# FACTORS HINDERING GRADE 7 LEARNERS ON THE READING SKILLS AT DILOKONG CIRCUIT, SEKHUKHUNE EAST DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

## MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

## LANGUAGE EDUCATION

in the

## FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

(School of Education)

at the

## UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

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2023

# DECLARATION

I, Patience Mokgatle Mashabela, declare that the research report titled: 'Factors Hindering Grade 7 Learners' reading skills at Dilokong Circuit, Sekhukhune East District, Limpopo Province, South Africa, is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any other course or degree and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This research report is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree, Master of Education in Language Education at the University of Limpopo.

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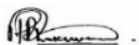STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:                                    DATE: 27 June 2023

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**DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Modipadi; my father, Hlabirwa; my sister, Mahlako and my brother, Mogoshi. May their souls Rest in Peace. The study is further dedicated to my son, Robinho and daughter, Anesha; my siblings, Monare, Gosebo, Pebetse, Pheladi, Sebutsi and Kgagara. Thank you for your love and support.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

• My greatest thanks goes to the Almighty God who has given me the strength and the courage to face all the challenging moments in my studies.

 • I would also like to thank my supervisor, Dr Maledu for her untiring academic and moral support. May the Lord bless you.

• I would also want to thank my Co-supervisor, Mr Phokwane for his academic and moral support. May the Lord bless you.

• Sincere gratitude also goes to my family for their love, kindness, patience and endless support.

• Sincere appreciation goes to Mr Mabitsela, my high school peer educator who helped me understand research from honours level.

• My heartfelt appreciation also goes to Matome Nkgapele and Sharlot Makola who were baby-sitting my child when I attended to my studies.

• My most heartfelt appreciation goes to the educators and learners who participated in this study. This study would not have materialised without you. Thank you!

• Thanks to everyone who contributed in many different ways. I am sorry I could not mention you all by names.

# ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors that hinder reading skills of Grade 7 learners at Dilokong Circuit. The study interacted with the participants directly in their natural setting, being at their school. A qualitative research approach was applied in the study, whereby thematic method was used for data analysis. Participants were purposively sampled from the school. The study sample comprised of 6 Grade 7 learners, also the 2 educators who teach Sepedi in the sampled grade. Data collection instruments used in this study include document analysis (learners' written essays), semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations. The study revealed that both learners and educators experience challenges regarding reading skills. Most of the learners struggle with reading comprehension. Thus, the study recommends that schools should encourage learners to read more books in order to have good understanding of written texts.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| CAPS | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement |
|------|---------------------------------------------|
| TREC | Turfloop Research Ethics Committee |
| DOE | Department of Education |
| SA | South Africa |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education |
| USA | United States of America |
| SACMEQ | South African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality |
| SADC | South African Development Communities |
| UPE | Universal Primary Education |
| NRP | National Reading Panel |
| SEPHOLEKE | Setatamente sa Pholisi sa Lenaneothuto le Kelo |

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# CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The democratic processes which unfolded in South Africa after 1994, brought new educational policies with changes to the old approaches of language teaching and learning. According to the Department of Education's requirements, as set out in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS: 2011), educators had to rearrange the learning environment to accommodate different groups of learners. The objectives were to foster a communicative approach to language learning and to assess learners' oral activities when they interact in groups.

Sepedi CAPS document - *Setatamente sa Pholisi sa Lenaneothuto le Kelo (SEPHOLEKE: 2011)*, specifies the oral activities for Sepedi language classroom based on the following skills; listening (the teacher reads texts and learners answer questions from the texts); speaking (learners present oral works to assess their language usage; and reading (learners read texts to be assessed on their ability to read with comprehension). The current study focused on reading comprehension as one of the challenges identified by the researcher. The reading strategies and processes that educators and learners should follow are specified in SEPHOLEKE (2011), and they direct both teachers and learners towards effective and successful teaching and learning of reading skills, including reading comprehension. The main strategies are text-based approach (learners evaluate texts); communicative approach (learners do a great deal of reading, speaking and writing) and the process approach (learners follow processes of skills learning). The reading process has three phases: pre-reading, reading and post reading. There are also literary texts prescribed for teaching the skills: novel, drama, short stories, poetry, folktales and others that may be created by educators.

Reading in any language plays an essential role in the educational system and social lives of the readers. The reading process is the avenue for other language functions such as writing, vocabulary identification, use, grammar advancement and excellent spelling (Chandran & Shah, 2019). Young learners are usually presented with the opportunity to strengthen their reading skills from an early age. It is at this age that most learners struggle with decoding phonetic knowledge, word recognition and

comprehension (Sardor, Oyshajon & Rushana, 2020). As a result, the learners disengage themselves from reading tasks, have lowered self-confidence in reading new words, get frustrated in simple reading tasks, and become discouraged by their lack of success. Mohammad and Hasbi (2021) assert that nature, nurture and socialisation play a predominant role in developing reading and other linguistic skills among young learners, and help them overcome learning barriers. Furthermore, Mohammad and Hasbi (2021) state that reading, understanding and comprehension of the language pose a great challenge to most learners, teachers and parents since young learners may lack required exposure to the proper enabling environment, social milieu and peers well-versed in linguistic abilities. Students that have reading difficulties in their Home Language tend to struggle in reading components such as accuracy, comprehension and speed (Orgez & Rachid, 2017). The factors stated above are amongst other factors that the researcher has recognised with the Grade 7 learners as the participants of the study. The researcher believes that reading comprehension difficulties in other instances might be caused by lack of motivation, confidence and ability to articulate words.

Primary school teaching serves as the foundation for one's academic future since it shapes the future of individuals and the society by guiding and improving their language literacy and skills, with reading comprehension being one of the skills. It is advised that effective educators should adjust their instruction to support student learning and to navigate unpredictable instructional situations to explore the innovative nature of literacy instruction (Gundogmus, 2018). Furthermore, Gundogmus (2018) regards the teaching of reading and reading comprehension skills as essential parts of training programs and the instruction process. Effectiveness of the skills gained in the primary reading instruction is significant for future reading and writing performance and academic achievement of individuals. The above statement clearly states that reading skills should be taught while the child is still in lower levels of education because if not gained in the primary school period, which forms the basis of life development, learners can be seriously impacted by this deprivation in the later periods of life.

The teaching strategies that enhance reading with comprehension is a priority for many educators involved in schools. However, due to the unprepared nature of a large section of learners entering the education system, reading with comprehension is not

easily achievable. Learners learn effectively when teachers use appropriate teaching methods to stimulate the learning process that will yield improved results in the students' level of success (Astri, 2018). There is a need for teachers to select the best methods that could be employed to help learners comprehend the written texts. This implies that an interesting method needs to be carried out to keep students active in a reading classroom. Several learners have been found to lack basic literacy skills such as reading comprehension in Sepedi Home Language reading classrooms. It is important to know that reading comprehension does not only involve the understanding of individual words but also active engagement with the content of the text to create mental representations that promote learners' interaction with the text.

Successful comprehension requires coordination of skills at many levels to extract and construct meaning. It is believed that when students comprehend or understand written text, and integrate their understanding with prior knowledge, they can perform the following three reading-comprehension skills: identifying simple facts presented in written text (literal comprehension), making judgments about the written text's content (evaluative comprehension) and connect the text to other written passages and situations (inferential comprehension) (Tefera, 2017). The three different levels of comprehension identified by Scanlon (2010) are: (a) literal comprehension, which involves understanding information as directly stated in the text, (b) inferential comprehension, which requires the reader to make inference that connects the information directly stated in the text with the reader's prior knowledge, and (c) critical comprehension in which readers engage to construct meaning from texts. The stated information is also important for Sepedi Home Language learners in that they must be able to read with understanding so that they can get meaning from the texts, especially because their Home Language should pave way for grasping other languages used in other school subjects.

Poor readers might spend less time reading, and thus develop limited vocabulary and general knowledge (Yunus, Mohamad & Waelateh, 2016; Ismail & Yusof, 2016). Reading challenges do not only affect Sepedi learners in South African rural schools, but also learners of other languages in other countries. For instance, in Britain, the year 2008 was declared as the National Year of Reading because of the poor reading competence of learners in English (Rankin, 2013). African studies have shown that the majority of children in Kenyan primary schools read far below their grade levels, and

that more than one million Kenyan children of school age are out of school, while one in five youths aged 15 – 24 cannot read (UNESCO, 2014). It is believed that lack of resources serves as a barrier to reading because there are inadequate resources such as books, audio-visual aids and other resources in learners' homes and their surrounding environments–which disadvantage learners' ability to read.

The researcher has been teaching Sepedi Home Language to Grade 7 learners for two years. As such, the researcher's observation is that most learners are not proficient in reading and are not keen to read Sepedi story books. The Grade 7 assessment paper consists of 2 sections divided into Paper 1 and Paper 2. Paper 1 comprises of objective questions, while Paper 2 is about creative writing. Section A of Paper 1 evaluates learners' understanding of a closed passage, which is about reading comprehension and answering questions that carry 20% of the assessment. Most of the learners are not able to answer questions due to lack of comprehension skills. Resultantly, this makes learners lose interest in the reading of comprehension passages. All the three levels of reading comprehension, i.e., literal meaning, inferential and evaluative meaning are important and need to be fostered. This study intends to contribute to the body of knowledge by investigating factors that hinder Grade 7 learners from reading with comprehension in Sepedi Home Language.

## 1.2 Research problem

Grade 7 learners at a selected primary school in Dilokong Circuit have challenges pertaining to reading with comprehension during the Sepedi reading activities. Most learners always obtain low marks because of lack of comprehension skills, and they struggle to answer questions set in line with the comprehension passages they have read. The poor level of reading among school learners is a problem, not only in Limpopo Province, but world-wide (Modipane, 2017). In support of the above statement, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) argue that instead of grappling with more abstract levels of reading, readers have often been found to bark at texts, saying words aloud from the texts without understanding what they are reading about.

**1.3 Literature review**

**1.3.1 Defining reading**

Reading is a selective process in which the reader, guided by knowledge of his native language, picks up graphic cues, relates them to syntactic, semantic, phonological cues, and then decode and store those choices in short memory to be subsequently tested and associated with future decoded choices (Haji-Othman, 2017). This shows that it is important for learners to have knowledge of their indigenous language because reading with understanding in their Home Languages will assist them with learning other school subjects.

**1.3.2 Reading challenges internationally**

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA: 2015) defines reading literacy as the ability to understand, use and reflect on written texts in order to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential to participate in society. PISA (2015) measured students' skills of accessing information in texts, remembering information, interpreting and expressing one's thoughts. The reading literacy results show that Turkey's general point average is 428 although the average score of all countries is 460, and the reading literacy performance of students in Turkey is lower than that in the PISA 2009 and PISA 2012 reports. These results demonstrate that the reading literacy of the students in Turkey is below the international average and that there is also a performance decline compared with previous years (Gundogmus, 2018).

In relation to challenges of reading in Australian indigenous languages, Margot (2014) states that the maintenance of indigenous cultural languages is important. The fact is that all children need to read in English language if they are to fulfil their educational promise in Australian society. To support the above statement, Perkins (2015) asserts that what makes a text challenging to read is when there are words that the reader has never seen before and do not know how to pronounce. Margot (2014) and Perkins (2015) agree that the reading challenges in indigenous languages might be caused by the attitude of learners towards their own languages. The authors' assertions support what happens with Sepedi Home Language learners because they have a tendency

of regarding other languages like English as more important than their native languages, to a point that such languages may negatively affect their reading skills and other skills that are prescribed for their Home Language learning–especially with the insertion of such languages in their text.

Rietdijk, Janssen, Van den Bergh and Rijlaarsdam (2017) argue that in the Netherlands, serious concerns have been raised about the level of students' reading proficiency at the end of primary school. Two national assessment studies indicated that two-thirds of the students in Grade 6 do not meet basic reading standards. Their texts show flaws with regards to content, organisation, style and communicative effectiveness. This causes learners to hardly progress between Grades 4 and 6, though reading is regarded as an important skill that learners must master to learn any language. It was revealed that secondary school learners face difficulties in their reading comprehension due to ambiguous words, unfamiliar and limited vocabulary.

### 1.3.3 Reading challenges in Africa

African studies have shown that the majority of children in Kenyan primary schools are reading far below their grade levels. Additionally, more than one million Kenyan children of school age are out of school, while one in five youths aged 15 – 24 cannot read (UNESCO, 2014). The results obtained from Mophosho, Khoza and Sebole (2019) in their Setswana study on reading comprehension, are attributed to numerous factors such as learners' background knowledge, the language used in the text (Home Language), and possessing an extensive vocabulary in their Home Language. The low levels of reading among Grade 7 primary school learners is the result of poverty of the mind and lack of early literacy intervention in African languages despite the fact that these languages received recognition as official languages in the post-apartheid dispensation (Fakude, 2014).

### 1.3.4 Reading challenges in South African indigenous languages

Concerning the South African reading challenges, the results of Fakude's study show that learners experience a delay in reading ability in their L1 such that they performed at an average of 60% for all the schools when dealing with information recall. Information recall showed a differential performance of a homogenous group of learners.

According to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2017), an international comparative reading assessment revealed that 78% of Grade 4 learners in South Africa cannot read for meaning, and this is significantly worse for children assessed in African languages, whereby 93% of Grade 4 learners assessed in Sepedi could not read for meaning with relatively large percentages among Setswana (90%), Tshivenda (89%), isiXhosa (88%), Xitsonga (88%), isiZulu (87%) and isiNdebele (87%).

### 1.3.5 Factors contributing to learners' poor reading skills

Most researchers conducted their studies on the challenges of learners' reading comprehension. Their difference is the experiences they had with the learners at different grades and contexts, and the contributory factors to those challenges. Reading without comprehension among learners is still a great concern (Hagaman, Casey & Reid, 2012). Similarly, Pretorius and Spaull (2016) point out that the poor teaching methods at school level are one of the major factors that hinder reading development in many students. Furthermore, many of the students who struggle to comprehend texts, especially at university, may have attended schools where very little emphasis was placed on reading and writing (Probyn, 2019).

Ngcobo (2014) asserts that many students find reading difficult, whether the language is second or third to them. Reading literacy has been cited as one of the main challenges faced by the developing countries in the world, and this literacy challenge has been directly linked to slow socio-economic development. Ngcobo (2014) reveals that learners were not able to read, and more variance was observed in Home Language than second language. In the study on reading comprehension, Rietdijk, Janssen, Van den Bergh and Rijlaarsdam (2017) state that comprehensive reading program affects students' writing performance, educators' classroom practices, beliefs and skills because educators use specific approaches that are not yet fully implemented in current practice to teach writing. Almutairi (2018) cites the following problems as causes of poor reading comprehension: inappropriate use of prior knowledge, lack of vocabulary knowledge, lack of reading fluency, limited knowledge of common text structures and difficulties in making inferences. The statement supports the integration of language skills and will be of value to the current study

because Sepedi Home Language learners and educators also promote integration in a class since no skill can be taught in isolation.

Most of the learners gain university entrance without the foundational skills required for them to fully read and comprehend texts, and that militates against their success at university (Hungwe, 2019). According to Shamini (2013), educators are usually engrossed in completing the syllabus for the mid-year and final year examination. The scenario is worse among educators who are always busy drilling and giving a lot of written exercises to the pupils as preparation for the examination.

## 1.4 Role of theory in the study

This study adopted the Schema theory of Cognitive Learning by Frederic Bartlett. According to Bartlett (1932), theory of Cognitive Learning describes how knowledge is acquired, processed and organised. The theory says that every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world. According to the theory of Cognitive Learning, knowledge is a network of mental frames or cognitive constructs called schema. Learners' success in decoding the meaning of a given text depends on their level of prior knowledge that has been accumulated ages before their current reading activity. Their linguistic depth, relevant contextual background and their familiarity with the text type being studied form a point of reference from which the learner will draw schemata (tools) to use to decode or predict the meaning of the text (Xue, 2019).

The theory is relevant to the study on investigating factors impacting reading comprehension of Grade 7 learners because the theory specifies some factors that contribute to learners' failure to read with comprehension, like lack of knowledge of the world that could assist learners during reading to build their own reading and knowledge framework, and facilitate their future application of the language in other areas. This theory shows that learners without the knowledge of their environment and that of the world struggle to work on comprehension passages because they cannot relate to the content and context of the passages. Lack of knowledge of the environment might be one of the factors that hold back Sepedi Home Language learners from achieving the reading comprehension skills.

## 1.5 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate factors that hinder Grade 7 learners on the reading comprehension skills at Dilokong Circuit, Limpopo Province.

**Main research question:** What are the factors that hinder Grade 7 learners on the reading comprehension skills?

**The objectives of this study were to:**

Identify factors that cause reading comprehension challenges in a Grade 7 Sepedi Home Language classroom.

Examine the challenges of reading comprehension experienced by Grade 7 learners.

Explore the remedial interventions to solve the reading challenges.

## 1.6 Research methodology

### 1.6.1 Research design

Research design is a plan of how the researcher will systematically collect and analyse data that is needed to answer the research questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). The study followed a case study design as the researcher investigated challenges of reading comprehension as a case of Grade 7 learners at a selected primary school in Dilokong Circuit. Qualitative approach was employed for the study. This approach was employed to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour and interactions, and it helped the researcher to generate non-numerical data (Vihba, Bijayini & Sanjay, 2013). The researcher visited the participants at their natural setting at school where educators and learners met on daily basis to engage in the processes of learning and teaching language skills. The interpretivist paradigm was underpinned in the study since the researcher visited the participants during data collection to identify and interpret factors that hinder learners from reading with comprehension. Learners were also observed and assessed on how they comprehensively interpreted information from the reading texts.

### 1.6.2 Population and Sampling

**Population**

The population for the study comprises of the individuals, dyads, groups, organisations, or other entities one seeks to understand whom or to which the study results may be generalised or transferred, and is the principal group about which the research is concerned (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). Population for this study comprised of 10 Primary Schools at Dilokong Circuit. The site for the study was a Primary School with 289 learners. Grade 7 learners were 34 in total. Thus, the total number of educators in the school was 10, including the 2 Sepedi Home Language educators.

**Sampling**

Sampling is the process of selecting a statistically representative sample of individuals from the population of interest (Majid, 2018). This study used purposive sampling in which one primary school was sampled for the study. The purposive sampling technique was applied to select the one that was considered to have learners with reading comprehension challenges. The researcher sampled 6 learners out of 34 in Grade 7 through the assistance of the educators. The learners were selected according to the three levels of performance (2 high, 2 average, and 2 low). Two Grade 7 educators were also purposively sampled as they were the ones responsible for teaching Sepedi HL in Grade 7 classroom.

### 1.6.3. Data collection techniques

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established system, which then enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes (Collin, 2020). The researcher used the following data collection instruments:

**Semi-structured interview**

This type of interview was conducted with educators. Semi-structured interview is the type of interview that allows the researcher to probe for more information from the participants by asking follow-up questions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). Following this type of data collecting method helped the researcher to get more information from participant educators by asking probing questions about their experiences of teaching comprehension passages and the challenges faced by learners during the lessons

thereof. The researcher used field notes, voice recorder and interview schedule as tools to support the interview and to gather information about the experiences of participants regarding the reading challenges in the classroom.

**Non-participatory observation**

Non-participatory observations were conducted with learners. Non-participatory observation entails a construction of a picture of what transpires during a classroom practice (Sauro, 2015). The researcher sat at the back of the classroom and used a checklist to record aspects of the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. The researcher further avoided showing any reaction to learners so that they would not be disturbed during the lesson. This enabled the researcher to gather authentic information about the challenges that learners faced during the reading of Sepedi comprehension texts. The researcher used observation checklist as a guiding tool pertaining what to observe as learners went through the comprehension tests, such as to preview, visiting questions before reading the text, reading the text more than once before answering, underlining difficult words, time spent on the paragraphs and/or pictures of the text, and evaluate as learners were writing comprehension test in class.

**Learners' written comprehension passage**

The researcher gave a comprehension passage to learners to read and answer questions related to the passage so that they are assessed on their ability to read with comprehension and identify challenges they might have experienced during reading. A mark sheet was used to mark comprehension passage to check how learners answered questions.

**1.6.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis is when data is reduced through the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data that appear in written field notes and transcriptions; then displayed in an organised and compressed manner to guide the researcher to draw conclusions and take action (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). The study followed thematic data analysis method under which inductive coding was adopted to serve as a strategy for generating codes from the data. Inductive coding guides the researcher to create codes based on the collected data (Christensen, et

al., 2019). For this study, inductive coding was suitable because it allowed the researcher to make codes based on the responses received from interviews, observations and learners' written comprehension passage. It allowed the researcher to break down collected data into smaller samples which will make it easy for readers to read and comprehend the findings. Data collected through semi-structured interview was transcribes from the voice recorder. Transcribed interview data, observation data and learners' written comprehension passages were analysed thematically through guidelines of Miles and Huberman (1994) following the inductive method.

## 1.6.5 Quality criteria

The quality criteria are explained in terms of the guidelines stated in Pandey and Pandey (2015) as indicated below:

**Credibility:** The complete research was taken to the participants for verification to ensure that the information in the document is exactly what the researcher got from the participants. All the sources of information are acknowledged under the reference list.

**Transferability:** It is the extent to which the findings can be transferred or applied in different settings. The researcher facilitated the transferability through thick description. The researcher presented research results for other researchers to understand them with ease. Data collected through semi-structured interviews and learner observations was categorised into themes and subthemes for clear presentation and for clear understanding of the readers and other researchers. Data will be easily transferred to other contexts or translated to other languages.

**Confirmability:** The findings are based on the study's participants and settings instead of researcher's biases. The researcher ensured that the evaluation and interpretation in the research is supported by the data received from the sources during investigations to make the results easily confirmable. The researcher also issued the peers with the study so that they review it and confirm its credibility.

**Dependability**: The researcher used different methods of data collection to collect most relevant data. This was achieved by frequently visiting the research site in order

to collect enough data from the participants. This refers to the ability of the researcher to convince the readers that the findings of the research are also dependable.

## 1.7 Significance of the study

The study will be significant to the Department of Education as it will give guidance on intervention strategies to assist educators.

This study will lead to the development of strategies that will help educators to teach Sepedi reading skills.

It will help educators to see the impact of reading texts in Sepedi language and find ways that can help learners to achieve better results.

The study will assist policy makers to involve all stakeholders in designing and revising policies and implement ways of helping learners to read well.

The broader society will benefit from this study as it will improve the reading skills of learners for societal literacy development.

The study will be of value to learners since they will have good reading skills that will build their confidence and improve their performance.

## 1.8 Ethical considerations

Research ethics is a set of principles that assist the community of researchers in deciding how to conduct ethical research (Christensen et al., 2019)

**Permission:** The researcher applied for permission using formal requests from the following stakeholders: Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC), circuit office, school, and parents of the learner participants.

**Informed consent and voluntary participation:** Participants were informed about the title, aims, objectives and the significance of the study. Consequently, before they signed, they were informed that their participation was voluntary, and if they so wished, they can withdraw from participating in the research without any consequences. Participants were given consent forms to sign before participating.

**Privacy, Confidentiality and anonymity:** All information obtained during the research process was treated as confidential. Data collected from the interviews and observations, after being analysed and recorded in the project, was locked in a safe

place that is only known by the researcher. Anonymity was adhered to throughout the research process. The researcher achieved anonymity by using pseudonyms for the participants instead of their real names. The participants involved are not identifiable in this final version of the research project.

**Protection from harm:** The researcher took reasonable measures to ensure that participants were free from any harm. No risks or dangers were experienced throughout the research process.

## 1.9 Outline of the study

The study comprises of five chapters:

**Chapter 1:** Presents an introduction, background and motivation of the study, research problem, role of the theory in the study, aim and objectives of the study, the research methodologies which includes research design, population and sampling, data collection and data analysis clearly unpacked. The chapter also covered the aspects of quality criteria, significance of the study and ethical considerations of the study.

**Chapter 2:** Provides relevant and appropriate literature that highlights research studies about factors hindering reading skills in Grade 7.

**Chapter 3:** Deals with the research methodologies, discussing the approach, paradigm, planning, and data collection methods.

**Chapter 4**: Provides a data presentation, analysis, and interpretation.

**Chapter 5:** The chapter is about the overall summary of the chapters, consisting of the findings, summary of all chapters, recommendations and conclusions of the study.

## 1.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented step by step information on the research processes. All the steps followed by the researcher in this study are clearly outlined in order to reach amicable solutions to the research problem. Furthermore, the chapter gives a detailed background of the study, the research problem, a preliminary literature review, research methodologies, significance of the study, quality criteria and ethical considerations. The next chapter discusses the research findings presented by other scholars and researchers regarding the problem of this research study.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the background of the study, the research problem, aim and objectives, literature review, theoretical framework, purpose of the study, research questions, research methodology, quality criteria, and ethical considerations. This chapter reviews literature that informs the study about the experiences of teachers and learners regarding factors that hinder learners from acquiring the reading comprehension skills and the findings of other researchers on the factors contributing to difficulties of reading with understanding.

Literature review is regarded as a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of current knowledge, and allows the researcher to identify relevant theories, methods and gaps in the existing body of knowledge (McCombes, 2019). The primary goal of this chapter is to identify the reading challenges that prevent Grade 7 learners from acquiring the skills of reading with comprehension. To understand the essence of the present research, a review of relevant literature is discussed under the following themes: (a) the gaps identified by other researchers, (b) the importance of reading and improving learners reading skills, (c) reading problems that hinder learners' reading skills (d) reading skills strategies for learners, (e) and the effectiveness of the reading skills strategies. Literature Review focuses on analysing research of different scholars with similar challenges (Ngobeni, 2019).

The researcher focused on analysing current sources in order to identify the gaps that were left by other researchers in connection with the research problem. Analysing sources of other scholars helped the researcher to identify the gap for this study and to understand the reading challenges encountered by the learners at different parts of the continent. The researcher focused on sources from different countries including South Africa.

## 2.2 Defining reading skills

The issue of factors hindering learners on the reading skills is one of the current essentials that have raised interests of a number of prominent scholars (Hungwe, 2019; Cofu, 2013) who addressed it from different perspectives. In this study, reading skills is understood within the context of sociocultural perspective. Many gaps have been identified in the existing literature, and it is one of the aims of this study to contribute towards addressing them. There is a lack of contextualized learning resources for reading. At the moment, schools rely on international standardised reading assessments which can be unsuitable for students who are non-native speakers. Relevant and appropriate reading materials are important in this regard. Korkmaz and Karatepe (2019) investigated and highlighted the effectiveness of reading materials to specially determine their effectiveness in relation to text appropriateness, material purpose, learner's needs and vocabulary development.

The information that is taught and the didactic cues from teachers are also influenced by textbooks which help to increase reading engagement and comprehension levels of the students (Dockx, van den Branden, & de Fraine, 2020). Similarly, reading is one of the important aspects that need to be mastered because it is the foundation of learning in cross-disciplinary subjects. The ability to read is imperative for finding a job or going to college. The ability to read plays an important role in improving individual lives and abilities in school. Reading ability is also important in supporting the development of a country because it provides many benefits, including adding to the repertoire of knowledge, opening up new information, enabling people to explain new information to others, increasing concentration, and also for entertainment (Rintaningrum, 2019).

Poor teaching methods at school level is one of the major factors that hinder reading development in many students (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016). Similarly, Oakhil and Elbrow (2014) argue that reading is a complex process which requires the organisation of prior cognitive skills and abilities, besides that, readers will not be able to understand the text because they will encounter difficulties in decoding words in the text. Reading generally depends on comprehending the target language. This requires comprehending words, sentences and contexts of the text. Yet,

comprehension typically requires the previous knowledge of incorporating words and sentences within an understanding of the context and the meaning of the text.

Literacy skills that include learning to read and write form the cornerstone of a successful educational system and thus, learners should be taught to read as early as the pre-school period. According to Wolf (2014), the main purpose of teaching reading is to enable learners to read independently and with understanding. The researcher argues that reading with understanding is an important thing that learners must understand in order for them to achieve better results in their studies and not face challenges in learning and teaching. Reading is one of the most crucial core skills that students should learn because, without it, it would difficult to become proficient in other subject areas. If reading competence is not well-founded, the teaching and learning process will be challenging for both teachers and pupils. Reading skill impacts academic performance of the students (Bano, 2018).

Reading fosters critical thinking in students and enhances reading comprehension, which is advantageous in many academic areas (Whitten, 2019). Responsibilities in the acquisition of this skill are a trifocal responsibility of parents, teachers and learners. Children's reading habits are formed with the help of their parents, and ongoing encouragement of reading improves the academic performance of the children (Kamala, 2022). Students' motivation to read is crucial in enhancing their reading skills, otherwise it could be a hindering factor if they do not have the desire to learn (Sari, 2020). In addition, Wang (2013) asserts that students are facing difficulties because numerous factors such as, but not limited to, their inability to apply the elements of the reading process like skimming and scanning of the reading materials; lack of vocabulary; having poor reading skills and losing focus. The researcher argues that, reading with understanding is an important skill that learners must acquire in a reading classroom from an early age in order to achieve better in their language learning and their studies in general since other subjects also depend on the knowledge and understanding of language aspects and skills.

## 2.3 Models of reading comprehension

The aim of teaching reading comprehension is to assist the students in conceiving written text using the target language (Nurdianingsih, 2021). Hence, in the reading process, there will be a written text that needs to be interpreted by a reader (Abame et al., 2017). On that account, written texts and reading skills are two important elements to understand the target language. Therefore, the importance of reading comprehension skills is inevitable to studying a language. It is in line with Astri and Wahab (2018) who state that reading comprehension is important since it is the process of constructing meaning from the text. Brown (2013), highlighted three models that play a vital role in ensuring that learners understand reading better, as well as making reading understandable. Furthermore, the author explains that all the models are different in relation to the feeling of the reader about what is being read. The bottom-up model of reading needs readers to understand sentence by sentence so that they know better what the comprehension passage is all about. The top-down model of reading focuses on the vocabulary and prior knowledge of the reader in order to understand what they are reading, while the interactive model sees reading as thoughtful, and work that many people must always do well at.

### 2.3.1 Bottom-up model of reading

A bottom-up reading model is a reading model that emphasises the written or printed text. It says that reading is driven by a process that results in meaning or by the text, and that reading proceeds from part to whole (Didion et al., 2020). This type of reading method helps learners to read with understanding because it focuses on reading word by word so that learners can hear what they are reading about. The method helps learners to read with understanding and be able to answer questions after reading. The idea behind the bottom-up model is that readers should slowly start the reading process by decoding every letter of the word, vocabulary word, and eventually a sentence in order to construct meaning from a written passage (Ahmadi, 2013). In other words, this model looks at the whole reading process as letter and vocabulary-based. Thus, in order to successfully gain meaning from a text, readers are required to understand and recognise each letter and vocabulary word while reading. Since this model emphasises the importance of reading every single word for comprehension, quick word understanding is an important requirement for the bottom-up approach.

The bottom-up method shows that learners who are struggling to read with understanding will succeed because the aim of this method is to identify learners who struggle with reading so that they are given assistance. The method supposes that readers who follow the bottom-up reading process rapidly become expert readers whose proficiency plays a significant role in improving their ability to decode. This model looks at the readers who are not able to quickly decode words in the text as struggling readers whose comprehension process is interrupted by their failure to decode. Proficiency in decoding enables successful readers to easily and rapidly understand letter chunks, prefixes, suffixes and the original vocabulary. As a result, readers' ability to quickly translate words can exploit more memory capacity in their brains for reading comprehension. On the other hand, struggling readers spend more time and effort trying to figure out the meaning of each vocabulary word in the text, which results in the loss of a lot of processing capacity in the brain needed for understanding the text (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012).

### 2.3.2 Top-down method

A top-down reading model is a reading approach that emphasises what the reader brings to the text. It contends that reading is driven by meaning and proceeds from whole to part. It is also known as concept-driven model (Bartolo, 2020). The top-down method helps learners to use their prior knowledge with the existing knowledge on what they are presently reading about in order to retrieve message from the text. This method helps learners to understand what they are reading about from the start until the end. In the top-down model, readers are required to start the process of reading comprehension by building particular expectations about the text based on the reader's previous knowledge about a particular topic (Li, 2020). Using prior and exciting knowledge will help learners to answer questions about reading comprehension. The top-down method helps learners to read with understanding, read things the way they are written, and write down the important words that will aid clarity at the end so that they can do better in the reading skill.

### 2.3.3 Interactive method

The interactive method of Rumelhart (1977), argues that reading is not viewed simply as either a bottom-up or top-down process, but instead as a synthesizing of patterns, calling for the application or integration of all of the previously identified knowledge sources. The method combines the bottom-up and top-down methods to help identify challenges that learners face when using either the bottom-up and top-down method. Since the interactive model is developed to address weakness and limitations that are found in both the bottom-up and the top-down reading comprehension models, it tends to join in features of both. Interactive model is said to be the most followed and conclusive model for explaining the process of reading comprehension and approves the importance of the interaction between a reader and the text (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012).

Interactive reading method helps learners to understand that they can use the two models (bottom-up and top-down) to understand well when reading. It reinforces the idea that neither the bottom-up nor the top-down model can be used separately to explain the entire reading comprehension process. Therefore, it called for the

formation of an interaction between these two models (Ahmadi & Gilakjani, 2012; Ahmadi, Ismail & Abdullah, 2013). In the same note, Alderson (2000) explains that the whole reading process is not an either-or selection between the bottom-up and top-down models, but includes the interaction of both methods. Therefore, Ahmadi (2013) advices that learners should use the two models in order to succeed in reading comprehension.

## 2.4 Problems that hinder learners to read with understanding

Reading is an important skill that learners need to master for them to perform better. Most learners face difficulties in reading with understanding because there is no much time for teaching learners how to read with understanding. Being unable to read with understanding is the major problem that many learners face and it disturbs their academic progress. According to Chandran and Shah (2019), problems in reading and comprehension emanate from environmental, instructional and biological sources. These causes entail that the area in which one is born and brought up determines their ease of grasping languages, and that the modes of instruction that one receives at an early age or during their growth determine their ability to grasp reading and comprehension.

In terms of biological sources, the cause might be a combination of the biological parents that determines the origin of a person. That is, the biological sources can ascribe one to a specific genetic makeup that either makes it easy or difficult for them to learn languages (Mohammad & Muhamad, 2017). Some of the other sources originate from the wrong pronunciation of words due to ethnicity, encountering new words, not understanding the meaning of the words, and poor reading habits (Mohammed & Rashid, 2017). It is also noted by Nanda & Azmy (2020) that the reading comprehension problems can cause three major effects in learners, being; low learning achievement, low problem-solving skills, and barriers to the students' future in studying and careers.

**2.4.1 Inappropriate use of prior knowledge**

Inappropriate use of prior knowledge disturbs the progress of learners in reading with understanding because they read without understanding nor using prior knowledge. When learners are unable to read with understanding by using prior knowledge, they will fail to answer questions. Through the use of pre-reading activities, which aims to both develop and activate the students' prior knowledge, teachers can shorten the students' learning by simplifying the textual information in order to make it reachable for all students. When students lack relevant background knowledge, learning is likely to be fragmented and incomplete. Students will struggle to identify the meanings of new terminology, differentiate main ideas from detail, grasp how one idea relates to another, and build a coherent representation of the lecture material. According to the annual results of the survey on reading in National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE: 2017), more than half of freshmen and seniors report that they come to class unprepared sometimes, and an additional 19% report being unprepared less often or very often.

**2.4.2 Lack of Vocabulary Knowledge**

Reading comprehension is one of the problems that hinder learners' progress with reading skills, if learners are unable to read using good knowledge about what they read, they will not perform well in learning. Vocabulary is a tremendous obstacle that prevents students from performing well in reading comprehension (Le, 2021). It is reported in Shehu (2015) that lexical resources is the primary challenge for learners when reading a text. The factor behind this is that new words make learners stop for a while to read and understand their meaning. Consequently, the speed and effectiveness in reading comprehension inevitably have a negative effect on the learners. Learners' lack knowledge about what they read makes holds them back from performing well in activities that require reading. As students become more familiar with the vocabulary and continue to build their vocabulary skills, not only does their reading fluency increase, but also does their reading comprehension. In addition, as students learn and understand new vocabulary words, and relate the words to their personal knowledge of a subject, they can invoke that same knowledge as they read. Learning the vocabulary, therefore, helps students to use their personal experiences

to relate to stories and information they read (Bailey, 2023). In their study on the reading comprehension in English, Nanda and Azmy (2020) argue that Indonesian students experience obstacles in studying reading skills. In their study, they found that there are three factors that affect students when learning reading comprehension skills, namely: lack of motivation, low prior knowledge and low English vocabulary. In addition, Wahyuni, Ritonga and Anastasya (2019) claim that students experience difficulties in reading skills such as unfamiliar vocabulary and difficulty in understanding long sentences and their structures.

### 2.4.3 Lack of Reading Fluency

Learners in schools are faced with difficulties of reading well, and educators are falling to understand what learners are reading about–and this later makes them not to achieve well in school. Reading fluently supports reading comprehension in that when pupils read fluently, their cognitive resources can be redirected from focusing on decoding to comprehending a text. For this reason, fluency is sometimes described as a vehicle that carries learners from word recognition to comprehension. Shanahan (2019) says that teachers need to teach reading because it helps pupils to understand how print works, how to develop and consolidate automatic decoding skills, and how to bring a text from pupils to prosody.

### 2.4.4 Limited background knowledge

Learners face difficulties because they have limited knowledge about the texts they read. This makes them fail to understand the texts and thus end up giving wrong responses to comprehension questions–causing them to achieve low marks. Burmakow (2016) agrees that readers without background knowledge always struggle to absorb the text's meaning and find it hard to learn new academic concepts. Having limited knowledge about the common text structures is additional strain that can negatively impact reading comprehension of students with learning disabilities. It was revealed that pupils lack knowledge of blending sounds within words and there are also signs of interferences in the ability of the pupils to fluently read words aloud. Reading ability of pupils in the school is low due to the fact teachers do not teach them the knowledge on blending sounds within words (Joseph, 2018).

### 2.4.5 Difficulty in Making Inferences

The difficulty of making inferences from a text is another problem that hinders reading comprehension of students with learning disabilities (Hall & Barnes, 2017). Making inferences is the students' ability to; (a) draw their own conclusion of what has been said, (b) make estimates prior and during reading, and (c) apply pictures or imagery to assist with comprehension (Bintz, Pienkosky-Moran, Berndt, Ritz, Skilton & Bircher, 2012). Therefore, being able to perform all these metacognitive skills requires the students to make connections between different types of information in order to construct meaning from the text.

### 2.4.6 Lack of proper resources for reading with understanding

Majority of schools do not have enough reading resources that will help learners to spend much of their time reading. Learners share books in most occasions, and this makes it difficult for them to master reading comprehension. Resultantly, learners' achievements in reading comprehension become low. With the lack of educational resources, learners find it difficult to comprehend and enjoy classroom lessons. Educators often find it difficult to clarify arguments with fewer educational resources because they fear leaving any pupil behind limited access to instructive resources (Nawani, 2019). Lack of instructional material affects learners in comprehending the main aspects of the lesson that the teacher is delivering. Furthermore, with the lack of educational resources, teachers find it hard to determine if the learners' comprehension of the subject has improved.

### 2.4.7 The impact of educators on learners' reading comprehension

Learners face difficulties in reading with understanding because their educators also do not have adequate skills that will help learners do better. In addition, other educators spend most of their time absent from the school, and this disadvantages learners to understand reading better and achieve better. Most educators are not trained enough to master the issue of reading with understanding and at the end, they fail to do a better job at teaching reading comprehension. If all learners deserve to

learn how to read from their teachers, the knowledge, abilities and capacity building initiatives for teachers should be provided (Moats, 2020).

Language teachers are more concentrated on the content rather than teaching reading. Some teachers can teach vocabulary, however, rules on grammar are more technical in nature and require the guidance of language teachers especially in implementation. It is therefore arguable that teachers need to undergo capacity building since their background on teaching letters and sound recognition is inadequate.

## 2.4.8 Grammar

Some of the researchers report grammar as one of the vital causes of comprehension failure. Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018) say that different grammatical knowledge levels will affect readers' understanding differently, hence those who have inadequate knowledge of grammar tend to have difficulties in reading comprehension. Consequently, to comprehend the meaning of the passages, grammar knowledge is necessary for learners.

## 2.5 Challenges of reading comprehension internationally

Claessen et al., (2020) say that reading difficulties are a problem that affects school learners across the world. United States of America (USA) through National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2022), states that across all states/jurisdictions in 2022, the percentage of below average students ranged from 20 to 52 percent; the percentage was 39 percent for public school students nationally. In the 26 states/jurisdictions with larger proportions of students performing below average compared to 2019, percentage increases ranged from 3 to 9 percentage points. Nationally, there was a 4 percentage point increase for public school students. Larger proportion of fourth-grade students performed below NEAP basic in reading in seven of 26 participating urban districts.

The reading comprehension problem has been an ongoing problem in the USA as it is also indicated in Temple at al. (2005) that 40% of the fourth grades could not read at the basic level, even in narrative text under the supervision of teachers. Black learners and Hispanic learners' results were even worse, with 69% of black fourth grades and 64% of Hispanic fourth grades unable to read at basic levels. In higher grades, 30% of the eighth grades and 25% of the twelve grades on the 1996 NAEP study required the basic reading ability. Similarly, in 2002, the United States Department of Education reported that of the 2,887, 217 school-aged children receiving services for learning disabilities, majority of them were identified as having a learning disabilities because of the evolving delays in reading (Martin, 2008).The results indicate large continuity between early reading skills and later reading skills, suggesting that efforts to improve learner's reading skills should focus on the development of learner's early reading skills (Lonigan, Purpura, Wilson, Walker & Menchetti, 2012).

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2018) has revealed that fifteen-year-old students in the Philippines scored lower in reading than those in majority of the countries and economies that participated in PISA 2018. The country's average reading score was 340 score points, on a par with that of the Dominican Republic. Tong et al., (2018) found that about 50% of 10-year-old Hong Kong Chinese-English bilingual children who had difficulties in Chinese reading comprehension also had difficulties in English reading comprehension, indicating a moderate overlap.

The study conducted by Nation (2019) about the difficulties on reading comprehension in Australia, asserts that children identified as having poor comprehension have deficits either in decoding, linguistic comprehension or both. This logic forces the conclusion that reading comprehension deficits cannot be specific, but instead must be related to weaknesses in one or both of its component parts. In support of Nation's assertion, Foorman, Petscher and Herrera (2019) posit that reading comprehension is the product of decoding and linguistic comprehension and further clarify that both components (decoding and linguistic comprehension) are necessary, and that neither is sufficient alone. General phonology problems arise for Italians in the inventory and distribution of individual sounds but are most common in the areas of stress and rhythm. Learners have the most problems in understanding and making themselves

understood due to this rhythmic language difference. The stress-timed patterns of English cause great difficulty to Italian learners, particularly in terms of perception and comprehension (Swan & Smith, 2001).

## 2.6 Challenges of reading comprehension in Africa

### Nigeria

In other contexts outside South Africa, the factors inhibiting rural learners' reading development are similar. In the context of Nigeria, Olakunle and Christiana (2019) conducted a study that sought to examine learners' interest in reading and the availability of reading materials as they relate to and predict learners' achievement in English reading comprehension. The findings of their study revealed that learners' interest in reading and the availability of reading material were strongly related to their English reading comprehension, although only reading material could significantly predict learners' reading comprehension accomplishment. Dolean (2019) conducted a study in Romania on the factors affecting learners' reading proficiency in multi-grade courses in rural elementary schools. The results showed that the teachers' scope of experience in teaching had a substantial impact on reading performance.

Nigeria is a multilingual country with about 250 different languages, attended by many dialects. In Nigeria, the reality is that a large percentage of school children are unable to read adequately and fluently. This inability to read, in turn, affects their other school activities because reading is central to intellectual development–which they cannot achieve because they cannot read to learn (Fatimayin, 2015). Furthermore, Fatimayin (2015) says that the reading difficulties which have pedagogical as well as other reasons are compounded by the lack of appropriate teaching methods, teacher quality and a national lack of a reading culture plus a near total absence of instructional media. Such circumstances make for a comfortable approval of the English language as the official language of instruction in schools. Thus, reading difficulties are predictable as learners might become confused and frustrated when learning to read. It is the learner's first language that provides a rich basis for second language learning. Nigerian primary school children are about three years behind their British or American counterparts, and over 30 million Nigerians have graduated from high school with poor reading skills (Aina, Ogugbeni & Adigun, 2011).

**Namibia**

In Namibia, the provision of trade books has declined at an alarming rate over the past years (Totemeyer, 2013), and learners often have to rely on English material published outside of Namibia. In the study of Mutenda (2008), it is revealed that Namibian children learn to read formally in their mother tongue but learn English as a second language from Grade One with an intention of developing strong literacy skills in English. However, when children enter Grade Four, they cannot read well in neither their Home Language nor English. This is confirmed by the report of the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ: 2015), which found that Grade Six learners were unable to read texts with understanding, and that Namibia recorded the lowest on reading performance in the Southern African Development Communities (SADC) region. The picture was even worse with only 25% of learners reaching the chosen levels of reading competence. Mule (2014), says that it is imperative that teachers detect the learners' reading problem earlier in order to avoid other problems in future and before it becomes a central concern to reading development.

**Uganda**

The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA, 2010) in Ssentanda (2013 & 2014) shows that children in the central region of Uganda were quicker at identifying sounds in their mother tongue than in English. However, when placed in an international context, the learners' level of performance in Uganda was below the regional level for East Africa and below international levels. In addition, comprehension levels were reported to be close to zero in English. Concerning the cause for the poor reading comprehension, Uganda National Education Board (UNEB, 2011) found that pupils' underperformance in literacy could be due to the deficiency in the teachers' skills to teach reading in particular. This was reflected by the teachers' weak performance in oral reading, implying that they themselves might not have been taught reading skills. This remark implies that there are teachers in Uganda who are not fully prepared to handle the challenges involved in the teaching of reading (Kyeyune, 2012). As the UNEB (2011) report suggests, it is difficult for the teachers to properly manage reading when they themselves have some difficulties with reading skills.

**Lesotho**

Parents in the rural areas of Lesotho rarely engage their learners in book reading activities (MOET, 2013).Therefore, the issue of quality in the teaching of early literacy, especially the teaching of reading in pre-schools, is the area of concern (MOET, 2013). UNESCO (2014) and UNICEF (2016) reports state that there is lack of basic reading skills in many countries globally, including Lesotho. Chimbi and Jita (2019) and Mueller et al., (2019) assert that teachers often have limited knowledge of curriculum implementation; hence, the limited knowledge of implementing the integrated curriculum or syllabus. One of the findings of Chimbi and Jita (2019) was that of teachers who are willing to implement curriculum are often discouraged to do so due to lack of professional development and lack knowledge on the interpretation and implementation of the curriculum.

## 2.7 Challenges of reading comprehension in South Africa

There are numerous studies that show that South African learners, both in basic and higher education institutions, are faced with reading difficulties. Most of the students' reading shows that they did not master the skill of reading, and this affects their performance in their studies. Most of the studies show that South African learners are faced with difficulties in learning and in tertiary institution also, where many students' readings show that they did not master the skill of reading with understanding. As a result, this makes them not to perform better in their studies.

Various researchers have looked into the factors that influence learners' reading proficiency. For example, Van Staden and Bosker (2014) conducted a study in South Africa to discover factors that predict reading literacy proficiency among Grade 4 learners. The findings of their study speak to the importance of encouraging engaged reading and instilling love of reading in children from an early age, particularly through parental participation. As previously stated, Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) conducted a study in which they investigated the perceptions and experiences of teachers in rural schools at White River town in Mpumalanga. The investigation found that most of the schools lacked water, sanitation or electricity, and that classrooms were in poor conditions. They concluded that these challenges have significant ramifications for successful teaching and learning, which is true for reading instruction.

Learners in rural regions are at a disadvantage when it comes to reading to learn because of their parents' low socio-economic position. This is because most parents in rural areas work part time, have low levels of education and do not place high importance on education (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Furthermore, based on the factors identified above, it is apparent that parents who are illiterate and unemployed are likely to face challenges in purchasing reading materials for their children and supporting and motivating them to read. This is a sign that reading with understanding is a great concern hence the failing education system.

Many countries in the world have been, and are still determined to establish a universal pre-school programme. However, they struggle to implement and/or achieve their goals. Some states in the USA such as Florida, Oklahoma, Columbia, Virginia and New York, have implemented universal programmes in the last decade but the enrolment at non-funded pre-school programmes in these states has decreased (Barnett et al., 2014).

## 2.8 Effective strategies of teaching reading skills

Reading comprehension is a great concern that causes learners to perform poorly in school. There are strategies that can be employed to assist learners to improve their reading comprehension. The National Reading Panel (2000) says that teaching reading comprehension to students plays a significant role in helping them to improve their overall academic performance and not only in the reading area. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of the United States of America requires teachers to satisfy the literacy needs of all students, including those who have disabilities, and especially those whose reading skills are below grade levels.

Learners should be trained to be strategic readers because strategic readers are active learners who are able to obtain strategic reading skills by themselves without being taught. They are able to construct meaning from a text through identifying and recalling significant information, monitoring their comprehension, integrating their prior knowledge with the new information, and summarising as well as guiding their learning

(Gajria, Jitendra, Sood & Sacks, 2007). The role of educators in this regard is to ensure that all learners have the necessary tools to progress in their reading skills.

The following are five strategies that may improve reading comprehension skills to learners:

## 2.8.1 Graphic Organisers

Graphic organisers are visual model that are used to organise, classify and rearrange textual information in a very simple way that makes it easy to be remembered and understood (Dye, 2000). The types of graphic organisers are venn diagrams, concept maps, mind maps, flow charts and pictures. Although graphic organisers may take dissimilar forms, their common goal is to enable the students' understanding through visualising textual information. The use of pictures in learning helps learners to understand the meaning of what is being taught. When learners use pictures, it is easy for them to get the message and understand better. Graphic organisers are beneficial in the intelligence that a picture is worth a thousand words (Sam & Rajan, 2013). Using pictures when reading, is good because learners will see pictures and be able to relate the text with the pictures for better understanding. Graphic organizers can help students focus their thoughts for planning, decision making and writing. They help students see connections, patterns and relationships. They can also help students show understanding of the 'big picture' from a lesson or a book. It is advised that teachers should use the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to support learners to acquire reading comprehension.

Hartman (2015) says that when applying the UDL framework, no student, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, should be defined by their perceived impairments and support needed to access to learning in the inclusive classroom. The use of pictures and other types of graphic organisers suits all learning styles. No matter what kind of learner a student is, anyone can learn easily through pictures and visual images because images accommodate different kinds of learners, such as visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learners.

Graphic organiser is a reading strategy that is helpful to both typical developing students and students who have learning disabilities. They benefit students in several ways. First, they provide students with a framework that organises their thinking in order to avoid perceptual errors that may emerge through the reading process and information recall. Second, graphic organisers help students to better comprehend textual information through creating a prediction about the text, making inference, checking their understanding while reading, and remembering major information provided by the author (Pang, et.al, 2013; Sam & Rajan, 2013).

## 2.8.2 Collaborative Strategic Reading

Collaborative learning by Lev Vygotsky (1934), is the educational approach of using groups to enhance learning through working together. Groups of two or more learners work together to solve problems, complete tasks, or learn new concepts. This approach actively engages learners to process and synthesise information and concepts, rather than using rote memorisation of facts and figures. Learners work with each other on projects, where they must collaborate as a group to understand the concepts being presented to them. The approach also applies during classroom reading activities where learners are motivated to learn from each other, and is termed collaborative strategic reading. The approach is regarded by Klingner, Vaughn, Boardman and Swanson (2016) as the strategy that has been broadly used to recover students' reading comprehension as it inspires students' engagement in reading activities to extend their own learning and improve the learning of their peers by working in small heterogeneous cooperative groups and peer discussions. Bremer, Vaughn, Clapper and Kim (2002) define collaborative strategic reading as a reading comprehension practice that combines two instructional elements: (a) modified reciprocal teaching and (b) cooperative learning or students pairing.

Collaborative strategic reading helps learners to work well with their peers so that they can perform better. Using this strategy can help learners to ask their peers questions they were afraid to ask in class and achieve better at the end (Klingner, Vaughn, Boardman & Swanson, 2016).

There are specific comprehension strategies that learners can use with all informational and expository texts they read to assist them in developing strategic techniques for comprehending a collaborative strategic reading method, which consists of a set of four cognitive strategies that students as a cooperative group engage with before, during and after reading a text. The first phase is preview, which helps learners to put together their previous knowledge and make it suit in what they are presently reading about. In this phase, students are required to stimulate their background knowledge, make predictions, and brainstorm about the given topic before they start the reading process. In the second phase, learners are demanded to listen to the reader, pay attention, and write questions regarding what they do not understand. The second strategy is click and clunk, a self-monitoring activity. In this phase, students have an opportunity to accomplish their understanding by writing down all words, phrases and sentences that are unfamiliar to them or difficult understand (clunk). They also write down words, concepts, phrases and sentences that are familiar to them and can be easily understood (click).

After identifying click and clunk, students work together as a group to re-read each clunk and try to gain meaning from the context. Through that group activity, students have an opportunity to learn from one another through discussing all the identified clunks and try to figure them out. After all the requirements for the past two phases, learners are expected to understand what they read about and put their thoughts accordingly. The third strategy is getting the gist. In this phase, students engage in a specific activity while reading. They analyse and synthesize the important information of each paragraph as well as restate its main idea.

It is at this phase that learners will be asking clarity about what they did not understand and write about what they read so that the teacher can see if they understood the lesson. The fourth strategy is wrapping-up. After students complete the reading activity, they start to generate questions about the text. Students within a cooperative group have an opportunity to ask questions and respond to their group's questions. The students close their group debate by exchanging significant ideas and information from the text (Boardman, 2016; Klingner, Vaughn, Boardman & Swanson, 2012).

### 2.8.3 Peer Assisted Learning Strategy

Peer Assisted Learning/Literacy Strategies (PALS) is a peer tutoring strategy that can be incorporated into a literacy curriculum to improve fluency, decoding and comprehension. In PALS, students are paired and alternate between the role of the tutor and tutee. Each student takes a turn reading aloud, listening to his/her partner read, and providing systematic feedback to each other (Fitriani & Tarwana, 2020).

The following three procedures in implementing PALS are outlined in Christian and Sera (2016); 1). Partner reading with story retell, which is a cooperative learning strategy in which two students work together to read an assigned text. Each student reads several paragraphs. The lower performing student reads until they finish the first paragraph, then the lower performing read the story retell and the higher performing acts as a tutor. 2). Paragraph shrinking as an activity that allows each student to take turns in reading, pausing and summarising the main points of each paragraph. Students provide each other with feedback as a way to monitor comprehension. In paragraph shrinking, the higher performing student asks the reader to identify who or what the paragraph is mainly about. The most important thing is for the reader to condense, or shrink this information into 10 words or less. 3). Prediction relay which is an activity that allows each student to make predictions about what will happen in the next paragraph, make turns reading for 5 minutes, then check their prediction, and summarise the main points.

This strategy helps learners in reading with understanding by enabling them to help one another, while the teacher helps in pairing them and ensuring that learners with difficulties stay with those who do not have difficulties so that they can share their knowledge. This helps most learners in that the learners who are afraid to ask teachers questions when they do not understand, find given an opportunity to ask their peers.

Peer assisted learning strategy is additional evidence-based strategy that is valuable for increasing reading comprehension for all students, including those with learning disabilities. It is a commonly recognised instructional method used to improve students' reading comprehension through engaging in a peer-tutoring activity. In this method, teachers pair a skilled reader with an unskilled reader and allow them to

supportively engage in different reading activities that are intended to advance reading comprehension. When implementing this strategy, teachers assign each student with a specific role to play, either tutor or tutee, while engaging in pre-structured reading tasks and activities. Students in each group have an opportunity to exchange the roles while working together on the reading activity. By allowing students to exchange roles, both tutor and tutee have an opportunity to practice the same responsibility that their partner will learn and practice the required skills to successfully perform the pre-structured reading activity.

The approaches identified above are good at assisting learners to acquire the skill of reading comprehension. Some learners learn better through working with their peers. Thus, the above approaches offer learners an opportunity to compete with their peers, learn from them and gauge their capabilities. Peer assisted learning strategy improves students' learning by giving students with disabilities access to the general curriculum, pairing students with different abilities, allowing students to engage in several reading activities through peer tutoring, and allowing teachers to please the individual educational needs of all students.

## 2.8.4 Story-mapping

Story mapping is another strategy used to improve learners' reading comprehension and to get clear meaning of the text. The strategy guides learners to have the abilities to effectively identify important words in the text and make connection of significant things in the text and comprehend the text with understanding. Story-mapping is another evidence-based reading strategy that has been broadly used to improve students' reading comprehension. It is a cognitive intervention that needs students to fill a pre-structured template with story grammar components as headings to visualise, organise, and understand textual information from a story (Grünke, Wilbert, Jürgen & Stegemann, 2013). Story mapping activates learners' previous knowledge about the given text, organise important information from the start until the end of the text, review their work and confirm their understanding. Story-mapping is one of the reading strategies that can be used before, during and after reading in the reading process for different purposes. This strategy is effective for facilitating students' comprehension of

a text and can help students to review and confirm their understanding of the text (Boulineau, Fore, Hagan-Burke & Burke, 2004).

## 2.8.5 Self-questioning

Self-questioning is an intervention reading approach that needs students to actively engage in reading process by regularly discontinuing and asking themselves several questions about the text in order to monitor their own comprehension and meaning construction of the text. Asking questions while engaging in the reading process offers students an opportunity to think about what they read and makes learners to be active and independent readers that are also able to appropriately reflect on their reading (Mahdavi & Tensfeldt, 2013).

Self-questioning strategy helps learners to achieve better with reading comprehension and helps them to write questions about the text they read about and later ask themselves questions to assess their understanding of the text. The learners should, in the middle of reading, ask themselves what they are reading about in order to activate their focus and their level of reading comprehension.  Self-questioning is an affective metacognitive reading strategy established to develop reading comprehension in all students with and without learning disabilities across different grade levels.

## 2.8.6 Reading aloud

Read-aloud is an instructional practice where teachers, parents and caregivers read texts aloud to children. The reader incorporates variations in pitch, tone, pace, volume, pauses, eye contact, questions and comments to produce a fluent and enjoyable delivery. When teachers read aloud, they are demonstrating the connection between oral and written language (Wright, 2015).  After the read aloud activity, it is important to assess students' understanding by asking comprehension questions before moving on to the next subject.

This reading strategy enables learners to read aloud many times so that at the end, they understand the meaning of what is in the text. When learners use this strategy, they can find their own mistakes and fix them since they will be reading many times.

The use of pictures will also help because even if learners at first do not get everything written on the text, the pictures will provide them with another meaning of what they are reading about and thus help them understand. According to Maphumulo (2010), the teacher reads a story and shows the pictures to learners. Learners listen and respond to the story. Language patterns are assimilated by learners, learning about the structures of the stories, improving the vocabulary and practicing listening, speaking, comprehending and thinking skills.

## 2.9 The role of theory

This section plays a vital role in the study because it explains the theory that supports the topic of a given investigation. This study used the Schema theory of the philosopher, Frederic Bartlet. The theory plays an important role in education when learners are to read with understanding. Schema was first mentioned by the German philosopher Kant in 1781. Today's schema originates from Gestalt psycholinguist Bartlett who applied schema to psychology research. It is American Artificial Intelligence expert, Rumelhart who finally established schema into a systemic and integrated theory. The educational psychologist Richard Anderson introduced schema theory to the educational community.

The schema theory shows that in terms of reading, learners should combine the prior knowledge and the current knowledge to understand what they read. The theory helps learners to understand what they are reading about, and at the end, helps them to achieve better. The theory interprets that when people comprehend, they need to combine their background knowledge with the information in a text (Fahriany, 2015; Cho et al., 2020). In this process, the prior knowledge and knowledge structure work successfully in people's cognitive activities. All knowledge is packed into units, and these units are schema (Yan, 2020). Since it includes individual experience, it succeeds in attracting students in reading and thus benefits them in raising their interest, increasing their reading speed, and making proper judgments in reading.

The Schema theory is divided into the following:

**Linguistic Schema**

Knowledge of linguistics in the study helps learners to comprehend what they read bit by bit to be successful at the end. It helps learners to use past knowledge in a newly given topic and understand better. Linguistic schema refers to readers' prior linguistic knowledge, including the knowledge about phonetics, grammar and vocabulary as traditionally recognised. Therefore, gathered linguistic information is a necessity for readers to attain when they want to decode meaning of a passage.

**Content schema**

The use of content Schema in learning helps learners to read well, understand what they are reading and be able to give their views about what they read. It helps much to learners who have difficulties in reading because it involves previous knowledge of learners. Content schema is the background knowledge that evaluates the topic it relates to. It involves many things, such as topic understanding, cultural knowledge, conventions and previous skill of the domain. As culture-centred, this type of schema is, among the three, the very one which chooses readers' understanding of a passage, since whatever kind of writing is read must be interpreted under a cultural context. Hence, it is a product of that culture. For students with low language proficiency, content schema is a very significant problem they should deal with.

**Formal schema**

This kind of schema theory helps learners to achieve better in learning because it uses different teaching styles to accommodate all learners. Formal schema is abstract, encoded, code internalised, and has coherent patterns, mixed methods of meta-linguistics. It is discoursed and discussed, and has textual organisation that guide expectations in our attempts to understand an expressive piece of language.

**2.10 Conclusion**

Chapter two presented a review of related literature which started with a definition of reading skills definition, its importance, and the common reading skills problems that students with learning disabilities face while reading. Also, the teaching strategies

applied by teachers when teaching reading comprehension. The literature review discussed different examples of the reading skills strategies in details.

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# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the literature review, which gives strength to the current chapter in that it provides the researcher with more information about what other studies said concerning the challenges of reading comprehension as the focus of this study. This chapter discusses the research methodologies employed in this study to generate, handle and analyse data. The aim of this study was to assess factors affecting reading comprehension of Grade 7 learners in a Sepedi classroom and to examine the effectiveness of the strategies that are used to enhance the learners' reading comprehension. The researcher wanted to develop explanations for learners' struggles of reading with understanding. Thus, the methods discussed herein are relevant to the study's aim and objectives and enabled the researcher to collect and analyse data in depth. The components discussed in this chapter are research design, population and sampling method, data collection method, the significance of the research, ethical consideration, as well as issues of credibility, trustworthy, dependability and confirmability, and conclusion of the chapter. Methodological details will be followed as specified in Korstjens & Moser (2018) and Bertram & Chritiansen (2017).

Research methodology is vital and makes it possible for researcher to determine what structure should be followed or adopted to conduct a particular study and which techniques should be adopted for the purpose of collecting data for the study (Zulu, Ngoepe & Saurombe, 2017). Research methodology is defined as a common process the researcher may apply when undertaking a research project which, to some extent, prescribes the exact tools the researcher desires (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). It is more concerned with why and how events occur, as well as how they influence human behaviour. As a result, the study employed the methodology to investigate factors that hinder learners to acquire reading comprehension skills, also to find ways of assisting learners to overcome those challenges.

## 3.2 Research Design

A research design is defined as the strategies used to understand the phenomenon in its entity (Parahoo, 2014). The research design for this study is qualitative case study. Case study is a situated action that is concerned with understanding how individuals understand their experiences, how they manufacture their worlds, and what meaning they attach to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, qualitative research designs were used in the study to explore and describe reasons for Grade 7 learners' inability to read with understanding. Research design can be regarded as a methodical process which provides direction and procedures on the validation of data. Research design focuses on the end-product and research procedure to achieve the outcomes.

There are three categories of research approaches, namely; qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research design. Quantitative research is a way of gathering data from numerical values whereas qualitative research emphases on facts, perceptions and beliefs. Quantitative research method was originally commenced in the social sciences to support researchers to investigate culture and social occurrence. It is usually utilised to grow knowledge. Quantitative research gathers data in the form of numbers and utilises statistical data analysis (Terre Blanche, Durreheim & Painter, 2006). Qualitative research method intends to investigate and discover issues about the present problem. Qualitative research helps the researcher to interpret social, people and cultural context. Qualitative researchers gather data in the form of spoken or written language and interpret the data by themes (Terre Blanche, Durreheim & Painter, 2006). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), mixed method is concerned with collecting, analysing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a series of studies or single study. They further indicate that mixed method provides an improved understanding of the research problems. Mixed research method utilises the quantitative and qualitative research to collect and analyse data. It also supports the researcher to certify that there is no information gap. Mixed research methods play a vital role in explaining acute terms than when one research method is used (Bulsara, undated). This study used qualitative research design since this study stresses on description of factors hindering reading with understanding of Grade 7 learners.

## 3.3 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is labelled as the type of research design that attempts to understand the phenomenon as a whole, emphases on life experiences and stresses more on the importance of people's interpretations of events and has few defined ideas (Parahoo, 2014). The study adopted a qualitative research approach which played a vital role in revealing the meaning of the experiences of the participants. Data was collected at the site where the participants experienced the challenges under study (Creswell, 2014). The researcher discovered the thoughtful account of Grade 7 learners at the research site. The use of the qualitative research approach permitted the researcher to understand the phenomenon under study and interpret the meaning that the participants gave to it (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative approach further supported the research in understanding how the factors of reading with understanding influenced learners' performance. Therefore, qualitative research approach enabled the researcher in developing useful strategies of reading with understanding. Again, as guided and supported by the theory of change, the qualitative approach was found relevant to the study. The following research design, population, sampling method, and data collection method and analysis were used to support the use of a qualitative research approach.

The researcher used comprehension text for learners to read and later answer questions. This was done to identify the problems that learners faced regarding reading for comprehending. The heading of the comprehension text was "Johnson & Johnson, the vaccine of COVID19". The essays had 9 questions with the total mark of 20. The researcher, at the end, managed to record difficulties that learners faced when reading for understanding. The detailed information that was collected through the qualitative data provided a complete picture of the investigated phenomenon. The next section to be discussed is population and sampling.

## 3.4 Population and Sampling

Population is the target group of individuals that the study aims to study or treat, while sampling is the process of selecting representative sample of individuals from the population interest. In this study the population is the Grade 7 learners and their 2

Sepedi Home Language educators. Sample is the individuals selected from the population (Majid, 2018). The study was conducted at one primary school located at Dilokong Circuit, Sekhukhune East District in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

### 3.4.1 Population

Population discusses the total amount of people, groups or organisations that might be involved within in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2017). On the other hand, Creswell (2014) defines population as a group of people from which a sample for the study will be drawn. Thus, the population for this study involved the Grade 7 learners enrolled for Sepedi Home Language at Dilokong Circuit, Limpopo Province. The population was selected from 18 primary schools, but focused on one primary school since it was deemed to have learners who face challenges when reading for understanding. The selected school comprised of 289 learners and 10 educators, with 2 educators being responsible for teaching Sepedi Home Language. The researcher focused on 6 learners selected from 35 learners in Grade 7.

### 3.4.2 Sampling

Sampling is the procedure of selecting a portion of the population to represent the complete population. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) define sampling as a technical accounting device to rationalise the collection of information, to choose in appropriate way the restricted objects, persons and events from which the actual information will be drawn. Leedy and Ormrod (2015) define sampling as a process of identifying a subset of a population of people, another biological species, or inanimate objects. Data collected from these subsets is used to draw conclusions about the population from which they were drawn. Similarly, Leavy (2017) view sampling as a selection of a number of individual cases from a larger population.

In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to select study participants and respondents. Patton (2015) views purposive sampling as an approach through which information-rich cases are gained to address the research purpose and questions. The sampling strategy that was chosen produced rich information and was reliable with the methodological approach used. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that relies on the researcher's decision when selecting participants for the research study.

Purposive sampling was used in this study to allow the researcher to select participants who were best suitable for answering the research questions. Purposive sampling was used in this study to select participants from Grade 7.

The researcher requested a mark sheet from educators to select learners according to their performance and purposefully chose 2 learners with high, average and low marks. As a result, the sample of this study consisted of 6 learners. This sample of learners was considered most relevant for providing the current researcher with answers regarding the difficulties of reading with understanding. The participation of educators was a good thing to this study since it assisted the researcher in gathering information about the difficulties that learners faced when reading academically. In this study, two educators were purposefully sampled to provide information about the supposed causes of the challenges that learners faced when reading with understanding, as well as how they assist learners' in overcoming such challenges. The involvement of 2 educators in this study produced relevant perceptions about how to improve the learners' reading skills.

## 3.5 Data Collection

Data collection is a process of gathering information about the research topic. This is done in an organised way for in-depth analysis purposes. There are various types of data collection instruments, including questionnaires, interviews and observations. The above data collection techniques are used to gather data in situations where the researcher needs to interact with the participants (Thahn & Thahn, 2015). Therefore, the researcher used semi-structured interviews, and observation and questionnaire for data collection.

### 3.5.1 Semi structured interview

Leedy and Ormrod (2015) refer to semi-structured interviews as types of interviews whereby a researcher directly asks invariable questions but also asks individually modified follow-up questions in order to accumulate clarity regarding specific responses. The interviews were conducted with 6 lecturers to better understand issues related to reading with understanding. Furthermore, Moser and Korstjens (2018)

stress that a semi-structured interview is more flexible in terms of changing the order of questions and for more extensive follow-up questions for participants' responses. This enabled the researcher to ask follow-up questions and probing questions during the interview sessions based on the answers given by the participants.

According to the above explanations, semi-structured interviews is essential for the interviewer to take control of the interview procedures while permitting interviewees to fully explain their perceptions without boundaries. As a result, semi-structured interviews enabled the current researcher to look for answers that detail the success in addressing the reading with understanding challenges of Grade 7 learners. Learners were asked about the difficulties they face when reading for academic purposes, as well as their individual efforts to overcome these difficulties. Learners were also asked to express their concerns about the effectiveness of the collaboration between educators and the Department of Education in helping them improve their academic reading skills. Educators were more likely to participate in the interviews because they have more detailed communications with learner about academic matters. As a result, they were able to offer reasons based on their long-term interactions with learners. Thus, they were interviewed about their perceived causes of learners' reading challenges, other factors that fuel such challenges, and the effectiveness interventions to such challenges.

### 3.5.2 Qualitative questionnaire

This study also used questionnaires to gather data. A questionnaire is a designed and written instrument that has a list of research questions, and is used to get useful primary information from participants in a study (Questionpro.com, 2020). Open-ended questionnaires were used for the researcher to gain needed information from the participants in which 9 open-ended questions were provided to learners for them to provide the required information.

### 3.5.3 Non- participant observation

Bushiso (2017) suggests that observation is an important data collection technique since it gives straight evidence because often people do not always do what they say

they do. Accordingly, the researcher organised an observation checklist to observe the reading instruction and how teachers emphasised reading skills in Sepedi lesson; how teachers motivated learners to be engaged in reading activities; how teachers provided suitable level passages to learners to read and then asked obvious complete questions about the content of the passage; and how teachers provide a variety of tasks to learners to determine awareness of rhyme, alliteration and phoneme awareness. Therefore, classroom observation in this study helped to identify the daily existences in the classroom and the communication between the teachers and the learners during Sepedi reading lessons. The observation also helped to paint a rich picture of social phenomena such as the behaviour of learners in a classroom.

## 3.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a systematic process of coding, categorising and interpreting data in order to provide explanation of a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Burns and Grove (2014) define data analysis as the techniques used to reduce, organise and give meaning to data. After data has been collected in this study, it was arranged for analysis by summarising it into statistical measures. The process of data analysis was accomplished by using the thematic method of analysing data. The thematic analysis offers a useful and valued research tool that could deliver a detailed and accurate, but dynamic data account (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). In order to improve the analytics of the data and the decisions reached in the data, the data were also analysed as reports of affairs and as facts. Thematic analysis was performed through the process of coding in six phases to create established, meaningful patterns. These phases are: familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the final report (DeCarlo, 2018). In thematic analysis, similar responses are recognised and categorised into themes. However, before categorising responses into themes, responses from the participants are first presented the way they are for the researcher to identify similar responses. The data were gathered from semi-structured interview, observation and the questionnaire were analysed as follows:

### 3.6.1 Six phases of thematic analysis procedure

#### 3.6.1.1 Familiarisation

In becoming familiar with the data, the researcher took time to read the transcribed data that was gathered through the semi structured interviews, the observations and the questionnaire. Reading through the data, the researcher made original notes to familiarise with the data. Significantly, the researcher made notes while at the same time checking the objectives of the study because Braun and Clarke (2008) caution the users of the model against the disagreements and the wrongness that could leak between the audio recordings and the transcriptions. In this study, the researcher ensured that the transcriptions are accurate.

#### 3.6.1.2 Coding

After a thorough reading of the data, the researcher formulated some codes. Coding refers to identifying all the relevant pieces of data within the entire data set to answer the research question (Shandu, 2017). In addition, to be thorough, the researcher ensured that the various phases and sentences correspond to different codes.

#### 3.6.1.3 Generating themes

During this phase, the researcher recognised several codes and combined some of them into various themes. The codes which were too unclear or those that were not relevant were revised.

#### 3.6.1.4 Reviewing themes

During this phase, the researcher reviewed the themes by reducing and merging comparable themes. Most importantly, the researcher made sure that the themes that were created represented the data.

### 3.6.1.5 Defining and naming themes

In the next phase, the researcher refined, reduced and named the themes. The initial themes that did not articulate the research objectives were revised, because Braun and Clarke (2008) maintain that each theme tells a story, and it is essential to consider how it fits into the complete story that one is telling.

### 3.6.1.6 Writing up

According to Braun and Clarke (2008), producing the report is the final stage of the analysis. At this stage, the researcher writes up the story as told by the data through the themes in relation to the research questions. They further suggest that the task at this stage is to tell a story in a way that influences the reader of the merit of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2008). Data collected through the questionnaire as contained in the students' responses to the questions about their language needs was analysed thematically. The learners' and the educators' responses were used to analyse language needs. In summation, data collected through interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically.

## 3.7 Quality Research Criteria

This study employed credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability in line with qualitative research. Korstjens and Moser (2018) agree that quality criteria for all qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Each of these stances are discussed below.

## 3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the amount of confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). To establish credibility, firstly, the researcher recorded and analysed all the data gathered and presented it in a fair and balanced manner. The researcher also asked for feedback from participants on the data and its understanding. Secondly, the researcher collected data in different situations to ensure that the picture provided in the research is as full and complete

as it can be. Lastly, the researcher collected data over a long period of time to ensure that the participants become used to the researcher and therefore behave naturally.

### 3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability explains the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). In line with transferability, the researcher disclosed the context of the study and provided a complete description of the study to the participants so that readers can determine to what extent the findings might be applicable to other contexts.

### 3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Dependability is comparable to consistency and reliability in quantitative research. To achieve dependability, firstly, the researcher asked the participants to analyse the patterns in the data. Secondly, the researcher used multiple sources of data to explore the issues from all possible views.

### 3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of research during data collection and data analysis (Mandal, 2018). To ensure confirmability, the researcher disclosed the details of the data on which claims or interpretations are based. The researcher will make the findings accessible for other researchers to examine the data and approve, modify or reject the researcher's interpretations.

### 3.8 Ethical Consideration

This research was subjected to a number of learners at school where it was carried out. As a result, the researcher obtained a clearance certificate from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee at the University of Limpopo. The certificate was a declaration that this study could be conducted on humans.

### 3.8.1. Permission

Permission was requested from the Sekhukhune East District through Dilokong Circuit. A request for permission was also made to the selected primary school's principal. In addition, respondents were asked for permission to participate in this study. As a result, prior to agreeing to participate in the study, all respondents were fully informed about it.

### 3.8.2. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Participants were guaranteed that no personal information about them would be used in this study. When it was required to cite the respondents' assertions, the researcher used assumed names. As a result, their identities are kept private, and their safety is ensured.

### 3.8.3. Protection from harm

The participants were certain that there were no risks connected with their participation in this study. As a result, there was no harm done to the respondents or any occurrence of events that put their safety in risk. Participants were also assured that there would be no harm, punishment or execution if they withdraw from the study.

### 3.8.4. Informed consent form and voluntary participation

Consent means to give approval, to agree in participating in a study or procedure. Informed consent must be free, voluntary, clear, universal and comprehensive. Thus, during the study, the participants must be free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. To obtain informed consent, the researcher explained the study aims and objectives. The researcher indicated that participants are not forced to participate and they can withdraw from the study at any time.

## 3.9 Conclusion

Chapter three presented the research methodologies that were adopted in this study. Qualitative methodology was adopted, and involved the use of interviews, observation and questionnaires as the most appropriate data collection methods. This methodology and the subsequent techniques helped the researcher to achieve different purposes that were based on the objectives of the study. The reason for adopting qualitative research approaches was to cover both the study populations and to address different objective of the investigation. The chapter also covered research design, data collection methods, sampling and data analysis methods. To arrive at a sample frame, purposive sampling was used to select a sample from the population. The interviews were recorded on a cell phone. The researcher transcribed interviews for analysis. Chapter four will present the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the procedures described in this chapter.

# CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

## 4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the discussion of the methodology that was applied in this study and its following designs, techniques of data collection and analysis. The significance of the previous chapter to the current one is that it laid a foundation for the success of the current researcher to collect, handle, present, analyse and interpret data. Hence, the current chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and interpretation. As stated in chapter 3, data for this study was acquired from semi-structured interviews with teachers, observations of teachers' instruction in the classroom and document analysis of Grade 7 learners' written comprehension test. The researcher managed to get consent from parents of learners and the teachers. In this chapter, each data set is separately presented to familiarise the reader with the findings of this investigation.

## 4.2. Table of teachers and learners profiles

Table 4.1: Profiles of teachers

| Teacher | Qualifications | Teaching experience | Age | Gender |
|---------|---------------|---------------------|-----|--------|
| Teacher A. | BEDHONS | 10 years | 38 | Female |
| Teacher B. | BEDSPF | 7years | 35 | Male |

The research was conducted in one primary school and involved two teachers. The table shows the profiles of sampled teacher participants. They differ in terms of their age, qualifications and gender. They were all qualified, even though their qualifications were not the same, and they were based in a rural school. Their teaching experiences were not the same. The researcher also observed teachers in class when they were teaching comprehension passages in order to assess their methods and techniques of teaching comprehension passages to guide learners on the reading comprehension. The non-participant observation was supported by an observation schedule attached as Appendix G.

Table 4.2: Profiles of learners

| Learner | Age | Gender |
|---------|-----|--------|
| Learner A | 14 | Female |
| Learner B | 14 | Male |
| Learner C | 13 | Female |
| Learner D | 13 | Male |
| Learner E | 13 | Female |
| Learner F | 13 | Male |

Six learners out of the population of 34 were purposively sampled for participation. There were three male and three female learners. Their ages were ranging between 13 and 14 years old. All learners sampled were subjected to observation, and their written comprehension tests were marked for the researcher to identify their challenges with reading comprehension. The observation schedule was used to observe the teachers' and learners' engagement with the comprehension test.

## 4.3 Data presentation and analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a systematic process of coding, categorising and interpreting data in order to provide explanation of a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Similarly, Burns and Grove (2014) define data analysis as the techniques used to reduce, organise and give meaning to data. After data has been collected, it was arranged for analysis by summarising it in line with thematic data analysis method.

## 4.3.1 Presentation and analysis of teachers' interview responses

Teachers were interviewed using the semi-structured interviews that allowed the researcher to probe more into their responses in order to get more empirical data. Interview questions were intentionally designed to produce information that would reveal the teachers' knowledge of teaching strategies for teaching reading

comprehension. Two Grade 7 Sepedi Home Language teachers were interviewed and their responses are presented near their coded pseudonyms, i.e., the first teacher is labelled as T1, and the second as T2. Six questions were prepared for the interview and they were responded to as follows:

**Question 1**

**English version**: Do your learners enjoy learning reading Sepedi language in the classroom?

**Sepedi version**: *Naa barutwana ba lena ba thabela go bala Leleme la Sepedi ka nako ya kabothuto?*

**Karabo ye e letetšwego**: *Barutabana ba lebeletšwe gore ba hlaloše maemo a maikutlo a barutwana ge ba le phapošeng ba rutwa le go ithuta ka ga mabokgoni a go bala thutong ya leleme la Sepedi.*

**Sepedi responses for question 1**

T1: *"Nna ke bona barutwana ba rena ba se na lerato leo le tseneletšego ge go etla go thuto ya Sepedi Leleme la Gae. Se sengwe gape ke gore ge ba bala mopeleto wa bona ga se wa maleba maleba, ke tlhobaboroko ka ge ba palelwa ke go bala mantšu ka tsela ya maleba".*

T2: *"Barutwana ba rena ba bontšha ba rata maleme a mangwe go feta leleme la Sepedi. Nna ke bona barutwana ba laetša go rata leleme la bobedi la tlaleletšo. Ka nako ya go ruta Sepedi, barutwana ba a raloka ntle le go ela šedi go thutwana ya bona, nakong ya go bala ba hlaboša mantšu ka mokgwa wo ekego ba bala leleme la Seisemane".*

**Translated responses for question 1**

T1: Learners do not have much love for Sepedi language. Another issue is that learners spell out Sepedi words in a wrong way, even when they are writing, they write with wrong spelling.

T2: Our learners seem to like other languages more than their own. I think they like the second language more than theirs. During the Sepedi lessons, they just play and

they do not seem to be serious about their lessons. When they read they pronounce words as if they read English words.

The researcher wanted to find out if learners like learning Sepedi language since their performance is low in the language. T1 and T2 show that leaners do not enjoy learning Sepedi language, and they spell words wrongly when writing. In their oral presentations, they always mix Sepedi with English. Both teachers agree that learners do not enjoy Sepedi and they do not give the language the respect it deserves. They use wrong spelling and use other languages when they write. On the issue of wrong spelling, Carvalhais et al., (2020) in their study about Portuguese students, found that orthographically related variables such as; stress, mark errors and orthographic misspellings were the most common errors in learners of Grades 4, 6 and 7. This is evident with Grade 7 Sepedi learners of this case as their teachers explained that they do not pronounce or write words correctly.

**Question 2**

**English version:** Do you have enough time to teach reading skills? Explain.

**Sepedi version:** *Na, le na le nako yeo e lekanego ya go ruta mabokgoni a go bala? Hlalosa.*

***Karabo ye e letet*š*wego:** Barutabana ba swanetše go fa tlhalošo ka ga nako yeo e abetšwego mabokgoni a go bala phapošeng, le gona gore e ka ba e lekane go ruta bana mabokgoni ao na. Ba tla hlaloša le ditlhohlo tše di tlago le kabo yeo ya nako.*

**Sepedi responses for question 2**

T1: *"Ga ke na nako ye e lekanego ya go ruta thuto ya Sepedi go ya le ka matlakala a gona. Nako ye ntši ke šoma le barutwana ka mabokgoni a go ngwala go nako ye e abilwego. Nako ya gona ga e lekane, le gona ka nako ye ntši motho o šitwa go šoma kgahlanong le molao wo o beilwego. Re no šoma ka dipelo tša bohloko ka gore ge mošomo o nyakega go ba bagolo o ka se re ke be ke dira seo se lego kgahlano lenaneo leo le beilwego. Go balela kwešišo gona ke tlhobaboroko ka nnete".*

T2: *"Nako yeo re rutago leleme la gae ke ye e fokolago kudu. Ga go na nako ye e kgotsofatšago ya go ruta barutwana go bala, kudu go balela kwešišo. O tsebe gore*

*seo se nyaka mošomo wa bomolomo gore ba bale ba tle ba botšišwe dipotšišo ka o tee ka o tee, goba re ba ngwadiše mohlwaela wa ditekatlhaologanyo di swaiwe ka tsitsinkelo, e tla tšwa kae yona nako yeo? Nna bjalo ka morutiši ke swanetše go netefatša gore ka gare ga nako yeo ke e filwego, ke ruta barutwana mabokgoni ka moka gomme seo se dira gore nako ya go bala e be ye nnyane kudu".*

**Translated responses for question 2**

T1: I have limited time allocated to teach learners Sepedi in terms of all the skills and other aspects of the language. There is no enough time to teach reading comprehension. Most of the time, I engage with learners on the writing skills. Time allocated is different for all the language skills to be taught. It is not easy to work outside the given time because you will encounter problems when you have to submit your progress report to the office and they discover that you did not do your work according to the plan. We are working under stressful situations because rules and plans need to be adhered to. Reading comprehension is the worst for learners to achieve.

T2: Time allocated to teach reading skills is not enough, there is no time allocated special for reading, I made a plan during writing time and gave learners little time to read and this makes it impossible for learners to do better when reading. Remember, reading comprehension needs a lot of activities like, reading aloud one by one and that accompanied by questions to test learners' understanding, or through several reading comprehension passages that they should read silently and answer the questions in writing. It is my responsibility as a teacher to make sure that I teach all the language skills within the time allocated.

The researcher asked this question to understand if the real problem for learners to perform below is time allocated to teach the reading skills. Both teachers agreed that they have limited time allocated to teach learners reading skills. This is confirmed by Sousa (2021:288) when stating that "Time management is a major problem in any teaching and learning process because teachers are often dissatisfied with the time allocated for them to teach". What emerged from the interviews was that there is no enough time allocated for reading, and teachers reduce the time allocated for teaching other skills to make more time for teaching reading. Having less time to read has a negative impact on learners' performance. Sufficient time is needed for students to

familiarise themselves with the reading materials. In fact, teachers often need more time to carry out learning because some activities are not completed due to time constrains. It is therefore important for all stakeholders to look into the matter and fix the issue of time so that teachers and learners can achieve their goals.

**Question 3**

**English version:** Do learners perform well when given formal tasks concerning reading comprehension?

**Sepedi version:** *Barutwana ge ba fiwa mešongwana ya kelo ya semmušo ba šoma gabotse naa?*

***Karabo ye e letetšwego:*** *Barutabana ba swanetše go fa lesedi la dipoelo tša melekwana fao barutwana ba ngwalago tekatlhaologanyo e le ge ba lekolwa kwešišo. Nakong ya molekwana goba tlhahlobo, barutwana ba bala ka setu gomme ba araba dipotšišo go hlohla kwešišo ya bona.*

**Sepedi responses for question 3**

T1: *"Nna ke bona bana ba sa šome gabotse ka moka ka gore ke kopana le bothata bja gore barutwana ba araba dipotšišo ntle le go kwešiša seo ba balago ka ga sona. Dikarabo tša bona di fapana kudu le seo tekatlhaologanyo e bolelago ka sona. Ba bantši ba ngwala ditabana tša go ya kua tšeo o ka se tsebego gore di amana bjang le tekatlhaologanyo. Ge motho wa gona a ka no topa lentšwana le letee, o bolela ka lona nako ye ntši ge a araba dipotšišo".*

T2: *"Thutwana ya Sepedi e bonwa bjalo ka thutwana ya boleta go barutwana. Barutwana ga ba itokišetše go ngwala dikelo tša gona. Ke kopana le bothata bja gore ge ba ngwala ba šomiša polelo ya Seisimane gomme ba hwetša meputso ya fase ka ge e se polelo ya maleba".*

**Translated responses for question 3**

T1: Most of them are not doing well when writing reading comprehension tasks. During formal tasks they answer questions without reading clearly and understanding what the question is all about since they would have failed to comprehend the text. Their answers are mostly out of context. To some, just getting one word they understand, that word will appear in most of the answers without considering the meaning.

T2: Some learners do not prepare themselves for Sepedi assessments because they regard the language as simple and because it is their mother tongue. During reading, they do not mind mixing their Home Language with English, and they get penalised for that. Other learners have a tendency of copying the questions because they struggle to go farther than few words in their reading and end up not getting any sense out of the text.

The researcher wanted to find out from educators if learners are doing better even if they lack reading skills. T1 shows that learners do not understand when reading texts, they write wrong things and this makes them affects their performance. This shows that indeed learners need continuous exercises on reading both at home and in the school. T2 says that learners do not prepare themselves before writing and this explains that learners do not prepare themselves before writing. The challenge may be fixed by ensuring that learners are given enough time to read in school before writing, and that they must be monitored.

**Question 4**

**English version:** Is there anything that you as a teacher do to support and improve the learners' reading comprehension skills?

**Sepedi version***: Na go na le seo o se dirago bjalo ka morutiši go thuša barutwana go efoga ditšhitišo tša go balela kwešišo?*

***Karabo ye e letetšwego:*** *Go potšišo ye go lebeletšwe gore barutabana ba hlaloše ka ga mekgwa yeo ba e šomišago go thuša barutwana bao ba šitwago go bala gore ba be le bokgoni bja go fihlelela mabokgoni a go balela kwešišo.*

**Sepedi responses for question 4**

T1: *"Ke lokiša mathata a barutwana ka go beakanyetša ba go swarela kgole thutwana ye nngwe yeo go yona ke boeletšago thutwana ya go feta ebile ke maatlafatša le mekgwaruta ya ka ka go oketša ka ye mengwe yeo ke sego ka e šomiša nakong ya thutwana ya mathomo gore ba kwešiše bokaone".*

T2: *"Ke fa barutwana sebaka se se okeditšwego gomme ka maatlafatša thutwana ya gona ka go šomiša dithušathuto. Ke bontšha barutwana diswantšho mabapi le se ba balago ka ga sona gore ba kwešiše gore tekatlhaologanyo e bolela ka ga eng".*

**Translated responses for question 4**

T1: I give my learners extra reading lessons and improve on my teaching strategies by adding some strategies I did not employ in the first lesson to accommodate them.

T2: I organise extra lessons for the learners that are struggling and add more strategies and support my teaching with the use of teaching aids. I show them pictures of what they are reading about to make them relate and understand what the comprehension passage is all about.

The researcher wanted to know if educators have intervention strategies to deal with the challenges that they come across when teaching reading comprehension skills. Both educators highlighted what they are doing to help learners. T1 and T2 concurred that extra classes are organised to assist learners. They also shared the same views on empowering their teaching strategies. T2 added by saying that teaching aids in a form of pictures are used to enhance the learners' interest on reading comprehension skills and to help learners relate with the content.

The use of teaching aids is confirmed by Joseph (2015), saying that teachers use teaching aids to enhance classroom instruction, extract learners' attention and create motivation to learn. The following are devices that also assist learners to understand their lessons; computer, DVD, instructional aids like books, chalk boards, pictures, or objects (specimen, map, globe) that help the teacher to effortlessly carry out the teaching-learning process. Similarly, Amin et al., (2018) say that using multimedia projector for visuals draw more attention among the students in reading. Moreover, visual aids are known to create real relations between the readers and the text, and make the reading process quicker and lively (Yunus, Salehi & John, 2013). Grouping learners who struggle with reading and those who read well can help them to scaffold each other because learners sometimes do better when they learn from their peers than educators.

**Question 5**

**English version:** What reading strategies do you use when teaching reading comprehension skills?

**Sepedi version:** Ke mekgwaruta efe yeo o e šomišago go ruta barutwana mabokgoni a go balela kwešišo?

**Sepedi responses for question 5**

T1: *"Ke šomiša mokgwa wa gore barutwana ba bale kudu ka seo ba balago ka ga sona ka go šomisa ditsela tše di fapanego go bona katlego ya gona. Tsela ya mathomo ke go fa barutwana sengwalwa ba bale, gwa latela go ngwala ditlhalošo tša mantšu ao ba badilego ka ga ona a boimanyana, la mafelelo ke go ba laela gore ba balele godimo. Tše ke ditsela tšeo ke di šomišago go lekola tsebo le bokgoni bja barutwana".*

T2: *Ke botšiša barutwana dipotšišo ka seo ba tla bego ba badile ka ga sona, gomme seo se bitšwa mokgwa wa kamano wa potšišo le karabo. Morago ga gore barutwana ba bale, ke ba laela go bolela seo tekatlhaologanyo e bego e le mabapi le sona. Ke šomiša mokgwa woo go lekola kwešišo ya barutwana ya go bala le kwešišo ya bona.*

**Translated responses for question 5**

T1: Read aloud is a strategy I often use in teaching reading skills for comprehension. I apply several steps when teaching reading comprehension. The first is to give students a reading text, then ask them to read it. Thereafter, I ask students to rewrite the meaning of the text they have read focusing on complex concepts in the text. Finally, I ask students to read their answers aloud. These are the steps that I always apply when teaching reading comprehension and the strategies have been proven to be effective in improving some learners' comprehension.

T2: I usually ask learners questions about the text or materials discussed, also known as a question-answer relationship strategy. After the students read the text, I ask them to retell it. I choose this strategy in post-reading activities because it helps to determine the learners' understanding of the text.

The response of T1 shows that she implemented think-aloud strategy in learning reading comprehension. She used several steps when implementing the think-aloud strategy. First, she gave the reading text to the learners and then asked them to read it aloud. Second, she asked learners to rewrite the meaning of the text they had read. Lastly, learners were to read their responses aloud, and the teacher confirmed that the steps applied when learning reading comprehension have proven effective in developing some learners' understanding. Dwiningtyas et al., (2020) supports the teacher's method by saying that the strategies for teaching reading could be brainstorming, reading aloud and asking for specific information. T2 also shows that

he uses post-reading activities to determine the learners' understanding of the reading texts. Both T1 and T2 used similar strategies to determine how well learners understood the comprehension passage. Asking learners questions about what they read made their learning effective in reading comprehension skills since it motivated learners to participate actively in class in order to answer questions.

**Question 6**

**English version:** Do your learners have enough books to read and improve their reading comprehension?

**Sepedi version**: Na, *barutwana ba na le dipuku tše di lekanego go ba ruta go bala ka kwe*šišo*?*

***Karabo ye e letetšwego:*** *Barutabana ba swanetše go fa tlhalošo ya go ba gona goba go se be gona ga dipuku tša go bala sekolong go leka go kgontšha barutwana go ba le dibaka tše di oketšegilego tša go bala mohlwaela wa dipuku gore ba hlabollwe go mabokgoni a go bala ka kwešišo.*

**Sepedi responses for question 6**

T1: *Mmušo ga o fe dikolo dipuku tšeo dilekanetšego go thuša gore barutwana ba ithute go bala. Barutwana ba hlakanela dipuku, fao o hwetšago ba bangwe ba eya gae kantle le dipuku, gomme seo se fa barutwana nako e nnyane ya go ithuta go bala.*

T2: *Dikolo ga di na dipuku tše di lekanego gore re ka di fa bana gore ge ba le gae ba di bale go oketša tlotlontšu ya bon. Ka nako ye nngwe re ba kopollela ka metšhene ya sekolo gore ba bale gae eupša ka nako ye nt*ši *re swenywa ke taba ya kgaotšo ya mohlagase.*

**Translated responses for question 6**

T1: The government does not provide learners with enough books to enhance their reading skills. Learners share books, while others go home without text books, and this limits their opportunity of reading.

T2: Schools do not have enough books to make learners read, sometimes we make copies for them to read but we usually face the challenges of load shedding and we end up reading aloud to them to just listen and answer questions aloud without seeing what we read about or even the pictures on the texts.

The researcher wanted to find out if learners have enough books since they are not doing well with reading comprehension. This information was necessary to help the researcher to know if lack of books is one of the factors that hinder reading comprehension skills. Both teachers agreed that lack of books in the school affect learners' reading skills since most of them go home without books to read at home. Thus, reading opportunities are limited for them. T2 also indicated that they make copies for learners but face a challenges of load shedding. They used to ask for books from other schools and asked parents to buy their children books for learners to have enough books and to enhance their reading comprehension skills, but still they do not succeed.

### 4.3.2 Presentation and analysis of classroom observations

The researcher observed teachers guiding learners on what to do when answering comprehension text. The following were observed:

**Teaching methods employed by teachers in class**

Both teachers started their lessons with baseline assessment, being the stage of asking learners what they know about comprehension texts. Learners gave their different thoughts and later, the teachers explained what comprehension passage is.

T1 gave learners comprehension text to read. Learners were taken through on the reading skills such as skimming and scanning the text. T1 told learners to read the text slowly in order to get the content meaning of the comprehension passage. Learners were told that after reading the text, they must read the questions and give responses.

After the baseline assessment, T2 gave a comprehension text to learners to skim and scan. Learners were advised to go through the questions first before reading the text. They were given five minutes to read the questions before engaging deeply with the text. There were pictures on the text that enticed learners when reading. Learners were advised to read the text more than once before they could conclude with their responses. The first reading assisted learners to answer the low order questions, then they read repeatedly to understand more in order to work on the medium and high order questions.

**The content of comprehension passage**

The researcher observed that the language used in comprehension text was simple and at the level of learners. Figurative language was minimal with some idioms and simple proverbs. The text was well structured with long and short sentences, and short paragraphs at the level of Grade 7 learners. The length of the text was one page and a half, not too long or too short.

**The questions of the comprehension passage**

The researcher observed that the questions from the comprehension passages of the two teachers were fair to learners. The teachers followed Barrett's taxonomy to set questions, meaning that they were mixed as low, medium and high order questions being the three levels of learners' understanding. The questions accommodated all learners in class. They were well framed and understandable, not vague.

**Learners' participation in class**

The researcher observed that learners were actively participating and enjoying the lesson. They listened attentively and engaged well with the teacher. The problem was that most of them took time to answer the questions–showing that they were struggling to understand the text.

**Comprehension test feedback**

The researcher observed that after writing the comprehension text, learners and the teacher answered the questions together. The teacher instructed learners to ask questions where they did not understand and their questions were answered. Later, the teacher also asked learners questions. Going through learners' written work, it was clear that they struggled with reading comprehension. Most of them did not perform as expected because they seemed excited at the beginning of the lesson.

### 4.3.3 Analysis of learners' written comprehension passage

The topic of the comprehension passage was "Johnson & Johnson the vaccine for COVID-19", and it is attached as Appendix H in the appendices.
Leaners' responses are presented in tabular forms for different questions.

**Question 1**

**English version:** What is the name of the vaccine that the comprehension text is talking about?

**Sepedi version:** *Ke mokento ofe wo go bolelwago ka wona mo?*

*Karabo ye e letetšwego:* Johnson & Johnson

Table 4.3: Learners' responses for question 1

| Learners | Responses |
|----------|-----------|
| Learner 1 | Kalafi ya COVID-19 e bolokegile |
| Learner 2 | Kalafi ke ya batho bao ba lego kotsing |
| Learner 3 | Johnson & Johnson |
| Learner 4 | Corona virus 19 |
| Learner 5 | Ya Covid-19 |
| Learner 6 | Ke kalafi ya Covid-19 e lego Johnson & Johnson |

Learner 1, 2, 4 and 5 demonstrated lack of understanding. Their answers show very well that they answered without understanding the question and gave wrong answers. Learner 3 and 6 gave the correct answers, which shows that only 2 learners gave the correct answers as they appear on the text. It is important for learners to skim and scan the comprehension text well. This shows that learners lack the skill of reading comprehension because this kind of a question falls under the low order questions.

**Question 2**

**English version:** At what age do they start to inject people with vaccine?

**Sepedi version:** *Kalafi e thoma ka batho ba mengwaga ye kae?*

*Karabo ye e letetšwego: Batho ba mengwaga ye 55 le go feta.*

Table 4.4: Learners' responses for question 2

| Learners | Responses |
|----------|-----------|
| Learner 1 | Kalafo ke bao balego kotsing ya twatši ya COVID-I9 |
| Learner 2 | Kalafi e thoma ka go fiwa batho |
| Learner 3 | Ba mengwaga e 55 |
| Learner 4 | Ba go ba godimo ga mengwaga e 55 |
| Learner 5 | 55 |
| Learner 6 | Ba mengwaga e 55 le go feta |

Learner 1, says "vaccine are those in danger", which is the incorrect answer because the question needs age only. This shows that learners did not read the comprehension with understanding, and at the end wrote wrong answers. Learner 2 responded by saying the vaccine started with people instead of stating the age. Learner 3, 4, 5 and 6 gave the correct answers, and this shows that they understood the question. This shows that some learners lacked reading comprehension skills since they failed to get the question right, even though the answer appears on the comprehension text.

**Question 3**

**English version:** How do people get the vaccine?

**Sepedi version:** Kalafi e fiwa batho ka tsela efe?

***Karabo ye e letetšwego:*** *Kalafi e fiwa ka mokgwa wa moento.*

Table 4.5: Learners' responses for question 3

| Learners | Responses |
|----------|-----------|
| Learner 1 | Kalafi ya COVID-19 e fiwa bjalo ka Ente godima |

| Learner 2 | Mengwaga e 55 le go feta le bao ba ba bjago kudu |
|-----------|-----------|
| Learner 3 | Ka go hlabela letsogong |
| Learner 4 | Ba Enta godimo ga letsogo la batho |
| Learner 5 | Ya go enta letsogong |
| Learner 6 | E fiwa bjalo ka Ente godimo ga letsogo la gago |

Learner 1 shows that people get the vaccine of COVID-19 by using needles but does not explain where, and the answer does not respond sufficiently to the question. This shows that the learner answered the question without understanding. Learner 2 answered by saying the vaccine is given to 55 years old people–of which is out according to the question. This response shows that learners lacked understanding of comprehension text and answered wrong things. Learner 3, 4, 5 and 6 show the understanding of the question and that assisted them to give the correct attempts for the low order question.

**Question 4**

**English version:** Write the word COVID -19 in full

**Sepedi version:** *Ngwala lereo le la COVID-19 ka botlalo?*

***Karabo ye e letetšwego:*** Corona Virus Disease 2019.

Table 4.6: Learners' responses for question 4

| **Learners** | **Responses** |
|-----------|-----------|
| Learner 1 | E thuša kudu ka go šireletša kgahlanong |
| Learner 2 | Kalafi ya COVID-19 e fiwa bjalo ka Ente godimo ga letsogo |
| Learner 3 | COVID-19 ke Corona |
| Learner 4 | Corona Virus Disease 2019 |
| Learner 5 | Corona Virus Disease 2019 |
| Learner 6 | Corona Virus Disease from 2019 |

Learner 1 said that the word Covid-19 means people get help. The learner did not know or perhaps understand what it means to write abbreviations and acronyms in full. Learner 2 wrote that COVID-19 in full is 'the vaccine of COVID-19'. Both Learner 1 and 2 showed lack of reading with understanding. Learner 3, 4, 5 and 6 have shown understanding of the question. Only four learners got the answer correct, although the researcher was hoping that all learners would get the question correct because it is a low order question.

**Question 5**

**English version:** Suppose you are minister of Education, what decision would you take regarding education that involves COVID-19?

**Sepedi version:** *Naa ge o be o le molaodi wa lekgotla la thuto o be o tla tšea sephetho sefe ka ga dithutotlhahlo tša mabapi le twatši ya COVID-19?*

***Karabo yeo e letetšwego:*** *Barutwana ba tla fa dikgopolo tša bona mabapi le maemo a Covid-19 gore ba ka tšea sephetho sefe mabapi le dithutotlhahlo ka ga kalafi ya bjona bolwetši bjo.*

Table 4.7: Learners' responses for question 5

| Learners | Responses |
|----------|-----------|
| Learner 1 | Bao ba hwetšago thušo ka kalafi. |
| Learner 2 | Bao ba ithwelego ba botše ba ditirelo tša maphelo ka malwetši a bona. |
| Learner 3 | Ke be nka tšea sephetho sa go hlaba Vaccine. |
| Learner 4 | Batho ba swanetše go nwa diphilisi le dihlare. |
| Learner 5 | Ebe nka dira diphilisi, dihlare, le yona tšhwana ye go fokotša bolwetši bjo. |
| Learner 6 | Bana ba be ba dula ka gae. |

Learner 1 responded by saying "Those getting help by vaccine". This showed that learners are mixing the Sepedi language with English language, hence the answer is way out of context. Learner 2 give an answer and talked about pregnant people, of which the comprehension text is not about. Learners 3 said that vaccine is where they are using another language, and the answer was incorrect. Learner 4 and 5 wrote that "To make their own vaccine for the disease protection", even if these are learners' responses are related to the text, they are not the answers that were expected on the question asked. Learner 6 explains that "Learners must stay home" and it is one of the answers expected from all of them. In this stage, questions started to require high level and critical thinking, however, learners seemed to struggle to respond to the question correctly. Even though the researcher indicated that they were supposed to give their own view, the learners failed to give relevant views in line with the text and the question asked–suggesting that the y did not understand both the text and the question.

**Question 6**

**English version:** Name two things' people must continue taking even if they got vaccine.

**Sepedi version:** *E fa dilo tše pedi tšeo batho ba swanetšego go tšwela pele go di dira le ge ba hweditše kalafi.*

**Karabo ye e letetšwego:** *Go hlapi diatla, go sanithaisa, go apara sešianko-le-molomo, le go se batamelane.*

Table 4.8: Learners' responses for question 6

| Learners | Responses |
|---|---|
| Learner 1 | Kalafi e šireletša go COVID-19 eupša o ka e hwetša le go fetetša batho |
| Learner 2 | Mehuta e mentši ya kalafi e hlahlobile eupša morago ya dumelelwa. |
| Learner 3 | Ba swanetše go apara sepipa nko le molomo le go hlapa matsogo. |

| Learner 4 | Batho ba swanetše go apara sepipa nko le molomo, ba swanetše go hlapa matsogo kgafetšakgafetša. |
| Learner 5 | Go apara sešira nko le molomo. |
| Learner 6 | Ba swanetše go bolela ka malwetši a bona ba ngwale mengwaga ya bona fase. |

Learner 1 said that if you have vaccinated, you cannot pass the virus to others, and this answer is incorrect, and irrelevant to the comprehension text. The learner just answered without understanding what the question was all about. Learner 2 said that many vaccines are tested and they agreed on them. This learner just copied words from the text and rewrote them as a response. Learners 3, 4 and 5 managed to get the answer correct, and this shows that they understood the text and the question. Learner 6 said that people should talk about their infections. This answer was not correct, and also showed that the learner could not comprehend the text.

**Question 7**

**English version:** In two lines, explain what people must do before taking the vaccine.

**Sepedi version:** *Ka methaladi e mebedi, hlaloša gore ke eng seo batho ba swanetšego ke go se dira pele ba hwetša kalafi.*

***Karabo ye e letetšwego:*** Batho ba swanetš*e go utollela baoki ka ga malwetši ao ba phelago le ona pele ba ka hlaba moento wa go thibela COVID-19.*

Table 4.9: Learners' responses for question 7

| **Learners** | **Responses** |
| --- | --- |
| Learner 1 | Batho ba swanela ke go botša maphelo ka maletši ao banago le ona. |
| Learner 2 | Kalafi e šireletša go twatši ya COVID-19 eupša o ka e hwetša. |
| Learner 3 | Ba swanetše go ngwadiša gore batho batlo hlaba kalafi. |
| Learner 4 | Ba swanetše go latela melao ya go thibela COVID-19. |

| Learner 5 | Ba botse ba tša maphelo ka malwetši a bona. |
| Learner 6 | Ba swanetše go bolela ka malwetši a bona ba ngwale mengwaga ya bona fase. |

Learners 1, 5 and 6 showed understanding of the question and gave correct answers saying people must inform health workers first about their existing diseases. The three learners show a good understanding of the text. Learner 2, 3 and 4 could not answer correctly showing that they lacked reading comprehension. This shows that learners struggle with reading comprehension skills. It clearly shows that some of the learners cannot read, and in a situation where they read they cannot comprehend and that result in them writing what is not asked to respond to questions. It clearly shows that intervention is needed to provide them with necessary skills to improve their reading.

**Question 8**

**English version:** In four lines, explain what people must do if they feel pain after getting the vaccine.

**Sepedi version:** *Ka mehlala ye mebedi bontšha gore batho ba swanelwa ke go dira eng ge ba ekwa bohloko ka morago ga go hwetša kalafi.*

***Karabo ye e letetšwego****: Batho ba swanetše go nwa diokobatši tšeo ba di fiwago bookelong, ga ba swanela go nwa seokobatši se sengwe le se sengwe.*

Table 4.10: Learners' responses for question 8

| **Learners** | **Responses** |
|---|---|
| Learner 1 | Kalafi e thomile go hlabala moPresitente le moemedi wa tša maphelo. |
| Learner 2 | Ditlamorago tša kalafi ya COVID-19 ke go kwa bohloko ge ba kopane le ditlamorago ba swanela. |
| Learner 3 | Ba swanetše go idibala, go opa ke hlogo, go babjwa goba go robala. |
| Learner 4 | Ga ba swanela go Enta kalafi ge ba na le malwetši a mangwe. |

| Learner 5 | Go nwa diphilisi. |
| --- | --- |
| Learner 6 | Ba swanetše go nwa diphilisi tša bohloko, ba be ba tšhele letsogo ka gare ga meetse a letswai. |

Learner 1 answered without understanding the question, while Learner 2 showed that the effects of getting the vaccine is to feel pain. However, the researcher wanted to know what must be done if people feel pain. This shows that learners answered without understanding. Learner 3 did not understand the question since the answer is not correct. Learners listed the diseases while the question required them to explain the remedy for the pain. Learner 4 gave the wrong answer and showed lack of reading comprehension. Learner 5 and 6, showed understanding of the question. Thus, only 2 out of 6 learners got the question correct. This demonstrated that more work needs to be done to help learners with reading comprehension skills.

**Question 9**

**English version:** Give 2 effects that people experience after getting the vaccine.

**Sepedi version:** *Efa ditlamorago tše pedi tšeo batho ba kopanago le tšona morago ga go hwetša moento.*

***Karabo yeo e letetšwego:*** *Go kwa eke o a lwala le dihlabi mmeleng.*

Table 4.11: Learners' responses for question 9

| **Learners** | **Responses** |
| --- | --- |
| Learner 1 | Kalafi ke bao ba le so kotsing yo twatši ya COVID-19 |
| Learner 2 | Batho go fihla ga bjale bontši bja batho lefaseng ba hlabetšwe ka Ente ya kalafi morago ba lla ka ditlamorago di tlwaelegilego |
| Learner 3 | Ba swanetše go bolela ka moka, bare ga ba hlabele baimana, batho ba go opa ke hlogo le batho ba go ba le malwetši a bona a ba hlabe. |

| Learner 4 | Ba opa ke letsogo le ba entilego ka lona, Ba hlapa matsogo ka sanethaesa, Ba apara sepipa nko le molomo. Ba lebelela boemo bja mebele ya bona. |
|---|---|
| Learner 5 | Go kwa bohloko letsogong. |
| Learner 6 | O kwa bohloko letsogong. |

Learner 1 said that "the vaccine are people in danger", and this was not the expected answer. This answer shows that the learner read without understanding and at the end gave wrong answers. Learner 2 responded by saying that people got the vaccine then later cried about the effects but could not explain the kinds of effects they cried about. Learner 3 said that pregnant women and those with other diseases must not get injected. This answer shows that the learner could not understand the question. Learner 4 states that after getting the vaccine, people face many challenges of headache, pain on shoulders, washing hands, wearing mask and checking their weight. These answers were confusing, showing that learners failed to understand the text and at some point, the questions they were asked. Learner 5 and 6 got the answers right. The learners' struggle with comprehension text means that they are not skilled with the reading strategies, which is the responsibility of teachers to impart that skill to learners. On the other hand teachers show lack of skills to teach comprehension texts because there is no improvement on the reading skills of learners, hence the skill attracting researchers to investigate factors contributing to the learners' difficulties in reading, with reading comprehension being one of the skills.

**4.3 4 Summarised results of the written comprehension test**

The performance of learners on the comprehension test is analysed according to the number of questions asked, stating the marks obtained and representing them in percentages. Presentation of performance is made in a tabular form. The analysis will show the number of learners who got particular questions correct out of the total of 6 participants. There were nine questions from the comprehension text.

Table 4.12: Analysis of learner performance

| Questions | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 | Q9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of positive responses | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| % | 33 | 67 | 67 | 67 | 17 | 50 | 50 | 33 | 33 |

The summary of the table is that learners performed better at questions 1 to 4, which are the low order questions with the maximum of 67% for questions 2, 3 and 4. Questions 5, 6 and 7 were middle order questions and learners got 50% on them. This is the mark below the low order level. Questions 8 and 9 were high order questions and learners performed poorly on them by 33%. Question 1 was the poorly performed question under the low level questions and the rationale might that learners at the beginning of the test got excited and underestimated the question.

**4.4 Conclusion**

The chapter presented the research findings and interpretation of the findings from respondents. The findings were generated from Grade 7 learners and their Sepedi Home Language educators. In the next chapter, a summary of the main findings from the data analysed and discussed is presented, and appropriate recommendations are provided. The implications of the research findings for factors hindering reading comprehension skills of Grade 7 learners are also discussed.

# CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the presentation of findings and data analysis. The findings and interpretation of data were discussed in detail in the previous chapter, and thus permitted the research to draw decisions and to make recommendations. The research purposes are to examine factors that hinder the reading skills of Grade 7 learners. The current chapter focuses on the conclusions drawn from the analysis of results and to make recommendations for upcoming investigations of this nature. This chapter serves to present the summary of all the chapters, recommendations, suggestions and the summary of the key findings of the study in terms of the study research questions as noted below:

1. What are the factors hindering Grade 7 learners on reading skills?
2. Which instructional approaches are employed by educators during the teaching of reading skills?
3. What strategies could be identified and implemented by the educators to address the challenges learners experience during reading?

## 5.2 Summary of key findings in terms of the research questions.

**Research question 1**: What are the factors hindering Grade 7 learners on the reading skills?

The findings from the study showed that learners respond to the comprehension text question without first comprehending the text. That is, they do not read with understanding and end up using wrong spelling, mixing Sepedi language with English language, and writing words that the text does not talk about–suggesting that they did not bother to read the text.

In addition to the challenges that learners experience, educators mentioned that learners do not like their Sepedi language since they do not prepare themselves well before writing. From the questions conducted with the learners, the study further

revealed that learners are not familiar with reading strategies. Their ideas are usually disorganised, which gives a perception that learners have little knowledge of reading skills. Due to this, the study revealed that the learners keep on copying words from the text and presented them as answers despite the irrelevance of the words to the question. Thus, it can be summarised that learners focused on providing content for topic of the assignment rather than writing with understanding.

**Research question 2:** Which instructional approaches are employed by educators during the teaching of reading skills?

The findings from the study showed that educators use CAPS document which stipulate all the steps that learners must follow to read with understanding. However, learners seemed to fail to comprehend what they read given the good implementation of the curriculum.

**Research question 3**: What strategies could be identified and implemented by the educators to address the challenges learners experience during reading?

Educators helped learners by actively monitoring how well they understood the text as they were reading. Learners were taught to pause throughout the story to ask themselves whether or not they understand what is happening in the story and why; and to rephrase the sentence or paragraph in their own words to better understand what the author is trying to say. Thereafter, learners would re-read the text one more time. Learners were taught to answer questions about the text they just finished reading. Additionally, learners were taught to ask questions about the text for them and the teacher to identify the parts of the story they may have not understood. They were also taught to create mental images of the story they read so that they can visualise what is happening. Finally, learners were taught to give a summary of what they just read for them to know which parts of the story are important enough to include in the summary and which ones are not.

## 5.3    Summary of chapters

**Chapter one**

The chapter presented the overall overview of the study, presenting discussions on the background and motivation of the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, the role of theory in the study and the significance of the study. This chapter played a significant role in familiarising readers with the purpose of conducting this study. This was completed through massive clarification of why the identified problem is of concern to this study and why it is significant for the researcher to conduct an investigation on the recognised problem.

**Chapter two**

The chapter presented literature review in relation to the factors hindering the reading skills of Grade 7 learners. The chapter also looked into the role of the theory in the study, methods of reading with understanding and problems that hinder learners from reading with understanding. The chapter also looked into factors hindering reading skills of learners in international perspective considering Western and African literature. It also discussed factors that hinder the reading skills of South African learners. The positive impacts of reading comprehension on learners were also discussed. Thus, the literature prepared the researcher with detailed understating of factors hindering the reading skills of Grade 7 learners.

**Chapter three**

The chapter discussed and examined the research methodology employed relating to data collection and analysis. Qualitative method approach was employed to collect data to address the aims and objectives of the study. Semi-structured interviews, observations, written text analysis and semi structured questionnaire were utilised as the data collection instruments. The chapter also discussed the adopted research design, sampling and population, and quality criteria.

**Chapter four**

Chapter four provided profile of learners and educators sampled, discussions on data presentation, analysis and interpretation on the data attained from Grade 7 learners' comprehension tests together with data drawn from semi structured interviews,

observations, and the questionnaire. The chapter confirmed how the collected data responded to the questions of this study by performing a detailed analysis of all data sets attained during data collection. It was in this chapter that the researcher informed the reader of all the perceptions that emerged from the collected data, and demonstrated how they respond to the questions of this study.

**Chapter 5**

Chapter five summarised the key research findings, and conclusions, recommendation for future determinations, and suggestions for further research.

**5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the responses given by the participants in this study regarding their adjustment experiences, the following recommendations are made:

> The study recommends that higher education must ensure that all schools have libraries where learners will be provided with various books to enhance their vocabulary.
>
> Educators must use the CAPS document all the time to ensure that learners are given correct questions according to cognitive levels, so that they can perform better.
>
> The researcher recommends that learners should read more often, mainly academic related articles to improve their vocabulary. This will lead them to the awareness of the difference between the spoken and written languages.
>
> It is also recommended that teachers pay attention to their learners' usage of language and try to rectify or encourage them to be conscious of their grammar.
>
> The study recommends that the educators should give more comprehension writing texts to the learners so that they can know how to comprehend the text.

**5.5 Conclusion**

The study investigated the factors hindering the reading skills of Grade 7 learners at Dilokong Circuit. The purpose of the study was to: identify factors hindering Grade 7 learners on the reading skills; identify the approaches employed by educators during the teaching of reading skills; and identify strategies that could be implemented by the

educators to address the challenges learners experience during reading. The study employed a qualitative research methodology to understand the views and perceptions of the participants. A thematic research design was used to explain the participants' shared patterns of language and actions in their natural setting. The literature review of the study focussed on the following themes: role of the theory in the study; methods of reading with understanding; problems that hinder learners from reading with understanding; problems that hinder learners from reading with understanding in South Africa, overseas and North Africa; and effective reading skills that have a positive impact on learners' reading comprehension. The study found that even though learners are taught all the strategies they can use to read well, they fail to comprehend what they read about and this affect their performance.

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: REQUEST LETTER TO THE SCHOOL**

P O BOX 703

DRIEKOP

1129

18 APRIL 2021

PHOKO PRIMARY SCHOOL

PO BOX 195

ATOK

0749

Dear Principal/ School Governing Body

 PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY IN YOUR SCHOOL

I am PM Mashabela an educator in your school. I am doing Masters in Language Education at the University of Limpopo. I am asking to collect data for research in your school with your educators and your learners in grade7. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors hindering reading skills of grade 7 learners. The study proposes to come up strategies to overcome the impacts.

Thanking you

Kind regards

PM Mashabela

**APPENDIX B: REQUEST LETTER TO THE CIRCUIT**

P O BOX 703

DRIEKOP

1129

18 APRIL 2021

DILOKONG CIRCUIT

PRIVATE BAGX1305

MOROKE

1154

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY

I am PM Mashabela an educator in one of your schools. I am doing Masters in Language Education at the University of Limpopo. I am asking to collect data for research in your primary school that is under your circuit Dilokong with your educators and your learners in grade7. The purpose of this study is to investigate factors hindering reading skills of grade 7 learners. The study proposes to come up strategies to overcome the impacts.

Thanking you

Kind regards

PM Mashabela

**APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL'S CONSENT FORM**

Investigation on factors hindering the Grade 7 learners on the reading skills. Primary School. Dilokong Circuit, Limpopo Province.

I understand that

1. The answers I got here will only be used for my research and it will be confidential.
2. The researcher questions will not bring danger to anyone.
3. The researcher will answer all questions that are meant for them.
4. Participants can withdraw at any time, no one will force them to do what they do not want.

I....................................the school principal, fully agreed to support Mashabela PM, a Master's degree student at the University of Limpopo to conduct her study on factors hindering grade 7 learners' reading skills in my school.

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

Signature                                                                    Date

**APPENDIX D: EDUCATORS' CONSENT FORM**

Investigation on factors hindering the Grade 7 learners on the reading skills. Primary School. Dilokong Circuit, Limpopo Province.

I understand that

1. The answers I got here will only be used for my research and it will be confidential.
2. The researcher questions will not bring danger to anyone.
3. The researcher will answer all questions that are meant for them.
4. Participants can withdraw at any time, no one will force them to do what they do not want.

I...................................an Sepedi teacher, fully agreed to support Mashabela PM a Master's degree student at the University of Limpopo to conduct her study on factors hindering grade 7 learners' reading skills.

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

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

Signature                                                                                                    Date

**APPENDIX E: PARENTS' CONSENT FORM FOR LEARNERS**

Investigation on factors hindering the Grade 7 learners on the reading skills. Primary School. Sekhukhune Circuit, Limpopo Province.

I understand that

1. The answers I got here will only be used for my research and it will be confidential.
2. The researcher questions will not bring danger to anyone.
3. The researcher will answer all questions that are meant for them.
4. Participants can withdraw at any time, no one will force them to do what they do not want.

I......................................a parent/guardian to.............................. fully agreed for my child to participate in a research study to support PM Mashabela, a Master's degree student at the University of Limpopo to conduct her study on factors hindering grade 7 learners' reading skills.

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

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

Signature                                                                          Date

**APPENDIX F: EDUCATORS SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

NAME OF EDUCATOR: EDUCATOR

Question 1. Do your learners enjoy the teaching of Sepedi language?

_____

_____

_____

Question 2. Do u have enough time to teach reading skills?

_____

_____

_____

Question 3. Do learners perform well when given formal task concerning reading

skills?

_____

_____

_____

Question 4. Is there anything that you as a teacher you do to minimise the learners'
reading difficulties?

_____

_____

Question 5. What reading strategies do you use when teaching reading skills?

_____

_____

Question 6. Do your learners have enough books to read?

**APPENDIX G: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

ELEMENTS OF READING COMPREHENSION PASSAGE

1. Teaching methods
2. Guidelines for teaching comprehension passage
3. Text content (Comprehension passage)

    3.1 Language standard.

    3.2 Availability of pictures.

4. Learner engagement and participation
5. Standard of questions (In line with the taxonomy)

**APPENDIX H: COMPREHENSION TEXT (translation from Sepedi)**

**JOHNSON & JOHNSON THE VACCINE OF COVID-19**

The JOHNSON & JOHNSON vaccine is good and it protects us against the disease COVID-19. People who get the vaccine are those in danger of the disease. The vaccine start by being given to people from the age of 55 and more, those who are very much sick, those who stay with sick people, those working in health centre and those who are taking care of sick people. Those who are pregnant and breast feeding can also vaccinate but they must inform health workers about their existing health conditions before getting the vaccine. People get the vaccine of COVID-19 on their hand. There are many vaccines that are present but they must be checked well so that it is safe for people to get it. Up to so far people who are vaccinated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are complaining about the minor effects but nothing big that health workers cannot handle. The vaccine protects people from the disease COVID-19 but people can still get it or pass it to others. It is important for people to protect themselves by wearing mask, keep a 1.5 distance from others, wash hands and sanitise. The effect of the disease COVID-19 is to feel pain on their injected hand, to be sick, but that should not take more than one week. People must take painkillers to avoid the effects. The vaccine does not contain anything from animals and eggs. The vaccine started on the president and the minister of health. The vaccine is from USA.

**Question 1:** What is the name of the vaccine that the comprehension text is talking about?

**Question 2:** At what age do the vaccine start to be injected on people?

**QUESTION 3:** How do people get the vaccine?

**Question 4:** Write the word COVID -19 in full.

**Question 5:** Suppose you are minister of Education, what decision where you going to take regarding education that involves COVID-19?

**QUESTION 6:** Name two things' people must continue taking even if they got vaccine.

**QUESTION 7:** In two lines, explain what people must do before taking the vaccine.

**QUESTION 8:** In four lines, explain what people must do if they feel pain after getting the vaccine.

**QUESTION 9:** Give 4 effects that people experience after getting the vaccine.

**University of Limpopo**
**Department of Research Administration and Development**
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

| TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE |
| --- |
| ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE |

**MEETING:**      29 March 2022

**PROJECT NUMBER:**      TREC/55/2022: PG

**PROJECT:**

| | |
| --- | --- |
| **Title:** | An Investigation of Factors Hindering Grade 7 Learners on the Reading Skills at Dilokong Circuit, Limpopo Province |
| **Researcher:** | PM Mashabela |
| **Supervisor:** | Dr AD Maledu |
| **Co-Supervisor/s:** | Mr PP Phokwane |
| **School:** | Education |
| **Degree:** | Master of Education (Language Education) |

**PROF P MASOKO**
**CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

**Note:**

i)      This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.

ii)      Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.

iii)      PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

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