

**Analysing the Reading Comprehension Strategies Used by Teachers to teach in
Urban Primary Schools of Mongu District of Zambia**

by

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Declaration

I, Amukusana Mubiana, hereby solely declare that the work contained in this dissertation has been composed and written by me and that this work is as a result of my own individual effort. I further sincerely declare that this research has not been previously submitted for any academic award, and that all the work from other researchers has been acknowledged.

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Approval

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late mother Maureen Mwangala Nyambe Siyanga for the love you shared with me when you were still alive and for showing me the way to school. I miss you dearly mother.

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is multifaceted and intricate. The challenges the learner's experience with reading comprehension demand for coordinated efforts by the teachers to help identify reading comprehension strategies and instructional approaches that can lessen the challenges that the learners undergo as they try to comprehend the texts provided to them to read.

This study was conducted to determine the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers and to ascertain the challenges of those reading comprehension strategies as perceived by the teachers.

The sample size of the study included 11 teachers from four schools. The study employed purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants of the research. It employed qualitative data collection and analysis procedures which included interviews, observation and document review. Interviews were conducted to ascertain some of the issues underlying the themes of the research which were the strategies used to teach reading comprehension and the challenges perceived by the teachers as they interact with the strategies. Classroom observations were conducted using instruments that the researcher designed that provided in-depth information to the researcher. Documents such as lesson plans were reviewed to determine the strategies used by the teachers when teaching reading.

The findings indicate that teachers in the targeted schools had limited knowledge about the strategies for teaching reading comprehension. However, it was observed that some of the strategies they utilised were questioning, read aloud, silent reading, vocabulary, discussion. Background knowledge and storytelling even when they could not tell what the strategies were.

Despite the teachers using these reading comprehension strategies, the study revealed that most of the strategies used were not explicitly utilised by the teachers. Other challenges experienced by the teachers were limited reading materials such as textbooks which were not adequate for teaching reading. It was also observed that there was limited classroom space due to the free education policy which made classrooms to be filled by the learners.

Truancy, lack of confidence due to failure to read by some learners, lack of reinforcement of necessary reading skills and failure to set a purpose for reading by the teachers were other challenges observed.

Teachers exhibited lack of knowledge on how to improve their reading comprehension strategies but still made some suggestions which could help improve their approach to teaching reading comprehension. They suggested that deliberate policies on exchange programmes could be of help to them as they can be assisted by learning from their colleagues from other schools. Retraining in methodologies and techniques, reinforcement of workshops and teacher involvement in all available and ongoing programmes to do with the teaching of literacy could be of help to them and enhance their teaching strategies which they use to teach reading comprehension.

Abbreviations

PALS - Peer Assisted Learning Strategies

CWPT - Class-wide Peer Tutoring

CPD - Continuous Professional Development

MESVTEE - Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education

ELL - English Language Learners

ESL - English as a Second Language

EFAL - English First Additional Language

FET – Further Education and Training.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter presents the background to the study. It also gives the statement of the problem under investigation, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, the research objectives and questions. The chapter also provides the theoretical framework which guides this study and the definition of terms as they have been used in the study.

1.1 Background to the study

The aim of this study is to determine the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers in primary schools and to establish the challenges they experience through the use of those strategies.

Reading comprehension strategies continue to affect the performance of the learners' not only in language but other subjects as well. Hougen and Smartt (2012, p.170) have stated that "comprehension is the purpose for reading." They further indicate that reading is dependent on conveying meaning from what one has read other than just reading the words themselves. This is true because reading will only take place if a learner is able to read the words and is also able to understand the meaning of those words.

Research has found that failure to teach learners to comprehend in the early school years may exclude them from critical learning. Stahl, Flanigan and McKenna (2020) found that prioritising comprehension instruction for learners at an early age will help them to explore even broader texts, knowledge and educational opportunities. Research has further emphasised the complexity of reading comprehension and that it should not be taught using a single approach. Cain, Oakhill, and Bryant (2004) have indicated that reading comprehension is changes learners results in the learning process and addresses different components of the comprehension process, hence the need to emphasise both the lower-level language skills and the upper-level comprehension skills and to determine which of the skills most contribute to reading comprehension.

Reading is said to improve and refine a learner's mind. Snow (2002) describes reading as a simultaneous process of extracting and constituting meaning through interaction and

involvement with written language. As learners extract and construct meaning from a text their minds are sharpened as well as their communication. Attention, memory and inferencing are some abilities that learners need to be equipped with in order for them to comprehend what they read. It is also important that the learners are motivated by the teacher by activating their interests and identifying their goals for reading. Goff and Ackerman (1992) say that reading is the desire to engage and understand, it is the need to know. Overall, the teacher should consider the domain knowledge level of the learners and their linguistic levels as these are influenced by the specific texts read by the learners as well as the reading activity the learners engage in (Snow,2002). It is still imperative to note that reading actually involves three interconnected parts which the reader, the text and the reading task or activity.

Reading involves determining meaning and context; this can be done with the provision of an outline of ideas to ensure flow of information. Norris (1998) says that what a reader reads is organized into recognizable sequence. He further, says that information can either provide direct or indirect information. Direct information in this case implies the information whose intensions are easy to interpret while indirect information does not explicitly communicate but relies on other forms to imply meaning. Therefore, the need for reading comprehension by the learners. According to Numan (2003), reading comprehension is defined as a fluent process that combines information from the text with existing information to arrive at meaning. Veeravagu at al. (2010, p. 206) define “reading comprehension as a thinking process by which a reader selects facts, information or ideas from printed materials; determine the meanings the author intended to transmit, decide how they relate to previous knowledge and judge their appropriateness and worthy for meeting a learners’ own objectives.” Walter (2007) too, says that reading comprehension is more of a cognitive skill and not really a language skill. This is so because the mind is involved in interpreting what is written and being communicated by a text.

Hsueh-Chao and Nation (2000) assert that readers must know about 98% of the words in a text without any kind of help in order to comprehend it. This assertion associates reading comprehension with the size of vocabulary a reader possesses. Hence the exposure to new words be emphasized for understanding to be enhanced. As Babayigit (2011 p. 173) states,

“vocabulary knowledge can influence reading comprehension in two ways, directly through its effects on semantics of the text as well as indirectly on word reading skill.” This means that learners can actually draw meaning from a text by simply using the meaning of words. Semantics largely determines a learner’s reading comprehension through interpretation of word and sentence meaning. There is need for the learners therefore to competently read words by simply looking at them and through decoding.

Reading and understanding involves the interaction of several processes encompassing learners’ understanding, potential and being able to decipher a structure of a sentence and other cognitive processes. Hudson (1996) says that reading is an overlapping of spontaneous in word and sentence recognition techniques coupled with self-awareness skills and determination for reading. Sadeghi (2007) looked linked reading to two major components, which he says can either be internal or external. Sadeghi further explains that the internal factors as elements associated with the reader’s cognitive abilities and techniques, background knowledge and effectiveness, external elements connected to manner, text features, time, and setting for a reading activity. Manner having to do with the different ways a learner participate that allows him or her to learn in a way suitable to them. Features in text allow learners to think deeply about what they have read and helps them to locate important information in context. Time refers to the measure for an average learner to read a piece of writing while maintaining comprehension and setting is simply the environment in which the reading process takes place, (Carrel, 1998; Lungu & Mkandawire, 2022). This is implied by the relevance, speed and comprehension which are the main elements of fluency. Carrel (1998) further supports this by stating that regulation in reading is awareness and ability to sensor. Carrel et al. (1988) have identified concepts that elaborate reading comprehension which is done in two forms, that of knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. Knowledge of cognition involves a learner’s knowledge about oneself, about the learning strategies and knowledge about why and when they need to use a given strategy. Regulation of cognition has to do with how well the learner can regulate their own learning process.

To become good readers, learners need to understand and practice some reading strategies with their teachers that will help them interact and get involved with the text, as Schultz

(2011) acknowledges that successful reading of a text requires a reader to engage various cognitive strategies since background knowledge and prediction of what is contained in a text are prerequisites of comprehension of a text.

Ramos (2018) recommends reading to be an important part of a learner's daily life because it inculcates in him or her the skills of acquiring and interpreting knowledge and the relevant information to comprehend their context. Ramos (2018, p. 24) indicates that "in this process, the reader can make predictions or inferences, learn new vocabulary or learn how to decode a language." It is for this reason that successful readers acquaint themselves with necessary techniques on how to read and understand what they read. Soto et al. (2019, p.2) assert that "reading comprehension is a set of skills that the subjects invoke to generate a mental representation of a text." This implies that a text is interpreted in a mental replica represented by events connected to the interpretation of the text at hand. Learners need to be in control of their reading by being active and purposeful readers. This helps them to increase their engagement with the text and to comprehend even more. This is further supported by Mc Namara (2009), who asserts that reading strategies are essential to accomplish comprehension due to the fact that readers can outdo reading challenges and become better readers. In this case, Mc Namara says that the use of cognitive strategies to ease the learners understanding of the text in view of the fact that good readers try to establish the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts in the text before and during reading so as to decode the information more successfully. This is further supported by Bryness in Yusuf (2011) who states that reading comprehension occurs when the reader is aware of the skills and strategies employed in reading and are cherished to accomplish the purpose for reading.

Reading comprehension is beneficial to a learner in so many ways. It helps a learner to amplify their academic self-confidence. Confidence is instilled in the learner who understands what they read and are more likely to succeed in their academic work when they are able to read. Akbash et al. (2016) acknowledge that there is a relationship between reading comprehension and learner success in mathematics and science as it activates critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the learners that are vital for mathematics and science. It is imperative to note that learners who are struggling readers find it difficult

to believe in themselves as they lack confidence in reading and schoolwork. Reikeras (2006) also associates reading ability to general school achievement. She further states that in her study that low achievement in reading slightly interfered with learners' development of arithmetic skills. Therefore, increased understanding of text and questions can lead to better grades.

Walker et al. (2008) believe that measurement of both reading ability and mathematical skills is twofold as they are designed to measure higher cognitive skills like problem solving and mathematical reasoning through mathematical items. Grimm (2008) too reports that early reading comprehension is the application of mathematical knowledge. Meaning that reading

comprehension lays a foundation and a starting point for learners in relation to their performance in mathematics. Kembo (2014), in his research done in Kenya, acknowledges the influence reading comprehension has on academic performance of learners and says there is a significant correlation between reading comprehension practices and academic performance, this implies that learners who are able to comprehend what they read are likely to perform well in their academic work. Bastag (2014) also confirms in his study that reading attitude and reading comprehension significantly played a role in academic achievement. The knowledge of words is key to reading comprehension and therefore, vocabulary is said to increase the level of understanding and the enhancement of critical thinking skills. Legaspi et al. (2020) says that the knowledge of vocabulary in reading comprehension plays an effective role in academic performance.

Reading helps learners to think critically and improves reading comprehension skills which are beneficial to the learner in every subject area, this is supported by Whitten et al. (2016) who says that it is easy for the learner to transfer the skills acquired through reading into adulthood and further into the workplace and society. Learners will be able to build strong reading comprehension skills that will allow them to create, identify and apply information in their places of work. Possession of strong skills in reading comprehension is critical because it increases the pleasure and efficacy of reading and not only does it improve academic skills but also professional life after school life (Rutzle, 2020).

The more a learner reads, the better their writing skills generally become. A learner who reads and spends most of their time in reading activities is likely to have the ability to write well. Through writing, learners can improve their vocabulary and writing skills. There is need for teachers to work with their learners when trying to connect through reading and writing. The knowledge of basic sentence construction using reading comprehension can be transferred to the learners by the teacher through the use of explicit instruction. Learners need to possess the knowledge of how ideas connect at the sentence level which in turn allows them to grasp meaning from the text and eventually helps them to build coherent sentences when writing. Urgur (2018) supports this by stating that reading and writing are language skills that feed each other and reviews that there is an important relationship between the two skills. Reading is said to contribute remarkably to the improvement of expressive language. Writing is one such expressive skill as it allows a writer to convey their personal point of view on a particular topic (Aktas, et al., (2023). When expressing their views writers will use language. Reading comprehension can improve writing in different ways, which are exposing the learners to a variety of writing styles, allowing learners to study grammar in context, help expand learner's vocabulary and inspiration of new ideas. Therefore, reading comprehension helps learners to determine what is important from what they have read and they will write about it. The Reading lists.com states that, "writers shape other writers."

Reading strengthens a learner's ability and literally changes a learner's mind. Yildiz and Centinkaya (2017) have attributed this to the fact that due to reading comprehension, good readers' attention is focused. They therefore advise the improvement of learners' reading skills for attention enhancement. Gernsbacher (1993) also confirms this by stating that reading comprehension helps a learner to focus and maintain activation of relevant information and allows them to suppress irrelevant information which is vital for reading comprehension's success. Segal (2023) also confirms by stating that sustained attention is critical in reading comprehension and therefore, should be embodied in reading comprehension. This is further supported by several studies (Clark, 1999; Hoffman and Subramaniam, 1995; Reynolds and Besmer, 2000) which have collectively found that sustained attention in learners help them score higher and aids them to read faster.

Reading comprehension strategies are deliberately measured or focused attempts to control and change the reader's efforts to decode text, understand words and construct meaning of a text. Mahdavi and Tensfeldt (2013) have argued that, for the learners to improve comprehension, a variety of approaches should be used. They further state that to understand what one reads is a complex effort. They recommend a use of different techniques by teachers to improve their learners' reading comprehension and also to make sure that learners learn at their instruction. It is imperative that teachers make coordinated efforts to help learners understand what they read.

1.2 Statement of the problem

MESVTEE (2013) states that "reading is a foundational skill for learning across subjects." Therefore, the need for the learners to understand what they read. Failure to teach learners to comprehend in the early school years will exclude learners from critical learning. The general low performance in reading comprehension by the learners has been justified by inadequate teaching and learning materials, unbalanced teacher-pupils' ratios, inadequate provision of in-service training in literacy methodology an absence of a reading culture in the country and many other factors (MESVTEE, 2013). However, there has been little focus on the critical aspect of how the teacher breaks up the curriculum to teachable units that learners can easily consume. Evidence has shown that teacher competency in the area of reading comprehension improves performance among learners (MESVTEE, 2013). Effective reading comprehension strategies are essential for learner's success but many teachers face challenges in implementing evidence-based strategies despite the importance of teaching reading comprehension skills, teachers often lack sufficient preparation to deliver quality instruction in reading comprehension. Teachers need practical strategies to address the complexity that comes with the difficulty of teaching reading comprehension to their learners. This study, therefore, attempts to explore the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges these teachers face in using these strategies.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to determine the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers who teach grades four (4), five (5) and six (6) and to explore the challenges of those reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study sought

- (i) To analyse the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers.
- (ii) To analyse the challenges of the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension as perceived by the teachers.
- (iii) To analyse the improvements that can be made to the strategies used by the teacher to teach reading.

1.5 Research Question

The following research questions governed the study.

- (i) What are the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension who teach grade four (4) to six (6)?
- (ii) What are the challenges of the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension as perceived by the teachers?
- (iii) What are the improvements that could be made to the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of this study may inform the Ministry of Education and may help to record improved, highly interactive and working strategies that teachers may adopt towards achievement of better results and improved results not only in language but other subjects as well.

The findings derived from this study may also help interested stakeholders to formulate appropriate intervention measures around the country in order to enhance comprehension levels among learners. These other stakeholders may comprise the Ministry of Education and policymakers to allocate resources efficiently by focusing on evidence-based strategies that will yield results in learners. Parents too can reinforce reading comprehension

strategies by encouraging their children to develop stronger reading comprehension skills, To the teachers who may use them to implement reading comprehension strategies to learners to help them understand texts more effectively and also to tailor their instruction to meet their diverse needs. To other organisations that may have taken interest in improving reading comprehension levels of the learners.

1.7 Delimitation

This study was carried out in Mongu district, Zambia. The study targeted grade four, five and six teachers who taught language to their learners. The study was confined to four urban schools of Mongu district and they remain anonymous.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The researcher met resistance from some teachers who thought that the researcher was doing monitoring on behalf of the Ministry of Education and was grading their performance. The recording of the lessons and interviews that were done to aid the researcher during data analysis made some of the participants uncomfortable, thinking that the researcher would circulate them even after they were assured by the researcher through sharing information on consent forms that were prepared prior to the research. Some teachers still declined to participate in the study, leading the researcher to replace one of the targeted schools. The study was confined to four urban schools and only involved three teachers from each of the schools. Therefore, findings from this study could only be interpreted within the context of the study and conclusions may not be generalized beyond the area under study.

1.9 Theoretical framework

This study is drawn from the schema theory. The schema theory is adapted from an English psychology Rumelhart, gist Frederic Bartlett in 1932 who described the term as “active organization of past reactions and experiences” and later developed by Richard Anderson in the 1970s (An, 2013, p.130). In the 1980s introduced the theory in reading and defines schema as “an explanation of how readers use prior knowledge to comprehend and learn from a text,” (Rumelhart, 1980 in an, 2013, p. 130). This theory is of the view that background knowledge is the basis for comprehending a text. It assumes that learners

obtain knowledge by fitting it into their memory in order to make sense of what they have read. Learners will easily derive meaning from a text if they have a general sense about the topic. This background knowledge that learners have may come from the texts they previously read, the discussions they may have had with their teachers, peers, stories they have been told by their caregiver or elders and parents, or stories told by their mentors or teachers for class activities, from the field trips they have undertaken, or movies they have watched and many other interactions they have had. The use of prior knowledge in the reading process paves way for the learners to be actively engaged with the text as they are able to comprehend the information contained in the text. This interactive process at the same time helps the reader to make predictions or inferences to confirm a theory, learn new vocabulary or learn how to decode the new words.

Schema theory is based on the understanding that a learner's knowledge of new things such as their role in the reading process, the ability for them to understand easily and comprehend familiar titles is influenced by their sensory thinking as well as imaginative thinking which motivates them to be active in the reading process (An, 2013). It primarily relates to comprehension as learners activate both knowledge of the topic and the way language works.

This theory according to Roit (2014), prescribes that learners who lack schema are unable to infer because inferences require creation of meaning from what is stated by the writer of a text. The development of schema through application of appropriate strategies is essential in learners in the comprehension of texts as it enables them be good readers who can make sense of what they read by relating it to what they already know. Brown (2001) supports this as he states that readers need to bring in information, knowledge, emotion and culture to a text for it to make meaning. Further he justifies this as schemata to the printed text. A learner's background knowledge from books is essential as it can aid him or her to understand a text. Also the possession of knowledge by the learners on a wider range of topics make them to be comfortable with the text and easily allow them to confidently interpret a text. Smith (1994) acknowledges and says that schema theory is based on the belief that every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world. This world simply has to do with the learner's daily experiences and encounters. Learners will likely

build their reading habits when they grasp what they read and link it to what they already know. Background knowledge is the backbone for critical thinking as it helps learners to draw inferences and thus making reading enjoyable. Therefore, it can be concluded that learners need to think beyond what they read in order to see other meanings embedded in the text which may eventually lead to a better understanding as it may bring more information in their minds.

Furthermore, Otto, Rude and Spiegel (1979) have alluded that, a reader in the reading comprehension process, is not only required to pronounce the written symbols but also to understand and interpret the information contained in the text. Smith (1973) also affirms to this concept, stating that being able to see sentences with one's eyes is not enough but rather the knowledge of language in which the material is written, its subject matter, and being able to read and interpret what one has read is what is important. Smith (1973) still further states that there are two types of information, which are visual and non-visual. Visual is the information seen in a text coming from a printed page while non-visual is what the reader already knows and comes from the brain. Both visual and non-visual information will help the reader to connect the text to the context related to their personal experiences thereby strengthening their background knowledge.

Schema theory helps to guide this study on the role it plays in understanding a text. The ability of a reader to understand a text is dependent on how much schema the reader poses while reading. Also, the theory helps to understand the role the teacher plays to activate the schema in the learners as it enables them to infer and make substitutions of information not explicitly inserted in the text by the author. It is advisable that the teacher activates the schemata of the learners before they start to read so that they can better comprehend a text. As Carrell (1981) asserts, there is need for text activation in the reader with appropriate cognitive schema in order for it to be comprehended. This activation can be done by reading a story with a familiar theme to allow the learners activate their background concepts for easy and efficient processing of the text. It is important to note that the activation of background knowledge in the learners is cardinal in the whole process because it allows for efficiency. Koh (1986) and William (1987) acknowledge the use of pre-reading skills as a way of activating background knowledge. These pre-reading activities are done before

reading a text and they usually help learners' overall understanding. They also help learners to retrieve their prior knowledge on a topic and make predictions on what they are about to read. Encouraging activities that activate learners background knowledge should be a common practice by teachers as these are a building block for them to comprehend what they read.

Smith (1994) contends that learners possess content, formal and language schemata. Content schemata is when a learner is aware of the discourse level and structural makeup of the type of genre in the text. Formal schemata are when the learners are skillful enough to recognize words and how these words conform with other words in a sentence. While language schemata are when learners are in a position to attach meaning to their reading. Learners who are good readers will use their background knowledge and experiences to interact with text, allow integration of additional knowledge, new vocabulary and subtlety of language into their schema.

Koh (1986) suggests that, it is important to make learners aware of what is involved in successful reading. Preparation of learners to read allows them to prepare their minds and develop higher levels of concentration and focus. Carrell (1988) also says that learners' reading challenges may be due to inadequate background knowledge. He further emphasizes the need for appropriate activation of schemata in the learners who may have sufficient schema but are not yet able to comprehend a text. Teachers, therefore, should help learners to make connections before, during and after reading in order to help the learners understand what they read. Wooley (2011) stipulates that reading comprehension scaffolds learners to move beyond decoding individual words to building a concrete understanding of the entire passage, with reference to this preparation of learners to read allows them to open up their minds and develop higher levels of focus and concentration. Clarke et al. (2013) assert that learners' success is dependent on what they understand, what they are able to analyze and how they apply information they accumulate through reading. This is so because reading improves critical thinking skills, so as learners read more they also learn to think independently. Schema theory encourages learners to activate prior knowledge, establish new schema, deepen their understanding of texts and also empowers them to connect, visualize and engage with what they read.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Comprehend – to mentally grasp something’s complete meaning.

Comprehension - the formation of a meaning based on the representation of the text.

Comprehension Strategy - set of steps that good learners use to make sense of text.

Learner - a person learning a subject or a skill.

Reading - is a multifaceted process involving areas such as word recognition, orthography, alphabets, phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and motivation.

Reading Comprehension - ability to decode what is read what is already known and to think deeply about what is read.

Strategy - is a plan of action designed to archive a long-term or overall aim.

Text - a body of written work in various forms and structures that can be words, phrases and sentences that piece together a passage of written work.

1.11 Summary

Chapter one has presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework and reviews literature that is related to this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

The literature reviewed in this chapter highlights what others have written about reading comprehension strategies. It reviews some studies related to the challenges faced by the teachers when using the strategies and improvements that can be done. These views have been presented under the following themes which have been discussed in detail.

2.1 Conception Review

Reading comprehension is the act of extracting meaning from a text while interpreting the meaning of those words (Hougen and Smartt, 2020). Hougen and Smartt further explain that there is need for learners to read with understanding at an early age because it increases the learners' knowledge and educational opportunity, hence the need for explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies. Mahdavi and Tenfold (2013) have identified five different strategies that student teachers and teachers can adopt for practice in their classrooms. Peer Mediated Learning is one of the strategies identified. Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) and Class-Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT) are two peer mediated learning strategies that are well established researched methods that can improve reading comprehension. These methods are quite inclusive because they cater for young learners with disabilities. Peer mediated learning allows the teacher to pair learners or place them according to ability, with one learner being a higher achiever. The higher achiever in the pair or group acts as the tutor with each activity repeated so that roles are interchanged. Each learner gets to practice as tutor and tutee. The teacher should model each of the activities. The teacher focuses on improving reading comprehension by involving learners. Learners read the texts together, summarizing and making predictions about what will happen next. In PALS, there is use of additional drills in phonemic awareness, phonics and sight word decoding. CWPT includes structured and reciprocal tutor roles with scripts and learners use these scripts and practice through drills in their pairs. The teacher should monitor the learners making sure roles are exchanged. The teacher also should consider changing the partnering and the instructional materials as such. CWPT is a strategy that supports learners to access rich literature and text and through that learners acquire spelling skills.

The other strategy is vocabulary instruction. Elleman and Compton (2017) have shown that possessing comprehensive and profound vocabulary often corresponds with strong reading comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge has been hypothesized to precede the ability to read and comprehend text. Studies show that this can be achieved through the use of oral language supplemented with word banks, pictures, repetition and read alouds. Other findings have also shared on a similar strategy, which they have called extended vocabulary instruction. Extended vocabulary instruction uses a selected number of target vocabulary words to teach activities, to introduce the words before reading the story, to highlight words during reading and to review words after the story. This instruction encourages the use of context and explicit definitions other than the use of a dictionary. Since learning words is difficult, there is need to include illustrations and role playing as interactive activities to reinforce the expressive and receptive elements of vocabulary learning.

Another strategy to build listening and reading comprehension text is the use of Story Grammar and Text Structure (Howell, 2005). Structure is ingrained in all text. This strategy uses simple patterns that outline narrative texts called story grammars. A variation of patterns is used for expository texts with various structures such as to compare and contrast, cause and effect, problem and solution, description and procedure. According to Short and Ryan (1984), story grammar helps learners to put together information or answer questions during reading that help in identifying the main parts of the story. Understanding text structure has proved to increase comprehension of text. The results are achieved when learners are taught about structure and clue words to look for that will reveal the structure. Similarly, specific questions can be asked to further understand the content of a text and its structure. Daymock (2007) says story grammar identifies the basic parts in a story and portray those parts as being one to generate a well-formed story. Daymock still says that story grammar offers a complete framework for unfolding narrative text structure and concluded that learners through understanding of the narrative structure showed narrative comprehension. This increases comprehension of text. Dunchan (2004) has asserted that this is because the awareness of narrative structure helps learners to predict the flow of stories which consequently facilitates the comprehension of narrative. Story Grammar and Text Structure instruction allows the teacher to model and scaffold, but this will fade as the

learners use the strategies independently and repeatedly with guided practice and feedback. Learners' personal experiences are utilized during the lessons. The instruction also uses the specific clue words to a text structure and allows learners to practice through while being guided to locate words. The words located enable learners to identify the text structure. When the teacher uses questions aimed to identify text structure and guide learners to use graphic organizers to visualize important elements, it gives the learners room to gain comprehension.

Explicit instruction is another reading comprehension strategy that teachers use to teach reading comprehension. Through explicit literacy instruction, learners are most likely to develop their critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills allow learners to understand and address situations based on facts available to them through reading comprehension text. Explicit instruction is influential in initiating learners to the essential components of new skills and assisting them to recognize the parts of a text at hand. Explicit instruction has been described as instruction that is clear, obvious and detailed (Mathew & Cohen, 2022). Explicit instruction involves a high level of interaction between teacher and learner for delivery targeted feedback. This kind of delivery is distinct to the teachers with the provision of this strategy as they are required to plan purposefully ahead of the lesson and gauge the stage when it can be appropriately applied in the lesson. Rupley, Blair and Nicholas (2009) have advised that struggling readers can benefit from direct or explicit instructional methods. Explicit instruction breaks learning activities into smaller parts that learners will be able to understand. Explicit instruction can help the learners to be more focused and organized. It also helps the learners to comprehend and remember what they have read.

Cultural background is said to have an effect on reading comprehension. When learners are exposed to a text that is culturally familiar, they tend to recall what they have read. Rasmayati, Mu'in and Robbiah (2022) have supported this with their findings in their study where teachers used different cultural content on reading comprehension which proved to be effective and improved learners' learning processes in reading comprehension. Reich et. al (2013) have indicated in their study done in rural Southern province in Zambia that there are some differences that occur at different reading developmental stages which are

attributed to different cultural and learning settings and different methodologies. They further show that these differences may include the development of reading which is delayed, support from in and out of school learning and inconsistent acquisition of skills as a result of teaching methods applied.

Another approach presented by Treptow, Burns and Mc Comas (2007) is allowing learners to practice reading aloud to adults, which should be done with error correction to improve reading comprehension for the learners. Listening to and reading stories can lead to learners' proficiency in reading comprehension (Bergman, 1999). Reading aloud can be used to check learners' pronunciation, word stress, pauses, intonation and understanding in reading comprehension. Short stories are known for motivating learners through their moral lessons, and they can be a source of learning activities. Stories also can enrich the vocabulary of the learners.

Richards et. al (1999, p.306) state that "silent reading is an act of receiving the message in script." It is reading that allows learners to perceive what is written and be able to interpret it. It allows a learner to concentrate on what they are reading in order to make sense of it rather than the pronunciations of words. Bhatpara (1995, p.121) supports this by stating that, "silent reading does not impress others but helps the learner to acquire speed in reading and to improve the process of comprehension." It is reading that trains the learner to read without audible sound and allows them to connect with the text.

The use of a familiar language to teach reading comprehension also leads to achieving cognitive skills and prepares learners for academic achievement (Mkandawire, 2017). Kula and Mwansa (2022) have reviewed from their study that when a familiar language is used in the classroom where a regional language exists, no hindrances are experienced. Comprehension is an important aspect of reading which learners need to acquire for them to understand and extract meaning. Reading can be improved by implementing effective and efficient reading strategies and by changing how learners read. O'Connor, Swanson, and Geraphy (2010) have argued that teachers can improve reading comprehension in the classroom by using a variation of techniques with their learners (Mwanza and Mkandawire, 2020).

2.2 Reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension strategies.

McKeown et al (1983) conducted a study which investigated the relationship between vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension. This study was replicated as the original study showed the substantial gains in accuracy and marginal gains in comprehension. The results were attributed to methodological challenges leading to revision of comprehension measures. Fourth graders were used in the revised study and were taught 104 words over a period of five months. After instruction, both the instructed and not instructed learners performed a task to measure accuracy of word knowledge, speed of lexical access and comprehension of stories which contained words that were taught. Substantial advantages were exhibited by learners in all tasks. Further, effects of comprehension on stories was revealed in three different ways, the first being through an increase in the amount of recall, the second by provision of summary stories which were more coherent and lastly, by a larger percentage of correct responses to multiple choice questions. The results informed the concerns to frequency of instruction encountered in the production of gains as well as the design of the instruction. The study used grade four learners in their revised study and taught them words over a period of time showing substantial results with regard to the use of vocabulary instruction. The study supports the need for the learners' being conversant with a sufficient number of words to support them to easily understand what they are reading. The establishment of the results on the use of instruction as a prerequisite to teach specific words to support learner' understanding of the text and the use of word learning strategies to allow them to be conscious and to utilize word activities for engagement in the learning process is highlighted. These results provide a basis for the current study's first objective which is looking at the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension to grades four, five and six.

In the United States, an action research study was conducted by Muscho and Muscho (2017) on the relationship between explicit vocabulary instruction and reading comprehension restricted to English language learners (ELL). The research involved the second and third grade learners at the same school in Minnesota. Pretests and posttest grade level comprehension assessment were administered to the learners. The learners were

exposed to explicit vocabulary instruction throughout the week and the same assessment was administered to them thereafter. Confidence and motivation were measured using surveys. Data was collected in form of pretests and posttest scores for grade level comprehension and vocabulary assessments, student surveys, and Fountas and Pinnell assessments. Results of the study suggested that explicit vocabulary does not have an effect on reading comprehension and that ELLs showed a greater degree of growth than non-ELLs. These results support the fact that confidence and motivation can lead to good performance given that the learners in the ELL class did better after the assessment. The current study is looking at the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in the urban schools of Mongu District.

Xiong (2020) carried out a meta cognitive analysis and single case studies to examine the effectiveness of Vocabulary Instruction on vocabulary learning and reading comprehension for English learners in the United States. Overall estimates showed that there was promotion of vocabulary learning and comprehension advanced by use of vocabulary instruction. The mean effect for vocabulary learning was $g=0.40$ (95% CI=0.26-0.54, $p<.001$) a small moderate effect. The mean effect for reading comprehension was $g=0.26$ (95% CI=0.07-0.46, $p=.01$). Meta regression was used to conduct moderate analyses which showed that varied effects were related with methodological thoroughness, instructional programming and outcome assessments at a statistically significant level. The findings further revealed that comprehensive interventions tend to produce better results but that these interventions do not need a significant period of time, regularity and strength to improved results. The study was important to this research as it showed that there was promotion of reading comprehension which was enhanced by the use of vocabulary instruction and a variation of thorough methodology. Vocabulary learning exhibited by the learners meant that they understood the meaning of the words thereby making their comprehension easy. While the literature reviewed has examined the effectiveness of vocabulary instruction on vocabulary learning and reading comprehension for English learners, the current study looks at the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers

in teaching reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in the urban schools of Mongu District.

A study was conducted in Thailand by Bangsri (2020) to investigate the effects of using a story map in improving Thai English First Learners (EFL) sixth graders reading comprehension and to examine the learners' attitude towards the story maps in improving their reading comprehension skills. The study adopted the use of story maps as an instructional strategy meant to enhance learners reading of comprehension narrative texts at a literal comprehension level. The study was carried out on thirteen sixth grade learners in an extended opportunity school which lasted for eight weeks with two hours of instruction per week. Reading comprehension pretest and post test instruments were adopted for data collection and a learner' attitude questionnaire. A statistically significant difference in the learners' reading comprehension skills on narrative texts was recorded after the use of story maps. Implementation of story maps mean score was at 3.78, showing tremendous aptitude exhibited by the learners towards the use of story maps. The study shows the usefulness of story maps in improving learners reading comprehension in narrative text and does not show its benefits on other texts like expository. Learners from an urban area were used, similar to the current study. The study further reveals the relevance of using language in a similar way it appears in the text being at the exact level of the learners. It goes on to explain the need for story maps and the roles they play in reading comprehension. This information was evidence enough to prove the relevance of the current study which has to do with the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension.

In Malaysia, Li and Wen (2017) conducted an action research study on improving reading comprehension through the use of story maps among year 4 learners in one of the primary schools. The study was done in view of the learners' failure to answer the "WH". WH questions are questions that answer the who, why, which, whose, whom, when, what and how questions of a text. In order to improve the reading comprehension results of the learners and teaching practices in reading comprehension, story maps were utilized. The study involved 12 males and 12 females, for a total of 24 learners. Pre-reading comprehension tests and post-test comprehension tests, work and teacher reflective

journals were used as instruments for data collection. A story through demonstration was introduced to the learners and then they would complete it by identifying literary elements based on the text. Results indicated that the improvement of reading comprehension were aided by the use of story maps through identification of literary elements in comparison with reading comprehension questions. The story maps led to positive results with regard to reading comprehension. The intervention was found to have an influence on the environment, teaching, learning and teaching practices. It was evident that story maps were a useful strategy in the learner attention attraction and the teaching of literary terms. The findings indicated that the researcher benefited by being reflective of her teaching learning strengths and weaknesses. Story maps proved to be a very effective tool in improving learners' reading comprehension. Information drawn from this study is insightful in that it has cited the relevance of environment, teaching, learning and teaching practices as mediators of learner attention, attraction and teaching of literary terms. This benefited the teacher by moulding her into a reflective teacher. This was reason enough to conduct this study on the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

A study done in Indonesia by Oktaviana and Amin (2021) aimed at knowing the students' perceptions, advantages and challenges on the use of story maps in reading comprehension in the classroom. This study was conducted to learners in the tenth grade at senior high school. A questionnaire and interview were used to collect data. Results showed that story maps can assist learners to understand a text. Most of the students expressed an understanding in reading comprehension an attributed this to feeling and quickness to understand the text. This was also noted to be a very interesting activity and helped the learners to understand the structure of a text. The study looks at knowing the learners' perceptions and unlike the current study which looks at the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

Hasnani and Ismail (2020) conducted an action research study based on Enhancing Students Reading Ability Through Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) in Malaysia. The study focused on four stages namely, namely planning, implementing, observing and

reflection. Pretest and posttest and observations were used as instruments for the research. The findings revealed that the use of PALS was achieved in improving the learners' reading ability. Improvement was seen from the mean score of the students in a cycle which was 23.1 categorized as good and in the second at 73.1 as very good. Seventeen learners out of the twenty-two that completed the cycle met the minimum completeness criteria. This sets a better argument for the current study as it provides an indication that strategies need not only be effective but also efficient and feasible for the learner in a classroom as provided for by the four stages engaged in the study which are planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The current study looks at this study on the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

Flint (2019) carried out a review of literature in the United States covering school based implementation of PALS for students with and without disabilities. The findings revealed that being a research-based strategy, PALS has showcased some strength in reading comprehension across a range of grades and ability at all levels. The review provides a basis for the current study as it shows the relevance of PALS in reading comprehension as revealed by different studies reviewed by Flint, which form a basis for this study which focuses on the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

Syamsiah et al (2018) conducted a study in Indonesia which aimed to get an in-depth understanding of the self-questioning strategy on the reading comprehension process. The study engaged qualitative and ethnography methods to explain the cultural aspects of the implementation of self-questioning strategy in the fifth semester of the students' reading process in an English education study programme. The research revealed the use of self-questioning strategy as a unique cultural theme in the process of comprehension of the student with a pattern of activities that are interrelated and affect. Comprehension of a text is surrounded by many questions generated by the students during the reading process. This study involved students at a tertiary level and explains the cultural aspect of implementation process. The study further goes on to show the relevance of self-question in the whole process providing a basis for the current study which looks at the strategies

used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

Janssen (2002) also conducted a study in the Netherlands. In her study, self-questioning was examined as a means of enhancing students understanding of text, especially literally texts. Results suggested that students could be trained to ask questions during reading of which the questions lead to significant achievements in reading comprehension and recall. Research results indicated that the approach would be effective in the literature classroom. Even if the study was conducted to students in a higher institution of learning, this study is relevant to the current study as it brings out important information on the questioning training of students to ask question as they read. Similarly, these results may not only be applied to literature but to reading comprehension as well, as the two seem to be related in one way or another as both involve comprehension of information. The conclusion that comprehension is embedded in the use of a variation of questions is important for the teachers as they teach reading comprehension. The study provides an intervention for teachers through the provision of relevant training skills in self-questioning. The current study looks at this study on the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

Bharuthram (2017) conducted a research study which focused on facilitating active reading through self-questioning. In this study done in South Africa, a discussion of student questioning and answering reading strategy was drawn by allowing students to develop their own answers from a student module. Student and tutor feedback methods were employed on the strategy use for data collection. The findings showed positive student and tutor experiences with students with self-reports exhibiting challenges as it was a new but at the same time making them to read the text many times. Learners were able to engage with the text at a much deeper level eventually leading to increased understanding of the text. However, the researcher says that despite the benefits of this strategy students are more likely to see it as a 'once off' measure and suggested that the strategy be integrated disciplinary teaching which is either explicit or implicit with continuous coaching and application. Practical ways of helping learners to formulate questions and answers have been suggested as well. The results support that self-questioning works well on learners and

highlights the ability of students to answer questions from a module. However, the study shows that students encountered challenges due to the strategy being new to them. The idea that the students used it several times made them to perfect their skills which eventually allowed them to engage deeply with the text and lead to increased understanding of the texts. Despite the study being done to students at a higher institution of learning, it provides information for this study which is looking at the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

A study was conducted in the Philippines by Lucero and Vargas (2021) to investigate the effects of using explicit instruction in improving reading comprehension of grade one pupils. The Study was conducted at Catalanacan Elementary School in the Division of Science city of Munoz. A true experimental design, following a two- group pretest, posttest study design. Results revealed a computed t-value of 20.13 as greater than the critical t-test value of 1.68 meaning that there was a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest after the explicit instruction was implemented. The findings indicate that explicit instruction was a predictor in the improvement of the reading comprehension of the grade one learners as it showed tremendous results. The aforementioned study uses experimental design to establish its findings, the current study uses qualitative design.

Elston et al (2022) conducted a study on the role of explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies to an English as a Second Language (ESL) learner. The study was conducted in South Africa at a quantile primary school in Western Cape, which is an affluent school. The study was conducted on a single grade four ESL learner. An observation and interview schedule were used to collect data and pretest and posttest were conducted before and after the intervention programme. Results showed that the explicit teaching of three reading strategies and one on one interactions and guidance from the teacher enabled the grade four learner to acquire critical skills. Improvement by the learner was noted and it also boosted her confidence. The learner developed a habit of thinking in a higher order manner after comprehensively taught the collaborative and complex approaches. The study shows the teaching of complex approaches to improve the learners results and boosting her confidence. Other findings revealed that the learner benefited from

the use of explicitly instruction and was able to think at a higher order manner after thorough teaching. This study though was conducted on one learner. It does not show how if it can do well where many learners are involved. The current study is looking at the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

Sofyan et al. (2021) conducted a study in Indonesia and used a reading test instrument to determine the students' capability in reading skills. The research employed quasi-experimental design. The results proved that the score in the experimental class was 61 with a standard deviation was 8.20 and the posttest score was 69.1 with a standard deviation of 8.53 and the pretest in the control class was 56.5 with a standard deviation of 8.53 and posttest was 60.40 with a standard deviation of 9.68. Conclusions were that the implementation of the strategy improved the reading competence skills of the learners. The study informs the current one on the need for read aloud as it improved learner's reading comprehension. Hazzard (2016) did a study on the effects of read alouds on student comprehension. The focus of the study was to justify the claim that read alouds has an increased effect on comprehension scores. The study used observations, questionnaires and comprehension questions. Results indicated that below average learners and average readers scored higher while there was no difference for above average learners. The results of the study were able to justify the claim and showed through its increased positive effects on reading comprehension of learners. The study has enough information to feed the current one which is looking at the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

According to a pre-observation conducted in Indonesia by Campbell (1989), where she looked at the teacher as a role model during sustained silent reading, it was revealed that teachers used sustained silent reading in promoting reading in the classroom and during the learning process. It was also observed that self-selected material encouraged learners to read by increasing their interest which enhanced their motivation as well. This motivation was seen to positively affect the learners' reading culture which intern improved their comprehension and other language skills. The study is relevant to the

current one as it brings out important information on how silent reading enhances learner motivation and salient use of learner selected materials for improved reading comprehension. This current study looks at the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

In South Africa, Zano (2020) conducted a study titled, “From teachers’ perspectives; resources used in teaching reading comprehension to English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners in the FET phase.” The study aimed to investigate the resources used in teaching reading comprehension to EFAL learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. The study employed a qualitative research design and semi structured interviews. The study has acknowledged the use of different strategies as a way of developing deep comprehension skills as it helps the learner to progress beyond surface comprehension to employing text knowledge to constructing meaning. Further, the same studies have reviewed the use of the dictionary, textbooks, WhatsApp, parents and videos as some of the resources used by teachers in South Africa to improve the English first Additional Language (EFAL) learners. This study has provided information to the current study which focuses on reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and their perceived challenges.

Ntshikila et al. (2021) conducted in a South Africa which focused on grade seven learners’ understanding comprehension skills at a quintile 5 school. The learners were purposefully selected and a case study design was used within a qualitative approach. Pre and posttests were used to assess the learners’ academic performance. Results showed that all the learners eventually learned and began to use higher order questions. The results still indicated that learners were modeled into independent higher thinkers and also enjoyed the discussions especially when the teacher explicitly planned and used a variety of literacy strategies to teach comprehension skills. Its provisions on the increased understanding on higher order questions provide the basis for the current study which is looking at the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District.

Studies conducted in Zambia by Muyangana (2012) on strategies employed by teachers in teaching of reading comprehension in selected secondary schools in Lusaka district brings out information on how reading comprehension was taught. Data was collected using lesson observations, semi structured interviews and focus group discussions and analyzed. The findings showed that reading comprehension was not taught in the rightful manner as was supposed to be the case. He reported that most lessons were taught through testing and not teaching. Teacher morale in the way lessons were introduced and concluded, poor lesson presentations, general lesson presentation and poor teaching techniques. Other findings were that there was a poor reading culture among teachers and learners, as well as inadequate reading materials and outdated books. Muyangana does not provide information on a particular use of strategy by the teachers on the teaching of reading comprehension which would have been more helpful to the current study. The challenges exhibited by the teachers too do not show whether they were related to the strategies used. Muyangana's study focused on secondary schools while this study looked at primary schools.

Lungu (2006) also conducted a study in Zambia which looked at communicative approaches and traditional methods and writing achievement in English in Grade eight from some selected schools. The study involved learners from both low and high socioeconomic sector and two cohorts of learners were involved that is, 413 learners in 2001 and 150 learners in 2004 bringing the total to 563. Findings drawn from this study indicated that communicative approaches were better than traditional approaches as indicated by the mean scores achieved. Other results indicated that factors such as teacher motivation, teacher effectiveness, learners' background and inadequate materials play a role in the performance of learners. The study provides information on the use of communicative approach and other traditional methods used by the teachers. However, it does not narrow this to the use of the actual strategies applied in the provided methods used. The current study looks at the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District. Ndila (2019) conducted a study in Zambia on implications of instructional methods on reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected schools in Kabwe

District. This study revealed that phonetics, linguistic, comprehension, multisensory, whole word method, look and say and basal reading approaches as mostly used instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties. The results revealed that learners had challenges in phonics and failed to spell out some words. The study revealed some difficulties such as over-enrolment, lack of learning and teaching resources, mixed disabilities, shortage of infrastructure, inconsistency on education policy regarding learners with reading challenges, and exam-oriented learning. Implications of the study indicated that the instructional methods used dwelt mostly on group reading rather than focusing on individual differences and needs. Ndila focused on the implications of instructional methods on reading skills of the learners with regard to reading difficulties. This provides information on a number of methods used and not particular strategies to implement the methods.

Nkosha (2011) conducted a research study on effects of the discourse analysis strategy and the conventional approach on pupils' performance in reading comprehension in Bemba. The study found that there was statistically significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the experimental group¹ and the control group. There was no statistically significant difference between the performance of the two groups. The study further revealed that subjects' individual post-test scores revealed that there was a small positive tendency for the discourse analysis group to do slightly better than the conventional approach group. Nkosha's study was conducted among eleventh graders focused on effects of the discourse analysis strategy and the conventional approach on pupils' performance in reading comprehension in Bemba.

2.3 Challenges in implementing the reading comprehension strategies

Reading comprehension has been described as a multidimensional and complex skill. Researchers have found multiple sources that contribute to the learner's weaknesses in reading comprehension. These weaknesses were classified as decoding difficulties, working memory, linguistic reasoning, executive functioning, vocabulary and prior knowledge. Poor reading ability has been attributed to various factors which include lack of quality teachers, a decline in text complexity and reduced intensity of instruction. (Cutting & Scarborough, 2006).

Owing to the fact that reading is a challenge to the learners, it is inevitable that teachers give special attention to the instructions they use. However, teachers to face challenges as they utilize the instructions they use to teach reading comprehension. Mathew (2021) has argued that teacher preparedness to teach reading is a challenge. Teaching reading requires practice which can be gained through experience, in order to be prepared a teacher is required to know the language, the techniques of the delivery of the lesson, and literature for the learners as well as reading psychology.

Moats (1999) highlighted that the challenge faced by teachers is that teacher training offered by universities and colleges has been seriously overlooked. The training undertaken by the teachers pays little attention to the demands of competent reading instruction and the training experience that is necessary to learn it, hence the consequences for teachers not being good. She further noted that a teacher faces a lot of demands from the classroom which affect their preparedness. Some of these demands include stimulation of the learners' interest in reading which may be done through a lot of exposure to interesting literature, discussions, use of explicit and systematic instruction and assessment of learners and provision of feedback.

In Ghana, Mohammed and Amponsah (2018) conducted a study aimed at investigating the predominant factors contributing to low reading abilities of pupils at Elsie Lund Basic School in the Tamale Metropolis. A purposive sampling technique was used to select twelve (12) classroom teachers of the Elsie Lund Basic School. The instrument used to collect data was one-to-one in-depth individual interviews. The gathered data were analysed thematically. The analysis of the data showed the following to be the factors contributing to the low reading abilities of the pupils, their lack of confidence to practice how to read in class, poor motivation from teachers and parents failure to help develop the interest of the pupils in reading, lack of pre-reader books in school and at home, lack of library, teachers inadequate knowledge on phonemic awareness strategy of teaching reading, lack of reading clubs and lack of reading competition among the pupils in the school. The results show factors contributing to low reading ability by the learners. The highlighted challenges by the learners do not really show whether they were as a result of

applied reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers and whether the lack of confidence was due to inappropriate teacher practices.

Mwanamukumbi (2013) conducted study on reading difficulties in grade six learners and challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading. The main aim of the study was to prospect factors that present reading difficulties. The study used both qualitative and quantitative designs. The results from the study showed that most of the grade six learners were not fluent readers and could not read as expected of their level. The learners committed a lot of errors in mispronouncing, substitution, adding and omission of words. Equally, teachers had their own perceptions about learner challenges which were language and communication problems and psychological factors. Also, teachers had challenges to do with their practice as there were inadequate learning and teaching materials and high teacher pupil ratio. The study still revealed a significant correlation between teachers' ability to sport the exact errors and actual performance of the learners. The study reveals teachers' perceptions in relation to language and communication of the learners and other psychological factors which affect their practice. Also, findings on the correlation between teacher ability to identify specific errors and performance also feeds the current study.

Kasebula (2021) conducted research on the use of familiar language to enhance reading skills in learners with intellectual disabilities in primary schools. The results of the study revealed that the language used to teach was not the familiar language used predominantly in the area which affected the learners' acquisition of reading skills. Other factors revealed that lack of adequate and appropriate learning and teaching materials and shortages of reading materials in the schools. Also, it was found that there were significant challenges teaching effectively using the familiar language due to language barriers which affected the teaching of reading. Learners were not able to do some tasks involving syllable segmentation and phonological awareness. Teachers' guidance to segmentation and phonological awareness in the classroom is very cardinal in reading comprehension but it is not revealed as to where the problem was as a result of teacher practices or inadequate application of reading comprehension strategies.

2.4 Improvements that can be made to the strategies used by the teachers.

In order to have a lasting impact on the learners' reading comprehension have to be taught to the learners. To achieve this, Cornell (2023) states that it is important to use the learners' prior knowledge to teach comprehension. He further encourages teachers to use the learners' prior knowledge to develop their instructional strategies because it highly increases the learners experience and makes their learning efficient and effective. Prior knowledge helps the learners to draw inferences from what they read to what they already know and also helps them to associate the current knowledge to the previous thereby having a positive effect on learning. Teachmint (2000) describes prior knowledge as the information that the learner already has before learning new concepts.

A critical review was conducted by Smith et al. (2021) to determine the influence background knowledge has on the reading comprehension of primary school-aged children. They identified twenty-three studies that met their criteria and focused on the links between background knowledge and reading comprehension of children in the mid to late primary years. Findings revealed that higher levels of background knowledge have a range of effects that are influenced by the nature of the text, the quality of the situation model required, and the presence of reader misconceptions about the text. The findings also indicated that background knowledge impacts differently on stronger and weaker readers. Readers with lower background knowledge appear to benefit more from the text with high cohesion, while weaker readers were able to compensate somewhat for their relatively weak reading skills in the context of a high degree of background knowledge. Prior knowledge is important in the creation of interest which may increase learners' ability to comprehend the texts they read and it provides immediate and effortless to information which is not clear. The finds still show that readers with lower background benefited more with an increase in the cohesion of text and so were the weaker readers. This information provides important information to the current study.

Roit (2014) stipulates that good readers make use of clues in the text, in their personal perceptions and experiences to construct meaning of the text availed to them. Using clues is hugely important because a learner's comprehension and effective usage of these clues leads to academic success. Clues can enhance the learner's vocabulary, his or her reading

comprehension and make them to be better readers. It is encouraged that learners use contextual clues especially if they come across difficulty words which they are not able to read.

Tarigan and Pangaribuan (2018) The objectives of this study was to find out the students' reading comprehension by Context Clues strategy. The study was conducted on the eighth-grade students of SMP Dharma Wanita Medan in Indonesia. In conducting this research, the researcher used Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the method of research. The test was used to gather the quantitative data. Based on the finding of this study showed in the pretest that only 3 students (10%) passed KKM (the Mastery Minimum Criteria), and posttest 27 students (90%) passed. The result of this research revealed that there was a significant improvement of the students' achievement in the posttest. This improvement was shown by the comparison between the mean score of pre-tests (47.26), and posttest (80.33). Furthermore, the students were interested in Context Clues Strategy, as could be seen from their full attention during the teaching learning process. Therefore, the Context Clues Strategy was found to be an effective strategy in helping students to improve their reading comprehension especially in narrative text. As exhibited by the learners, attention that was induced by the use of the context cues is vital in the improvement of reading comprehension of the learners. Though the study was conducted to learners of a higher grade than the ones in the current study the results could still be used to guide the current study.

The development of vocabulary is another skill that teacher need to develop in the learners. Al-Khasawneh (2019) reveals in his research a significant relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension. Al-Khasawneh says that vocabulary knowledge is an important predictor to comprehension written texts. He further emphasises the teaching of vocabulary using different strategies to enhance learners' vocabulary for both general and academic purposes.

Leslie (2013) conducted an action research study to examine how instructional strategies and providing students with vocabulary strategies support word knowledge and increased comprehension in content areas for struggling readers. A combination of direct instruction

and vocabulary strategies were suggested to increase word knowledge and comprehension. Research was conducted in a special education classroom with four students. Through surveys, interviews, and observation, it was evident that vocabulary strategies positively impacted students' ability to comprehend social studies content. These findings call for teachers to evaluate their instructional practices to provide direct instruction combined with vocabulary strategies. Many opportunities should be provided for students to interact with words on a regular basis across a variety of contexts. This study was conducted on struggling readers and on their ability to comprehend social studies content. Many studies have indicated the relationship between reading comprehension and other subject areas as alluded to in the background information in the study. Walker et. al. (2008) have asserted that students' scores on these contextualized items were influenced by their level of reading ability. Grimm (2008) also reported that early reading comprehension relates to a conceptual understanding of mathematics and the application of mathematical knowledge. The exposure of learners to new words and vocabulary can lead to easy comprehension of what the learners are about to read. Meanings of these new words and contextual meanings can be provide to the learners prior to their reading activity. This study, though done in social studies, provides relevant information to the current study.

Hall et al. (2019) conducted a study investigated the effects of small-group inference instruction on the inference generation and reading comprehension of sixth- and seventh-grade students who were below-average readers ($M = 86.7$, $SD = 8.1$). Seventy-seven percent of student participants were limited English proficient. Participants were randomly assigned to 24, 40-min sessions of the inference instruction intervention ($n = 39$) or to standard English language arts instruction ($n = 39$). Membership in the treatment condition statistically significantly predicted higher outcome score on the Gates-Mac Ginitie Reading Comprehension subtest ($d = 0.60$, 95% confidence interval (CI, 0.16, 1.03), but not on the other measures of inference skill. The findings of the show that the below average learners benefited significantly in the comprehension test results and the confidence levels as well increased. This provides the basis that inferencing can actually be utilized to improve reading comprehension of learners.

Prastika et al. (2020) conducted a study aimed to find out whether there was any significant effect of prediction strategy toward students' reading comprehension for the tenth-grade students at SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi in Indonesia. The research methodology used for the study was true-experimental research which involved experimental class and control class. The total population of this research was the tenth-grade students of SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi, which consisted of 225 students. The researcher used 2 classes as the sample of the study. These 2 classes were divided into experimental and control class. There were 28 students at experimental class (X Science 1) and 29 students at control class (X Science 2). In collecting the data, the researcher gave pre-test, treatment, and post-test to both classes. The formula used to analyze the data was t-test. The researcher found that the pre-test mean of experimental class was 60.35 and post-test was 83.57. Meanwhile, the pre-test mean of control class was 55.51 and posttest was 68.96. Furthermore, the researcher discovered that to observations was 11.63. The H1 was accepted and H0 was rejected. As a result, there was a significant effect of prediction strategy toward students' reading comprehension for the tenth-grade students at SMAN 8 Muaro Jambi. The findings provide important information to the current study as they show a positive effect on the use of prediction in reading comprehension of the learners, though the learners in the study were grade tens.

Beer, Winkle and Mckeown (2016) conducted a study on reading comprehension as a valued skill in Kenya. In this study, they analyzed the reading comprehension exercises in the English textbooks for Standard 4 and Standard 5 because reading comprehension is taught through English textbooks. Results indicated a strong emphasis on questions that can be answered directly from the text and questions that connect to a reader's background. Direct answering from questions from the text can be of help to the learners as indicated from the results of this study. Teachers can enhance learners' understanding by asking learners questions from what they read, and this can help improve their comprehension of text. This study provides information required by the current study.

In Zambia, Kamalata (2016) conducted a study whose purpose was to establish the relationship between phonological awareness knowledge and reading ability in a transparent orthography. A sample comprising of 105 participants (15 teachers and 90 pupils) was drawn from three schools in Solwezi District, North-Western Province. The

participants were randomly (pupils) and purposively (teachers) selected for the study. The study used a mixed method and employed the Concurrent Triangulation Design. Information was obtained from participants using interviews guides, classroom observations check lists and tests in reading and phonological awareness. In order to achieve the study objectives, tests were administered in phonological awareness and reading in Kiikaonde to establish the relationship between phonological awareness knowledge and reading ability. Interviews with teachers and classroom observations were conducted to find out the components of phonological awareness being taught in schools and the strategies being used to teach phonological awareness skills. Interviews with teachers were also conducted to find out if teachers had received training in phonological awareness either in college or in service workshops. Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses were used. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis while quantitative data was analysed using Excel, 2010 where both descriptive and inferential statistics was used. The study revealed that there was a significant and positive correlation between phonological awareness knowledge and reading ability more so in grade two than grade one learners. The study also revealed that blending, substitution and sound identification (isolation) were the components of phonological awareness that teachers were teaching during literacy lessons. The study also revealed that teachers were using teacher-centred strategies when teaching phonological awareness during literacy lessons. It was also revealed in the study that teachers had not received training in phonological awareness during pre- service training, but some had received this training in Continuous Professional Development Meetings. This study provides important information on the use of phonological awareness to reading comprehension though its focus was on orthography, the current study looks at the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers in teaching reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in the urban schools of Mongu District.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, various studies related to the research objectives have been reviewed and gaps have been drawn from the studies reviewed to lay a basis for the current study. The next chapter discusses the methodology employed in the current study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The previous chapter gave a review of some important literature on the influence of executive function on reading comprehension. The current chapter presents the methodology used in the study which included the philosophical assumption, research design, and target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This research is a descriptive design with a qualitative methodology. A descriptive research study describes characteristics of an existing phenomenon. It determines the strategies used to teach reading comprehension in primary schools. This information provided a broad picture of the phenomenon being explored. In order to obtain this information, classroom observations and interviews were conducted. The interviews used a structured schedule to assess the challenges faced by the teachers.

Also, the research will consider the lesson plans prepared by the teachers in terms of their outcomes, contents and outcomes. It will analyse teachers' views on comprehension lessons and pedagogical content knowledge. Blaxter, Hughe, and Tight (2006) observe that this type of research design is appropriate to describe and show features of an event, situation or a group of people. It leads to the profile development of a situation of people by acquiring complete and possible accurate information.

3.2 Study population

The study collected data from all the teachers who teach primary school learners from the selected schools.

3.3 Study Sample and sampling Techniques

The study sampled eleven (11) teachers, three (3) from each of the four (3) and two from one (1) of the schools where the research was conducted. The study employed purposive sampling techniques because the researcher targeted a category of teachers who provided

valuable information and because there is specialisation of teaching subjects in the schools. The advantage of purposive sampling is that it allowed the researcher to concentrate on those teaching the targeted grades and generate valuable data for the study. Cohen and Marion (2000) have supported the purposive sampling technique by indicating that it can benefit the research because some of the selected key informants have special knowledge and perception that add value and richness to the research. Patton (1990:169) also notes that, “the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for the in-depth study.” These information rich cases can be those from which one can learn a great deal about the importance necessary for the research.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

Data was collected from documents, interviews and observations. Interviews were conducted to ascertain some of the issues underlying the themes of the research which were the strategies used to teach reading comprehension and the challenges perceived by the teachers as they interact with the strategies. Classroom observations were conducted using instruments that the researcher designed that provided in-depth information to the researcher. Documents such as lesson plans were reviewed to determine the strategies used by the teachers when teaching reading comprehension to their learners.

3.5 Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools, guides or schedules that help the researcher to collect data and these may include interview guide, group discussion guide, observation checklist, questionnaire and tests (Mkandawire, 2019).

3.5.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were used to collect data from the class teachers. It is important to note that interviews are one of the most important sources of information for research. Dexter (1970) states that interviews are vital for the provision of content required by the researcher for deeper understanding of the issue under study. Interview guides are important in that they will provide the same category of information obtained from a number of respondents about the issue being studied. The interview schedule provided topics or subjects areas within which the researcher was free to explore, probe and ask questions that elucidated

and illuminated the subject under study, (Patton, 1990). The researcher in this case remains free to build a conversation within a particular area or to establish a conversation style with focus on the subject of interest.

3.5.2 Classroom observations

The researcher conducted classroom observations in order to find out the strategies used by the teachers when teaching reading comprehension. Classroom observations allowed the researcher to stand away from the behaviour being observed and created a log, notes or an audio or a video setting of the behaviour in their most natural setting. The goal for this was to record behaviour without interference. This is supported by Salkind (2011), as he states that observations aim at bringing out data of specific characteristics of individuals or groups.

3.5.3 Document review

The researcher reviewed some lesson plans. Lesson plans helped the researcher to establish and gather ideas and evidence to support the interviews and observations that were conducted. It also helped the researcher to evaluate the quality and purpose of the documents used to determine the benefit of the study. Bowen (2009) has alluded to the fact that document analysis is important as it allows the researchers to make sense of their resources and select the appropriate pieces for their studies. He further goes on to say that documents contain qualitative data which the research can make use of and may even suggest situations the researcher can observe to provide additional insights to the study. Morgan (2022) also acknowledges that documents can give the researcher a track to the development of their study by providing appropriate content which is within the confines of the study. Document review also helped the researcher to triangulate the data.

3.5.4 Fieldwork journal

The researcher kept a day-to-day detailed record of activities. These included the dates, times and contents of the lessons that were kept which included personal reflections. These influenced the researcher to perceive situations in different ways.

3.5.4 Data collection procedure

Data collection involves the gathering of information to serve or prove some facts. Data collection will be done over a period of one month. Observations were conducted in the classrooms; interviews too were conducted following a structured instrument as well as a review of some documents relevant to the research.

3.5.5 Validity and reliability of data

Trustworthiness was used to ensure confidence in the trustfulness and reliability of the findings. Trustworthiness is essential for maintaining the integrity of qualitative research. Collingridge and Gantt (2019) have argued the necessity for quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research

Different instruments were used objectively and subjectively to ascertain consistency of results. The use of different types of methods to collect data to obtain true information helped the researcher to enhance the validity and reliability of the data collected. Reliability helped the researcher to make comparisons that were reliable. Singh (2014) postulates that validity and reliability increase transparent and decrease opportunities to insert researcher bias in qualitative research.

3.5.6 Data analysis

The qualitative data collected were manually analyzed, coded and processed using emerging themes. Lloyd and Blanc (1996) suggest that in analyzing qualitative data, the initial task is to find concepts that help “make sense of what is going on.” Patton (1990) suggests that these concepts about data analysis start arising during data collection and that marks the beginning of the analysis and this continues throughout the study. This study constructed themes and patterns which were identified from the interviews, and reviewed the documents with an aim to use them in the description of the phenomenon that were studied (Gall and Gall, 1996). This will be done because there will be no hypotheses before the data collection. The understanding of the phenomenon under study and outcomes emerged from experiences with the environment. What took place in the study environment is grounded in direct research experience rather than imposed (Patton, 1990).

3.6 Ethical consideration

Reading comprehension strategy is quite complex as it deals with the learners and the teachers handle their lesson which directly affects their privacy, hence dealing with this issue required ethical clearance before commencement of the study. The researcher obtained ethical approval from the University of Zambia ethical committee in order to conduct research. The researcher then used the letter from the University of Zambia to introduce herself to the Head teachers. Approval by Head teachers allowed the researcher to conduct the study in the schools. Both oral and written consent was obtained from the participants who were the teachers and were assured of their confidentiality in the information they provided.

To ensure confidentiality of the participants, the researcher decided not to mention the schools in the report because the teachers were specializing in particular subjects and grades but instead numbered them alphabetically. Mentioning the schools would actually give a clue to those who handled the classes. Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger (2015) have provided insights into the complexities of maintaining participant anonymity in qualitative research. They have indicated that both anonymity and confidentiality play a vital role in preserving research ethics and ensuring the reliability of quantitative data. They further suggest that researcher need to navigate the principles carefully to uphold trust and rigor in their work.

3.7 Summary

This chapter gave an overview of the research methodology selected for this study and the rationale for the alternatives made have been presented. It is apparent that the research design used for this study was qualitative. The instruments which were used for data collection and the procedures applied have also been discussed. It has also indicated that data analysis and presentation of findings were thematically done in line with the research objectives. The next chapter presents the data and its interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings referred to as the results of the study consist of the conclusions which the researcher came up with after considering the data gathered through observations, interviews and documents. The study involved observation of lessons by 11 teachers, of which all were female. The findings were presented under the following themes generated following the research questions as follows:

1. What are the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension to grades (4) to six (6) learners?
2. What are the challenges of the reading comprehension strategies used to teach reading comprehension as perceived by the teachers?
3. What are the improvements that could be made to the strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension?

4.2 Reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension.

The first objective was to establish the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension. The teachers were asked to give their understanding of what reading comprehension is. This was deliberately asked by the researcher because she wanted to understand how much knowledge the teachers had about the subject under study.

Reading comprehension is a written text in which learners read and understand or comprehend what is in the text. (Grade Four teacher: School A)

It is an activity where learners are given work to read and are asked questions from the story. (Grade Five teacher: School B)

It is the ability for the learners to read a text, understand it and process it. (Grade Six teacher: School D)

The second question aimed to identify reading strategies used by the teachers. Most of the teachers said that they are strategies that help learners to understand what they read. One teacher also described them as techniques that help to catch the attention of the learners as they read and help them to read with understanding.

The teachers indicated that they used read aloud in groups, individually, or with the whole class. Silent reading was done as individual reading, with subsequent discussion either through picture discussion or question and answer. The teachers said that these were the only strategies they were conversant with. From the answers provided, it can be concluded that most teachers did not have the knowledge about many other strategies they could use to teach reading. It was observed that the teachers did not realize that some of strategies they used to teach reading, like vocabulary or use of new words, was actually a reading comprehension strategy as observed in their lessons.

When asked about the performance of their learners, most of the teachers said that the performance of their learners was average because most of them were able to read. Though other teachers were quick to mention that, even if their learners were able to read, comprehending of what they read was a challenge and it affected their performance in written work that they are given.

Another teacher said that some of her learners were able to read but at a very slow pace and providing for more reading time for them was a challenge because it could affect other lessons for other teachers.

It is difficult for me to provide more time for the learners who have reading difficulties and slow readers because of specialization, other teachers need to come and teach their lessons as well. At least before this specialization came, I was able to provide more time for the learners because I used to teach all the subjects in one class and then compensate for the lost time after class. (Grade Six teacher: School B)

Another teacher said that;

Learner performance in my class is not very good because of a lot of challenges that both myself and the learners face. Yes, some learners are fluent readers but they have challenges understanding what they read. When I engage them in oral exercises, they are able to respond but when I ask them to read the questions for themselves, the performance is not really that good. (Grade Four teacher: School C)

I would say half of my learners are good while the other half is at average performance because the good readers are able to quickly do their work even with little instruction while the other half requires a lot of attention. (Grade Four teacher: School D)

When questioned regarding the type of materials they were using to teach their learners, the teachers indicated that they used textbooks, word cards, flash cards, pictures, dictionaries, magazines, stories, story books and charts. A discussion of how these materials were utilized by the teachers is presented below.

Textbooks were used for reading, discussions and picture discussions. One of the teachers said that she first discusses the pictures in the textbooks with her learners, before they read the text. According to her, she said she does this because it gives her learners an idea of what they are going to read about in their comprehension text and that that pictures too arouse the interest of her learners to read.

All the teachers said that they used flash cards to teach reading comprehension. They said that they find the flash cards helpful because they use them to teach vocabulary to the learners. Words are written on the flash cards and flashed to the learners to identify the words written on them. word cards. Most of the teachers reviewed that they used word cards in a similar way they used flash cards, except that the word cards were not flashed but showed to the learners for some time to read the words.

I use pictures that are in the textbook to introduce the lesson. What I do is that I ask the learners to look at the picture then use it to predict what the

story will be about and the learners will do so. Sometimes they just talk about what they see in the pictures. (Grade Five teacher: School C)

One out of eleven teachers observed use dictionaries to explain the selected vocabulary from the text with the learners, and she had this to say;

usually when teaching vocabulary, it's difficult for the learners to explain the meaning of words that is why I use dictionaries when teaching so that the learners can learn to look for the meanings themselves. I have taught them to do so and it's easy for them to look up for the words. Another teacher said,

Since we have challenges with reading materials, I sometimes get stories from magazines and write them on the charts for my learners to read. I look for interesting stories that I know my learners me enjoy to read them I stick them on the wall for them to read. The learners usually read the stories during break or before classes as they wait for their learning time to start. (Grade Six teacher: School D)

Another teacher responded,

I tell my learners some stories and then ask them questions from the stories I tell them. I adopt some folk stories which our grandparents used to tell us. Sometimes I get stories from the radio which are that they use some story books sometimes to teach reading to their learners. Read from our local languages literature and use them in my class. (Grade Four teacher: School B)

A response from a Grade Six teacher was, "Though we have limited story books in the school but we write our own story books for the learners which we eventually use to teach the reading in class."

Teachers were also found using charts in their classrooms. Some stories were written on charts for the learners to read especially where books were limited. They said that they had no option but to use charts because that was the only way the learners would be engaged

in the reading lessons. And that since a chart will be placed at a more central place, all the learners will have an opportunity to see without challenges.

Asked whether materials were adequate, all teachers indicated that they did not have adequate resources to teach reading comprehension. They mentioned that the textbooks found in their schools could not cater for all the learners, and in most cases the learners were made to share in groups. The researcher also endeavored to identify some of the skills the learners were able to gain from reading comprehension instruction and asked a follow up question of how the teachers think the learners were able to apply those skills. Most of the teachers indicated that their learners were able to acquire reading, writing, speaking and listening. As one grade six teacher indicated that the learners are able to acquire reading skills themselves because as they read it sharpens their reading skill and they become fluent readers.

As for listening, one teacher said that her learners were able to exercise patience because at the end of the reading exercise they were expected to answer questions and because of that, they are made to listen to either the teacher or their friends reading or even themselves.

Another teacher said that her learners were able to sharpen their writing skills as they were able to adopt some expression skills from what they read.

You see, my learners are able to write and tell stories from what they read. They sometimes adopt some words and use them in their own writing after learning the meaning of those words. So, reading comprehension is very important to my learners. sometimes I get shocked when I read their work and find these words even if sometimes the spellings may be wrong but at least am able to get the meaning and work with them to provide correct spellings. (Grade Six teacher: School A)

Another teacher acknowledged that her learners were able to acquire and expand their vocabulary through reading comprehension. She indicated that her learners were able to use the new words learnt in their conversations with their friends and sometimes extended that to their homes either with their siblings or parents.

A grade four teacher interviewed also indicated that her learners were able to gain confidence from reading comprehension especially those that were able to read.

My learners are not shy, especially those that are good readers. They quickly respond to tasks assigned to them. But those that are still struggling are not confident, they have to be forced to participate in class activities because they are scared of their friends who may laugh at them when they make mistakes. (Grade Four teacher: School C)

Punctuation was another skill that was mentioned by two teachers who indicated that their learners learnt how to punctuate their work from reading comprehension.

I teach my learners to punctuate their work through reading comprehension because I emphasize on the many punctuation marks used and I explain why it is important to do so. (Grade Four teacher: School A)

I think another skill my learners are able to acquire from reading comprehension is understanding and comprehension skills because my learners are able to interpret not only what they read in their reading comprehension lessons but also other reading materials they come across in other subjects as well. I do not only teach English language but social Studies as well. Most of the learners who are good readers also do not have challenges in Social studies. You will find that the same learners who are good readers are the ones doing well in other subjects as well. (Grade Six teacher: School B)

Most of the teachers stated that their learners also acquired scanning and skimming skills. They stated that some of their learners quickly used the two skills to identify the new words which they found difficult to read as well as to find answers to the questions which were asked after reading.

Asked whether their learners were able to summarize what they read, the teachers indicated that most of their learners were not able to do so. But if asked to narrate orally, only some

could do so. They indicated that they have not yet taught their learners to summarize. They said that maybe if they had taught them the skill they would try.

The researcher, in trying to find out the challenges the teachers were facing in teaching reading comprehension, was informed that mostly it was inadequate materials that made their work difficult. Most of the time they were made to improvise their own reading material or write the stories on the charts which was quite time consuming. One Grade Five teacher said, “Because we have to write the texts for the learners, it consumes our time to prepare for the lessons and buying charts also is costly because the school cannot provide for us.”

From the classroom observations and the researcher came up with the following findings. Most of the teachers introduced their lessons by asking the learners to scan through the text, identify the words which they thought were difficult for them to read and whose meaning they did not know, and write them on a piece of paper. The teacher then collected the pieces of paper and wrote the words that prominently came out on the board. The teacher would then ask the learners to pick a word they could read and explain its meaning. Learners would then identify the words they were able to read and explain the meaning of the words. The teacher would then proceed with the remaining words.

One Grade Six teacher, on the other hand, first asked the learners to scan the words the learners were not familiar with and write them on pieces of paper. She then wrote the words on the board. Second, she divided her learners in groups of six to eight learners and shared the words between the learners and asked them to look up for the meanings of the words in the dictionaries. Later on, she asked learners to read out to other learners the meanings they got from the dictionaries.

Other teachers simply identified the words on their own which they thought were difficult for the learners and wrote them on some cards. They then either flashed them to the learners to read or read them out to the learners and discussed the meanings thereafter.

One of the teachers used spelling games with her learners to introduce her lessons. She would divide her learners in groups of ten, then pick one representative at a time for each

group to go in front. The teacher would then say the word and ask the learners to write it on a piece of paper. The teacher then asked learners to show the written words to the whole class to determine whether it is the correct spelling. Points were awarded for the winning team and written on the board. Each of the given words had a new representation from the group and at the end of the exercise a winning group was declared by the highest score. None of the other teachers used spelling games in their lessons apart from this Grade Six teacher.

Discussion was another way lessons were introduced. Teachers would ask the learners to look at a picture and then ask questions from the picture for the story learners are about to read before they read it. In some instances, some pictures were drawn on charts and discussed with the learners, these pictures were adopted from the learners' course books.

Some lessons were introduced through the use of storytelling. One teacher used storytelling to introduce her lessons. She would tell a story to her learners and ask some questions thereafter from the story. One teacher told a story about child labour, which was related to the topic of the day that the learners were to read.

Questioning was another way the teachers introduced their reading comprehension lessons. For example, in one case the teacher asked the learners to mention their favourite fruit and give reasons as why they liked that particular fruit. The teacher then went on to explain why the fruits were important to learners' bodies and encouraged them to eat fruits. Thereafter, the teacher read a passage to them on the importance of fruits.

The teachers in most cases read aloud to the learners. Teachers read the whole text aloud to the learners before they would ask a few learners to read parts of the story to their fellow learners. In some cases, groups were assigned to read aloud for the whole class. While reading aloud to the learners, two teachers out of the eleven observed asked follow-up questions to their learners after a paragraph to ensure the learners were following. The rest of them just read the passages up to the end.

Silent reading was done after reading aloud activities were done generally in all observed classes. The teachers would ask their learners to read silently and then answer the questions that followed.

Teachers came up with lists of words which they thought were difficult for the learners, while other teachers used learners to scan the texts and find words which were difficult for them to read and whose meanings they did not know. Thereafter, the words were read out to the learners and learners also practiced reading the words. The words meanings were either explained or looked up in dictionaries.

Background knowledge was used by one of out of the eleven in one of the lessons where the teacher asked her grade four learners to mention the fruit they liked the most and gave reasons why they liked those fruits before the learners were introduced to the lesson of the day.

Performance of learners in their reading tasks was average, as observed in classroom participation. Some learners could read while others had challenges in pronunciations of words as they read. When it came to answering to questions, learners often performed very well in oral questions, unlike written exercises. In most cases, learners did not finish their assigned work by the end of the lesson.

From the lesson plans reviewed it was found that all the teachers were using the strategies that were both observed by the research during the lessons as well as what some of the teachers mention they were using. Most of these strategies that were prominent were silent reading, reading aloud and vocabulary.

4.3 The challenges in implementing the reading comprehension strategies

The second objective was to establish the challenges of the reading comprehension strategies as perceived by the teachers. The researcher sought to find out the challenges the teachers were facing in teaching reading comprehension. Details of the challenges that the teachers experienced when teaching reading comprehension have been presented below.

All the teachers interviewed mentioned materials as the number one challenge. They said that their learners were sharing textbooks in big numbers, making it difficult to teach

reading comprehension. The learners had to give each other turns to use the text books for reading which was very difficult for each one to at least follow when another learner was reading to the class. Some teachers mentioned that they were overwhelmed with large numbers of learners to handle.

Numbers in our classrooms are too big because of the free education policy, as you saw in my class, some learners are sitting on the floor. Even allowing each learner to read is difficult because of time and the sitting arrangement of the learners, said one teacher. (Grade Six teacher: School A)

Classroom space is a challenge because of the numbers and we don't have enough desks to cater for all our learners as you saw that most of the learners sit on the floor. Others bring their own 'chitenge' (wrappers) material to sit on. (Grade Four teacher: School C)

Teachers from one school bemoaned truancy by their learners as a challenge. They said that some learners disappear immediately when they realize they will have to sit on the floor. Others do not come to school for various reasons.

We find ourselves teaching different learners almost all the time because of truancy. You will find that from the set you teach today, some will miss the next day. (Grade Six teacher: School D)

Another teacher said that, the other challenge we have is that of the parents to our learners because they don't assist their children with homework and when we ask the learners mostly they say their parents come home late and tired and give excuses for helping them. Others say their grandparents cannot read so it's difficult for them to help. (Grade Six teacher: School B)

Asked about the challenges the learners were facing, the teachers said that their learners lacked concentration because of lack of confidence, especially those that had reading difficulties.

Some grade four teachers indicated that their learners had difficulties transitioning from the use of the local language to English language.

My learners still have challenges with reading and understating the English language because this is the first year we switching to English as a language of instruction, so there is so much reliance on the use of the local language making it difficult for them to comprehend what they are reading I have to interpret for them even what they are reading in English. (Grade Four teacher: School C)

Another Grade Four teacher said that her learners could read but understanding what they read was a challenge because they did not understand English.

The researcher observed that in most cases the teachers did not explicitly give instructions to the learners leaving them to either do the wrong things or to keep asking for clarifications from either their fellow learners or the teacher.

Three out of eleven teachers had challenges explaining the meaning of words to learners, hence some words were left without being explained. These teachers just picked the words from the text but could not really give meaning of the words to the learners. There was over reliance of textbooks by the teachers even when the textbooks were not adequate for the learners. The teachers observed had not improvised teaching and learning materials, so there was much reliance on textbooks, charts, flash cards and word cards. In most cases where a teacher used a textbook, they could not use any other materials. If they wrote the story on the chart that would be the only material used for that particular lesson. The use of these materials were not combined by most of the teachers.

In most cases, little time was assigned to the learners to read the text and eventually led to the learners not finishing their work and intern affected their performance. Some teachers did not manage their time well, failing to provide enough time for the learners to do their tasks. In other classes time was spent on reading, where teachers wanted almost all the learners to read aloud in turns several times before they could be assigned to read silently in order to answer questions.

Lack of teaching materials in terms of reading textbooks was observed. Generally, a minimum of three to six learners and a maximum of eight had to share a book. Some learners had to wait to read until their friends finished reading. Because they had to wait, they ended up not finishing their tasks on time.

Reinforcement of necessary reading skills was lacking in most of the lessons observed as there was a lot of reliance on reading aloud and silent reading throughout their reading exercise. For example, activation of learners' background knowledge was a challenge to most of the teachers. Teachers could also not use prediction where learners could be asked to predict what they are about to read using the pictures or use of vocabulary in sentences to reinforce meanings of the words. Other strategies they could have used, including inferencing, text structures, characters, theme, etc., were not discussed with the learners.

Learners were provided with opportunity to read text, either aloud to the whole class or silently to themselves. However, it was observed that the purpose for reading was never defined for the learners, beyond the fact that they would answer oral questions as guided by the teacher from the passage read or the exercise given at the end of the text read in the learners' books. The researcher observed that teachers did not provide a framework to guide the learners' reading so as to activate their comprehension skills.

4.4 Improvements that can be made to the strategies used by the teachers

The third objective was to establish the improvements that can be made to the strategies used by the teachers. Despite the teachers exhibiting lack of knowledge on how they can improve their strategies that they used to teach reading comprehension, they shared supportive contributions that included deliberate policies on exchange programs, retraining in methodologies and techniques, reinforcement of workshops and involvement of all teachers in ongoing programmes to do with teaching and learning of literacy. Turning to the measures that they would want to be undertaken, most of the teachers mentioned that they would want the schools or the government to provide more textbooks and other reading material to the learners. Others mentioned that the government should quickly address the teacher pupil ratio to reduce their workload, as they were handling large

numbers of learners in their classrooms. Some teachers indicated that they needed desks in their classrooms so that issues related to lack of seating can be reduced.

For me, there must be deliberate policies on exchange programmes by us teachers whereby we can go and see what our fellow teachers are doing in their schools maybe we can learn one or two things from them which they are doing differently said one teacher. (Grade Six teacher: School C)

Another teacher said,

I think even the college can help to retrain us in some methodologies and techniques that we can use to help our learners to read efficiently. (Grade Five teacher: School A). I think we need reinforcement of workshops like those who handle secondary classes because they learn a lot from their Language Teachers Association (LATAZ) workshops which have segregated us who teach in primary schools. (Grade Six teacher: School D)

Another said,

I think we need to put everyone on board whenever there are some programmes running, for example the catch up programme, not everyone is involved but I think we all need to learn from there and our learners too need to benefit from such programmes. (Grade Six teacher: School C)

The researcher took an interest to find out how vocabulary, fluency and accuracy were addressed during the teaching of reading comprehension in the classroom and the following were observed. Vocabulary was mostly done at the beginning of the lesson, either the teacher or the learners identified the vocabulary and meaning and meanings of the words were discussed before reading of the text.

Fluency was addressed during reading, when the teachers corrected the pronunciations of words. There were two teachers who emphasized on segmentation of words as well as the numbers of syllables in words when looking at the new words with the learners. Accuracy was addressed when learners were given texts to read orally and questions asked from what

the learners read. Those with reading difficulties were left unattended, resulting in them failing to write the exercises given at the end of the reading exercise.

Most of the teachers did not provide explicit instructions to their learners especially with regard to reading. They did not explicitly guide the learners on how to go about their reading in order to understand the texts read. They simply asked the learners to read and then answer the questions that followed. Conclusions were all done in a similar manner, where the learners were asked questions from the exercise they were given orally. Some classes used a song for a social closure to the instructional period. Learners were often given homework to go and practice reading the vocabulary words identified at the beginning of the lesson. Some learners were assigned stories to read from their textbooks as homework.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings based on the topic, a study of the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers in urban primary schools of Mongu district and their perceived challenges. For each of the themes, the researcher has presented the information obtained through observations of lessons taught by the teachers, interviews conducted with the teachers and information obtained from lesson plans previously used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension. Based on the findings for this study, the researcher has drawn conclusions which represent the findings of the study. The findings include the strategies that teachers used to teach reading comprehension, the challenges that were perceived by the teachers in relation to the strategies used as well as how the strategies can be improved.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the findings that have been presented in chapter four. The presentation of the discussion of findings is based on the research objectives. The discussion is presented by using the findings and how they are related to the literature reviewed earlier in chapter two, relating it to its theory and bringing out the researcher's voice. The objectives of the study were:

1. To analyse the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension.
2. To analyse the challenges of the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension as perceived by the teachers.
3. To analyse the improvements that can be made to the strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension.

5.1 Reading comprehension strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension

In response to this objective, analysis of data collected revealed that most of the teachers were limited in terms of knowledge of what reading comprehension strategies were. The responses of what strategies they used indicated that they had little knowledge about reading comprehension strategies including the ones they used when teaching their lessons.

Reading aloud was frequently in their lessons which they coupled with silent reading before the learners were given an activity to do. Rog (2001) says reading aloud is very beneficial to learners as it provides them with many other skills. These skills include building vocabulary, supporting of connections between print and elements and teaches reading in a more meaningful context. Rog still further says that, reading aloud helps learners to develop and model their fluency and motivates them to read. Furruggia (1989) has postulated that learners develop a rich language base and understand the power of words as they engage with a lot of activities while listening and reading to stories.

Although reading aloud was frequently used by the teachers, it was found that reading was done mostly in bigger groups which did not allow the learners to listen to themselves and show their pronunciation of words and other skills they could learn from that. It was also

difficult for the learners who made mistakes while reading because it was difficult to do so as most of reading was done in groups.

Vocabulary is another strategy that the teachers used to teach reading comprehension. In most cases the learners were asked to look up for the difficult words from the text prior to reading and there after the meanings of the words were provided and the words were read. The researcher observed that in as much as vocabulary was used to teach the learners reading comprehension, some teachers did not explain some of the meanings of some words to the learners meaning that learners were left to wonder without really learning the meanings of some words. Teachers also needed to use the words in different contexts in which the words can be used to simplify the meaning of words to the learners. This could also help them clarify the meaning of words to the learners. Stahl (2005) says that vocabulary knowledge is knowledge of a word not only by its definition but also how it fits into the world. Vocabulary is all about the words the learners need to know to understand what they read. Teachers need to know the necessity of building vocabulary skills in their learners as it plays a very critical role to reading comprehension.

Nagy and Scott (2000) support the use of contextual analysis by the learners to infer the meaning of a word by looking closely at the surrounding text. They acknowledge the use of context clues as having potential to enhance considerable long-term vocabulary growth. They further recommend the application of the target word in different contexts as well as their own experiences to allow for a greater opportunity for the learners to comprehend the meaning of words at a much more personal level. This is the reason why McKeon et al (1983) have reported in their study that vocabulary was used as a prerequisite to teach specific words to support the learners understanding of text in the literature reviewed. They also emphasized the use word learning strategies to allow learners to be conscious and to utilize word activities for engagement in the learning process. It is important for the teachers to stimulate skills that will inculcate vocabulary through enhancement of appropriate strategies.

Questioning is another strategy that was popularly utilized among the teachers to teach reading comprehension. Flood et. al (1984, p. 255) said, “while questioning stimulates and

directs thinking, it is also necessary to supplement your instruction with work conception.” They further still assert that it is imperative to use questioning to teach reading comprehension as it allows for the development of learner’s background knowledge and experience for them to have a wider pool of knowledge from which they read and do their reading comprehension activities for positive results stimulated by teacher instruction. It is also important for the teachers to take into consideration the use of a variation of questions of different mental abilities whose development would serve as a source of direction for learning. As observed by the researcher, most of the teachers were basically asking the learners what they saw in the picture. Such questions could further be amplified by asking the learners to even predict what they thought would happen to the predicted characters and what they learnt from the learners can relate to the story and relevance it has in the learners’ lives.

Another strategy that teachers acknowledged using was silent reading. In this strategy, learners were asked to read quietly on their own. Teachers responded that it was important that learners read silently after they read aloud in order for them to get connected with the text for a deeper understanding because they were expected to answer to some questions thereafter. It is evident that most of the teachers did not guide their learners on how they could easily read their text and focus on the demands of the questions which in most cases resulted in the learners not finishing their work on time or even not finishing at all. Payner (1998) has postulated that silent reading is a mode for proficient readers as they are able read fast using the strategy. However, the researcher observed that teachers allowed every learner to engage in silent reading, regardless of their proficiency in reading. Struggling readers were asked to read silently and were expected to answer questions at the end of the reading activity. It can easily be concluded that teachers denied their learners who were struggling an opportunity to apply themselves by not using other strategies at the cost of reading silently. Sanders (2020) reveals that learners of varying proficient levels enjoy silent reading time and find it important to their daily schedule. He further suggested that learners enjoyed this silent reading time when in a comfortable and quite environment. This is important because it will allow the learners to be focused without distraction.

This study established that the teachers relied so much on the same strategies to teach reading comprehension from the documents reviewed. These methods were either used on large groups, as whole class and in very rare cases as individual as was seen with silent reading. Teachers need to try and make efforts to practice and use a variety of strategies that will benefit the learners. Klinger et. al (2010) have asserted that most teachers are not explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies to their learners even when they know that they must know how to engage with text.

Background knowledge is another strategy that was reported as being used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension. These findings resonate with Smith et al. (2021), who conducted a critical review of twenty-one studies identified by pre-determined criteria on the link between background knowledge and reading comprehension of children in the mid primary to the late primary. The review postulates that the higher levels of background knowledge is influenced by the nature of the text, the quality of the situation model required and the presence of reader misconceptions about the text. The review indicates that background knowledge impacts differently on the stronger and weaker readers. Findings also agree with other studies which suggest that the readers with weaker background knowledge benefit more from the text without difficulty while weaker readers with a degree of background knowledge were able to compensate for their weak reading skills (Mkandawire et al., 2022).

Results also indicate that discussion was one of the strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension. Teachers used discussion mainly to discuss the pictures prior to reading the text. These pictures were either drawn on the charts or were found in the text books. Discussion is said to be a useful method that can help learners in the reading process and accords them a clear sense of what they read and also helps them to comprehend what they read. Wilkinson and Son (2011) asserted that learner engagement in discussion of text provides alternative and additional means of developing learners reading comprehension abilities beyond the explicitly teaching of comprehension strategies. They further state that learners are able to present divergent views on the topic, respond to other learners' ideas and provide reflections on each other's ideas in an attempt to build their knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the text. A study conducted by Darise (2018) has also

supported this notion, revealing that the use of small groups discussion in teaching reading comprehension had positive effects in teaching reading to the second-grade learners.

Another strategy that was established was the use story telling as being used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension. In one of the lessons observed, the teacher used told a story to her learners and then asked them questions from the story. Through stories learners are able to build their reading comprehension skills, develop strong writing and listening skills and gain confidence. This is in line with Yulianawati et. al (2022), who have shared in their study that the engagement of learners in the story telling activities responded positively. They reported that the stories got the learners engaged, motivated their behavior and attitude in reading and they further acknowledged that the adoption of storytelling as scaffolding learners' engagement in reading comprehension in primary school contexts.

Spencer (2022) found that when children practice academic language in their context of oral storytelling, they get better at understanding and using complex word and sentence patterns. They learn how narrative discourse is organized. More challenging academic tasks like reading comprehension and writing can be simplified and transferred easily through an easier modality because learners are proficient in oral language. Spencer still amplifies that fact that stories do not require the use of materials and can be done anywhere thereby simplifying work for the teacher. Tefera (2022), in his study which looks at improving students' reading comprehension skills through short stories in higher education institutions, has revealed that students who learned through the technique of using carefully selected short stories improved their reading comprehension and reading skills. This study also determined that short stories improved learners' reading comprehension. The literary text used in the study helped the students' learning strategies, attention and the improvement of reading skills that indirectly were said to have improved their reading comprehension. These findings agree with Kafusha et al (2019) who stated that reading much text improves vocabulary, understanding, reading skills and functional literacy by such readers. Even though this study was conducted to students in a higher education institution, it can be used among the primary school learners where teachers can select stories that are suitable to the level of the learners and use them in their teaching.

5.2 The challenges of reading comprehension strategies

The second objective was to establish the challenges of the strategies used as perceived by the teachers. It was clear from the findings that teachers experienced some challenges when teaching reading comprehension to their learners. Many teachers could not relate their challenges to the strategies but the observations conducted revealed most of the challenges the teachers experienced, such as the ones discussed below.

Lack of explicit instruction to the learners was a challenge that was observed by the researcher. Some teachers explained that it was difficult for their learners to understand the instructions that they gave them due to language barrier or their failure to understand. Explicit instruction makes learning clear and provides learners with an opportunity to practice and provide feedback and it is beneficial to learners who are at different levels of learning (Boakye, 2015). There is need for reading comprehension to be explicitly taught in order for the learners to become competent readers. Archer and Hughes (2011) have said that when learners are explicitly taught, they are given an ample opportunity to practice and apply the strategy they are introduced to while the teacher monitors their performance and provides immediate feedback which should be affirmative, encouraging and corrective in nature. When explicit instruction is used, concepts are clearly explained, skills are clearly modelled, and direct explanations are used without ambiguity. The teachers, therefore, are expected to use clear, direct and visible instructional actions to avoid the learners guess their roles.

Lack of teacher improvisation of materials was another challenge that was established. Most of the teachers observed could not improvise materials for teaching and learning. They relied heavily on the textbooks, which were not even adequate for the learners. In one of the grade five classes observed only the teacher had a textbook, which she gave to the learners to read one at a time when she engaged them to read. It is important for teachers to improvise materials for reading using locally available materials obtainable from the environment or designed by the teacher to enhance effective instruction. Many teachers bemoaned the lack of reading comprehension resources in their schools like textbooks, story books and other reading materials. Mupa and Chinooneka (2015) have said that teachers need a variety of materials for use in their teaching and learning. Their

instructional materials were limited to textbooks and syllabuses and do not go beyond that. It is important that teachers learn to improvise learning and teaching materials for their reading comprehension lessons. Tety (2016) acknowledges that instructional materials are key to teachers and learner performance. Indeed, for the learners to perform well, their learning has to be simplified and made enjoyable by use of a variation of materials that will motivate them to learn.

Another challenge that was observed was the lack of reinforcement of the necessary reading skills in most of the lessons observed. As revealed by Tobin (2000) in his study that the presence of a reinforcement activity had significant effects on reading comprehension. Leshtz and Stemmer (2006) have stated that there are two types of reinforcement, negative and positive reinforcement. They described positive reinforcement as the presentation of a reinforcer or event that increase the response. Going by this assertion, it is imperative that the teachers use as much positive reinforcement as they can to motivate their learners by reinforcing different skills that can aid the reading comprehension of the learners. The need for teachers to enhance the learners' reading skills at their instructional level should highly be emphasized as well as and incorporating strategies for identifying main ideas, facts and details. Skills like sequencing, predicting, comparing and evaluation of information should be taught, reinforced, and practiced. Teachers need to model the strategies to the learners and critical steps should be included to facilitate and allow the learners to practice. Numerous opportunities should be accorded to the learners in order for them to apply the strategies to the tasks provided. These findings agree with Mkandawire et al., (2023) who observed learners needs diverse strategies in order to adequately understand a teaching point. The gradual transfer of power and responsibility from the teachers to the learners can then be supported. Kasebula (2021) has established similar challenges which support the findings of this study by stating that in his study that teachers had challenges to do with guiding their learners in segmentation and phonological awareness. Tembo (2011) also had similar findings where teachers failed to reinforce necessary reading comprehension skills in their learners.

It was also observed that learners were allocated very little time on their tasks which led to many of them either not finishing their tasks or not even attempting to do so especially for

the struggling learners. It is important to note that time limitations may enhance reading comprehension by promoting mindfulness in the learners as stated by Walczyk et al. (1999). Timed reading where learners are made to read under time pressure for them to improve their reading speed to an optimal rate that supports comprehension rather than developing speed readers is inevitable and needs to be supported. However, the teachers in this case did not even time their learners for the tasks, making them not to achieve their time on the tasks. The findings of this research are in agreement with Maala and Mkandawire (2022), who reported that learners were given limited time to read long passages which impacted their performance.

Setting a purpose for reading helps the learners to focus and engage while reading and allows them to help their learners to establish the need to read. It was established in this study that teachers did not set a purpose for reading for their learners. Learners were just asked to read text without being guided on what to really look for as they read. Clever (2014) asserted that reading with a clear purpose helps learners to gain more from the text and that learners will be able to monitor their reading. It will also help them to figure out what information is important and make them confident that their reading was a success. Clever further suggests that one way to set a purpose is through questioning and these questions should shape learners reading so that they can see through the text and reveal deeper meaning each time they read. Most of the questioning that was done by the teachers was done after reading. Johnson and Keier (2010) have also supported this by stating that setting a purpose motivates learners who might overlook the value for reading the text. They say it will provide a gentle push for those learners who read quickly over material and may skip key messages in the text. It can also be concluded that learners who read with a purpose can be kept engaged and focused throughout the reading exercise as they will find it meaningful. Learners can find it easy to break their reading into smaller chunks for reinforcement of comprehension.

Overcrowding of learners was another challenge that was faced by the teachers which affected their teaching of reading comprehension. Teachers indicate that over enrollment contributed to poor classroom management and control and affected the sharing of textbooks among the learners. They indicated during interviews that the minimum was

three learners per book, where books were available, while other schools indicated that eight to nine learners shared one book. In one rare instance which the researcher observed, only one textbook was available in class Teachers were also overwhelmed with marking of the learners' books, making it difficult for them to provide prompt feedback to the learners due to large number of learners in their classrooms. Ndila (2019) focused on the implications of instructional methods on reading skills of the learners with regard to reading difficulties her study provides information to this current study. Her findings indicate that teachers had challenges due to over enrolment of learners in their classrooms making it difficult for teachers to teach.

Akoto-Baak et. al (2021) found that increased enrolment increased the workload of teachers significantly and exposed them to health challenges. They also reveal that increased enrollment made it very difficult for teachers to manage their classrooms and interact with learners during instructional periods. These results resonate with the findings of the current study and support its findings.

In view of the third objective, analysis of data collected revealed that most of the teachers had limited knowledge on how to improve the strategies they used to teach reading comprehension. The provision of responses such as provision of materials by either the school or the government and provision of desks or reduction of numbers in the classrooms due to over enrollment. If teachers lack knowledge on how to improve the reading comprehension of their learners, it means that many learners are denied the opportunity to enhance their reading comprehension skills where a particular strategy did not work well for them or even where they need a little reinforcement.

However, it is important to note that some the responses provided by the teachers may impact their teaching of reading comprehension positively. The teachers indicated the need for exchange programmes within the district by teachers where they can at least engage and exchange information on various issues that affect their comprehension teaching and some strategies' they can use. Exchange programmes are said to provide transformational learning opportunities by exposing teachers to diverse learners, classrooms, and schools. Teachers can benefit more interactive teaching skills which they can apply to their teaching

of reading comprehension. Participation in these exchange programmes, as alluded to by Dressler (2021), opens opportunities for teachers to not only acquire language skills and gain sharing of teaching resource but also fosters a widened perspective and a deepening of learning and appreciation of diversity. If teachers can experience such personal development, increased confidence, motivation, and open mindedness, then exchange programmes become a useful resource for teacher development.

Retraining was another suggestion that came out from the teachers. They suggested that the college could come in to help and retrain them on methodologies for teaching reading comprehension. Since teachers have a lifelong impact on their learners, it is imperative that they acquire particular skills specially to do with reading comprehension of the read and foster their self-esteem. Brooks (n.d.) acknowledges that exchange program for teacher help to reinforce many skills in the teachers which they can in turn transfer to their learners. With many changes in terms of policies specially to do with the teaching of literacy, it is important that teachers go through staff development. Some teachers mentioned that the Ministry of Education should consider them for retraining in methodologies. This could help the teachers who struggle in some skills and lack certain strategies to teach reading comprehension. This is also supported by Nkomo and Abdi (2023) found in their study, which discussed the impact of teacher training and retraining in primary and secondary schools for a better teacher performance revealed that the benefits of teacher training and retraining include knowledge acquisition, skills, ability, competence, development of positive attitude among other many professional skills. The study also established that training and retraining of teachers equipped teachers with techniques and modern pedagogies that help them to better connect with, manage and teach their learners in a manner where they benefit positively.

Curra (2021) says that teacher training and professional development can be delivered in different forms such as formal classes, seminars, workshops or through online learning. Retraining of teachers should be supported as it addresses the challenges that teachers encounter within their classroom which directly affects their practice. This may also accord the teachers an opportunity to enhance their skills and training to overcome the challenges they experience. Such things as encouraging learner engagement or grasping their attention

can be rekindled in the teachers so that they can help their learners. Lack of professional development of teachers can be a source for dissatisfaction in the quality of their teaching to form competent learners who possess knowledge and necessary skills (Boudersa, 2016).

Provision of reading materials was another suggestion by the teachers which they thought would improve the teaching of reading comprehension in schools. Teachers suggested that the schools or government should provide textbooks another reading materials to the schools so that at least learners will be able to read without difficulties. They said this due to the fact that learners were meant to share textbooks in large numbers which made it difficult for some of them to read the books. The findings agree with Chella et al. (2023); Mkandawire (2022), and Kafusha et al., (2021) who observed that the lack of teaching and learning materials affect literacy skills in schools and subsequently affect the reading culture.

Astri and Wahab (2018) aimed to explain the relationship between student learning styles and student achievement in English reading comprehension and to determine the extent the teaching material meets the needs of the learners with different learning style. The study revealed that the reported significant improvement in reading comprehension of learners when using the teaching materials to both auditory and visual learners, and this was attributed to many factors of which one could have been the internet factors that do with motivation in learning through the learning and teaching materials. Generally, the need for reading materials cannot be overlooked as they aid the teacher when teaching.

5.3 Summary

The chapter has presented the findings based on the topic: a study on the strategies used by teachers to teach reading comprehension and the challenges as perceived by the teachers in urban schools of Mongu District. For each of the themes, the researcher has presented information obtained through observation of reading comprehension lessons taught, interviews conducted with the teachers and the lesson plans previously used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension lessons. Based on the findings, the researcher has conclusions which represent the findings for this study. The findings included the strategies used by the teachers to teach reading comprehension, the challenges that were perceived

by the teachers in relation to the strategies used as well as how the strategies could be improved.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings and discussion on the topic: A study of the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers in urban primary schools of Mongu district and their perceived challenges.

6.1 Conclusion

The study has established that most teachers had knowledge of what reading comprehension strategies are and were utilizing some of the strategies to teach their learners. Although it can be concluded in general that the teachers used the reading comprehension strategies identified in the findings of this study, not all the strategies were well utilized. Teachers still had challenges when it came to teach their learners. To this effect, teachers need to be provided with appropriate skills that will enhance their teaching skills. Schools need to provide continuous development programmes (CPD) that will critically address the teaching of reading comprehension in the schools.

This study further established that teachers had several challenges which they encountered. Even though teachers experienced these challenges, some of the challenges could be resolved at individual level by the teachers themselves. One example is a situation where the teachers can improvise reading materials by writing some stories for the learners to read. Also, enhancement of strategies like story telling where teachers do not need any materials to teach and peer mediated strategies where learners themselves can be used as a resource.

This study also revealed that the teachers could not really explain as to how they could improve on the strategies they were using to teach reading comprehension. Knowledge of such fosters the teachers to improve their learners reading comprehension skills. This lack of knowledge by the teachers could be the reason learners' performance is negatively affected. Skills like inferencing, use of prior knowledge and clues are very useful in a learner's reading comprehension because they simplify and make teaching easy and improve their reading comprehension skills. The strategies which learners were exposed to such as read aloud, questioning, silent reading, vocabulary and storytelling encourage the

learners to comprehend what they read. Exposure of learners to such skills especially with explicit instruction and consistency may create an enabling environment for the learners.

To sum up, although the study revealed that teachers were utilizing some of the strategies to teach their learners, they had challenges which made it difficult to teach. Reading comprehension can be achieved if these challenges identified can be minimized.

6.2 Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations have been made:

The Ministry of Education to organize foras where researchers can present their findings to the teachers so that the teachers can use the findings to improve on the strategies they are using to teach reading comprehension.

Strategies should be taught to the teachers during training so that they can utilize them as they do their teaching practice. This is so because some teachers interviewed could not identify some strategies they used.

Further studies need to be conducted in specific reading comprehension strategies to ascertain how effective they are in helping learners to comprehend what they read.

6.3 Summary

The chapter has presented the conclusion in line with the study objectives. It also made recommendations based on the findings and conclusion of the study. Suggested topics for future research have brought this report to a close.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

The Coordinator,

Ethical Committee of the School of Education,

University of Zambia.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY IN MONGU DISTRICT OF WESTERN PROVINCE

I am Amukusana Mubiana a student at the University of Zambia in the school of Education. I am pursuing a Master of Education degree in Literacy, Language and Applied Linguistics.

In partial fulfillment for the degree stated above, I am required to conduct a research project, I am hereby asking for permission to carry out the study at four selected Schools of Mongu District.

The title of the research is tittles; a study of the Reading Comprehension Strategies used by teachers in urban Primary Schools of Mongu District and their perceived challenges.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Amukusana Mubiana

Appendix 2



HSSREC FORM 1B

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Telephone: +260-211-290258/353080 P O Box 32379

Fax:+260-211-290258/293937 Lusaka, Zambia

E-mail; director.drugs@unza.zm

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(This template is for research interventions that use questionnaires, in-depth interviews or focus group discussions)

(Language used throughout form should be at the level of a Grade 8 student)

Notes to Researchers:

1. Please note that this is a template developed by HSSREC to assist the Principal Investigator in the design of their informed consent forms (ICFs). It is important that Principal Investigators adapt their own ICFs to the outline and requirements of their particular study by replacing words in red.
2. The informed consent form consists of two parts: the information sheet and the consent certificate.

3. Do not be concerned by the length of this template. It is long only because it contains guidance and explanations which are for you and which you will not include in the informed consent forms that you develop and provide to participants in your research.

4. This template includes examples of key questions that may be asked at the end of each section that could ensure the understanding of the information being provided, especially if the research study is complex. These are just examples, and suggestions, and the investigators will have to modify the questions depending upon their study.

5. In this template:

square brackets indicate where specific information is to be inserted

bold lettering indicates sections or wording which should be included

Standard lettering is used for explanations to researchers only and must not be included in your consent forms. The explanation is provided in black, and examples are provided in red in italics. Suggested questions to elucidate understanding are given in black in italics.

[Informed Consent Form for Primary school teachers in selected urban schools of Mongu District Western Province_]

Name the group of individuals for whom this consent is written. Because research for a single project is often carried out with a number of different groups of individuals - for example counselors, community members, clients of services - it is important that you identify which group this particular consent is for. In other words you may be required to have more than one ICF.

This informed consent form is for primary school teachers in the schools in Mongu, district of Western province who am inviting to participate in my research titled. “A Study into Reading comprehension Strategies used by Teachers in Urban Primary Schools of Mongu District and their Perceived Challenges”

You may provide the following information either as a running paragraph or under headings as shown below.

[Name of Principle Investigator]

[Name of Organization]

[Name of Sponsor]

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)
- Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

Briefly state who you are and that you are inviting them to participate in research which you are doing. Inform them that they may talk to anyone they feel comfortable talking with about the research and that they can take time to reflect on whether they want to participate or not. Assure the participant that if they do not understand some of the words or concepts, that you will take time to explain them as you go along and that they can ask questions at any time.

I am Amukusana Mubiana, working for Mongu college of Education. I am doing research on “A Study into Reading comprehension Strategies used by Teachers in Urban Primary Schools of Mongu District and their Perceived Challenges.” I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research.

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them and I will clarify.

Purpose of the research

Learners have difficulties in comprehending what they read and teachers also have challenges in helping the learners to understand what they read. These challenges may have been caused by the strategies used by you the teachers, therefore, I would like to find out the strategies that you employ to teach reading comprehension to your learners, the challenges you are experiencing and how best we can improve these teaching and learning strategies. This knowledge might help us to improve our practices as teachers and help adopt better ways to strengthen these strategies.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in a one-hour oral interview and a class observation where am going to sit in your class and record your one hour or one hour twenty minutes literacy or English language reading comprehension. Am also going to ask for your teaching file so that I can review some of the old lessons you have taught to ascertain the strategies that you employ in your reading comprehension lessons.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experience as a teacher can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge of the strategies used to teach reading comprehension.

Voluntary Participation

The choice that you make will have no bearing on your job or on any work-related evaluations or reports. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

A. Provide a brief introduction to the format of the research study.

Am asking you to help me learn more about some of the strategies that you employ to teach reading comprehension, the challenges you are facing and how you think we can help improve the strategies. If you accept, you will be asked to participate in the interview, allow me to observe and record your lesson and also allow me to look at your teaching file.

B. Explain the type of questions that the participants are likely to be asked in the focus group, the interviews, or the survey. If the research involves questions or discussion which may be sensitive or potentially cause embarrassment, inform the participant of this.

This interview will be guided by myself.

The group interview will start with me, making sure that you are comfortable. I can also answer questions about the research that you might have. Then i will ask you questions about the reading comprehension strategies to share your knowledge. The questions will be about the strategies that you employ to teach reading comprehension, the challenges you are facing and how you think we can help improve the strategies.

I will also talk about general teaching strategies because this will give us a chance to understand more about reading comprehension in a different way. The following are an example of the types of questions i will ask;

What do you know about reading comprehension?

What are reading comprehension strategies?

How is the performance of your learners in reading comprehension?

What materials are you using to teach reading comprehension?

Are the materials adequate?

What skills are learners able to acquire from the reading comprehension lessons/

Are your learners able to summarise or answer questions from the text read?

What challenges are you facing in teaching reading comprehension?

I will not ask you to share personal information, beliefs, practices or stories and you do not have to share any knowledge that you are not comfortable sharing.

The class observation will take place in your class], and no one else but myself will be present to observe the lesson. The entire observation will be tape-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the tape. The tape will be kept under key and lock. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else will have access to it. The tapes will be destroyed after three months.

You have been selected to participate in an interview with myself.

During the interview, I will sit down with you in a comfortable place at the school or at your home. If it is better for you, the interview can take place at a place of your choice. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the i will move on to the next question. No one else but i will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else will have access to this information. The entire interview will be tape-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the tape. The tape will be kept key and lock. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else will have access to the tapes The tapes will be destroyed after three months.

Duration

The research takes place over one and half months' months in total. During that time, i will visit you two times for interviewing you at two weeks' interval and each interview will last for about one hour each. The observation and document review will be held once and will take about one and a half hour.

Uses of information

The information I shall get from you will be used to help in making decisions by the schools in the district and possibly by the teachers in the whole country.

Risks

This research does not have any risks on the part of the participants, it basically has to do with the practice they undertake in their teaching profession.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about some strategies that you use to teach reading comprehension, the challenge you experience and how best we can improve as teachers. The information gathered can be of help to other teachers.

Reimbursements

State clearly what you will provide the participants with as a result of their participation. WHO does not encourage incentives beyond reimbursements for expenses incurred as a result of participation in the research. These may include, for example, travel costs and reimbursement for time lost. The amount should be determined within the host country context.

You will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research.

Examples of question to elucidate understanding: *Can you tell me if you have understood correctly the benefits that you will have if you take part in the study? Do you know if the study will pay for your travel costs and time lost, and do you know how much you will be re-imbursed? Do you have any other questions?*

Confidentiality

Explain how the research team will maintain the confidentiality of data with respect to both information about the participant and information that the participant shares. Outline any limits to confidentiality. Inform the participant that because something out of the ordinary

is being done through research, any individual taking part in the research is likely to be more easily identified by members of the community and therefore more likely to be stigmatized. If the research is sensitive and/or involves participants who are highly vulnerable - research concerning violence against women for example - explain to the participant any extra precautions you will take to ensure safety and anonymity.

The research being done in the school may draw attention and if you participate you may be asked questions by other people in the school. I will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that am collecting from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. Only the researcher will know what your number is and i will lock that information up under lock and key. It will not be shared with or given to anyone.

The following applies to focus groups:

Focus groups provide a particular challenge to confidentiality because once something is said in the group it becomes common knowledge. Explain to the participant that you will encourage group participants to respect confidentiality, but that you cannot guarantee it.

I will ask you and others participants from this school not to talk to people who are not participating in this research or share any information regarding this research with them. I will, in other words, ask each of you to keep what will be shared confidential. You should know, however, that I cannot stop or prevent participants from sharing things that should be confidential.

Example of question to elucidate understanding: Did you understand the procedures that we will be using to make sure that any information that we as researchers collect about you will remain confidential? Do you understand that we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of information that you share with us in a group discussion Do you have any more questions?

Sharing the Results

Your plan for sharing the findings with the participants should be provided. If you have a plan and a timeline for the sharing of information, include the details. You may also inform

the participant that the research findings will be shared more broadly, for example, through publications and conferences.

Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that I will get from this research will be shared with you and your other teachers in the school before it is made widely available to the public. Each participant will receive a summary of the results. There will also be small meetings in the school and these will be announced. Following the meetings, I will publish the results so that other interested teachers may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

This is a reconfirmation that participation is voluntary and includes the right to withdraw. Tailor this section to ensure that it fits for the group for whom you are seeking consent. The example used here is for a community social worker. Participants should have an opportunity to review their remarks in individual interviews and erase part or all of the recording or note.

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and choosing to participate will not affect your job or job-related evaluations in any way. You may stop participating in the class observations, interview or may not submit your teaching file at any time that you wish without your job being affected. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview and class observation to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Question to elucidate understanding: This question must be posed to the participant.

Do you know that you do not have to take part in this study if you do not wish to? You can say No if you wish to? Do you know that you can ask me questions later, if you wish to? Do you know that I have given the contact details of the person who can give you more information about the study? You can ask me any more questions about any part of the research study, if you wish to. Do you have any questions?

Who to Contact

Provide the name and contact information of someone who is involved, informed and accessible - a local person who can actually be contacted. State also the name (and contact details) of the local IRB that has approved the proposal.

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact any of the following: Amukusana Mubiana Mongu College of Education, mubianaamukusana@yahoo.com.

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by The University of Zambia Ethical Committee, which is a committee whose task is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find more about the The University of Zambia Ethical Committee, contact the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee, Telephone +260-211-290258/293937, P.O. Box 32379, Lusaka, e-mail drgs@unza.zm.

This proposal or protocol has been reviewed and approved by HSSREC which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find more about the IRB, contact:

Chairperson, Humanities and Social Sciences, Research Ethics Committee,

University of Zambia

P O Box 32379

LUSAKA

OR

Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

University of Zambia

P O Box 32379

LUSAKA

State if also it has been reviewed by a primary ethics committee by indicating an organization which may have reviewed the proposal. This primary ethics committee may be another university's ethics committee or a REC or IRB in another country) or an organization which is funding/sponsoring/supporting the study. Having granted ethical approval by a primary ethics committee in another country does not preclude obtaining ethics approval in a study country.

"Approval to conduct this research has been provided by the University of Zambia, in accordance with its ethics review and approval procedures. Any person considering participation in this research project, or agreeing to participate, may raise any questions or issues with the researchers at any time.

In addition, if you are/ or any person is not satisfied with the response of researchers may raise ethics issues or concerns, and may make any complaints about this research project by contacting the HSSREC on the address sated above.

All research participants are entitled to retain a copy of any Participant Information Form and/or Participant Consent Form relating to this research project."

Part II: Certificate of Informed Consent

This section must be written in the first person. It should include a few brief statements about the research and be followed by a statement similar the one in bold below. If the participant is illiterate but gives oral consent, a witness must sign. A researcher or the person going over the informed consent must sign each consent. Because the certificate is an integral part of the informed consent and not a stand-alone document, the layout or design of the form should reflect this. The certificate of consent should avoid statements that have "I understand...." phrases. The understanding should perhaps be better tested through targeted questions during the reading of the information sheet (some examples of questions are given above), or through the questions being asked at the end of the reading of the information sheet, if the potential participant is reading the information sheet him/herself.

I have been invited to participate in research about Reading comprehension Strategies used by Teachers in Urban Primary Schools of Mongu District and their Perceived Challenges.

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

If illiterate ¹

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness _____

Thumb print of participant

Signature of witness _____



Date _____

Day/month/year

¹ A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb print as well.

If vulnerable or incapacitated like pregnant women, children, people with mental illness, people with disabilities, prisoners and minority groups form instance, the investigator must ensure that there is a well-educated and motivated surrogate or proxy decision maker. When comprehension is an issue the research plan should include means of testing the participants' understanding of the important information prior to enrollment.

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent: Amukusana Mubiana

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____

Date _____

Day/month/year

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS (Names, addresses and phone numbers of the following):

Principal Investigator (Must be a local person and a Zambian).

Names: Amukusana Mubiana

Phone: +26 0977 697764

E mail:mubianaamukusana@yahoo.com

Physical address: Mongu College of Education

P.O. Box 910294, Mongu

Appendix 3



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

REF NUMBER: 2023 MAY 2023 JUNE 002

EXPEDITED

PROGRAMME (MASTERS/PHD): MASTERS

STUDY TITLE: A STUDY INTO READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES USED BY TEACHERS IN URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF MONGU DISTRICT AND THEIR PERCEIVED CHALLENGES

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: MUBIANA AMUKUSANA

SUPERVISORS: DR. STEPHANIE SIMMONS ZUILKOWSKI

Title

The title is clear.

Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem is clear.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study should be specific and stated in line with the title. As such, the first sentence suffice as the purpose of the study.

Objectives and Research Questions

There are no ethical issues in these sections.

Significance of the Study

This section is clear.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The theoretical or conceptual framework has not been presented.

Literature Review

The literature review chapter is rather incomplete as there is no research gap justifying the need for the current study.

Methodology

8.1 Research Approach

This section is rather too brief. The PI should ensure that the section is strengthened by explaining why the approaches will be used in this study.

8.2 Data Collection Procedures

This section is clear.

8.3 Research Instruments

This section is clear.

8.4 Validity, Reliability, Credibility, Trustworthiness

The PI should ensure that the terms above related to qualitative and quantitative approaches are explained.

8.5 Data Analysis

This section is clear.

9.0 Ethical Issues

This section should be strengthened by adding further information: informing participants how long it will take the PI to conduct the interview; interviews will be held according to participants' convenient place and time.

Verdict

The protocol is recommended for approval subject to corrections as follows:

Strengthening the purpose of the study

Presenting the theoretical or conceptual framework

Strengthening literature review

Strengthening research approach

Explaining Reliability, Validity, Credibility, Trustworthiness, among other terms

Strengthening ethical issues

Appendix 4



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Great East Road Campus | P.O. Box 32379 | Lusaka10101 | Tel: +260-211-290
258/291 777 Fax: (+260)-211-290 258/253 952 | E-mail: director.drugs@unza.zm |
Website: www.unza.zm

6.2 Approval Of Study

IORG No. 0005376

HSSREC IRB No. 00006464

08th June, 2023

REF NO. HSSREC:-2023- JUN – 002

Ms. Amukusana Mubiana,

University of Zambia,

School of Education,

Lusaka.

Dear, Ms. Mubiana,

RE: “A STUDY INTO READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES USED BY TEACHERS IN URBAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF MONGU DISTRICT AND THEIR PERCEIVED CHALLENGES”

Reference is made to your submission of the protocol captioned above. The HSSREC resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

REVIEW TYPE	ORDINARY REVIEW	APPROVAL NO. HSSREC:- 2023- JUN – 002
Approval and Expiry Date	Approval Date: 8 th June, 2023	Expiry Date: 7 th June, 2024
Protocol Version and Date	Version - Nil.	7 th June, 2024
Information Sheet, Consent Forms and Dates	English.	To be provided
Consent form ID and Date	Version - Nil	To be provided
Recruitment Materials	Nil	Nil
Other Study Documents	Questionnaire.	
Number of Participants Approved for Study		

Specific conditions will apply to this approval. As Principal Investigator it is your responsibility to ensure that the contents of this letter are adhered to. If these are not adhered to, the approval may be suspended. Should the study be suspended, study sponsors and other regulatory authorities will be informed.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.

All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to HSSREC within 5 days.

All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.

All protocol deviations must be reported to HSSREC within 5 working days.

All recruitment materials must be approved by HSSREC prior to being used.

Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. HSSREC will only approve a study for a period of 12 months.

It is the responsibility of the PI to renew his/her ethics approval through a renewal application to HSSREC.

Where the PI desires to extend the study after expiry of the study period, documents for study extension must be received by HSSREC at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Documents received within 30 days after expiry will be labelled “late submissions” and will incur a penalty fee of K500.00. No study shall be renewed whose documents are submitted for renewal 30 days after expiry of the certificate.

Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee as an IRB must be filled in and submitted to us. There is a penalty of K500.00 for failure to submit the report.

When closing a project, the PI is responsible for notifying, in writing or using the Research Ethics and Management Online (REMO), both HSSREC and the National Health Research Authority (NHRA) when ethics certification is no longer required for a project.

In order to close an approved study, a Closing Report must be submitted in writing or through the REMO system. A Closing Report should be filed when data collection has ended and the study team will no longer be using human participants or animals or secondary data or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants or animals for the study.

Filing a closing report (rather than just letting your approval lapse) is important as it assists HSSREC in efficiently tracking and reporting on projects. Note that some funding agencies and sponsors require a notice of closure from the IRB which had approved the study and can only be generated after the Closing Report has been filed.

A reprint of this letter shall be done at a fee.

All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC by way of an application for an amendment prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be

reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address or methodology and methods. Many modifications entail minimal risk adjustments to a protocol and/or consent form and can be made on an Expedited basis (via the IRB Chair). Some examples are: format changes, correcting spelling errors, adding key personnel, minor changes to questionnaires, recruiting and changes, and so forth. Other, more substantive changes, especially those that may alter the risk-benefit ratio, may require Full Board review. In all cases, except where noted above regarding subject safety, any changes to any protocol document or procedure must first be approved by HSSREC before they can be implemented.

Should you have any questions regarding anything indicated in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at the above indicated address.

On behalf of HSSREC, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. J.I. Ziwa

ACTING CHAIRPERSON

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA HUMANITIES AND

SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE - IRB

cc: Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Assistant Director (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Assistant Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Appendix 5

In- Depth Interview Guide For Teachers.

Instructions

Introduction

Explain the purpose

Get verbal consent

Interview Guide

What do you know about reading comprehension?

What are reading comprehension strategies?

How is the performance of your learners in reading comprehension?

What materials are you using to teach reading comprehension?

Are the materials adequate?

What skills are learners able to acquire from the reading comprehension lessons/

Are your learners able to summarise or answer questions from the text read?

What challenges are you facing in teaching reading comprehension?

What challenges are do learners face during learning and teaching of reading comprehension?

What measures ca be taken to overcome the challenges faced by both the learners and the teachers?

What other comments or suggestions would you put forward in relation to reading comprehension for both you the teacher and the learner?

Thanking the respondent for the participation

Appendix 6

Observation Form for Reading comprehension Lessons

The objectives of this observation is:

To determine the reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers.

To ascertain the challenges of the reading comprehension strategies used as perceived by the teachers.

To determine the improvements that can be made to the strategies used by the teachers.

Instructions

Self-introduction

Introduction of the procedure

Explain the purpose which is getting information on reading comprehension strategies used by the teachers and their perceived challenges.

Get verbal and written consent

Appendix 7

Observation Form for Reading comprehension Lessons

Date:

Time and Duration:

Name of Teacher:

Topic of the Lesson:

How was the introduction done?

.....

.....

.....

.....

What reading comprehension strategies did the teacher use?

.....

.....

.....

How was the learner performance in the reading task?

.....

.....

.....

What was done with difficulty by the teacher?

.....

.....

.....
What other factors played a role in the teacher or learner reading skills?
.....
.....
.....

Do the learners have opportunities to practice reading/ to apply their knowledge and skills in purposeful reading?
.....
.....
.....

How does the teacher address the following skills in the lesson?

Vocabulary

.....
.....
.....

b) fluency

.....
.....
.....

Accuracy

.....
.....
.....

Were the instructions explicit?

.....
.....
.....

How was the conclusion of the lesson done?

.....
.....
.....

Any other comments relevant to the study.

.....
.....
.....