

An evaluation of the teaching of reading and writing skills to Grade 2 pupils: A case of Lushishi Basic and Kaleo Community schools in Nchelenge district of Luapula Province

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to evaluate the teaching of reading and writing skills of Grade 2 pupils in two schools in Nchelenge district of Luapula Province, Zambia and the study sought to investigate the reading and writing teaching and learning materials and the methods used by teachers in teaching reading and writing in the two schools. The study employed a mixed paradigm and descriptive survey design that sampled two schools, Head teachers, in-service coordinators, senior teachers, teachers and learners. Data was obtained from respondents by means of interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation schedules. The sample consisted of fifty respondents. Frequency, percentages, tables, graphs and pie-charts were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data obtained. Data was then analyzed manually in some cases and also, a combination of software MS Access and MS Excel. The study found learners in Basic school performed better than those in Community school due to lack of orientation of teachers on the use of books and methodologies in teaching reading and writing Grade 2, lack of adherence to the stipulated Grade 2 literacy lesson procedure and the teaching of reading and writing with hardly any teaching and learning aids, teachers not teaching the Grade 2 class using the four pace groups and teachers' poor organization of the teaching corner and lack of books in class libraries. The findings revealed that Grade 2 learners' performance and achievement in reading and writing in the basic school was higher than those that were in the community school and the study recommended that the Ministry of Education should improve school infrastructure and supply books and desks while school administrators should ensure that teachers' orientations and monitoring are done and teachers should adhere to the stipulated lesson procedure, teach using aids, use pace groups when teaching, organize teaching corner well and adhere to homework and remedial work policies.

Key words: Competence, curriculum, literacy, materials, policy, skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Zambia gained political independence from Britain on 24th October, 1964 and after independence, the country inherited the British type of education but immediately after independence, Zambia had to chart her own destiny in education provision. In 1965, English was officially prescribed as the medium of instruction throughout Zambia's formal education system and the Education Act of 1966 was

meant to overhaul the whole system in order to meet the aspirations of an independent country (MOE 1998).

However, during the 1980's and 1990's, it became increasingly evident that literacy levels among Zambian school children were distressingly low. Most of the pupils were not able to read and write by the end of Grade 1. Therefore, there was concern among Government officials, Ministry of Education officials and other stake holders on this negative development in the Zambian education system (MOE 1977). That concern was because reading and writing were essential life skills. If children did not learn to read and write early enough or well enough in Primary school, they could not learn other subjects properly and this may culminate into a semi illiterate society.

(Harlen 2007:21), Assessment data of learners' performance in low-income countries reveals that "many learners are not mastering the basic skills of reading at an early stage of their education thereby affecting their lifelong achievements." Many findings also support the opinion that Zambian children were not gaining basic literacy skills. According to the MOE (2008)

Therefore, the government of the republic of Zambia through the Ministry of Education, in its effort to improve the delivery of educational services at all levels embarked on major policy reforms in the 1990's starting with Focus on Learning (1992), Educating Our Future (1996) and the Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP-1998). BESSIP was however, intended to accelerate the implementation of the policy goals of the Ministry of Education as articulated in Educating Our Future.

The Government through the Ministry of Education saw the need to raise reading levels among Primary school learners and convened a National Reading Forum which led to the development of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP), a comprehensive seven year plan of action aimed at improving not only reading but literacy levels among Zambia's school children. The Primary Reading Programme (PRP), located within the broader Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP) was then established with a

mission to improve literacy levels among Zambian school children. One of the successes of the Primary Reading Programme was the production of Zambia New Breakthrough to Literacy (ZNBTL), a course aimed at introducing initial literacy at Grade 1 through the seven official Zambian Languages (ZATEC 1998).

In order to raise the reading levels of learners, quite a number of things are cardinal, ranging from teachers, learners, teaching and learning materials, infrastructure, and contact hours among other things. In Grade 1, learners are expected to be taught reading for one year and are thereafter expected to be able to read by the time they go into Grade 2. Nevertheless, most of the learners are not able to read by the time they get into Grade 2. This is due to the fact that there are problems in the teaching and learning of Reading which would enable Grade 1 learners to read, National Reading Panel (2000).

1.1 Statement of the problem

In spite of the numerous reforms in the Zambian Education system since 1965, both at school and teacher training levels and the change of policies on the language of instruction in the teaching and learning and change in approach to the teaching of literacy, still most of the learners in the Zambian Primary schools cannot read by the end of Grade 1, MOE (1966).

1.2 Research objectives

1. To determine the availability of teaching and learning materials in reading and writing for Grade two in the two schools in order to achieve high levels of literacy competence at Grade 2 level.
2. To assess the suitability of teaching techniques used in the teaching of reading and writing to Grade two pupils in the two schools.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Social constructivist theory by Vygotsky (1978) which uses the Zone of proximal development (ZPD) and according to Vygotsky, learning occurs in zones where ZPD is the distance between a student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance with peer collaboration and the student's ability in solving the problem independently. Vygotsky's theory promotes learning contexts in which learners play an active role in learning whereas the teacher plays a collaborative role in order to help facilitate meaningful construction in learners and therefore, learning becomes a reciprocal experience. Scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy originates from this theory and the strategy provides individualized support based on the learner's ZPD (Don 2017).

1.4 Significance of the study

It is hoped that the findings of the study would be of help to all the stake holders interested in education in Zambia. It would benefit the Ministry of Education in continuously reviewing the programmes so as to come up with appropriate

interventions as well supply teaching and learning materials to needy schools thereby helping to raise literacy levels not only in Nchelenge schools but in all Zambian basic schools. The policy makers would benefit as the study would help them modify the education system to make it more relevant to national needs. The findings would also help school administrators to intensify teacher monitoring, promote reading and writing initiatives, create local policies on making teaching and learning aids and ensure that pupils are assessed regularly in literacy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Language and Literacy

Language is a complex and dynamic system of conventional symbols that are used in various modes, thoughts and communication and can be defined as, a socially shared code or conventional system for representing concepts through the use of arbitrary symbols and the rule governing combinations of these symbols. Therefore, language has a vital role to play in the education process and hence, the attainment of language skills during the initial education stage is extremely important in the education system and also, communication is essential in teaching and learning, (Fromkin et al. 2007)

Literacy is the ability to read and write while the inability to do so is called illiteracy or analphabetism. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Kosenen, 2005; UNESCO, 2011:5), defines literacy as, "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying context." Literacy therefore, encompasses a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development and these abilities vary in different social and cultural contexts according to need, demand and education. In addition, literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.

2.2 The role of Language and Literacy in Education

Language has a vital role to play in the educational process and therefore, the attainment of language skills during the basic education stage is extremely important in the education system, (Higgins 2000). Literacy is simply the ability to read and write. It is therefore also imperative to note that the greatest achievement and gift from education is being able to read and write, (MOE 1998). However, reading is a skill by means of which we look at written words and understand through them the writer's meaning. It is an activity which involves sight, intelligence, knowledge of the writer's language and knowledge of the world. It is made possible by all our previous experience of learning to read, (Afolayan et al 1980).

Reading and writing are thinking skills. Reading and writing is thinking triggered by print or some other visual stimulus.

Without thought, there is no real reading and writing, (Moore 1989). Reading and writing are essential tools rather than subjects and are a series of interlocking and interconnected skills, (Wills 1981). Reading is a skill by means of which human beings look at written words and understand through them the writer's meaning, (Hammer 1991). It is an activity which involves sight, intelligence, knowledge of the writer's language and knowledge of the world. Like writing, reading is a thinking skill and is triggered by print or some other visual stimulus as without thought, there is no real reading. Also, reading is an essential tool rather than a subject and is a series of interlocking and interconnected skill dominated by the eyes and brain.

2.3 Literacy learning in the mother tongue

"Mother tongue is the child's first language. When a child is born, he or she is exposed to a language that is spoken by the parents." (MOE, 1998:13), it is the language that a child learns first and is able to speak at the age of two onwards. This language is the child's parents' language through which the child is able to learn the parents' customs and traditions. It is the child's mother tongue.

The mother tongue is important because it is part of the learner and it is the language that builds an individual. It shapes one's personality and mannerisms. It is deeply rooted and it represents the child and the learner's thinking is based on the mother tongue since language and thinking cannot be separated. The mother tongue helps the learner to understand and interpret his or her world and above all, the child organizes the world through a language and the child's beliefs, attitudes, et cetera are influenced by the mother tongue.

Learners feel more confident and therefore, respond better to learning if that learning is taking place in a language with which they are familiar. Parental support will be more forthcoming when learning is taking place initially in a familiar language. Even illiterate parents can support their child's literacy development if they understand the language in which the child is reading and writing in, (Brumfit, 1984). Once sound foundation for literacy is laid, it is much easier to move from known to unknown and the English language relatively unknown. The phonic idiosyncrasies of English can be taught more easily once learners are familiar with basic phonic rules in their mother tongue.

The mother tongue helps with concept formation in a child. Zambian languages are phonetically very regular much more so than English. For this reason, learners will find it easier to learn and apply phonic rules in a Zambian language in the first instance, (Yule, 2002). Prediction based on picture and meaning cues is an important reading skill. A learner cannot use these cues unless they are familiar with the language they are reading. Therefore, reading should be a fun activity that learners choose to engage in and reading for enjoyment will not take place if the learner cannot understand the language being read.

2.4 Planning literacy and language lessons

Planning is essential if efficient teaching has to take place. Unless a teacher plans his or her work carefully, pupils will not receive maximum benefit from one's teaching. There is always something that can be improved or something that might be omitted in order to leave time for a more important item. Planning serves time, helps a teacher decide what his or her objections are, it provides a variety of different activities in a lesson and helps to decide what activities and teaching aids to use and when to use them, (Wills 1981).

A teacher should always make a plan for each lesson he or she has to teach because if plans are not made, teaching becomes more difficult and may not benefit the pupils as much as a well planned lesson. (Thomson, 2001). Planning a language makes the teacher consider what revision from the previous lesson is necessary, what the objective of the lesson is, what new language to introduce and how to introduce it, what the main stages of the lesson will be, what activities and practice in the different skills will be included at different stages, what teaching aids and other materials a teacher plans to use, how the teacher organizes the work of the class at different stages of the lesson such as pair work, group work, individual work or whole class work, to ensure that pupils have practice in using the language and how much time to spend on each activity.

2.5 Assessment

Assessing pupils' progress is an important aspect of teaching literacy and languages. A teacher needs to feedback on the progress of pupils because he or she needs to know how much the pupils have understood and whether the teacher needs to do revision or remedial work, (Jackson, 1979). The teacher needs to know who is doing well and who is having problems, so that they are encouraged and helped appropriately. Pupils and their parents will also want to know how well they are doing and if the teacher is pleased with their progress or not. The teacher therefore, needs to monitor pupils' progress in some way.

Normally, there are three ways of assessing pupils, the first being Achievement tests which are usually, formal examinations such as National school leaving or annual school examinations The second are Diagnostic tests which are less formal tests, (MOE 2011). (Harmer 1983), the main purpose of diagnostic tests is to find out whether the pupils have understood what has been taught to them. The third is Continuous assessment, (Child 1986). Continuous assessment is more informal regular assessment of pupils' work. Whatever method the teacher uses, pupils should feel that assessment is beneficial to learners as assessment is the only useful way to find out how well learners are performing, (Harmer 1983). The method of assessment should suit the level of pupils one is handling.

2.6 Pre-reading and writing skills

There are four distinct aspects of Pre-reading and early writing skills:

1. Perception: ability to see shapes and the differences which which distinguishes one shape from another.
2. Motor skills: ability to use a pen or pencil to form symbols.
3. Understanding of progression in writing: in English, we start at the top left corner and move to the right.
4. Space awareness: to make one's writing legible and attractive, the child must learn to place letters within words, how to space words and how to position sentences on a page.

However, suitable motor skills exercise can involve the children in copying patterns from the board, from a textbook or from a work card. In the early years of schooling i.e in Grade 1, a child is never expected to read anything which he or she has not previously heard, spoken and understood. During the first term, by means of a variety of apparatus, the children are taken through the essential pre-reading stages involving recognition, discrimination and left to right eye movement, (Ainscon and Tweddle 1984). The children quickly pass on to the reading of sentences, words and finally to readers themselves so that by the end of the first grade, they are able to read with less difficulties, (Abbot and Wingard, 1981).

2.7 What is reading?

Reading is one of the receptive skills that is taught in schools throughout Zambia and the world at large. Reading is defined in different ways and Gariford (1994). Wills, has looked at reading as an arbitrary interpretation of written symbol. Hence, reading is a means of communication, (Wills 1981).

2.7.1 How reading should be correctly taught

Before reading, and if pupils have not learnt to read in any other language before, the teacher should show them that the sounds they hear can be written down to form words and sentences which have meaning, (Moore 1989). This can be done showing them different types of written materials such as books, notices, letters and instructions on a pack. The teacher should read aloud and point to the words. The teacher should also show pupils that reading is from left to right as well as show them that there are individual words and letters by using numbers, rhymes and songs.

Reading, whether in English or the mother tongue is a skill that needs to be taught and there are two stages in learning to read. The first stage is mechanical reading. This has to be mastered before the second stage-comprehension can be reached, (Cobb 1984). In the teaching of the mother tongue, comprehension can be mastered quickly because the child comes to school with a vocabulary of between two to five thousand words. However, it is in the first stage of mechanical reading that many children fail to make progress.

2.7.2 Reading readiness

However, before children can do the actual reading or learn to read in class, it is important that the teacher teaching or about to start teaching reading should be aware of reading readiness.

Reading readiness is concerned with the idea that a child begins to read much as it begins to talk, that is when the child is psychologically and physically ready to do so and not before, (Moore 1989). Before a child is ready to read, it needs to accumulate a number of experiences and skills. However, these may be gained from home or school but, without them, a child will not be ready to read. It follows that the age at which a child is ready to read can vary from child to child.

2.7.3 Factors affecting reading readiness

Factors affecting reading readiness are intelligence, environment and physical. Intelligence means the inborn mental powers. A child's general intelligence will determine his or her level of perception of relationships of shape normal child will learn to read fairly easily in a reasonable time whereas, an educationally subnormal child whose intelligence is low will take a very long time, (Kisseberth 2003). The general physical development and health of a child will influence the age at which he or she begins to read. A child with a poor medical history of disease, poor nutrition and so on will be at a disadvantage.

As for environment, the child's social development affects his or her ability to progress in learning to read. A child accustomed to listening and talking to adults or friends, a child who is exposed to books, pictures and playing with toys and so on, is more likely to read earlier than others, (Hammer 1983). The child's emotional development also has a strong influence on reading. If a child is emotionally stable and able to adjust to attending school, sitting in a classroom and so on then, he or she is more likely to learn to read more quickly than a pupil who is disturbed emotionally. A pupil that is controlled by fear or has a very unstable home background is likely to suffer.

Before a child is ready to read, he or she needs help to experience what are known as pre-reading experiences, (Thomson 2001). The first pre-reading experience is called language skills which have to do with listening and concentration using words and phrases in a recognized sequence to express meaning, be able to describe what he or she is seeing or doing, be able to say what has happened in the past and use words to express thoughts in a sensible related sequence.

The second experience is auditory discrimination in which the child should be able to hear and understand the sounds of the language and be able to notice small differences between the sounds, (Farrant 1980). The third experience is visual discrimination in which a child should be able to discriminate between differences in shape, size, colour, etc. The fourth experience is left to right eye movement. The fifth is motor control, where the child should be able to control his or her

book, hold it correctly, turn the pages and be able to coordinate hand and eye by being able to draw the letters and shapes he or she can see such as crayoning, drawing, big brush painting, drawing in sand, clay work, et cetera and the last experience is that of tactile discrimination where a child should be able to identify objects by their 'feel' or 'touch'.

2.8 Reading problems

A teacher of literacy should be able to know as well as identify the causes of reading problems if he or she has to help the children in his or her class to read with less difficulties, (Boon 1963). The child may have visual difficulties i.e some children are not able to see the difference reversible letters such as b and d, u and n. This can be remedied by giving the child an extra practice in matching shapes. Failure to keep on the line is also a cause of reading problems as children find it difficult not to mix words on one line with those in another. For this, a pupil can place a piece of card under the line as he or she reads it. Poor visual memory is another problem. Here, the problem is that children cannot remember large units in the look and say method, (Maynard 1970). Children cannot recognize and retain what they have seen. For example, words of more than three letters confuse them. This may be due to poor eyesight. However, this can be corrected by giving children plenty of play in building up words with syllable cards and letter cards or playing the memory game with objects.

The other problem is regressive eye movement, (Hill 1978). Instead of moving along the line from word to word, the child's eye would go back sometimes from right to left, so the child would repeat words or syllables and get them in the wrong order. This can be prevented by using a card under the line and a pointer going along the line as a child reads. Defective hearing is yet another problem, (Richards and Rodgers 1986). Some pupils find difficulties in distinguishing between words of similar sounds such as ship-sheep, pin and pen simply because the pupil does not hear the sounds correctly. This may be due to something wrong with the child's ears or to the fact that the child does not listen carefully enough. Therefore, the teacher should avoid teaching words of similar sound at the same time but should let children identify sounds heard about even those from the radio.

Articulation is yet another problem where some children find difficulty with certain words in their home language. For example In Ibibemba f for v, Icitonga l for r and vice versa, d for th- Dis is de boy and so on. With the home language, this may be due to retaining baby talk or simply lack of practice and experience in using the sounds. With English, it is generally the latter with bad listening or defective hearing as added causes (Mill 1977)

The last problem is difficulties due to poor knowledge of language. Some children have poor knowledge of their own languages, having spoken little with adults. Consequently, when they come to read, they try to read words they do not

know well. This can also happen with English reading where a child is transferred from an old-fashioned school during the year, (Maynard 1970). Children must never in the early stages be asked to read words which they cannot pronounce and which they have not already used orally. Children who are poor at their own language or English must be given more practice.

2.9 Backwardness in reading

Backwardness in reading is due more to immaturity rather than due to lack of intelligence. In such children, early grade work gives rise to anxiety and tension. The feeling of failure causes lack of confidence, confusion and dislike for reading as some children are psychologically or physiologically immature. Because of visual immaturity, there is confusion between the letters t/l, a/e, a/s, i/e, r/n/u, b/h/d, etc. Backward readers with perceptual weakness show mistakes like confusion in letters like b/d, p/q, reversal in words like saw/was, on/no, it/ti and transposition of letters such as girl/girl, (Watters 2003). Some children have defective vision. They get blurred images of words and hence, wrong impressions. In such children, perceptual movements are slow and the nervous strain makes concentration difficult and so, only a fleeting glance is given. Hence, they react to a prominent part of the word and guess the rest.

The learning attitude is also influenced by emotional irritation, (Gunner 1991). Mental and emotional attitudes to reading created by the physical handicap persists even after the physical handicap is rectified. Teachers should therefore, detect eye defects as soon as possible. Weakness in auditory discrimination of speech sounds lowers of discrimination between speech sounds especially those that are similar. Such children fail to analyze and synthesize correctly the auditory elements of words.

2.10 Methods used in teaching reading

Good reading depends on a good foundation given in lower grades. Therefore, it is good for teachers to use methods suitable to the situation. However, there is not a single best method of teaching reading. Whichever of the good methods the teacher chooses, he or she should understand the principles behind them (Child 1986). The alphabet method uses the names of letters of the alphabet and is also known as the spelling method. The other is the phonic method and it is the analytic method which aims at providing pupils with the sounds of various letters of the alphabet or sounds of letters. The syllabic method is where the key unit is the syllable. Syllables are learned and then combined to form words as in the teaching of certain languages. This method has been found useful in literacy teaching campaigns involving teaching reading to adults, but the method may lead to confusion particularly as the syllables taught increase in number. The fourth method is the word method, (Richards and Rodgers 1986). The word method is basically the whole word or look and say method which is now used in conjunction with other methods. Look and say is followed by a picture and word. The

other method is the sentence method and this starts with the sentence as a unit but really becomes a sentence or whole, for the study of words is vital to its development.

The sixth method is the story method, (ZATEC 1998). The story method starts with a story in the beginning and breaks down to sentence and word later. The kinesthetic method is the supplementary impression gained by the children through writing and tracing words. It is simply a means of consolidating visual and auditory impression of words. The last method is the activity method but this is not a separate method as such but is an approach to reading.

Later, the teacher intensifies the process by the use of flashcard drills. Always, the child looks, sees the whole word, associates it with appropriate object or picture and says it. The other main method of teaching reading is the 'part' method which does what it says i.e breaks the words into parts rather than present them as whole shapes, (Nurse 2000). Children must learn the sound values of letters and be able to blend the sounds together. The child looks for example at the word "cat", but does not recognize or remember it. If the child knows the phonic sounds, he or she can read the word by breaking the word into parts and sounding c...a...t, then blending the sounds together ca...t "cat".

2.11 What writing is and how writing should be correctly taught

What is writing? Writing is the use of graphical symbols or a combination of letters which relate to the sounds we make when we speak. Writing involves the encoding of the message of some kind, that is, we translate our thoughts into language. On the other hand, reading involves the decoding or interpretation of this message and the reader is usually someone who is not physically present and this is why we should choose this particular channel of communication instead of speech (Byrne 1988).

2.11.1 Why teach writing?

The question which may arise then is, why teach reading? It should be noted, that in the early stages of a course oriented towards oral proficiency, writing serves a variety of pedagogical purposes. Firstly, the introduction and practice of some form of writing enables us to provide for different learning styles and needs, (Hill 1976). Some learners, especially those who do not learn easily through oral practice alone, feel more secure if they are allowed to read and write in the language. For such students, writing is likely to be an aid to retention, if only because they feel more at ease and released.

Written work serves to provide the learners with some tangible evidence that they are making progress in the language. It is not likely to be a true index of their attainment, but once again it satisfies a psychological need. Writing provides variety in classroom activities, serving as a break from oral work and is therefore a quieter and more relaxed time for both students and teachers. At the same time, it

increases the amount of language contact through work that can be set out of class, (Byrne 1991).

2.11.2 How writing should be correctly taught

Before the teacher begins to teach pupils to write the letters of the alphabet, it is important that pupils learn to control their pencils correctly, particularly if they have never written before, (Byrne 1988). Pupils should start to write in their exercise books with a pencil because it is easier to write with than a pen. But even before they use a pencil, pupils can begin to make patterns with a small

stick in sand outside the classroom or in sand tray inside the classroom.

Pupils should be shown how to hold their pencils correctly so that they have good control over their writing. The teacher should tell pupils to hold their pencil or stick between their first finger and thumb, (Byrne 1988). The pencil should rest on the knuckle of the second finger. Right-handed pupils should be told to hold the pencil about two and a half centimetres from the point, but left handed pupils should hold the pencil a little higher, three and a half centimetres from the point so that they can see more easily what they have written. It is important to allow left-handed pupils to write with their left hands. This is natural for them. They will take a little longer than right-handed pupils to write neatly, but the teacher must be patient with them

The teacher can help the pupils to control their writing movements by showing them how to write from left to right by drawing two pictures, one on each side of the chalkboard. He or she could for example, draw a bird in the left side of the board and a nest on the right side. The teacher can then draw a line between the two and explain to the pupils that the bird flies to the nest. More examples should be drawn on the chalkboard such as a bee flying to a flower and a dog moving towards meat, (Johnson and Marrow 1981). Thereafter, the teacher should draw lines between the two pictures, explaining to the pupils as he or she each line, for example, 'the bee flies to the flower.' Then, the teacher should tell pupils to draw lines in the same way. If they can draw the bird and the nest, and the other objects for example, the teacher should let them do so. Before helping pupils to write the letters of the alphabet, it is useful to let them draw patterns to provide further practice in controlling the pencil. Certain patterns are useful for practicing movements of the pencil which would help pupils to form letters correctly later such as clock wise movements and up and down movements.

Some textbooks or teacher's handbooks may also have patterns for the pupils to practice drawing, (ZATEC 1998). However, the teacher should use his imagination to make drawing patterns more interesting and meaningful for the pupils. For example, the teacher would ask pupils to draw some of the patterns such as IIIIIIIIIII, mmmmmmm, bbbbbb, xxxxxx or the teacher would ask pupils to draw a row of bananas or umbrellas to prepare them for writing the

letters I,m,b,x,c and e,j,etc. At first, only the lower case or small letters should be taught first.

2.11.3 Approaches in teaching writing

The teaching of writing has approaches to be used and usually, there are four approaches that have dominated the teaching of language and these are focus on accuracy, focus on fluency, focus on purpose and focus on text.

The focus on accuracy approach aims at ensuring that pupils make as few mistakes as possible. The theory being that if the learner is encouraged to be creative, he or she will make mistakes which are therefore reinforced. To eliminate mistakes therefore, control is stressed. Pupils are taught how to write and combine various types and exercises. The teacher can give for example, a numbered exercise and then let learners choose from the words given and fit them in. All the teacher wants is to minimize mistakes but gradually, the amount of control is reduced and later pupils are given opportunity for self- expressions, (Hill 1975).

In focus on fluency approach, pupils are encouraged to write as much as possible without worrying about making mistakes. This makes pupils feel that they are writing and writing what they want. Consequently, they enjoy the experience because there is less control, (Afoloyan 1980). Since all writing is purposeful, the teacher must devise situations which allow pupils to write purposefully and this is under the focus on purpose approach while the focus on the text approach stresses the paragraph as the basic unit of writing. Pupils then are taught how to construct and organize paragraphs.

Copying from the chalkboard is the first form of writing that children are introduced to when they begin school. A child in the second grade has to look at the chalkboard, retain the memory of the word and reproduce it on the page in the correct sequence, (Cobb 1984). This is a complicated process as the motor and sensory nerves of the eye, muscles and nerves of the hand, the motor and visual centers of the brain are all involved. One of the major reasons why children make mistakes in mirror writing and right to left reversals is because some children are not mature enough intellectually as well as in their kinesthetic ability to make the necessary accommodations and reversals (Brumfit 1984).

It is important that the teacher show pupils how to form the letter or letters of the sound after he or she has introduced them to the sound, (Moore 1989). As the letter is being introduced to the pupils, the teacher should tell them how to form it by drawing the letter in the air or writing the letter on the board. As the teacher does this, he or she should use directions: 'down', 'up', 'round', 'over' and 'across'. For example, as the teacher writes the letter 'w', he or she can be saying 'down and up and down and up' and for letter 'b', should be saying 'down and round' and so on.

2.12 Teaching and learning materials in reading and writing at Grade 2 level

In order to effectively teach reading and writing in Grade 2, a teacher has to use teaching and learning materials, some of which are already made and in the absence of these, the teacher has to improvise. The materials used in Grade 2 for reading and writing are teachers' guide, activity books, conversation poster, rainbow readers and teachers' created materials:

1. *Teachers' Guide:* The guide contains the methodology of the course and specific lessons for steps 1 to 3 and it contains fifty lessons. The guide also gives guidance to the teacher on how to teach each lesson at the teaching station and how to prepare independent learning activities for the other groups that are not *at the teaching station*.
2. *Activity books:* These are books learners use to work from. They contain graded learning activities and phonics activities which learners have to complete during the literacy lessons and they also contain stories that are used during Pathway to English 2 which is an oral English language course.
3. *Conversation posters:* Conversation posters are four in number and are used to facilitate learning in the teaching corner. These posters cover the themes- 'My school', 'My school', 'My home', 'the Market' and 'the Bus station'.
4. *Rainbow readers:* These are a set of story books that accompany the SITE course. They cover the same range of ability with 'red level' being the easiest and then, 'green' being the most difficult.
5. *Teacher-created materials:* As supplements, the teacher has to make other materials. (MOE 1998:7), these are materials which would supplement the already made materials which may be in short supply or not available in school and are meant to enhance effective teaching and learning.

2.13 Methodologies used in teaching reading and writing

In teaching reading and writing in Grade 2, the Language Experience Approach (LEA) is used and this is based on four posters, readers and stories. Learning takes place through familiar themes of the posters- family, school, market and the bus station. The learners are taught in small groups at the teaching station, (ZATEC 1998). This enables the teacher to pay attention to individual learners as well as take note of their progress at the teaching station with the teacher while the other three groups are engaged in appropriate independent learning activities.

2.13.1 Pace groups in reading and writing

In Grade 2, the reading and writing course is divided into three stages. Stage 1 consists of ten (10) lessons and is followed by an assessment exercise that divides the class into four pace groups based on ability. Stage 2 consists of thirty

(30) lessons that are divided into three blocks of ten (10) lessons called 'stage 2 Early', 'Middle' and 'Late'. Again, each block of ten (10) lessons is followed by assessment exercise. Stage 3 also has ten (10) lessons, (MOE 1998). There is no assessment for the end of stage 3 as only the brightest learners or fast learners are expected to get this far through the course and by then, it shall be time for the end of year assessment. Hence, learners will only progress to the next stage if they pass the assessment exercise at the end of the previous stage.

2.13.2 Oral language in Grade 2

In addition, the Pathway to English course is taught every day for thirty (30) minutes. This is usually done before the literacy lesson so as to ensure that learners have sufficient oral language to facilitate the learning of literacy in English, (ZATEC 1998). The oral course has its own Pathway 2 teachers' guide that the teacher has to refer to separately for guidance on how to teach each oral lesson.

2.14 Teaching and learning aids used in teaching reading and writing in Grade 2

The chalkboard is the most obvious teaching aid (Wills 1981). Common objects can obviously be used to explain new vocabulary, (ZATEC 1998). The teacher can also show more than one of each object for teaching plural for example, 4 pencils, 2 books or colours, a blue bag and a red bag and size, a big coat and a small coat. Two similar but not identical objects also can be used when teaching comparison such as 'the blue ruler' is shorter than 'the red ruler'. It should not also be forgotten that pupils are a very useful teaching aid! A teacher can use them to show actions, to compare sizes, to demonstrate questions and answers the teacher wants to teach, to introduce dialogues, to teach clothes and parts of the body and for many other useful purposes. Posters, pictures and drawings should be large enough to display on the wall or chalkboard and should be seen clearly at the back of the room, (MOE 1998). They can be used for teaching new vocabulary, practicing new structures and tenses, teaching preparations, as a starting point for story-telling, a starting point for writing activities and for showing two pictures and asking pupils to spot the differences.

Authentic materials can be used in order to make the pupils' language learning as natural as possible and to prepare them for using the language naturally outside the classroom. It is a very good idea to use materials that have not been prepared especially for the classroom, (Higgins 2000). Post cards and pictures from newspapers, magazines and tourist brochures can easily be stuck onto cards to make activities on work cards and worksheets. They can also be used as pictures to start off writing, listening and various oral activities.

Word and picture flashcards are of great use, especially in the teaching of reading and writing, (ZATEC 1998). Word and sentence cards are very useful for familiarizing pupils with new words and sentence patterns. Picture cards can then be

used to match with the word and sentence cards so that pupils understand the meaning of the new words and structures. For example, a picture showing a man sitting back, holding his stomach and looking happy, with an empty plate in front of him might be matched to the sentence card- 'He has eaten'.

Word cards can also be used as an aid to spelling difficult words. The teacher can use these, either with the whole class or with individuals, to familiarize pupils with difficult spellings. Pupils might be given word cards and asked to stand in order to make sentences. They might be given letter cards and asked to stand in alphabetical order or stand in order to make a word. They might be given cards with commands on them and asked to obey the commands, (MOE 1998). The teacher should make sure that the lettering on the word cards are clear and neat and large enough to be seen by all pupils in the class.

Worksheets give pupils practice in certain language structures or reading and writing activities, (Harmer 1983). The teacher needs enough copies of the same worksheets so that each pupil has a copy, or a copy can be shared between two or three pupils. A teacher can use a text or a picture followed by some kind of questions to practice reading comprehension, he or she can present sentences and pictures for matching or can provide a gapped text to be completed by the pupils. However, there are many language activities in which worksheets can be used, including word games and cross words.

Language teachers however, should be resourceful and not only depend on already made or written teaching and learning materials, (Johnson and Morrow 1981). Being resourceful and improvising materials means that a language teacher should exploit the surrounding environment and make use of materials that can enable learners to understand the lesson.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

The study design was a survey with sparse use of qualitative data. This design was chosen because the considered appropriate as they also allowed for more flexible strategies of data collection in order to answer the research questions, (Musonda, 2009). Also, because the research had to cover two schools and many respondents in a short period of time and also, had to get detailed view points on the issue from the point of view of the researched and used statistical tests and graphic displays to analyse data. Reading and writing skills achievement of Grade 2 learners were compared between learners in the Primary school to those in the Community school.

3.2 Research sites

The study was carried out in the two schools in Nchelenge district of Luapula Province; Lushishi Basic school and Kaleo Community school from which respondents were also sampled.

3.3 Population, Sample and Sampling procedure

The population for the study consisted of all Grade 2 learners in the district, all Grade 2 teachers, all Primary school and Community school Head teachers, all Senior teachers and all school in-service co-ordinators. (Mugenda and Mugenda 2013) describes population as the entire group of individuals or items under consideration in any field of inquiry and have a common attribute. The sample consisted of fifty (50) respondents. A representative sample of 40 Grade 2 learners, that is 20 from each school were randomly selected from the two schools in the district. Then, two school Head teachers, four Grade 2 teachers, two middle basic school senior teachers and two school in-service co-ordinators were purposively selected because of the nature of their positions in schools.

The simple random sampling procedure was used to select the 40 learners while the other sample consisted of 10 participants purposively selected because of the nature of their positions in schools. They consisted of four Grade 2 teachers, two school Head teachers, two senior teachers and two school in-service co-ordinators that were directly involved in the delivery, administration, training and monitoring of both teachers and learners. In the sampling of institutions, the study adopted the stratified cluster random sampling technique. The schools were stratified by initial language of instruction and clustered by location (zones). Sampling was done zone by zone. The sampling was done at three levels: Sampling zones and schools- level 1, sampling learners- level 2 and sampling Grade 2 teachers, Head teachers, senior teachers and school in-service co-ordinators-level 3.

3.4 Data Analysis

In this research, data was analysed qualitatively as the semi structured interviews and observation schedules were used as data collection instruments. Thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with the categorization of themes from the semi structured interviews and observation schedules (Smith, 2013). Charts and graphs were used to analyse data. The data gathered was analysed according to the themes of the study, the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the interview guide was analysed manually and also, a combination of software MS Access, SPSS and MS Excel was used to analyse data. Analysis was mainly descriptive, that is, mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation. Related statistics were applied where possible. Statistical testing took the form of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), correlation and regression both simple and multiple.

3.5 Ethical Issues

The researcher avoided pressuring respondents to take part in the research. Alternatively, permission consents, assents were obtained from respondents involved in the research and the research topic was strategically selected to ensure that there was no harm whatsoever to the research respondents. In this research, the researcher was fully conscious of the need to abide by the ethical rule of respecting the privacy of

individuals taking part in the research. In the same way, all the respondents of the research were to remain unidentified to the public as all their valuable views, opinions and perceptions were only known by the researcher for use only in the research and participant's identities will forever remain hidden.

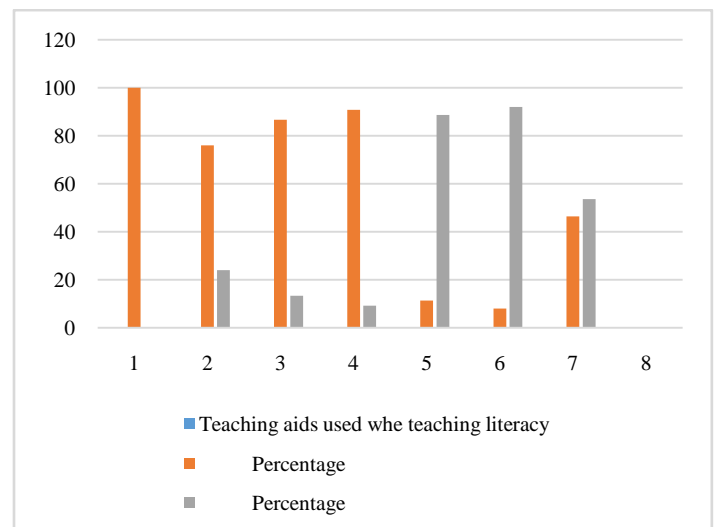
The Researcher got permission from The District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) to interview Head teachers and from Head teachers to interview in-service co-ordinators, teachers and learners. The names of respondents would remain anonymous for the sake of confidentiality. However, the identity of respondents was concealed in the thesis but for identification in the thesis, thirty parents were allocated numbers 1 to 30, while the thirty children were allocated ordinal numbers 1st to 40th.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Teaching and learning materials used in reading and writing

Teachers in the two schools in Nchelenge district used a variety of teaching items when teaching literacy and some of these items were: teaching guide (100%) which was the most popular, followed by rainbow readers (90.8%), conversation posters (86.7%), activity book (76%), class library (46.4%), teacher created materials (11.3%) and the least used were talking walls (8%).

Figure 1: Teaching materials used in teaching literacy



Source: Research findings 2013

The absence of adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials deprived learners the opportunity to learn effectively because teaching and learning materials are extremely useful to both teachers and learners in reading and writing lessons. (Thomson 2001:26), the teaching and learning becomes effective when a teacher backs up the teaching with visual support such as objects, pictures, drawings, posters and flash-cards (Quist 2000). Other studies, (Boone 1983 and Farrant 1980) indicated that teaching resources were used by

the teacher in order to enhance the teaching process as learning resources were sources of information for the learners and also created a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

4.2 Teaching methods in Reading and writing

The study revealed that a variety of methods were used to teach Literacy such as Whole class teaching (89.8%), Group work (90.6%), Oral questions and answers (66.5%) and Starting time (13.7%).

Table 1: Methods used when teaching Literacy

Whole class teaching (starting time)	89.8	10.2
Group with teacher (Teaching station 1 and 2)	90.6	9.4
Oral questions and answers	66.5	33.5
Sharing time	13.7	86.3

Source: Research findings 2013

The study showed that 98% of the respondent agreed that, the methods used in schools to teach learners reading and writing were wrong and inappropriate. They indicated that, such trend disadvantaged the learners and was against the literacy policy guidelines, which states that, “teaching methods should be appropriate so that right materials are given at the right time, manner and quality” (ZECFW) (2013:4). The study further revealed that, teachers were not well vested in the teaching methods suitable for teaching reading and writing. These teachers used methods that were appropriate in other subjects like numeracy for example. Time use of wrong and inappropriate methods is against the report of (MOGE, 2015) which states in part that, teachers should be well vested with appropriate methods in order to bring about effective learning.

4.3 Teaching techniques used for teaching reading and writing to Grade 2 pupils

The study revealed that in the two schools, the most common approaches used were the Communicative language teaching approach where learners learnt in pairs or groups in problem solving and the other method used was the Situational method in which language was by association with characteristics of the surrounding pictures. Other approaches such as Grammar translation in which the major features were reading, writing and vocabulary selection based on reading the text was not observed and so was the Direct method where the lesson began with a brief dialogue through the use of demonstrations and visual aids. More so, Audial-lingual approach was not observed which among other things gave learners numerous opportunities to speak and provide opportunities for quick reinforcement and the common technique used by the teachers in the two schools was the Question and answer technique where teachers asked questions to which pupils responded. However, the teaching of reading and writing required proper planning and presentation of subject matter. Techniques carry out a method that is consistent with an approach. An approach on the other hand, is a set of correlative assumptions dealing

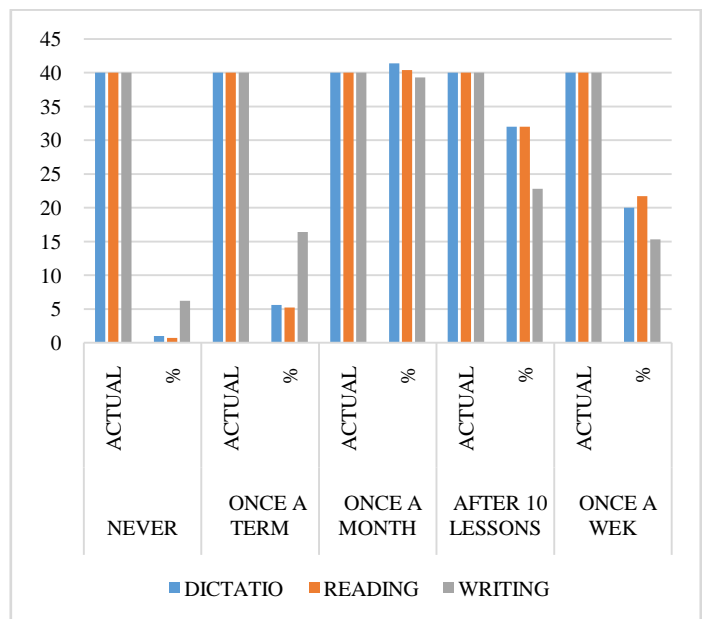
with the nature of Language teaching and learning, (Sesnan 1997).

On techniques used in teaching reading and writing at Grade 2 level in the two schools, the study found that though teachers used the Language experience approach based on the four posters, readers and stories, in formal circumstance, teachers did not teach the class into four pace groups as they did not adhere to the stipulated lesson procedure. The teaching corner was not effectively used and the library was poorly organized and there were less or no talking walls in Grade 2 classrooms, more especially at Kaleo community school. According to MOE(1998:56): “it is important that teachers and teacher-educators use a variety of teaching methods and techniques in order to cater for the range of learning needs taking into account the available local resources” and (Brookner 2003) agrees with this view.

4.4 Assessment

The study reviewed that very few teachers in this survey did not assess pupils. In reading (0.7%), in Dictation (1.0%) were never assessed while the highest was (6.2%) of pupils never assessed in writing. Most teachers assessed their pupils once a month (41.4%) in Dictation, (40.4%) in Reading and Writing (39.3%).

Figure 2: Frequency of pupil assessment



Source: Research findings 2013

(Cremin et al 2008), learner assignment and assessments help a teacher measure learner’s progress and achievement in a subject area during the course of instruction. In this study, results showed that teachers mostly assessed learners by asking questions (83.0%), 66.7% assessed by monitoring learners as they worked, 50.0% assessed by observing learners reading and writing, 33.3% assessed by listening to individual learners read while only 16.7% of observed

teachers assessed learners by using Reading assessment tool and giving quiz respectively. Inadequate and inconsistent learner assessments at Kaleo community school, coupled with their incorrect applications did not help teachers to measure learner performance and achievement and thus, teachers failed to come up with interventions in reading and writing.

Findings from the study indicated that teachers in both schools assessed learners by asking oral questions, monitoring them as they worked, by observation but at Kaleo community school, teachers rarely used Reading Assessment tool and assignments such as home-work and projects. (Medwell et al 2012:89) claims that: “both assessment and teaching are so closely interrelated that it is virtually impossible to work in either field without being constantly concerned with the other.” Assessment should therefore, not be separated from teaching and a good Reading assessment should have a much more positive effect on learning and teaching and should generally result in improved learning habits. Other studies, (MESVTEE 2013) indicated that assessment is an important tool in the teaching and learning process and is used to determine whether teaching and learning have taken place or not. However, proper records were not kept by the teachers on learner assessment and thus not creating opportunities for learners to benefit from their feedback. Hence, teachers should note that classroom assessments enhanced learners’ achievement levels

IV. CONCLUSION

A number of conclusions were drawn from the study:

Lack of school infrastructure and inadequate desks, lack of teaching and learning materials as well as lack of orientation of teachers on the use of books and other new reading and writing resources negatively impact on learners’ achievement of high levels of literacy competences at Grade 2 level. Non blending or integrating of two or more teaching methods of reading and writing in order to come up with a workable procedure in the classroom negatively affect the teaching and learning of reading and writing at Grade 2 level in the two schools. Grade 2 teachers in the two schools did not expose their Grade 2 pupils to listening to a variety of authentic texts in the classroom during reading lessons and this in turn inhibited pupils from practicing and developing their listening skills at an early stage which are a pre-requisite to learning reading faster and earlier. Non-use of authentic materials by Grade 2 teachers in the two schools in the teaching of reading and writing to Grade 2 pupils did not give an opportunity to pupils to use language in real life situations while lack of adherence to the stipulated lesson procedures and not following the theme given at each stage gave less time to Grade 2 pupils to practice new concepts in reading and writing. Non use of, inadequate use of, lack of improvisation and poor use of teaching and learning aids in the teaching of reading and writing to Grade 2 pupils. Non and inadequate evaluations of reading and writing lessons did not bring out teachers’ and pupils’ strengths and

weaknesses. Non availability of class libraries and poor organization of class libraries in Grade 2 classes at the two schools did not give chance to pupils to read for pleasure as well as help raise pupils literacy levels at an early stage while non effective use of the teaching corner and lack of adherence to time allocated at each stage at the teaching station did not give chance to Grade 2 pupils to fully practice new words and concepts in reading and writing respectively. Over enrolment and poor sitting facilities in Grade 2 classes coupled with poor infrastructure at the two schools compromised the teaching and learning of reading and writing to Grade 2 pupils and also, irregular and inadequate assessment of Grade 2 pupils in reading and writing, lack of assessment to place pupils in pace groups, lack of assessment records and administration of homework, assessment and remedial work policies not done as stated due to lack of time and teachers’ overloads had a negative impact on achieving high literacy levels as it was difficult for teachers and pupils themselves did not know their levels of performance.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were proposed for effective implementation of report intervention

1. School administration through PTAs should come up with local initiatives to construct classrooms and staff houses as well as procure school requisites.
2. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is needed in specific instructional strategies and methods focused on reading and writing instruction should be prime focus at Grade 2 level.
3. Head teachers should plan for procurement, procure and increase availability of teaching and learning materials and also, strengthen the production of teaching and learning materials from local materials by teachers and older pupils.
4. The Head teachers should ensure that teachers set time for administering the proposed assessment scheme, keep records of assessment, mark pupils written work in time, assess pupils in order place them in pace groups.
5. School administrators should conduct teacher monitoring and maintain a file for monitoring reports and make monitoring follow-ups.
6. School administrators should promote reading and writing initiatives, encourage learners to attend school regularly, control school enrolments as well as provide Report booklets instead of oral feedbacks at the end of the term.

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