

**TEACHERS' PRACTICES FOR ENHANCING READING SKILLS IN
LEARNERS IN FOUR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZOMBA RURAL**

M. Ed (PRIMARY- LITERACY EDUCATION) THESIS

MARY HARRY POTANI

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

NOVEMBER, 2016

**TEACHERS' PRACTICES FOR ENHANCING READING SKILLS IN
LEARNERS IN FOUR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ZOMBA RURAL**

M.Ed. (PRIMARY- LITERACY EDUCATION) THESIS

By

MARY HARRY POTANI

B. A. (General Education) - Lakeland College (USA)

Submitted to the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies, Faculty of Education,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education
(Primary-Literacy Education)

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

NOVEMBER, 2016

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Amos Chauma, PhD (Lecturer)

Main Supervisor

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Patrick Kapito (Lecturer)

Co-Supervisor

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Foster Kholowa, PhD (Senior Lecturer)

Dean of Education

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late husband James Kennedy Chibaya who died when I was doing this study and he was the one who encouraged me to go back to school. I also dedicate it to my late uncle Mr. Ted Willie Makondi and my late mum Ms Felia Willie Makondi for making me who I am today. May their souls rest in peace.

It is also dedicated to my children Hope and Ekariorama for their encouragement and support during the study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude and appreciation goes to my supervisor Dr. Amos Chauma for his total commitment right from the conceptualization of the research problem, presentation and analysis of the data and organization of my argumentation. I found his guidance and supervision in the course of shaping my thesis extremely enriching. I am very grateful because he was always available whenever I needed his assistance. God bless him. Special thanks should go to Mr. Patrick Kapito my second supervisor for the remarkable guidance towards my study.

I really appreciate the Scottish Government through Strathclyde University for the sponsorship which made me realize my dream of attaining M.Ed.

It is with pleasure that I recognise the District Education Manager Zomba Rural for granting me permission to conduct the study in her district. My sincere thanks are further extended to all my research respondents in Zomba Rural schools whose input has been invaluable in this study.

Above all, I give glory and honour to the almighty God for giving me the courage and strength to overcome all the challenges that came my way during the course of my programme and for making my dream a reality.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners in upper primary school. Four schools were purposively selected in Zomba rural. The study had forty eight participants comprised of ten standard seven learners, one IPTE qualified standard seven English teacher and one head teacher from each of the four selected schools. The study used qualitative approach. Data was generated using in-depth interview, focus group discussion and lesson observation. Data was tape recorded, transcribed and was analysed following the main themes derived from the data generated. The findings of the study revealed that the activities that teachers use within different strategies do not enhance reading skills in learners. There was minimal interaction amongst learners. The study concluded that there are a number of challenges that teachers face when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills. The implication is that, if reading skills are not enhanced in learners, it will be difficult for the learners to read information from different learning areas with understanding. Therefore, schools and zones need to conduct CPDs for the teachers to share knowledge on how they can enhance reading skills. PEAs and head teachers should also conduct frequent supervision to ensure effective teaching of reading in the schools. Teachers should be encouraged to use variety of teaching and learning resources in order to meet the needs of all the learners.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xv
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Chapter overview	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	4
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	5
1.4 Research questions.....	5
1.4.1 Main research question	5
1.4.2 Specific research questions	5
1.5 Significance of the study.....	5
1.6 Definitions of terms	6
1.7 Thesis structure	7
1.8 Chapter summary	7
CHAPTER TWO	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.0 Chapter Overview	8

2.1 Strategies for enhancing reading skills	8
2.1.1 <i>Group guided reading</i>	9
2.1.2 <i>Silent reading</i>	10
2.2 Reading Phases	13
2.2.1 <i>Pre reading phase</i>	13
2.2.2 <i>During reading phase</i>	14
2.2.3 <i>Post reading phase</i>	15
2.3 Challenges that teachers and learners face when using strategies that enhance reading skills.....	16
2.3.1 <i>Large Classes</i>	16
2.3.2 <i>Teachers' inadequate knowledge</i>	18
2.3.3 <i>Teaching and learning resources</i>	19
2.4 Overcoming challenges faced by teachers and learners when using strategies for enhancing reading skills	21
2.4.1 <i>Overcoming large classes</i>	21
2.4.2 <i>Overcoming teachers' inadequate knowledge</i>	22
2.4.3 <i>Overcoming shortage of teaching and learning resources</i>	23
2.5 Theoretical framework.....	24
2.5.1 <i>Social constructivism theory</i>	24
2.5.2 <i>Schema theory</i>	26
2.6 Chapter summary	27
CHAPTER THREE	29
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	29

3.1 Chapter overview	29
3.1 Research approach	29
3.2 Research design	31
3.3 Data generation, methods and instruments	31
3.3.1 Lesson Observation	32
3.3.2 In-depth Interviews.....	33
3.3.3 Focus group discussion	35
3.4 Selection of research site	36
3.5 Sample Population	36
3.6 Data sources and sampling procedures	37
3.7 Piloting of the study	38
3.8 Access negotiations to the research site.....	39
3.9 Data management.....	39
3.10 Data analysis	40
3.11 Credibility and trustworthiness of the study	40
3.12 Ethical considerations	41
3.13 Limitations of the study	42
3.14 Chapter summary	42
CHAPTER FOUR.....	43
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	43
4.0 Chapter overview	43
4.1 Teaching strategies and activities used to enhance reading skills in learners.....	43
4.1.1 Instructional strategies.....	44

4.1.1.1	<i>Silent reading</i>	44
4.1.1.2	<i>Reading aloud</i>	46
4.1.2	<i>Teaching and learning methods</i>	49
4.1.2.1	<i>Question and answer</i>	49
4.1.2.2	<i>Group work</i>	51
4.1.2.3	<i>Discussion</i>	53
4.1.2.4	<i>Individual work</i>	56
4.1.2.5	<i>Pair work</i>	58
	<i>This is what one of the teachers stated during in-depth interview.</i>	58
4.1.3	<i>Activities for enhancing reading skills</i>	60
4.1.3.1	<i>Pre-reading activities</i>	60
4.1.3.2	<i>During- reading activities</i>	62
4.1.3.3	<i>Post-reading activities</i>	64
4.1.4	<i>Other related activities for enhancing reading skills</i>	66
4.1.4.1	<i>Scaffolding</i>	67
4.1.4.2	<i>Activities related to learners experiences</i>	68
4.1.5	<i>Teaching and learning resources for enhancing reading skills</i>	70
4.1.5.1	<i>Learners' book</i>	70
4.1.5.2	<i>Word cards</i>	73
4.1.5.3	<i>Real objects</i>	74
4.1.5.4	<i>Charts</i>	75
4.2	<i>Challenges that teachers and learners face when using strategies that enhance reading skills in learners</i>	77

4.2.1 Learner related challenges.....	77
4.2.1.1Lack of interest in reading.....	78
4.2.2 Teacher related challenges	83
4.2.2.1 Teachers' dedication.....	83
4.2.2.2 Inadequate knowledge on PCAR	85
4.2.3 School related challenges.....	87
4.2.3.1 Shortage of books	88
4.2.4 Policy related challenges	89
4.2.4.1 Promotion of learners.....	89
4.2.4.2 Inadequate reading activities in the syllabus	90
4.3 Overcoming challenges faced by teachers when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners	91
4.3.1 Overcoming learner related challenges.....	91
4.3.1.1 Lack of interest in reading.....	91
4.3.1.2 Failure to ask capable peers for assistance	92
4.3.1.3 Failure to read.....	92
4.3.2 Overcoming teacher related challenges.....	93
4.3.2.1Teachers dedication.....	94
4.3.2.2 Inadequate knowledge	94
4.3.3.1 Shortage of books	96
4.3.4 Overcoming policy related challenges	97
4.3.4.1 Promotion of learners.....	97
4.3.4.2 Inadequate reading activities	98

4.4 Chapter summary	100
CHAPTER FIVE	102
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	102
5.0 Chapter overview	102
5.1 Conclusions and implications	102
5.2 Recommendations	105
5.3 Suggested areas for further study	106
REFERENCES	107
APPENDICES	117

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Lesson extract 1	47
Table 2: Lesson extract 2	54
Table 3: Lesson extract 3	67
Table 4: Lesson extract 4	69
Table 5: Lesson extract 5	86

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introduction letter from the Dean.....	117
Appendix 2: Permission letter from the DEM	118
Appendix 3: An extract of lesson observation notes	119
Appendix 4: An extract of lesson observation notes	121
Appendix 5: An extract of lesson observation notes	124
Appendix 6: Interview guide for head teachers	128
Appendix 7 : Interview guide for teachers.....	130
Appendix 8: Focus group discussion guide for learners	132
Appendix 9: Lesson observation schedule.....	133

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CPD:	Continuous Professional Development
DEM:	District Education Manager
DVD:	Digital Video Disc
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
IDI:	In-Depth Interview
IPTE:	Initial Primary Teacher Education
MIE:	Malawi Institute of Education
MoEST:	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
OBE:	Outcome Based Education
PCAR:	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PEA:	Primary Education Advisor
PTA:	Parent-Teachers Association
SACMEQ:	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SEED:	South East Education Division
SSR:	Sustained Silent Reading
TDC:	Teachers Development Centre
UNESCO:	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZPD:	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the introduction for the whole study. It starts with the background to the study, followed by statement of the problem, purpose of the study and the definition of terms. At the end of the chapter is thesis structure and chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the study

Reading is one of the four language skills and it is also viewed as an active and complex process which draws on the application of a number of skills and knowledge about language and print (Cooper, 1996). As learners progress with their education, they are required to read with understanding so that they get the meaning of the information learnt in various learning areas. Learners use reading to learn information from content area. This is possible if learners read texts with understanding. Harris (1961) states that the ability to understand and use the information in texts is a key to learners' success in learning. Roberts (1969) states that letters convey information about sounds, words convey information contributing to the meaning, and readers interpret them in a way which brings meaning to the text.

There is always communication breakdown between the reader and the writer if the reader fails to translate the text; for example, the children can communicate and learn from oral language, but most of them cannot read because they do not have the ability to identify printed words; hence, no communication. Similarly, learners in upper primary learn all the subjects in English except Chichewa so they need to have reading skills that can help them to understand the information conveyed in content areas. However, in reading there is need for the readers to think critically so that they can get the meaning from the text. Children need to use their previous experience so that meaning is obtained from the text; hence, effective communication.

Learning to read at an appropriate time is crucial to one's academic success. According to Kaplan (1986), failure to read by the end of first grade is associated with later academic failure. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, literacy levels for primary school children are low (UNESCO, 2010). Malawi being one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa also faces similar challenges. This is evidenced by the results of 2010 baseline and midterm reports of Early Grade Reading and Assessment. The 2010 baseline report states that a total of 72.8% standard 2 and 41.9% of standard 4 students could not read a single word of a story (MoEST, 2010). Similarly, midterm report indicates that standard 4 learners were struggling with reading fluency and that their achievement fluency in reading comprehension was much lower than in listening comprehension of questions of similar difficulty. The learners were able to answer 15% of the questions which means that the majority of the learners were not able to study independently (MoEST, 2011).

Language teachers in Malawian primary schools have been using different strategies of teaching reading in order to help learners overcome the problems of identifying letters and recognising words. Similarly, over the last decade, there has been an introduction of several literacy projects and initiatives in Malawi to help combat the struggles with reading and writing found in learners throughout the country (MoEST, 2010). Despite all these interventions, many studies have revealed that learners are still struggling with reading and they spend the whole year in school without acquiring the expected language skills (MoEST, 2012; Chimombo, Chiuye, Chide and Chiunda, 2014).

According to Kewaza and Welch (2010), reading as a skill is one of the effective means of learning and expands one's proficiency in the use of language. Reading also promotes skills necessary to acquire knowledge. People get more information when they read books, newspapers, magazines, and stories; hence, becoming more knowledgeable of the world around them. This is evidenced by a study which was conducted by Maganga, Mwale, Mapondera and Saka (2010) on learning achievement of standard 3 and standard 7. It was noted that by the time learners reached standard 3, they found standard 3 work difficult because most of them could not read and write. This means that learners failed to use reading as a tool to assist them to acquire relevant information for the assessment tasks they were given. The study shows a much greater awareness of the contribution reading can make to an individual's growth and in enabling people to meet the changing demands of the complex society.

In school, children are required to read books and printed information to support their learning across all areas of the curriculum. Literacy demands of the world beyond the primary classroom are constantly increasing (Browne, 1993). For example, most of the jobs now require employees to be flexibly literate. A person responds to written information if s/he interprets what has been written. Due to the importance of literacy as discussed in the foregoing paragraphs, there is need for teachers to ensure that learners develop the ability to read in whatever way they choose or need now or in future. Thus, this study intends to explore teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in upper primary school learners.

1.2 Statement of the problem

After spending eight years of primary education, it is expected that learners should acquire and develop reading skills that will enable them to read fluently and critically. Despite the various literacy interventions that have been launched in Malawi in order to enhance reading skills in learners, the general public is concerned with the reading and writing skills of primary school learners (MoEST, 2010). However, several studies have been conducted in Malawi regarding the teaching and learning of English as a second language in different areas. In relation to reading skills, a study was conducted on the levels of reading skills (Milner et al., 2011). The researcher has not come across a study that focused on the teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in primary school learners. Hence, the need to get a better understanding of teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills with an aim of improving teaching in Malawi.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners in upper primary school.

1.4 Research questions

The study was guided by the following questions

1.4.1 Main research question

The main research question was:

- What are the teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in upper primary school learners in Malawi?

1.4.2 Specific research questions

The specific research questions were:

- What are the teaching strategies and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners?
- What are the challenges that teachers and learners face when using these teaching strategies and activities?
- How do teachers and learners overcome the challenges they face when using these teaching strategies and activities?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study will help in giving a clear understanding of how reading skills are enhanced in primary school learners, the challenges that teachers and learners face and how to overcome those challenges. This understanding will help teachers to reflect on their

practices because they are directly concerned with the teaching strategies in the schools. Teachers will therefore find the results of this study useful. The findings of the study will also be important to school administrators because they would be encouraged to help teachers in teaching reading lessons by providing the necessary support that can help to enhance the reading skills in learners. The findings would also be significant for they would inform policy on how to enhance reading skills in learners.

1.6 Definitions of terms

The following terms are defined as follows:

Case study: It is a type of study in which a person, program, agency, or some other unit of analysis is examined in detail (O'sullivan & Russel, 1994).

Eye-digression: Eyes turning or wander away from the words the reader wants to read (MIE, 2008).

Finger pointing: Making a soft quite sound (MIE, 2008).

Guided reading: A classroom activity in which learners are taught in groups according to reading ability. The teacher works with each group on a text carefully selected to offer an appropriate level of challenge to the group (Medwell, Wray, Minns, Coates & Griffiths (2009).

Open-ended questions: These are types of survey questions in which respondents are required to provide their own answers without a listing of possibilities (O'sullivan & Russel, 1994).

Regression: The moving back of eyes to check previous words instead of sweeping steadily forward (MIE, 2008)

Scaffolding: Temporary help that is given to students to help them succeed at a task. It is removed once it is no longer needed (Crawford, Saul, Mathews & Makinster, 2005)

Sub-vocalisation: Forming the sounds of the words a person is reading (MIE, 2008)

Whispering: Making a soft quite noise (MIE, 2008)

1.7 Thesis structure

This study has five chapters. Chapter 1 contains an introduction of the problem. It presents the general background to the study stating the statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, and significance of the study and definitions of terms that are used in the study. Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature of the study as well as theoretical framework. Chapter 3 discusses research design and methodology. It explains how the data was generated including the study site, sampling and population as well as ethical issues, credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings of the study. Finally, chapter 5 makes conclusions of the findings and recommendations of the study.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter shows the background to the study which lays a foundation to the whole study. It has provided the statement of the problem which is followed by the purpose of the study and the research questions that the researcher investigated. Lastly, the chapter justifies the significance of the study in the field of teaching and learning. In the next chapter, the study reviews literature on strategies and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners and discusses related studies that have been conducted internationally, Africa and Malawi in general.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of literature on strategies and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners. It discusses the challenges that teachers and learners face when using the strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners. Then, it will have a discussion of ways of overcoming challenges that teachers and learners face when using the strategies and activities. Within these aspects the chapter will also have a presentation of studies that have been conducted in reading. Finally, the chapter has the explanation and discussion of the theoretical framework that guided the study.

2.1 Strategies for enhancing reading skills

This section discusses the strategies for enhancing reading skills in learners. There are a number of strategies in reading that have been proven to be effective to all learners. Effective strategies depend upon the teachers' knowledge of content, their experiences on the field and ability of their learners. There is need for teachers to know their learners so that they can use strategies that are applicable to the individual needs of their learners.

The following are the teaching strategies for enhancing reading skills in learners: group guided reading and silent reading.

2.1.1 Group guided reading

Group guided reading is a model of instructions that involves explicit modeling of reading strategies by the teacher while learners are actively engaged in reading trade books (books marketed to the general public) appropriate for their instructional reading levels and interest (Roe, Smith & Burns, 2009). It is also a form of support that places a learner in a more formal instructional situation (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The groups in guided reading should be composed of learners that are of the same reading level. During guided reading, learners reading skills will be enhanced for example, critical reading, word guessing, fast reading, scanning, skimming and predicting as they are involved in the searching and discussion of the text.

Many studies have been conducted and have revealed the positive effects of guided reading in enhancing reading skills. A study in America on the effects of guided reading instructions of students' fluency, accuracy and comprehension revealed that teachers who use guided reading in their classes produce learners who can read with confidence. The learners are more fluent, accurate, and can effectively answer comprehension questions related to a piece of reading (Heston, 2010). Similarly, a study on improving reading comprehension and fluency through the use of guided reading by Gab, Kaiser, Long, and Roemer (2007) revealed that guided reading interventions using leveled texts was successful in addressing the problem of reading comprehension and fluency in grades 2

and 4. There was an increase in students reading fluency and comprehension throughout the course of intervention. Basically, both of these studies focused on student's fluency, accuracy and comprehension and they also focused on a specific strategy (guided reading). This study therefore aims at finding out the teachers' practices and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners.

Roe, Smith and Burns (2009) state that the goal for guided reading instruction is to provide learners with the opportunity to not only become familiar with reading skills and practices, but to provide students with a small group setting where they may not feel intimidated to take risks in reading. Learners can also be encouraged to help each other and read with expression during group guided reading. Hardie (2013) conducted a study on the role of guided reading on the development of young children literacy skills. The study found that the role of guided reading lessons is to teach, prompt and reinforce skills and strategies through small group instructions that learners can then transfer to independent activities. However, Hardie's study focused on literacy skills in general. This study intended to explore the teachers' practices and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners.

2.1.2 Silent reading

Silent reading can be done to the whole class every day and for longer periods as the children grow older. Silent reading periods in class give learners the opportunity for a sustained reading from a book of their choice. In these sessions learners are able to develop their experiences and enjoyment of books (Browne, 1993). Learners must read

silently to make intelligent decisions based on the material they read. Teachers need to allow learners to read text silently, and then share with their peers through discussions. However, MIE (2008) states that teacher should always check bad reading habits that learners use when reading silently. Some of these bad reading habits are: whispering, finger pointing, regressions, eye digression and sub-vocalisation.

A study on achievement effects of sustained silent reading in a middle school by Sullivan (2010) indicated that sustained silent reading is beneficial to learners because it increases their reading achievement. However, Sullivan (2010) states that there is need for the teachers to be trained on how to implement SSR. There is also need for the availability of the books in the library for the learners to read. Sullivan's study was conducted in a context where books were available. This study will among other things find out the challenges that teachers and learners face when using the strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners.

Careful questioning by the teacher to extend limited and stereotyped depictions of people in reading material can help learners develop expertise in silent reading (Roe, Smith & Burns, 2002). This means that teachers need to ask learners questions that will help them to evaluate the text and interpret the information in the passage. Pressley et al. (2001), Stuhlman and Pianta (2009) stress that the process of assisting learners in becoming more proficient readers, require that teachers draw upon instructional activities prior to reading, during and after reading. Studies of teachers in a variety of settings suggest that teachers' literacy instruction and perceptions of students' abilities influence classroom

practices and student achievement (McMahon, Mark and Reeves, 1998). Research also shows that students of teachers who possess a high level of self-efficacy achieve at higher learning rates than students who are not taught by such teachers (Pressley et al., 2001).

A study by Lipenga (2011) on teachers' practices for developing speech proficiency in learners in Malawi revealed that the quality of spoken language amongst Malawian learners is generally poor because language teachers do not use teaching methods and strategies which facilitate the development of English language speech proficiency. This shows that the teachers' practices are essential if effective learning is to take place in a classroom. During reading teachers need to use strategies and activities that can help to enhance reading skills in learners. However, Lipenga's focus was on speech proficiency. This study therefore aims at finding out the strategies and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners.

Chen and Dhillon (2013) conducted a study on the exploration of ways to change students approach to learning by encouraging them to adopt a deep learning in developing their reading skills in English. Among other things, the study revealed that, taking a deep approach to learning, changing attitudes and methods in teaching reading, lecturers can effectively foster the reading skills in students and improve their achievement. This study was conducted in University. However, this can also apply to upper primary school where learners need to have good reading skills so that they can read information from different learning areas with understanding; hence, improving their performance. Therefore, this study aims at exploring teachers practices for enhancing reading skills in learners in primary school.

2.2 Reading Phases

Reading in a classroom situation has three phases. Teachers perform different activities in all the phases in order to help learners become proficient readers. William (1987) argues that for teaching of reading to be successful a reading lesson needs to be divided into three phases and these are; the pre-reading, while reading and post reading. In each phase, there are activities that are supposed to be done with an aim of assisting learners to read the text with understanding; hence enhancing their reading skills.

2.2.1 Pre reading phase

The main purpose of pre reading phase is to prepare learners for the text they are going to read. This phase is for warm up activities which engage learners in preparation for a reading task. This stage also provides an overview of what can increase reading speed and efficiency. Williams (1987) observes that the reasons for pre reading is to stimulate interest in the text, have a reason for reading and prepare the learner for the language of the text. The activities carried out at this phase allow learners to think about what they already know about a given topic and think of what they will read. More information is contributed by the reader than the print on the page.

According to Goodman (1967), reading is a complex process by which a reader reconstructs a message encoded by a writer in a graphic language. Widdowson (1983), states that the psycholinguistic view of reading assumes reading to be an active process in which the reader is an active information processor. Teachers need to use different activities in pre reading phase to assist learners build their background knowledge. MIE

(2008) suggests the following activities to be used during pre-reading phase; matching the title and illustrations with the content of a description, guessing meanings of words and phrases, and answering questions on descriptions. Similarly, Urquhart and Weir (1998) suggests the following as some of the pre reading activities: thinking about the title and reading appendices quickly. In order to allow learners interact with the text, teachers can ask learners questions, ask learners to explain what they think the text or story is about, ask learners to brainstorm and guess the meanings of some words within the text (MIE, 2008).

2.2.2 During reading phase

The aim of this phase is to assist learners put together what they are reading , relate the information to their own experience, opinions and knowledge, follow the order of ideas in the text, to understand and infer the information found in the text and confirm background knowledge (Aebersold & Field, 2003). This is the phase in which learners continue to build upon their own existing schema. Each time they read the same subject, their knowledge of the subject becomes greater. At this stage, learners apply and practice comprehension strategies for example; summarise, asking questions, making connections and monitoring comprehension (Adler, 2001). MIE (2008) suggests the following as during reading activities: identifying characters in the story, asking and answering questions, reading silently, guessing meanings of unfamiliar word, matching text with illustrations or diagrams, analysing sentences and extracting specific information.

2.2.3 Post reading phase

The aim of this phase of reading is to check understanding, to consolidate language skills and to enable further reading. As learners process the information being read, they need to exercise their ability to summarise, clarify, connect and evaluate as an indicator that they have understood what they have read (Marzano & Robert, 2001). The following are post reading activities summarising main points in stories, completing a close passage, asking and answering questions, re-ordering jumbled sentence, describing title, main character, reciting a poem (MIE, 2008). MIE (2008) also suggests the following strategies to help learners perform the suggested activities so that learners reading skills are enhanced; for example, group/pair work, think pair share, demonstration and explanation.

Taking learners through the three phases of reading will help them acquire the necessary reading skills. Senekane (2013) conducted a study on correlation between reading comprehension practices and academic performance. Among other things, the study revealed that teachers followed the three stages of reading to help learners understand the read text. As a result, the learners became confident when reading and performed better in the other subjects. Senekane's study was conducted in standard three in Kenya and it can also be applied in a Malawian context. This study will among other things explore the strategies and activities that are practiced within the three phases of reading.

Another study was conducted by Onkoba (2014) in Kenya to find out the correlation between reading comprehension practices and academic performance. Among other things the study confirmed that reading comprehension practices have an influence on academic performance. This means that if a learner is able to read, he can also perform better in the other learning areas. Therefore, this study was intended to find out the teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners. If the reading skills are enhanced properly, learners can read different texts with understanding hence improving their performance in the other learning areas.

2.3 Challenges that teachers and learners face when using strategies that enhance reading skills

This section presents challenges that teachers face when using strategies that enhance reading skills in learners. There are several challenges that teachers face when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learner but based on studies that have been reviewed, the researcher discusses three challenges. These challenges are large class, teachers' inadequate knowledge and shortage of resources. These challenges have been discussed because it has shown that they have a great impact on language teaching and learning.

2.3.1 Large Classes

Large classes are one of the challenges that teachers face when enhancing reading skills in learners. Ur (1996) proposes that the exact number of learners in a class does not matter, but what matters is how the teacher sees the class in own specific situation. Gibbs

& Jenkins (1992) state that a large class can be any number of students. Several studies have revealed that large classes cause a lot of problems. Bayani (2014) conducted a study on language learning strategies used by learners and how they reflect their performance. Among other things the study revealed that learners' poor performance in English was attributed to a number of variables such as large classes and unqualified teachers. However, Bayani focused on the language learning strategies used by students and how they reflect their performance. Bayani (2014) targeted secondary school students. This study will among other things find out challenges that teachers and learners face when using the strategies and activities for to enhancing reading skills in learners.

A study of large class and assessment problems encountered by teachers in Secondary Schools in Nigeria (Kolo and Francis, 2005; Atsumbe and Raymond, 2012), found that teachers find marking of assignments difficult and recording of test scores a burden. Naidoo, Reddy and Darasamy (2014) conducted a study in South Africa on educator perspective on factors affecting reading literacy and strategies for improvement. Among other things, the study revealed that large classes affect the teaching of reading in primary school. Another study by United State Agency for International Development (2007) on large class size in the Developing World which was conducted in Sub Saharan Africa revealed that the quality and quantity of teaching and learning in large class tends to be much lower in comparison to the peers in small classes. It was found that there are a lot of challenges that are associated with large classrooms, and these can negatively impact teaching and learning of reading. Teachers find it difficult to differentiate their

instructional methods in order to meet the needs of individual learners. The teachers also require more time for classroom management at the expense of teaching.

A study by Kewaza & Welch (2013) on big class size challenges and the teaching of reading in primary classes in Kampala revealed that not every learners' needs were catered for in such crowded classes. The teachers stated that there was a lot of work to be done by a single teacher. This then means that it is difficult to teach reading in large classes since the learners are not assisted individually. Contrary to these studies, Qiang and Ning (2011) conducted a study in China on exploration of large class in the teaching of English as a second language, the findings revealed that problems found in large classes can also be found in small classes. Qiang & Ning suggest that teachers need to view large classes from a different perspective and recognize that despite a lot of disadvantages, large classes can provide many opportunities for teaching and learning. These studies tell us that large classes pose a lot of challenges in the teaching of reading. This study therefore, will among other things find out the challenges that teachers and learners face when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners.

2.3.2 Teachers' inadequate knowledge

Research has shown that teachers' inadequate knowledge is another challenge for enhancing reading skills in learners. Teachers need to be well trained on how they can enhance reading skills in learners; however, most of the teachers are not properly trained. A study was conducted by Mwanamukubi (2013) in Zambia aimed at exploring the factors that contribute to causes of reading difficulties among grade six learners and

challenges faced by teachers in teaching them how to read. Among other things, the study found that most of the teachers were not adequately trained on how they could help learners that have problems in reading as a result; they face a number of challenges when teaching reading. Similarly, a study was carried out by Muchemwa (2014) in Zimbabwe on the reading deficiency among primary school and secondary school pupils; the study found that there are various conditions that cause reading problems among learners such as teachers that are poorly trained. Muchemwa (2014) states that teachers are managers of knowledge and mediators of learning so they need to be properly trained on how they can assist learners in reading. In Malawi, Chisamba (2014) conducted a study on instructional strategies for teaching reading comprehension in inclusive classroom. Among other things, it was revealed that most of the teachers had inadequate knowledge on how they can teach reading for comprehension. Based on these studies it shows that teachers are among other factors that hinder the effective teaching of reading. Therefore, this study will among other things, find out the teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners.

2.3.3 Teaching and learning resources

Teaching and learning resources are materials that are used during reading. The teaching of reading requires a lot of resources such as textbooks. A study by Chimombo, Kunje, Chimuzu and Mchikoma (2005) revealed that the quality of education in Malawi is low as evidenced by limited facilities particularly for the lower classes with the resources concentrated at the upper level. The study also indicated that 70% of Standard 2 pupils were unable to read a single word from the list of the 20 most commonly used words

from their learners' books; in addition, over 95% showed no abilities to read connected text fluently or accurately. During this study it was also found that a very low percentage of learners were in classes that had teaching materials. For example, 37.9% of standard six learners had no text books (Chimombo, Kunje, Chimuzu & Mchikoma, 2005). This shows that teachers had access to very few resources in their classrooms. The number of learners with their own text book was not satisfactory if better reading achievement of all learners was to be obtained. For the learners to promote their reading skills, they need to be given enough reading materials. Shortage of reading resources reduces the reading proficiency of learners. Having an appropriate level of basic resources in a classroom can greatly improve learners' achievement (Hanushek, 1995). This shows that resources are essential for effective teaching of reading. This is in line with the study which was conducted in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia and Uganda by Lee & Zuze (2011) on the school resources and academic performance in Sub-Saharan Africa, the study revealed that teaching and learning resources are associated with school achievement across many developing countries.

Randomized studies in Nicaragua and Kenya provided strong evidence of the effectiveness of resources. The studies showed that the provision of text books raised the scores of the top performing performance (Glewwe et.al 1998). A study in Zambia by Mwanamukubi (2013) on exploring the factors that contribute to causes of reading difficulties among grade six learners and challenges faced by teachers in teaching them how to read revealed that teaching and learning resources contributed to reading difficulties in learners. This shows that the use of teaching and learning resources during

reading can help in enhancing reading skills in learners. Among other things, this study will find out challenges that teachers and learners face when using teaching strategies for enhancing reading skills in learners.

2.4 Overcoming challenges faced by teachers and learners when using strategies for enhancing reading skills

This section of the study discusses ways of overcoming challenges that teachers face when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners. These have been discussed based on large class, teachers' inadequate knowledge and shortage of resources. Several studies have been conducted and have revealed that group work helps in dealing with large class and shortage of resources when teaching reading. Other studies have found that teachers need to attend to in service trainings in order have enough knowledge on how they can teach reading.

2.4.1 Overcoming large classes

Teachers can overcome the challenge of large class if they know learners names. The teachers will be able to control the class by calling the names of the learners that cause problems in the classroom during reading. Ying (2010) states that teachers need to know learners by their names and give them more time to participate through individual work, pair work, group work and whole class work. In addition, Zhong (2008) suggests that teachers need to organise cooperative learning activities such as think pair share and jigsaw to develop learners' reading skills. This means that teachers should make sure that all learners are involved during reading. Similarly, in their study on educator perspective on

factors affecting reading literacy and strategies for improvement, Naidoo, Reddy and Darasamy (2014) suggested the use of group guided reading when teaching reading in large classes.

Mmela (2006) conducted an action research study to explore whether a teacher could understand and implement learner centred integrated literacy approaches in an English class in Malawi. Among other things, the co-researcher discovered that integrated approaches were more effective and they simplified teaching and learning, especially in large classes as compared to traditional methods of teaching she used before. Mmela's study was an action research and she worked with only one teacher at a specific school. This study intends to investigate teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners. The study will work with teachers in four different primary schools in order to find out different teachers' practices in different settings.

2.4.2 Overcoming teachers' inadequate knowledge

There is need for teachers to have adequate knowledge on how they can enhance reading skills in learners. Several studies have indicated the role of government to ensure that teachers are properly trained. A study in Zimbabwe by Muchemwa (2013) revealed that there is need for the government to introduce programmes that will help in equipping teachers with the necessary skills on how they can teach reading. Similarly, chisamba (2014) recommends education department, schools and teachers to organise CPDs where teachers can share knowledge on how they can teach reading for comprehension. This shows that in-service trainings are essential if effective teaching is to take place.

2.4.3 Overcoming shortage of teaching and learning resources

In classes where teaching and learning resources are not enough for all the learners, teachers should engage learners to reading in groups. In a study conducted by Chisamba (2014) on instructional strategies used by teachers in inclusive classroom, it was found that learners were reading in groups where they shared the books. It is also the responsibility of the government to provide adequate resources to schools for effective teaching and learning. Muchemwa (2013) recommends the government to provide appropriate materials for teaching reading skills. She further recommends the availability of libraries in all the schools including those in rural areas. However, Kewaza and Welch (2013) conducted a study on big class size challenges, teaching reading in primary classes in Uganda. Among other things the study found that even though the government tried its best to provide resources in schools, some schools did not use the books. This shows that sometimes government can provide the resources but they are not used. It is the responsibility of people of authority in the schools to make sure that the available resources are used appropriately in order to enhance reading skills in learners.

Even though several studies have been carried out both in Malawi and internationally on reading skills, little has been said on teachers' practices to enhance reading skills in learners. It is therefore important for this study to fill the existing knowledge gap. This study intends to explore teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners in upper primary school learners.

2.5 Theoretical framework

Theory has been described as a set of interrelated abstract propositions about human affairs and the social worlds that explains their regularities and relationships (Brewer, 2000). Denscombe (1998) describes a theory as a proposition about the relationship between things. The study will be guided by two theories. These are social constructivism theory by Vygotsky and schema theory by Piaget. The researcher decided to use these two theories because each of them has a part to play if effective teaching of reading is to take place. Social constructivism stresses that learners need to work in groups where they will be assisted by capable peers; they can also ask assistance from teachers who can help them in reading through scaffolding. However, for the learners to interpret the read text, they need to have prior knowledge of whatever they want to read. Therefore, schema theory emphasises the use of back ground knowledge for the readers to interpret texts. Teachers need to help learners activate their prior knowledge for them to understand the text. These two theories will guide the researcher on how teachers can help learners during reading activities.

2.5.1 Social constructivism theory

Constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves (Vygotsky, 1978). Within constructivism, the study followed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is the learner's progress from the actual development level to a higher potential developmental level through interaction with others (Garton & Pratt, 1989; Grey & Macblain, 2012). Zone of proximal development (ZPD) highlights the role of social interaction in learning and development, including second language learning. It

also presents the opportunity for growth in which children require support or facilitation from others. These “others” could be adults, parents, older children or peers with more expertise related to the learning task. These assistants in the social setting take control of those portions of a task that are beyond the learners’ current level of competence through a process known as scaffolding.

McGee and Richgels (2000) state that scaffolding is the instructional support adults give students as they attempt to solve the problem that go beyond their current knowledge. In reading, the teacher needs to know the learners’ level of development and shaping their instructions slightly beyond their development (Antanacci, 2000). This also needs to happen in reading where the teacher gives the learners a passage to read and if a learner fails to read, the teacher helps the learner by scaffolding. If a learners fails to give the meaning of a word, the teacher needs to provide some clues that will help the learner to give the correct meaning of the given word. To enable learners develop reading skills, teachers need to provide support measures which make it possible for learners to perform reading activities inside and outside classes.

In reading, scaffolding can be given using different activities such as; questions, prompts, rephrasing, demonstrations, gestures, visual resources, graphic organizers, dramatisations and designing the environment to facilitate practice of a particular reading skill. These activities enable students to sustain active participation in the learning process (Crawford, Saul, Mathews & Makinster, 2005). Constructivism states that an individual’s development cannot be understood without accounting for their social environment. The

theory rests on the key assumption that learning occurs in social grouping and that those that are more knowledgeable assist the less knowledgeable through scaffolding. This means that when beginning an activity learners depend on others with more experience; overtime, they take on increasing responsibility for their own learning and participation in joint activity. During reading lessons capable learners assist those that have problems when they are working in groups. Teachers need to use group work during reading to help learners interact and assist each other.

According to Gage and Berliner (1998), constructivism processes are particularly strong in a group setting, where each member must make sense out of the complex social interactions to which the learner is exposed. During reading, this means that the teachers, capable peers and family members have the role to provide the setting, pose challenges, and offer the support that encourages everyone to acquire useful and appropriate skills. There are differences in learners' interest and understanding of the reading process when they come to school. During reading, it is the responsibility of the teacher to cater for these differences and to ensure that all learners develop the necessary reading skills that will help them read effectively.

2.5.2 Schema theory

The study was also guided by Piaget's schema theory. Schema theory is a theory of how knowledge is acquired, processed and retrieved. According to Vacca, Vacca and Burns (1995) schemata is a term for mental structures that process information, perceptions and experiences. Schema is a concept which evolves and develops through two

complementary systems. These are accommodation and assimilation thus using perception and memory to facilitate learning. This theory was included because the researcher argues that during reading learners do not only understand a passage through social construction, but they also need to use their prior knowledge that will help them give meaning to the texts they read.

According to Schema theory, a text only provides directions for listeners or readers on how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge. Readers activate existing knowledge structures (schemata) to interpret text. Vacca, Vacca and Burns (1995) state that schemata influence reading for understanding and learning. For readers to understand a text, they need to activate or build schema that fits with information from the text. Similarly during reading, learners organise and integrate new information in order to facilitate retention. During reading, learners use their prior knowledge to help them construct meaning of a given text. Learners can interpret a text differently depending on the different prior knowledge they have on the particular text. Teachers need to help learners activate their previous knowledge so that they can construct meaning from the text. This can be possible if teachers use different teaching methods, activities and resources during reading lessons.

2.6 Chapter summary

The chapter has reviewed related literature from different authors that formed the basis of the study. It has a detailed discussion of strategies used to enhance reading skills and challenges faced when using these strategies. The chapter has also a discussion of studies

from Malawi and other countries on reading skills. Finally, the chapter has discussed theoretical frameworks that guided the study. The next chapter will describe the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the research design in which the approach to the study is described; then it explains how data was generated. It also includes a description of methods and instruments that were used to generate data. Next, it discusses the sample population and how the participants to the study were chosen. It also highlights piloting of the study which was done in order to test the effectiveness of designs, methods, and instruments during data generation. In the end, the chapter explains how negotiations to the study site were conducted, how data was generated and analysed including ethical issues, credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 Research approach

A research requires an approach that guides the researcher to infer and interpret the information gathered by respondents (Creswell, 2009). This study used qualitative approach. MacMillan and Schumacher (2006) define qualitative research approach as a research approach used in describing and analysing people's individual and collective actions, beliefs, thoughts and predictions. They describe it as "interactive, face to face

research”, which requires relatively extensive amount of time to systematically observe, interview and record progresses as they occur naturally. Mwiria and Wamahiu (1995) indicate that the use of this approach is important as it studies humans who unlike animals possess conscious which is unique for them.

In addition, qualitative research is also designed to reveal a target audiences’ range of behaviours, and the perceptions that drive it with reference to a specific topic or issues (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Similarly, this study investigated reading strategies that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners. The researcher observed both teachers and learners in a classroom when teaching and learning was taking place. This approach assisted the study because there was need for the researcher to find out the teachers practices and activities that help in enhancing reading skills in upper primary school learners in Malawi.

In order to have a clear understanding of these issues, the researcher worked with respondents by interacting with them. Qualitative approach is inductive and flexible in nature and it offers unique advantage because the researcher probes for further responses or observations as needed and obtain more detailed description and explanations of experiences, behaviours and beliefs (Sofaer, 2002; Mack et al., 2005). In addition, the use of qualitative approach has an ability to produce rich, detailed information that leaves the participants perceptions intact and presents a context of health behaviour (Weinriech, 2006). During the study, the researcher conducted interviews with respondents, so the researcher asked follow up questions in order to have a clear understanding of the

experiences of teachers based on how they use the teaching strategies to enhance reading skills in learners.

3.2 Research design

Within the qualitative approach, the study used case study. A case study is an investigation of an individual, a family, a group, an institution, a community, a program or intervention (Greig et al., 2007; Bassey, 1999). Case studies are one of the most common forms of qualitative research and can generate rich information, allowing an in-depth understanding of the people and/or content being studied (Stake, 2000). This design was chosen because the researcher wanted to carefully and thoroughly capture and describe teachers' practices and activities that help to enhance reading skills in learners. The researcher also gained some insight of the participants and to describe their perceptions and reactions on reading skills. In case studies, the researcher looks at the various aspects of a system and how they interrelate, in order to answer the question or prove the hypothesis (Edwards, 2001). In this study the researcher wanted to look at various aspects of teaching and how they are interrelated. For example, it looked at how teaching strategies are interrelated with reading skills and how teaching and learning resources are interrelated with reading skills.

3.3 Data generation, methods and instruments

Data generation is a systematic gathering of data about a subject of study, and about the setting in which they occur (Kent, 2001). Data generation in this study took a period of two months. The study used triangulation in which the researcher used more than one

method of data generation. In triangulation, the strength of one method compensates the weakness of the other. Bell (2005) states that the key to triangulation is to see the same thing from different perspectives. However, triangulation is expensive and tiresome, but the researcher chose schools near her home in order to reduce travel costs. The following data generation methods were used: class observation, Focus group discussion, and in-depth interviews.

3.3.1 Lesson Observation

Observation is a technique that involves systematically selecting and recording behaviours and characteristics of living beings, objects or phenomena (Creswell, 2014). The researcher in this study observed teachers using different teaching strategies and activities to enhance reading skills. At the same time, the researcher observed learners' behaviours after being exposed to a particular teaching strategy and took some notes. The researcher observed twelve English reading lessons. Each of the lessons lasted for thirty five minutes and three lessons were observed at each of the four schools.

The study used class observation to find out if what the teachers said during in-depth interviews was similar to their practices in the classroom. The researcher used lesson observation guide in order to generate data. The tool assisted the researcher to record the teaching strategies and activities which were conducted during lesson observation. However, observation also depends on the way people perceive what is being said or done. Observations have challenges for example, if participants know that they are being observed, they change the way in which they behave.

To overcome this, the researcher in this study observed three lessons presented by one teacher so that correct information was generated. During lesson observation, the researcher was able to identify teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills; the researcher also identified challenges that were faced by teachers when enhancing these skills. The study used direct observation because the researcher watched interactions, processes, or behaviors as they occurred within the classroom. This assisted the researcher because the researcher collected data where teaching was taking place. The researcher was also able to see what exactly happens in the classroom rather than relying on what people said during the interview. According to Mukherji and Albon (2010) observation helps the researcher to collect data of the interactions and behaviours occurring within their normal environment.

3.3.2 In-depth Interviews

Another way of generating data that was used during the study was through in- depth interviews. Interview is the method of asking quantitative or qualitative questions orally of key participants (Charmaz, 2006). Hannink et al. (2011) state that in-depth interviews are primarily used when seeking to capture people's individual voices and stories. Similarly, this study used in-depth interview to find out the teaching strategies and activities that IPTE teachers used to enhance reading skills in learners. One English teacher from the class that was observed and the head teacher from the selected schools were interviewed.

The researcher conducted four interviews with the teachers and each teacher was interviewed once for thirty minutes. Similarly, the researcher conducted four interviews with the head teachers; each head teacher was interviewed once and for thirty minutes. This method was used because it is useful for gaining insight and context into a topic; for gathering quotes and stories, and it allows the respondent to describe what is important to her or him (O'sullivan & Rassel, 1994; Bell, 2005). In-depth interviews also allow researchers to obtain large amount of data, perform in-depth probing, and ask more basing on the answers from the respondents (O'sullivan & Rassel, 1994). The researcher used an interview guide which had a list of questions to be answered by English teachers and head teachers in separate interview sessions.

However, interviews are susceptible to bias, time consuming and expensive as compared to other data generation methods, and it may seem intrusive to the respondent; hence, correct information cannot be collected (Bell, 2005). In order to overcome biasness, the study used a variety of methods for triangulation purposes. Interview method assisted this study because it was able to get different ideas from different teachers and head teachers especially on the strategies and activities that are used in the classrooms and how the teachers deal with the challenges they face when using strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners.

3.3.3 Focus group discussion

According to Bell (2005) a focus group discussion is a form of group interview in which a small group usually 10 to 12 people is led by a moderator (interviewer) in a loosely structured discussion of various topics of interest. In this study, focus group discussion was used in order to learn from the learners how the teaching strategies are used to enhance reading skills, the challenges that are faced when using the strategies and how the teachers overcome the challenges. In focus group discussion, the topic of the discussion is usually planned in advance and most moderators rely on an outline or moderator's guide to ensure that all topics of interest are covered (Bell, 2005).

Similarly, the researcher for this study had questions that guided the researcher during focus group discussion. These questions were written on a focus group discussion guide. In this study, the focus group was composed of ten standard seven learners from each of the participating schools. The researcher conducted four FGDs and each school had one FGD which lasted for forty five minutes. This study had learners of both sexes and of similar age ranges. The aim of focus group discussion is that participants will interact with each other, will be willing to listen to all views, perhaps to reach a consensus about some aspects of the topic or to disagree about others and to give a good airing to the issues which seem to be interesting or important to them (Bell, 2005). The comments during focus group discussion assisted the researcher to get enough first-hand information that answers the question. The researcher told learners to respect the views of others in order to allow full participation of all members within a particular focus group.

3.4 Selection of research site

The study was conducted in Zomba Rural. Zomba Rural is in the South East Division (SEED) in the Ministry of Education Science and Technology. The researcher used purposive sampling to select the site for the study. In purposive sampling, the researcher is deliberately subjective, choosing those respondents who will best fit the purpose of the study (Maxwell, 2013). However, Zomba Rural was chosen because the district is closer to the researchers' home and the primary schools were easily accessible.

3.5 Sample Population

The participants in this study were composed of forty standard seven learners, four English teachers and four head teachers. There were forty eight participants in the study. In qualitative studies, the population is relatively small because the findings of these studies are often designed to apply to a restricted group such as an early year setting (Mukherji & Albon, 2010). Similarly this study was a qualitative study and it required a small sample. The study used purposive sampling because the researcher selected participants who were able to give the required information. Maxwell (2013) states that in a purposive sampling particular setting, persons, or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that is particularly relevant to your questions and goals. The researcher targeted standard seven teachers who graduated from college after being trained on PCAR.

This group was targeted because participants have current information on how to enhance reading skills in learners as required by PCAR. In addition, the researcher had a good

rapport with the participants in these schools so they had time to support the researcher. The weakness of purposive sampling is that the researcher relies on a small number of participants for a major part of their data, and even when these participants are purposively selected and the data seem to be valid, there is no guarantee that these participants' views are typical (Maxwell, 2013). There is need to do systematic sampling to be able to claim that key participants' statements are representative of the group as a whole (Maxwell, 2013).

3.6 Data sources and sampling procedures

Data was generated from one head teacher from each of the selected schools. The head teachers were included because they observe lessons in the classes, so they have a clear picture of the strategies and activities that teachers use in their classes. Head teachers were involved because the researcher wanted to get information from different sources within a school in order to increase credibility.

One primary school English language teacher in standard seven from each of the selected schools was involved in the study. These teachers were those whose lessons were observed. These teachers had more to say because they are the ones that plan and practice English reading strategies and activities. They were also able to mention the challenges they face and explain how they deal with the challenges. Ten learners were selected from standard seven in each of the selected schools. The study observed gender so it had five boys and five girls. This was done to avoid gender bias. The total number of participants in the study was forty eight. Standard seven learners were chosen because they were

preparing to go to standard eight where they are required to read with understanding information from content areas, so that their performance is improved. Standard five learners were not selected because they just joined the senior section; standard six learners were not selected because they had less experience on how they can read for understanding; finally, standard eight learners were not selected because they were preparing for final examinations so involving them in this study could disturb them in their preparation for the examinations.

3.7 Piloting of the study

Piloting is a small study which is conducted before the main study with an aim of testing the adequacy of the proposed data collection strategy (O'sullivan & Rassel, 1994). Prior to the study, a pilot study was conducted at one of the primary schools in the same zone where the study was conducted. The purpose of pilot exercise is to get the bugs out of the instruments so that respondents in the main study will not experience difficulties when the main data will be analysed (Bell, 2005). Similarly, piloting was done to find out if the instruments would help in the generation of required information. In addition, piloting of this study helped to find out if the scheduled time would fit in the school calendar and activities. The pilot study was important in the sense that it assisted the researcher to modify some of the research tools in readiness for the actual data generation.

3.8 Access negotiations to the research site

This is when the researcher gets the letter of introduction. Researchers need to obtain approval of individuals in authority to gain access to sites and to study participants. It is also advisable to make a formal written approach to the organisation and individual's concerned (Creswell, 2014). Before the study, the researcher asked for a letter of introduction office of the Dean of faculty at Chancellor College. The letter was taken to the ministry of Education through the District Education Manager (Zomba Rural). The District Education Manager gave the researcher a permission letter to collect data from the four primary schools.

However, the Zonal Primary Education Advisor for zone and the head teachers from the selected schools were given some copies of the introduction letter. Finally, head teachers communicated verbally to both teachers and learners about the study. The participants were informed so that they were aware of the research in which they were involved. In this study, the researcher made the initial approach some time before the researcher hoped to generate data.

3.9 Data management

Data management system is a programme through which the researcher or user enters and stores large amount of data under different headings (O'sullivan & Rassel, 1994). The researcher in this study kept data in flash disks, having a hard copy, memory card, computer, sending it to personal email, having it in an external hard drive and on a DVD. Having the information being kept in multiple devices assisted the researcher to recover it

in case where the devices lose the information. The researcher in this study started managing data as soon as s/he started to generate data.

3.10 Data analysis

Data analysis is the way of summarising and describing findings and then seeing if the researcher can find common patterns or themes (Roberts-Holmes, 2005). The process of data analysis involves making sense out of text and data image (Creswell, 2009). In addition, data analysis involves preparing the data for analysis and moving into deeper understanding of the data (Creswell, 2009). Data analysis also needs to start as soon as the researcher starts generating data. Creswell further states that data analysis is conducted concurrently with gathering data, making interpretations, and writing reports. When interpreting data, researcher needs to provide an accurate account of the information. Similarly, the researcher in this study started analysing data as soon as the study started and the data was organised according to themes. First, the researcher looked at the data that was generated. Then the researcher summarised and described the findings of the research. These were based on the research questions that were formulated.

3.11 Credibility and trustworthiness of the study

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, the researcher was involved in peer review. During peer review, the researcher allowed peers to read and comment on whatever activity was done about the study. Similarly, the researcher read and commented on other people's documents related to the study. Triangulation was also used by involving

different schools, teachers, and learners, site of the study and data generation methods. For example, lesson observation, in-depth interview and focus group discussion. The researcher conducted a pilot study in order to find out if the instruments were correctly developed. The study also used direct quotations from respondents to show credibility.

3.12 Ethical considerations

The study observed ethical considerations. The researcher made informed consent. This means that subjects of research must be informed of the purpose of the research and of any risks and benefits that may be incurred by participating (O'sullivan & Rassel, 1994). Researchers will often do this in form of a letter, which they ask participants in the study to sign. The idea behind this is that everyone that has signed their consent fully understands the information on the form they have signed (Mukherji & Albon, 2010). According to Neuman (2003), participants have rights so they are supposed to be given a chance to read the form and make a decision whether to participate in the research or not. Similarly, subjects from this study were given their explicit consent before being included in the research. During interviews with head teacher, teachers and learners, the researcher assured participants that codes will be used so that no participant is identified. This is in line with Bell (2005) who state that participants should be assured that they will not be identified and even the researcher will not be able to tell which responses came from which respondents.

3.13 Limitations of the study

The researcher intended to conduct the study in Zomba Urban but it was changed to Zomba Rural because the researcher could not find the targeted teachers in Zomba Urban schools. The study was conducted in four primary schools in Zomba Rural so the results of the study may not be generalised to the whole Zomba Rural, South East Division or Malawi as a country. The findings can be generalized within the context of the participating schools.

3.14 Chapter summary

The chapter has discussed approaches, designs and methods that were used when generating data. The chapter has also highlighted how the data was analysed. In addition, it has also discussed some ethical issues, credibility and trustworthiness of the study and some limitations during the study. The next chapter will have a presentation of data analysis and a discussion based on the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Chapter overview

This chapter gives a detailed presentation of data together with a comprehensive discussion based on the research questions. The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners. The main research question being answered is: what are the teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in primary school learners? This research question was answered based on the following subsidiary questions: What are the teaching strategies and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners? What are the challenges that teachers face when using these teaching strategies and activities? How do teachers overcome the challenges they face when using these teaching strategies and activities? The findings are discussed in themes and sub themes in line with the research questions.

4.1 Teaching strategies and activities used to enhance reading skills in learners

The first question explored teaching strategies and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners. By strategies, the researcher included instructional strategies and teaching methods. By activities the researcher has included all the practices that teachers do in the reading lesson, the teaching resources and how the teachers use them to

enhance reading skills and these will be presented as sub-themes. The two sub themes generated were; instructional strategies and teaching methods which are discussed in the following sections.

4.1.1 Instructional strategies

Teachers use different teaching strategies when teaching reading. However, analysis of the data revealed that generally IPTE qualified teachers' used silent reading and reading aloud as instructional strategies for enhancing reading skills in learners. These were found during in-depth interviews with the head teachers and teachers as well as FGD with the learners. During lesson observation, the researcher observed that teachers use instructional strategies which are discussed as follow.

4.1.1.1 Silent reading

The study established that teachers ask learners to read a given text silently. Participants in this study explained that most of the times teachers tell learners to read a story from the book silently and find answers to the questions that were written on the chalkboard. It was observed during lesson observation that silent reading was done individually but four to five learners used one book. It has shown that teachers discourage learners from vocalising when they were reading silently. Vocalising is one of the bad reading habits so teachers need to discourage learners from vocalising during silent reading. This concurs with MIE (2008) who states that teachers should always check the bad reading habits when learners are reading a text silently. In such a way, teachers will help learners to become efficient readers. In addition, teachers should also discourage learners from

finger pointing, regression, whispering and eye digression because these habits slow the reading speed. The researcher asked the participants to explain how they identify learners that are not reading since the class remains silent. As an illustration, the participants said that:

There is a difference between reading in senior and junior classes. Most of the times in senior classes, learners read silently. I write questions on the chalkboard and I tell the learners to find the answers to the questions from the story they are reading. To make sure that all learners are reading silently, I move around the classroom to see how learners are reading, but it is still difficult to tell whether the learners are really reading or not because some learners pretend as if they are reading by just looking on the page. Answering of the questions from the chalkboard gives me a clear picture of whether the learners read the story or not (**IDI- teacher 1-at school A-19/01/16**)

The participants' explanations as illustrated in the quotation shows that teachers ask learners questions to find out if learners were really reading. However, the researcher argues that sometimes failure to answer the questions may mean that the learners did not understand the text. Teachers could ask learners to read a sentence from the text and say something about that particular sentence. In this case, learners will be responsible for their own learning. This would help learners to interact with the text because each one of them would want to share something from the text. They would also construct meaning depending on their understanding of specific sentences. This is in line with schema theory which states that people use their prior knowledge to interpret a text (Vacca, Vacca and

Burns, 1995). This shows that there would be different interpretations of the sentences depending on the different schemata the learners have on a specific content.

During lesson observations, the researcher observed that teachers asked learners to read silently, but the teachers could not ask questions that could provoke the learners' thinking. Most of the questions were of low levels of Blooms Taxonomy. For example, what was the lion carrying? What the researcher observed during lesson observation contradicts with Roe, Smith and Burns (2009) who state that the critical readers must be active readers, questioning, searching for facts, and suspending judgments until they have considered all the material. Teachers can enhance critical reading skill in learners by asking learners questions that will assist learners to evaluate the texts they have read. For example, questions like; do you think this story is real? Why do you think so?

This can be possible if teachers use different strategies and activities within the three phases of reading. Similarly, schema theory states that the text does not carry meaning but it only provides directions for readers on how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge (Piaget, 1972). This means that, the learners understanding of a particular text during silent reading would be informed by what each of them had come to know and value from living a particular time and place.

4.1.1.2 Reading aloud

Apart from silent reading, the researcher also found that the other strategy that IPTE teachers used was reading aloud. During lesson observation, the researcher observed that

the teachers asked learners to read aloud in groups, individuals and as a class. However, when the learners were reading in groups or as a class, some learners were just looking at their friends claiming that their friends were reading fast. This happened because the teachers asked all learners to read together despite their different reading levels. Due to this, some learners read fast and others slowly.

This is evidenced by the following lesson extract of a teacher giving instructions

Table 1: Lesson extract 1

Teachers activities	Learners activities
Giving instructions <i>You should read as a class first, and then each group will read two sentences. Some of you don't read, you just look at your friends when they are reading.</i> <i>So I want all of you to read aloud together. One, two, three start</i>	Listening to instructions <i>Reading aloud the whole class</i>

Lesson observation 3-teacher 3- at school C-01/03/16

(For a complete lesson transcript see appendix 4)

The lesson extract indicates that teachers use reading aloud during lesson presentation. Reading aloud works better if the teacher wants to know how learners are pronouncing some of the words or wants to know the levels of reading of different learners in a classroom and this works better when the learners read aloud individually. However, it was noted during lesson observation that reading aloud also disturbed other learners especially those that read slowly and it promoted laziness amongst learners because some learners waited for the teacher or peers to read for them.

This shows that reading aloud in this case does not enhance critical reading skill because learners read a passage with an aim of finishing the passage and not reading in a more detailed way so that they can understand the position of the author. As a result, they failed to answer questions that the teacher asks to check the learners understanding of the passage. The reading aloud which was observed was like a competition, as a result, some learners chose not to read. Some learners also became bored especially when they were waiting for their turn to come, as a result, they caused a lot of noise as their friends were reading; hence, caused challenges to teachers.

Chisamba (2014) found in her study that the teacher assisted learners to pronounce some words because the teacher was able to identify these learners during reading aloud. The researcher is of the view that maybe this was possible because the teachers in Chisamba's study asked learners to read individually. This was in line with what was established during focus group discussion in which learners explained that reading aloud is also beneficial to them especially when it is done individually. They stated that during reading aloud, they are able to see how different words are pronounced and when the books are not enough, they follow what others are reading. Therefore, teachers should allow learners to read aloud individually so that each of them can benefit despite their reading levels and shortage of books. If learners see words and how they have been used in a sentence, they can give meanings of different words. Similarly, they can tell what the sentence means if they are able to read a paragraph in which a particular sentence is; hence enhancing reading skills.

4.1.2 Teaching and learning methods

The researcher found that teachers use question and answer, group work, discussion, individual work and pair work to enhance the reading skills in learners. This was revealed during IDI with teachers and head teachers as well as focus group discussion with the learners. However, it was revealed during lesson observation that what the teachers said during in-depth interview was contrary to what was observed during lesson observation. For example during in-depth interviews with the teachers it was established that teachers give learners a chance to discuss, but during lesson observation it was found that learners had no time for discussion. The following is a discussion of how the methods were used.

4.1.2.1 Question and answer

The findings through lesson observation revealed that question and answer was one of the common methods that English teachers use during English reading lessons. For example, in pre reading phase, the teachers asked learners to state what they see in the illustration. Learners were also asked to read the title and explain what they think they will read in the story. The questions in this phase helped learners to make predictions. Both teachers and head teachers stated that during reading phase, teachers ask learners questions before the learners read a new paragraph. Finally, the teachers use question and answer during after reading phase.

This verbal quote represents what the head teachers said.

The teaching method that most teachers use when teaching reading is question and answer. During pre-reading the teachers ask learners to read the pre questions from the chalkboard. During reading phase, teachers ask learners questions that help them to predict what will come next in the story. Finally, the teacher ask learners questions to find out if the learners have understood what they have read (**IDI-head teacher 4-at school D-25/02/16**)

This sentiment indicates that teachers use question and answer as the main method of teaching during reading lesson because the teachers want to enhance different reading skills in learners. However during lesson observation, the researcher noted that most of the questions that teachers asked were low level questions. The researcher is of the view that the teachers in the study could have asked learners questions that could help them to apply what they read to real life situation or towards further learning. Most of the questions that the teachers asked were “where” “what” “when” questions instead of asking learners “why” “what if” and “why not” questions. These questions would help the learners to analyse the text. Questions that are properly formulated contribute to active learning. According to Crawford, Saul, Mathews and Makinster (2005) active classes are often the ones in which students learn the material fully and usefully. This means that learners learn better if they are involved in the lesson.

In addition, head teachers and teachers emphasised the importance of asking learners questions throughout a reading lesson. The head teachers and teachers stated that question and answer helps in guiding the learners on what they have read and what they

are going to read. It was also found during focus group discussion with learners that question and answer helps learners to have interest in reading the story so that they understand it and be in a position to answer questions from the story.

It was also noted that learners become attentive when reading the story because of thinking about answers to pre and post reading questions. This is line with MIE (2008) which states that, in order to allow learners interact with the text, teachers can ask learners questions, ask learners to explain what they think the text or story is about, ask learners to brainstorm and guess the meanings of some words within the text. The researcher is of the view that it is important for teachers to ask learners questions before they read a story in order for the learners to be interested in reading a particular story and find the answers to the questions.

4.1.2.2 Group work

The study established that teachers use group work when teaching reading. The researcher asked the respondents to explain when exactly teachers use group work. The researcher noted that teachers use group work throughout the reading lesson. In pre-reading, the teachers ask learners to work in groups and find meanings of difficult words. Learners explained that:

Kupatula kutifunsa mafunso, aphunzitsi amatiuza kuti mmagulu mwathu tipeze matanthauzo amau ovuta omwe akupezeka mu nkhani yomwe tikuyembekezera kuwerenga. Komanso nthawi zina amatiuza kuti tiwerenge mokweza ngati gulu. Tikatha kuwerenga amatuza kuti

tikambirane mayankho a mafunso omwe anafunsidwa tisanayambe kuwerenga.

Besides asking us questions, the teachers tell us in our groups to find meanings of difficult words that are found in the story. Sometimes teachers tell us to read aloud as a group. After reading, the teacher ask us to discuss answers to the pre reading questions (**FGD-learner 3- at school D-28/01/16**)

The explanation indicates that learners read texts and answer questions in groups. This is very important because it helps learners to share their ideas as they discuss as a group. It also promotes interaction among learners as they learn from one another. Vygotskian social construction theory states that constructivism processes are strong in a group setting where members learn through social interaction (Gage & Berliner, 1998). During reading capable learners assist those that have problems. It is therefore important for teachers to use group work when presenting their reading lessons in order to help learners to interact amongst themselves and assist each other. In cases where there are a lot of learners in a classroom, the teachers fail to assist all learners individually so group work will help because in these groups there are learners of different abilities and those that are more knowledgeable of a concept can assist the other learners that have problems. This concurs with Qiang and Ning (2011) who state that large classes are beneficial because learners work in groups and they assist each other during the process of learning.

However, it was observed during lesson observation that learners were put in groups of seven to twelve learners, and in those groups learners were not working as group members. Most of the work which was assigned to the learners was done by the capable

learners without discussing with their peers. The group work which was observed during lesson observation was not properly organized because there was minimal interaction among learners. Vygotsky theory emphasises that learning occurs in social groupings that those that are more knowledgeable assist the less knowledgeable through scaffolding (Gage & Berliner, 1998). This means that learners assist each other during group work. In reading, this can be possible if learners are asked to read as a group or in pairs so that they can assist each other. However, the teacher should always be there to guide the learners as they are reading. Heston (2010) found that teachers who use group guided reading instructions produce learners who can read with confidence. Similarly, Smith and Burns (2009) state that the role for group guided reading instructions is to provide students with small group setting where they may not feel intimidated to take risks in reading. This means that if teacher guide the learners to work as a group during reading lessons, their reading skills will be enhanced as a result, they will be able to read confidently.

4.1.2.3 Discussion

The study revealed that teachers use discussion method to enhance reading skills in learners. Head teachers and teachers explained that teachers tell learners to discuss meanings of difficult words and also discuss answers to pre and post reading questions. A comment was made by one of the teachers:

Another method that we use when teaching reading is discussion. In pre-reading phase, we ask learners to discuss the meanings of difficult words, and after reading, we ask the learners to discuss the answers to pre-reading questions **(IDI-teacher2-at school B-19/01/16)**

This shows that teachers create a conducive learning environment that promotes social interactions amongst learners. However, the researcher observed during lesson observation that during pre reading phase, some of the teachers did not allow learners to discuss the meanings of the words and also the answers to pre questions. This shows that what these teachers said did not match with their practices.

The following lesson transcript represents what some of the teachers did during lesson presentation.

Table 2: Lesson extract 2

Teachers activities	Learners activities
Giving instructions Gives instructions: <i>Look here class and listen, I have some word cards in my hands, I will read the words and give you their meanings.</i>	Listening while looking at the teacher
Shows the word cards, reads them aloud and gives their meanings: <i>Search, Unique, fear, envied, Startled</i> <i>Teacher: Search means looking for something</i> <i>Teacher: Unique means special</i> <i>Teacher: Fear means being afraid of something</i> <i>Teacher: Envied means jealousy</i> <i>Teacher: Startled means worried</i>	Looking at the cards Listening to the teacher as she reads the words and gives their meanings

Lesson observation 2-teacher 1- at school A-19/01/16

(For a complete lesson transcript see appendix 3)

This lesson transcript shows that most of the work was done by the teacher. This is similar to what was found during IDI with the teachers in which one of the teachers stated that due to shortage of time they just go straight to reading. The following verbatim presents what one of the teachers said:

Activities that appear in the teachers' guide do not match with the time allocated; as a result, sometimes I skip other activities. **(IDI teacher 3- at school C- 20/01/2016)**

This means that some teachers do not do all the activities that appear in the teachers guide due to shortage of time. This contradicts with constructivism theory of learning which states that the learner is an active contributor to the learning process, and the teaching strategies should focus on what the learner can bring to the learning situation as much as on what is received from the environment (Garton & Pratt, 1989). This means that teachers need to give learners a chance of bringing in what they know about a particular concept in order for them to construct new knowledge. According to the researcher, teachers need to involve learners in the process of learning. Every individual has got knowledge and it is during discussion when learners share their knowledge.

Although some teachers do not give learners enough time to interact during reading, other teachers appreciate the importance of discussion method in enhancing reading skills. The teachers stated that discussion promotes interaction and cooperation amongst learners. Learners' interaction is essential for enhancing reading skills because learners share ideas as they discuss concepts. This was revealed during in depth interview with teachers.

The following statement is a representation of what some teachers said:

Discussion method encourages interaction amongst learners as learners discuss the meanings of difficult words and questions from the passage they have read. This method also promotes team work amongst learners as each learner is given a chance to give his/her views (**IDI- teacher 4-at school D-25/02/16**)

This statement shows that teachers understand the importance of discussion method in enhancing reading skills. However, their practice does not match with what they know theoretically. In other words, teachers do not put theory into practice. Teachers need to practice whatever they feel will assist learners in learning to read. Chen and Dhillon (2013) argue that taking a deep approach to learning, changing attitudes and methods of teaching reading, teachers can effectively foster the reading skills in learners and improve their achievements. Similarly, the co researcher in Mmela (2006) study discovered that the use of integrated approaches helped in improving the teaching of English language. This means that teachers need to use different strategies to help learners become proficient readers.

4.1.2.4 Individual work

The study found that individual work was another method that teachers used to enhance reading skills in learners. During lesson observation it was revealed that teachers use individual work throughout the reading lesson. The teachers asked learners to read silently, find meanings of difficult words from the passage and answer comprehension questions individually. Despite that the learners sat in groups, each learner was reading

and finding the answers to post-questions alone. It was also revealed during in depth interview with the teachers that individual work is important because it assists a teacher to identify the learners that cannot read.

Individual work also assists teachers to record the speed at which individual learners are reading. Individual reading assists learners to read at their pace especially when the teacher time their reading. Despite that learners that have problems are identified easily when they are working individually; it is difficult to help all the learners that have challenges in a large class. The researcher is of the opinion that teacher's choice of method will depend on the number of learners in class and the resources that the teacher has. The following sentiments show teachers and learners views on individual reading:

Individual work assists us teachers especially when we want to identify those learners that have problems with reading. When learners read in groups, it becomes difficult for teachers to identify the learners that have problems with reading **(IDI-teacher 3-school C-20/01/2016)**

Learners had this to say:

Munthu ukamawerenga pawekha, umawerenga bwino makamaka akati muwerenge kwa mphindi mwakuti. Ngati anthu mukuwerenga pagulu, umangodumphu mawu ena poopa kuti anzako angakusiye mbuyo pamene mukuwerenga.

Individual reading is good especially when you are given specific time to read a text. If reading is done in groups, you skip some words to avoid being left behind when reading **(FGD-learner 1-at school B-19/01/16)**

This implies that, if teachers identify learners' problems, they are able to assist them accordingly during individual work. In addition, if learners read at their pace, they are able to understand the text; hence, enhancing their reading skills. Teachers need to ask learners to read individually so that each of them reads at his/her pace.

4.1.2.5 Pair work

The study established that teachers use pair work as one of the teaching methods to enhance reading skills in learners. During in-depth interview, teachers stated that they use pair work when teaching reading in order to assist shy learners who cannot express themselves during group work. Teachers ask learners to be in pairs and discuss the meanings of difficult words and the answers to the questions from the text. Pair work also enhances social interaction in which learners interact amongst themselves in the construction of new knowledge. This is what one of the teachers stated during in-depth interview:

During pre-reading, learners are supposed to find meanings for difficult words from the story they will read. I ask learners to be in pairs and discuss the meanings of difficult words. Then I ask learners to share their meanings with the whole class (**IDI-teacher 1-at school A-19/01/16**).

This indicates that some teachers use pair work to allow learners discuss the meanings of difficult words and answers to pre and post reading questions. The researcher is in agreement that pair work helps shy learners to speak. However, apart from the teacher telling the learners to pair up and discuss, they can also use think-pair-share in which each of the learners comes up with his/her ideas first then they share as a pair. In such a

way each learner contributes to the discussion because all the learners are involved. One of the learners explained that reading in pairs works better when both of the readers are able to read, but if one fails to read then it becomes difficult. The one who is a good reader dominates. The following statement from one of the learners represents what some learners said about reading in pairs.

Ine sindimakonda kuwerenga kwa anthu awiri awiri chifukwa nthawi zambiri omwe amatha kuwerenga samapereka mpata woti anzawo awerenge, choncho ukakhala kuti sumatha kuwerenga, umangomvera zomwe ena akuwerenga. Ndimona bwino tikamawerenga aliyense yekha yekha

I don't like reading in pairs because most of the times those that are able to read do not give chances of reading to those that have problems with reading, as a result, if you have problems with reading you just listen to your friend reading. I like individual reading **(FGD-learner 6-at school C-20/01/16)**

This statement indicates that some learners do not like reading in pairs because some learners dominate. Although the teachers and head teachers emphasised the importance of using pair work, it was however observed during lesson observation that teachers don't use pair work during reading. The teachers used individual work in which learners sit as a group but each one of them read alone. This shows that there was minimal interaction amongst learners. The researcher is of the view that teachers need to allow learners to work as in pair in order to increase interaction amongst learners which will lead to active participation; hence, enhancing reading skills in learners.

4.1.3 Activities for enhancing reading skills

On activities for enhancing reading skills, the study revealed that teachers used different activities to enhance reading skills. These activities were revealed during lesson observation, in-depth interview with both teachers and head teachers and focus group discussion with learners. The study found that teachers use comprehension questions, illustrations, close passages, spellings, and composition to enhance reading skills in learners. The study found that these activities were practiced in the three phases of reading. This section will present the activities based on the phases in which they are practiced

4.1.3.1 Pre-reading activities

The study also found that teachers use different activities within the three phases of reading to enhance reading skills in learners. Some of the activities that were mentioned were: discussion of illustration and title of the story which assist learners to predict the story; discussion of pre-and post-questions and discussion of the meanings of difficult words. The following statement indicates what the learners explained on some of the pre reading activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners.

Tisanayambe kuwerenga nkhani iliyonse, aphunzitsi amatiuza kuti tifotokoze zomwe tikuyembekezera kumva munkhani yomwe tikufuna kuwerenga. Iwo amachita izi potifunsa mafunso kuchokera pachithunzi chomwe chimapezeka pankhani iliyonse kapena kuchokera pa mutu wa nkhaniyo. Aphunzitsi amatifunsa mafunso monga ili: Kodi pachithunzipa mukuonapo chiyani? Nanga mukuganiza kuti nkhani imeneyi ikukamba za chani?

Before reading any story, the teacher asks us to make predictions about the

story that we want to read. The teacher asks questions from the illustrations that are found in each story or from title of the story. The teacher asks us questions like: *What can you see in the picture? What do you think the story is about?* (FGD-learner 5-at school B-19/01/16)

This shows that one of the activities that teachers do to enhance reading skills in learners is discussion of title and illustration which helps learners to make predictions. A similar observation was made during lesson observations in which the teachers used illustrations and title to help learners make predictions about the story. Teachers can use subtitles and story impression to allow learners make further predictions. The teacher can also ask learners to read a paragraph and ask them what they will read in the next paragraph.

In addition, teachers can use a variety of teaching resources and activities to help learners predict or guess meanings of word. Teachers need to use pre-reading phase to assist learners build their background knowledge in order to prepare the learners for the text they are going to read. A reader who has no background knowledge about the topic may be unable to reconstruct the ideas that the author is trying to convey (Roe, Smith & Burns, 2009) Similarly, if the learners are not given a chance to use their background knowledge about a text, it will be difficult for them to understand the given text. This concurs with Schema theory which states that readers activate existing knowledge structures (schemata) to interpret text. For readers to understand a text, they need to activate or build schema that fits with information from the text (Vacca, Vacca & Burns 1995). This can be possible if teachers give appropriate activities in pre reading phase.

During in-depth interview with teachers, it was however revealed that some teachers do not allow learners to make predictions. Instead, they just go straight to reading. One of the teachers explained:

Of course, predictions are important because they help learners to understand the story easily especially when their predictions agree with what they read from the story, but because of recklessness some of us don't give learners chance of making predictions, we just go straight to reading (**IDI-teacher 3- at school C-20/01/16**)

This statement indicates that some teachers do not bother about pre-reading activities; they rather go straight to reading. If learners meet such teachers then it will be difficult for them to use the reading skills even in other content areas; hence failing to understand written text.

4.1.3.2 During- reading activities

The study established that teachers use different activities during reading to enhance reading skills in learners. The participants in the study stated that teachers use activities such as silent reading, reading aloud, fast reading and word searching to enhance reading skills in learners. The researcher wanted to know how each of the activities mentioned above enhance reading skills. Most of the participants in the study explained that when the teachers ask learners to find answers for specific questions from the story, they are enhancing skimming skill in learners because the learners will only be focusing on where they can get the correct answer.

In addition, teachers can ask learners to find specific words from the passage in order to enhance the skill of scanning. Word guessing can be enhanced if the teachers use gestures or mime an activity. However, during lesson observation it was observed that teachers use the same activities to enhance specific reading skills. For example, teachers always use illustrations and title to allow learners predict a story. The researcher is of the opinion that teachers can think of other activities which they feel can help in enhancing reading skills. They can use paired reading in which learners are paired and take turns in reading different passages.

However, for the teachers to think of different activities they need to be knowledgeable of what they are presenting and this helps them to think of an activity which can be used to allow learners acquire the necessary skills. The study also found that teachers rarely time the learners when they are reading a text. This was observed during focus group discussion in which participants agreed that teachers do not give learners specific amount of time to read a text. The researcher suggests that teachers can time learners or learners can do it on their own. This is a very important skill in senior classes where they will require fast reading skills when reading content from different learning areas. The following verbatim quote from one of the learners represents what the learners said:

Tiyeni tinene zooni apa, nthawi zambiri aphunzitsi amangotiiza kuti tiwerenge nkhani ndipo tipeze mayankho amafunso omwe atipatsa ndipo timangowerenga mmene tingawerengere. Zimangotengera kuti tsiku limenelo aphunzitsi ali ndi ntchito yochuluka bwanji kuti ife tichite.

Let us say the truth here, most of the times the teacher tells us to read a story and find answers to the questions.

We just read anyhow. It all depends on the amount of work the teacher has for us **(FGD-learner 9- at school C-20/01/16)**

The explanation in the verbatim quote shows that teachers do not time learners when they are reading. Teachers need to allow learners read different texts at different rates in order to prepare them to read a lot of information from content area. This concurs with Roe, Smith and Burns (2009) who state that one way to help learners match appropriate rates to materials is to give them various types of materials and purposes, allow them to try different rates, and encourage them to discuss the effectiveness of different rates for different purposes and materials. The aim of enhancing this skill in learners is to allow them read a lot of information with understanding within a short period of time. If learners get used to this, they will be able to read information from the other learning areas at a reasonable speed.

4.1.3.3 Post-reading activities

The study revealed that teachers use post questions in which learners are asked questions from the story. They are also asked to make sentences with selected words from the passage. These activities will help the teachers to know if the learners understood the text. The following statement in verbatim is illustrative of what the teachers said:

After learners finish reading a story we give them different activities. We can tell them to write a summary of the story they have read or tell them to make sentences with some of the words from the story they have read or giving them a cloze passage with an aim of letting them fill the gaps with correct words **(IDI-teacher 3-at school C-20/01/16)**

It is important to give learners a lot of activities after reading in order to enhance the reading skills in learners. To help learners do these activities effectively, the teacher needs to model and allow learners to practice. However, it was revealed during focus group discussion that most of the activities are not done soon after reading, but they are done on the other day when the learners do not have any reading activity. Teachers need to give learners a variety of activities after reading in order to enhance the reading skills in learners. The following reported verbatim represents what most of the learners said:

Eeeeeeh!tikatha kuwerenga tikhonza kunena kuti amatipatsa ma exercise osiyana siyana. Komabe nthawi zambiri tikangomaliza kuwerenga nkhani amatifunsa mafunso ochokera mundime yomwe tawerenga. Ndiye ma exercise enawo timachita patsiku lina lomwe mwina sitimawerenganso nkhani iliyonse koma zochitika mu exerciseyo zimakhala zolumikizana ndi nkhani yomwe tinawerenga tsiku linalo. Mwachitsanzo, amatha kutiuza kuti tipange ziganizo ndiena mwa mawu omwe amapezeka munkhani yomwe tinawerenga kale.

Eeeeeeh!we can say that teachers give us different exercises, but most of the times they give us comprehension questions from the story we have read, so we do the other exercises on another day when we have not read any story. However, these exercises are related to what we read during reading lesson. For example, they can tell us to make sentences with some of the words that are found in the story that we already read (**FGD-learners 3-at school 2-19/01/16**).

This means that the activities that teachers give learners are related to the reading passage. These activities are important because they help teachers know if learners read the story with understanding. Similarly, Aebersold and Field (2003) state that the aim of after reading phase is to check understanding, to consolidate language skills and to enable

further reading. This means that teachers need to ask learners understanding of a text during after reading phase. The researcher wanted to find out the importance of after reading activities. It was revealed from the head teachers that after reading activities are important because they help the teachers to know if the learners read the story with understanding. The following verbal quote represents what the head teachers said:

After reading activities help in checking learners understanding of the story. As I said already that these activities are related to the story that learners read. For example, if a learner can manage to write appropriate words in gaps in a close passage, this means that the learners understood the story. Similarly, if learners are able to answer comprehension questions, this means that they really understood the story, and if learners are able to make sentences this means that they understood the meanings of these words **(IDI-head teacher 1-at school A- 19/01/16)**

This statement indicates the importance of different activities during reading. There is need for teacher to give a variety of after reading activities to enhance reading skills in learners. Taking learners through the three phases of reading helps them to enhance their reading skills. It is within these phases where they activate their prior knowledge which helps them to understand the text.

4.1.4 Other related activities for enhancing reading skills

The findings discussed in this section pertain to other related activities for enhancing reading skills in learners. Apart from the activities that have been discussed in the fore chapters, teachers also use scaffolding and learners' experiences to enhance reading skills in learner. How these activities are done will be discussed in the next few pages.

4.1.4.1 Scaffolding

During focus group discussion, it was established that teachers use scaffolding to assist learners in most of the activities that are done in all the three phases of reading. Teachers can support learners through dialogue, questioning, conversation, and nonverbal modeling, in which the learner attempts literacy tasks that could not be done without that assistance (Grey & Macbalain, 2012). The teachers can also mediate and scaffold the performance of the students until they can function independently. This is similar to what the researcher observed during lesson observation in the schools. The teachers asked the learners to give the meaning of words by giving the learners synonyms.

The following lesson transcript indicates how the teacher used a synonym to assist learners give the meaning of “accumulated.”

Table 3: Lesson extract 3

Teachers activities	Learners activities
Asking learners to give meanings of words <i>Teacher: What is the meaning of the word accumulated?</i> <i>Teacher: Ok, what is it called if you put things together?</i> <i>Teacher: So what is the meaning of accumulated</i> <i>Teacher: Very good, both of you are right. Accumulated means collected or gathered.</i>	Giving meanings of words <i>Looking at the teacher</i> <i>Learner 1: Collect</i> <i>Learner 2: Gather</i> <i>Learner 3: Collected</i> <i>Learner 4: Gathered</i>

Lesson observation 3- teacher 3-at school C-01/03/16) for a full lesson transcript see appendix 4)

The foregoing lesson transcript shows how one of the teachers used clues to help learners guess meanings of words. Teachers can also tell learners where exactly they can find a word in a passage; how to pronounce words correctly; and how to answer questions correctly. Even though the teacher, head teachers and learners said that teachers assist learners to give meaning of words by scaffolding, it was also found that one of the teachers did not assist learners by scaffolding but the teacher just went straight to the answer. In a classroom setting where reading takes place, the teacher is there to guide the learner in reading and whenever the learners have problems, the teacher is always there to support (Grey & Macbalain, 2012). When enhancing reading skills in learners teachers should always be there to assist the learners until they see that the learners can now perform independently. This view of constructivism is the social one, compatible with the Vygotskian claim that all knowledge starts out on the social plane before it becomes individual knowledge (Gage & Berliner, 1998). The theory stresses on assisting learners in order to improve their competence, and it is called the Zone of Proximal Development.

4.1.4.2 Activities related to learners experiences

For the learners to read a text with understanding they need to have prior knowledge. Teachers can activate learners' prior knowledge throughout the lesson. This is what was observed at one of the schools during a lesson. The title of the story that learners were asked to read was "The Last Day." The teacher assisted the learners to answer some of comprehension questions by using the learners' prior knowledge. For example, the

teacher wanted the learners to differentiate between the assembly which is done daily and the one that is done once in a term.

The following lesson transcript indicates how the teacher helped the learners explain what happens on the assembly of the last day of school.

Table 4: Lesson extract 4

Teachers activities	Learners activities
Ask learners the following questions <i>What activities do you do on the assembly on the last day of school?</i> <i>What activities will you do on assembly on the last day of school?</i> <i>The assembly which was done in the morning at the school is not similar to the one which is done at the end of the school what do you think are the differences?</i> <i>What will you do on the last day of school?</i>	Answering questions <i>Poems, parade and dances</i> <i>Sing songs, recite poems</i> <i>The assembly which is done at the end the school has activities such as announcing names of learners that have been promoted to the next class and performance of tradition dances.</i> <i>Recite poems, sing songs and perform some dances</i>

Lesson observation 2-teacher 4- at school D-23/02/16

(For a full lesson transcript see appendix 5)

In this lesson transcript, the teacher shows how he/she uses learners' prior experience in order for the learners to have a clear understanding of the story from the book which is talking about the last day of school. The learners will use the knowledge they have about the assemblies that happen at the school to interpret the text which is also talking about

assembly. This is in line with schema theory which stresses that readers activate existing knowledge structures to interpret text. Similarly, Vacca, Vacca & Burns (1995) state that schemata influence reading for understanding and learning. For readers to understand a text, they need to activate or build schema that fits with information from the text. This can be possible if teachers use activities that activate learners' schemata.

4.1.5 Teaching and learning resources for enhancing reading skills

The study also found that teachers use different teaching and learning resources to enhance reading skills in learners. The most common resources which were found during the study were learners' books, charts, word cards, pictures and real objects. This was observed during lesson observation, focus group discussion, and in-depth interview with both teachers and head teachers.

4.1.5.1 Learners' book

During lesson observation, focus group discussion and in-depth interview it was revealed that teachers use learners' book during reading lessons. Before reading the teachers use learners books to show learners illustration and title to help learners predict the story. During reading, the teachers asked the learners to read the story from the book and after reading, the teachers asked learners some questions from the book, so the learners used the books to check the answers for specific questions. Despite that the teachers used learners' book throughout the lesson, in some schools it was observed that the books were not enough for all the learners.

Teachers and head teachers agreed that books are used during reading and one of the teachers explained that:

We use books when teaching learners reading. Every child needs to see what other learners or teachers are reading. In addition, there are illustrations that help learners to make predictions. If the books are not available, it becomes difficult because learners feel as if they are listening to news on radio **(IDI-teacher 3-at school 3-20/01/16)**

The foregoing explanation shows that teachers use books as one of the resources when teaching reading because learners need to see the words and use illustrations in the book for making predictions. In addition, learners see the words and how they have been used in a sentence in order to guess meanings of these words; hence, enhancing the reading skills. The teacher should introduce essential vocabulary within a passage to enhance the skill of word guessing. This can be possible if the learners have books in which they can refer to. For example, learners can guess the meaning of a word after they have seen how the word has been used in a sentence.

During focus group discussion, it was also found that books are important because learners see what is being read and they are able to hear how different words are pronounced. The researcher is of the view that books are really important in enhancing reading skills. For example, learners can enhance the skill of fast reading if they can time their reading both at school and at home. As they time their reading, they can also enhance the skill of fast reading.

The following verbatim quote represents what learners said on the importance of learner's books:

Mabuku ngati chipangizo chophunzirira, amatithandiza kwambiri. Mzathu akamawerenga, ife timaona momwe mawu akuwatchulira komanso timaona chomwe chikuwerengedwacho. Komanso tikakhala ndimabukhu timathakuona zithunzi ndikufotokozera chomwe tikuyembekezera kuwerenga munkhan, komanso timatha kuiwerengeratu nkhani tisanapite mkalasi. Timathanso kukhala ndi nthawi yochuluka yowerenga nkhani patokha popeza nthawi yomwe timakhala nayo mkalasi imakhala yochepa. Izi zimatithandiza kuti nkhani tiimvetse mwachangu.

Books as learning resources help us a lot. We are able to see how our friends pronounce the words and we are able to see what is being read. In addition, if we have books, we can look at illustrations and make predictions easily, we can also read the story before class. We also have enough time to read the books on our own because the time we have for reading in class is not enough. This helps us in understanding of the story
(FGD-learner 1-at school A-19/01/16)

The verbatim indicates the importance of books when teaching reading skills in learners. If the learners have a chance of taking the books home, they can enhance their reading skills because they will be using the books anytime they need them. Some people may argue that, if a learner does not know how to read, how he/she can enhance the reading skills by just having the book at home. If learners have a chance of taking the books home, they will be assisted by their parents and siblings on how to read.

4.1.5.2 Word cards

During in-depth interview with teachers the study found that teachers use word cards to enhance reading skills in learners. The teachers explained that they use word cards in order to help learners see clearly how different words are written and pronounced. Nevertheless, it was noted during focus group discussions and interviews with head teachers that even though teachers claim that they use word card, these word cards are rarely used during lesson presentation. The head teachers stated that most teachers do not use word cards because of unpreparedness. They prefer to write the words on the chalkboard. Teachers need to be prepared for every lesson presentation so that they are able to enhance read skills in learners. During FGD the learners said that teachers rarely use word card when teaching reading. The following explanation from learners confirms that teachers rarely use word cards.

Nthawi zambiri tikamakonzekera kuti tiwerenge nkhani, aphunzitsi amalemba mawu ovuta pa bolodi. Nthawi zina amalemba mawu ovuta pamakadi ngakhale kuti izi sizimachitika chitika.

Most of the times when we are preparing to read a story, the teacher writes difficult words on the chalkboard. Sometimes, the teacher writes difficult words on cards even though this does not happen often **(FGD-learner 10-at school B-19/01/16)**

The explanation refutes the claim that teachers use word cards most of the times; instead, they write the difficult words on the chalkboard. This is similar to what the researcher observed during lesson observations. Of all the lessons that were observed, it was only in one lesson where the researcher saw a teacher using word cards. The teacher demonstrated reading the words then asked the learners to read the words aloud from the

word cards. These contradicting explanations indicate that teachers know the importance of word cards but they don't want to admit that they do not use them during lesson presentation. This shows that teacher do not put theory into practice.

4.1.5.3 Real objects

It was noted during the study that real objects are important in enhancing reading skills in learners because the learners are able to see the things for themselves. For example, teachers can show learners a chair for them to have a clear understanding of what a chair is. The head teachers and teachers agreed that real objects are important because they help in clarifying concepts. They also help the teacher to make teaching realist and meaningful. Indeed, real objects are important during lesson presentation because they help the teacher in clarifying concepts and they help learners to understand concepts easily. One of the teachers explained that:

When I am using real objects, I feel that learners understand better what I am teaching and I do not have problems when explaining concepts (**IDI-teacher 1-at school A-19/01/16**)

This explanation shows that teachers know the importance of real objects, however, it was noted during lesson observation and focus group discussion that teachers do not use real objects. In all the lessons that were observed, nobody used real objects. This was also confirmed during focus group discussion where learners said that teachers do not use real objects when teaching. Real things will help learners in activating their prior knowledge which will assist them in constructing meaning for the read text. However, all respondents stated that the resource that teachers use most of the times during reading is

the learners' book. This concurs with Lipenga (2010) who states that the problem of poor English language speech among learners is enhanced by teachers' practices for not using a variety of teaching and learning materials which facilitate the development of English language speech proficiency. Similarly, poor reading skills in learners are enhanced by the teachers' practice of not using real objects. Since the teachers appreciate the use of real object, they also need to use these real objects so that they can enhance the reading skills in learners.

4.1.5.4 Charts

It was also noted that charts are important in enhancing reading skills in learners. This was revealed during in-depth interview with the head teachers and teachers. Head teachers and teachers explained that charts are important because they act as reference materials whenever they are displayed in the classroom. Learners can look at what was written on the chart and learn something from that information. The teachers can also write a story on a chart in cases where there is a shortage of books.

The teachers explained that:

Charts help us when teaching English reading. We use charts to write stories or draw illustrations. Charts also help learners to see information that was presented some time back. Sometimes if a learner misses a lesson, s/he can check the learnt information on charts which have been displayed in class **(IDI- teacher 2-at school B-19/01/2016)**

This sentiment indicates that that charts assist both the teacher and learners. If there are some meanings of words that have been written on charts, the learners can refer to the

chart in cases where they come across similar words in a story. However, during in depth interview with the head teacher, it was also found that charts help teachers to keep time since the charts are written before the beginning of the lesson. The teachers can write difficult words on charts and bring them to class so that he/she can discuss them with the learners. Even though the teachers and head teachers know that charts are important, findings in FGD with the learners stated that teachers rarely use charts.

This was confirmed during lesson observation where most teachers presented their lessons without charts. The researcher also confirmed that teachers rarely use charts when it was observed that in most classrooms there were no charts that were displayed. It was only in one of the schools where the researcher found illustrations which were drawn on walls some years back. These findings are similar to Lipenga (2010) findings which state that teachers use charts on special occasions. Contrary to these findings, Chisamba (2014) noted that some teachers use charts to write a passage for learners to read. This indicates a positive development in the teaching of reading. However, Chisamba also noted that the charts were not displayed which resulted into learners' limited access to the charts which could also affect their reading skills. There is need for the teachers to use charts when teaching and display them after use so that they enhance reading skills in learners.

This section of the study has presented findings on the teaching strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners. The section has included instructional strategies, teaching methods, teaching and learning resources that teachers use to enhance the

reading skills in learners. The section has also presented findings on other related activities for enhancing reading skills in learners. The next section will discuss findings on challenges that teachers face when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners.

4.2 Challenges that teachers and learners face when using strategies that enhance reading skills in learners

The second question explored challenges that teachers and learners face when using the strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners. In attempt to answer this question, the following themes emerged during in-depth interview with the head teachers and teachers' as well as focus group discussion with the learners. The sub themes that emerged from the data analysis were; learner related challenges, teacher related challenges, school related challenges and policy related challenges. These sub themes are discussed in the next few pages.

4.2.1 Learner related challenges

These are the challenges that are caused by the learners themselves. During in- depth interview with head teachers it was found that teachers fail to use some of the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners because of learner related challenges. For example, lack of interest in reading, failure to ask capable peers for assistance and failure to read a given text. The sections that follow have a detailed discussion on how these hinder the use of strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners.

4.2.1.1 Lack of interest in reading

The study established that some learners have no interest in reading. They only read when they are asked to do so during reading lessons. If learners have no interest in reading, it will be difficult for the teachers to use silent reading and reading aloud in groups. If such learners are given a text to read silently they will pretend as if they are reading and sometimes they can cause noise in class which will end up disturbing the whole class. Similarly, if they are asked to read aloud as a group, they will also not reading. The following verbal quote represents what the head teacher said on learners' lack of interest in reading.

The problem which is there is that most learners have no interest in reading. Despite that there is shortage of books in the schools; there are some learners that have no interest in reading. We see a few learners that come to borrow supplementary reading materials that we have, and these are the same learners, so it becomes difficult for the teacher to enhance reading skills in such children (**IDI-head teacher 1-at school A-19/01/16**)

This verbatim from head teacher shows that the learners that have no interest in reading do not use supplementary reading materials that are available in some schools. This implies that teachers will have problems in enhancing reading skills in such learners.

4.2.1.2 Failure to ask capable peers for assistance

It was also revealed during focus group discussion that some learners do not ask capable peers for assistance because they are afraid of being called dull. In addition, it was

revealed that some learners remained quite during class/group discussion. This was observed during lesson observation. When the teachers asked learners to discuss meanings of some words, it was always capable learners that dominated the discussion. Similarly, during reading aloud, those that had high reading levels dominated the reading. This was observed in all the schools that participated in the study. The researcher felt that may be the reading environment is not conducive for the learners to read. The following excerpt shows some learners concern:

Mmmhh! madam, kufunsa mzako kuti akuthandize kumakhalatu kulimba mtimatu, chifukwa umaganiza kuti kodi ndizingofunsa nthawi zonse, ndiyetu amzanga azingoti awa ndiye alibetu mzeru. Ndiyeno basi umangosankha kusafunsa ngakhale zivute.

Mmmhh! Madam, to ask a friend to assist needs courage because you think that if I ask every time, my friends will be saying I am not intelligent. So we just choose not to ask even when things are difficult
(FGD-learner 4-at school 2-19/01/16)

This excerpt indicates that learners choose not to ask for assistance even when they have problems. Similarly, Senekane (2013) found in her study that shy learners did not participate in class discussion due to large classes. Learners still need to ask capable peers because these can assist in using some of the strategies and activities, as a result, teachers will not have problems in enhancing reading skill in such learners. This is in line with social constructivism theory which encourages teachers to use groups in which learners can assist each other. However, it is the responsibility of the teachers to arrange the class in a way that the learners will be able to talk to each other and to work together.

4.2.1.3 Failure to read

During the study, it was found that some learners have problems with reading and understanding of the passages being read so it was difficult for them to use the reading skills even when they were given resources that could help them to read. For example, it was difficult for those learners to read silently and scan difficult words from the story. The participants revealed that the level of English reading of learners in the participating primary schools is very low. As a result, it becomes difficult for the teachers to let such learners read aloud in as a group or read silently as individuals. The following verbatim indicate learners concerns on the situation of reading amongst learners.

Ambirife timavutika powerenga. Mawerengedwe athu samagwirizana ndi kalasi yomwe tili, mwachitsanzo mu seven muno ena timawerenga ngati tili sitandade five mwinanso four kumene. Akatifunsa kuti tiwerenge timawerenga movutika nthawi zina timalupha mawu ena.

Most of us have problems in reading. We read below our grade level, for example, in standard seven, some of us read as if we are in standard five or four. When we are asked to read a passage, we read with problems and sometimes we skip some of the words **(FGD-learner 2-at school A-19/01/16)**

The verbatim explanation shows that most of the learners in primary schools that participated in the study read below their grade level. This concurs with SACMEQ 111 (2011) report which indicates that a small percentage of learners reached acceptable levels of reading and most standard 6 learners read at level 2 (emergent reading). None of the learners had demonstrated critical reading skills (level 5, 6, and 7) (Milner, Chimuzu, Mulera, Kunje, Matale and Chimombo, 2011). However, it was observed during lesson

observation that those learners that were mentioned to read were able to read the given text. It was also observed that the teachers involved volunteers only. This indicated that those that could read had to raise their hands so that they could be mentioned to read. It was revealed during focus group discussion that when a learner knows that I have problems with reading, he/she does not raise a hand to read.

It is therefore important for the teachers to involve both volunteers and non volunteers so that the teacher can have a clear picture on how learners are reading and give them appropriate support depending on their needs in reading. However, in one of the lesson observation it was observed that most of non-volunteers that were mentioned to read did not read even a single word. Teachers need to give appropriate support to these learners. However, teachers need to vary the amount of guidance they give to learners and offer them more independence as they show that they are ready for it. This is in line with Vygotsky's theory ZPD which presents the opportunity for growth in which children require support or facilitation from others. In this case, the teacher or capable peers in the groups could assist.

During the study, the researcher also observed that poor reading affects the performance of learners. This was mentioned during in depth interviews with the teachers and head teachers. The participants explained that if a learner fails to read, he/she cannot do well in the other learning areas. The following statement shows similar comments from the teachers and head teachers:

If a learner is able to read English, he/she also does better in the other learning areas. A learner who fails to read English does not perform well the other learning areas. If a learner is able to read, the learner can understand questions which he/she can be asked from different subjects, and s/he can read with understanding what s/he has learnt in the other subjects. For this reason, reading English at ones specific grade level is very important especially for the learners that are in senior classes because they learn all the subjects in English except for Chichewa. **(IDI-teacher 4- at school D-28/02/16)**

However, there was also a similar observation from the head teachers. The head teachers explained that if a learner does better in reading, he/she can also do better in the other learning areas. The following quote shows head teachers concerns

Most of` the learners who do not do well in the other learning areas are those that fail to read, and those that perform well in the other learning areas are those that can read English properly **(IDI-head teacher 3- at school C-20/01/216)**

These verbatim quotes illustrate participants concerns on the low level of reading among primary school learners which also affects their performance in the other learning areas. This also concurs with Kewaza and Welch (2010), who states that reading as a skill is one of the effective means of learning and expands one's proficiency in the use of language. Reading also promotes skills necessary to acquire more knowledge. This means that people get more information when they read books, newspapers, magazines, and stories; hence, becoming more knowledgeable of the world around them. Similarly, learners can learn information from the other learning areas if

they are able to read since they will be able to read on their own at the same time, they can understand what they can read.

4.2.2 Teacher related challenges

Learners during focus group discussion stated that teachers fail to use some of the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills because they are not dedicated to their duties so they don't prepare properly. It was also found during in-depth interviews that teachers fail to enhance reading skills in learners because some teachers have inadequate knowledge on PCAR. In addition, the study found that teachers fail to enhance reading skills in learners because some teachers are being experienced in one section of primary school level and also lack of creativity among teachers. This was found during lesson observation, focus group discussion with the learners and in-depth interview with teachers and head teacher. The discussion in the following sections is on teacher related challenges.

4.2.2.1 Teachers' dedication

On teachers' dedication, the study found that teachers are not dedicated to their duties. This was disclosed during in-depth interview with the teachers and focus group discussion with the learners. The learners stated that some teachers come to school every day, but they spend their time under the tree chatting instead of attending to learners in the classroom. During in-depth interview with the teachers, it was explained that some teachers prepare the work to be taught on a particular day, but because they are not dedicated to their duties they just sit in class instead of teaching the learners. Similarly,

the learners stated that sometimes they don't learn while their teachers are present. This is evidenced by the following comment from learners:

Nthawi zina timatha kungokhala osamaphunzira aphunzitsi athu ali pasukulu pompano. Iwo amakonda kungokhala pamtengo apo basi kumacheza ndi anzawo ife tikusewera. Nthawi zina amatiuza kuti tiziwerenga nkhani kuchokera m'bukhu.

Sometimes we don't learn while our teachers are here at school. They like to sit under that tree and chat with their friends while we are playing. Sometimes they just tell us to read a story from the book **(FGD-learner 4-at school B-19/01/16)**

From the comment, it must be stressed that although some teachers prepare and go to work for lesson presentations, they absent themselves because they don't present whatever they prepare. As indicated in the statement, it shows that some teachers tell the learners to read a story from the book without discussing illustrations and difficult words. In this situation, there is no one to guide the learners in reading; as a result, their reading skills will not be enhanced. Teachers need to help learners in making predictions before any reading lesson. This is in line with schema theory which states that learners use their prior knowledge to help them construct meaning of a given text. Schemata also influence reading for understanding (vacca, Vacca, & Burns, 1995). This means that predictions help learners to activate their prior knowledge so that they can understand the text.

For readers to understand a text, they need to activate or build schema that fits with information from the text. The researcher is of the opinion that if learners are not allowed to predict then it will be difficult for them to interpret the story because they have not

used their prior knowledge which could help them to construct meaning of the read text. Similarly, if learners are not given a chance to guess meanings of some difficult words in the passage, then it will also be difficult for them to understand the text they read. In addition, it will also be difficult to enhance their reading fluency.

4.2.2.2 Inadequate knowledge on PCAR

The study found that most teachers were not oriented on PCAR so it becomes difficult for them to present the concepts basing on PCAR standards. The head teachers stated that because of inadequate knowledge on PCAR some teachers skip some content and teach whatever they feel they can manage. However, the researcher wanted to know from participating teachers if they also don't have enough knowledge since they have just graduated from college and they were trained through PCAR. It was confirmed that teachers even those that have just graduated from college have inadequate knowledge on some concepts.

The teachers explained that:

Madam, at college we learnt for the sake of passing examinations not for us to know. So when we came here we do not have enough knowledge. This is observed clearly when we want to upgrade we fail to write a composition as a result, the composition that we write is similar to the one that we teach learners at primary school **(IDI-teacher 1-at school A-19/01/16)**

The quotation clearly indicates that when teachers are in college, they learn to pass examinations not to gain some knowledge that may help them in future. A similar

observation was also made by the head teachers who stated that some teachers have no knowledge on how best they can use the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills. It was observed during lesson observation that some teachers have no knowledge on how they can use the strategies and activities to enhance reading skills in learners. For example, in pre-reading, the teacher started the lesson by showing learners flash cards where some words from the story were written. The teacher read the words then gave the meanings of the words while the learners were listening. This is evidenced by the following lesson transcript:

Table 5: Lesson extract 5

Teachers activities	Learners activities
Gives instructions: <i>Look here class and listen, I have some word cards in my hands, I will read the words and give you their meanings.</i>	Listening while looking at the teacher
Shows the word cards, reads them aloud and gives their meanings: <i>Search, Unique, fear, envied,</i> <i>Teacher: Search means looking for something</i> <i>Teacher: Unique means special</i> <i>Teacher: Fear means being afraid of something</i>	Looking at the cards Listening

(Lesson Observation 1-teacher 1- at School A-19/01/16) (For a complete lesson transcript see appendix 3)

This lesson extract shows that the teacher did not involve the learners in some of the activities that could enhance reading skills such as word guessing. In this case, there was no discussion or scaffolding that could help learners to give correct meanings of the

words. The teacher used teacher centred method because she was doing the activities alone. This contradicts with Malawi's outcome based education which requires learners to make sense of new knowledge in the context of their existing knowledge and develop new understanding as learning takes place (MIE, 2008). In addition, it also argues with social construction theory of Vygotsky which stresses on assisting the learners in order to improve their competence. Pressley (1999) also states that teachers should model and learners should practice relating prior knowledge to the text and making predictions about the content before reading, interpreting the meaning by constructing mental images and summaries during reading and asking questions and seeking clarifications after reading. This means that teachers need to give learners a variety of activities that will help them to make more predictions before they read a text. This is in line with Chen and Dhillon (2013) who found that, taking a deep approach to learning, changing attitudes and methods in teaching reading, teachers can effectively foster the reading skills in students and improve their achievement.

4.2.3 School related challenges

It was found during in-depth interview with the head teachers and teachers as well as focus group discussion with the learners that there are also school related challenges. These are the challenges that are caused by the schools. These challenges are PCAR mode of promoting learners to the next class, in adequate reading activities in the syllabus and shortage of books. This school related challenges are discussed in the next few pages.

4.2.3.1 Shortage of books

The study revealed that it was difficult for the teacher to use some of the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills because shortage of books in the schools, so some learners just listen to their peers as if they are listening to a story being told. This was revealed during FGD that when the books are not enough some learners fail to see what others are reading, hence, problems in using some of the activities for enhancing reading skills. During lesson observation, it was revealed that the learners were put in groups so that each one of them had a chance of looking at what was being read. However, it was found that some of the learners were not able to read during silent reading because the book was positioned upside down; hence, silent reading became a challenge. In some cases, the researched observed that some learners pretended as if they were reading because of how the books were positioned, as a result, teachers found difficulties in reading aloud or silent reading.

Books are essential in the development of reading skills. The learners can predict stories using the illustrations in the books. The learners can refute or confirm their predictions after they have seen or read the story, so if the books are not enough such skills cannot be enhanced. Muchemwa (2014) found in her study that conditions in the school cause problems in reading. Muchemwa stated that if books are not enough for all the learners, it becomes difficult for them to participate in reading activities. Similarly, a study in Malawi revealed the negative effects of shortage of resources in the development of reading skills in learners (Chimombo, Kunje, Chimuzu & Mchikoma, 2005). This means that books are essential in the teaching of reading.

4.2.4 Policy related challenges

These are the challenges that are caused by the policy. The study established that the criterion for promoting learners to the next class and inadequate reading activities in the syllabus cause challenges to both teachers and learners when using the strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners.

4.2.4.1 Promotion of learners

The findings reveal that the PCAR criterion of promoting learners to the next class encourages the promotion of learners that are not competent in reading; hence, teachers fail to use some of the activities and strategies for enhancing reading skills. The teachers stated that if a learner gets 40% as an overall grade, this learner is supposed to be promoted to the next class. This shows that most learners are promoted to the next class even though they don't have necessary requirement. This criterion encourages the promotion of learners that cannot read.

If such learners are promoted to the next class, the reading material in the new class becomes difficult for them to handle. As a result, teachers will have challenges in using the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in such learners. Learners need to move from one class to another after they have acquired all the skills meant for the previous class.

4.2.4.2 Inadequate reading activities in the syllabus

On this, it was found that the syllabus has only one reading lesson per week. For the learners to acquire the required reading skills there is need for teachers to involve learners in extensive reading which will lead to the development of more vocabulary structure and good reading habits (Fry, 1965). The following explanation shows head teachers concerns on inadequate reading activities in the syllabus:

I feel that reading as a lesson is not adequate in the syllabus. Learners read a story from their book once a week and the other reading is done by the teacher who reads a story from the teachers guide.

However, the reading which is done by the teacher enhances listening skills **(IDI-head teacher 3-at School C-20/01/16)**

The excerpt in quotes shows a concern from the head teacher on inadequate reading activities in the syllabus. This poses a challenge to the teachers when they want to enhance reading skills in learners. Nevertheless, the researcher is of the opinion that despite the reading activities that appear in the syllabus, teachers can also encourage learners to read materials such as newspapers and magazines. Learners can also be given supplementary reading books to take home, as they are given more time to read, their reading skills will also be enhanced.

This section of the study has looked at the challenges that teachers face when using the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills. The study established so many challenges and these have been presented based on the following categories: learner

related challenges, teacher related challenges, school related challenges, school related and policy related challenges.

4.3 Overcoming challenges faced by teachers when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners

This section of the study presents the finding on the third questions which explored how teachers and learners overcome the challenges they face when using strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners. The means of overcoming various challenges have been presented based on the categories of the challenges that have already been discussed in section 4.2.

4.3.1 Overcoming learner related challenges

The next few pages will discuss how teachers overcome challenges that are caused by learners. The challenges to overcome are; lack of interest in reading amongst learners, failure to ask capable peers and failure to read.

4.3.1.1 Lack of interest in reading

The researcher found that teachers can overcome the challenge of learners having no interest in reading by encouraging learners to read when they are at home. Despite the shortage of books in the schools, the teachers can ask learners to read something when they are at home. The teachers can give the learners a reading homework, and tell them to report whatever they have read when they come to school. This shows that teachers can give learners reading assignment as homework, so the learners will be encouraged to read

so that they should have something to report when they are in class. This concurs with Peterson, Caverly, Nicholson, O'Neal and Cusenbary (2000) who state that the teacher who is aware of literacy context outside the classroom can connect those contexts to reading tasks and the selected materials. This means that in structuring reading tasks and selecting materials, teachers should allow learners' choice, while providing support in making those choices.

4.3.1.2 Failure to ask capable peers for assistance

The study during FGD noted that teachers can overcome this challenge by encouraging learners to ask capable peers. This will be possible if the teachers use group work or pair work where they can learn without fears. Crawford, Saul, Mathews & Makinster (2005) state that teachers should arrange the class in a way that makes it easy and natural for the learners to work easily and talk to each other. In addition, teachers should make sure that there is an emotionally secure learning environment in which learners feel free to try new tasks, and in which unsuccessful attempts may lead to eventual success (Crawford, Saul, Mathews & Makinster, 2005). This means that teachers need to create conducive learning environment for all the learners to learn despite their differences. When learners are put in groups or in pairs they are comfortable to ask peers for assistance.

4.3.1.3 Failure to read

The study established that something needs to be done in order to improve the level of reading amongst learners in Malawi. Learners need to be monitored on their level of reading and then assist them based on their deficiencies in reading. The researcher

suggests that teachers need to let learners read in groups or in pairs so that those that have problems with reading are assisted by those that can read properly. The learners need to be exposed to a lot of text with guidance from capable peers and adults that can help them to read properly. This concurs with constructivism theory of learning which states that the learner is an active contributor to the learning process, and that teaching strategies should focus on what the student can bring to the learning situation as much as on what is received from the environment.

Teachers can use guided reading in which learners read books of their reading level. According to Browne (1993) guided reading is a useful way of introducing learners to reading information text as time can be spent discussing the arrangement of the book and individual learners can be asked to search for particular items in the text. However, learners especially those that are knowledgeable should be allowed to assist their peers in their cooperative groups. In so doing, the teachers will be able to use the strategies and activities for enhancing the reading skills in learners. This is in line with Muchemwa (2014) who suggested that there is need for the teachers and the learners themselves to be supportive to the learners in order to deal with the challenges faced when teaching reading skills.

4.3.2 Overcoming teacher related challenges

The study also established that there is need to overcome teacher related challenges. The findings are presented based on the categories of teacher related challenges and these are

teachers' dedication and inadequate knowledge. The following is a discussion of ways of overcoming the teacher related challenges.

4.3.2 1Teachers dedication

It was found during in-depth interview with teachers that there is also need for head teachers and PEAs to conduct frequent supervision so that they can identify the lazy teachers and find ways on how they can deal with them. It was suggested that frequent supervision by both head teachers and PEAs can help because these people will ensure that indeed learning is taking place in the classrooms. The researcher is of the view that apart from head teachers and PEAs, senior primary school teacher can also be given the responsibility of supervising their fellow teachers because if it will be head teacher and PEAs only, teachers will only be attending to the learners if they know that the PEA or head teacher is coming for supervision. For instance, in Lipenga (2010) it was found that teachers used charts when PEAs came in the schools for supervision. This means that real teaching was done on special days when the PEAs visited the schools. The senior teachers will be teachers within the school so they will be working hand in hand with the head teachers to ensure that learning is really taking place within a particular school.

4.3.2.2 Inadequate knowledge

The study found that there is need for the teachers to make some consultations from other teachers on how they can use different strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills. Teachers can also be involved in team teaching whereby each teacher use strategies and activities that proved to be effective in enhancing reading skill in their

respective classes. It was also established that there is need for the schools to conduct CPDs. The following excerpt represents what the head teachers said:

Most of the times I ask the teachers to ask their fellow teachers for assistance. I know that in primary, there is no specialization of subjects but sometimes other teachers understand certain concepts better than others so they need to share ideas. I sometimes ask the teachers to write the concepts they feel are difficult for them to present then we organise school based CPD with the teachers where they can share ideas based on concepts presented by the teachers **(IDI-Head teacher 4-at school D-25/02/16)**

The statement in the quote shows that some head teachers organise school based CPDs for teachers to share ideas on how to present certain concepts. The researcher is in agreement with this idea because as teachers share ideas, they widen their knowledge as a result, they will not have problems when using the strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners. However, these CPDs should also be done at zonal level where teachers can get knowledge from a large group of people. The researcher also wanted to know from the participants if they had ever attended to any CPD. It was found during in depth interview with the teachers that most of the teachers had never attended to CPD. The following statement represents what most teachers said:

To say the truth madam, the knowledge that I have is the one that I got from college. I have never attended to any of the CPDs since I started working. But what helps me is that I ask people for assistance especially when I see that I will have problems in presenting something **(IDI-teacher 4- at School D-28/01/2016)**

This statement reveals that some teachers do not attend to CPD. This is similar to what Chisamba (2014) found in her study. It was found that lack of insets and workshops cause a challenge in the teaching of reading comprehension in inclusive classroom. Similarly, teachers can also have challenges in using the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills if they do not attend CPD. However, these contradicting views indicate that some schools conduct CPDs and others do not. This depends on the administration of the school on whether to conduct CPDs or not. The researcher is of the opinion that schools should make initiatives on organizing CPDs for their teachers. In addition, zonal PEAs should also organise CPD with their schools. They can choose teachers that are experts in certain strategies and activities and allow them to presents to their friends at TDC level. This will result in teachers having more knowledge on how they can use the strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners.

4.3.2 Overcoming school related challenges

4.3.3.1 Shortage of books

During in depth interview the teachers, the study revealed that teachers ask learners to be in groups when reading so that each learner has a chance of looking at a book. However, the researcher is of the opinion that if the books are not enough for all the learners, teachers should engage students to read in groups. Reading in groups will assist those learners that have problems in reading because they will be assisted by their capable peers. This concurs with Vygotsky (1978) who encourages learners to work in cooperate groups where they can assist each other. It is therefore important for the teachers to let learners work in groups if they are to enhance reading skills.

4.3.4 Overcoming policy related challenges

The study established that there is need to overcome policy related challenges. Head teachers suggested that there is need for learners to be promoted to the next class based on their academic performance; however, teachers proposed that there is need for teachers to give learners a lot of reading assignments in order to expose them to more reading material which will letter enhance their reading skills.

4.3.4.1 Promotion of learners

It was revealed during in-depth interview that there is need to review the PCAR criterion of promoting learners to the next class. Promotion of learners to the next class needs to be based on the learners' performance. Learners need to perform well in all the learning areas so that they can be promoted to the next class. The learners that can read well can also perform better in the other learning areas. This is in line with Kaplan (1986) who states that all school subjects require various written materials such as stories, graphs, charts and tables, and to have a better understanding of these; one needs to know how to read. This means that if learners fail to read, they cannot do well in the other learning areas. The following statement indicates what the teachers said:

For us to enhance the reading skills in learners easily there is need to use the old system of promoting learners to the next class. This system requires a learner to get marks not less than half of the total marks of the subjects that have been written as a result learners will be promoted based on their academic performance (**IDI- teacher 1-school A-26/01/2016**)

The researcher is in agreement with this idea because the system will help teacher to promote learners that can perform well in the classes they will be promoted to; hence teacher will not have problems in using the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners. However, this cannot be done by an individual school or zone but it is the responsibility of the government to review the mode of assessment.

4.3.4.2 Inadequate reading activities

On inadequate reading activities, the study established that teachers can also use old syllabus books to enhance reading skills in learners. During in depth interviews with the teacher, it was revealed that it becomes difficult to enhance reading skills in learners by using the reading lessons that they have because they only have one reading lesson per week. The learners need to have a lot of time for reading both at school and at home. There is need for the learners to be involved in extensive reading which will lead to the development of more vocabulary structure and good reading habits (Fry, 1965). This can be possible if the learners are given reading homework by using news papers and old syllabus books. The researcher concurs with the teachers that there is need for the learners to be given more time for reading. This is possible if the learners are exposed to a lot of reading material. Similarly, the head teachers suggested that there is need to introduce *simba zamaphunziro* in all the villages in which learners will be meeting to assist each other in reading.

The suggested *simba zamaphunziro* require having more reading material which will be used by the learners. In these sessions learners will be able to choose book of their

interest and level; hence they will be motivated to read. The researcher is of the view that there is need to introduce guided reading instructions in these places because learners will be reading books of their grade level and their interest. Guided reading will help learners in these groups to read with confidence as a result, the teachers will not have problems in using the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills. This concurs with Roe, Smith and Burns who state that the goal for guided reading is to provide learners with the opportunity to not only become familiar with reading practices but to provide learners with a small group setting where they will not be intimidated to take risks in reading.

Apart from the introduction of *Simba zamaphunziro* in the villages, it was also suggested by the teachers during in depth interview that there is need for all the schools to have libraries that are well equipped with books. The following verbatim excerpt is a representative of the teachers' views:

Each school needs to have a well resourced library. This will help because the learners will be going to the libraries during their free time to read the books of their interest (**IDI-teacher 1-at school A-19/01/16**)

The excerpt above signals the need for having libraries in the schools. However, the libraries should have a variety of books so that the learners should have a wide range of choices of the books they can read. In such a way, learners will be motivated to use the libraries; hence, enhancing reading skills in learners. During focus group discussion with the learners and in-depth interview with the head teachers, it was found that it is important for the schools to have English clubs in which learners will help each other in reading.

The researcher is in agreement with these views because as learners work in their clubs they will be able to read books of their interest and reading levels, they will also be able to assist each other, as a result, the learners reading skills will be enhanced. This is in line with Vygotsky's theory of social construction which stresses on assisting learners in order to improve their competence which is known as the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky (1978) defines it as the actual development level as determined by the independent problem solving and "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." Similarly, learners will be assisted by capable peers when they join the English clubs; as a result, their reading skills will be enhanced.

However, there is need for curriculum planners to review the curriculum and include more reading activities that will help enhancing reading skills in learners. The learners need to be exposed more reading material when they are at school, but the current syllabus allows learners to interact with texts for thirty five minutes only which is not enough for enhancing the reading skills in learners.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the findings basing on the information which was generated from head teachers, teachers, learners and lesson observations. Second, it has presented teaching methods and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners. In addition, it has discussed findings of challenges that teachers face when using the teaching strategies and activities for enhancing the reading skills in learners. Finally, the

chapter has presented findings on how teachers overcome the challenges they face when using the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners. The next chapter will have a presentation of conclusions, implications and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the summary of the conclusions and implications on the key findings of the study discussed in chapter 4. The conclusions and implications are followed by recommendations of the study. The last section outlines suggested areas for further research.

5.1 Conclusions and implications

The main purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners. The main research question which the study answered was what are the teachers' practices for enhancing reading skills in learners? The study was guided by the following subsidiary research questions. What are the teaching strategies and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners? What are the challenges that teachers face when using the teaching strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners? How do teachers overcome the challenges they face when using the teaching strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners.

Firstly, on the teaching strategies and activities that teachers use to enhance reading skills in learners, the study concludes that the teachers use reading aloud, silent reading, question and answer, group work, discussion, individual work and pair work as teaching methods for enhancing reading skills in learners. The study revealed that teachers failed to enhance reading skills because of how they used the teaching strategies and activities. Teachers used silent reading in which learners were not given a chance to evaluate the text. Teachers asked learners low order questions. Similarly, during reading aloud learners read as if they were in a competition as a result, some learners did not read; hence, problems in enhancing reading skills in such learners.

The teachers did not allow learners to develop critical strategies to understand and respond to the text. In addition, group work that teachers used was not properly organised because there was minimal interaction amongst learners. This is contrary to Vygotsky theory of learning which states that constructivism processes are particularly strong in a group setting, where each member must make sense out of the complex social interactions to which the learner is exposed (Gage and Berliner, 1998). This implies that teachers fail to enhance reading skills in learners which they can use to read information from content area which is also important for their academic success. Teachers need to involve learners in interactive nature of reading in which the readers are able to efficiently coordinate the graphic clues from the page and their own knowledge so that they can learn from the text they read. It is important for teachers to take their role as important in developing learners' abilities to understand and learn from written material by allowing them to read and share whatever they read through discussions.

Secondly, on challenges that teachers face when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners; the study established that there are several challenges that teachers face when using strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners. The challenges were categorised into learner related challenges, teacher related challenges, school related challenges and policy related challenges. It was noted that most learners do not read based on their grade level so this poses challenges to teachers when using the strategies for enhancing reading skills in learners. For example, during reading aloud, it was difficult for the learners to read together as a group because some learners read fast others read slowly as a result, those that read slowly could not read. In addition, learners fail to ask capable peers for assistance, so they fail to use some of the strategies and activities as assigned by their teachers. The study also found that books in the schools are not enough for all learners to use during reading. This means that learners are not given more time to interact with texts which will lead to problems when using the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in such children.

Finally, on how teachers overcome the challenges they face when using teaching strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners; the study concludes that there is need for the teachers to encourage learners to work in groups where they can assist each other in reading. This concurs with Vygotsky (1978) who encourages learners to work in cooperate groups where they can assist each other. They can also give learners a lot of reading assignments with an aim of giving learners enough time to interact with text. It was also suggested that teacher need to collaborate and assist each other in using the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills. If all these are to be done, it will

be easy for the teachers to use the strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners which will then lead to good performance in the other learning areas because the learners will be reading texts with understanding.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this report were based on the analysis of specific research solutions to the challenges that teachers face when enhancing reading skills in learners. The findings are important to different stake holders if quality education is to be offered in Malawi. These stake holders are: The ministry of education, the district education managers and PEAs, head teachers and teachers. The study therefore recommends that:

- Government should ensure that teaching and learning resources especially books are available in the schools. There should be more reading activities in the syllabus to help learners have more time in interacting with text. In addition, there is need to work with Teachers' Training Colleges to make follow up on how newly qualified teachers are doing on the implementation of what they learnt from college.
- District Education Managers and PEAs should work hand in hand to help teachers enhance reading skills in learners. There is need to conduct CPDs in schools as well as in Zones where teachers can share their experiences. In addition, frequent supervision need to be done by PEAs, head teachers as well as senior primary school teachers in order to ensure effective teaching in the school.

- Head teachers being overall in-charge of schools, should make sure that teachers attend to learners all the time and that they are well prepared for lesson presentations.
- Teachers should use a variety of activities such as word searching, comprehension questions and close passage to enhance reading skills in learners. The teachers should also use a variety of teaching and learning resources such as charts, models and real objects. Learners should also be given a lot of reading assignments to allow them interact with text. In addition, teachers need to work together within a school so that they can share knowledge on effective strategies and activities for enhancing reading skills in learners.

5.3 Suggested areas for further study

The researcher identified two areas that need to be studied.

- A replica of this study to be conducted on a wider scale because this study cannot give a true reflection of how teachers are enhancing reading skills in Malawi since this study only focused on four schools and in one Zone. So the results of this study will reflect the teachers' practices within those four schools.
- A study on student teachers' experiences in the teaching of reading because studies have shown that learners fail to read at their grade levels. Studies have also shown that there is shortage of resources in the schools. Therefore, the results of the suggested study will provide a reflection on how best teachers can enhance reading skills in such situations.

REFERENCES

- Adler, C.R. (Ed.) (2001). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Block for Teaching Children*. Retrieved 20 October, 2015, from:
<http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforeading/publicatins/reading>.
- Aebersold, J.A., & Field, M.L. (2003) *From reader to reading teacher: Issues and strategies for second language classrooms*. New York: Cambridge.
- Atsumbe, B. N. & Raymond, E. (2012). Problems of implementing continuous assessment in primary school in Nigeria. *Journal of education and practice*, 3 (6).
- Bassey, M. (1999). *Doing qualitative research in educational setting: Case study research in educational setting*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bayani, C. (2014). *Exploring language learning strategies used by learners and how they reflect their performance*. Unpublished masters thesis, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, Zomba.
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: A guide for first time researchers induction, health and social science*. London: Library of Congress.
- Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. (2010). *Qualitative data analysis: Systematic approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Brewer, J. D. (2000). *Ethnography*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Browne A. (2001). *Developing language and literacy 3-8*. London: SAGE publications

- Browne, A. (1993). *A practical guide to teaching reading in the early years*. New Delhi: Sage publications.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Chen, L., & Dhillon, J. (2012). Deep approaches to learning in improving reading skills: a case study from yunnan agricultural university. *The theory and Practices of language studies*. 2(8), 1603-1613.
- Chimombo, J.P., Chiuye, G., Chide, L., & Chiunda, G. (2014). Explaining pupils achievement levels in Malawi: Evidence from the primary achievement survey. *In Malawi Journal of Development Education*, 4(3) 36-59.
- Chimombo, J. P. G., Kunje, D., Chimuzu, T., & Mchikoma, C. (2005). *The SACMEQ 11 project in Malawi. A study of conditions of schooling and the quality of education*. Harare: SACMEQ.
- Chimombo, J., Mwale, L., & Ndalama, L. (2006). *An assessment of schooling conditions and Standard one-achievement levels in pre-literacy, pre-numeracy, basic literacy and numeracy in Malawian primary schools: PCAR Standard 1 baseline study*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education.
- Chisamba, C. M. (2014). *The teaching of reading in inclusive classrooms: A case study of teachers instructional strategies in teaching reading comprehension to standard four learners*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Oslo.
- Cimmiyotti, C. B. (2013). *Impact of reading ability on academic performance at primary level*. Unpublished masters thesis, Dominican University.

- Cooper, M. (1996). *Helping children to read*. Herts: United Kingdom Reading Association.
- Crawford, A., Saul, W., Mathews, S., & Makinster, J. (2005). *Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom*. New York: International Debate Education Association.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: International student edition*. London: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: International student edition*. London: Sage Publications.
- Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide for small scale research projects*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Denscombe, M. (1998) *The good research guide*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Edwards, A. (2001). Qualitative research designs and analysis in G. Mac naughton, S, Rolfe and Slaig. Blatchford. *Doing Early Childhood Research: International Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Maidenhead: Open University press
- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnel, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading good first reading for all children*. Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann.
- Gabl. K.A., Kaiser. K. L., Long. J. K. & Roemer. J. L. (2007). *Improving reading comprehension and fluency through the use of guided reading. An action research project*. Unpublished masters thesis, Saint Xavier University.
- Gage, N., & Berliner. D. (1998). *Educational psychology*. Boston: Macmillan.

- Garton A., & Pratt. C. (1989). *Learning to be literate. The development of spoken and written language*: New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Gibbs, G. & Jenkins, A. (1992). *Teaching large classes in higher education*. London: Kogan.
- Gray, C., & Macblain, S. (2012). *Learning Theories in Childhood*. California: Sage publications.
- Greig, A., Taylor, J., & Mackay, T. (2007). *Doing research with children*. London: Sage.
- Goodman, S.K. (1967). *The psycholinguistic nature or reading process*. Detroit. MI: Wyne State University.
- Hanushek, E. (1995). *Interpreting recent research on schooling in developing countries. The World Bank Research Observer*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc.
- Hardie, E. M. (2013). *The role of guided reading on the literacy development of young children*. Unpublished masters thesis, Brockport College, University of New York.
- Harris, A. J. (1961) *How to increase reading ability*. London: Longman
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. London: Sage.
- Heston, K. (2010). *The effects of guided reading instructions on students' fluency, accuracy, and comprehension at Woodview elementary school*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Wisconsin.

- Kaplan, S. P. (1986). *A child's odyssey: Child and adolescent development*. New York: West Publishing Company.
- Kent, R. (2001). *Data construction and data analysis for survey research*. New York: Palgrave.
- Kewaza, S., & Welch, M. I. (2013). Big class size challenges: Teaching reading in primary classes in Kampala Uganda's Central Manicpality. *US- China review*, 3(5), 283-296. Retrieved 10 November, 2015, from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543154.pdf>
- Kolo, T. N. & Francis, R.O. (2005). Large Classes and Assessment Problems Encountered by Nigeria in Secondary School: *A Paper Presented at 31st Annual IAEA Conference*. Nikon Hotel. Abuja: Nigeria.
- Lee, V. E., & Zuze, T. L. (2011). School resources and academic performance in Sub Saharan Africa. *Comparative Education Review*, 55(3), 369-397.
- Lipenga, M. L. *Teacher practices for developing English language speech proficiency in selected primary schools in Zomba District*. Unpublished masters thesis, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, Zomba.
- McGee, L.M., & Richgels, D.J. (2000). *Literacy beginnings: Supporting young readers and writers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Mack, N., Woodsong, C., Macqueen, M. K., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative research methods. A data collector's field guide*. North Carolina: Family Health International.

- MacMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Maganga, J., Mwale, L., Mapondera, A., & Saka, T. (2010) *Learning achievement of standard 3 and 7 learners in Malawi*. Domasi: MIE
- Malawi Institute of Education. (2008). *Malawi primary syllabus for standard 7*. Domasi: MIE.
- Marzano R. J., Hargety P. J., Valencia S. W., & Disteno P. P. (1978). *Reading Diagnosis and Instruction: Theory into Practice*. New Jersey: Guilford Press.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2013). *An interactive model of research design*. California: Sage Publications.
- McMahon, R., Mark G. R., & Reeves C. K. (1998). Relationships between kindergarten teachers' perceptions of literacy acquisition and children's literacy involvement and classroom materials. *Journal of Educational Research*, 91(3), 173–82.
- Medwell, J., Wray, D., Minns, H., Coates, E., & Griffiths, V. (2009). *Primary English teaching theory and practice*. Great Britain: Cromwell Press Group.
- Milner, G. C., Chimuzu, T.C., Mulera, D., Kunje, D. E., Matala, E., & Chimombo, J. (2011) *Southern and eastern Africa consortium for monitoring education quality Malawi (SACMEQ) 111. national report*. Lilongwe: International Institute for Education Planning.
- Mmela, E. (2006). *Implementing Literacy Approaches in English Classroom in Malawi*. Blacksburg, Virginia: University of Virginia.

- MoEST. (2012). *Malawi reading interventions early grade reading assessment (EGRA): Final assessment*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education Science and Technology.
- MoEST. (2011). *Malawi professional teacher development. Malawi national early grade reading midterm Report*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education Science and Technology.
- MoEST. (2010). *Malawi professional teacher development support: Analysis of best practices on early literacy in Malawi*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education.
- MoEST. (2010). *Malawi professional teacher development. Early grade reading assessment: national baseline report*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education Science and Technology.
- MoEST. (2010). *Analysis of best practices on early literacy in Malawi: Malawi professional teacher development*. Lilongwe: Ministry of Education Science and Technology.
- Muchemwa, S. (2014). Reading deficiency among primary and secondary school pupils: A case of Zimbabwe. *US- China Education Review B*, 4(3), 193-201.
- Mukherji, P., & Albon, D. (2010). *Research methods in early childhood*. London: Sage Publications.
- Mwanamukubi, L, (2013) *Reading difficulties in grade six learners and challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading: a case of chadiza and chipata districts, zambia*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Zambia, Lusaka.
- Mwiria, K., & Wamahiu, S. P. (1995). *Issues in educational research in Africa*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

- Naidoo, U., Reddy, K. & Darasamy, N (2014). Reading literacy in primary school in South Africa: Educator perspective on factors affecting reading literacy and strategies for improvement. *Int J sci*, 7 (1), 155-167.
- Neuman, W.L. (2003). *Social research method and qualitative approaches*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.
- Onkoba, M. K. (2014). *Correlation between reading comprehension practices and academic performance: A case study of class three pupils in westland sub-county, Kenya*. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Nairobi.
- O'sullivan, E., & Rassel, G. (1994). *Research methods for public administrators*. Toronto: Longman.
- Peterson, C. L., Caverly, D. C., Nicholson, S.A., O'Neal, S., & Cusenbary, S. (2000). *Building reading proficiency at secondary level*. Texas: South West Texas University.
- Pressley, M. (2001). *Best practices in literacy instruction*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Pressley, M. (1999). Self-regulated comprehension processing and its development through instruction. In L. B. Gambrell, L. M. Morrow, S. B. Neuman, & M. New York. Guilford Press.
- Roberts, G.R. (1969). *Reading in primary schools*. New York: Humanities Press.
- Roberts-Holmes, G. (2005). *Doing your early years research project: A step by step guide*. London: Sage.

- Roe, D.B., Smith, S.H., & Burns, P.C. (2009). *Teaching in today's elementary school*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.
- Roe, D. B., Smith, S. H., & Burns, P. C. (2002). *The teaching in todays' elementary school*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.
- Senekane M. M. (2010). *An exploration of strategies employed in English additional language class secondary school in Maseru, Mesotho*, Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.
- Sofaer, S. (2002). Qualitative research method. *International Journal for Quality Health*, 14 (4), 329-336 Retrieved December, 2015 from:
<http://intqhc.oxfordjournals.org/content/intqhc/14/4/329.full.pdf>
- Stake, R.E. (2000). *Case studies in N.K. Denzin and YS. Hand book of qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Stuhlman, M. W., & Pianta, R. C. (2009). Profiles of Educational Quality in First Grade. *Elementary School Journal*, 109 (4), 323–42.
- Sullivan, M. P. (2010). *Achievement and effects of sustained silent reading in a middle school*. Doctor of Education thesis.
- UNESCO. (2010). *EFA global monitoring report 2010: reaching the marginalised; regional overview, Sub-Saharan Africa*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Urquhart, S., & Weir, C. (1998) *Reading in a second language: Process and Practice*. London: Adson Wesley Longman Limited.

- Vacca, J. A., Vacca, R.T., & Gove, M. K. (1995). *Reading and learning to read*. New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *The mind and the society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Weinreich, N. K. (2006). *Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. Weinreich Communications.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1983). *Learning purpose and language use*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Williams, E. (1987). Classroom reading through activating content based schemata. *Reading in Foreign Language*, 4(1), 1-7.
- Smith, C. D. (2008). *Using both qualitative and quantitative research methods promotes effectiveness*. Retrieved November 25, 2008 from:
<http://ezinearticles.com/?using-both&id=1061205>>
- Sweet, A., & Snow, C. (2003) *Rethinking reading comprehension*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Yang, X. (2010). Problems and solutions to English teaching in large class. *Journal Of Basic English Education*, 10(1), 42-46.
- Zhong, Y. (2008). A preliminary explore to group cooperative learning in college English teaching in large classes. *Kaoshi Zhoukan*, 44 (1),49-50.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introduction letter from the Dean



CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

Principal: Richard Tambulasi
B.A (Pub Admin), BPA(Hons) MPA, PhD

P. O. Box 280, Zomba, MALAWI
Tel: (265) 01 524 222
Telex: 44742 CHANCOL MI
Fax: (265) 01 524 046
Email: deaned@cc.ac.mw
bchulu@cc.ac.mw

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF EDUCATION

16th December, 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION (MASTER OF EDUCATION)

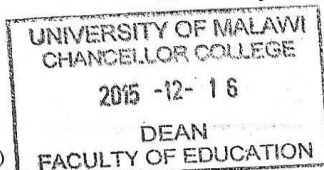
The Faculty of Education would like to introduce to you Ms. Mary H. Potani, Registration no. MED/PR/LIT/03/14, Chancellor College M.Ed Student who is supposed to do research in area of her interest.

This letter serves to request you to assist her with data collection in your institution.

The Faculty of Education will appreciate your support in this very important aspect of our students' training.

Yours faithfully,


F. Kholowa, (PhD)
DEAN OF EDUCATION



cc: Supervisor

**Appendix 2: Permission letter from the
DEM**



Telephone : 265 525 377

E-Mail : dem-zombarural@yahoo.com

The District Education Manager(R)

P.O. BOX 311

Zomba.

MALAWI

11/01/2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearers of this letter, Ms Mary H. Potani is a student at the Chancellor college who has been granted authority to do a research in this zone (NCHENGAWEDI) specifically in the following schools, Mapalo primary school, Lifani school, Domasi government and Domasi Demonstration.

This letter serves to request to you to assist and support her accordingly.

T. MAGERETA

FOR: DISTRICT EDUCATION MANAGER (R)

Appendix 3: An extract of lesson observation notes

Date: 19/01/2016

Class: standard seven

Teacher: T1

Activity: Reading

Time: 35 minutes

Lesson observation: 3

Title of the story: The Lion and the hunter.

Total number of learners: 78

Teachers Activities	Learners activities
Giving instructions: <i>Look here class and listen, I have some word cards in my hands, I will read the words and give you their meanings.</i>	Listening to the teacher
Shows the word cards, reads them aloud and gives their meanings: <i>Search, Unique, fear, envied, Startled</i> <i>Teacher: Search means looking for something</i> <i>Teacher: Unique means special</i> <i>Teacher: Fear means being afraid of something</i> <i>Teacher: Envied means jealousy</i> <i>Teacher: Startled means worried</i>	Looking at the word cards Listening to the teacher as she reads the words from the cards and give their meaning.
Giving instructions <i>open your books on page 52 and look at the picture</i> - Asks the learners the following questions: <i>What can you see from the picture?</i> <i>What is happening in the picture?</i> <i>What is the title of the story?</i> <i>What do you think the story is</i>	Opening their books on page 52 and studying the illustration and explaining what is happening by answering the questions <i>There are two men and a lion.</i> <i>A lion is carrying a man</i> <i>A lion and a hunter</i> <i>A lion and a hunter</i>

<i>about?</i>	
Writes questions on the chalkboard and ask individual learners to read the questions aloud. <i>Why was Kakhobwe a well-known hunter?</i> <i>Who did Kakhobwe meet in the forest?</i> <i>Did Kakhobwe really kill Dziko?</i>	Reading the questions from the chalkboard.
Tells the learners to read the story silently and find the answers to the questions on the chalkboard <i>lion and the hunter</i> silently.	Reading the story silently and finding answers to the questions on the chalkboard
Ask learners to give the answers to the questions on the chalkboard <i>Why was Kakhobwe a well known hunter?</i> <i>Who did Kakhobwe meet in the forest?</i> <i>Did Kakhobwe really kill Dziko?</i>	Discussing the answers to the questions on the chalk board <i>Because he had a very powerful dog and unique hunting tools.</i> <i>Kakhobwe meet the lion.</i> <i>No he did not kill Dziko.</i>

Appendix 4: An extract of lesson observation notes

Date: 01/03/2016

Class: standard seven **Teacher:** Teacher 3

Activity: Reading

Time: 35 minutes

Lesson observation: 3

Title of the story: Suman becomes a Millionaire.

Total number of learners: 65

Teachers activities	Learners activities
Ask learners to open their books on page 59 Ask learners to read the title of the story Discussing illustration with the learner by asking learners questions <i>What can you see in the picture?</i> <i>What tells you that its rice?</i> Ask learners to find difficult words from the passage (Let us find difficult words from the story)teacher writes the words on the chalkboard <i>Humble, consulting, unpolished, accumulated</i> Ask learners to read the words from the chalkboard Ask learners to give meanings of the difficult words (Individually) <i>What is the meaning of the word humble</i> <i>consulting</i> <i>unrefined</i> <i>accumulated</i> Assist learners to give the meanings by using synonym for example Accumulated <i>What does the word accumulated mean?</i>	Opening books on page 59 Reading the title “How Suman became a millionaire Answering questions <i>I can see rice</i> <i>I have read on the price tag</i> Finding difficult words from the passage Humble, consulting, unpolished, accumulated Reading the words on the chalkboard <i>Humble, consulting, unpolished, accumulated</i> Giving meanings of difficult words individually Humble modest Consulting: Asking Unpolished: Unrefined Accumulated Looking at the teacher without responding Learner 1: Collect

<i>Ok, what is it called if you put things together?</i> <i>So what is the meaning of accumulated</i> <i>Very good, both of you are right. accumulated means collected or gathered.</i> Write questions on the chalkboard and ask individual learners to read the questions <i>1. Why was Suman liked by his classmates?</i> <i>2. How did suman start his business?</i> <i>3. What time when he became an engineer?</i>	Learner 2: <i>Gather</i> Learner 3: <i>Collect</i> Learner 4: <i>Gather</i> Reading the questions
Demonstrates reading the story while the learners were listening Asks the learners to read as a class Giving instructions <i>Read the story aloud and find answers to the questions that are the chalkboard</i> <i>You should read as a class first, and then each group will read two sentences. Some of you don't read, you just look at your friends when they are reading.</i> <i>So I want all of you to read aloud together. One, two, three start</i> Asking learners to read in groups	Listening to the teacher reading a story Listening to the instructions <i>Reading aloud the whole class</i> <i>Reading aloud in groups</i> <i>Reading aloud individually</i>

Asking learners to read aloud individually	
The teacher concludes the lesson by asking learners to give answers to pre-questions. <i>Discuss in your pairs the questions on the chalkboard</i> 1. <i>Why was Suman liked by his classmates?</i> 2. <i>How did Suman start his business?</i> 3. <i>What time when he became an engineer?</i>	Answering pre-questions 1. <i>Because he was humble, quiet, well behaved and hard working</i> 2. <i>His grandfather gave him K100</i> 3. <i>He went to Dzinja Institute of Technology</i>

Appendix 5: An extract of lesson observation notes

Date: 23/02/2016

Class: standard seven

Teacher: Teacher 4

Activity: Reading

Time: 35 minutes

Lesson observation: 2

Title of the story: The last day

Total number of learners: 76

Teachers activities	Learners activities
Telling learners to open their books on page 83. Ask learners question about the illustrations 1. <i>What can you see in the picture</i> 2. <i>Where do you think these people are?</i> 3. <i>What is the title of the story?</i> Ask learners to identify new words in the story. Write words on the chalkboard <i>Reward, eager</i> and ask individual learners to read the words Ask learners to guess the meanings of the new words using the content. Ask some learners to read their answers aloud to the class Discuss the answers with the class <i>What do you call it when someone gives you something because of doing something good?</i>	Opening learners books on page 83 Answering questions about the illustrations 1. <i>Children</i> 2. <i>They are at school</i> 3. <i>The last day</i> Identifying new words from the story Reading the words from the chalkboard <i>Reward, eager</i> Guessing meanings of the new words: <i>Reward: prize</i> <i>Eager: excited</i> Reading answers aloud to the class <i>Reward : prize or award</i>
Writing questions on the chalkboard 1. <i>What day of school is this?</i> 2. <i>Why does the writer like the last day</i>	Looking at the teacher writing questions on the chalkboard

<i>of school?</i> 3. <i>How are the assemblies on the last day of school different from other assemblies?</i> 4. <i>What period of the year does the writer particularly like in the village?</i>	
Ask individual learners to read the questions aloud Tell learners to read the story “<i>The last day</i>” silently and tell them to find the answers to pre-questions. Discuss the answers to pre-questions with the learners 1. <i>What day of school is this?</i> 2. <i>Why does the writer like the last day of school?</i> 3. <i>How are the assemblies on the last day of school different from other assemblies?</i> 4. <i>What period of the year does the writer particularly like in the village?</i> Ask learners the following questions additional questions 1. <i>What activities do you do on the assembly on the last day of school?</i> 2. <i>What activities will you do on assembly on the last day of school?</i>	Reading the questions aloud Reading the story silently Discussing the answers to pre-questions 1. <i>The last day of school</i> 2. <i>Plays and other games by some learners</i> 3. <i>There are announcements of examination results on the last day of school and the assembly is long</i> 4. <i>The writer likes the harvesting time.</i> Answering questions <i>Poems, parade and dances</i> <i>Sing songs, recite poems</i> <i>The assembly which is done at the end the school has activities such as announcing names of learners that have been promoted to the next class and performance of tradition</i>

3. <i>The assembly which was done in the morning at the school is not similar to the one which is done at the end of the school what do you think are the differences?</i> 4. <i>What will you do on the last day of school?</i>	<i>dances.</i> <i>Recite poems, sing songs and perform some dances</i>
Concluded the lesson by asking learners questions from page 84. <i>Open your books on page 84.</i> <i>Go over the questions the questions at the end of the story orally with the learners</i> 1. <i>What do learners do on the last day of school?</i> 2. <i>How are assemblies on the last day different from other assemblies?</i> 3. <i>Why does the writer love life in the village?</i> 4. <i>Give any example of interesting</i>	Opening books on page 84 and going over the questions at the end of the story orally. 1. <i>Stage plays and play games.</i> 2. <i>The assemblies on the last day of school are long and there are announcements of end of term examination results.</i> 3. <i>Because there is always something to eat</i>

<i>places to which the writer takes cousins from the village?</i>	4. <i>The Zoo, museum and the town centre.</i>
5. <i>Mention any three fruits that the writer eats in the village?</i>	5. <i>Masuku, matowo, matememe and malambe.</i>

Appendix 6: Interview guide for head teachers

1. Teaching strategies and activities that are used during English reading lessons to enhance reading skills in learners.

- a. What teaching strategies and activities that English teachers use during English reading lessons to enhance reading skills in learners?
 - i. Pre reading
 - ii. During reading
 - iii. After reading
- b. What are the importance of the teaching strategies and activities in each of the reading phases mentioned above?
- c. In your opinion, based on practical or professional experience, which teaching strategies and activities do you consider as more effective for enhancing reading skills in learners?
- d. How do English teachers assist learners in performing the following reading skills?
 - i. Predicting
 - ii. Silent reading
 - iii. Skimming
 - iv. Scanning
 - v. Fast reading
 - vi. Word guessing
- e. In your opinion are you satisfied with what English teachers do to enhance the following reading skills in learners? Why?
 - i. Predicting
 - ii. Silent reading
 - iii. Skimming
 - iv. Scanning
 - v. Fast reading
 - vi. Word guessing
- f. How do you advise teachers to enhance the following reading skills in learners
 - i. Predicting
 - ii. Silent reading
 - iii. Skimming
 - iv. Scanning
 - v. Fast reading

- vi. Word guessing
- g. What kind of teaching and learning materials do English teachers use during English reading lessons?
- h. How important are to teaching and learning (mentioned above) in enhancing reading skills in learners?
- i. In your opinion do you think English teachers are doing enough to enhance reading skills in primary school learners?

2. Challenges faced when enhancing the reading skills

- a. What are the challenges that teachers and learners face when using teaching strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners?
- b. Explain why English teachers have problems in enhancing reading skills in primary school learners
- c. How do you advise teachers and learners to overcome the challenges they face when using the teaching strategies and activities that enhance the reading skills in primary schools learners?
- d. Does reading has any effect on the learning of other learning areas?

3. Suggestions on reading strategies and activities that could be used to enhance reading skills in primary school learners?

- a. What are your suggestions on the teaching strategies and activities that teachers and learners use to enhance reading skills?
- b. In what ways can the problem of low reading levels in primary school be addressed?

Appendix 7 : Interview guide for teachers

1. Teaching strategies and activities that are used during English reading lessons to enhance reading skills in learners.

- a. What teaching strategies and activities do you use during English reading lessons to enhance reading skills in learners?
 - i. Pre reading
 - ii. During reading
 - iii. After reading

Probe: What kind of activities do you use during reading lessons to enhance reading in learners?

- b. What is the importance of the activities in each of the reading phases mentioned above?
- c. In your opinion, based on practical or professional experience, which teaching strategies and activities do you consider as more effective for enhancing reading skills in learners?

- d. How do you assist learners in performing the following reading skills?
 - i. Predicting
 - ii. Silent reading
 - iii. Skimming
 - iv. Scanning
 - v. Fast reading
 - vi. Word guessing

- e. How do English teachers enhance the reading skills in primary school learners?
 - i. Predicting
 - ii. Silent reading
 - iii. Skimming
 - iv. Scanning
 - v. Fast reading
 - vi. Word guessing

- f. What kind of teaching and learning materials do you use during English reading lessons?
- g. How important are to teaching and learning materials (mentioned above) in enhancing reading skills in learners?

- h. In your opinion do you think English teachers are doing enough to enhance reading skills in primary school learners? How?

4. Challenges faced when enhancing the reading skills

- a. What are the challenges that teachers and learners face when using teaching strategies and activities that enhance reading skills in learners?
- b. Explain why English teachers have problems in enhancing reading skills in primary school learners?
- c. In your opinion, how can English teachers overcome the challenges that hinder them from enhancing reading skills in primary school learner?
- d. Does reading has any effect on the teaching and learning of other subjects?

5. Suggestions on teaching strategies and activities that could be used to enhance reading skills in primary school learners?

- a. What are your suggestions on the teaching strategies and activities that could be used to enhance reading skills in primary school learners?
- b. In what ways can the problem of low English reading levels in primary school be best addressed?

Appendix 8: Focus group discussion guide for learners

1. Teaching strategies and activities that are used during English reading

- a. What teaching strategies and activities do English teachers use when teaching English reading in your class?
 - i. Pre reading
 - ii. During reading
 - iii. After reading
- b. What opportunities are you given to practice the following reading skills?
 - i. Predicting
 - ii. Silent reading
 - iii. Skimming
 - iv. Scanning
 - v. Fast reading
 - vi. Word guessing

Probe: How often do you have reading lessons?

- c. How do teachers assist you when you have made mistakes in the use of any of the reading skills?
- d. What teaching and learning materials do English teachers use during English reading lesson?
- e. Which teaching materials do you like and dislike? Explain why?
- f. What do you do when you come across a difficult word in a passage?
- g. What helps you to understand a story or text you read?

2. Challenges that learners face when using reading skills

- a. What are the challenges that contribute to low reading levels amongst learners in primary schools?
- b. How do you overcome the challenges (mentioned above)?
- c. How do English teachers help you to overcome the challenges that you face when using the reading skills in English?
- d. How does socializing with teachers and friends improve your reading skills?
- e. Do having poor relationship with teachers and peers have any effect on your reading skills?
- f. Does reading have any effect on the learning of other learning areas?

3. Suggestions that could be used to improve the problem

- a. What suggestions/ways can you give that could be used to improve the teaching of reading skills?
- b. In what ways can the problem of poor reading skills be addressed?

Appendix 9: Lesson observation schedule

1. Teaching strategies and activities that teachers and learners use during English reading lessons.

- a. The teaching strategies and activities that teachers use during English lessons?
 - i. Pre reading
 - ii. During reading
 - iii. After reading
- b. How does the teacher involve the learners in the following reading skills?
 - i. Predicting
 - ii. Silent reading
 - iii. Skimming
 - iv. Scanning
 - v. Fast reading
 - vi. Word guessing
- c. How does the teacher use learner's prior knowledge?
- d. Which reading skills does the teacher use during the lesson?
- e. How does the teacher assist the learners that have problems in using the reading skills?
- f. What are the teaching and learning materials that teachers use when teaching reading?
- g. How is the interaction between
 - i. learner and learner
 - ii. learner and teacher

2. Challenges that teacher and learners face when using the reading skills

- a. What challenges do teachers and learners face during English reading lesson?
- b. How do they overcome the challenges?