

**THE TEACHING OF READING FLUENCY TO GRADE FOUR
MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS IN MPEZENI ZONE OF CHIPATA
DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

BY

PHIRI TIMOTHY

ID: 227136667

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district of Zambia. The study used descriptive phenomenology design under qualitative research approach. The sample comprised 12 Grade 4 teachers purposively selected from three primary schools in Mpezeni Zone. Interview guides and classroom observation guides were used for data collection. The study findings revealed that demonstration, repeated reading, read aloud, individual reading, choral and group work were some of the strategies used by teachers to teach reading fluency in the zone. The study also that language barrier, over enrolment, shortage of appropriate reading materials, shortage of teachers and learner shyness were the common challenges which impeded the teaching of reading fluency. Further, the study noted that, if put to good use, practices such as repeated reading, read aloud, choral reading, paired reading, parental involvement, frequent workshops/Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs), remediation and bilingual resources can help teachers to effectively teach reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone. The study recommended that supervisors at school, zonal, district and provincial levels must frequently monitor the teaching of reading fluency to ensure teachers use appropriate approaches at all times. Government, through Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, must expand existing rural primary schools or build more to decongest classrooms, deploy more primary school teachers in areas and periodically supply more reading materials to meet the demand.

Key words: *teaching, reading fluency, reading materials, strategies, multilingual learners*

DECLARATION

I, **PHIRI TIMOTHY**, do hereby declare that this piece of work entitled ‘The Teaching of Reading Fluency to Grade 4 Multilingual Learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata District’ is my own, and that all the works of other persons have been duly acknowledged, and this work has never been previously presented at Chalimbana University and indeed at any other university for similar purposes.

Signature

Date.....

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of **Phiri Timothy** has been approved as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Applied Linguistics of Chalimbana University.

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Examiner 1

Signature

Date

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Examiner 2

Signature

Date

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Examiner 3

Signature

Date

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Board/Chairperson of Examiners

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Supervisor

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved children, Rejoice K. Phiri, Hiram K. Phiri, Tenacious K. Phiri and Timothy K. Phiri Jr., whom I wish to inspire that in life they need to aim higher and stay focused irrespective of circumstances they may encounter along the way for Francis Bacon once said, “Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes and adversity is not without comforts and hopes.”

With determination, there is absolutely nothing impossible!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
ABSTRACT.....	i
DECLARATION.....	ii
COPYRIGHT	iii
APPROVAL	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF APPENDICES	Error! Bookmark not defined.
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	xi
DEFINITION OF KEY OPERATIONAL TERMS	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Chapter Overview	1
1.2 Background	1
1.3 Statement of the problem	4
1.4 Purpose of the Study.....	5
1.5 Objectives.....	5
1.6 Research questions	5
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.8 Delimitation of the study	6
1.9 Limitations of the study	6
1.10 Theoretical Framework.....	6
1.11 Chapter Summary	7

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	8
2.1 Overview	8
2.2 Strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency.....	8
2.3 Challenges teachers face when teaching reading fluency.....	15
2.4 Practices that can be used in teaching reading fluency.....	22
2.5 Research Gap	31
2.6 Chapter Summary	31
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	33
3.1 Overview	33
3.2 Research Paradigm	33
3.3 Research Approach	33
3.4 Research Design.....	34
3.5 Target Population.....	34
3.6 Sample Size	34
3.7 Sampling Technique.....	35
3.8 Research Instruments	35
3.8.1 Interview Guide.....	35
3.8.2 Classroom Lesson Observation Guide.....	35
3.9 Data Analysis.....	36
3.10 Trustworthiness	36
3.10.1 Credibility	36
3.10.2 Dependability.....	37
3.10.3 Confirmability.....	37
3.10.4 Transferability	37
3.10.5 Authenticity.....	37
3.11 Ethical Considerations.....	38

3.11.1 Approval of the study.....	38
3.11.2 Informed consent.....	38
3.11.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity	38
3.12 Chapter Summary	38
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	40
4.1 Overview	40
4.2 Which strategies do teachers use to teach reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district?..	40
4.2.1 Findings from the participants	40
4.2.2 Findings from classroom observations	44
4.3. What challenges are teachers facing when teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district?	46
4.3.1 Findings from the teachers	46
4.3.2 Findings from classroom observations	51
4.4 Which practices can teachers use to effectively teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district?	53
4.4.1 Findings from the participants	53
4.4.2 Findings from classroom observations	57
4.4.3 Chapter Summary	59
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS	60
5.1 Overview	60
5.2 Strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.....	60
5.3 Challenges teachers faced when teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.....	64
5.4 Practices teachers could use to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni zone of Chipata district	68
5.5 Chapter Summary	72
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	74

6.1 Overview	74
6.2 Conclusion	74
6.3 Recommendations	75
6.4 Suggestion for further research	75
6.5 Chapter Summary	76
REFERENCES.....	77
APPENDICES.....	88
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE RESPONDENT (TEACHER)	88
Appendix 2: Classroom Observation Sheet.....	92
Appendix 3: Approval Letter	93
Appendix 4: Introductory Letter	94
Appendix 5: Permission Letter	95

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
MOGE	Ministry of General Education
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
PLP	Primary Literacy Programme
RR	Repeated Reading
TGMs	Teacher Group Meetings
ZPC	Zambia Primary Course
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

DEFINITION OF KEY OPERATIONAL TERMS

- Reading fluency:** ability to read rapidly, accurately and with proper expression
- Strategies:** methods teachers use to teach reading fluency
- Practices:** actions and strategies teachers deploy in the teaching process
- Challenges:** factors affecting effective teaching of reading fluency
- Multilingual learners:** learners who use more than two languages for communication
- Remediation:** special instruction provided to learners who need more support in reading
- Bilingual education:** teaching using two languages mainly native and second language
- Teaching:** the practice of imparting skills such as reading to a learner

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter will give the background to this particular study. The chapter will present the background of the intended topic of study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions. The chapter also provides the significance of the study, delimitation, limitations, and theoretical framework.

1.2 Background

Reading fluency is one of the basic reading skills which undeniably play crucial role in reading achievement. Conversely, some studies of experts in reading argue that reading fluency should not be considered a topic that requires attention (Cassidy, Orttieb, & Shettel, 2011) as it is perceived to have little value seeing that most of the reading that is done beyond the primary grades is silent reading. This perception may be influenced by Chall's (1996) model of reading development which places fluency as a competency to be mastered in the early stages of reading.

However, reading fluency has started receiving better attention in the recent past considering the impact it has on a learner's education. Experimental studies conducted recently verify that reading fluency play a key role for successful literacy as it is one of the pillars of effective reading instruction (National Reading Panel, 2000; Rasinski, 2012). Therefore, Fluency appears to be an interesting subject for researchers and practitioners for its effect on many components of reading such as word recognition and comprehension.

Hasbrouck and Glaser (2019) define reading fluency as reasonably accurate reading, at an appropriate rate, with suitable expression, that leads to accurate and deep comprehension. A learner that has acquired this skill can handle various linguistic assignments with ease. MOGE (2014) views reading fluency as the ability to read sentences with expression, accuracy and speed. It must be noted that most learners face a lot of challenges in their academic lives due to lack of accuracy, speed and automatic decoding of a given text as they are, to a larger extent, not well grounded in reading fluency.

According to Yildirim and Rasinski (2014), reading fluency is a prerequisite for the achievement of the reading comprehension which in turn leads to a learner's good academic outcomes. The experience that this researcher has in teaching is influential in appreciating the fact that most learners progress to the next grade with limited reading skills; needless to mention reading fluency skills. This has immensely contributed to learners' low performance in both primary and secondary schools. Canizo, Coalla & Cutetos (2015) add that reading fluency is strictly interrelated to comprehension and also correlated with important aspects of academic life, such as school outcomes. This is particularly because a fluent reader is hardly distracted by external factors and reads the text automatically and effortlessly thereby recognizing the words at hand and understands the author's intended message.

Various studies have shown that authentic fluency instruction has a remarkable potential for helping a wide range of learners beyond the primary grades improve their fluency, overall reading achievement and motivation for reading (Biggs, Homan, Dedrick & Rasinski, 2008; Griffith & Rasinski, 2004; Rasinski, Reutzel, Chard & Linan - Thompson, 2011). As noted by Rasinski (2012), when fluency instruction is treated as both an art and a science that can be taught through authentic and engaging forms of deep and teacher – supported reading, fluency can and will make a significant impact on the reading achievement and reading dispositions of all readers, especially those who are considered at most risk. This explains why reading fluency is now one of the five essential competencies outlined in the current Zambia Literacy Policy which a teacher is expected to teach the learners (MOGE, 2014).

Meanwhile, some studies are demonstrating that fluency has been a major concern for students in grades 4 (Daane, Campbell, Grigg, Goodman & Orange, 2005) and 5 in middle school (Morris & Gaffney, 2011) and in high school (Rasinski, Padak, McKeon, Wilfong, Friedauer & Heim, 2005). This calls for an investigation into the teaching of reading fluency in primary schools, particularly lower section which lays a foundation for any kind of reading.

It is interesting to note that in Zambia, several studies examining reading proficiency, over the years, have revealed low reading standards (Tambulukani & Yao, 2014; Kelly & Kanyika, 2000; Matafwali, 2005; Sharma, 1973). Sharma assessed grades 3 – 4 children on a 4-item single word

test and found that only 4.5 percent of the third graders were reading at their grade level. This finding justifies that the phenomenon of poor reading outcomes is not new in Zambia.

Another study by Chipili (2016) found that primary schools have continued recording poor reading levels despite having good infrastructure, manageable class enrolment of 38 to 40 learners per class, good staffing levels with no double classes for teachers and enough contact hours with the learners. Besides, several governments and Non-Governmental Organization funded interventional workshops involving key stakeholders at district, zonal and school levels have always been conducted to try and improve literacy levels but the problem seems to persist.

On the other hand, there have been a lot of efforts and interventions by the Zambian government through Ministry of Education and other stakeholders to improve literacy levels in the country. Prominent among the intervention has been the introducing and evaluating national literacy policies such as the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC), Primary Reading Programme (PRP) and Zambia Literacy Programme (PLP). Thus, in 2000, ZPC which had been there since independence was blamed for the poor reading outcomes and was replaced by the PRP with the hope of improving reading levels through the use a familiar language in grade one (Sampa, 2005).

This was done on assumption that beginning readers would acquire skills in their mother – tongue or familiar language before transferring them to learning to read in English (Ministry of Education, 2013). Initially, the PRP seemed quite promising as the children involved were able to break through to reading within the first year of formal instruction (Tambulukani, Chishimba, Mkandawire, 2018).

However, learners still experienced some problems with reading in English language as one year of mother – tongue instruction was deemed inadequate for effective skills transfer. As a result, the PLP with a longer period of initial mother – tongue based literacy instruction was adopted in order to give beginning readers more time to get familiarized with the reading process (Chibamba, Mkandawire, &Tambulukani, 2018). The PLP adopted the process of learning to read that is based on the five key competence skills namely; phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension (Chileshe et al., 2018). It is worth noting that the Primary Literacy Programme gave a special recognition to fluency as one of the five competencies that must characterize a literacy lesson (MOGE, 2014).

Despite the implementation of well researched interventions outlined in the 2013 Zambia Literacy Policy to improve reading proficiency in the country, many studies (Chipili, 2016; Kombe & Mwanza, 2019; Nambao & Mwanza, 2023; Mkandawire, et al., 2024) recently conducted suggest that the vast majority of learners in primary schools still struggle to read fluently.

The EGRA Baseline study in 2018 showed that only 10.2% of learners assessed in the five provinces (Eastern, Muchinga, Southern, Western and Northwestern) read fluently and comprehended grade level text (USAID Education Data, 2018). Similarly, the Monitoring Impact on Learning Outcomes (MILO) study reports that only 1.8% of the learners assessed in Early Primary in 2016 and 2.3% in 2021 attained the minimum proficiency level in reading (UNESCO, 2022).

Further, a study by Kasimba (2024) found that about 62 percent of Grade 5 learners at the selected school were reading at frustration level in English. Additionally, the average words per minute was at 44, the average words correct per minute was at 38, the average prosody score was 7 out of 16 points, average written comprehension score of 1 out of 5 marks. The study provides clear evidence regarding the continuing problem of reading fluency affecting the attainment of quality education in Zambia.

This can prompt one to ask the burning question: With all the corrective measures by government and other stakeholders, why did schools, especially in Mpezeni, continue to experience problems of having learners who were lacking in reading fluency?

1.3 Statement of the problem

Fluency is a very important skill not only in the life of a learner but also for everyone to fit in the contemporary world where most information is transmitted in written form. Camizo et al (2015) argue that reading fluency is strictly interrelated to comprehension and also correlated with important aspects of academic life, such as school outcomes. It is for this reason that the current Zambia Literacy Policy emphasizes the need for teachers to teach reading fluency (MOGE, 2014:1). However, as argued by Cronje (2021), learners can fail to read fluently due to inappropriate approaches used by teachers to teach reading fluency. Against this background, studies have been conducted in Zambia to investigate various aspects of reading (Ndila, 2019;

Kaani, Mulubale & Setwin, 2022; Nambao & Mwanza, 2023; Kasimba, 2024). However, these studies targeted upper primary classes and were guided by objectives that were contrary to the ones the current study this study sought to achieve. This implies that, while a lot could be known about reading fluency, there was very limited information on tested practices teachers could use to teach reading fluency in the Zambian context. Therefore, this study investigated the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district as not much was known about the strategies teachers used to teach fluency and the challenges they were facing were facing. Put in form of a question, the problem was: How did teachers teach reading fluency to the Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

1.5 Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni zone of Chipata district.
2. To determine the challenges teachers face when teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni zone of Chipata district.
3. To suggest practices that can be used in teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni zone of Chipata district.

1.6 Research questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. Which strategies do teachers use to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni zone of Chipata district?
2. What challenges are teachers facing when teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni zone of Chipata district?

3. Which practices can teachers use when teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni zone of Chipata district?

1.7 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the study findings may contribute to improvements in the teaching of reading fluency in the primary schools of Zambia and beyond in order to enable learners acquire quality education. The study findings may also help in informing education planners and policy makers about areas that may require attention for the country to produce fluent readers. The study will further provide relevant literature for future studies in reading fluency.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study was conducted in government primary schools in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study were that only primary schools from Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district were sampled. As a result, the findings may not be generalized to other parts of the country.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This study was influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) socio – cultural theory of learning which views learning as a social skill that requires an active participation, interaction and involvement of not only the learner but also the teacher. The theory is premised on two core elements; Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The latter is the level of development of a person under the guidance of older people or peer; the former entails the assistance given to the student (completely then gradually reduced) so that they can perform a task on their own (Slavin, 2019).

Riding on the core elements of this theory, the teacher can use scaffolding by structuring reading activities based the learners' existing reading skills (ZPD) and in a way that helps them to reach the desired reading fluency. The teacher can first demonstrate the process as the learner watches. Then the teacher lets the learner have a go, steps back, and offers support and feedback when needed. However, this support to reading fluency must be gradually removed as the reader masters the assigned skills.

Even though reading fluency is widely perceived as a product of a learner's personal effort through frequent practice, it can be argued that a learner needs a teacher to guide their reading behaviour in the social learning process (MOGE, 2014). The teacher must play their part well to ensure effective teaching of reading fluency to enable learners read better and faster.

1.11 Chapter Summary

Chapter one presented background information to the teaching of reading fluency with a view to establishing its relevance in the realization of quality education. The chapter also provided the statement of the research problem, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework, delimitation, limitations and definition of key terms. The next chapter presents reviews related literature.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

The previous chapter introduced this study by highlighting the background, statement of the problem, research objectives, significance, limitation and delimitation. This chapter will provide a review and synthesis of the literature related to the teaching of reading fluency in the primary schools. The literature has been segmented into three themes namely strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency, the challenges teachers face when teaching reading fluency and the practices that can be used in teaching reading fluency. Each study cited ends with a paragraph connecting it to the current study and provides the existing gap justifying the need for this study to be undertaken.

2.2 Strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency

Akyol and Altinay (2019) conducted a qualitative case study to remedy reading problems and develop reading skills in a fourth-grade primary school student with sound, syllable and word recognition exercises. The study covered 38 lesson periods in the autumn term of the 2018 – 2019 academic year. For developing reading skills, the strategies of prior listening to the paragraph, repetitive reading and word repetition were used. Data were obtained by means of observation and document examination. Based on the data obtained, first of all, sound, syllable and word recognition exercises were conducted with the student, and then reading exercises were carried out with texts selected to suit the level of the student's Turkish course books and story books. Analyses were performed by taking audio and video recordings of all exercises. As a result of the intervention, the student's desire to read increased. He began to read out loudly, identify sounds that he previously did not recognize or confused, and improvements in his reading skill were observed. The case study used a very small sample of only one participant who was the recipient of the intervention (the student). Meanwhile, this phenomenological study will use a bigger sample of ten teachers who teach fourth grades in the district, believing that receiving an instructional intervention is one thing, delivery is another. This is why this study concentrated on the teachers and not the student.

Padeliadu, Giazitidou & Stamovlasis, (2021) conducted a study in Greece to explore whether the use of specially designed texts in conjunction with specific instructional strategies can enhance the

reading fluency of students with severe reading difficulties. The intervention followed a within – subject design including pretest/post – test measures without control groups. The intervention program lasted for two months and included 16 individual sessions. Four illustrated books with controlled texts were designed and used within the program. Regarding instructional strategies – model – reading, assisted reading, self – monitoring and reinforcement were implemented. Based on the results it was revealed that the intervention program had a high impact on reading fluency in the four instructional texts. Analysis of pretest and post – test scores showed that the intervention program had a different effect for each individual on the measured skills. No effect was recorded for students’ reading fluency. However, the program significantly improved participants’ reading comprehension. The study under review was trying to find out whether or not specially designed texts used with specific reading strategies such as assisted reading, model reading and self – monitoring can enhance students’ reading fluency, with special interest in those with severe reading difficulties. On the other hand, this study invested the teaching of reading fluency with particular attention on the teacher; establish instructional strategies they use, challenges faced and the way forward. Hence, it was important.

Senawati, Suwastini, Javantini & Sri (2021) conducted a study aimed to critically review experts’ opinions and results of previous research on the definition and characteristics of reading aloud and its benefits for young children in the EFL contexts by employing George’s (2008) model of literature review. The review revealed that the teacher plays the most crucial role in the reading aloud, acting as a bridge between the text and the student’s comprehension. The study revealed that reading aloud benefits children’s English regarding their vocabulary, pronunciation skills, and motivation, literacy and critical thinking skills. The results imply that reading aloud is still relevant to be implemented nowadays because of the benefits it brings to children’s English. The study under review aimed to partly review the benefits of reading aloud to young children’s learning of English as a foreign language, on the contrary, the current study explored the strategies teachers used to teach reading fluency.

Rehayu and Mustadi (2022) conducted a study aimed to improve students’ reading literacy through the use of Read – Aloud method. The study use the Classroom Action Research (car). The subjects of this study were 18 graders of elementary school. Data were collected through observation, test questions, and documentation. The research instruments consisted of student observation sheets in

reading activities, reading performance test items, and documentation guidelines. The data were analysed following the descriptive qualitative techniques. The results indicated that the implementation of Read Aloud activities at Educational Park could improve students' reading literacy, particularly in the aspects of fluency and comprehension as students were able to read fluently in a clear intonation with correct pronunciation and use punctuation marks appropriately. While for comprehension, the students showed the ability to find the main idea, answer questions based on the reading, and conclude the reading context. The increase in the students' reading literacy was also supported by the assessment results, which climbed from the low to the excellent category. The study being reviewed here used learners as its sample while the current one used teachers.

Gedik and Akyol (2022) conducted a study to remediate the reading difficulties of a fifth – grade student having no physical or mental problems but experiencing reading difficulties and to develop his skills of reading fluency. For this purpose, the repeated reading, paired reading, and word repetition techniques were used in the research process. In addition, the meaning analysis, word map and vocabulary notebook techniques were also used due to the positive effect of rich vocabulary knowledge in remediating difficulties and improving skills of reading fluency. This study was designed as action research, one of the qualitative research designs, and it was carried out with a fifth – grade primary school student in Silvas in the spring term of 2018 – 2019. The error analysis inventory was used to determine the levels of reading and comprehension. It was found that the participant was at the level of frustration in the fifth, fourth and third grade texts and at the instructional level in the second – grade text. As a result of the reading, comprehension and vocabulary development activities, the student's reading motivation, desire and self – confidence increased, and he started to detect and correct reading aloud mistakes by himself. It was also observed that the participant, who was at the second – grade instructional level at the beginning, reached the independent level in the text of the third grade and the instructional level in the text of the fourth grade at the end of the study which lasted for 31 class hours. The reviewed study was essential to the current study as it investigated issues to do with reading fluency. However, it was conducted at fifth grade level while the current one concentrated on the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners.

Thurston, Bernal & Alvarado (2023) conducted a randomized trial in four Colombian elementary schools with eight classes, and 298 third and fifth grade pupils. Results indicated that Paired Reading could be an effective, low cost strategy for improving reading. Positive results for the Paired Reading group, compared to the control group were observed (effect size +0.16). This study is very important to the current study in that it brought paired reading as a strategy which some schools used to improve reading. However, their attention was on whether or not the strategy could be transferred to other languages and education systems. The current study concentrated on the teaching of reading fluency by establishing strategies that teachers use, the challenges they face and recommend the best practices to address the fluency issues affecting teachers in Mpezeni Zone in particular.

Stocker, Fox, Swain & Leif (2022) conducted a study to examine the effects of a combined explicit decoding plus frequency building intervention on consonant (CVC) word reading fluency. Participants were two third grade students and one fourth grade student receiving special education services from an urban U.S. elementary school. Delivered during the intervention block, the students practiced 5 to 8 minutes per day over 8 to 9 days per word list. The multiple probe design demonstrated an experimental effect for all three participants, with significant gains revealed on individual word lists, curriculum – based assessment, and curriculum – based measurement. The study by Strocker and others is very pertinent to the current study as revealed the positive effects of word decoding as one of the instructional strategies used to teach reading fluency. However, the study did not reveal challenges that teachers would encounter in the process of teaching reading fluency and provide alternative measures. These are issues that the current study delved into in the quest to find lasting solutions to the reading fluency problem affecting primary schools in Zambia generally and Mpezeni Zone, to be specific.

Reyes, Valmorida & Alayon (2023) conducted a study to explore teachers' strategies, challenges, and coping mechanisms in helping struggling reading in the new normal in Philippines. The research participants were 14 selected elementary teachers of Tungawan Central Elementary School, specifically teachers handling Grade one, two and three pupils. This study utilized a single case study method to determine the teachers' strategies, challenges, and coping mechanisms in helping struggling readers during the pandemic. The study results showed that the participants utilized various strategies to help struggling readers, such as conducting remedial classes, using

phonetics, doing a simultaneous reading, and integrating games and reading materials. In addition, the participants also encountered the following challenges: lack of student willingness, lack of parents' cooperation, lack of time for reading, lack of reading materials, and lack of teacher's patience. Furthermore, to address the challenges, the participants identified coping mechanisms: having more patience, fostering a supportive learning environment, using teaching strategies, and motivating themselves. The findings of this study are very influential to the current study as it brought out a lot of aspects that are pertinent to the matter under investigation. However, the study was conducted in the new normal in Philippines while this one was conducted in the post covid – 19 pandemic period in Mpezeni Zone.

Midi, Tahang & Akib (2024) conducted a study entitled 'The Use of Choral Reading Strategy to Improve Students' Reading Skills.' The study was a classification action research using one class pre – test and post – test 1, posttest 2 which aimed to find out the effectiveness of choral as a strategy to improve the students' reading skill at second grade of SMP Negeri 7 Sorong City. This had 20 students. The researcher applied total technique sampling and test as the instrument of data collection. After several meetings, the study revealed that the use of choral and reading strategy significantly improved the students' reading skills. The reviewed study investigated the use of choral reading strategy to improve students' reading skills while the current study explored the teaching of reading fluency.

Oduro, Mensah & Quansah, (2021) conducted a qualitative inquiry into exploring the approaches used by teachers to remediate phonics difficulties among struggling readers at Unipra South Cluster of Schools at Winneba in Ghana. Grade 4 English Language teachers were sampled to participate in the study. An unstructured interview was conducted to collect data with the help of an interview guide. Data were analysed using the thematic analysis approach. The study found that the grade 4 teachers predominantly used the jolly phonics and rhyming methods in remediating phonics difficulties among struggling readers. It was further revealed that materials used during instruction were flashcards, manila cards, chalkboards and textbooks. However, the study explored approaches used by teachers to remediate phonics difficulties among struggling readers in Ghana while the current study concentrated on the teaching of reading fluency in to grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni of Chipata district, Zambia. Therefore, it was very imperative.

Adamu, Tsiga & Zuilkowski (2022) conducted a study to explore how teachers approached reading instruction in Nigeria. The study documented primary grades classes with as many as 160 children and used in – depth interviews with 20 teachers in Kano State. The results indicate that most teachers reported using grouping to teach reading, while some relied on instructional materials or the group level rather than individual; teachers generally lacked a detailed understanding of students’ reading development. Classroom management and discipline were ongoing concerns. The study under review here is very essential to the current study in that it revealed approaches teachers use when teaching reading. Nonetheless, while the study used in – depth interviews with teachers, the current study intended to observe reading lessons besides interviews to appreciate the actual teacher behaviour the teaching of reading fluency.

Olaoluwa and Ebey (2022) conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of paired reading strategy on reading ability of struggling readers in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. A quasi – experimental study was adopted. The study population was all the 2, 974 primary three pupils in all the 47 public primary schools. The purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 73 primary three pupils from two intact classes. Reading Level Classificatory Test (RLCT) (Beginners), Reading Level Classificatory Test (RLCT) (Intermediate), Reading Level Classificatory Test (RLCT) (Proficient) and Struggling Readers Reading Ability Test (SRRAT) were used as the instruments for the study. Kudar Richardson Formula 21 was used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments, which yielded coefficient indexes of 0.68 for Reading Level Classificatory Test (Beginners), 0.74 for Intermediate, 0.69 for proficient and 0.90 for SRRAT. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while analysis of covariance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis. The study revealed a significant difference in the mean reading ability scores of struggling readers exposed to paired reading strategy than those exposed to choral reading strategy. The study, which was conducted in Nigeria, examined the effectiveness of paired reading strategy on reading ability of struggling readers. The current study, which was conducted Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district, looked at the teaching reading fluency in primary schools with particular interest in grade four teachers as opposed to primary three pupils the reviewed study targeted.

Marima (2016) conducted a study to establish teachers’ orientation in reading instructions in early childhood settings and adopted the descriptive research design using the survey method and

observation technique. A sample of 10 primary schools from Dagoretti and 10 from Westlands divisions in Nairobi County were studied. The study concludes that although most teachers indicated that they were confident, they also indicated that they were not well equipped with relevant teaching methods. Majority of pre – unit teachers used phonics and others whole – word methods. Lack of reading materials and guidelines was the common challenge. The study importantly brought out the approaches teachers use to teach reading in Kenya. However, research was set to establish teachers’ orientation in reading instructions in early childhood while the current study intended to investigate the teaching of reading fluency in primary schools of Chipata district in Zambia’s Eastern Province. Therefore, the current study still remained relevant.

Kulwenz (2022) conducted a study to explore the teaching of reading in lower primary classes in one public primary school in Kocheke sub country, Uganda. It was a single case study that adopted a qualitative research approach targeting six teachers, two from every lower class, one Headteacher, and one District Inspector of schools who were purposively selected summing up to eight participants. The study used face – to – face semi – structured interviews and document analysis methods during data collection. The study revealed that teachers used whole language, phonics, and balanced methods to teach reading. However, the findings argued that although the phonics methods helped learners to read new words on their own, it hindered learners’ fluency and confused slow learners and those who never went through pre – primary. The study also revealed that the whole language methods helped learners who had challenges with the language of instruction to read although it never helped them in reading unfamiliar words independently. With all these weaknesses of the reading strategies regarding reading fluency, the current recommend the practices that teachers can use to teach reading fluency in primary schools.

Language of instruction can have an influence on the development of reading skills among young learners. In line with this, Mkandawire et al., (2024) conducted a study to understand multilingual teachers’ pedagogical approaches to helping non – speakers of the language of instruction learn initial reading (decoding) skills in diverse classes of Lusaka district of Zambia. Qualitative data were collected through face – to – face interviews, focus groups, and lesson observations with 23 Grade one teachers. Data collected were transcribed and qualitative content analysis was performed through a meaning condensation process. Findings of the study revealed that teachers in multilingual classes used translanguaging, bilingual materials, remediation and reading

intervention strategies to teach literacy among early graders. Further, parents, multilingual teachers, and bilingual learners were also used as resources in multilingual classes. This study by Mkandawire and others, however, revealed strategies teachers used to teach literacy in general and not reading fluency in particular. Therefore, the current study investigated strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency, challenges they face and the way forward. The grade they investigated (grade 1) was too low for reading fluency as this research involved grade 4 teachers.

Ndila (2019) conducted a study to investigate the implications of instructional methods on reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in selected schools in Kabwe district, Zambia. The study employed qualitative approach using a descriptive research design. It had a sample of 30 participants consisting of 15 learners and 15 teachers who were purposively and conveniently drawn from three selected special education units in Kabwe district. Data were collected through interview, observation and focus group discussion guides. Analysis of data was done thematically where merging themes were presented in a descriptive form. The study revealed phonetics, linguistic, comprehension, multisensory, whole word, look and say and basal reading approaches were the mostly used instructional methods in teaching learners with reading difficulties. The study under review looked at the implications of instructional methods on reading skills to learners with reading difficulties in Kabwe. Additionally, the study looked at reading in general. However, the current study specifically looked at the teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district of Zambia.

2.3 Challenges teachers face when teaching reading fluency.

For learners to attain reading fluency, teachers' knowledge plays a key role. In line with this, Pittman, Zhang, Binks – Cantrell & Hudson, (2019) conducted a study in England to assess teachers' ability to understand concepts relating to phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle/phonics, and morphology as well as their knowledge about teaching these fundamental skills. The study used a sample of 150 urban, elementary school teachers from 11 low socio – economic schools in one of the nation's largest cities. Using exploratory factor analysis to understand the latest constructs underlying the survey scores and hierarchical linear modeling on factor scores of each construct, the results revealed that teachers located in low socio – economic status schools did not have explicit knowledge needed to effectively teach struggling readers.

Although teachers possessed a high level of knowledge regarding syllable counting skills, they lacked knowledge related to morphology. The study under review by Pittman and others was only interested in assessing teachers' ability to understand concepts relating to phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, alphabetic/phonics and morphology without investigating the teaching of reading fluency, challenges they faced and the way forward. This is what the current study intended to focus on.

Lu (2022) conducted a study in Philippines entitled 'Challenges Teachers Face in Teaching Reading among Elementary Pupils.' An in – depth interview and focus – group discussion was conducted to 14 teachers, 7 for in – depth interviews and 7 for focus group. The respondents were elementary teachers. The data obtained from the study were coded and analysed using the data reduction, thematic analysis, drawing conclusions and verification. The findings showed that the existing challenges of teachers in teaching reading comprehension to elementary pupils are the inadequacy understanding reading, deficiency reading development, underdeveloped sounds and words recognition, difficulty attending students' need and insufficient reading materials. While the study under review focused on challenges teachers faced in teaching reading among elementary pupils, the current study will focus on the teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district. Particularly, the study examined strategies teachers use in teaching reading fluency in primary schools, challenges they encounter in the process and the way forward.

Desta (2020) conducted a study to investigate practices of teaching early reading and challenges teachers face in its implementation at the Ethiopia primary schools. The study was carried out in 224 grade two government primary schools found in the Amhara National Regional State in 2019/2020 academic year. The study used a descriptive research and 112 English language teachers participated. Interview, questionnaire and observation were used to gather data. The findings revealed that teachers failed to practice the teaching of early reading in line with the purposes and principles of teaching early reading. Teachers used traditional way of teaching approach in teaching reading. The study also showed that teachers are deficiently trained regarding phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, vocabulary and phonemic awareness. Besides, lack of teacher training, lack of materials, and unrelated educational qualification were major impediments of teachers while implementing teaching early reading. This study was very important to the current study as it brought out issues regarding practices of teaching early reading

and challenges teachers face. However, it did not recommend the practices that would be used to teach reading fluency, which was the main target of the current study.

Ehsan, Iqbal & Rehman (2021) conducted a study to look at the possible issues associated with shyness among school going children especially when they are in the classroom. The survey questionnaire had been deployed with seven perceived statements on a 5 – point rating scale. A total of 150 students participated in this study. Outside of the class, the researcher had summarized the results of the shyness survey in terms of percentages. The results showed that majority of secondary level students perceived that shyness is a natural process and that a teacher can help the students to overcome their shyness in the classroom. Participants agreed that there is close association between shyness and lack of confidence. Shy students mostly felt uncomfortable in the classroom and it causes a huge academic loss. Although shyness is a natural phenomenon, yet fear of failure, fear of humiliation and hesitation contribute to promote shyness among students. The study by Ehsan and others used questionnaire while the current study used interview guide and classroom observation schedule as instruments.

Another study was conducted by Haile and Mendisu (2023) to identify the challenges affecting teacher practice of phonological awareness (PA) in the first – grade classrooms of the teaching of the Koorete language in Ethiopia. This study adopted the descriptive research design using the survey method and exploratory case study technique, and it was conducted in the selected schools in Amaro in the Southern part of Ethiopia. Qualitative method was used to observe, and interview selected participating teachers, and questionnaires were used with the thirty native language teachers selected through stratified sampling and 30 native language teachers were selected through target sampling from the selected schools based on their qualifications, experience, and recommendations for merit. Classroom observations, in – depth semi – structured interviews, and questionnaires were used to collect data. The recorded data were then transcribed, translated, analyzed and then they were thematically discussed. The results of the study showed that lack of subject content and pedagogical knowledge, inadequate teaching materials, inadequate teacher training programmes, lack of an enabling literacy – rich environment, and lack of in-service training in the first grades pose major challenges. In as much as this study is pertinent to the current study, it was meant to identify challenges affecting teacher practice of phonological awareness in particular, in the first-grade classrooms of Ethiopia whereas the current study intends to investigate

the teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district. Therefore, its objectives could not be nullified by the study under review the aim, objectives and research sites were totally different.

Ekeh, Jacob, Pillay & Idemudia (2023) conducted a study to examine reading comprehension strategies adopted by teachers to enhance reading comprehension among primary school learners. The study adopted a qualitative research method with an interpretivist paradigm. Ten (10) teachers were purposively selected for the study, one each from ten (10) primary schools. Data were collected from the selected participants using semi – structured interview. Data collected were analysed using the atlatl software and the thematic data analysis technique. Findings indicate that some teachers did not understand the various strategies to optimize reading comprehension. Teachers also lacked knowledge of different learners’ learning preferences to plan their reading comprehension lessons. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate reading materials and differentiated reading exercises for slow learners were highlighted among the challenges that hampered reading comprehension. The study by Ekeh and others is very essential to the current study. However, the use of a single research instrument, semi – structured interview, cannot give an in – depth insight of the problem under investigation. Therefore, the current study used open – ended interviews and classroom lesson observations to establish the real issues surrounding the matter in depth; the teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

Cekiso (2017) conducted a study in South Africa to establish the Foundation Phase teachers’ perceptions of their role in teaching. The study was qualitative in nature and a case study was followed. Semi – structured interviews were purposively selected from public schools. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Findings of the study showed that the majority of teachers were not adequately prepared to teach reading and to deal with learners who experience problems in reading. Some teachers indicated that they were not even trained to teach in the Foundation Phase. The findings also showed that the majority of respondents doubted if the classroom practice would yield positive results in as far as reading instruction is concerned. The findings further indicated that the majority of respondents only paid attention to oral reading (observing punctuation marks and pronunciation), without attending to reading comprehension. This study was related to the current study in that it brought out challenges in implementing reading

interventions. Even so, the current study went further by suggesting practices that teachers can use to teach reading fluency.

Similarly, Mazinyo and Pillay (2017) conducted a descriptive survey designed to investigate challenges teachers encounter in teaching English reading in the province of Kwazulu Natal. This study comprised 44 teachers who were purposively sampled on grounds of availability. Views were sampled through the use of a self – made questionnaire. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24, resulting descriptive data. The findings of the study revealed that teachers were faced with numerous challenges which include, among others, learners who were unable to read; mother tongue interference, and overloading of the curriculum. Another salient finding was lack of support for teachers from both the Department of Education and parents. This study is closely related to the current study as it brings challenges teachers face as they impart reading skills to learners. Nonetheless, the current study has special interest in reading fluency which is different from ordinary reading. Besides, the use of questionnaire as the only research instrument did guarantee authenticity of a study. Thus, the current study used lesson observation guide and open – ended interview guides to collect authentic data.

Lungu (2019) conducted a study to establish the effects of the use of Cinyanja as a medium of classroom instruction in selected primary schools in multilingual Chilanga district. The study employed a qualitative research design and purposive and random sampling techniques were used to come up with 26 respondents. Data were collected through interviews, document analysis, focus group discussions and classroom observations of literacy lessons. The study revealed that some teachers as well as pupils did not have much knowledge on the language of classroom instruction (Cinyanja), both had to learn the language first before the teaching and learning sessions. It was also established that teachers were not adequately trained on the new language policy. The study by Lungu looked at the effects of Cinyanja as a medium of classroom instruction in selected primary schools in multilingual Chilanga district. On the contrary, the current study looked at the teaching of reading fluency to multilingual grade four learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

Chipili (2016) carried out a study to investigate factors that contribute to the poor performance in reading of grade 2 learners in selected primary schools which fall in low and high populated areas of Chibombo district. The descriptive study was conducted in seven primary and three community

schools with a sample of teachers teaching grade two pupils and other teachers teaching grades one to four, and ten learners from each school making a total of 122 respondents. Data on teacher focused on attitude to teaching literacy and the methodology of literacy. Data collection on learners was conducted using assessment tool, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). The findings indicated that teacher learner interaction was not adequately implemented. Most teachers were having double classes due to low staffing levels against high pupil enrolment. Some teachers were in hurry of teaching in order to finish the syllabus. Findings further revealed that community school teachers were not motivated especially where payments were concerned. The reviewed study investigated the factors that contribute to poor performance in reading of grade 2 learners while this study explored the teaching of reading fluency to grade 4 multilingual learners. Therefore, it was prudent that was undertaken.

Kombe and Mwanza (2019) conducted a study to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy in selected primary schools in Kitwe district on the Copperbelt. The study employed qualitative descriptive design. Purposive sampling technique was used to come up with 134 respondents, that is, 103 classroom teachers, 30 lecturers and 1 District Resource Personnel. Data were collected through interviews and focus group discussions. The study found that while some teachers were trained, others were not. Even after commissioning the policy in 2014, schools still lacked teaching resources with which they could implement the policy. Teacher training institutions were finding it challenging to comprehensively revise their teacher education programme because they did not fully understand the content of the 2014 revise policy. This study was essential to the current study as it investigated the preparedness of teachers to teach literacy; a concept that encompasses reading. However, the current study paid attention to the teaching of reading fluency with special interest in teacher factors.

Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021) conducted a study to establish challenges teachers and pupils faced as a result of teaching and learning using the translanguaging pedagogical practices in multilingual grade 1 class of Lundazi district. A phenomenological design was used in one class for one term on a sample of 41 pupils and 1 teacher of literacy. Classroom observations and interviews were used to collect data that were analysed thematically. The study found that the teaching of literacy using translanguaging practices in a grade 1 multilingual class was associated with challenges like the mismatch between the language of instruction and dominant learners' familiar languages that

existed in the classroom: rigidity of the language policy which was based on monolingualism throughout the learner's learning process: strict monolingualistic assessment which only which tested skills in the regional language and: inadequate teaching and learning materials which supported monolingual language learning. The study under review was related to the current study as its investigations were around language of instruction in 'literacy', a concept which contains the reading aspect being investigated by this study. However, the current study investigated the teaching of reading fluency, specifically approaches which teachers used, challenges faced and the way forward.

Mubanga & Musenge (2020) conducted a study to investigate the challenges teachers faced in the process of teaching reading phonic and sight words to fourth grade learners in the selected primary schools of Lusaka district Zambia. Using qualitative and quantitative approaches, they collected data from teachers and fourth grade learners through survey interviews and observation. A questionnaire was administered to 100 learners who had just completed their fourth grade and another questionnaire to 20 fourth grade teachers in the five primary schools. Class observations were done, and interviews were conducted with the school administrators. Quantitative data were analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), while the thematic approach was used to analyze qualitative data. The findings of the study indicated that some children absconded themselves on the early days of their first grade (grade one) where early reading was introduced hence failed to cope with reading phonic and sight words. The challenge was over enrolment of pupils in the schools in the early grades because the government schools were few in the area hence teachers failed to pay attention to learners with learning difficulties due to the high teacher – pupil ratios. The other finding from the study was that there was shortage of appropriate quality teaching and learning materials for early grade reading in the primary schools of Lusaka district. This study by Mubanga and other investigated the challenges teachers faced in the process of teaching reading phonic and sight words. On the contrary, the current study investigated the teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

Further, Nambao & Mwanza (2023) conducted a study to establish the teachers' views on teaching oral reading fluency in grade 5. The research objective was 'what are the teachers' views on teaching oral reading fluency in grade 5? A phenomenological research design was used in this study which purposively sampled six schools and 12 grade 5 teachers who were teaching language

in the selected primary schools in Zambia. The study found that teachers held a view that Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) is a skill that can only be taught in lower primary grades (1 – 4) and not in upper primary grades (5 – 6). The study further revealed that teachers have the content knowledge of ORF but lack the pedagogical knowledge to teach fluency to grade 5 learners. The study review was very significant in that it brought out perceptions that some teachers in primary schools have towards the teaching of oral reading fluency to grade 5 learners as they submitted that the skill (ORF) only needed to be taught to lower primary grades (1 – 4). This explains why the current study targeted the grade 4 teachers.

2.4 Practices that can be used in teaching reading fluency.

Young, Mohr & Rasinski (2015) conducted a survey to establish the effectiveness of Reading Together Intervention which combines repeated reading and Neurological Impress method. Sixteen volunteers from various backgrounds were recruited and trained to deliver Reading Together Intervention to struggling readers in third through fifth grade. The differences on the outcomes measures between the treatment (n = 29) and comparison (n = 23) were statistically significant. Thus, students in the treatment demonstrated increased reading expansion, reading rate, and overall reading scores. Results suggest that Reading Together is a feasible method of increasing proficiency. The study only concentrated on the effectiveness of a reading intervention without investigating the possible challenges teachers might be facing in its implantation. This study addressed the reading fluency problem in primary schools by investigating various phenomena.

Other instructional practices that have proven to be effective tools to increase sight word fluency in students with reading disabilities are the reading racetracks. To this effect, Grunke (2019) conducted a single – case study in Germany to evaluate this technique. Four elementary school children with various learning difficulties received nine to twelve individual intervention sessions from one of the two graduate students. The results indicated that reading fluency of 30 common two – syllable German words rose remarkably in the four participants. This study provides further evidence that reading racetracks are an effective practice to build fluency in children with learning difficulties. In as much as the study under review is significant to the current study, it was conducted merely to evaluate a reading fluency technique. On the contrary, this study investigated

how the actual teaching was done in order to establish strategies used and recommend better practices. Besides, the study was conducted in Germany, a developed country, whose educational conditions may not be obtainable in Zambia and Mpezeni Zone in particular.

Chard et al (2022) conducted a study in to synthesize research on interventions that are designed primarily to build reading fluency for students with learning difficulties. The research yielded 24 published and unpublished studies that reported findings on intervention features, including repeated reading with and without a model, sustained reading, repetitions, text difficulty and specific improvement criteria. Their findings suggest effective interventions for building fluency reading, multiple opportunities to repeatedly read familiar text independently and with corrective feedback, and established performance criteria for increasing text difficulty. The study was closely related to this one as it brought out some interventions that could help to enhance reading fluency. However, it did not consider the challenges teachers encounter when teaching reading fluency. Therefore, this is one of the areas that this study delved into in order to provide realistic solutions.

To improve oral reading fluency rate and promote its generalization to unpracticed texts, Reed, Zimmermann & Reeger (2019) conducted a study to investigate a Varied Practice approach that involved passages with a high proportion of overlapping words ($m = 85\%$ unique word overlap). Fourth graders were randomly assigned either to the Varied Practice treatment ($n = 405$), where they read three different passages one time each, or the Repeated Reading Comparison ($n = 422$), in which they read the same passage three times each. Both groups read with a partner for about 20 minutes, 3 – 4 times per week, over an average 12 weeks (30 total sessions). Results indicated that students in Varied Practice demonstrated significantly better fluency outcomes than students in Repeated Reading, but both groups demonstrated growth near the 90th percentile. Results of a quantile regression revealed that low – to – middle achievers benefited from Varied Practice the most. Overall, the findings suggest fluency approaches rooted on statistical learning hold promise as an alternative to approaches focused on practicing words in redundant contexts. The study being revealed here was only interested in the end result of the reading fluency intervention; hence, their sample only consisted of learners only. However, the sample for the current only comprised grade 4 teachers.

Parental involvement in reading interventions can spur reading fluency. Zhou, Dufrene, Mercer & Olmi (2019) carried out a study to test the effects of parent – implemented reading interventions on four elementary students’ reading fluency. The students’ mothers were trained to implement the interventions at home. The interventions were tested via a multiple baseline design across students. During the intervention phase, parents’ treatment integrity was monitored and students’ oral reading fluency for novel, grade – level progress monitoring passages was assessed. Visual analysis indicates that all four students demonstrated increases in oral reading fluency for instructional passages and novel progress monitoring passages after intervention implementation. The study Zhou and others was very compatible to this study as it brought interventions that could help improve reading fluency in schools. Even so, their investigations targeted parents whose influence in the teaching of reading fluency, especially third world countries, is almost negligible. Therefore, this study invited the participation of teachers as the ones who teach reading fluency to learners on full time basis.

Ceyhan and Yildiz (2021) conducted a study to examine the effect of interactive reading aloud (IRA) lessons on students’ reading comprehension levels, reading motivation, and reading fluency skills. A mixed experimental design was used to model the study. This study was conducted in a Turkish public school in the academic year 2017 – 2018, with 62 second – grade students, 22 in the first experimental group, 20 in the control group, and it lasted for 11 weeks. The IRA lessons within the research scope were performed by the researcher in one experimental group and a second – grade teacher who was responsible for the class itself in the other experimental group. Reading comprehension, Rubric, Motivation to Read Profile Scale, and Rubric for Reading Prosody were used as data collection tools. The findings of the study revealed that reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading fluency levels of the students in the experimental group were higher than those of the students in the class where lessons were taught on the basis of the current Turkish lesson curriculum. Furthermore, it was determined that IRA practices improved students’ levels of reading comprehension, reading motivation and reading fluency skills, independently of the practitioner. This study was very pertinent to the current study. However, it was conducted at second – grade level while the current research was conducted at fourth – grade level.

Shenoy, Lyer & Zahedi, (2022) conducted a study to examine how phonics – based instruction with early English literacy outcomes for students in kindergarten. Their sample comprised 627 students attending a private middle – cost school in Mumbai, India where the language of instruction was English. Students were tested for early literacy skills in kindergarten using the DIBELSNext benchmarking measures. They compared groups of students who received no phonics (n = 165) to students who received one year of phonics (n = 234) and students who received two years of phonics (n = 228) respectively. Their results suggested that students who received both one and two years of phonics instruction in preschool significantly outperformed those who did not receive any phonics instruction on all the skills assessed. Moreover, the risk of students being at risk for reading difficulties reduced significantly with an increase in years of phonics instruction. The study by Shenoy and others is important to the current study in that it revealed a phonics instruction as a useful intervention in the teaching of reading fluency. Nevertheless, the study was conducted a very low level (preschool), where the teaching of reading fluency may not be applicable according to Zambian education curriculum. Therefore, this study targeted grade 4 teachers because by that grade, learners must have broken through to literacy so as to take on reading fluency lessons, advanced stage in literacy, that concentrate on speed, accuracy and so on.

Another paper by Balasubramaniam (2023) entitled ‘Reading Dyfluency in Indian Classrooms’ identified the following as problems exhibited by readers with reading fluency issues: word recognition difficulties, inability to read in sense groups, problems to do with accuracy, automaticity and expression. To enhance reading fluency, the paper recommended loud reading, echo reading, choral reading, beginning with smaller texts, repeated reading, poetry recitation and performing scripted skits, paired reading, repeated reading and supported reading as key strategies. The paper targeted reading Dyfluency in Indian classrooms and as such, the recommendations made here might be influenced by the prevailing conditions in those classrooms which might not be applicable in Zambian classrooms, Chipata district in particular. Therefore, the current study remains very significant.

Taguchi, Gorsuch & Mitani (2023) conducted a study to explore whether the Audio – Assisted Repeated Reading (RR) method facilitates readers’ fluency growth. The study focused on 27 U.S. College – level learners of Japanese comprising three ability groups from mid – beginners to low

– intermediate. The researchers found beneficial effects of audio – supported RR in terms of reading rate growth while learners maintained good comprehension. The study showed a significant practice effect, in which learners increased their reading rates while re – reading the same passage. Further, learners in one of the groups read significantly faster with a new, unpracticed passages representing transfer of practice effect. The results of this study were very influential to the current study in that they revealed an effective method that could be used to teach reading fluency. Nonetheless, their study targeted a very high level in the education hierarchy (college) besides having been conducted in the United States of America. The current study was conducted in Chipata district of Zambia and will investigate the teaching of reading fluency to grade 4 learners.

Still in the in the United States of America, Hudson, Koh, Moore, Binks - Centrell (2020) reviewed sixteen empirical studies conducted in 2000 – 2019 that examined oral reading fluency interventions among elementary students to identify the characteristics of effective oral reading interventions and their impact on English oral reading fluency and reading comprehension outcomes. Their findings support the use of repeated reading of students with reading difficulties. Interventions that were found to be most effective were those that were conducted one – on – one with a trained model of fluent word reading and accuracy. The reviewed studies by Hudson and others were only interested in oral reading interventions and their impact on English oral reading fluency. The current study established the strategies teachers used to teach reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone, challenges they faced and recommended practices that could be used to effectively teach reading fluency.

Suwandi and Wardhani (2023) conducted an audio research to improve the quality of reading learning for elementary school students affected by the Mount Sinabung disaster in the Siosar Shelter area, Indonesia. Reading problems experienced by students include difficulty recognizing letters, spelling stammering, difficulty reading words, not paying attention to punctuation, not understanding the content of reading and low motivation to learn. The action taken to solve the problem was to utilize a literacy workshop assisted by audio – visual media. The study was carried out in two cycles with two meetings each. Data were collected through tests, observations, analysis of documents and interviews. Data analysis was carried out quantitatively and qualitatively. The results of the study showed that the quality and process of reading results improved after the action

(the average initial condition of 52.23 increased to 81.06). The findings were reinforced by t – test results that showed that there were significant differences in reading competence in pre – action and in the post – action and the results of the second cycle actions. The study only examined the use of a literacy workshop assisted by audio visual media in improving the quality of reading among students affected by mount Sinabung disaster in siosar shelter area in Indonesia. On the contrary, the current study sought to establish practices teachers could use to teach reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

Raddi (2018) conducted a study to discover if the choral and echo reading strategies were effective to increase fluency. The participant of this study was a 7 – year – old Caucasian male in second grade, classified under SLD (Specific Learning Disability) with dyslexia. The study took place in a general education classroom of a private school. The data were collected using the researcher’s field notes on the student’s participation during scheduled reading time. An interview was conducted with another teacher to evaluate changes within the student’s progress. Lastly, the quantitative fluency scores, recorded as the number of words per minute, were used. The research was conducted using a multiple probe design by comparing the fluency scores of two different stories; one a cold read and one a repeated read. The results showed that fluency emerged more effectively in repeated and taught stories rather than cold read stories. The study conducted by Raddi only had one participant, a 7 – year old second grader with dyslexia. The current study used a sample of ten teachers teaching grade 4 classes in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

Arevalo (2023) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of remedial reading instructions provided to the pupils aiming to improve their literacy levels. A quasi – experimental research design employing pre – test and post – test to evaluate the effectiveness of remedial reading instructions in improving the literacy levels of the identified frustrated readers in Grade 4. Simple percentage and t – test of mean difference were the statistical tools used to interpret the result of the study. The study revealed a significant difference in the literacy programme of the Grade 4 pupils before and after the implementation of remedial reading instruction through the utilization of the teacher – made activities and reading materials. The study also indicated that since pupils have different needs, it is crucial that their reading instruction be as closely tailored to their actual needs as possible. Thus, making remedial reading instructions an effective strategy in helping and making pupils learn to read. The study under review evaluated the effectiveness of remedial

reading instructions provided to the pupils to improve their literacy levels whereas the current study explored the teaching of reading fluency.

Another study was conducted by Suhaimi (2018) to investigate the effects of a reading strategy, repeated readings on reading fluency. Three students as members of two classrooms in one junior high school participated in this two week study. The research employed a quantitative means by using pre – experimental design. A pre – post – test design was used. The results of this study indicate that repeated reading strategy is found to be overall effective on reading speed and reading accuracy. The research under review employed a quantitative approach that used pre – experimental design to investigate the effects of a reading strategy, repeated readings on reading fluency. The current study was qualitative in nature influenced by a phenomenology design to investigate the teaching of reading fluency to the Grade 4 learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

Similarly, Xin and Yunus (2020) carried out a survey to explore the effectiveness of the reading intervention – assisted repeated reading using graded readers in improving the oral reading fluency of struggling elementary aged readers learning English as a second language (ESL). This action research based study was carried out with 7 struggling ESL readers from a primary school in the period of 30 days. The findings collected from three different data collection methods revealed that the participants were able to read with higher accuracy in word recognition and faster reading rate with improved prosodic reading. This study was carried out with 7 struggling ESL readers but the current study involved three teachers teaching Grade 4 classes in Mpezeni Zone.

Waruwu, Rahmawati, Daulay (2023) conducted a study aimed to improve the ability to read fluently in learning English, especially aspects of reading skills using the demonstration method for third grade students at Talitakum Private Elementary School. The study was a pre – experimental which involved only one class and was carried out in two meetings. The study used a total sample sampling technique. The results showed that student learning outcomes increased from 33.3% (before the treatment) to 83.3% (after being given the treatment) which indicated that demonstration is an effective method for teaching reading fluency. Talitakum Private Elementary School has an increasing influence on the ability to read fluently in learning English using the

demonstration method. While the study by Waruwu and others was very crucial to the current study, it was conducted at one private school whereas this one involved three government schools.

Some teachers have found nurturing reading proficiency of pupils through phonics beneficial. Shoaga, Akintola & Okpor (2017) conducted a study to investigate the influence of pupils with implications for entrepreneurial opportunities for Early Childhood Educators in Nigeria. Ex – Post facto survey design and proportionate random sampling technique were adopted for the study. Structured Questionnaire (PRA Scale, $r = 0.68$) was administered on a sample three hundred pupils from twenty (20) elementary schools in Ikorudu, Lagos, Nigeria. Descriptive statistics of simple percentages was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that teaching of phonics has improved the pupils' reading ability with 96.7% of the pupils who applied sound of letters in pronouncing new words. This study which involved early childhood educators used an Ex – Post Facto survey design was conducted in Nigeria. However, this was conducted in Zambia, with grade 4 teachers as participants, and used a phenomenology design.

Schools often encounter situations where some learners and teachers face challenges with the authorized language of instruction because of linguistic diversity. To address such challenges, the use of bilingual approaches becomes inevitable. Therefore, Khaled (2024) conducted a study to investigate the role of bilingual education on literacy rates in Algeria. This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as a secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Thus, the study looked into already published studies and reports as data were easily accessed through online journals and libraries. The findings established that bilingual education in Algeria, involving Arabic and French, has positively impacted literacy rates. Students in bilingual programs generally achieve higher literacy in both languages compared to monolingual peers. The success varies based on teaching quality and available resources, but overall, bilingual education promotes better literacy and educational outcomes. The study under review is very essential to the current research as it brought out a pertinent alternative of teaching reading (or literacy in general) in multilingual setups. However, the reviewed study adopted a desk methodology while the current study was a phenomenology field research which sought to bring out participants' lived experiences.

Namangala (2022) conducted a study to investigate headteachers monitoring and supervision practices of learners' literacy performance in selected primary schools in Siavonga. Respondents included school administrators; headteachers and deputy headteachers, Grade 1 to 4 literacy teachers and the focus group which still captured teachers. The findings of the study were that a lot of support and commitment was required to boost literacy levels in Siavonga district; school administrators should be consistent with monitoring and supervision, the Siavonga District Education Board needed to come in with more material and moral support and parents, together with other stakeholders needed to be on board and be committed for the same programme. The findings also showed that the literacy programmes needed to be conducted according to modern technology. The findings further showed that proper literacy monitoring and supervision had a lot of benefit for both teachers and learners. The study did not review the strategies teachers used to teach literacy, challenges faced and recommend the required practices. These are the areas that the current study concentrated on.

Teachers can make learning environments influential in the development learners' reading fluency. In this regard, Lee, Puplampu & Zuilkowski (2023) conducted a study to explore teachers' behaviour around the organization of classroom literacy environments in Zambia and Mozambique. The multi – case study drew face – to – face interview data from 16 grade 2 – 7 primary school teachers in Zambia and 21 grades 1 – 5 primary school teachers in Mozambique. Data were analysed thematically and compared across countries. Findings highlight a need for more funding around the basic provision of classroom literacy material to combat shortages, as is typical of low – and middle – income country contexts. The data also revealed potential in the development and use of locally sourced classroom literacy materials, both by the teachers and school leadership or other stakeholders. The study being reviewed here was conducted in two countries; thus, the findings may not be authentic enough as the site has varying conditions influencing the teaching/learning of literacy. However, this study was conducted in one site, therefore, results are expected to very authentic as it only concentrated on one phenomenon, reading fluency, and not 'literacy' which is a multifaceted concept.

The use of a learner's language of play is very instrumental in skills transfer, not only in general learning but also in reading fluency development in particular. In this vein, Kula and Mwansa (2022) investigated the use of a familiar language, Namwanga – in Northern Zambia, in the context

of a regional language, Bemba. The paper shows that learning of literacy in the regional language is better supported by classrooms that allow free use of the ‘home’ language or mother tongue. Results from a reading and comprehension task show no hindrance to the achievement of reading fluency in a regional language when a familiar language is encouraged in the classroom. Thus, the paper provides support for multi – literacy developed through languages learners are exposed to in their environment rather than a foreign language. While the study by Kula and Mwansa concentrated on the language factor’s influence in the teaching/learning of literacy, the current study paid attention to teacher factors’ influence in the teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district in Eastern province and not Northern Province.

2.5 Research Gap

The reviewed of literature has shown that reading fluency has received more attention from a lot of researchers across the globe exploring various pertinent aspects. This is particularly due to its positive impact on the academic life of a learner and the general wellbeing of humanity as they endeavour to survive in contemporary world in which information is mainly transmitted in written form. Despite the existing literature in the field, there was plenty of room for additional study in search of solutions to low fluency affecting our learners in Zambia as reported by UNESCO (2022) and many others. The gap was between the requirement for teachers to teach reading fluency as one of the essential competencies as outlined in the Zambia Literacy Policy (MOGE, 2014) and the reported low numbers of learners that could read fluently at grade level (Kasimba, 2024). Even with the reviewed literature, however, not much was revealed regarding how teachers were teaching reading fluency to multilingual learners in Zambia, in general, and in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district, in particular. This called for an investigation into the strategies used, the challenges they faced in the process and later generate tested practices that would help teachers to effectively teach reading fluency to learners in primary schools. It was hoped that the findings of the study would be essential in mitigating low reading proficiency affecting attainment of quality education in Zambia.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the academic literature in the field of reading fluency and demonstrated the relevance and significance of the subject covered in the current study. Reading fluency is a very essential aspect in a learner's academic life as it leads to the comprehension of course materials presented to him/her at any level of education. Therefore, if well taught, reading fluency can significantly contribute to accomplishing educational objectives and attainment of quality education in the country and beyond. The following chapter presents the methodology the study used to arrive at the beneficial findings, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The previous chapter reviewed related literature to the study in order to guide the development of the research methodology presented in this chapter. According to Crotty (1998), research methodology is a comprehensive strategy that silhouettes our choice and use of specific methods relating them to the anticipated outcomes, but the choice of research methodology is based upon the type and features of the research problem. The chapter discusses research paradigm, research approach, research design, study site, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, limitations and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Sikalumbi (2023:67) defines a research paradigm as “a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitute a way of viewing the world and conducting research.” It is simply a philosophical framework on which a research is anchored. Given the foregoing definition, this study was guided by social interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivists believe that reality is dependent on the individuals’ constructed understanding, which implies that the social world is complicated and it can be understood only from the point of view of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated (Ritchie et al, 2014). The paradigm was suitable for the study to enable the researcher to engage the participants through questioning and observation to establish strategies they use when teaching reading fluency, determine the challenges they face in the process and generate the practices that would help them to effectively teach reading fluency to the multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone. This required the researcher to interpret the participants’ lived experiences of the phenomenon being investigated.

3.3 Research Approach

The study took a qualitative approach because of its descriptive nature. Qualitative research approach is a kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) but the phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally (Patton, 2001). This suggests that to understand phenomena in terms of

the meanings individuals assign to them, a qualitative researcher should engage with the participants by studying things in their real world. Qualitative approach was appropriate to this study as it allowed the researcher to interact with the participants; appreciate their viewpoints in order to understand the subject being studied so as to arrive at the required truth.

3.4 Research Design

A research design is regarded as a master – plan or a blueprint for the research activities which the researcher intends to use in order to carry out a full investigation of a problem of interest (Sikalumbi, 2023). In order for this qualitative study to establish strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district, for instance, the researcher used descriptive phenomenology research design. According to Creswell & Poth (2018), a descriptive phenomenology study is one which describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. The design was suitable for the study as it enabled the researcher to enter the participants’ world to generate the much needed data through interviews and lesson observations for deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.5 Target Population

According to Sikalumbi (2023), the term target population is used in research to mean all members of any well – defined collection of people, events or objects from which a sample is drawn to meet the target of a study as defined by the aims and objectives. For the purpose of this study, the target population was all the primary school teachers in Mpezeni Zone Chipata district.

3.6 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of participants selected from the population bearing common characteristics, knowhow and accessible to take part in the study under investigation (Creswell, 2012). A sample must reasonably represent the target population of the study as it, De Vos (2000:191) argues, “enables a researcher to draw more accurate conclusions and make more accurate predictions.” Therefore, the sample size comprised 12 Grade 4 teachers purposively sampled from three primary schools in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

3.7 Sampling Technique

A sampling technique refers to a process a researcher uses to come up with people, places or things to study on (Creswell, 2012). To choose teachers, the researcher used critical case purposive sampling. According to Yin (2009), critical case sampling is a research technique where researchers deliberately select cases that are considered crucial or critical to understanding a phenomenon under investigation. The selected cases are expected to provide valuable information, often representing extreme or wider population of interest to the research question. Therefore, the use of critical case sampling enabled the researcher to come up with a decisive sample so as to achieve generalizable findings as Patton (1990) argues “if it can happen there, it can happen anywhere, and vice versa.”

3.8 Research Instruments

According to Kasonde – Ng’andu (2014), research instruments are tools used by the researcher to obtain the necessary data. The choice of the instruments was influenced by the nature of the research question that guided the investigation. Hence, this study used interview guide and classroom lesson observation guide to collect the required primary data regarding the teaching of reading fluency to multilingual learners in the zone.

3.8.1 Interview Guide

The researcher interviewed Grade 4 teachers to understand the variations in each individual’s experience of evidence – based practice regarding the teaching of reading fluency. The choice of interview guide was influenced by Ashworth’s and Lukas’s (2000) assertion that descriptive phenomenology interviews enable a researcher to set aside his or her assumptions and theories and focus, instead, on the research participants’ points of view and their unique lived experiences.

3.8.2 Classroom Lesson Observation Guide

Observation as a method of data collection refers to a prolonged period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects during which the former unobtrusively and systematically collects data in form of field notes (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). For this study, therefore, non – participant observer was the most suitable type of observation for the study as the researcher

did not want to have an influence on the findings. According to Cohen et al (2018), non – participant observer is a method of lesson observation in which the researcher does not take part in the activities under investigation. This type of observation enables the researcher to record the natural behaviour of the group and have a real experience of the natural environment in which learning is taking place (Kothari, 2004). The method of observation helped to decrease the researcher’s bias as the focus was on patterns of teacher behaviour regarding the teaching of reading fluency.

3.9 Data Analysis

According to Kasonde – Ng’andu (2013), data analysis refers to the process of manipulating the collected data in order to draw conclusions which reflect the interest, ideas and theories that initiated the study with a view to uncovering the underpinning structures and extracting essential variables thereby testing any underlying assumptions. Considering the fact that this study was qualitative and descriptive in nature, thematic analysis was used to analyze the generated data. Sikalumbi (2023) argues that thematic analysis is a powerful tool for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data as it allows the researcher to identify and analyze the underlying themes and patterns within the data, and to report these findings in a clear and concise way. This enabled the researcher to draw well informed conclusions based on the findings as a result of deeper understanding of the meanings and significance of the data collected.

3.10 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Beck, 2014). In light of the foregoing, Guba & Lincoln (1994) outline credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and authenticity as criteria for ensuring trustworthiness.

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to a measure of the truth value of qualitative research or whether the study’s findings are correct and accurate. According to Polit & Beck (2014), confidence in the truth of the study and the findings is the most important criterion. To ensure credibility in this study, the

researcher used a variety of data collection techniques and changing the interview tactics. The researcher also cross – checked and validated the responses using member check.

3.10.2 Dependability

Guba and Lincoln (1994) view dependability as the degree of consistency, reliability and stability of findings and interpretation throughout the research process. Dependability in this study was ensured by collecting data from different perspectives through interviews and classroom lesson observations. The collected data were compared and cross - checked to ensure consistency and reduce the impact of individual biases.

3.10.3 Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability refers to the neutrality or the degree to which the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Polit & Beck, 2014). In other words, this entails that the study should produce findings that objectively reflect data collected from participants; implying that the data must speak for themselves. To ensure confirmability, the study detailed each step of data analysis to ensure findings accurately portrayed the participants' responses. This process was also thoroughly audited by the study supervisor.

3.10.4 Transferability

The nature of transferability, the extent to which findings are useful to persons in other settings, is different from other aspects of research in that readers determine how applicable the findings are to their situations (Polit and Beck, 2014). This implies that transferability measures the applicability or generalizability of the study's findings to other settings. To ensure transferability of the findings, the study used a critical case sampling technique to come up with a decisive sample. The analysis of the findings was also transparent.

3.10.5 Authenticity

Authenticity in qualitative research refers to the extent to which researchers fairly and completely show one range of different realities and sensibly convey participants' lives (Polit & Beck, 2014). To ensure authenticity of the study, the researcher purposively selected appropriate participants that formed the study sample. Details of the selection procedure were also provided by the study.

3.11 Ethical Considerations.

Ethical considerations relate to the dos and don'ts that the researcher must observe during the research process for the purpose of respecting and protecting the rights and privacy of the respondents (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). In order to facilitate and underpin the observance of ethical considerations, the following aspects were followed:

3.11.1 Approval of the study

An ethical clearance letter was sought from Chalimbana University Ethical Committee before the commencement of data collection. The researcher also sought permission from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) to visit the sampled schools in Mpezeni Zone for data collection. In the schools, permission was further sought from the Headteachers for the researcher to collect the required data.

3.11.2 Informed consent

Securing informed consent from study respondents is a matter of fully disclosing the procedures of the proposed research before requesting permission to proceed with the investigation (Israel and Hay, 2006). Therefore, after self-introduction, an informed consent form was presented to the participants by way of explaining the nature of the research and its impact. The researcher later explained to the respondents the need for their participation in the study. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they would be allowed to leave at their own discretion. Thereafter, the respondents were asked to sign the consent form and participate in the study.

3.11.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Participants' names were not included in the data collected and questions that might cause discomfort to the respondents were avoided. The data collected were kept completely confidential and used only for academic purpose. In other words, confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were highly upheld before, during and after the research.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the methodology that was used in the study. It included the research paradigm, research approach, research design, target population, research sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. The following chapter presents findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 Overview

The previous chapter presented the methodology of the study. This chapter presents the findings of the study on the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district. Findings are presented using the research questions as themes. Under each research question, there are other smaller themes indicating findings from the interviews with the sampled teachers and classroom lesson observations. Participants were identified using numbers, thus, from school 1 participants were recorded as teachers 1, 2, 3 & 4; from school they were recorded as teachers 5, 5, 7 & 8 while those from school 3 were identified as teachers 9, 10, 11 & 12.

4.2 Which strategies do teachers use to teach reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district?

4.2.1 Findings from the participants

Participants were asked on the strategies they used to teach reading fluency in their classrooms. It was established teachers used read aloud, group work and reading comprehension. Other strategies they used included individual work, discussion, question and answer and demonstration. Of the revealed strategies, it was noted that group work, read aloud and demonstration were the most used strategies teachers used to teach reading fluency.

School 1 Teacher 2 said that:

For me, I usually use learner centred and discussion in which learners do more than the teacher. By discussing they don't forget the sounds learnt. I also use individual work where a learner does reading activities individually as I go round to provide guidance where necessary.

School 2 Teacher 7 had this to say:

In my class I use read aloud in which case I ask learners to read aloud to the class while others are listening and following. I also use question and answer to check their

understanding. Sometimes I appoint individual learners to read to the class so that others can be inspired.

School 3 Teacher 11 said:

Me I use demonstration whereby I read the passage to them first so that they see how I follow the reading rules. I also use question and answer strategy to ask them some oral questions from the passage or paragraph I read just to check if they are following. Then I use group work so that learners can learn to read fluently from their friends.

Participants were also asked on how they ensured that learners who were not familiar with the language of instruction participated in reading activities. From the responses, the study established teachers used shared reading or paired reading, remediation, frequent engagement, story books and homework assignments to ensure learners who were not familiar with the language of instruction participated in reading activities.

School 1 Teacher 3 said:

What I do, I give him story books to practice from home so that he becomes familiar with some words. You find that maybe at home parents know the language, they help. Sometimes I create time for him alone for remedial assistance where he feels free to express himself. You find that in class he feels shy because friends laugh at him when he makes a mistake in pronunciation and so on.

School 2 Teacher 5 said:

I can say shared reading has been very helpful. I put such learners in a group or pair them with a classmate who is fluent in the language of instruction. When I see that they are not free to participate, I engage them frequently. But again, I give them sentences or short stories to read at home.

School 3 Teacher 9 added:

I put them in a group so that they learn from their friends, I also give them story books to continue practicing from home or better still be assisted by anybody who knows the

language at home. When I'm free, I call or invite them to interact with me; to make them feel free.

The participants were further asked on how they used the teaching and learning materials to ensure that learners acquired the needed reading fluency skills in their classrooms. The study revealed that the teachers used pictures to evoke story creation/sentence construction. They also used reading materials such as textbooks for reading practice while word cards were for writing key words (vocabulary) selected from the story for learners to read.

School 1 Teacher 3 stated that:

In my class, learners are shown a picture and from there they construct sentences. I also use word cards for writing words extracted from the story for learners to practice before they are given a chance to read the passage.

School 2 Teacher 1 explained:

Since Grade 4 reading materials are very few here, I divide the class into groups and give them a copy per group so that at least they can be following especially when I ask volunteers to read. If not that, I just sacrifice and write the passage or story on the chalkboard, especially if it's a short one. I also write some words or sentences on cards and give learners to practice.

School 3 Teacher 10 said:

I usually ask learners to tell a story from the pictures provided especially those found in the textbooks before the actual reading is done. I give learners the reading books for reading practice.

School 2 Teacher 4 stated:

I pair or group learners and give them books or word cards to read. I make sure that the flash cards, word cards or books are of their level. I also give learners learning materials such as books to read from home so that when returning, I ask them to read at least a

paragraph from the book they borrowed in front of the class. Where they struggle, I come in.

The participants were later asked on how they ensured that those learners who could not read fluently caught up with their fluent classmates. The responses commonly indicated that teachers provided remedial measures to help struggling readers catch up with their fluent classmates. It was further established that paired reading or group work was also used in order to help such learners catch up with reading fluency.

School 3 Teacher 12 said:

When I identify such learners I give them remedial work at their own free time. I ensure that this remedial work is at their reading level, for example syllables to make words. During classes, I sometimes pair them classmates that are fluent.

School 2 Teacher 8 added:

Me I give them separate work according to their reading levels. I keep on giving them until they catch up. Sometimes you discover that these learners that struggle to read usually perform poorly in most classwork, as a result they even lose interest in school. So I make sure I bring them close so that they know I value them. By so doing I discover where their problem is and help them accordingly.

School 1 Teacher 2 said:

I do remedial work. I create time for them after classes and help them individually. I make sure I don't put struggling readers alone but pair or group them with those that are good. I put those that good first and push in slow learners.

School 3 Teacher 9 lamented:

Since I start teaching my class at 13 hours, I report for work one hour before to meet the slow learners so that I teach them how to read according to their level or abilities. To do this, I put them in groups in line with their abilities. Those at sound level, word level, sentence level and paragraph level are classified and given the right assistance.

4.2.2 Findings from classroom observations

One teacher introduced the reading lesson through the use of a picture which he displayed and asked learners to identify what it (the picture) depicted. The heading ‘mvetso’ (comprehension) and sub – heading ‘ulamuliro’ (leadership) were written on the chalkboard.

Using demonstration strategy (teacher modeling), the teacher read the passage entitled ‘ulamuliro’ to the class as they followed through listening. Later he used individual reading strategy to enable learners practice the reading. He did this by pointing at individual learners, one after the other, to go in front and read a paragraph to the class as they followed through listening because no desk had a copy the book being read.

After the reading aloud activity by individual learners, the teacher gave learners a comprehension exercise for them to copy and fill in the blank spaces.

Another teacher introduced her lesson through word cards which were flashed to the class, one at a time, and asked one learner to read the word to the class and later the whole class was asked to chorus through repeatedly.

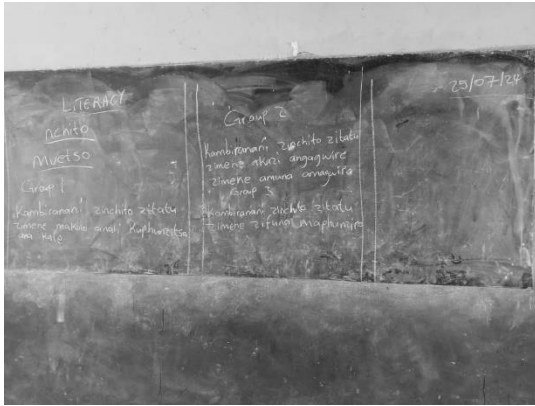
Using demonstration (teacher modeling), the teacher read the passage to the whole class as they followed through silent reading using the shared textbooks. Later, the class was divided into groups and each group was given a card bearing a paragraph extracted from the passage previously read by the teacher. Group leaders were asked teach their members how to read the given paragraph. The teacher then randomly picked one learner from each group to read the given paragraph aloud, one after the other, as she provided guidance in terms of reading rules.

Later, learners were given a comprehension exercise to be done individually from their various desks.

Another teacher wrote the heading ‘Nchito’ (work) and ‘mvetso’ (comprehension) as sub – heading on the chalkboard. She used word cards to introduce new words extracted from the passage yet to be read. Individual learners were asked to read the word(s) aloud. Using demonstration strategy (teacher modeling), she demonstrated the reading of the passage as she paused to ask

learners for the meanings of some words. Then she appointed individual learners to read the passage aloud but in turns.

She divided the class into three groups and gave them tasks meant to discuss the passage read.



Source: field data (2024)

Later, group leaders were asked to present their findings on the chalkboard.



Source: field data (2024)

From the classroom observations, it was revealed that teachers mostly used choral reading, repeated reading, individual reading, teacher modeling (demonstration), read aloud and group work as strategies for teaching reading fluency.

4.3. What challenges are teachers facing when teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district?

4.3.1 Findings from the teachers

The participants were asked on the challenges they were facing when teaching reading fluency in relation to the strategies they used. The study established that lack of instructional materials, over enrollment and learner shyness were the main strategy related challenges which teachers faced when teaching reading fluency.

School 1 Teacher 4 said:

Like in my class lack of reading materials affects the choice of strategies for teaching reading fluency. I'm saying so because when teaching reading, we take learner centred approach; the learner must access to the reading materials (textbooks) for them to practice. So as you have seen we only have one Grade 4 Literacy book for term two as a school; it's very challenging.

School 3 Teacher 11 submitted:

Shortage of manpower is a big challenge for me. You will find that most of us teaching lower classes have double classes. Now with these issues of over enrolment it's really challenging to find time for slow learners. Sometimes I may wish to give them text books to read from home but again books are not enough for all.

School 2 Teacher 6 added:

I can say over enrollment is making my teaching very difficult because if I use a strategy that requires every learner to participate at their level, that reading lesson will take forever. To add on, read aloud is a strategy that helps learners gain reading confidence within a short time. But with this overcrowded class, learners feel shy to read aloud in front of peers thereby causing them to stumble or read slowly.

School 3 Teacher 10 stated:

Here sir, the major challenge is shortage of books to cater for every learner. Sometimes I'm forced to write the whole story on the board. Again you find that you have planned to use a certain strategy to help learners read but when called to read alone aloud, they feel shy. That's why most of the times I use group work.

Participants were asked on the challenges they faced when teaching reading fluency in relation to the strategies of ensuring that there was no language barrier in the classroom. The study revealed that accessing suitable materials and resources for these learners and learners mixing up Cinyanja (the zonal language of instruction) with other local languages were the major challenges associated with classroom language barrier. The other challenge noted in relation to language barrier was balancing of instructional strategies between who understood language of instruction and those who did not.

School 1 Teacher 1 said:

Yeah, I have a boy who came on transfer from the Copperbelt. I've been facing challenges with strategies to use for him to participate in reading because he doesn't know the language we use here and I don't know bemba. Worse still, he doesn't know English. Sometimes I feel like wasting time concentrating on him alone neglecting the majority. So, yeah! It's very challenging to strike a balance.

School 2 Teacher 7 said:

Our school has so many learners that speak multiple languages. So classroom management has been very challenging. Also accessing materials and resources suitable for these diverse learners has been a tough issue. You find that even you as a teacher you can't understand the learner's language.

School 3 Teacher 9 stated:

For me the challenge is learners mistaking Cinyanja for Ngoni. For example, a learner uses kuluta (going in Ngoni) instead of kupita (going in Cinyanja) but we are trying especially that I'm from here.

Participants were also asked on the challenges they were facing in the classroom in relation to learner participation in reading activities. The findings showed that over enrolment and learner shyness were the notable challenges which teachers were facing in relation to learner participation in reading activities.

School 1 Teacher 3 said:

Some learners are naturally passive or shy, it's a challenge but I try to force them. With free education policy, sir, it's very difficult to make everyone participate due to high numbers. So only sharp ones are always participating.

School 2 Teacher 5 answered:

I can say learner participation is affected by two factors; class size and learner shyness. As you have seen the size of my class, it is very difficult to ensure every learner is given a chance to read aloud but we are trying. For those that are shy, even if you put them in a group they pretend like they are participating when they are not; you ask them to read aloud. But we try to encourage them.

School 3 Teacher 11 said:

Participation problems are there but a few. What I do, I appoint those that are shy as group leaders so that they are forced to be active. Sometimes I just make sure I point at them to participate but it is challenging with this over enrollment, to be frank.

The participants were later asked on the challenges they faced in relation to the materials needed to teach reading fluency in their classrooms. From their responses, it was clearly established that shortage of appropriate or prescribed reading materials (textbooks) was a big challenge.

School 1 Teacher 2 said:

In most schools here in the rural areas, textbooks for reading are not enough. Like here, we only have one textbook for literacy for term two which I give learners I appoint to read on behalf of fellow learners. What I know is that for the child to learn to read fluently, they

need frequent interaction with reading materials like textbooks. Otherwise, nothing happens.

School 2 Teacher 8 said:

In my class textbooks or reading materials are insufficient even to give one book per two pupils. So I just give one textbook per group. This makes the teaching of reading fluency very difficult. Also, the assessment tools we use for reading fluency are outdated or ineffective.

School 3 Teacher 12 added:

Reading materials are a big challenge like for this school. For example, for term three there are only three copies left for literacy against eighty plus learners. The challenge is real, sir.

The participants were also asked on the challenges they were facing in relation to teacher's competence in the language of instruction for teaching reading fluency. The study established that some teachers had serious challenges with the zonal language of instruction (Cinyanja) because being new in the province.

School 1 Teacher 4 said:

For me no, but there are some teachers at our school that have serious challenges with the Cinyanja here. This makes learners fail to read because the teacher can't instruct them properly. For example, pronunciation of words.

School 2 Teacher 7 said:

To be open with you sir, I have been facing difficulties with pronunciation and intonation in Cinyanja as I recently came here on transfer from another province. So I have limited proficiency in the language of instruction used here, though I'm slowly coping now.

School 3 Teacher 11 added:

I have no problem with the language of instruction. I was brought up here. But we have a new teacher who has serious issues with the language but we are trying to help her.

The participants were given an opportunity to add any other challenges that affected the teaching of reading fluency. The findings revealed that shortage of classroom space due to free education induced over enrolment, shortage of teachers, lack of teacher motivation and high workload for primary school teachers were the other challenges that affected the teaching of reading fluency in primary schools found in Mpezeni Zone.

School 1 Teacher 2 said:

Over enrollment due to free education policy is a serious challenge. For example, some classes have one hundred plus pupils. How can one make them break through to reading fluency? Shortage of classrooms is another issue. We cannot split the learners into streams. Teachers are also few: for a long time here we use volunteers. Lastly, lack of teacher motivation.

School 2 Teacher 5 said:

There is too much work for us primary school teachers. I teach a lot of subjects in a day such that by the time I think of slow learners, I'm already finished. The learners that struggle to read in my class are so many. Thus, to help them adequately, one needs ample time. That's why in schools where there a lot of teachers, they share the subjects to lessen the burden so that one can remain with energy to provide remedial work.

School 3 Teacher 9 noted:

Here, it's overcrowding classes and shortage of teachers. Sometimes I'm assigned to teach other classes whereby I'm failing to concentrate on my own class. Some classes learn from under a tree. So nkhani ya literacy niyokosako (so the issue of literacy is a tough one).

Participants were asked on the sources of the problems they were facing when teaching reading fluency. The study established that government was not doing enough hence it was to blame for the problems teachers were facing when teaching reading fluency. It was also revealed that classmates were the cause for learner shyness to read as they had a tendency of laughing at those

who failed to read. The study later noted that for some teachers, language barrier was the major source of the problems they were facing when teaching reading fluency.

School 1 Teacher 3 said:

Government is not doing enough, therefore, they are to blame. They should provide more learning materials especially in rural areas. There are some extra materials apart from what free education money can buy.

School 2 Teacher 6 said:

For me language barrier is the source of the challenges I'm facing when teaching reading in my class. I have a very strong passion for kids especially teaching them how to read but the language of instruction here is a big letdown. Mostly I ask my colleagues to teach me how to pronounce certain words before meeting my learners. That brings down my confidence in front of learners.

School 3 Teacher 10 added:

I can say government is to blame for shortage of classrooms, learning materials and staffing. On top of the grant or funding primary schools receive, government needs to supply schools with appropriate reading materials which are usually difficult to find in most shops. For shy learners, classmates are a source as they laugh at them and parents are not pushing their children to work hard.

4.3.2 Findings from classroom observations

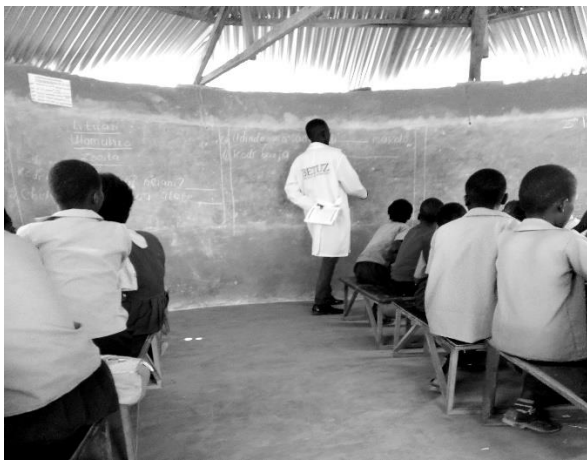
From all the lessons that the researcher observed in the sampled schools, the challenge of shortage of reading materials (textbooks) was real. In some cases, a lot of learners were clustered around one textbook just to have access to a given passage.



Source: field data (2024)

In others, only the teacher, in exchange with those he appointed to read to the class, had access to the only available appropriate reading material (textbook) as

illustrated by the picture below.



Source: field data (2024)

All the sampled schools had over enrollment of learners which made the teaching of reading fluency very difficult amid the shortage of books. As a result of overcrowded classes, it was observed that some teachers were short of appropriate strategies to use. For example, the group below was too big for effective teaching of reading fluency.



Source: field data (2024)

Shortage of teachers was also clearly observed as a challenge affecting the teaching of reading fluency as some teachers were teaching more than one class. For instance, teacher 1 was just standing in place of a volunteer teacher who shy away being observed. His usual class was Grade there.

It was also observed that the teaching of reading fluency took the form of reading comprehension such that a lot time was wasted discussing the read passage and writing the follow – up comprehension exercises from the read passage.

One teacher had serious challenges with the language of instruction such that she was often observed depending on the learners to explain what certain words meant especially that for lower primary teaching was done in Cinyanja, the zonal language.

4.4 Which practices can teachers use to effectively teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district?

4.4.1 Findings from the participants

The participants were asked to suggest practices that could help learners be actively engaged in order to improve on reading fluency. The study established remediation, teacher demonstration, read aloud, group work and parental involvement as key practices that could help learners to improve on reading fluency.

School 2 Teacher 8 said:

Read aloud; we need to encourage learners to read aloud to themselves, peers or teachers. Parental involvement; engage parents in reading activities for example home works. A teacher can give a learner some passage as an assignment to be practiced from home with the help of parents or able siblings such that when he or she returns to school, they read the same passage aloud to the teacher or class.

School 3 Teacher 12 said:

Group work; group work has really helped me to make learners read. Remedial work also helps especially for struggling readers. Demonstration (teacher modeling); I feel it is a good practice because learners should see how the teacher read and by so doing, they are able to imitate and later become good readers as well.

The participants were also asked on how best a teacher could plan for learners who failed to read fluently. It was established that teachers needed to identify the root cause of the learners' failure to read and create time to provide targeted support strategies such as remediation, pair work and one – on – one reading with them. Furthermore, the study noted that the work for such learners should be planned separately and be given at the appropriate time as catch – up.

School 3 Teacher 11 said:

I feel we need to involve parents so that in case there are some relatives who can help, they should also come in. we also need to prepare and give struggling readers separate work on one on one basis for them to catch up.

School 1 Teacher 1 added:

A teacher needs to create free time to meet the slow learners to help them through remedial to revise the sounds they did not get right. When planning, a teacher needs to plan for the class as a whole; but also prepare separate work at the level of slow learners to be given during free time so that there is no segregation. Learners that fail to read fluently should be paired with those that are fluent for easy learning and teaching.

School 2 Teacher 5 noted:

Identifying the root causes should be the first step so that the teacher is able to provide targeted support and implement evidence based strategies such as remediation, pair work or one on one reading with the pupil.

The participants were asked on what they thought should be done in order to make a teacher teach reading fluency effectively. The study established that workshops/Teacher Group Meetings, teacher motivation, coaching and mentoring should be conducted frequently to make teachers teach reading fluency effectively.

School 2 Teacher 6 said:

I think coaching and mentoring can help. Experienced or senior teachers must offer coaching and mentoring frequently to help teachers refine their instructional practices and address challenges they face.

School 1 Teacher 3 said:

We should be having frequent Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs), they help teachers through sharing of new ideas. This gives teachers chance to open up in case they are facing challenges in the teaching of reading. Also attending workshops for 'Let's Read Zambia' can help; either at zonal level or district level. As teachers we can learn a lot of strategies to teach reading. I can tell you sir that when I just started work, I was blank but when I just attended one workshop, I learnt a lot.

School 3 Teacher 9 said:

There is need to be having meetings where some good teachers demonstrate how it should be done. This has really helped me. The teachers should also be motivated by the school by giving them presents when they do well. It makes us work extra hard.

Participants were also asked on how they could support learners who might be struggling to read fluently. The study established that such learners must be given books to read from home, remedial

work of their level or one – on – one support such reading aloud with them. They should also be assessed regularly in order for the teacher to adjust support, if need be.

School 2 Teacher 8 said:

We need to give one on one – on – one support to such learners. By this I mean we should provide individualized support such as reading aloud together. We should also regularly assess learners' progress so that we are able to adjust instruction and support where necessary.

School 3 Teacher 10 said:

We must give struggling readers more remedial work. This work should be planned properly to suit their reading level. I also bring them close to me.

School 1 Teacher 4 said:

Help them during free time by giving them remedial work; even giving them books to read from home.

Participants were later asked on how the challenges surrounding the teaching of reading fluency in terms of ensuring that there was no language barrier in the learning/teaching process could be addressed. The study revealed that there was need for the teachers to involve bilingual resources, use of group work, adequately plan for diverse classrooms and involve parents where necessary. It was also noted that new teachers needed to be posted where they were coming from so that they do not face language barrier when teaching reading.

School 2 Teacher 5 said:

There is need to involve bilingual resources such as teachers and learners. Parental involvement can also help through home reading assignments.

School 3 Teacher 11 had this to say:

In class teachers should use group work so that learners can learn from their peers that know the language well.

School 1 Teacher 4 said:

Teachers must be deployed where they are coming from so that they don't have challenges with the language of instruction. For learners with different language, teachers must plan for them.

Participants were also asked on how the challenges of teaching reading fluency in terms of struggling readers' participation could be addressed. The study established that teachers should make struggling readers group leaders or point at them to read often. It was further revealed that the struggling readers should be paired with fluent readers or give them individualized attention on one – on – one basis. The other findings showed that government must supply adequate reading materials for all learners to have access and let alone be forced to participate.

School 3 Teacher 12 said:

I feel the teacher must point at them to read. They can also be made group leaders so that they are deeply involved in the reading activities.

School 2 Teacher 7 said:

The teacher must randomly point at learners to read; not always picking those that are already fluent. Struggling readers can also participate easily if they are paired with fluent readers. Such learners should also be given individualized attention – one on one.

School 1 Teacher 2 added:

Teachers must give learners that struggle to participate more attention and more work of their level. Government must also provide schools with adequate reading materials so that all learners can have access. This will make all learners active.

4.4.2 Findings from classroom observations

The study observed that in classrooms where the teachers used choral reading and grouping to teach reading fluency, learner participation was very high as opposed to when they were singled out to read aloud. It was revealed that these early graders enjoy loud and repeated reading such

that in the classrooms where the practices were implemented, a good number of learners were fluent in reading in Cinyanja.

Some teachers effectively taught reading fluency through demonstration and radiation when learners were grouped as illustrated by the following picture.



Source: field data (2024)

It was observed that demonstrating reading and offering remediation to grouped learners proved effective because the teacher was able to attend to specific reading needs of struggling readers in the observed classrooms.

However, triangulation of findings revealed that some teachers did not use the reading fluency practices they were suggesting as effective solutions, for example paired reading. In some cases, the suggested practices perceived to be the ones that would enable teachers teach reading fluency effectively were either not being used or used inappropriately. Furthermore, from classroom observations, the study did not clearly establish how both teachers and learners that were not familiar with the language instruction were practically assisted. Similarly, the evidence of how the observed teachers from the sampled schools involved parents in the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners was not available.

4.4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the finding of the study as collected from interviews with the participants and classroom observations. These findings were presented in line with the objectives of the study as stipulated in chapter one of this report. The following chapter discusses the findings with the support of related literature.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. The current chapter discusses the findings of the research in relation to the literature review and theory presented earlier in this study on the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district. The discussion is guided by the themes generated from the study objectives.

5.2 Strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

The study established that repeated reading was widely used by teachers in their quest to drill the learners in reading fluency. In this strategy, the teacher reads a word or sentence and later asks the learners to read after him or her to reach the required level of speed, accuracy, and comprehension. It was noted that the use of repeated reading enabled some learners to master pronunciation of words. These findings are consistent with Xin and Yunus (2020) whose study showed that the learners that were subjected to repeated reading were able to read with higher accuracy in word recognition and faster reading rate with improved prosody. However, the study revealed that teachers used repeated reading strategy with the whole class whereby learners were asked to read some sentences or words repeatedly and together as a class. In the process, it was established some learners were just miming as they were not even looking at the words or sentences being read. This is contrary to Hudson et al (2020) who argue that for repeated reading strategy to be effective, it needs to be conducted one – on – one with a trained model of fluent word reading and accuracy. Therefore, the teachers did not use the strategy in a way that would enhance reading fluency because learners have different reading needs and abilities. As such, treating learners uniformly when teaching reading fluency negatively affects the rate at which each learner acquires the necessary skills.

The study also established that teachers used choral reading strategy to teach reading fluency. With this strategy, it was found that a teacher would read a word or sentence first as a model and later ask the whole class to read through loudly at once. If appropriately used, Middi et al (2024) found that the use of choral as a reading strategy effectively improves the students' reading skills.

However, the current study revealed that the effectiveness of this strategy was affected by large class sizes as most learners sitting far away from the teacher hardly reproduced the word or sentence being read. As a result, it was noted that teachers in the sampled schools found it increasingly difficult to tell which learners were lagging behind in terms of reading fluency because the chorus falsely indicated all was well.

The finding of the study also established teachers used read – aloud to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni of Chipata district. This is a reading strategy which is direct opposite to silent reading and it is done by an individual learner or by a group of learners as instructed by the teacher. The finding is supported by Rahayu and Mustadi (2022) who found that the implementation of read – aloud activities could improve students’ reading literacy, particularly in the aspects of fluency and comprehension, as students were able to read fluently in a clear intonation with correct pronunciation and use punctuation marks appropriately. According to the foregoing study, the increase in the students’ reading literacy was also by the assessment results which climbed from the low to the excellent category. The study by Rahayu and Mustadi also revealed that the students subjected to read – aloud showed the ability to find the main idea, answer questions based on the reading, and conclude the reading content. In further supporting the findings, Senawati et al (2021) add that reading aloud enables learners acquire, pronunciation, comprehension, listening skills, reading skills, speaking skills, communication skills, and motivation, literacy and critical thinking skills. However, the current study found that the read aloud as a strategy of teaching reading fluency mainly benefited the few already fluent readers as they were always given the opportunity to read to the others as the teachers were trying to save on time for many other subjects of the day.

The study findings further established that all the teachers in the sampled schools used demonstration or teacher modeling to teach reading fluency. This is where a teacher reads through a word, sentence or passage prior to the learners’ turn to show them how fluent reading should be done as learners are urged to pay attention to the use of acceptable pronunciation, intonation and punctuation marks. This strategy in itself enables teachers teach reading fluency effectively as the study by Akyol and Altinay (2019) showed that the strategies of prior listening to the paragraph and repetitive reading helped in improving learners’ reading skills. From the current study, it was noted that the strategy enabled the teacher to provide scaffolding measures, as proposed by

Vygotsky's (1978) socio – cultural theory, before allowing the learners to practise the observed skills in relation to reading fluency. However, amid limited reading materials (such as textbooks) against overcrowded classes, the study noted that the use of demonstration did not yield the desired results as most learners did not have access to the read word, sentence or passage. This made it very difficult for some learners, especially the struggling ones, to acquire the necessary reading fluency skills.

The study also revealed that the teachers in the sampled schools used discussion as a strategy of enabling multilingual learners acquire reading fluency. As noted by the study, after the reading activities, some teachers engaged learners in passage discussion or analysis to ascertain their comprehension levels. The study findings are consistent with Gedik and Akyol (2022) who established that as a result of reading, meaning analysis had a positive effect in improving skills of reading fluency. Further review of the foregoing literature revealed that as a result of reading, comprehension and vocabulary development activities, the students' reading motivation, desire and self – confidence increase as they start to detect and correct reading aloud mistakes by themselves. Besides, the use of discussion as a strategy of teaching reading is supported by Stocker et al (2023) whose study established that word decoding has positive effects on reading fluency. On the contrary, the current study found that most teachers did not use the strategy appropriately as the largest portion of reading lesson was dedicated to discussion of the read passage through question and answer technique which later gave birth to comprehension exercise in which learners had to provide answers to the given questions in writing. This practice notably made the teaching of reading fluency ineffective in the zone.

Further, the study findings established that the use of group work was a commonly used strategy in the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district. This is a strategy in which learners are divided into, arguably, small clusters to either practice reading or analyze a given passage as instructed by the teacher. From the current study, it was clear that most teachers preferred using group work as a strategy of teaching reading as it provided an opportunity for learners to learn from one another and for the shy ones to participate actively. These findings are in line with Adamu et al (2022) whose study established that most teachers reported using grouping to teach reading in Kano State of Nigeria. In as much as the strategy was widely used in the sampled schools, the study noted that its effectiveness regarding

the teaching of reading fluency was negligible because the formed groups were very large thereby making participation by struggling learners difficult or impossible. The situation was worsened by shortage of appropriate textbooks as in some cases only one copy was given for the whole group to share. If not well planned and used, group work can make the teaching of reading fluency difficult or impossible especially in overcrowded classes and the sampled schools were no exceptional.

To help struggling readers catch – up with their fluent classmates, the study established that some teachers used remediation. Remediation is where a teacher provides individualized scaffolding measures, as proposed by Vygotsky’s (1978) socio – cultural theory on which the current study is anchored, to struggling readers to attain reading fluency. The study revealed that these learners were either paired with fluent partners or received one – on – one attention from the teacher. These findings are in tandem with Padeliadu et al (2021) whose study established that the use of specially designed texts in conjunction with specific instructional strategies such as assisted reading has a high impact on reading fluency of students with severe reading difficulties. The findings are also supported by Thurston et al (2023) whose study revealed that paired reading would be an effective, low cost strategy for improving reading. The findings are further consistent with Reyes et al (2023) who found out that teachers utilized various strategies to help struggling readers, such as conducting remedial classes. The study findings revealed that the participants were aware of the appropriate strategies required to help struggling readers to breakthrough to reading fluency. However, classroom lesson observations suggested that the teachers in the sampled schools did not pay attention to the struggling readers as there was no evidence. Remediation can, arguably, enable diffident readers gain self - confidence and motivation to acquire the necessary reading skills. Thus, prudent utilization of the strategy would help learners catch – up with reading fluency skills.

The use of instructional materials is very essential in the teaching of reading fluency. In Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district, the current study established that teachers used word cards, pictures, textbooks, flash cards and other reading materials to teach reading fluency at various stages of their lessons to teach reading fluency to the Grade 4 multilingual learners. This finding is in agreement with Oduro et al (2021) whose study revealed that the Grade 4 teachers predominantly used flashcards, manila cards, chalkboards and textbooks during reading instruction. The current

study, further, found that most the instructional materials which teachers in the sampled schools used to teach reading were merely improvised. The initiative enabled creative teachers supplement on government's efforts regarding the reading material provision.

Regarding how teachers ensured that learners who were not familiar with the language of instruction participated in reading activities, the study established that some teachers used remedial assistance, translanguaging, home reading assignments and group work. It was further established that the idea of giving such learners home reading assignments was to ensure that parents or relatives help in translanguaging. This finding is supported by Mkandawire et al (2024) whose study established that teachers in multilingual classes used translanguaging, bilingual materials, remediation and reading intervention strategies to teach literacy among early graders. The study by Mkandawire and others further revealed that parents, multilingual teachers, bilingual learners were also used as resources in multilingual classes. The use of remedial assistance, translanguaging, home reading assignments and group work provides an avenue for both teachers and learners to deal with issues of language barrier that affect the teaching and learning of reading fluency respectively. As noted by Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021), the use of monolingual materials in a multilingual classroom can negatively affect the teaching and learning of reading fluency. However, the findings of the current study revealed that not all the teachers in the sampled schools were able to apply appropriate measures to classroom language diversity. As a result, some learners were disadvantaged insofar as acquisition of reading fluency skills was concerned.

5.3 Challenges teachers faced when teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district.

The study established there was a critical shortage of appropriate reading materials for teaching reading fluency in all the sampled schools in the zone. In some cases, there was only one copy of the recommended pupil's book for Primary Literacy Programme which was used by the teacher and those appointed to read to the class. These findings are supported by Mubanga et al (2020) whose study revealed shortage of appropriate quality teaching and learning materials for early grade reading in the primary schools of Lusaka district. The findings are further supported by Desta (2020), Lu (2022) and Haile and Mendisu (2023) whose studies established that shortage of materials is a serious challenge affecting the teaching of reading in early grades. As echoed by

other scholars, shortage appropriate reading materials seriously affects the teaching of reading as learners cannot practice the skill from abstract. Reading fluency itself is a hands – on activity that requires a learner to be in constant touch with the reading material in order to master word forms or shapes for speed and accuracy to develop. Besides, lesson observations showed that the teaching of reading in Zambian primary schools followed a deliberately laid down procedure informed by the 2014 literacy policy which comes with its own suitable reading instructional materials that may not be improvised by the teachers in times of scarcity. This implies that a teacher may possess the necessary pedagogical skills to teach reading fluency but it is increasingly difficult for them to teach effectively if the appropriate materials are not available.

Moreover, the study established that the teaching of reading fluency was affected by over enrolment of learners. It was revealed that some classrooms had over 100 pupils thus making some teachers fail to apply appropriate instructional measures to effectively teach reading fluency. This finding is in agreement with Mubanga & Musenge (2020) whose study indicated that over enrolment of pupils in the schools in the early grades was a challenge because government schools were few in the area hence teachers failed to pay attention to learners with learning difficulties. This is what has been in the sampled schools where the teachers only paid attention to the few learners who were already fluent in reading. With over populated classrooms, it is increasingly difficult for teachers to provide remediation to all the struggling readers due to high numbers of those in need of individualized attention. Overcrowded classes also make the teacher fail to use appropriate strategies to teach reading fluency effectively, for instance paired reading may be difficult to apply. This is good evidence of how over enrolment of learners negatively affected the teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone.

Other results of the study established that learner shyness was a challenge that affected the teaching of reading fluency in the classrooms. When overcrowded classrooms are filled to capacity, some learners feel shy to participate in reading activities such as reading aloud in front of fellow learners. These findings resonate well with Ehsan et al (2021) whose study revealed that shy students mostly feel uncomfortable in the classroom and it causes a huge academic loss. They further indicated that although shyness is a natural phenomenon, yet fear of failure, fear of humiliation and hesitation contributes to promote shyness among students. This matches with what was obtaining in the classrooms of the sampled schools as a good number of learners feared to read aloud to a

class. This behaviour does not only affect the learners' acquisition of reading fluency but also affects the choice of teaching strategies on the part of the teacher as some always cling to group work. From this, it can be realized that learners who feel shy to participate in reading activities can hardly acquire the much needed reading fluency skills such as speed, accuracy and prosody. Vygotsky's (1978) socio – cultural is influential in this situation because for shy learners to attain reading fluency, they may require one – on – one support from the teacher which will make them open up and learn effectively.

The current study findings also established that effective teaching of reading fluency was affected by language barrier. In some cases, both teachers and learners were facing difficulties with pronunciation and intonation in the language of instruction (Cinyanja). This finding is congruent with Lungu (2019) whose study revealed that some teachers as well as pupils did not have much knowledge on the language of classroom instruction (Cinyanja) as both had to learn the language first before the teaching and learning sessions. Classroom language barrier arises as either the teacher or learner moves from an area of a familiar language of instruction to the one which uses a completely different language. Sometimes, these movements are caused by external factors such as transfers or random posting of newly deployed staff in a bid to promote the 'One Zambia, One Nation' moto, thus, making them (teachers) susceptible to classroom language barrier. This situation greatly affects the teaching of reading as MOGE (2014) guides that a zonal language of an area in which a school is found should be a medium of instruction for lower primary. This implies that even the instructional materials used in the teaching of reading fluency are monolingually tailored to suit the literacy policy guidelines. As a result, language barrier was found to be a hindrance to the effective teaching and learning of reading fluency in the multilingual classrooms of the sampled schools.

In order to alleviate the impact of language barrier on the teaching of reading fluency, it may be prudent to have appropriate instructional resources. However, the findings established that grade 4 classrooms in Mpezeni Zone lacked materials and resources suitable for linguistically diverse learners and teachers. The finding is in accord with Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021) whose study established that the inadequate teaching and learning materials only supported monolingual language learning. To unlock the reading potential of a linguistically diverse learner, the literacy policy needed to leave room for the supply and use bilingual resources to enable teachers deal with

the in a fairly easy manner. The use of bilingual resources helps the teacher to have capacity to translanguaging or switch codes in order to teach reading fluency to multilingual learners in an effective manner.

Also, the study findings revealed that teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone was affected by shortage of teachers which forced those available to handle at least two classes at a time. In some schools, lower classes were being handled by volunteer teachers who were working under very unfavorable conditions. The findings of this study are in conformity with Chipili (2016) who found that there was inadequate teacher – learner interaction as most teachers were having double classes due to low staffing levels against high pupil enrolment. Teacher – pupil ratio is a very crucial aspect in the teaching of reading fluency especially in the lower grades that require close attention, control and scaffolding measures for meaningful learning to take place. Therefore, teacher shortage is a huge setback where teaching of reading fluency is concerned because if a teacher is overloaded, it is almost impossible for them to be effective in terms of planning and delivery. As such, the worst impact will be felt by the majority struggling readers who are in dire need of the teacher's support continue to suffer as attention goes to those learners that already fluent. This has made most learners move up to secondary level of education stratum and let alone complete school without attaining reading fluency skills because the inadequate overloaded teachers failed to provide appropriate scaffolding measures proposed by Vygotsky's (1978) socio – cultural theory which guided this study. This implies that the theory used in this study may not support the findings because when there is a shortage of teachers at a school, it may be difficult for learners to receive the much needed support (scaffolding) to enable them attain fluency.

The study findings further established that most of the teachers paid more attention to reading comprehension thereby neglecting other equally important aspects of reading such speed, accuracy and prosody. This observation exhibited a missed opportunity to continue working on learners' needy areas regarding reading fluency. These findings are contradict with Cekiso (2017) who found that the majority of teachers only paid attention to oral reading (observing punctuation marks and pronunciation) without attending to reading comprehension. The findings of the current study and those of Cekiso clearly verify that it is a common practice by teachers to spend more time on one aspect of reading when teaching thereby neglecting other equally important areas such reading speed, accuracy and prosody. It must be noted that too much concentration on reading

comprehension negatively affects majority of readers who may be at frustration stage as they cannot comprehend what they cannot read. Therefore, teachers are expected to be situational readers that should know where to put more efforts for the majority of their learners to attain reading fluency.

5.4 Practices teachers could use to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni zone of Chipata district

The study findings established that parental involvement could be very helpful in the teaching of reading fluency in the zone. It was indicated that parents are key in providing support learners need in the absence of the teacher. The finding tallies with Zhou et al (2019) whose study revealed that parental involvement intervention demonstrated increases in oral reading fluency for instructional passages and novel progress monitoring passages after intervention implantation. The family are a primary agent of socialization and such, it plays they play a key role in education of every child. For quality education to take place, there is need for the parents, the learner and the teacher to work together. For instance, when the teacher notices that the learner has a problem in reading, he or she can involve the parents and guide them on how to help the affected child through home reading. They can also act as bilingual resources to help the child go round the language barriers which one may encounter as a result of monolingualized instructional practices. In this way, it is believed challenges affecting both the learners and the teacher during the teaching of reading fluency can be alleviated through such concerted efforts by the partners. Vygotsky's (1978) socio – cultural theory on which this study rides guides that scaffolding measures to improve on the learner's existing reading abilities (ZPD) can be provided by any more knowledgeable other, parents inclusive.

Furthermore, the findings of the current study revealed that frequent Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs) and workshops could help teachers teach reading fluency effectively in Mpezeni Zone. It was revealed that such platforms enable teachers to share good instructional practices and experiences. The findings are supported by Suwandi and Wardhani (2023) whose study showed that the quality and process of reading results improved after a literacy workshop was conducted (the average initial condition of 52.23 increased to 81.06). The study further revealed that there were significant differences in reading competence in pre – action and in the post – action and the

results of the second cycle actions. The findings provide a solution to Nambao and Mwanza's (2023) study findings which found that teachers had the content knowledge of reading fluency but lacked the pedagogical knowledge to teach reading fluency to Grade 5 learners. Truly workshops and TGMs provide a recourse for teachers that may be experiencing challenges when teaching reading fluency. For example, when a newly deployed teacher joins a station, they are usually blank on the teaching of reading. Therefore, they depend on the services of experienced senior teachers to provide them with the much needed mentorship through workshops or TGMs to enable them acquire the necessary expertise for them to be effective teachers. Similarly, when there a curriculum shift such the one set to be rolled out in 2025 in Zambia, workshops play a key role in training the new ways of teaching reading fluency. Therefore, frequent workshops and TGMs can help improve the teaching of reading fluency in Mpezeni Zone.

The study findings also established that teacher demonstration could be an effective strategy for teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone. This is a where a teacher models reading fluency to the learners or class before they (learners) are actually called to start practicing the skill. The findings are in agreement with Waruwu et al (2023) who found that Talitakum Private Elementary School had an increasing influence on the ability to read fluently in learning English using the demonstration method. Indeed one can support these findings as it is believed that learners, especially lower graders, learn through imitating their model who in this case is a teacher. When a teacher teaching these lower graders has a good handwriting, it is most likely that some, if not all, learners will have good handwriting. In the same vein, if a teacher models good reading fluency skills such as speed, accuracy and prosody, lower grade learners will easily imitate him or her and eventually become fluent as well. Therefore, once appropriately used, teacher demonstration can undoubtedly improve the teaching of reading in Mpezeni Zone.

Additionally, the findings found that choral could be an effective strategy of teaching reading fluency in the zone. This was revealed as a practice where learners are instructed to read a given text together and loudly, usually after teacher demonstration. It is a product of the infamous audiolingual language teaching approach. The findings are supported by Young et al (2015) whose study suggested that reading together is a feasible method of increasing proficiency. Choral reading helps readers with low confidence to ride on the proficiency of their classmates in order to acquire reading fluency skills. As the strategy has always worked well for any choir learning a

new song, there is hope and evidence that choral reading could be used to effectively teach reading fluency to multilingual learners and those in Mpezeni Zone are no exception. The practice can also help linguistically diverse learners attain reading fluency irrespective of barriers imposed by the monolingualistic instructional approach. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that learners read correctly as opposed to mere mimicking.

The study findings further revealed that struggling readers could be taught how to read fluently using paired reading strategy. The practice demands that a fluent reader models fluent reading and later allows the struggling partner to read the same words, sentence or passage. The findings are in line with Olaoluwa and Ebby (2022) whose study showed a significant difference in the mean reading ability scores of struggling readers exposed to paired reading strategy than those exposed to choral reading strategy. The practice was also recommended by Balasubramaniam (2023) as one of the key strategies for enhancing reading fluency. Additional support to the current finding is offered by Hudson et al (2020) whose study findings found interventions that were conducted one – on – one with a trained model of word reading and accuracy to be most effective. All the foregoing findings provide clear evidence that paired reading can, undoubtedly, help teachers and pupils effectively teach and learn reading fluency respectively. Paired reading as a practice of teaching reading fluency works well with Vygotsky's (1978) socio – cultural theory guiding this study as it promotes a struggling reader learning from the more knowledgeable other who can either be a teacher, fellow pupil or parent. However, for effective results to be realized, the teacher must plan the reading activities according to the learner's reading ability or level (Zone of Proximal Development).

In addition, the study established that repeated reading could be a very effective strategy for teaching reading fluency, especially to those learners experiencing difficulties. The findings are consistent with Hudson et al (2020) who supported the use of repeated reading to students with. Further support is given by Suhaimi (2018) who indicated that repeated reading strategy is found to be overall effective on reading speed and reading accuracy. Repeated reading as a practice of teaching reading fluency demands that a learner rereads aloud a give text more than once until the teacher is satisfied that the required skill has be attained. It is believed that the more readers are subjected to reading of the same text repeatedly, the more they perfect certain aspects of reading fluency such as accuracy, speed and prosody. However, it must be noted that the practice becomes

more efficient if it is done on one – one with the teacher, fluent pupil or a small group because if pupil population is very high, the teacher cannot know whether or not the needed reading skill has been attained. As evidenced by the supporting literature, if the practice is well utilized, it can help teachers in the zone teach reading fluency effectively.

The findings of the current study established that reading aloud could be very useful in the teaching of reading fluency to the Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone. The study findings are in tandem with Ceyhan and Yildiz (2021) whose research determined that interactive reading aloud practices improved students' levels of reading comprehension, reading motivation and reading fluency skills, independently of the practitioner. The findings are further supported by Senawati et al (2021) who revealed that reading aloud enhances children's vocabulary, pronunciation skills, motivation, literacy and critical thinking skills. Basically, is done by one learner appointed by the teacher. As noted by the foregoing supporting literature, read aloud motivates a learner to read more as their confidence levels increase. Nevertheless, the study revealed that struggling readers hesitated to participate in read aloud activities for fear being laughed at if they failed or made a mistake. Even so, with good reinforcement and implementation by the teacher, read aloud can enable teachers to teach reading fluency effectively.

Furthermore, the study findings established that remediation could help enhance the teaching of reading fluency to the struggling readers in Mpezeni Zone. These findings are consistent with Arevalo (2023) whose study revealed that frustrated readers who were subjected to remedial reading interventions through the utilization of the teacher – made activities and reading materials exhibited significant improvements. The study recommended remedial reading instruction as an effective strategy in helping and making pupils learn to read. In every classroom (especially in rural schools), there are learners who fail to read fluently or cannot even read at all. If not handled appropriately, these learners become frustrated and eventually hate school. These are the learners for which remediation is tailored. This practice requires that a teacher plans reading activities suitable for each one's reading needs and meets them separately but frequently for them to catch up. In Zambia's primary schools, this teaching strategy funded by VVOB is fondly known as 'Catch – Up'. With a good teacher – pupil ratio and appropriate implementation, the practice could enable teachers teach reading fluency, especially to the struggling readers, effectively.

The findings also established that the use of bilingual resources could help teachers teach reading fluency effectively. The finding is backed by Khaled (2024) whose study revealed that bilingual education in Algeria positively impacted literacy rates. Although success can vary based on teaching quality and availability of resources, the study noted that bilingual education promotes better literacy and educational outcomes, overall. Further, the current finding is in collaboration with Mkandawire et al (2024) whose study recommended that government should develop and implement a strong simultaneous bilingual or multilingual literacy programme to reflect community languages and avoid imposing monolingual language ideologies across schools. They also lobbied that early grade teachers should be allowed to use diverse pedagogical approaches in the teaching of reading in multilingual classes within the mainstream curriculum. Bilingual resources here could mean people or materials that promote the teaching and/or learning of reading fluency using two languages. Bilingual resources can help lessen language related challenges teachers of different linguistic backgrounds face in their quest to teach reading fluency following the monolingual literacy policy.

Vygotsky's (1978) social – cultural theory of learning agrees with the foregoing discussion on the need for the teacher to structure reading activities based on the learner's existing reading skills (Zone of Proximal Development) and in a way that helps the learner to reach the desired reading fluency. The discussion has shown that a teacher needs to demonstrate how fluent reading is done as the learner follows attentively. Then he/she needs to let learners practice the reading as he/she steps back but continues to offer support (scaffolding) and feedback when needed. The support to reading fluency can be gradually removed as the reader masters the assigned skills.

However, the theory may not agree with the foregoing discussion in that some schools in Mpezeni Zone are negatively affected by shortage of instructional materials, over enrolment, shortage of teachers and language barrier, among other challenges, which may affect the teacher's choice of appropriate teaching strategies to provide the necessary support (scaffolding) according to the learner's reading needs (Zone of Proximal Development).

5.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the findings of the study thematically and in line with the data presented in the preceding chapter. The study findings were validated by relevant literature from chapter two

of this research. The following chapter presents conclusion and the necessary recommendations. The chapter also suggests areas of further research based on the findings of this study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Overview

The previous chapter discussed the findings of the study. This chapter concludes the study, makes recommendations and suggests areas of further research based on the findings of the study.

6.2 Conclusion

Arising from the presented discussion of the findings on the teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district, the following conclusions can be drawn for the study.

The first objective established the strategies teachers used to teach reading to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni of Chipata district. The study found that the strategies that teachers used to teach reading fluency included read aloud, repeated reading, choral reading and demonstration. It was also established that remediation and homework assignments were the commonly used strategies to help struggling readers acquire reading fluency skills. Therefore, the study concludes that teaching of reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone was taking place though some teachers exhibited limited knowledge of the names and appropriate application of the strategies they were using.

The second objective sought to determine the challenges teachers faced when teaching reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district. The study found that teachers encountered over enrolment, shortage of appropriate reading materials, shortage of teachers, learner shyness and language barrier as the main challenges. From these findings, it can be concluded that teachers faced some challenges which inhibited their effective teaching of reading fluency to the learners in the zone.

The third objective was to suggest practices that teachers could use to effectively teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata district. The study suggested that the use of practices such as read aloud, parental involvement, remediation, paired reading, frequent workshops or TGMs, teacher demonstration and of bilingual resources could help teachers teach reading fluency effectively. The study concludes that, with manageable class sizes

and adequate appropriate reading materials available, the correct and consistent use of the aforementioned practices could help teachers to effectively teach reading fluency to the multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations in line with the thematic areas.

- i. There must be frequent monitoring by both local and external supervisors to ensure that teachers teach reading fluency using appropriate strategies. This monitoring can also make supervisors acquaint themselves with what happens in classrooms regarding the teaching of reading fluency so they advocate for impactful strategies which respond to actual needs of learners as they meet at high profile planning meetings such as curriculum evaluation.
- ii. The government must have a deliberate agenda of building more schools in rural areas and/or expanding the existing ones to meet the ever growing enrolments exacerbated by the free education policy and feeding the programme, continue employing more primary school teachers but send them where they are conversant with the area's local languages and periodically supply more reading materials relevant to the active literacy programme.
- iii. Teachers must always ensure that they put to good use the tested practices such as repeated reading, read aloud, paired reading and parental involvement in order to effectively impart fluency skills to the learners in primary schools through effective remediation.

6.4 Suggestion for further research

Arising from the findings, the current study may not have fully explored all areas regarding the teaching of reading fluency to learners in primary schools. Therefore,

A similar study should be conducted at Grade 1 level to investigate the teaching of reading fluency to the first grade learners in a quest to lay a solid reading foundation. As observed by Padeliadu & Antoniou (2014), there is a considerably high correlation between oral reading fluency achieved

at first grade and general reading success. This implies that first grade is extremely significant for future reading success because basic literacy skills are achieved in this grade.

6.5 Chapter Summary

The current chapter concluded the study and presented recommendations for required action to enable concerned teachers teach reading fluency to multilingual learners effectively. The chapter also presented recommendations for future researches to explore areas that are considered influential to the attainment of essential reading skills by learners before they cross over to secondary education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE RESPONDENT (TEACHER)

Time of interview.....

Date.....

Place.....

Interviewer.....

1. Which strategies do teachers use to teach reading fluency to Grade 4 multilingual learners in Mpezene Zone?

(a) What strategies do you use to teach reading fluency in your classroom?

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(b) To the learners that are not familiar with the language of instruction, how do you ensure that they participate in the reading fluency class?

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(c) What strategies do you use to help learners discuss or analyze the texts in your reading fluency class?

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(d) How do you use the teaching and learning materials to ensure that learners acquire the needed reading fluency skills in your classroom?

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(e) As a teacher, how do you ensure that those learners who cannot read catch up with their fluent classmates, if any?

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2. What challenges are teachers facing when teaching reading fluency to Grade four multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone?

(a) What challenges are you facing in the classroom you teach reading fluency in relation to:

(i) the reading fluency strategies you are using

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(ii) the strategies in ensuring that there is no language barrier in the classroom

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(iii) learner participation in the classroom

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(iv) the materials needed to teach reading fluency in your classroom

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(v) teachers' competence in the language of instruction

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(vi) Could there be any other challenges affecting the teaching of reading fluency that you would like to add?

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(b) What are the sources of the challenges you face when teaching reading fluency in your classroom?

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3. Which practices can teachers use in the teaching of reading fluency to Grade four multilingual learners in Mpezeni Zone?

(a) Explain the practices that you think can help learners be actively engaged in order to improve on reading fluency.

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(b) As a teacher, how can you plan for learners who fail to read fluently?

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(c) What do you think should be done in order to make a teacher teach reading fluency effectively?

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(d) How can you support learners who may be struggling to read in your classroom?

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(e) How can you address the challenges surrounding the teaching of reading fluency in terms of:

(i) the reading fluency strategies used?

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(ii) the practices in ensuring that there is no language barrier in learner' participation in reading fluency classroom?

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(iii) struggling readers' participation in reading fluency classroom?

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Appendix 2: Classroom Observation Sheet

SCHOOL.....

GRADE.....

OBSERVATION NOTES:

Preparation	Evidence
Strategies teachers use to teach reading fluency	Evidence
Challenges teachers face when teaching reading fluency	Evidence
Practices that teachers can use in teaching reading fluency	Evidence

Appendix 3: Approval Letter



Chalimbana University

Office of the Director
Directorate of Research & Postgraduate
Private Bag E1, Lusaka.
Email: researchethics@chau.ac.zm
Website: www.chau.ac.zm
Phone: +260 979 024363

Research Ethics Clearance Form 1c

ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Researcher: Phiri Timothy

Supervisor: Dr. Nyimbili F.

Title of research: The Teaching of Reading Fluency to Grade 4 Multilingual Learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata District.

Thank you for application for research ethics clearance by Chalimbana University Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research.

The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to an applicable national legislation, professional code of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

Ethics approval is granted for the period July, 2024 to July 2025 on condition that the researcher will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved proposal by the supervisor. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date, July 2025.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Chikopela'.

Dr. R. Chikopela

Chairperson

Research Ethics Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. D. Sikalumbi'.

Dr. A. D. Sikalumbi

Director

Research, Innovations and Postgraduate

Appendix 4: Introductory Letter

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Chalimbana University

RESEARCH, POSTGRADUATE STUDIES & CONSULTANCY
PRIVATE BAG E1
LUSAKA.
E-Mail: directorateresearchchau@gmail.com
<http://www.journal.chalimbanauniversity.net>
Phone: +260777368751

12th July, 2024

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTORY LETTER- POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION

STUDENT NAME: PHIRI TIMOTHY

STUDENT ID NO: 227136667

Chalimbana University Directorate of Research Postgraduate Studies, Consultancy and Innovation would like to introduce the above named student pursuing Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics. The student is currently collecting data on the research study entitled **"The Teaching of Reading Fluency to Grade 4 Multilingual Learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata District."** We request you to allow him collect data for his dissertation as it is part of the University requirements for the award of a postgraduate degree.

Your assistance rendered to the student will be greatly valued.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sikalumbi A. D.', written over a faint circular stamp.

Dr. SIKALUMBI A. D.

DIRECTOR

RESEARCH, POST GRADUATE STUDIES, CONSULTANCY AND INNOVATION

Integrity. Service. Excellence.

Appendix 5: Permission Letter

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CHALIMBANA UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH, POSTGRADUATE STUDIES &
CONSULTANCY
PRIVATE BAG E1
LUSAKA

15TH JULY, 2024

THE DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY
P.O. BOX 510241
CHIPATA

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: PERMISSION FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION

I am a student at Chalimbana University pursuing Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics. I am currently collecting data on the research study entitled **“The Teaching of Reading Fluency to Grade 4 Multilingual Learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata District.”**

I write to request your able office to allow me collect data from Mshachantha, Walira and Mwami Primary Schools for my dissertation as it is part of the University requirements for the award of a postgraduate degree.

Your kind consideration towards my request will be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

TIMOTHY PHIRI



STUDENT ID NO. 227136667

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All correspondence should be addressed to
The District Education Board Secretary
Tel 06-222463, 06-221152
Fax 06-222463
E-mail: debchipata@gmail.com

In reply please quote
No



**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
25 JUL 2024
DEPUTY HEADTEACHER
MSHACHANTHA PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. Box 510241, CHIPATA

District Education Board Secretary
P.O. Box 510241
CHIPATA
PUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
22-07-2024
HEADTEACHER'S OFFICE
MSHACHANTHA PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. Box 510241, CHIPATA
Head teacher

16th July, 2024

D/H for the Head

The Head teacher
- Mushachanta Primary School
- Walira Primary School
- Mwami Primary School
CHIPATA DISTRICT

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
22 JUL 2024
HEADTEACHER'S OFFICE
MWAMI PRIMARY SCHOOL
PRIVATE BAG 5, CHIPATA

JJa Headteacher

RE: STAFF INTRODUCTION: MR. TIMOTHY PHIRI STUDENT NO. 22713667

This serves to introduce to you Mr. Timothy Phiri who is a student at Chalimbana University pursuing Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics. The officer is visiting your school in order to collect data on the research study entitled **"The Teaching of Reading Fluency to Grade 4 Multilingual Learners in Mpezeni Zone of Chipata District.**

Kindly welcome him.

Florence Manda (Ms)
District Education Standards Officer
For/DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY
CHIPATA DISTRICT
/nsc..