drink it. "Please drink the medicine," they said. "It will make you better." But I shook my head again. That night, Grandmother said, "I know the medicine tastes bad. But please drink it. It will make you better." So I drank the medicine to make Grandmother happy. Ugh! It was not good. But I drank it. In the morning, my cough was gone!

How did grandmother make the medicine? Write the story.

She went into the garden. First she picked _____

Then she _____ the leaves in water. She made a hot _____

Mother put the medicine in a _____

drink

the

cup

87
leaves

put

*Summary of paired samples t-tests***The Possible Effects in the Differing Environment**

Variables tested	Private Mean	Public Mean	t statistic	Df	p value	Comment
Reading words	52.1867	14.4267	19.623	74	0.001	p value <0.05; therefore reject H ₀
Reading initial sounds	4.8133	2.6800	12.331	74	0.001	p value <0.05; therefore reject H ₀
Reading final sounds	4.8800	2.6800	4.575	74	0.001	p value <0.05; therefore reject H ₀
Reading sentences	16.0533	2.6800	20.433	74	0.001	p value <0.05; therefore reject H ₀
Reading comprehension	9.0800	4.4533	12.903	74	0.001	p value <0.05; therefore reject H ₀

Source: Field data, 2010