



**EXPLORING LITERACY PEDAGOGY IN KIKAONDE IN SELECTED GRADE  
ONE CLASSROOMS IN SOLWEZI DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

By

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my acquired, biological family and friends, particularly:

1. Carol Lwambula (my wife) and Muzan'alu, Kuwunda and Inkumbu (my children).
2. David and Evelyn Lukama (my parents) and Maseka, Lufunda, Chinyama, Bwite, Kasoka, Kawan'u and Kuken'a my siblings.
3. I am grateful to my brother, Lufunda, for helping me with my application to UKZN.
4. I am grateful to Moonga Mweemba and Mr. Nonde Chimba for their encouragement throughout my academic journey.

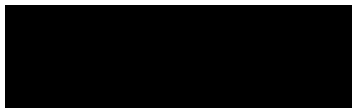
Nzambi anyikiswili (God bless you).

## DECLARATION

I LUKAMA, KAMALATA, declare this work described in this dissertation, “**Exploring literacy pedagogy in grade one classrooms in Solwezi District of Zambia.**”

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- iv. This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet unless acknowledged, and the source is detailed in the dissertation and the references section.
- v. My personal involvement in this study included the following, conceptualizing the study, formulating research objectives, applying for ethical clearance, collecting data, analyzing the data and writing the report.
- vi. My supervisors, Dr. Nicholas Nyika and the assistant supervisor Dr. Phephani Gumbi gave guidance, reviewed and gave feedback on every step of the research process.

Signed:



Date: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CK	Content Knowledge
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
COVID -19	Corona Virus Disease
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
MOE	Ministry of Education
NRF	National Reading Forum
NBTL	New Breakthrough to Literacy
ODC	Overseas Development Cooperation
PLP	Primary Literacy Programme
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
ROC	Read On Course
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SITE	Step In To English
TCK	Teacher Content Knowledge
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ZNLP	Zambia National Literacy Framework

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explored literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde in selected grade one classrooms in Solwezi District, Zambia. Four objectives guided the study namely: to explore the teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde language in grade one classrooms, to establish reasons for teachers' choice of methods and strategies used to teach literacy, to ascertain whether the teaching of literacy in grade one classrooms is in line with the literacy curriculum and establish the challenges teachers were facing in teaching literacy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms.

The study was guided by the constructivism theory of learning. It adopted the interpretivism paradigm and employed the case study research design. A sample comprising 15 teachers from six schools purposively selected were drawn from Solwezi District. To achieve the study objectives, interviews with the 15 teachers and 18 lesson observations were conducted in the six schools to explore teachers' pedagogical knowledge in literacy teaching approaches, establish reasons for their choice of methods and strategies, ascertain whether their teaching was in line with the syllabus and establish challenges they were facing in teaching literacy.

The study revealed that all the 15 (n-15) teachers had pedagogical knowledge of several literacy methods and approaches but only two (n-2) used those that involved the active participation of all learners. It was also revealed that the teachers' choice of methods and strategies of teaching was based on their belief of the effectiveness of the methods and training received during continuous professional development. The study also revealed that teachers were teaching as prescribed by the literacy syllabus. Challenges encountered by teachers during the teaching of literacy included inadequate time to teach literacy resulting into low literacy syllabus coverage, challenges by some learners in urban areas understanding the medium of instruction and high levels of absenteeism.

The study recommends that teachers should become eclectic and use as many methods as possible to address weaknesses associated with the use of any one method. The study further recommends that teachers should base their selection and choice of instructional methods on various aspects related to the teaching and learning process such as formative and summative assessment.

One of the implications of the study for the Ministry of Education is to urgently revise the policy on pedagogy in teacher training, particularly the theories that underpin literacy teaching methods. Teacher training institutions should revise the literacy curriculum to address implementation challenges. Schools should hold CPDs periodically to develop effective literacy teachers, especially that pre-service teacher training programmes do not prepare them fully.

**Key words: Literacy, literacy pedagogy, Solwezi District, Kikaonde language**

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter provides a background to the study on exploring literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde in selected grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, Zambia. Furthermore, it explains the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions to be addressed, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations of the study, and the dissertation structure. A chapter summary has been presented last.

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

Zambia, a South-Central African country, covers over 752,616 km<sup>2</sup> and has an estimated population of 19,610,769 as of September 2022 (Zambia Statistical Agency, 2022). It shares borders with eight countries: the Congo DRC in the north, Mozambique, Malawi, and Tanzania to the east, Botswana and Zimbabwe to the south, and Angola and Namibia to the west. The majority of Zambians are multilingual (Banda & Bellononjengele, 2010). The national census conducted in 2010 revealed that Zambia has approximately 73 ethnic groups, of which seven local official languages, namely Bemba, Kikaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja, and Tonga, besides English, are used for purposes of education and broadcasting both on radio and television (Zambia Statistical Agency, 2022).

The first European missionaries to arrive in Zambia before 1899 used local languages to preach and teach people to read and write (Marten & Kula, 2008). Later, the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1924 recommended using local languages in schools and further encouraged using a three-tier model (Marten & Kula, 2008). The first two years of education were taught in a local language, the following five in a regional language, and further education was conducted in English (Muyebaa, 2009).

### **1.1.1 Context of the Zambian Education System after Independence**

Zambia adopted a three-tier system of education at Independence and is currently followed by primary, secondary, and tertiary education (Mwanza, 2016). Primary education lasts seven years of formal education, while secondary education lasts five years of the same (Mwanza, 2016). Tertiary education, on the other hand, varies in duration, with colleges offering certificates and diplomas taking two to three years, respectively. University education for an undergraduate degree takes four years.

There was a temporary change in 2004 when basic education, encompassing grades one to nine, replaced primary education. Sampa and Halaoui (2005), notes that basic education was divided into three categories: lower basic (grades 1–4), middle basic (grades 5-7), and upper basic (grades 8–9). Secondary education became known as high school and ran for three years, covering grades 10 to 12. This change was short-lived as the Patriotic Front-led government reverted to the education system adopted in 1964 when they took over government in 2011. The three-tier system of education, adopted at independency, has been in effect from 2011 to date (2024).

### **1.1.2 Language Policy in Zambia Since Independence**

Trask (2014) states that language policy refers to the official government policy that regulates the form, teaching, or use of one or more languages within the controlled area. Zambia adopted the use of English as the sole language of instruction from grade one to university after independence (Gordon, 2014; Kombe & Mwanza, 2014). Marten and Kula (2008) indicate that the use of English as the sole medium of instruction in education was meant to foster national unity in a multilingual nation. However, the use of English only as a medium of instruction had its own challenges, and this led the government to revise the policy in 1977. Banda and Mwanza (2017) and Kombe and Mwanza (2014), all indicate that the 1977 education reforms that followed extensive deliberations, still recommended the continued use of English as the medium of instruction, while a provision was made for the utilisation of the seven official local languages. The recommendation to use English as the language of instruction in education was made with a full understanding of the weaknesses that came with the continued use of it as the

only language of classroom instruction (Banda & Mwanza, 2017). The adoption of this policy did not solve the language challenge, and this prompted another revision in 1992.

Banda and Mwanza (2017) note that the 1977 language in education policy had several weaknesses, such as the downgrading of local languages, the isolation of schools from the local community, learner alienation from tradition, and the impairment of children's future learning due to its continued recommendation of English as the medium of instruction. The identified weaknesses of the earlier policy led to two major recommendations in the 1992 language policy. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education (MoE) should conduct a review to ascertain the main local language of instruction from grades one to four and, secondly, allow teachers to have some freedom to ascertain the main local language to be used as a medium of instruction (Banda & Mwanza, 2017). The 1992 policy document on the medium of instruction did not yield many positive results from the earlier ones, and this resulted in further changes being made in 1996.

Education (1996) indicates that the 1996 language policy retained English as the official language of classroom instruction. Furthermore, it recommended the use of a familiar language to teach initial literacy in grade one. The policy stated:

*'... all pupils will be given an opportunity to learn the basic skills of reading and writing in the local language. Officially, English will be used as a language of instruction, but the language used for initial literacy learning in grade one will be one that seems best suited to promote meaningful learning by children'* (Ministry of Education, 1996; 27).

Once adopted, there was still a challenge, and grade one learners were unable to transfer skills from the familiar local language to English because the period was short, which led to another policy shift in 2014.

Banda and Mwanza (2017) indicate that some of the major changes the government made in the 2014 language of education policy were the use of one of the seven official Zambian languages as the medium of instruction from grade one to four and English from grade 5 to university. This policy is still in effect today. Mwanza (2012) states that the language policy changes were an attempt to establish a suitable language. The change in the medium of instruction led to a few changes in the education system, including the teaching of literacy. The

Zambian National Literacy framework (ZNLF) was drafted so as to give guidance regarding the teaching of literacy as well as align itself with the education language policy.

Questions arose challenging the use of English only as the language of education (Muyebaa, 2009). This was after various studies and research revealed poor performance among Zambian learners in both English and local languages (Sampa, 2005; Williams, 1993). Furthermore, recent studies conducted by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with RTI International and the World Bank (Brombacher et al., 2015; Filmer et al., 2018) show that reading levels are still very low among learners in Zambia. For example, Filmer et al. (2018) states that a literacy assessment conducted in Zambia found that 55 percent of second-grade learners are unable to read words in texts at grade level. This is despite the Ministry of Education implementing the Primary Reading Programme and the Primary Literacy Programme in 1999 and 2013, respectively; the latter programme is still being implemented to improve literacy levels among learners in the country. I discuss the Primary Reading Programme and Primary Literacy Programme in detail below.

The Primary Reading Programme (PRP), a literacy programme, emanated from the First National Reading Forum (NRF), which the Ministry of Education formed in 1995 to undertake more research in literacy and make recommendations for addressing the literacy problem (Filmer et al., 2018). It was instituted after several studies, such as the ones conducted by Williams (1993) on behalf of the Overseas Development Cooperation (ODC) and the South African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) (Sampa & Halaoui, 2005), revealed poor reading levels among Grades three, four, and six learners in English. All the studies concluded that learners were behind in reading by two grade levels or years.

The National Reading Forum of 1995 had, among other things, the following terms of reference:

- i. To make explicit the extent of the poor reading performance among learners in government primary schools,
- ii. To consider how all learners can learn to read effectively for study purposes by the end of the lower primary grades (grade four), and

- iii. To consider whether a national reading programme can be developed to achieve the reading goal.

The forum identified the need to teach and achieve initial literacy in the learners' mother tongue. A recommendation was made on the urgent need to teach literacy in the mother tongue, as there was consensus among the participants that many learners were unable to read and write quickly due to the continued use of English, a second language, both as a language of learning and teaching literacy (Sampa, 2005). The forum further resolved that teachers should delay the use of English as a second language in teaching literacy in lower primary classes. However, the forum did not specify the duration of the delay. In addition, the forum recommended the integration of unused reading resources in schools into the reading programme and identified the in-service and pre-service teacher training needs relating to literacy teaching (Forum, 1995).

Between 1998 and 2012, the Ministry of Education implemented the Primary Reading Programme to address the literacy problem. This programme came with suggested methodologies to teach literacy effectively; I will discuss these later. The Ministry of Education piloted the programme among grade one learners in the Northern Province of Zambia, and in February 2004, it rolled out the programme to all schools in Zambia. According to Mkandawire (2017), the programme aimed to improve literacy levels among school children at the lower and middle primary levels in Zambia. In the programme, teachers taught literacy in the learners' mother tongue; the mother tongue here was the widely used Zambian language in the area. They used the mother tongue for one year (in grade one) and then introduced English in grade two. The seven local Zambian languages (the learners' mother tongues that teachers used to teach initial literacy) are Tonga, Ibibemba, ciNyanja, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, and Kiikaonde. These languages are the most widely spoken in the regions where the Ministry of Education implemented the pilot programme.

The Primary Reading Programme was comprised of three major components: the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL), the Step In to English (SITE), and the Read On Course (ROC). In the New Breakthrough to Literacy, teachers taught literacy for one hour daily in

grade one classrooms using seven local Zambian languages (learners' mother tongues), also called familiar languages.

The Step into English course was a grade two English literacy course aimed at developing literacy skills in English following the use of the mother tongue in grade one. Teachers taught English for one hour every day and the oral English language for 30 minutes daily. This was meant to provide learners with adequate language skills to support English literacy (Sampa, 2005).

The Read-On Course (ROC) focused on developing literacy skills in Zambian languages and English from grade three to grade seven. Grades three and four learners were taught English for an hour daily, while grades five and six learners were taught two and a half hours a week.

The Ministry of Education conducted the reading and writing tests at the start of the implementation of the programme and repeated these in 2002 as the programme was ongoing. The repeated test results showed significant reading and writing improvements from 30 percent to 68 per cent among grade two learners (Sampa, 2005). Despite recording such few successes, reading achievement levels fell again to as low as 33 percent later (Zambia, 2008). This is what led to the Ministry of Education introducing the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) in 2013, a literacy programme that is still currently on-going.

The Primary Literacy Programme aimed to address the weaknesses that were observed under the previous primary reading programme (MESVTEC, 2013). To implement this programme effectively, the Ministry of Education, through the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), developed the National Literacy Framework in 2013. The purpose of developing this document was to establish guidelines for the teaching and learning of literacy in all Zambian schools and improve literacy teaching in both private and public primary schools in Zambia (MESVTEC, 2013). The framework also guided all teachers to teach literacy and all learning content subjects in the mother tongue from grades one to four.

The approach adopted in the primary literacy programmes to teaching literacy focused on helping learners develop phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (MESVTEC, 2013). In developing phonemic awareness, the framework guided

teachers to help learners use and understand the alphabet. Teachers taught learners sound identification, sound deletion, and syllable segmentation. In phonics, teachers taught learners to associate sounds with letters and subsequently use sounds to read words. Teachers taught learners sound identification, syllable identification, syllable formation, syllable blending, and word formation (MESVTEC, 2013). They also taught fluency by teaching learners to read in rapid succession and at a pace sufficient for comprehension. In comprehension, teachers, and learners, read and identify the main idea of a piece of writing, locate details in a passage, deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words, and draw inferences from written material (MESVTEC, 2013). Learners would learn new words and their meanings through their constant engagement in reading tasks.

Learners in grade one classrooms engage in several activities, such as listening to stories, telling stories, singing and repeating rhymes, and demonstrating good reading habits during pre-reading activities. The expectation is that they build words from syllables and use word boundaries to recognise words. Reading activities involve reading short texts containing familiar one- and two-syllable words with picture support and re-telling short stories in their own words. Writing activities involve learners demonstrating correct posture when writing, holding a pencil, and copying shapes and patterns correctly. All the activities are aim to develop learners' four macrolanguage skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

In order to implement the Primary Literacy Programme, the officers from the Ministry of Education and senior teachers trained all the grade one teachers enrolled in the programme. This training was a requirement and was conducted through workshops and continuous professional development (CPD) meetings.

Despite the introduction of the Primary Literacy Programme in 2013, literacy levels among learners remained low. For example, Phiri (2015) conducted a study in Lusaka District to ascertain the prevalence and nature of reading difficulties among grade four learners. He found that learners' writing abilities were low and below their grade level, as 65 per cent had difficulties writing words and sentences from the BASAT test, while 76 percent could not write the test correctly. Since the use of a mother tongue in teaching literacy was addressed in the

current literacy programme, the reasons for the consistently low levels of literacy among learners are yet to be identified, hence the need for the study.

Furthermore, the teaching of literacy using the mother tongue in Zambia in particular has not been without challenges because the methodology for literacy in Zambian languages for primary grades has not been developed. Several factors leading to this situation include inadequate training of teachers in mother tongue literacy pedagogy, the status of mother tongues in communities, and education management factors (Mashige et al., 2019; Ngu, 2004), which I discuss below.

### **1.1.3 Factors hindering the development of mother tongue literacy pedagogy**

One of the factors hindering the development of mother tongue literacy pedagogy has to do with inadequate teacher training in mother tongue literacies. Ngu (2004) assessed teacher training institutions in Africa and found that most teachers were being prepared to teach languages such as English that were unfamiliar to learners. This is because these training programmes were developed before most countries gained their independence. A study conducted by Addabor (1996) on in-service education for teachers in Ghana revealed that no teacher had received training in mother tongue instruction. In South Africa, similarly, Mashige et al. (2019) found that most IsiXhosa teachers had not received training to teach using IsiXhosa as a medium of instruction. The case is similar in Zambia. The majority of teachers teaching literacy have not received pedagogical training to teach literacy in mother tongues (Lukama, 2016).

In Zambia, like other African countries, one factor hindering the development of mother tongue literacy pedagogy is the underdevelopment of most Zambian languages (Nkolola-Wakumelo & Simwinga, 2008). They state that Zambian languages and African languages in general, have not yet reached a level where they can be used to express technical terminologies for learning (Nkolola-Wakumelo & Simwinga, 2008). Furthermore, most, if not all, Zambian languages lack technical and scientific terms needed to express ideas. Due to this underdevelopment, it has been challenging to produce materials in mother tongues for possible use in schools (Muyebaa, 2009).

The attitude of Zambians towards Zambian languages is a hindrance to the development of mother tongue literacy pedagogy. Nkolola-Wakumelo and Simwinga (2008) contend that

Zambians, especially the educated, have a negative attitude and have shown no interest in local languages as will be discussed in the section below. Some homes have adopted the use of English language as the sole medium of communication making it assume the position of mother tongue. Learners from these homes may never appreciate their culture and the value that these indigenous languages carry (Mwita, 2001). In some cases, parents who consider Zambian languages as inferior resist the use of these languages in education and are reluctant to allow their children to learn using them (Nkolola-Wakumelo & Simwinga, 2008). This results in low demand for teachers who use the languages as medium of instruction. Kashoki (1990) states that there is a tendency to judge learners who speak English as fast learners and those who do not as poor learners and this has resulted in many Zambian parents consciously using English in the home to improve their children's 'intelligence'. This perception prompts these parents to send their children to schools that use English as a medium of instruction.

A serious lack of human resources in Zambian languages is a hindrance to the development of mother tongue literacy and a number of factors are responsible for this. Nkolola-Wakumelo and Simwinga (2008) state that the preference for English to other local languages makes few Zambians take interest in studying local languages. This has resulted in a situation where there is a critical shortage of mother tongue language specialists. This factor also accounts for the low number of students studying Zambian languages in teacher training colleges. Most students prefer studying English to Zambian languages because it is more prestigious to be a teacher of English, a view also shared by some lecturers in institutions of higher learning (Nkolola-Wakumelo & Simwinga, 2008). Another reason is that English is perceived to improve job prospects because it is taught in all schools. The above-stated factors have hindered the development of mother tongue literacy pedagogy.

Against this background, there is a paucity of research in African language pedagogy due to some of the factors stated above, hence the need for this study. In addition, there is a paucity of research on teachers' teaching strategies in Zambian languages. These are key areas of research interest for this study

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

The Primary Literacy Programme (PLP), which is the national literacy programme in Zambia, has been running for the past eight years now. The national literacy framework provides guidelines on the approaches to teaching early grade literacy (Ministry of Education & Education, 2013). The framework also guides all teachers to use a designated Zambian local language in the area (also referred to as the familiar language) as a medium of instruction for literacy from grades one to four. This was done to extend the period needed for a learner to acquire initial literacy in the mother tongue before transferring the skills learnt to learn how to read other languages such as English. Studies conducted within the implementation period of the literacy programme have revealed poor reading levels among learners in Zambia. Kabir (2023), for example, reports that an early grade reading assessment (EGRA) conducted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in 2021 revealed that only four per cent of grade two learners in Zambia met the Ministry of Education stipulated minimum level for reading proficiency. The study recommends among others, the need for the Ministry of Education in Zambia to focus on the critical foundation reading skills in children in the early grades of primary school and the implementation of teacher training activities on assessment and effective literacy instruction.

Kombe and Mwanza (2014), in seeking to understand some of the causes of the low literacy levels in Zambia conducted a study in which they sought to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to implement the 2013 revised curriculum and they found that while some teachers were trained in literacy instruction using the revised framework, others were not. Lukama (2016), in his study, came up with similar findings which revealed that most teachers had not received training in phonological awareness and literacy pedagogy during their pre-service training but had received short in-service trainings during continuous professional development (CPD) meetings. He recommends strengthening teachers' continuous professional development workshops so that they are trained to teach literacy effectively.

The studies conducted by Kombe and Mwanza (2014) and Lukama (2016) identified inadequate teacher training in colleges as one of the challenges affecting literacy development in Zambia. Teacher training focuses on the development of pedagogical practices and knowledge. Harris et al. (2009) define pedagogical knowledge as knowledge of learning and

teaching time, practice, strategy and methods in the learning environments where formal education takes place, as well as information about the learning, teaching and evaluation of the student's participation in the learning environments. The present study explored literacy pedagogy as one of the identified challenges affecting literacy development in Zambia. Stated as a question, do literacy teachers have pedagogical knowledge of literacy approaches in Kikaonde?

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to explore literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde in selected grade one classrooms of Solwezi District, Zambia. The study focuses on grade one classrooms although the literacy programme runs from grade one to four. The focus was on grade one classrooms because it is the foundation of the literacy programme. Further, this study focused on teaching methodology of Kikaonde, a Zambian language in grade one classrooms. Teaching methodology in Kikaonde language as a knowledge field, is within the area of language teaching and learning. This particular study focuses on the broader knowledge field of language education with specific focus on Zambian languages in primary classrooms.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The study sought:

1. To explore teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in the Kikaonde language in grade one classrooms in Solwezi district.
2. To establish reasons for teachers' choice of methods and strategies used to teach literacy.
3. To ascertain whether the teaching of literacy in grade one classrooms is in line with the literacy curriculum.
4. To establish the challenges teachers are facing in teaching literacy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms.

### **1.5 Main Research Question**

Major research question:

What are teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde language in multilingual grade one classrooms in Solwezi district?

### **1.5.1 Specific research questions**

1. What are teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde language in grade one classrooms in Solwezi district?
2. Why do teachers choose the methods and strategies they use to teach literacy lessons?
3. How is the teaching of literacy in grade one classrooms lined up with the literacy curriculum?
4. What challenges are teachers facing in teaching literacy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study exploring literacy pedagogy in teaching mother tongue literacy will significantly add to the body of knowledge in language education, a field of knowledge, the teaching profession, language learning, and policymakers. Firstly, it will add to the body of knowledge regarding literacy education in Zambian languages. Findings from the study may add to the pool of knowledge on the need to invest heavily in teacher pedagogical knowledge in literacy teaching in African languages in general and Zambian languages in particular. Furthermore, findings may stimulate further research on teaching approaches aimed at finding the most suitable teaching approaches in teaching literacy using the mother tongue, particularly relating to African and Zambian languages, in particular. It may also add to the pool of knowledge on factors hindering language learning in reading and writing in the mother tongue among learners. Findings from the present study may also inform policymakers on the need to improve teaching and learning approaches in teaching of literacy in Zambian languages.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the Study**

Azad and Pandya (2021) define study limitations as the specific boundaries or limitations that a researcher establishes for their study. The boundaries set by the researcher define what is to be included in the research and ultimately help to focus a study on a particular area of interest. Beck (1993) states that the delimitation of the study can be tied to the scope of the study, i.e., the specific period, geographical location, or population being studied. Additionally, Ross and Bibler Zaidi (2019) state that the delimitations of the study can also relate to specific variables,

concepts, or theories that will be considered in a particular study. It is imperative to establish clear delimitations so as to ensure that a study remains manageable and can effectively address the research questions and objectives (Ross & Bibler Zaidi, 2019).

The study was conducted in Solwezi District, North Western Province of Zambia. It was conducted in selected primary schools in Solwezi District. Primary school teachers teaching literacy in Kikaonde to grade one learners were involved. The study explored literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde, particularly teaching approaches to teaching mother tongue literacy, and not other teaching methods in other subjects. It explored how mother-tongue literacy was taught in Kikaonde rather than how English is taught. The study did not explore how learners learn but how teachers teach literacy in Kikaonde. Only grade one teachers of literacy were involved, even though literacy in Kikaonde is taught from grades one to four in government schools.

### **1.8 Limitations of study**

Study limitations are challenges anticipated or faced by the researcher (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Makin and Orban de Xivry (2019) state that researchers should consider study limitations because they impact the validity and reliability of the findings. Identifying and acknowledging the limitations of a study enables researchers to provide more accurate and comprehensive interpretations of their findings. Zelner et al. (2022), adding their voice to the importance of identifying study limitations, state that understanding the limitations of a study can help researchers design more robust studies and avoid similar challenges faced in their previous studies. Furthermore, Howladar and Rahman (2020), discuss the limitations of a study stating that it helps to enhance the credibility and transparency of the research, consequently contributing to the advancement of knowledge in that field.

One limitation of this study was that the findings could not be generalised to other places and situations because it focused only on the use of literacy pedagogy, a particular phenomenon in Solwezi. However, the study still provided an in-depth and better understanding of the phenomenon in other comparable contexts.

## 1.9 Operational definitions

Establishing clear and precise definitions for the operations involved in the study is very crucial. Jhunjhunwala (2019) defines operational definitions as the specific procedures and measurements used to define and quantify variables in a study. Frongillo et al. (2019) state that one of the reasons for the importance of operational definitions in research is its role in eliminating ambiguity. He also states that having operation definitions enables researchers to avoid misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the results. Ma et al. (2020) also state that operation definitions are critical in ensuring the internal validity of the study. The following operational definitions have been used to define the terms below.

Pedagogy - Relationships and interactions between teachers, students, and the learning environment and the learning tasks (Murphy et al., 2012)

Literacy - Ability to read and write.

Grade One - The first grade is at the Zambian primary level.

Classroom- A room in a school where a group of learners are taught.

Kikaonde - One of the seven local official languages in Zambia, which is also used as a medium of instruction from grades one to four in Zambia.

## 1.10 Thesis Structure

Chapter one has provided an introduction and background to the study on exploring literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde in selected grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, Zambia. It discusses the context of the education system in Zambia since independence, the literacy programmes that were implemented after independence and the factors hindering the development of mother tongue literacy in Zambia. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations of the study, structure of the thesis, and summary of the chapter are presented.

Chapter two reviews literature from different parts of the world on teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in multilingual contexts in mother tongues around the globe in Africa and in Zambia. It, furthermore, discusses factors that influence teachers'

choices of literacy instructional methods and strategies in selected countries in Africa and Zambia, the Zambian National Literacy framework (ZNLF) and challenges teachers are facing in teaching literacy to learners, and the use of eclectic methods in teaching literacy in mother tongues.

Chapter three discusses the constructivist theory of learning, a theory used in this study. A conceptual framework has been presented in this chapter too.

Chapter four presents the methodology used in the study. The research paradigm, approach, design and justification for using the case study design have been presented. The chapter also presents the study population, sample, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data analysis, trustworthiness and reliability of the research instruments.

Chapter five has presented the findings of the study in relation to the research questions. Emerging themes have been presented.

Chapter six presents the analysis and discussion of findings on teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, the teaching of literacy using the literacy curriculum, challenges teachers face in teaching literacy in Kikaonde and the use of eclectic methods in teaching literacy in grade one classrooms.

Chapter seven presents the conclusion of the study, highlights the contribution of the study to knowledge, presents recommendations and suggestions for further study.

### **1.11 Chapter Summary**

Chapter one has presented the background to the study, a statement of the problem, and the purpose of the study. It has highlighted the study-specific objectives, research questions to be addressed, the significance of the study, delimitation, and limitations. The next chapter reviews literature from different parts of the world on literacy pedagogy.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1 Overview**

This chapter presents a review of literature relevant to literacy pedagogy. The chapter focusses on the following concepts: pedagogical knowledge in literacy teaching in mother tongues; the impact of pedagogical knowledge; factors influencing teachers' choices of literacy instructional methods; and challenges facing teachers in implementing literacy programmes in the world and Africa. Furthermore, the chapter, discusses the National Literacy Framework in relation to literacy components, scope and sequence, schedule of instruction, literacy instructional methods, their impact on the teaching of literacy, as well as challenges facing teachers in literacy teaching and pedagogy in Zambia. The literature is organised around themes related to research objectives. The research gap emanating from the reviewed literature has been discussed in this section.

#### **2.2 Teachers' pedagogical knowledge of teaching approaches in mother tongues around the world**

This section discusses pedagogical knowledge and its importance in the teaching of literacy. Furthermore, it presents studies on the pedagogical knowledge and training of teachers in selected countries globally, Africa and Zambia.

##### **2.2.1 What is pedagogical knowledge?**

Matuga (2001) defines pedagogy from a wider perspective as the "art and science of teaching." Teachers of literacy must possess pedagogical knowledge in order to effectively teach literacy. Shulman (1987) defines teacher-general pedagogical knowledge as "those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation that appear to transcend subject matter." Other scholars define the term in a similar manner. Harris et al. (2009) define pedagogical knowledge as knowing the learning and teaching process, practices, strategies, and methods used in a classroom where formal education takes place and having information of learners with regards to their learning. Usta and Karakuş (2016) define pedagogical literacy as the teachers' competences that helps them make informed decisions in the selection of methods used in the classroom.

Shulman (1987) also classified general pedagogical knowledge as a component of teachers' professional knowledge. Teacher professional knowledge is made up of three components: content knowledge (CK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), and teacher pedagogical knowledge. Teachers' content knowledge (TCK) relates to a specific subject and content of teaching, while pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) comprises teacher knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of learners, and knowledge of teaching strategies (Shulman, 1987). Pedagogical content knowledge is a combination of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Central to the definitions stated above are knowledge of teaching strategies and processes, methods of learning, and classroom management, which will be discussed in this chapter. Li (2008) states that pedagogical knowledge serves many functions such as showing learners interaction in the classroom, describing teaching processes, and presenting lessons.

Koniq (2014) states that there are three broad fields that make up pedagogical knowledge. These are knowledge of instructional processes, student learning, and assessment. Knowledge of instructional processes includes, among others, teaching methods and classroom management, while student learning has to do with individual students' dispositions and their learning processes (König et al., 2022). Assessment involves the application of diagnostic and evaluation principles during assessments (König et al., 2022).

There are several advantages offered by teachers who possess pedagogical knowledge in literacy, more so in enhancing learner learning outcomes. As earlier stated, pedagogical knowledge refers to the understanding of effective teaching methods and strategies (MacLellan, 2008). This knowledge, according to Zekarias and Zhao (2023), is very important because it has a relationship with children's early literacy and numeracy skills. Barends (2022) mentions, for example, that teachers who have strong pedagogical knowledge can easily and effectively integrate theory and practice in literacy education. Furthermore, such teachers can design integrated learning experiences that can benefit learners by carefully utilising pedagogical choices such as reflection, learner support, service learning, and situated learning (Barends, 2022).

Brooks and Normore (2009) also consider pedagogical literacy as an important tool that helps in the conventionalization of pedagogical knowledge, which is very important for all professional teachers. Pedagogically literate teachers are better placed to make informed

decisions in selecting suitable and appropriate teaching techniques and methods, which ultimately impact positively on the learning of a child (Koçoğlu et al., 2022). Hill et al. (2005) also state that the teacher's pedagogical content knowledge plays a crucial role in learner achievement. Additionally, teachers who continuously develop their pedagogical content knowledge over time through experiences become experts in literacy teaching (Kukner & Orr, 2015).

Studies exist that indicate that teachers should be pedagogically literate to effectively teach literacy. For example, Kocoglu (2021) sought to evaluate pedagogical literacy in the education process. A qualitative research method was used, and using document analysis, data was obtained by examining existing records and documents. The findings of the investigation revealed that pedagogical literacy positively affects the competence of teacher professional knowledge and learning-teaching processes, and teachers who have these competences value everyone in the learning environment. The study further affirms the need for teachers of literacy to be vested with pedagogical knowledge in order to effectively teach literacy. The need for teachers of literacy to be vested with pedagogical knowledge in Solwezi forms part of the motivation of this study.

### **2.2.2 Importance of Pedagogical Knowledge in the teaching of Literacy**

Scholars have advanced several reasons on the need for teachers to be pedagogically literate. Firstly, teachers should have pedagogical knowledge to teach literacy in the learner's mother tongue or any other language effectively (Harsiati, 2021). Furthermore, teachers should have an understanding of various teaching approaches and methods, such as phonics instruction, vocabulary building, reading comprehension strategies, and writing skills, which are crucial and support language development (Wuryaningrum, 2020). Teachers should possess a deep understanding of different teaching approaches and methods to effectively support learners' language development in their mother tongues. This knowledge is important and enables teachers to create engaging and responsive learning environments that build upon students' prior knowledge and skills. Pedagogically knowledgeable teachers can easily use instructional strategies and resources to foster students' language acquisition, fluency, and literacy development in their mother tongues (Mudzielwana, 2016). Furthermore, such teachers are aware of the unique challenges and characteristics of the languages they teach and thus tailor their instructions accordingly. In summary, teachers who have a strong pedagogical knowledge

of literacy teaching approaches in mother tongues can effectively support learners' language development and foster their literacy skills.

### **2.2.2.1 Studies on the pedagogical knowledge and training of teachers in Selected Countries globally**

Studies on teachers' pedagogical knowledge and training in literacy have been conducted globally. Irfan (2024) investigated the professional needs of literacy teachers for pedagogical training in Pakistan. The study specifically aimed to explore current practices of literacy teachers and identify the professional needs of literacy teachers for pedagogical training. The study used a descriptive survey design. A linked scale questionnaire was developed for teachers conveniently sampled from the targeted schools. The study revealed that the majority of the literacy teachers agreed that they knew how to teach the literacy subject matter while a few of them disagreed. Furthermore, 84.7 per cent of the teachers of literacy agreed that they implemented the literacy course curriculum while 7.9 per cent of the teachers disagreed and 7.6 per cent were undecided. The mean scores and standard deviations supported their statement. The study recommends the launching of professional development of literacy teachers to improve their competence, initiate pedagogical training for literacy teachers to improve the quality of learning and organise capacity building workshops to improve the efficiency of the teachers. The recommendations of the study to initiate pedagogical training entails that teachers of literacy needed to improve their efficiency in the same.

Arya et al. (2020) explored the patterns of technological and content knowledge in 45 pre-service teachers' literacy lesson plans that integrated digital texts and tools. The data sources included 95 lesson plans, part of the pre-service teacher's course work, which they planned to use as part of their literacy instruction. The pre-service teachers also identified materials, teaching methods that included a step-by step description of teaching and a plan for assessing whether or not the teacher met the objective in each lesson plan. The study used a qualitative directed content analysis approach. The study revealed that these pre-service teachers demonstrated pedagogical content knowledge in 13 per cent of the lesson plans and just one per cent of technological content knowledge in the same. The findings in this study imply that teachers did not exhibit enough pedagogical content knowledge despite taking literacy teaching methods. Furthermore, one of the limitations of the study is that it solely focused on pre- service teachers' planning of literacy instruction as opposed to the implementation. This present study

aims to fill this gap by investigating the implementation of actual teaching methods and strategies in the classroom. Secondly, the study by Arya et al. (2020) was limited to lesson plans making it difficult to interpret why pre-service teachers made their instructional choices. Our present study aims to fill this gap by investigating the reasons for teachers teaching the way they do in selected schools in Solwezi, Zambia.

#### **2.2.2.2 Studies on the pedagogical knowledge and training of teachers in Selected Countries in Africa**

Several studies have been undertaken in Africa in relation to the pedagogical knowledge and training of teachers of literacy. Phajane (2012) examined the methods used by foundation phase teachers in the teaching of Setswana, the home language to grade 1 learners in Bojanala District, South Africa. The study was interested in discovering what different methods of teaching beginning reading teachers were using. The study employed a case study design and a sample of four experienced female teachers were drawn from four schools. Lesson observations and interviews were used to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that all the four teachers used the phonics method, the traditional method and the sentence method on a limited scale implying that the teachers were not well equipped in literacy teaching methods. The researcher recommends the inclusion of suitable approaches and methods of teaching reading to beginners in the teacher training curriculum. The researcher further recommends the drawing up of syllabi of methods of teaching reading in all languages. This study, therefore, identified a gap in the pedagogical knowledge of teachers among foundation phase teachers in South Africa.

Bunyi et al. (2011) on the other hand, investigated the preparation that teachers who teach in the lower primary receive and what support is available through continuous professional development (CPD) to teach reading and mathematics in Kenya. Teacher educators, sampled from four public and private training colleges participated in the study. Their lessons, centered on lower primary reading and mathematics methods to final year trainee teachers, were observed. Interviews with the teacher educators were also conducted. Furthermore, focus group discussions were conducted with trainee teachers drawn from classes where lesson observations had been done. The study revealed that no training or induction programmes for teacher educators teaching in primary teachers training colleges had been conducted. This resulted in teacher educators being ill prepared to offer quality trainings. The study also

revealed that there was little continuous professional development conducted with a focus on key curriculum areas such as early reading. The researchers recommend the review of the teacher education reading and mathematics curricular for lower reading to enhance the link with the lower primary school curriculum. They also recommend the strengthening of the teacher education primary curriculum for reading to include particular emphasis on the phonics approach which has proved effective in helping struggling readers.

### **2.2.2.3 Studies on the pedagogical knowledge and training of teachers in Zambia**

Banja and Mulenga (2019) state that teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Zambian languages is crucial for improving literacy outcomes among Zambian learners. Some studies have been conducted in Zambia in line with teacher pedagogical knowledge in the teaching of literacy and teacher training.

Chuunga (2013) conducted a study in the Monze district of Zambia in which he investigated how teachers practised the teaching of reading towards supporting learners with reading difficulties at the lower primary level. The study specifically sought to establish how teachers supported these learners in the classroom, how they planned their teaching to support these learners and the strategies that they used to support such learners. He employed a case study design and sampled 6 teachers of fourth grade learners from rural, peri-urban and urban schools for interviews and lesson observations. The interviews were supported by document analysis. The study revealed that teacher support rendered to these children included extra teaching outside the normal learning time, homework and the display of learners work on walls for them to revise even though there was little indication, of planning for these activities on the part of teachers both in their planning books and lesson evaluations. The study further revealed that teachers used strategies such as the direct -group based teaching, small groups, question and answer, one -on-one teaching, paired reading, chorus reading and group and individual task presentation. The study conducted Monze is different with the present study in several ways. Firstly, it investigated learners in grade four as opposed to grade one. Secondly, the study did not ascertain the pedagogical knowledge of teachers which the present study seeks to address. While the support given to learners with reading difficulties is cardinal in literacy development, it can only be meaningful if teachers have pedagogical knowledge, and this study aimed to fill this gap.

Nanchengwa (2016) investigated teaching techniques that were used by teachers and factors considered when allocating time for the lessons in private schools in Mufulira District. The study adopted a case study design and employed fifteen participants comprising of 9 grade one teachers, 5 headteachers and a standards officer selected purposively for the study. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from all the participants while observation guides and document analysis was used to collect data from the teacher's literacy lessons and documents respectively. The findings revealed that the most preferred techniques used to teach literacy were phonics and the look and say methods. Furthermore, the study revealed that the factors considered when allocating time for the teaching of literacy were the objectives the teacher intended to achieve in a particular lesson. The study by Nanchengwa (2016) differs with the present study in several ways. Firstly, her study was investigating teaching techniques in private schools while the present study was exploring literacy pedagogy in public schools. Furthermore, the medium of instruction in this private school including most private schools in Zambia is English while Kikaonde, a Zambian language is used in Solwezi.

Sichula and Genis (2019) conducted a study in Katete District in the eastern province of Zambia and sought to explore the pedagogical practices used in the non-formal literacy classes in two literacy programmes. One literacy programme was run by the government, while the other was run by a non-governmental organisation. The study also sought to ascertain the facilitators choices of certain teaching and learning methods. The study was qualitative in nature, employing a case study design, and data was collected through interviews, observations, and focus group discussions. Findings from observations revealed that literacy classes were dominated by teacher-centred lecture methods. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers in the programme based their pedagogical decisions on their perceptions of the adult learners as illiterate and ignorant. The author contends that many learners would have benefited from learner-centred approaches. Furthermore, the authors conclude that the pedagogical practices applied in the two literacy programmes fell short of international pedagogical standards for both adult learning and non-formal learning. The present study is similar to the one conducted by Sichula and Genis in terms of methodology but differs in the type of learners and purpose, hence the need for this study.

It is also important to address the gap between teacher training and classroom practices to improve literacy outcomes among Zambian learners. Teachers with practical and applicable pedagogical knowledge that aligns with the unique linguistic and cultural context of Zambia should be provided (Lambani, 2015). Bridging this gap requires designing professional development programmes that specifically cater to the pedagogical needs of Zambian language teachers. These programmes should focus on practical methodologies that are tailored to the linguistic landscape of Zambia.

Mentorship programmes, where experienced educators can provide guidance and support to new teachers, can be highly beneficial in addition to traditional classroom-based training (Lambani, 2015). On-the-job support for teachers can help translate their theoretical understanding into effective classroom practice.

Teachers also should use interactive and relevant teaching strategies that align with the linguistic and cultural context of Zambia (Mwelwa & Mwanza, 2020). The use of various techniques can also cater to the diverse needs of learners, acknowledging dialectical variations, regional vocabulary differences, and the impact of multilingualism on literacy development (Kombe & Mwanza, 2019).

### **2.2.3 The role of the mother tongue in the teaching of literacy**

This section discusses the role of mother tongues in the teaching of literacy and studies on literacy instruction in the mother tongues in Africa. Furthermore, it presents teaching methods and approaches for mother tongue literacy around the word. Reviewing this literature is important for this study so as to discover the most and authoritative scholarship around the subject.

Spear-Swerling (2019) states that mother tongues play a critical role in literacy education because they serve as a basis for acquiring and developing writing, reading and communication skills. Mother tongues also play a big role in the overall cognitive and academic development of learners. Kiziltas and Yildiz (2020) as well as Mitra and Raj (2011) all show that children learn best in their mother tongue and become literate in the first language, thus providing a strong foundation for learning additional languages. It is therefore important for teachers to recognise and value the importance of the mother tongue in literacy education.

It is also important for teachers to recognise the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the learners they teach. Incorporating learners' mother tongues into literacy instruction can enable teachers to create a more inclusive and supportive environment that acknowledges and respects cultural identities (Wearmouth, 2017). This results in increased motivation and engagement in learning, as well as improved academic achievement. Furthermore, teachers can effectively address the unique linguistic challenges and characteristics of the languages by using literacy teaching approaches that are specifically designed for mother tongues. This also helps to preserve and promote cultural heritage and prevent language loss. Additionally, Bisai and Singh (2020) are of the opinion that teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in mother tongues is crucial for fostering linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom. This knowledge, along with the recognition of the role of the mother tongues in literacy education, can greatly lead to the success of language development and literacy skills among learners. Embracing the mother tongue of the learners is therefore, an asset in literacy instruction and can lead to language development and overall academic success. Those who do not embrace the mother tongue have challenges.

**a. Studies on literacy instruction in the mother tongue in Africa**

Mashige et al. (2019) are some of the scholars contributing to the corpus of African literature pertaining to literacy instruction in mother tongues. They conducted a study in three rural schools in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, and, among others, sought to ascertain how teachers professional training assisted them in teaching using isiXhosa as the medium of instruction. They used a case study design and employed nine foundation phase teachers (teaching Grades 1–3) who were purposefully selected to participate in interviews. Their findings were that teachers who participated in the study were not trained to use isiXhosa, an African language, as a medium of instruction across the curriculum. Most of the teachers underwent their training using English, implying that the teaching approaches and methods they were trained to use were designed for English curriculum content, and this presented itself as a challenge. The study conducted by Mushinge et al. (2019) speaks to the urgent need to train teachers in pedagogical practices in the mother tongue.

### **2.2.3.1 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of literacy teaching in Zambian languages**

The role teachers play in promoting literacy among learners in Zambia is very crucial. The many languages in Zambia possess a unique challenge and opportunity for literacy teaching (Akello & Timmerman, 2018). It is therefore important that teachers in Zambia are equipped with a deep understanding of the linguistic and cultural nuances of the various Zambian languages to effectively teach literacy (Kombe & Mwanza, 2019). This knowledge includes not only knowing the grammar and structure of the languages but also the historical and cultural context in which the languages have developed. They should also understand issues to do with dialectical variations, regional differences in vocabulary, and the impact of multilingualism on literacy development (Mashinja, 2020).

Teachers in Zambia should be provided with support and professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching literacy in Zambian languages. This support can involve workshops, mentorship programmes, resource materials, and collaboration with other linguists and language experts. Mashinja (2020) states that the potential for improving literacy outcomes among Zambian learners can be greatly enhanced by investing in teachers' knowledge and understanding of Zambian language literacy teaching approaches. Sailors, Sailors et al. (2010), and other researchers have shown that when learners are taught in their mother tongues, they are more likely to develop strong literacy skills and perform better academically. It is therefore important that teachers of literacy in Zambia have the necessary knowledge and resources to effectively teach literacy in the Zambian languages.

Banja and Mulenga (2019)) also propose that it is imperative for teachers to be equipped with practical teaching strategies that cater to the different needs of learners. This could involve differentiation techniques, interactive and collaborative learning methods, and the use of relevant cultural materials that engage learners in the learning process.

### **2.2.3.2 Comparative analysis of teaching approaches across Zambian languages**

It is important to consider the unique linguistic and cultural characteristics of each language group when analysing and comparing teaching approaches across Zambian languages. This is mainly because different languages require different pedagogical strategies to effectively teach literacy skills and develop language proficiency. One such linguistic aspect to consider is the phonological and morphological features of each language (Tambulukani & Bus, 2011). It is

very important to understand the phonemic structure, tonal patterns, and grammatical systems of Zambian languages for the development of appropriate literacy instruction methods. Languages that have a complex tonal distinction may require specific techniques for teaching intonation and pronunciation, for example.

### **2.2.3.3 Impact of local languages on literacy achievement in Zambia**

The impact of local languages on literacy achievement in Zambia is not only important but also multifaceted. One of the key roles local languages play in literacy achievement is that they foster a strong foundation for language acquisition. Sailors et al. (2010), states that children learn best when instruction is delivered in the language they understand and use in their daily lives. This entails that the use of local languages in early literacy instruction can facilitate more meaningful and effective learning experiences, leading to improved literacy outcomes for the learners. Additionally, incorporating local languages into literacy instruction fosters a sense of cultural inclusion and identity among learners. Learners are motivated and engaged in literacy activities when they see their language reflected in the classroom.

In conclusion, local languages have a significant impact on literacy achievement in Zambia by serving as a foundation for language acquisition and promoting cultural inclusivity in educational settings. Integrating local languages into literacy instruction and embracing the linguistic richness of the country can contribute to effective literacy outcomes for Zambian learners.

### **2.2.4 Teaching approaches and methods for mother-tongue literacy around the world**

There are several teaching methods and approaches that have been used to promote literacy among learners. These methods and approaches include the whole language approach, the phonics method, the language experience approach, oral language development, reading comprehension strategies, and the use of authentic texts, which are discussed below. Literature on literacy teaching methods and approaches is relevant to the present study because it provides important insights into different methods that have been used in the teaching of reading around the world.

#### **2.2.4.1 Whole Language Approach**

Patzelt (1995) defines the whole language approach as an approach to teaching that has been used to help learners and adults learn a second language the same way they learned their first

language. Fauzi (2020) defines it as a learning approach where language is learned as a whole and not as separate entities. This is mainly because the approach views language as a whole and not as separate entities, and therefore, all four macro skills of language, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking, are integrated during the process of reading (Goodman, 1986). Further, this approach takes the form of a top-to-bottom approach.

The whole-language approach to language teaching is based on several principles. The first one is that language must be taught as a whole and not as separate components (Brockman, 1994). Therefore, when teaching language, learners should experience all the components of language as a whole, before they begin to look at individual components. The skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening are taught together and not as separate entities. According to Lamb and Best (1990), learners are exposed to many forms of language, and learning time is maximised when a teacher integrates the language skills. Another principle of whole language is that real-life experiences and the use of real texts are at the centre of language learning (Goodman, 1986). Learners are expected to learn languages through doing and using them. This entails that all learners are expected to write activities based on personal experiences. Another principle of whole language teaching is that the focus is on meaning (Patzelt, 1995). Learners should get meaning from any language activity. Therefore, any reading and writing task is regarded as meaningful for the learner once it is connected to his or her personal experience. Therefore, whatever is taught should be related to the child's experience. A learner-centred classroom is yet another principle of whole-language learning. Learning should be interesting, and more focus should be placed on the learner (Goodman, 1986). The major role of the teacher in a whole language classroom is to facilitate learning by providing an environment that is filled with language-related activities. Whole-language teachers should use a variety of methods at their disposal to suit a particular group of learners.

Routman (2014) states that some of the activities that are typical of whole-language classrooms are shared reading, guided reading, reading aloud, and guided writing. Shared reading involves reading sessions that are jointly carried out between teachers and learners, or learners and learners (Routman, 2014). This reading activity gives learners the opportunity to read and listen to each other. In guided reading, the teacher, who is the role model, guides the learners in reading, facilitates the activity, and guides them through the process. The teacher and the

learners hold class discussions based on reading books. Furthermore, the teacher asks learners questions based on the texts read to ascertain the extent to which they have understood (Fauzi, 2020). Reading aloud, on the other hand, involves both the teacher and the learner reading storybooks or texts aloud. Fauzi (2020) suggests that this activity can promote the child's vocabulary, improve listening and reading comprehension skills, and arouse interest in writing and reading.

Aspects of the whole language approach come into play during sentence construction and comprehension tasks. In order to improve comprehension skills, the teacher reads a story while the learners listen attentively (guided reading). Questions are asked from the story read to ascertain the learners' levels of understanding. During the lesson, learners are also expected to tell stories based on a particular letter sound being taught that day. This is aimed at promoting speaking skills. Teachers and learners would also sing and repeat rhymes based on a particular sound being taught on a particular day.

#### **2.2.4.2 Phonics method**

Many definitions of phonics have been advanced. Amadi (2019) defines phonics as an instructional method that teaches the relationship between written and spoken language graphemes enabling the effective reading and spelling of unfamiliar words. Adams (1990); Mesmer and Griffith (2005) define it as an instructional method used to teach learners letter sound relationships and how to use those relationships to recognize words.. Shanahan (2005) suggests that phonics is an effective methodology to teaching learners how to read because it exposes them to the orthography of a language.

The phonics can be taught using an analytic or synthetic approach (Amadi , 2019). The analytical approach aims to teach letter sounds in the context of whole words. Whole words are presented to the learners, and the teacher guides the learners in knowing the letter-sound patterns of a particular language spelling system (Amadi, 2019). She further suggests that the analytical phonics approach is suitable for learners at the start of the second year in school or those at the end of the first year. The approach is, however, seen as not being child-centered as learners are heavily dependent on the teacher, thus promoting rote learning (Johnston & Watson, 2005). Furthermore, it is difficult to teach using this approach in languages such as

English that do not have a one-to-one correspondence between the letter and the corresponding phoneme.

Torgerson et al. (2006) define synthetic phonics as an approach that teaches the pronunciation of sounds in association with letters of the alphabet and how to blend the sounds to form syllables and words. The approach involves teaching children how to sound out the letter sounds of a language, combining the sounds to form syllables and words, and reading unfamiliar words. Johnston and Watson (2005) argue that synthetic phonics should be taught in a child's first year of school. Children are taught letter sounds and thereafter guided on how to blend them into words. Teachers teach learners to associate vowels and consonant letters with their corresponding sounds. Learners are taught to identify letter sounds, blend sounds to form syllables and combine syllables to form words during reading lessons.

The strengths and weaknesses of using this approach have been advanced by various scholars. Amadi (2019) opines that using the synthetic approach in teaching reading helps children to construct words for themselves, decode unfamiliar words they come across in texts with little assistance, promote learner-centred learning, and reduce overdependence on the teacher. Learners, on the contrary, have challenges in sounding and blending letter sounds in languages such as English, which have an inconsistent orthography.

Literature exists in Africa on the effectiveness of phonics instruction in literacy improvement. Olagbaju and Olaniyi (2023) conducted a study in Gambia in which they investigated the effects of explicit and differentiated phonics instruction strategies on achievement in literacy instruction. The study also examined the moderating effects of parental involvement. This study involved one hundred sixty-four (164) learners from four randomly selected schools. The study adopted a control group quasi-experimental design and employed a pre-test and post-test involving a treatment that lasted for six weeks. The findings revealed that participants in explicit phonics instruction obtained the highest achievement score compared to those doing differentiated phonics instruction. Parental involvement had no significant main effect on pupils. The researchers urge teachers to adopt the strategies in order to improve the quality of instruction and proficiency in literacy skills. This study therefore confirms the need for teachers to use the phonics method in literacy instruction.

### **2.2.4.3 Language Experience Approach**

The language experience approach involves the use of conversation posters. The conversation posters have pictures based on the home, school, town and farm environment to depict the life of learners (Sampa & Halaoui, 2005). Learners are expected to construct sentences from any one of the posters. If the sentence is correctly constructed, the teacher would show the learners how to read and write it. Further, the teacher would split the sentence into words and syllables. The whole purpose of using conversation posters is to help learners experience the life at home, school, town or farm in their literacy sessions.

Other key teaching approaches can be used to promote literacy is the oral language development. The teacher should focus on promote oral language skills in the mother tongue through conversations, storytelling and discussions (Bunch, 2013). The use of conversations, storytelling and discussions helps learners to develop a strong foundation in their mother tongue and ultimately be applied to reading and writing.

The teacher can also conduct writing workshops were learners are given time to practice and improve their writing skills in their mother languages while incorporating feedback and revision processes (Lesaux et al., 2014). The more learners practice writing, the more they improve in it.

Vocabulary building is yet another approach and involves introducing specific vocabulary to learners so that they expand their word knowledge and comprehension abilities in the mother tongue. The reading comprehension strategy can also be used to teach literacy. The teacher can teach various comprehension strategies such as predicting, visualising, question and summarising simple texts to enhance learners understanding these texts in their mother tongue (Hidayati et al., 2021).

The teacher can also use authentic texts in the mother tongue such as story books and poems to engage learners and more so, foster a love for reading which ultimately develops their reading skills in the mother tongue (Loh & Tse, 2017). Teachers are also encouraged to use multilingual education. Multilingual education is the use of multiple languages including the mother tongue, in the classroom to support students' language development (Bisai & Singh, 2020).

The above stated teaching approaches are aimed at creating a language -rich environment which supports learners' literacy development in the mother tongue. Teachers can promote language acquisition, fluency and comprehension skills by incorporating these strategies into literacy instruction while preserving learners cultural and linguistic identities. From what has been stated already, all the macro skills of language namely reading, writing, speaking and listening should be taught in a literacy lesson and not as separate entities. While the Primary literacy framework in Zambia gives guidance on the need to use a variety of teaching approaches in literacy instruction, whether the suggested approaches are used or not is not known, and these were the aspects that motivated the researcher to undertake this study.

#### **2.2.4.4 Group Work**

Group work is one of the approaches that has been used in teaching language and literacy in general and many scholars have defined the term in similar manner. Brown (2001) defines group work as a generic term encompassing a number of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task. Harris and Sherblom (2018) define it as a collection of three to fewer than twenty persons who are independent, influence one another over a period of time, share a common goal and purpose, have a sense of mutual belonging, maintain norms and standards for group membership and engage in interactive communication. Karim (2015) also defines it as a learning activity involving learners working together in a small team or group aimed at performing a task with a goal of giving more opportunities for the learners to use or practice the language. The various definitions above indicate that group work involves a group of learners working together on a shared task and giving each other opportunities for participation together towards a common goal.

Group work can be classified into three main types namely informal learning group, formal learning group and cooperative based groups (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Informal learning groups are formed by clustering learners in a single class session. Learners can be asked to turn to their neighbour and spend a few minutes or so discussing a question posed to them by the teacher. This type of group can be used so as to focus the learners' attention on the materials to be learnt, set a conducive mood in learning, help set expectations as to be covered in a class session, summarise what was learnt by learners and ensure that learners cognitively process and rehearse the material being taught (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

The formal learning group, on the other hand, is formed so that groups perform a specific task such as writing a report, carrying out a project, preparing a paper for presentation and performing a lab experiment (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Lastly, the cooperative based group is a long- term group with a stable membership whose aim is to provide learners with support, encouragement and assistance in completing course requirements and assignments.

Group work offers many advantages to learners during the learning process. Karim (2015) states that one of the advantages of group work is that learners working in groups can often solve complex problems with minimal assistance compared to learners who work individually as they often do not make significant progress. The experience of learners working together not only helps them to learn materials but is also consistent with the real world (Karim, 2015). Another advantage of group work is that it generates interactive language as small groups provide opportunities for learner initiation, face -to-face give and take and also for learners adoption of roles that would be impossible (Brown, 2001). Richey et al. (2022), adding their voice, on the advantages state that group work has the potential to increase creativity and innovation because of the different perspectives and ideas contributed by different members of a group.

Brown (2001) further states that groups offer an embracing affective climate because they help learners feel more secure. Learners cannot be criticised individually in groups and even those who are passive become active and vocal during the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, small groups enables' them to work together thus increasing their motivation and self-confidence. Additionally, group work has the ability to enhance learning outcomes through peer-to-peer teaching and knowledge sharing (Sonita & Febria, 2022). Furthermore, it can assist learners to develop important skills such as communication, team work and conflict resolution which are valuable skills (Sonita & Febria, 2022).

Group work also promotes learner responsibility and autonomy because it makes learners more responsible for action and progress (Brown, 2001). Learners find it very difficult to keep quiet and hide themselves in small groups as they have a chance to engage and experiment with the language being learnt. Additionally, group work is the beginning point toward individualising instruction (Brown, 2001). When learners are in groups, teachers find it easy to recognise the individual differences in terms of age, cognitive style, motivation, personality and cultural

heritage (Brown, 2001). Brumfit (1994) also mentions that group work provides a ‘naturalistic environment’ as students engaged in group work are free from anxiety to experiment with the target language.

There are also some challenges related to group work. Sonita and Febria (2022) states that it leads to social loafing, where some of the group members decide not to contribute to the tasks undertaken by the group. There are also some of the group members who may carry a huge amount of a group task which leads to an imbalance thus leading to conflicts within the group and this impacts negatively on the overall effectiveness of the collaboration (Sonita & Febria, 2022). Group work may, sometimes lead to coordination challenges, differing opinions, and potential conflicts that can hinder the decision -making process thus slowing down progress. Karim (2015) also mentions a number of disadvantages of group work such as the challenge of controlling learners, use of mother tongue during the work, reinforcement of learner’s errors in the classroom, difficulties in monitoring all groups and the problem related to learners’ cognitive styles as some of the learners may prefer to work alone. Despite having a number of weaknesses as stated above, group work is a learner centred approach and it offers many benefits as far as learning is concerned.

#### **2.2.4.5 Demonstration Method**

The demonstration method is one of the teaching approaches used in the teaching of literacy. Hussain (2020) defines the demonstration method as a teaching technique that involves showing and explaining a concept or process through practical examples. The demonstration method is used when a teacher wants to engage learners and help them understand complex ideas by providing them with real-life examples (Giridharan & Raju, 2016).

Demonstrations have a number of advantages in the teaching of literacy. One of the advantages is that the method provides both visual and auditory simulations, therefore offering an effective way to cater to different learning styles. Khomeni and Prabawanto (2020) state that the method allows learners to utilise the practical application of theory and concepts, thereby making the learning experience more tangible and memorable. Furthermore, because learners are able to witness first-hand the principles being taught in class, the use of demonstrations during instruction can create a sense of excitement and curiosity in the classroom.

Some studies have been conducted regarding the efficacy of the demonstration method around the world. Kareva and Dragaj (2020) conducted a study in Skenderaj, Republic of Kosova, in which they sought to measure the impact of the demonstration method in the teaching and learning process. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. Three English language professors and 88 design students, who learn English as a second language, answered two dissimilar questionnaires regarding their perceptions as well as reactions towards the demonstration method and its effectiveness. Additionally, the 88 design students had to do an experiment to ascertain if the demonstration method was more helpful and applicable than other methods. The student's level of English proficiency was intermediate. The study found that the demonstration method made the process of teaching easier and clearer for all the teachers and students. The present study is different from the one conducted by Kareva and Dragaj (2020) in terms of the design and geographical location. While the above-stated study, among others, was meant to establish the efficacy of the demonstration method, the present study, among others, aimed to ascertain teacher choices of instructional methods and approaches.

Husnu (2018) also conducted a study in Indonesia aimed at examining the effectiveness of the demonstration technique to improve vocabulary and grammar elements in teaching speaking for English as a foreign language learner (EFL). The study used a true experimental design, involving 32 students as the experimental group and 32 others as the control group, and data was collected through a pre- and post-test given to these EFL learners. The researcher used SPSS 17 to analyse the data and also used a paired-samples t-test to analyse whether there was a significant difference in the mean score between the pre-test and post-test. The researcher, after performing a paired-samples t-test, found that there was a significant difference in mean scores between the experimental and control groups, and the t-test score was higher than the t-table, implying that the demonstration technique was significantly effective in teaching speaking, especially to improve the elements of vocabulary and grammar. While the study stated above found that the use of the demonstration method is important in the teaching of speaking, we did not know whether teachers of literacy were using it. Furthermore, the present study is different in terms of focus as well as method from the one conducted by Husnu. However, it highlights the importance of demonstrations as an effective technique in teaching that pedagogically knowledgeable teachers should possess.

The methods and approaches discussed above have provided useful insights on the different methods that have been used in the teaching of literacy. For example, one of the insights provided by the whole language approach to the present study is the need to teach language as a whole and not as separate entities meaning the integration of all the four macro skills of language namely, reading, writing, listening and speaking in literacy lessons. Another insight provided by the phonics method is the need to use this method in the child's first year at school because it assists them to learn how to sound out the letter-sounds of the language and combining the sounds to form syllables and words. Another useful insight provided by the language experience approach is the importance of using conversational posters depicting home, school, town and farm environments and that help learners to construct sentences. Another insight drawn from the use of group work is that it helps learners solve complex problems with minimum assistance compared to those working independently. The use of the demonstration method also helps learners to witness first-hand the principles being taught in class. The methods discussed are important because they provide insights on how literacy has been taught and can be taught effectively. This study sought to establish teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy approaches and the methods discussed above provide useful insights on the merits and demerits of each method and which one of the methods is currently being used in the teaching of literacy.

### **2.2.5 Literacy instructional methods used in Zambia**

This section discusses literacy instruction methods used in Zambia. It is important to discuss the methods used in the teaching of literacy in Zambia because it provides information on the literacy methods used in Zambia and also provides, insights on the choice of instructional methods by teachers, which this study sought to establish. There are a number of literacy methods for effective literacy instruction in Zambia, and the national literacy framework in Zambia also stresses the importance of effective literacy instructional methods in order to promote successful learning among learners. These methods include the task-based approach, the phonics method, and the language experience approach, among many others. Discussing the methods stated above is important to this study because it helped the researcher to understand the pedagogical knowledge of teachers in relation to literature that exists on instructional methods used in Zambia. The methods are discussed below.

### **2.2.5.1 Task -based approach**

The task-based approach can also be used in the teaching of literacy. Ha et al. (2021) define the task-based approach as an approach that involves structuring language learning around the completion of specific tasks that are designed to engage learners in meaningful and authentic language use. When tasks are incorporated into language learning, learners are engaged in meaningful and authentic communicative activities that promote language acquisition (Veigas & Wilson, 2020). Sampa et al. (2018) assert that task-based learning is one of the essential components of the Zambian national literacy framework and emphasise the practical application of language skills in real-life situations. Not only does this method help learners develop their language proficiency, but it also enhances their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Task-based learning also enhances active participation and collaboration among learners, thus creating an engaging learning environment. The method also allows for the contextualised use of language in various settings and, therefore, ties with the framework's goal of promoting an effective and engaging learning environment. The learning approach emphasises addressing linguistic diversity by allowing learners to apply their literacy skills in different language contexts, thus supporting the literacy framework (Sampa et al, 2018).

Evidence exists in research indicating that task-based learning has had a positive impact on learners' vocabulary development and motivation. Robinson (2011) established that task-based language teaching helps learners improve their vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency. Halici and Mede (2018) also indicate that teachers have reported that the use of traditional methods in secondary language practices is not as effective as implementing task-based instruction. Other advantages associated with task-based learning are that it promotes communication competence by allowing learners to work at their own pace and within their own level and area of interest, and it facilitates the integration of content and language learning (Harden et al., 2000; Siregar et al., 2022). Saifudin et al. (2020), adding to the advantages, state that the approach has been associated with the development of critical and creative skills among learners. The above-stated arguments indicate that teachers in Zambia can benefit from task-based instruction in literacy instruction because it promotes learners' vocabulary development and motivation. The approach also promotes active learning, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

The task-based approach is not without weaknesses. Littlewood (2004) indicates that using task-based approaches consumes more time to complete learning tasks. Furthermore, the debate still continues as to whether the term “task-based approaches” is appropriate for describing the developments in language pedagogy, and this indicates a lack of consensus in the field (Ha et al., 2021). This ongoing debate about the terminology suggests the need for further research and refinement of the approach.

#### **2.2.5.2 Phonics Method**

The phonics method has also been used in the teaching of literacy. Amadi (2019), as earlier mentioned, defines phonics as an instructional method that teaches the grapheme - phoneme relationships of a written language in relation and how it can be used to read unfamiliar words. The phonics method, as an approach to teaching reading and writing, deals with the relationship between sounds and their corresponding letters of the alphabet. Primary schools across Zambia have used the phonics method to develop early reading skills among learners. Some of the activities involving the use of phonics in a Zambian classroom include sound identification, blending of sounds, and sound substitution (Ministry of Education, 2014). Sound identification activities involve learners identifying the first or last sound in words. Blending activities involve learners blending sounds to form syllables and words. Sound substitution activities involve learners substituting sounds at the beginning or end of words to form other words or syllables (Ministry of Education, 2014) .

Studies have been undertaken in Zambia regarding literacy instruction methods in general and the phonics method in particular. Sampa et al. (2018) compared the efficacy of the phonics-based reading programme and the language experience approach-based literacy programme to develop reading skills among Zambian early childhood learners. They assessed 1,986 grade two learners who either took the phonics-based literacy programme (n-1593) or the language experience-based reading programme (n-393) for reading skills using the Early Grade Reading Tests (EGRA) in four languages, namely Cinyanja, Icibemba, Kikaonde, and Silozi. The results showed that learners in the phonics-based literacy programme recorded significantly better results in letter-sound knowledge in the four languages, non-word reading, oral passage reading, and reading comprehension. This study highlights the use of phonics in the country’s early childhood education and also provides insights into the effectiveness of different literacy approaches. Igbokwe et al. (2022), indicating the use of the phonics method in Zambian

classrooms, assessed the attitude of teachers towards the use of the phonics method in teaching reading. This shows the implementation of the phonics method in the Zambian context.

The strengths of the phonics method cannot be overlooked. One of them is its effectiveness in developing early reading skills among children because it supports the explicit teaching of phonics as part of a comprehensive approach to teaching reading instruction (MESVTEC, 2013). Furthermore, the method involves teaching letters and sound relationships in a clear sequence and thus has contributed to structured and effective literacy instruction in primary schools across Zambia.

Some of the weaknesses associated with the use of the phonics method in Zambian primary schools include challenges related to the interpretation and implementation of phonics instruction by teachers. Campbell (2018) found that some early child teachers interpreted phonics instruction as an isolated skill-drill activity, which could impact the quality of phonics teaching in the classroom. Tambulukani and Bus (2011), in their study, also highlighted the complexity of the reading problems in Zambian schools, indicating that the local language medium of instruction policy may pose challenges for some primary schools to effectively implement phonics instruction.

### **2.2.5.3 The language experience approach**

The language experience approach can be used in the teaching of literacy. Sampa and Halaoui (2005) define the language experience approach as an approach that involves the use of conversation posters based on the home, school, town, and farm environments to depict the lives of learners. This method integrates learners' personal experiences and language into the learning process. The language experience method in Zambia has been used to connect classroom instruction with the learners' familiar language and experiences. In a Zambian classroom setting, for example, learners are requested to name objects in the home or environment to elicit the phoneme of the day. Local languages are used to name the objects in the home or environment. Studies to ascertain the efficacy of the language experience approach with another approach among Zambian early childhood school learners indicating the use of the method have been conducted (Sampa et al., 2018).

One of the strengths of experience approach in Zambia is its potential to create a meaningful and relevant learning environment by incorporating learners' personal experiences and language use into literacy instruction. The approach strengthens learners motivation and engagement in learning because it connects classroom activities with their lived experiences (Sampa et al., 2018). Furthermore, the language experience methods tie into the local language medium of instruction policy in Zambia, which emphasises the use of the familiar language in the teaching of initial literacy and numeracy from grades one to four.

The approach has some distinct weaknesses, and one of them is related to the diversity of the learners' language background and experiences. Mkandawire (2022) highlights the difficulties of literacy and language instruction in multilingual contexts, and this indicates that the transparency of orthography can affect literacy instruction. Tambulukani and Bus (2011), furthermore, highlight in their study the importance of familiarity with the language in which initial reading is practiced, and this suggests that the language experience method has some challenges related to addressing the different linguistic backgrounds of learners.

#### **2.2.5.4 Look -and -say method**

The look - and -say method, also referred to as the whole word method, is an approach to reading that involves presenting to learners whole words for them to memorise. Fauzi (2020) regards it as a learning approach where language is learned as a whole and not as separate entities. This method has been used in Zambian classrooms to teach children to recognise and memorise words as complete units during literacy instruction. This method has not been employed in isolation during literacy instruction but in conjunction with other reading approaches to develop early literacy skills among Zambian learners.

One of the strengths of the whole word method is that it has the potential to lead to the development of learners' sight-word recognition and vocabulary acquisition. This method can facilitate the rapid recognition of frequently encountered words, which can contribute to early reading because it focuses on whole words (McBride-Chang & Treiman, 2003). Furthermore, allowing learners to recognise and memorise words in their familiar language contexts makes the method align itself with the initial literacy instruction in local languages (McBride-Chang & Treiman, 2003).

One of the weaknesses of the whole word method is related to phonemic awareness and decoding skills. McBride-Chang and Treiman (2003) suggest that over-reliance on the whole word method may limit learners' ability to decode unfamiliar words and develop phonemic awareness, which are essential skills for proficient reading.

In conclusion, the methods discussed are relevant to my study because they provide important insights into the teaching of literacy. One of the insights highlighted in the use of the task-based approach involves the need to structure language learning around the completion of specific tasks which are designed to engage learners in meaningful and authentic language use. The approach also promotes active learning, collaboration and problem-solving skills which are tenets of constructivism. Secondly, the phonics method involves teaching letter and sound relationships in a clear sequency and has contributed to structured and effective literacy instruction in primary schools in Zambia. Another important insight provided by the language experience approach is the integration of learners' personal experiences and language into the learning process. The insights stated above are relevant to my study because they inform this present study on the literacy methods and approaches currently being used in Zambia. It remained unclear whether teachers were using any of the methods discussed in this section and factors influencing their choice of instructional methods.

### **2.2.6 Culturally Responsive Mother Tongue Literacy Instruction**

This section discusses literature on the notion of culturally responsive mother tongue literacy. It also discusses literature on the need to assess teachers' knowledge of literacy teaching methods. Culturally responsive practices entail integrating students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives into the learning process (Tan & Mante-Estacio, 2021). My study seeks to explore literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde, a mother tongue, in grade one classrooms. Therefore, the insights from literature on culturally responsive instruction are important because they help us appreciate the benefits of incorporating culturally responsive practices in mother tongue literacy instruction.

Teachers who incorporate culturally relevant texts, stories, and traditions into mother tongue literacy instructions create a sense of belonging and validation for learners, which ultimately enhances their engagement in learning (Tan & Mante-Estacio, 2021). Bisai and Singh (2020) also state that culturally responsive mother tongue literacy instruction emphasises the

importance of involving families and community members as valuable partners in the learning process and supporting learners' language development and literacy skills. Teachers can therefore create meaningful mother-tongue literacy instruction that not only develops learners' language abilities but also strengthens their cultural identities and connections if they embrace culturally responsive practices and involve the community.

#### **2.2.6.1 Assessing teachers' knowledge of literacy teaching methods**

The need to assess teachers' knowledge of literacy teaching methods is important and has been supported by literature. Gámez et al. (2017) state that it is important to assess teachers' knowledge of literacy teaching methods in mother tongues so as to ensure effective instruction as well as promote learners language and literacy development. This assessment can include, among others, evaluating the teacher's understanding of oral language development, writing workshops, phonics instruction, vocabulary building, reading comprehension strategies, and the use of authentic texts (Dukes et al., 2021). The continuous assessment of teachers helps in ensuring that teachers are up to date with their knowledge of literacy teaching approaches. Furthermore, assessing teachers in literacy teaching methods can promote effective literacy instruction and learners' language and literacy development in their respective mother tongues. Assessment can take many forms, such as testing as well as research to ascertain teachers' knowledge of literacy teaching methods, which forms part of the scope of the present study.

#### **2.2.7 Impact of pedagogical knowledge on literacy outcomes in the world**

Pedagogical knowledge has an impact on literacy outcomes, and this is supported by a number of scholars. Bunch (2013), for example, states that a deeper understanding of pedagogical knowledge in literacy teaching methods has a big impact on learners' literacy outcomes. Teachers, for example, who are equipped with pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching methods are well prepared to address the challenges and different needs of learners in their mother tongues. They are in a better position to implement effective strategies such as vocabulary building, reading comprehension techniques, and using authentic texts to enhance learners' abilities to decode and recognise words and also expand their vocabulary in their mother tongues. This can ultimately lead to improved reading fluency and comprehension skills, thus laying a strong foundation across all subject areas.

Furthermore, incorporating culturally responsive practices into literacy instruction has a positive impact on learners engagement, motivation, and overall well-being (Bennett et al.,

2018). Learners develop a greater sense of belonging and validation when they see their cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives reflected in their learning materials and classroom discussions. This sense of belonging nurtures their confidence and self-esteem, as well as motivates them to engage in the learning process and ultimately influences their literacy development. Additionally, involving families and community members as partners further enhances learners' language development and literacy skills. Linan-Thompson et al. (2018) state that collaboration among teachers, families, and community members creates a supportive network that affirms the value of students' linguistic identities, reinforces their connection to heritage, and fosters a positive attitude towards learning.

### **2.3 Factors that influence teachers' choices of literacy instructional methods and strategies**

This section discusses factors that influence teacher's choices of literacy instructional methods. Discussing these factors is important to my study because it provides insights of what has been established already and the gaps that exist in knowledge about this subject globally and Africa.

There are a number of factors that influence a teacher's choice of literacy instructional methods and strategies, such as phonics methods, the look and say method, demonstrations, group work, and pair work, to mention but a few. Milton et al. (2007) highlight the importance of an evidence-based approach that includes phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and text comprehension in the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy. The inclusion of evidence-based approaches in the teaching of literacy suggests that teachers may be more inclined to use methods, such as the phonics method, when they are aware of the evidence supporting their effectiveness. A teacher would therefore choose an instructional method or strategy if there is evidence that one works better than the other.

One advantage of the utilisation of evidence-based literacy methods and approaches is that it helps to rely on scientifically proven methods that have demonstrated success in promoting literacy skills. Structure literacy, for example, which is informed by the science of reading acquisition, has been shown to support learners with dyslexic tendencies (Manuel, 2022). This approach integrates evidence-based strategies within literacy instruction, ultimately leading to improved literacy and language outcomes.

Abbott (2023), adding to the factors that influence teachers' choice of instructional methods, states that a teacher's perception of literacy instructional coaching can play a crucial role in shaping their approach to teaching literacy. This is mainly because when teachers perceive coaching as influential, they are more likely to incorporate recommended methods, such as the phonics method or any other, for example, into their instruction.

Ilosvay and Pepe (2018) also state that the teachers' definitions of literacy and the support they receive from the schools in designing literacy instruction for the different learners can also determine their choice of instructional methods. This entails that schools that provide adequate support for teachers in designing literacy instruction may foster the implementation of various literacy teaching methods and approaches.

Wissink (2019), also notes that teachers' self-efficacy has been identified as a contributing factor in the actual implementation of new literacy instructional knowledge. Teachers who feel confident in their abilities to teach literacy are more likely to integrate effective instructional methods into their teaching practices. Additionally, the knowledge and understanding that teachers have of foundational literacy skills, such as phonological awareness, can impact their instructional decisions (Hudson et al., 2021). This implies that teachers who possess a deep understanding of foundational literacy skills are more likely to incorporate a variety of teaching methods, such as phonics, look and say, demonstrations, group work, and many more, into their teaching.

Brum (2021) also states that the beliefs that teachers hold about literacy instruction can influence the strategies they choose to employ. Teachers who believe in the importance of a particular method or approach are more likely to utilise it in their classrooms.

The other factor that determines teachers' instructional choices is the utilisation of formative data, which in turn shapes their literacy instruction (Kreamer et al., 2019). Formative data includes, among others, data gathered from learners' exercises and feedback received during the teaching and learning process, to mention only a few. The use of data gathered from learners' exercises can help teachers ascertain which approaches and methods are suitable for learners in that context. For example, observational studies have shown that teachers' use of instructional actions and class organisation, such as small group activities, play a crucial role in literacy instruction (Kelcey & Carlisle, 2013).

Moje (1996) also opines that teachers' perspectives and beliefs about literacy instruction, including their attitudes towards using literacy strategies, significantly impact their instructional decisions. Teachers opt to use certain strategies because they have a positive perception of using them over others.

Other than perceptions, research by Jenkins (2018) suggests that professional development plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' literacy instructional practices and preferences. Additionally, Moje (2008) also indicates that training teachers to incorporate literacy practices and reading strategies into their content instruction plays a crucial role. Teachers are most likely to use instructional practices that they have learned through training and professional development meetings. Challenges, however, arise in balancing content and strategy instruction simultaneously due to the prevalent culture of whole-class direct instruction, which hinders active student engagement in reading and learning (Greenleaf et al., 2011). Gourvenec (2021), additionally, emphasises the impact of teachers' core beliefs and epistemologies on the instruction they provide, suggesting that these deeply ingrained perspectives significantly influence their approach to literacy instruction.

Teachers choice of instructional approaches is also dependent on their interpretation of educational policies. Coburn (2001), for example, discusses how teachers mediate reading policies in their professional communities, indicating that teachers interpret and adapt policies, including instructional methods such as look and say, demonstrations, and many others, to suit their classroom practices.

### **2.3.1 Studies on teacher choices of instructional approaches and methods**

Studies have been conducted regarding teachers preferred choices of instructional methods and approaches globally and in Africa. It is important to review existing literature on teachers preferred choices of instructional methods and approaches to identify existing gaps in these studies. This study also aimed to establish the teacher choices of instructional methods and approaches but with a focus on teachers of grade one in Solwezi district, Zambia, which is differently located. These studies are discussed below:

### **a. Global Case**

Nichols et al. (2005) conducted a study in Texas, United States of America, Texas, and examined how kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade teachers intended and reported classroom use, as well as their perceptions and knowledge of reading strategies and methods, before and after their participation in a 120-hour professional development training. The study analysed 33 teacher responses to reading strategies and methods. An analysis was made on three main types of teachers, namely, those using a structured approach to reading, those using an integrated approach, and those using an eclectic approach, to determine the most important strategies and methods characterising these different groups. The study revealed that teachers involved in the professional development experience made significant gains in their use of several reading strategies and methods. Three years after initial training, follow-up interviews with selected teachers from each of the three cluster groups were made and provided an understanding of the long-term effects of the professional development activities. The results showed that the teacher's reported use of selected reading strategies and methods was influenced by several factors, such as the workshops attended, the district's targeted reading strategies, teacher perceptions of their own instructional efficacy, and teachers' perceptions of academic needs and performance. The study by Nichols and Zellner (2005) varies with the present study in terms of the place and methodology, and we wonder what factors influence teachers' choices of instructional methods in Solwezi, and these are part of the interests of this study.

### **2.4 The National Literacy Framework in Zambia**

This section discusses the Zambia National Literacy Framework. The framework highlights literacy teaching components, the scope and sequence chart of literacy lessons, expected learner competences by the end of primary education, the literacy weekly schedule of instruction and the role of teachers in literacy instruction. This is important for my study because one of the objectives in this study is to establish whether the literacy lesson content is aligned with the literacy curriculum which the framework also outlines. The framework also highlights literacy teaching components, the scope and sequency for literacy lessons, expected learner competences by the end of primary education, the literacy weekly schedule of instruction and the role of teachers in literacy instruction. I know discuss them below:

Kombe and Mwanza (2014) define the Zambia National Literacy Framework (ZNLF) as a set of guidelines, strategies, and policies aimed at improving literacy levels across the country. The document serves many functions. This document was developed in order to provide a literacy strategy for literacy instruction and also provide guidance in the approach for the development of literacy skills (MESVTEC, 2013). This document provides a framework for assessing and addressing the country's literacy needs and, more importantly, promoting effective literacy instruction and learner support across all ages. The framework acknowledges and recognises the fact that literacy is not just a fundamental skill that enables individuals to fully participate in society but also gives access to opportunities for personal and professional development as well as enabling the literate individual to contribute to the economic growth of the nation (Ziegahn, 1992). Serpell (2020) also states that the Zambian national literacy framework acknowledges the need to address the linguistic diversity within the country. The document also recognises the urgent need of teaching literacy in both the local languages and English and also, the need for teacher adequate preparation so as to deliver effective literacy instruction. Chitondo (2021) states that the framework also discusses the role that parents and the community should play in supporting literacy development. He also stresses the need for collaboration between teachers and parents to create a supportive learning environment. Stakeholders, therefore, require a comprehensive understanding of the goals, components, and strategies of the national literacy framework to effectively implement it. It is therefore important for teachers and educational administrators to familiarise themselves with the content and principles of the framework in order to plan and teach literacy instruction. Kombe and Mwanza (2014) state that the national literacy framework in Zambia also incorporates the use of both language learning and vocabulary language strategies in teaching vocabulary. The above mentioned strategies are all supported by cognitive and metacognitive theories and have been proven effective in different teaching contexts (Borer, 2006). The national literacy framework aims to promote effective literacy instruction in both local languages and English, improve literacy levels by addressing the linguistic diversity of the country, and involve the community and parents in supporting literacy development.

Ministry of Education and Education (2013) states that the focus of the national literacy framework is on early grade reading because if learners do not learn how to read in the early grades, they are more likely to drop out of school. The framework also adopted the skills that

were adopted by the United States National Reading Panel, namely phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as important for learning how to decode in almost any alphabetic language (Shanahan, 2005).

#### 2.4.1 Literacy Teaching Components of reading in the National Literacy Framework

The National Literacy Framework highlights nine components, namely pre-reading and pre-writing, sounds (phonemic awareness and sounds), words, sentences, comprehension, writing, punctuation, and fluency, for successful and effective reading development (Ministry of Education & Education, 2013). The framework believes that the above-stated components, taken together, can build a learner's ability to read, write, speak, and listen effectively. Table 1 below shows the knowledge, skills, and values to teach in the early grades as outlined in the NLF on page 11.

*Table 1: Knowledge and skills for teaching literacy for early grades (literacy content)*

SN	Component	Knowledge, skills, and values to teach
1	Pre-reading	Listening to stories Participating in the discussion. Talking about reading material. Identifying parts of the book, text (article, story card), or poem. Identifying reasons for reading. Direction: left-to-right eye movement, top-down. Good reading habits for beginners. Visual discrimination. Read/interpret pictures. Oral activities, storytelling, song, rhyme, and tongue twisters.
2	Sounds	Phonemic awareness Segment words into syllables. Identify initial, middle and end sounds. Delete sounds (initial, middle and end) Phonics Identify letter sounds.

		<p>Identify sounds represented by a combination of letters. (Enn kw)</p> <p>Identify syllables.</p> <p>Form syllables.</p> <p>Blend letter sounds.</p> <p>Combine syllables to form words.</p> <p>Identify words differentiated by vowel length.</p>
3	Words	Word formation using letters and syllables.
4	Sentences	<p>Construct sentences of varying difficulty.</p> <p>Knowledge of word boundary.</p>
5	Comprehension	<p>Identify and express the main idea of a piece of writing.</p> <p>Locate details in a passage.</p> <p>Identify and recall, in chronological order, a series of events in a passage or story.</p> <p>Deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words.</p> <p>Draw inferences from the written material.</p> <p>Describe the feelings, qualities, and motives of a character in a story.</p>
	Writing	<p>Using proper layout—indentations, spacing, and stanza form—for songs and poetry.</p> <p>Using capital letters properly: the first word in a sentence and proper names.</p> <p>Ability to identify and use punctuation marks to express different thoughts and feelings in reading and writing.</p>
	Fluency	<p>Ability to read words in rapid succession.</p> <p>Ability to read a series of sounds in succession.</p> <p>Reading at a pace sufficient for comprehension.</p> <p>Reading with expression to convey meaning.</p> <p>Ability to read according to different texts.</p>

Source: Adopted from the National Literacy Framework (2013: 11)

## 2.4.2 Scope and sequence Chart of the Zambia National Literacy Framework

Ministry of Education (2013), furthermore, guides all teachers to follow the following specific literacy outcomes for each component in the National Literacy Framework, as shown in Table 2 below:

*Table 2: Literacy instruction specific outcomes for grade 1- National literacy framework*

Component	Literacy specific outcomes for grade 1
Pre- reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Listen to different stories.</li> <li>. Play games to practice left-to-right eye movement and top-down.</li> <li>. Read and interpret the pictures.</li> <li>. Carry out a variety of visual discrimination exercises involving letters, shapes, and objects.</li> <li>. Tell stories, sing, and repeat rhymes.</li> <li>. Demonstrate good reading habits.</li> </ul>
Sounds	<p>Phonemic awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Identify different sounds in a particular language.</li> <li>. Manipulate different sounds.</li> <li>. Distinguish different sounds.</li> </ul> <p>Phonics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Combine letters to form syllables and words.</li> <li>. Blend sounds are represented by more than one letter.</li> </ul>
Word	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Build words from syllables.</li> <li>. Use word boundaries to recognise words.</li> <li>. Use known words to communicate ideas.</li> <li>. Recognise simple words.</li> </ul>
Sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Construct simple sentences using words.</li> <li>. Construct complex sentences using words and phrases..</li> </ul>

Source: Adopted from the National Literacy Framework (2013: 15)

### 2.4.3 Learner competences by the end of primary education

The national literacy framework further guides that learners should exhibit the following competences, shown in Table 3, by the end of their primary education.

*Table 3: Grade level competences as outlined in the national literacy framework*

Level	Competences
Pre	Listening to stories that are told or read by teachers. Communicate in speech in different situations. Perform different oral activities (e.g., poems, songs, storytelling, rhyming). Utter complete words. Make complete sentences.
Grade 1	Show skills in reading initial sounds, i.e., letters, syllables, and words. Demonstrate basic skills in reading and writing common words and sentences. Segment words into syllables.
Grade 2	Demonstrate basic skills in reading and writing short paragraphs. Show understanding of short written texts.
Grade 3	Demonstrate basic skills in reading and writing short paragraphs. Write in script and cursive forms. Write short stories or passages. Comprehend a short story.
Grade 4	Describe various activities, objects, places, actions, and simple processes. Read and comprehend short texts based on different cross-cutting themes.
Grade 5	Demonstrate skills and knowledge to express feelings, thoughts, experiences, and convictions clearly and effectively in speech and writing at this level.
Grade 6	Demonstrate basic skills and knowledge to: Retell a read story. Punctuate simple sentences and short paragraphs. Demonstrate the ability to read a variety of texts with comprehension.

Grade 7	<p>Demonstrate high-level skills, knowledge, and values in a Zambian language to express feelings, thoughts, experiences, and convictions clearly and effectively in speech and writing.</p> <p>Demonstrate high-level skills, knowledge, and values by integrating life skills into academics and challenges in life.</p>
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Source: Adopted from the National Literacy Framework (2013: 6).

#### **2.4.4 National Literacy Framework weekly schedule of literacy Instruction**

Ministry of Education, (2013) gives guidance in the national literacy framework on the schedule to follow when giving literacy instruction to grade one learners. Beginning term one of each academic year, two sounds should be taught in a week (Ministry of Education, 2013). One sound is taught on the first day and revised on the second day. Another sound is introduced on the third day and revised on the fourth day. Friday is for revising all the two sounds that have been taught in that particular week (Ministry of Education , 2013). Activities involved in the lesson are not limited to sound identification tasks, blending of syllables and words, as well as reading and writing simple sentences. There is also a common assessment administered in weeks five and ten during the course of the term. The assessment is based on the sounds taught. Tables 4, 5, and 6 below are a summary of the weekly schedule of instruction for terms one, two, and three.

Table 4: Term 1 weekly schedule of literacy instruction

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Pre- reading/writing	Pre-reading/writing	Pre-reading/writing	Pre-reading/ writing	Pre-reading/ writing
Week 2	Sound a A	Sound e E	Sound i I	Sound o O	Sound u U
Week 3	Introduce sound l L	Revise sound l L	Introduce sound k K	Revise sound k K	Revise work done lL, kK
Week 4	Introduce sound n N	Revise sound n N	Introduce sound b B	Revise sound b B	Revise work done nN, bB
Week 5	Introduce sound s S	Revise sound s S	Revise sound s S	Assessment and remediation	Assessment and remediation
Week 6	Introduce sound m M	Revise sound m M	Introduce sound t T	Revise sound t T	Revise work done m M, t T
Week 7	Introduce sound p P	Revise sound p P	Introduce sound w W	Revise sound w W	Revise sound done p P, w W
Week 8	Introduce sound y Y	Revise sound y Y	Introduce sound h H	Revise sound h H	Revise work done yY, hH
Week 9	Introduce sound j J	Revise sound j J	Introduce sound f F	Revise sound f F	Revise work done j J, f F
Week 10	Introduce sound d D	Revise sound d D	Revise sound d D	Assessment and remediation	Assessment and remediation
Week 11	Introduce sound v V	Revise sound v V	Introduce sound ñ Ñ	Revise sound ñ Ñ	Revise work done v V, ñ Ñ
Week 12	Introduce sound lw, LW	Revise sound lw ,LW	Introduce sound ly, LY	Revise sound ly, LY	Revise work done lw LW, ly LY
Week 13	End of assessment				

Source: National Literacy Framework (2013: 36)

Table 5: Term 2 Weekly schedule of literacy instruction

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Week 1	Introduce sound kw	Revise sound kw	Introduce sound ky	Revise sound ky	Revise work done kw, ky,
Week 2	Introduce sound ch,	Revise sound ch	Introduce sound nd,	Revise sound nd,	Revise work done ch,nd
Week 3	Introduce sound ng	Revise sound ng,	Introduce sound nJ,	Revise sound ng,	Revise work done ng, nj
Week 4	Introduce sound nk,	Revise sound nk,	Introduce sound ns,	Revise sound ns,	Revise work done nk , ns
Week 5	Introduce sound ny	Revise sound ny	Revise work done ny	Assessment and remediation	Assessment and remediation
Week 6	Introduce sound nw	Revise sound nw	Introduce sound nz	Revise sound nz	Revise work done nw, nz
Week 7	Introduce sound bb,	Revise sound bb,	Introduce sound bw,	Revise sound bw,	Revise work done bb, bw
Week 8	Introduce sound by	Revise sound by	Introduce sound mb	Revise sound mb	Revise work done by, mb
Week 9	Introduce letter sound mf	Revise sound mf	Introduce sound mm	Revise sound mm	Revise work done mf, mm
Week 10	Introduce sound mv	Revise sound mv	Revise sound Mv	Assessment and remediation	Assessment and remediation
Week 11	Introduce sound mw	Revise sound mw	Introduce sound mp	Revise sound mp	Revise work done mw, mp
Week 12	Introduce sound my	Revise sound my	Introduce sound tw	Revise sound tw	Revise work done my, tw
Week 13	End of term assessment.				

Source: National Literacy Framework (2013: 37)

Table 6: Term 3 weekly schedule of literacy instruction

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Introduce sound pw	Revise sound pw	Introduce sound py	Revise sound py	Revise work done pw, py
Week 2	Introduce sound sw	Revise sound sw	Introduce sound fw	Revise sound fw	Revise work done sw,
Week 3	Introduce sound fy	Revise sound fy	Introduce sound vy	Revise sound vy	Revise work done fy, vy
Week 4	Introduce sound vw	Revise sound vw	Introduce sound ñw	Revise sound ñn	Revise work done vw, ñw
Week 5	Introduce sound zh	Revise sound zh	Introduce sound zh	Assessment	Assessment and remediation
Week 6	Introduce sound zw	Revise sound zw	Introduce sound nn	Revise sound nn	Revise work done zw, nn
Week 7	Introduce sound nch	Revise sound nch	Introduce sound ndw	Revise sound ndw	Revise work done nch, ndw
Week 8	Introduce sound ngw	Revise sound ngw	Introduce sound ngy	Revise sound ngy	Revise work done ngw, ngy
Week 9	Introduce sound nkw	Revise sound nkw	Introduce sound nky, mpw	Revise sound nky, mpw	Revise sound nkw, nky, mpw
Week 10	Introduce sound nny, nzw	Revise sound nny, nzw	Revise sound mny, nzw	Assessment and remediation	Assessment and remediation
Week 11	Introduce sound nsh, mby	Revise sound nsh, mby	Introduce sound nsw, mmy	Revise sound nsw, mmy	Revise work done nsh, mby, nsw, mmy
Week 12	Introduce sound ntw, mpy	Revise sound ntw, mpy	Introduce sound nzh, mvw	Revise sound nzh, mvw	Revise work done ntw, mpy, nzh, mvw
Week 13	End of term assessment				

Source: National Literacy Framework (2013: 38)

#### **2.4.5 Impact of the National Literacy Framework on Education in Zambia**

The national literacy framework has had a significant impact on education in Zambia, and one of them has to do with investment in education by the government. Meki Kombe and Herman (2017) state that there has been an increase in investment in education by government allocating 20 percent of the total country budget towards education. The investment in education, however, has not translated into better learning outcomes in primary education. This is because, among others, there is a critical shortage of learning materials such as textbooks in both English and local languages. Ninety-one percent of schools in Zambia lack textbooks, and six learners on average share a textbook despite the huge investment in education (Meki Kombe & Herman, 2017). This shortage of learning materials has a negative effect on the quality of curriculum delivery as teachers are forced to rely on teacher-centred approaches. The national literacy framework, in addressing this issue, recommends investment in more sophisticated and computerised information management systems that can help improve the planning, management, and monitoring of textbook production and distribution.

Banja and Mulenga (2019), adding their voices to the aspect of learning materials, state that the national literacy framework also emphasises the importance of teacher preparation and involvement in curriculum development. This is mainly because teachers are considered key stakeholders in the successful implementation of the framework, and their active participation in the development of the curriculum is critical. The framework ensures that the content is relevant, engaging, and aligned with the needs of both the learner and teacher, thus involving teachers in the development of the curriculum materials. This is based on the framework's understanding that well-prepared and well-supported teachers are essential in promoting literacy instruction.

Mangwaya et al. (2013) state that the involvement of teachers in curriculum development aligns with its goal of promoting task-based learning in literacy instruction. Teachers are urged and encouraged to create their own tasks that address challenges that may arise during literacy instruction. The task-based instruction approach does not only empower teachers to design instruction that meets the different needs of the learners but also encourages a sense of ownership and commitment to the teaching and learning process.

The national literacy framework in Zambia, overall, continues to have a significant impact on the country's education as it gives guidance on the need to improve access to learning materials, enhance teacher preparation, and promote effective literacy instruction. The framework, therefore, by addressing these critical components, strives to create a supportive and conducive learning environment that not only empowers students to develop their literacy skills but also actively participates in society.

#### **2.4.5.1 Advantages and challenges of using the National Literacy Framework**

There are several advantages and challenges of using the national Literacy Framework which this section highlights. Gutiérrez (2009) states that the advantages of using a national literacy framework include, among others, providing a standardised approach to literacy instruction, promoting the development of essential literacy skills, and ensuring consistency and coherence across schools. The framework also provides a clear road map for teachers, guiding them in their instructional practices and helping them to align their teaching with national standards. Wolf et al. (2018), furthermore, state that the framework incorporates evidence-based practices and considers contextual factors, allowing for flexibility and adaptation to specific cultural and linguistic contexts.

The implementation of the national literacy framework is not without challenges. Joubert et al. (2014) mention challenges such as the need for adequate teacher training and support to effectively implement the framework, especially in rural areas where resources may be limited. Piper et al. (2018) also add that there may be resistance and even reluctance from the teachers and other stakeholders who are used to traditional teaching methods. On-going professional development opportunities, the provision of the necessary resources and materials, and creating a supportive and collaborative environment where teachers can share best practices and learn from one another are required to address these challenges. It is also imperative to address the challenge of limited access to quality books and resources. It is also worth noting that improving access to quality textbooks and education materials in general is essential to maximising the impact of the national literacy framework. It is also worth noting that the combination of many schools, varying geographical accessibility, and differing language needs makes it challenging to manage the distribution of textbooks and other instructional materials on a manual basis.

#### **2.4.6 Role of teachers in literacy instruction using the national literacy framework**

Teachers play a crucial role in literacy instruction because they give literacy instruction to learners, using the national literacy framework. Shanahan (2005) states that teachers are responsible for implementing the framework and providing instruction that promotes the development of literacy skills. Blair et al. (2007) also state that teachers play a cardinal role in ensuring that learners attend to the learning tasks, believing in their teaching abilities, and expecting learners to be successful. Teachers, therefore, should be knowledgeable about the components of effective reading instruction as outlined in the national literacy framework. Rupley et al. (2009), furthermore, mention that teachers should have a deep understanding of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling instruction. Teachers should, in addition to what has been stated, be trained in evidence-based instructional strategies and techniques that have proven to support reading development. Blair et al. (2007) also add that teachers should receive continuous professional development to stay up-to-date with best practices in literacy instruction. This includes, among others, being strategic in planning, creating a conducive atmosphere for learning, and motivating learners to actively participate in learning activities such as reading comprehension (Blair et al., 2007).

##### **2.4.6.1 Policy recommendations for improving literacy instruction**

Teachers play a crucial role in literacy instruction using the national literacy framework as they are the implementers of literacy programmes. Shanahan (2005) states that teachers are responsible for implementing the framework and providing instruction that promotes the development of literacy skills. Blair et al. (2007) also state that teachers play a cardinal role in ensuring that learners attend to the learning tasks, believing in their teaching abilities, and expecting learners to be successful. Teachers, therefore, should be knowledgeable about the components of effective reading instruction as outlined in the national literacy framework. Rupley et al. (2009), furthermore, mention that teachers should have a deep understanding of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and spelling instruction. Teachers should, in addition to what has been stated, be trained in evidence-based instructional strategies and techniques that have proven to support reading development. Blair et al. (2007) also add that teachers should receive continuous professional development to stay up-to-date with best practices in literacy instruction. This includes, among others, being strategic in

planning, creating a conducive atmosphere for learning, and motivating learners to actively participate in learning activities such as reading comprehension (Blair et al., 2007).

#### **2.4.6.2 Comparative analysis: Zambia's National Literacy Framework and Global Trends**

The literature reviewed indicated that the Zambia National Literacy Framework aligns with global trends and priorities in literacy instruction. The framework emphasises the importance of early childhood development and recognises that literacy begins early and is built upon throughout one's life span (Gutiérrez, 2009). It also highlights the role of language in organising and interfacing with multiple development domains, reflecting the understanding that literacy development is intertwined with other cognitive and behavioural competencies (Dickinson et al., 2012). Additionally, the framework acknowledges the importance of a balanced approach to literacy instruction, incorporating both explicit skills-based instruction and authentic, meaningful reading and writing experiences (Wolf et al., 2018).

#### **2.5 Challenges in Implementing Mother Tongue Literacy Programmes Around the World**

There are challenges in implementing mother-tongue literacy programmes due to a variety of factors. Some of these challenges include the limited availability of materials in the mother tongue, making it difficult to find appropriate instructional materials. Nurdiana (2022) also notes that the scarcity of qualified teachers proficient in teaching in the mother tongue poses an obstacle to the implementation of effective literacy programmes in some parts of the world. This is mainly because these unqualified teachers are unable to use various teaching approaches and culturally responsive practices in mother-tongue instruction. Furthermore, learners, too, are unable to receive the necessary support to develop their language and literacy skills.

Kim and Davidson (2019), adding to the challenges, state that the lack of standardised assessments and evaluation tools for mother tongue literacy proficiency presents challenges in measuring learners' progress and identifying areas for improvement. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of instructional methods and tailor interventions to meet learners' specific needs without a consistent framework for evaluating literacy development in the mother tongue.

The complex linguistic landscape and multilingual setting present yet another challenge in implementing mother-tongue literacy programmes. Bhowmik and Kim (2021) suggest that this

could be overcome when administrators and teachers navigate the diverse linguistic backgrounds of learners and address the unique challenges of each individual while at the same time promoting inclusiveness and equity in the learning space.

Studies have been undertaken around the world and in Africa regarding challenges facing teachers in implementing literacy programmes at all levels. Dewi et al. (2022) conducted a study in which they sought to describe challenges faced by teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in implementing school literacy programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. A sample of four EFL junior high school teachers was interviewed using semi-structured interviews in a descriptive qualitative study. A qualitative approach to data analysis was used, and the findings of the study revealed that teachers faced challenges in implementing the school literacy programme because of their lack of understanding of the programme, challenges in time management, being technologically illiterate, an inadequate source of online reading, and students lack interest in reading. The study stated above differs from the present study geographically and in the level at which teachers faced challenges in implementing the literacy programme. Secondly, while semi-structured interviews were used in the study, the study did not consider implementation challenges related to student learning in the actual classroom situation. The present study aims to ascertain, among others, the implementation challenges of the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) using semi-structured interviews with teachers and lesson observations of literacy lessons.

Anthony (2023) also conducted a study in Ghana aimed at identifying challenges teachers faced in teaching literacy skills among kindergarteners and how the identified challenges impeded their smooth teaching. The study was an ethnography, and data were gathered through semi-structured interview guides. Twelve participants, purposively sampled, participated in the interviews. Content and thematic analysis procedures were used to analyse the gathered data. Findings from the study revealed that teachers encountered challenges related to inadequate instructional resources, large class sizes, insufficient in-service training and continuous professional development programmes, learning disorders, and an absence of supportive adults in the lives of kindergarteners. The two scholars recommend that headteachers and the local district education directorate organise in-service training for teachers so that they are exposed to literacy, instructional skills, and managing large classes. The study by Anthony informed

our present study on the challenges that impeded the effective teaching of literacy. However, it differs from the present study in the geographical location of the study as well as the level of learners. Findings from the present study will add to the body of knowledge in literacy instruction as well as inform policymakers on the implementation challenges facing teachers in the teaching of literacy.

Professionals have suggested a number of ways to deal with some of the challenges highlighted above. Khati (2010) urges teachers to develop a collaborative learning environment and give different learning activities to learners according to their different levels while at the same time ensuring that they are involved in the learning process. This entails teachers planning well for the lesson, managing their classes effectively, and monitoring learners' behaviour (Nikam & Ambekar, 2016).

The importance of training and capacity-building teachers in literacy teaching cannot be over emphasised. Lane et al. (2014) states that kindergarteners whose teachers have been trained to teach early literacy skills have improved literacy development. Therefore, early childhood teachers should receive training and undergo professional development in order to build their capacity for effective literacy instructional methods. Lerner and Lonigan (2016) conclude in their study that where teachers exhibited competency in early literacy pedagogy, learners performed better in early literacy assessments than those taught by less knowledgeable teachers. Nurdiana (2022) also suggests that teachers should be offered targeted training and professional development opportunities to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and proficiency in teaching in the mother tongue. This training should focus on, but not be limited to, diverse teaching approaches, culturally responsive practices, and the effective use of available resources to support literacy development.

It is also important for teachers and other stakeholders involved in literacy education to create culturally inclusive learning environments. Hilliker and Washburn (2021) suggest that creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that celebrate linguistic diversity and provide a platform for students to share their cultural experiences can significantly contribute to their sense of belonging and motivation to engage in literacy education in their mother tongue.

Teachers and learning institutions can work together to implement the above-stated strategies in order to overcome the challenges associated with mother tongue literacy programmes and

promote effective language and literacy development in different linguistic and cultural contexts. These efforts not only support academic growth among learners but also promote their cultural identities and heritage.

### **2.5.1 Challenges Teaching Literacy in Zambia**

There have been several challenges that teachers have been facing in teaching literacy. Kombe and Mwanza (2019) highlight challenges such as lack of teaching and learning materials, inadequate training by policymakers, rigidity on the part of those monitoring policy implementation, translation of literacy content from English to local languages, absenteeism by learners, and inadequate time to teach the stipulated sounds, as discussed in detail below.

The primary literacy programme and the current literacy programme being implemented did not come with the required material for teaching and learning (Kombe & Mwanza, 2014). Meki Kombe and Herman (2017), adding their voice to the same state that the Ministry of Education rolled out the revised literacy policy before they distributed materials to use. This scenario presented difficulties to teachers who were unable to teach literacy instruction effectively. Although the materials have been rolled out in recent years, the book-to-pupil book ratio still remains a challenge, as learners are still required to share these materials, especially in urban areas where the number of learners in a class still remains high. Mwanza (2012), in his study, reports the lack of teaching and learning materials as a factor hindering the effective teaching and learning of literacy.

There was a general concern that teachers had inadequate time to complete the one-hour literacy lesson (Kombe & Mwanza, 2014). An understanding of a grade one literacy lesson as outlined in the teacher's guide is cardinal. The lesson is outlined in stages as follows:

- a. Objectives: Teach the letter sound of the day.
- b. Learning outcomes include learners identifying and sounding out the phoneme of the day correctly, segmenting and blending sounds with vowels to form syllables and using syllables to form words, reading and relating the syllables and words to their sounds, and answering questions based on the story read.
- c. Introduction: The introduction of the lesson should take five minutes. The teacher reads a story to the learners aloud and asks a few questions orally. The oral questions are related to the sound being taught that day. The teacher then introduces the sound (phoneme) of

the day. The teacher demonstrates one or more phonemic awareness activities, depending on the level of the learners. Learners are requested to practice the phonemic awareness activities, emphasising the beginning and end sounds, identifying the odd one out, and blending and substituting sounds. The phonemic awareness activity part should take five minutes.

- d. **Development: Phonics:** The teacher revises all the vowels, the sounds learned from the previous day, and some of the syllables from the previous lesson. Some of the activities learners are involved in include identifying words or pictures beginning with particular sounds or syllables, teachers pointing at syllables at random, and learners sounding them out. The teacher then writes the new letter introduced in the phonemic awareness activity in both lower and upper case on the board or chart. The teacher also brings in both long and short vowels revised on that day. Learners are asked to give examples of words that begin with the sound of the day. The teacher can also sound some words and ask learners how many times they hear the sound of the day in the word. The teacher then blends the sound of the day (consonant) with a vowel (/m+a/ = /ma/) and thereafter asks learners to blend the consonant with each of the vowels. The phonics activities should take 20 minutes.
- e. **Fluency Activities:** The fluency activities should take eight minutes and involve teachers writing the syllables on the board in random order (pu, pa, pi, pe, pu) and learners practicing decoding them. Learners are thereafter requested to blend the syllables into either words or nonsense words, such as "pepi," meaning near in Kikaonde, a Zambian language, or "pepu," a nonsense word. The teacher's guide encourages the teacher to allow learners to do these activities in pairs or groups.
- f. **Vocabulary activities:** These activities should take eight minutes. These activities involve the teacher and learners revising or going through some of the words previously learned. The teacher, using flash cards or written words in random order, dictates these words for learners to read and pronounce.
- g. **Writing:** The writing activities take eight minutes. The teacher demonstrates on the chalkboard how to form a letter correctly, and learners practice writing the letter of the day. This activity is aimed at promoting handwriting. Another activity aimed at promoting independent writing involves the teacher requesting learners to write syllables

and words dictated by the teacher, drawing and labelling pictures beginning with the sound of the day, filling in the blank spaces in words with the missing sounds or syllables, and in later stages, writing sentences or short paragraphs.

- h. Comprehension: listening comprehension involves teachers reading a short story to the learners and asking questions during or after reading.
- i. The conclusion of the lesson involves learners practicing what they have learned that particular day.

The above-stated is the suggested literacy lesson format (CDC, 2014). Kombe and Mwanza (2019) found in their study that most teachers were unable to teach the stipulated sounds of the day because of limited time. The teachers who participated in their study stated that the literacy hour was not adequate to teach all the steps as outlined and guided by the Ministry of Education. The other challenge related to teaching was that most of the learners were unable to grasp the two sounds in one week. This adversely affected the curriculum coverage as teachers were made to repeat the lessons as remedial work.

Kombe and Mwanza (2014) and Nalwimba (2019), all state that some of the teachers were not trained in the literacy programme, and this affected the implementation. This is mainly because some of these teachers were not in school at the time of the training. Despite being trained by the school in-service coordinator (SIC), some of them were still unable to effectively teach literacy.

Some of the other challenges experienced by teachers were the non-involvement of primary school headteachers in the development of the curriculum ((Nalwimba, 2019). This meant that teachers never owned the literacy programme, and their role was to simply implement a programme they did not take part in. There was also a general over enrolment of grade one learners in urban schools, making it difficult for teachers to give individual attention to learners (Nalwimba, 2019). Furthermore, the bad attitude of parents towards local language learning had an influence on the learners' attitude towards learning (Nalwimba, 2019).

Mwanza (2012) and Gonçalves (2019) add that there may have been a shortage of trained teachers who were proficient in the various Zambian languages, leading to a mismatch between the language of instruction and the languages spoken by the learners. This meant that teachers were using other languages other than the medium of instruction used in the area.

The challenges in the teaching of literacy since the implementation of the literacy programme in 2014 have been highlighted. Most of the scholars who highlighted the challenges conducted their research in places outside Solwezi. Most of them used case studies whose findings could not be generalised to other places. It is important to ascertain the unique challenges teachers in Solwezi are facing in teaching literacy using the primary literacy programme, which is one of the main interests of this study.

## **2.6 Research gap**

Reviewed literature around the world and in Africa evidently shows that teacher pedagogical knowledge is cardinal and impacts positively on the learning of the child. Literature reviewed around the globe and in Africa has also highlighted, among others, literacy teaching methods and approaches, factors influencing the teacher's choice of instructional methods, the impact of pedagogical knowledge on literacy outcomes, and challenges in implementing mother tongue literacy programmes around the world. The major gap in the reviewed literature is the shortage of studies exploring literacy pedagogy and establishing teacher pedagogical knowledge in grade one classrooms, specifically in Zambia. Furthermore, few studies which have sought to establish the reasons for teachers' choices of instructional methods used in the teaching of literacy have been conducted in Zambia. Additionally, few studies have been conducted in Zambia to ascertain if the teaching of literacy is in line with the National literacy framework. These are the research oversights that the current study addressed.

## **2.7 Chapter Summary**

Chapter two reviewed literature on the pedagogical knowledge of teachers in literacy teaching in mother tongues, the impact of pedagogical knowledge on literacy teaching, factors influencing teachers' choices of literacy instructional methods and challenges facing teachers in implementing literacy programmes in the world and Africa. Furthermore, literature has been reviewed on the National Literacy Framework in relation to literacy components, scope and sequence, schedule of instruction and literacy instructional methods. The research gap emanating from the reviewed literature has been presented.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Overview

The constructivist theory of learning guided this study. The theory was used to frame and analyse the findings of the study. Language learning was theorised from a teaching perspective, and aspects of it were applied in this study. The theory helped the research establish pedagogical that teachers used to teach literacy instruction in grade one classrooms in Solwezi District, Zambia. The theory was also used to make sense of the pedagogical practices going on in the classrooms and then relate those practices to literacy development in primary schools in Solwezi District.

#### 3.2 The constructivism theory of learning

Alanazi (2016) as well as Koochang et al. (2009), make the observation that the constructivism theory of learning regard learners as capable of constructing their own knowledge through interacting with the environment and others socially as well as building on their prior experiences. Learners use the prior experience acquired through interactions with the environment they live in and with others when they come across new knowledge.

The understanding of the theory is not different from that of another scholar, who posits that learning is an active process involving the learners' engagement with the material and their environment (Kaufman, 2004). Gilakjani et al. (2013), adding to the understanding of the theory, mention that constructivism is rooted in the idea that individuals or learners actively construct their own ways of thinking through interactions with their experiences, a view not different from others. Janelli (2018) as well as Splan et al. (2011) state that constructivism is characterised by the belief that learners actively construct their knowledge as a result of their experiences, which is also applicable to other types of learning, such as e-learning. The theory of learning emphasises, too, the importance of hands-on experiences and social interactions in the learning process (Saudelli, 2015). The constructivist theory of learning is a theory that regards learning as an active process in which learners select and transform the information teachers teach during literacy lessons. This definition sums up the different understandings of the theory from the different perspectives of the scholars above.

### **3.2.1 Constructivism proponents**

Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky are the main proponents behind the constructivism theory of learning. Ültanir (2012) states that Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, proposed that children actively construct their understanding of the world through interaction with their peers as well as the environment they live in. Piaget, who is widely known for his work on cognitive development in children and the progression of children's thinking as they mature, emphasises the role that experience and interaction play in shaping their knowledge (Ültanir, 2012). Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki (2019) states that Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, focused on the influence of social interactions on cognitive development and introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development, which refers to the range of tasks that a learner can perform with the assistance of others (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). Vygotsky also suggests the importance of social interactions and cultural influences in shaping a person's cognitive abilities. The work of the two psychologists has significantly contributed to the shaping of the constructivism theory of learning, how individuals construct knowledge, and the role of social interaction in learning.

### **3.2.2 Constructivism theory of learning tenets**

There are several tenets of the constructivist theory of learning namely, collaborative learning, authentic learning, active learning, and scaffolding (Gupta, 2011), which are discussed in detail below.

Collaborative learning is one of the tenets of constructivism. Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005) refer collaborative learning to learning that allows learners to develop, compare, and understand multiple perspectives on an issue and come up with a consensus while sharing a workload. The aspect of comparing, developing, and understanding multiple perspectives on an issue involves the participation of all learners, making them deeply understand the task at hand. Furthermore, through collaborative learning, learners actively construct their own ways of thinking through their interactions with their experiences (Gilakjani et al., 2013). Teachers, to achieve what has already been stated, are therefore encouraged to create a learning environment that allows learners to explore and discover knowledge through hands-on activities and group discussions, for example. This approach to learning also emphasises the importance of providing meaningful and authentic learning experiences that connect with the learners' existing knowledge and experiences (Van de Pol et al., 2010). Teachers understanding

of literacy pedagogy is therefore cardinal, as they help learners deeply understand literacy concepts and tasks as they collaborate in the classroom.

Authentic learning is another tenet of the constructivist theory of learning (Cey, 2001). Authentic learning is designed to facilitate, simulate, and recreate real-life occurrences (ibid., 2001). Constructivist teachers should, therefore, present real-life situations that can motivate learners to engage in a given task. The authentic situations help learners to react actively because they are familiar with them. Authentic learning, in this study, has to do with the type of materials that are given to learners and whether or not these reflect real situations that can motivate them to be engaged in activities such as shared reading, guided reading, and phonics learning.

Active learning is yet another tenet of constructivism-based learning. Dagar and Yadav (2016) state that a large percentage of time should be spent on learner-centred activities in a constructivist classroom. A learner-centred classroom enables learners to actively construct new knowledge based on prior experiences (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997; Splan et al., 2011). The role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning process by offering guidance. The role of the teacher is to scaffold the learners. Scaffolding is the support and guidance that teachers give to learners as they go about working on challenging tasks (Terwel, 1999). This assistance rendered to learners leads to the development of critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, learners begin to apply knowledge acquired in real-world contexts among themselves. The process of scaffolding learners requires teachers who have a good understanding of literacy pedagogy.

### **3.2.3 Constructivist classrooms**

There are several ways in which constructivism can be implemented in a classroom situation. One method is by project-based learning. Learners can engage in real-world projects that require them to apply their knowledge and skills to solve authentic problems (Dagar & Yadav, 2016). Project-based learning activities align with the constructivist idea of learning through hands-on experience and provide opportunities for learners to collaborate and engage in meaningful social interactions.

Constructivist learning can also be promoted in a classroom by incorporating cooperative learning activities, which allow learners work together in groups as they undertake group tasks

(Xuefen & Gang, 2010). Cooperative learning activities promote interaction and collaboration among the learners. This collaboration and cooperation enable learners to learn from each other as they construct knowledge. The use of open-ended questions helps to stimulate their critical thinking skills thereby helping them to explore different options and solutions (Richardson, 2003). This open-ended question approach challenges learners to actively construct their understanding of the material and prompts them to articulate their thought processes, ultimately fostering a deeper level of learning.

Harris and Graham (1994) also state that technology can be used to support constructivist learning in classrooms by providing interactive simulations, multimedia resources, and online collaborative platforms that enable students to engage with the material in dynamic and immersive ways.

Incorporating these strategies and approaches in the classroom can help teachers create a constructivist learning environment that promotes active engagement, social interaction, and the construction of meaningful knowledge.

#### **3.2.4 Strengths and weaknesses of the constructivism theory**

The constructivist approach to learning offers several strengths that make it ideal for literacy education. Vogel-Walcutt et al. (2010) states that one of the strengths of the constructivist theory of learning lies in its emphasis on active engagement and the construction of knowledge among learners, which can result in deeper understanding and long-term retention of information. The involvement of learners in hands-on activities, collaborative projects, and interactive discussions through constructivist learning promotes a deeper level of involvement and ownership of the construction of knowledge. Yakar et al. (2020), furthermore, opines that the theory of learning promotes the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as learners are actively involved in making sense of new information based on their prior experiences. Constructivism recognises the individuality of each learner's cognitive structure and encourages teachers to create learning experiences that resonate with learners' existing understanding, thus making the learning process more relevant and impactful. Furthermore, learners' engagement in activities that require analysis, synthesis, and evaluation assists them in developing higher-order thinking skills, which are essential for success in the academic, professional, and personal domains. Gao et al. (2013) also mention that the social nature of

constructivism fosters the development of communication and collaboration skills. They state that activities such as group work, discussions, and cooperative projects enable learners to have the opportunity to express their ideas, listen to other learners' perspectives, and work collectively to construct knowledge, mirroring real-world social and professional interactions.

Even though constructivism has a number of strengths, acknowledging its potential weaknesses in educational settings is very important. Alanazi (2016) raises one concern related to the potential for a lack of structure and guidance in learner-directed environments. He is of the view that, without clear parameters and directions, some learners may require more explicit instruction to scaffold their learning effectively.

Gordon (2009) states that the constructivist approach has the possibility of overlooking foundational knowledge and essential concepts. There is an opinion that there is a risk that as learners engage in inquiry-based learning, they may not acquire a solid understanding of important principles, more so in subjects where foundational knowledge is crucial for advanced learning.

Carifio and Perla (2010) also state that the emphasis on collaborative learning in constructivism can pose a challenge in managing group dynamics and ensuring equitable participation as some students dominate discussions and projects while others struggle to contribute meaningfully, and this leads to disparities in the learning experiences and outcomes. In line with technology, the reliance on it and other multimedia resources in a constructivist classroom can lead to challenges in accessibility and equity because not all learners may have equal access to technological tools or be proficient in utilising them (Meyer, 2009). This potentially widens the gap in learning opportunities and experiences.

Another weakness of constructivism is the challenge of assessing and evaluating the learning outcomes, since the focus is on the individual construction of knowledge, which may not align with standardised assessment methods (Vogel-Walcutt et al., 2010). Gijbels and Loyens (2009), commenting on the weaknesses of the theory, state that there are limitations in applying constructivist approaches to certain learning environments because they heavily rely on social interactions, which do not always address the individual learning differences of learners. Henze (2009) also states the approach's focus on open-ended exploration and inquiry may pose challenges in standardised assessment and accountability, as traditional assessment methods

designed for structured content and predefined outcomes may not fully capture the depth of learning and skill development fostered by constructivist practice.

### **3.2.5 Implications of the constructivist approaches to literacy education**

The constructivist theory of learning has a number of implications for literacy instruction. The first one is that learners should be actively involved and collaborate with others during the literacy lessons (Harris & Graham, 1994). Constructivist classrooms are often characterised by hands-on activities, problem-solving tasks, and opportunities for learners to construct their own understanding through exploration and reflection. Therefore, the teacher should use all methods and approaches that ensure the active participation of learners.

Secondly, teachers should assist learners in learning how to read by engaging in several literacy activities until this assistance is no longer needed. It is also required that teachers possess knowledge of various literacy methods and approaches if they are to assist learners in building their knowledge of reading.

Another implication worth mentioning is that any literacy instruction given to learners should be appropriate to their level. Therefore, the teacher should plan and prepare suitable materials for reading according to the learners' level. Additionally, the material presented to learners should be presented in a sequence so that they are able to construct new knowledge as they learn to read and build words. Furthermore, teachers should have a better understanding of literacy pedagogy, as this can enable them to teach literacy effectively, thus promoting literacy development.

### **3.3 Conceptual Framework**

This section discusses the conceptual framework which was used in the study. Reinchel and Ramey (1987) define a conceptual framework as “a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of inquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation”. Conceptual frameworks play a number of roles in a study. Kombo and Tromp (2006) state that conceptual frameworks assist researchers to understand and become aware of the situation under investigation and this helps them make meanings of the findings. Jabareen (2009), adding on to the roles, states that conceptual frameworks define the essential concepts, variables and relationships to be investigated meaning that they establish the basis on which a study is built.

Furthermore, they help researchers in shaping their studies by incorporating important theories and concepts (Ukwoma, 2021).

Conceptual frameworks have several benefits to a study. Oliver et al. (2017), discussing one of the benefits says that well-structured conceptual frameworks help in organising the research process. They also enable researchers to delve deeply into the subject matter by integrating key concepts and theories which facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the study at hand. Furthermore, they assist researchers to interpret findings and shape systematic reviews because they offer a structured approach to research (Oliver et al., 2017).

A conceptual framework should possess certain qualities. Some of the qualities of an effective conceptual framework is that the language used by a researcher should be simple and straight forward, it should be clear and concise, self- explanatory and be consistent with the literature review (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Following Reinchel and Ramey's (1987) definition of a conceptual framework as "a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of inquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation", this study utilizes five broad concepts namely pedagogical knowledge, pedagogy, literacy development and language learning.

#### **a. Pedagogical knowledge**

Pedagogical knowledge is one of the concepts which was used in this study. Baumert et al. (2010) defines pedagogical knowledge as teachers knowledge that encompasses the specific learning and instructional processes and includes content knowledge (CK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) and generic content knowledge. Laura et al. (2022) adding their voices to the definition regard it as knowledge that encompass various aspects such as lesson planning, student learning, classroom management and assessment. This particular type of knowledge is derived from content and pedagogical knowledge and shaped by the teachers teaching experience. The relevance of this concept to the present study is that it helps us understand the components of teachers' expertise which plays an important role in effective literacy instruction as well as overall teaching quality which is the focus of this study.

## **b. Pedagogy**

Pedagogy is another concept which was used in the study. Pedagogy refers to the relationships and interactions between teachers, students, the learning environment and the learning tasks (Murphy et al., 2012). Pedagogy in teaching reflects societal values and beliefs about learning (Alexander, 2008). Healthy relations and interactions between teachers, learners and the environment promote language learning and literacy development. The use of effective pedagogy enables teachers to choose the right and comprehensive input for the learners. Furthermore, interactions between teachers and learners in school results into positive learning outcomes because the teacher knows the needs of learners and understands their weaknesses. The relevance of this concept to this study is that it explains the relationships and interactions between teachers, students and learning tasks which are critical to literacy development.

## **c. Language learning**

Language learning was another concept which was used in this study. Kramiņa (1999) defines language learning as a conscious process and a product of either formal or informal learning. Formal learning requires that teachers assist learners to learn a language until this help is no longer needed. Several theories explain language learning. Behaviourists explain language learning as habit formation and an act of building an association (Schlinger Jr, 2011)). Cognitive psychologists explain language learning as a skill that involves mental operations of thinking and attaching meaning to the forms learnt (Chomsky, 1968). The concept was relevant to this study as it gives insights on how learners learn, and the processes involved in language learning.

## **d. Literacy development**

Literacy development was another concept used in the conceptual framework. Breadmore et al. (2019) describes literacy development as the process of learning words, sounds and language. Knowledge of literacy development processes help us to know the skills and knowledge that a child needs to have in order to read and write effectively.

## **3.4 Chapter Summary**

The constructivist theory of learning, the theory that guided the present study has been presented. The major tenets of the theory of learning as well as its application and impact to

literacy education were highlighted. Furthermore, a conceptual framework for the study was presented. Chapter four, the next chapter, presents the methodology of this present study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology of this study. Firstly, the term research methodology and its importance will be discussed. Thereafter, the research approach adopted in this study will be discussed. This will be followed by discussing the research paradigm adopted in this study, the research design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques. A description of the schools and teachers selected in the study and the setting of the study will be presented. This will be followed by presenting data collection methods, instruments used, data analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter summary will be presented.

Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) define research methodology as a systematic process that involves the techniques, procedures, and tools used to gather and interpret data, ensuring the validity and reliability of research findings. Duan et al. (2014) state that the main aim of research methodology is to lay out a structured framework for researchers to conduct studies effectively, ensuring that the research is well-designed, rigorous, and capable of producing valid and reliable results. The application of appropriate research methodologies enables researchers to address specific research questions, select the most informative study units for observational studies, and obtain valid answers to research inquiries (Smajic et al., 2022).

Research methodology has a number of uses. Firstly, it acts as a guide for researchers to navigate the difficulties of the research process. Levac et al. (2010) state that it aids in clarifying the research purpose and questions, balancing feasibility with comprehensiveness, selecting appropriate data collection methods, and analysing and reporting results effectively. Suri and Clarke (2009), additionally, state that research methodology plays a crucial role in advancing knowledge synthesis methods, disseminating research knowledge, and shaping further research, policy practice, and public perception. Francis et al. (2019), adding their voice to its importance, state that it also assists in developing collaborative research methodologies tailored for specific fields such as humanitarian supply chains, ensuring that the research process is systematic and empirical.

Research methodology is also vital for strengthening the rigour and clarity of research studies. Caelli et al. (2003), commenting on the same, state that it allows researchers to justify their chosen methods, align them with the research question, and ensure that the research design fits the purpose of the study. The incorporation of different methodologies enables researchers to strengthen their conclusions, avoid overinterpreting, and improve the assessment process, leading to more substantiated research outcomes (Engström et al., 2021). Peters et al. (2015), also opine that research methodology aids in developing integrative research approaches for sustainability science, framing research designs effectively, and addressing research gaps through systematic scoping reviews.

Research methodology, in conclusion, is a fundamental aspect of the research process, guiding researchers in designing, conducting, and interpreting studies effectively. Its main role is to ensure that research is conducted systematically, rigorously, and with quality, ultimately contributing to the advancement of knowledge in various fields.

There are three main types of research methodological approaches, namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, that are used in social science research. Creswell and Creswell (2017) holds that while quantitative research is the opposite of qualitative research in terms of theory, knowledge claim, and practice, the mixed method approach combines and harmonises the two. The three approaches are discussed below, and a justification is made regarding the choice of the research approach used in the present study.

#### **4.1 Research approach**

This section discusses the research approach and the reasons for adopting the approach. This study adopted the qualitative research approach. Discussing the research approach used in this study is important because it assisted the researcher to choose the appropriate research design for the study.

Teherani et al. (2015) define the qualitative approaches a systematic inquiry into social phenomena such as how people experience certain aspects of their lives, their behaviour, and their relationships, among others, in natural settings. Creswell and Creswell (2017) define qualitative research as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The qualitative approach focuses on phenomena that occur in natural settings and is studied in all its complexity (Leedy, 2005). The

natural setting can include classrooms and schools, among others. It is descriptive in nature, and the data collected takes the form of words, pictures, interview transcripts, and quotations rather than numbers (Teherani et al., 2015). Qualitative approaches are concerned with processes rather than outcomes, how different people make sense meaning in their lives, and the data collected is analysed inductively (Teherani et al., 2015). Other features of qualitative approaches are that general questions are asked as opposed to hypotheses, there is a use of verbal description to portray the situation under study, and researchers interact with participants and immerse themselves in the complexity of the situation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

Qualitative research has a number of advantages that make it a suitable method for gaining insights into people's behaviours, attitudes, and motivations (Aspers & Corte, 2019). One of the advantages of qualitative research is the ability to gather rich and detailed data that provides a deep understanding of the research phenomena (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The use of open-ended questions and the conduct of in-depth interviews or observations enables researchers to unearth complex information that may not be captured through quantitative methods (DeVaney et al., 2018). Furthermore, qualitative research gives room for flexibility and adaptability during the data collection process (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Researchers have room to adjust their approach, probe further into interesting findings, and explore unexpected avenues that may arise during the study. This flexibility fosters a dynamic and interactive research environment, which promotes the exploration of different perspectives and experiences (DeVaney et al., 2018).

Qualitative research also comes with a number of disadvantages. Epp and Otnes (2021) mention the approaches' subjective interpretation and bias in data analysis and findings as one of their weaknesses. Researchers should exercise caution to ensure the validity and reliability of their conclusions because qualitative data is often narrative and open to multiple interpretations. Furthermore, qualitative research requires a lot of time and resources to undertake. Bhangu et al. (2023), adding their voice to the argument, state that data collection and analysis in qualitative studies demand a significant investment of time and effort, which can pose limitations in certain research contexts. Amid these weaknesses, the strengths of

qualitative research in providing in-depth insights and understanding human experiences make it a very good approach to research.

The study adopted the qualitative approach because this study was not testing any hypothesis but instead asking general questions. The study involved getting the views of people and how they made sense of meaning in their lives. In this study, it had to do with teachers' experiences using approaches to teaching mother tongue literacies.

#### **4.2 Research paradigm for the study**

This section presents the research paradigm used in this study. While there are three main types of research paradigms namely positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism, this study used interpretivism (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It is important to discuss the research paradigm used in this study because it highlights the set of beliefs this study holds about the world and how these beliefs guided this research.

##### **4.2.1 Selecting the Interpretivism or Constructivism Paradigm**

This study drew its position from the interpretive paradigm. Creswell and Creswell (2017) define it as a research paradigm that seeks to reveal the meanings of participants in their lives. Cohen et al. (2018); Guba and Lincoln (1989) regard interpretivism as a paradigm that aims to understand the subjective world of human experience. The focus of this paradigm is to study people and understanding their interpretations of the world around them. All efforts are made to try to understand the world from the perspective of the participants rather than the researcher.

The main aim of the interpretive paradigm is to focus on the participant's views of the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell & Clark, 2017). In this study, it had to do with exploring literacy pedagogy in grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, Zambia. Another aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the world through the subjective experiences of participants because it is believed that reality is a socially constructed phenomenon (Antwi & Hamza, 2015)). Furthermore, this paradigm aims to explore the experiences, perceptions, and opinions of participants about an object or event (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The aims of the interpretive paradigm stated above align with the present study which seeks to understand the world through the subjective experiences of the participants, in this case, teachers of literacy as they teach literacy in grade one classrooms.

The paradigm holds many assumptions, and one of them is that reality is a socially constructed phenomenon, and the reason why the paradigm is also referred to as the constructivist paradigm (Cohen et al. 2018). Other major assumptions of the paradigm are that people interpret situations through their own eyes, act on them, and make sense of the world based on their experiences (Creswell and Creswell). Furthermore, theory emerges from the data generated (Cohen et al. 2018). Cohen et al. (2018), in addition to the characteristics of the interpretive paradigm, hold the view that since realities are socially constructed and multiple in nature, interactions between the researcher and participants cannot be avoided.

In terms of methodology, interpretive theoretical approaches rely on observations and interviews, which foster conversations and reflections (Cohen et al.2018). This present study also relied on lesson observation guides and interviews guides with teachers when collecting data, which aligns well with the interpretive paradigm.

The interpretivism research paradigm has several advantages in the field of research. Delahunty and Ríordáin (2022) mention one, which is its emphasis on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the participants involved. Pathak and Thapaliya (2022) also mention that this particular paradigm allows researchers to enter into the hidden realities within society, and therefore, provide a deeper understanding of the subject matter under investigation. Busetto et al. (2020), furthermore, state that interpretivism enables researchers to minimise the distance between themselves and the researched individuals, which leads to the discovery of relevant topics that may not have initially been apparent. Researchers, therefore, can gain deeper insights into the real-world dimensions of the research problem at hand by adopting an interpretivism paradigm (Busetto et al., 2020).

Chowdhury (2014) states that the interpretivism research paradigm has influenced the development of the social sciences significantly, enhancing our understanding of the contemporary social world. Furthermore, interpretivism allows for a more holistic and comprehensive exploration of research topics, where theory building can benefit from a qualitative approach (Mumtaz, 2021).

The interpretivism paradigm, though offering valuable insights from the perspective of the participants, is not without limitations. Damayanti (2014) states that one of the disadvantages of using the interpretivism research paradigm includes, among others, challenges related to

subjectivity perceptions and bias in data interpretations. The interpretations can be subjective and can involve subjective perceptions, thus resulting in research bias and consequently affecting the reliability and validity of the findings. The qualitative nature of interpretivist research can sometimes lead to difficulties in generalising findings to broader populations and contexts (Damayanti, 2014). This limitation is because of the paradigm's emphasis on understanding specific social phenomena deeply, which may not allow making broader generalisations. Twala and Kekwaletswe (2019) also mention that the approach can be time-consuming and resource-intensive compared to positivist methodologies. This is because the in-depth nature of interpretivist research, involving conducting interviews and analysing rich qualitative data, requires a lot of time and resources (Pathak & Thapaliya, 2022).

The research paradigm has faced criticism for lacking objectivity and the temptation for researchers to influence outcomes based on their interpretations (Delahunty & Ríordáin, 2022). Pulla and Carter (2018), adding their voices to the limitations of the paradigm, raise concerns about the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings. It is therefore worth mentioning that researchers using the interpretivism paradigm should be mindful and take into account the potential biases, challenges in generalisation, resource intensiveness, and subjective nature of data interpretation when using the paradigm.

In summary, the interpretivist paradigm uses a subjectivist epistemology because the researcher makes meaning of the data collected from the participants through their own thinking, a relativist ontology because of the belief that the phenomenon under study has multiple realities, a naturalist methodology as the researcher uses data generated through interviews, reflective sessions with the researcher as participant observer, and a balanced axiology since the outcome of the research reflects the values of the researcher (Carr & Kemmis, 2003). Furthermore, the paradigm offers researchers a unique lens through which to explore social phenomena, enabling a deeper understanding of complex issues from the perspectives of the participants involved. This approach not only enriches the research process but also contributes to the advancement of knowledge in various fields. The above stated attributes were the basis of its selection.

### **4.3 Research design**

This study used a case-study design. This section discusses the meaning of research design and the design used for this study. It further elaborates the elements that qualifies and justifies the selection of the case study as the appropriate research design for this study.

Cohen et al. (2018) define research design as “a plan or strategy which is drawn up for organising the research and making it practicable, so that research questions can be answered based on evidence and warrant.”

Creswell and Creswell (2017) define a case study as a research design that gives an in-depth analysis of a programme, process, activity, or one or more individuals. This was a single-case study involving six schools in Solwezi District as opposed to a multiple-case study. Cohen et al. (2018) highlighted the following features of a case study namely, their focus on the rich and clear descriptions of events relevant to the case, focus on individual participants to understand their perception of events and allows the researcher to be to be involved in the study. One of the objectives of the study was to establish the pedagogical knowledge of teachers teaching literacy to grade one learners and this required clear descriptions of how they taught literacy and the case study design was suitable for this . Denscombe (2014) also adds that case studies provide in-depth study of one setting, focusses on the processes, interactions and involve the use of multiple methods of data collection. My study also focused on the processes such as the methods involved in teaching literacy, the reasons for teachers’ selection of the methods they use and implementation challenges which align with the features highlighted by Cohen et al (2018) and Denscombe (2014). Leedy and Ormrod (2016) state that case studies involve the collection of data through observations, interviews, past records such and documents such as newspaper articles. My study collected data using interviews and observations and these are the elements which justified the selection of this design.

One of the advantages of using a case study design is that the findings are easily understood by a wider audience, and the design is strong in reality (Cohen et al., 2018). Another reason for choosing a case study design is that it provides an in-depth examination of a phenomenon through rich descriptions based on various data sources (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Furthermore, a case study was suitable for the present study because it does not seek to control variables but instead focuses on studying cases in their natural contexts (Wilson, 2016).

Additionally, a case study design has the ability to provide a detailed review of a new or unclear phenomenon while maintaining holistic and meaningful aspects of real-life events, making it an ideal idea for our study (Setlhatlhanyo et al., 2019). The elements discussed above and case study research design ties with the objectives of the study aimed at literacy pedagogy in grade one classrooms in Solwezi District, Zambia.

#### **4.4 Setting of the study**

The study was conducted in Solwezi District. Solwezi is the provincial headquarters of North Western Province. It is 606 kilometres from Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. Some areas in Solwezi are urban, and the urban population has access to hydroelectric power and internet facilities in schools. Learners in urban schools are exposed to modern life, and their parents and guardians are working-class and business owners. Schools in urban areas receive a lot of financial support because of the huge population of learners and proximity to business houses. Learners in rural schools are not exposed to modern life and amenities such as electricity. Most of their parents are not educated. Most of them rely on farming as their only economic activity.

#### **4.5 Target Population**

This section presents the target population which was used in this study. The target population in this study was drawn from Solwezi District. Solwezi District, the provincial headquarters, is located in the North Western Province of Zambia. The target population in the present study included all primary schools and all the teachers teaching literacy to grade one learners in Solwezi District. Solwezi District was targeted because it had both urban and rural primary schools, making it easier to draw a sample from it. Furthermore, the district was easy to access because of a good road network, which enabled the researcher to get to the remotest part of the district.

Khotari (2004) defines a population as items in any field of inquiry. Population is also referred to as the universe of units from which a sample is to be selected (White, 2003). Burns and Grove (2010) regard population as all elements which meet certain criteria in the study. The target population is important in any research and offers several benefits. Firstly, the targeted population allows the researcher to be more focused and efficient in their research efforts, as they can tailor their methods and interventions to suit the needs and characteristics of that particular population (Willie, 2022). Furthermore, having a target population enhances the

relevance and applicability of the research findings (Muncert et al., 2011). McDade et al. (2007) also mention that having a target population in research can lead to more accurate and reliable results because researchers can control the confounding variables and better understand the nuances within that group. Lu and Franklin (2018) also state that target populations are critical for ensuring the external validity of research findings.

#### **4.6 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

This section presents the sample size and sampling techniques used in this study. The sample consisted of six primary schools and fifteen (15) teachers teaching literacy to grade one learners. The grade one learners, who were part of the learners where I conducted classroom observations, were part of the sample. The first-grade learners were important as far as establishing teacher-learner interactions and teacher pedagogical knowledge.

Kombo and Tromp (2006) define sampling as “the process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group.” Latham (2007) defines it as the researcher’s ability to select a portion of the population that is a true representative of the said population. Cohen et al. (2018) define sample size as a smaller group or subset of a population. It is imperative to ensure that the selected sample is representative of the population it emanates from.

The researcher divided the target population into units when coming up with the sample. Primary schools were divided into two categories, namely rural primary and urban primary schools. Furthermore, the primary school teachers teaching literacy to grade one learners were categorised as coming from both rural and urban schools. The researcher came up with these units in order to cover the entire population, and this ties with Cochran (1977), who opines the following regarding sampling:

Before selecting the sample, the population must be divided into parts that are called sampling units. These units should cover the whole of the population, and they should not overlap, in the sense that every element in the population belongs to one and only one unit.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants in the study. Purpose sampling involves choosing participants or other units for particular purposes (Leedy, 2005). Purposive sampling

was used to select fifteen teachers to participate in interviews aimed at exploring their pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde, reasons for their choice of methods and approaches, and challenges they are facing in teaching literacy to grade one learners. Purposive sampling was used because the fifteen teachers were involved in teaching grade one learners and therefore had characteristics that were suitable and relevant in responding to the research objectives. The teachers were drawn from six schools, purposely selected in Solwezi District. Three were urban primary schools, while the other three were rural schools. Most of the rural schools have single streams, while urban schools have multiple streams. Four teachers were drawn from each of the three urban schools because they have multiple streams, while one teacher was drawn from each rural school because they had a single stream. The next section describes the primary schools and teachers selected in this study.

#### **4.6.1 Descriptions of the schools and teachers selected in the study**

In order to maintain the anonymity of the schools and the teachers that were selected for this study, they were all identified through pseudonyms.

School Apple is located 24 kilometers from the office of the District Education Board Secretary, the supervising officer of all education matters in Solwezi District. It is located in the rural parts of Solwezi where agriculture is the main economic activity. The school has only one class for grade one. Teacher Jane, the only grade one teacher, was sampled for interviews and literacy lesson observations. She was aged 50 at the time of the interview and had six years' experience teaching literacy to grade one learners.

The second school was School Banana. It is located 21 kilometers from the office of the District Education Officer. It is located in the rural parts of Solwezi and agriculture is the main economic activity in the area. The school has single streams for each grade. Teacher Beatrice, aged 37, the grade one teacher was sampled for both the interview and lesson observations. Her substantive position at the time of the interviews was class teacher. She had seven years of experience teaching literacy in lower classes (Grade 1-4).

School Carrot was the third school. It is located in the Solwezi urban, 6 kilometers from the office of the District Education Officer. The school has four grade one classes due to the high population density in the area. All the four grade one teacher's namely Teacher Carol aged 36, Teacher Janet aged 34, Teacher Sarah aged 30 and Teacher Thelma aged 38 participated in the

interviews. However, only Teacher Carols' literacy lessons were observed. She was selected for lesson observations because of her rich descriptions in the interviews and had the more experience than the other teachers. Teacher Carol had 8 years' experience, Teacher Thelma 5 years and Teacher Thelma 6 years, teaching literacy to lower primary classes. All the four were class teachers.

School Mango was the fourth school. It is a rural school located 18 kilometers away from the District Education board Secretary's office. The school has only one grade one class. Teacher Sharon, the only grade one teacher, was sampled for interviews and lesson observations. She was aged 30 at the time of the interview and had 6 years experience teaching literacy in the lower grades. Her substantive position was class teacher. Furthermore, she was a school in-service coordinator (SIC) for literacy training for her school.

School Grape was the fifth school, and it is located four kilometers from the office of the District Education Board Secretary's office. The school is located in a densely populated urban area and has four grade one classes. Four teachers namely, Teacher Tendai aged 26, Teacher Bibusa aged 29, Teacher Mweemba aged 35, and Teacher Kasema aged 40, were sampled to participate in interviews. Furthermore, Teacher Tendai had three years' experience teaching literacy classes in the lower grades, Teacher Bibusa 7 years, Teacher Mweemba 6 years while teacher Kasema had 8 years. Teacher Kasema was the only one sampled for lesson observations because of her rich descriptions in the interviews and vast teaching experience among the four. Her substantive position was class teacher.

School Pineapple was the sixth school, and it is located 4 kilometers from the office of the District Education Board Secretary's office. The school is located in a densely populated urban area within Solwezi. The school has four grade one classes. Four teachers namely Teacher Muzhinga aged 28, Teacher Kyeeya aged 33, Teacher Kukena aged 36 and Teacher Womba aged 26 were sampled for interviews. Furthermore, Teacher Muzhinga had four years' experience teaching literacy to lower classes, Teacher Kyeeya had five, Teacher Kukena had nine years while Teacher Womba had three. Teacher Kukena was sampled out of the four teachers for lesson observations because of her extensive descriptions during the interviews and her vast experience. Her position at the time of the interview was that of class teacher and she was also a Zonal In-service Coordinator (ZIC) for literacy trainings in the zone.

#### **4.7 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

This section presents the data collection methods and instruments used in this study. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and lesson observations. According to Rudolph (2015), data generation comprises activities such as searching for, focusing on, noting, selecting, extracting, and capturing data.

##### **Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from fifteen teachers that explored their pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches, reasons for teachers' choice of instructional methods, and challenges they were facing in teaching literacy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms in Solwezi District in Zambia. Semi-structured interviews were used because they are flexible and consist of both open-ended and closed-ended questions ((Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

Fifteen teachers were interviewed, and their selection was based on their teaching of literacy to grade one learners. Each interview took about 50 minutes and was conducted within the school the teacher was teaching at. A class was used to conduct interviews after lessons so that the school routine was not disrupted.

Firstly, the teacher was informed of the nature of the study. After getting consent, the teacher was asked questions on their pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde, their description of approaches they used, reasons for their choice of the methods and approaches they used, and challenges they encounter when teaching literacy in Kikaonde.

##### **a. Lesson Observations**

Eighteen lesson observations were conducted in six schools to get data on whether the teaching of literacy was in line with the literacy curriculum and teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms in Solwezi District. Three literacy lessons, once every fortnight, were observed in each school among grade one teachers. The selection of these teachers whose literacy lessons were observed was based on their participation in the interviews.

Each observation took one hour during the literacy lesson in class. These observations were conducted during the normal school routine. These observations were conducted once every two weeks. The reason for conducting three observations was to put the teacher's behaviour in context and understand it better (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

The researcher informed the teachers of the nature of the study, and after getting consent, lesson observations commenced. Each observation took one hour during the literacy period. Observations generated demographic information about the teacher and learners, such as numbers, age ranges, lesson duration, lesson topic, and outcomes. It also generated information on the use of teaching methods in literacy teaching, focusing on both teacher and learner activities in the introduction, development, and conclusion of the lesson. The researcher listened and observed the approaches the teacher engaged in. Furthermore, the researcher documented the content of the lesson, activities, literacy approaches used, and any other relevant information on the observation guide.

#### **4.8 Research Rigor**

Principles of trustworthiness were used in this qualitative study. This section discusses trustworthiness criteria namely credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability which were used in this study. Connelly (2016) defines the trustworthiness or rigor of a study as the degree of confidence in the data, interpretation, and the methods used to ensure the quality of the data. Trustworthiness criteria, namely credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, were used to ensure the rigor of the findings (Lincoln, 1985).

##### **Credibility**

The researcher ensured the credibility of the findings by spending extensive time engaging with participants. The researcher also got feedback from other professionals in the field to determine whether they agreed with the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the study. Furthermore, the researcher used different instruments and sources to obtain information. Credibility refers to the confidence that is placed in the truth of the research findings (Macnee & McCabe, 2008).

## **Transferability**

Transferability was achieved in this study through purposeful sampling and thick description. The participants were purposefully sampled because they are knowledgeable of the issues under investigation (Schutt, 2018). Furthermore, the researcher extensively gave details of the methodology, from data collection and study context to the production of the final report, so that readers could draw accurate conclusions. Anney (2014) defines transferability as the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents.

## **Dependability**

The researcher achieved dependability by explaining how data was collected, recorded, and analysed. Raw data from interviews, observation notes, and documents such as lesson plans collected in the field were cross-checked. The researcher also coded the data twice and compared the compared the results to see if they were consistent or not (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). Dependability refers to the stability of findings over time (Anney, 2014).

## **d. Confirmability**

The researcher achieved confirmability by keeping an account of all events that occurred in the field to avoid perceptions and interests. Further, multiple sources of data generation methods were used for purposes of cross-checking information. Baxter and Eyles (1997) define confirmability as the degree to which the results of an inquiry can be confirmed by other researchers.

## **4.9 Data Analysis**

This section presents data analysis methods used in this study. This study used qualitative methods of data analysis. Kombo and Tromp (2006) refer to data analysis as examining the information collected in research and making inferences and deductions. Thematic analysis was used among the qualitative methods of analysis. Thematic analysis involves categorising related topics to identify major concepts and themes (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Verbal information from interviews was grouped into identified themes and categories. From interviews, information on teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches, reasons for teachers' choice of instructional methods, and challenges they are facing in teaching

literacy in Kikaonde were analysed. Themes were developed from this information, and their meanings and significance were explained. The patterns, regularities, and critical events were identified in order to give the correct meanings. Some direct quotations from respondents were made. Information from lesson observations was categorised according to patterns and themes. Thereafter, interpretations were made to highlight their meanings and similarities.

#### **4.10 Ethical considerations**

This section presents the ethical considerations taken in this study. In order to uphold ethics, I obtained ethical approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Research Ethics Committee to conduct the research.

Thereafter, I requested written permission to explore literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde in selected multilingual grade one classrooms in Solwezi district. Permission was sought from the District Education Board Secretary of Solwezi, North Western Province, who is responsible for all education matters in the district. After getting permission from the District Education Board secretary, who is the gatekeeper and manages all education matters at the district level, the researcher proceeded to the schools for data collection. In schools, the participants were informed about the nature of the study and their role in it before the commencement of data collection.

Furthermore, I sought informed consent from participants. I informed them that they were free to accept or refuse to participate in the study and that they were free to withdraw their participation at any time without giving any reasons, and this would not affect them negatively. Furthermore, I informed the participants that the data generated from the study was not going to be exposed to unauthorised people apart from myself and the supervisor, and all the names of participants were not going to be captured because the interest of the study was the information. Participants were going to be informed that the risk involved in participating in the research was minimal and may involve some teachers feeling uncomfortable during literacy lesson observations. Before all participants signed informed consents, clarifications were made on all information that was not clear.

Rudolph (2015) states that it is important to closely look at the ethical implications of what we are proposing to do whenever human beings are the focus of investigation. Ethical

considerations aim to find out how participants are going to be protected from harm, their right to privacy, and informed consent.

#### **4.11 Limitations of the study**

This section highlights the limitations of the study. Kombo and Tromp (2006) define study limitations as challenges anticipated or faced by the researcher. One limitation of this study is that the findings could not be generalised to other places and situations because it focused only on the use of literacy pedagogy, a particular phenomenon in Solwezi.

#### **4.12 Chapter summary**

Chapter four discussed the research paradigm, methodology, research design, population, sample, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations and a chapter summary. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.1 Overview

The methodology used to collect data for this study was explained in the previous chapter. The present chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings of the study are based on data collected from interviews with teachers and classroom observations conducted in grade one classrooms. Interviews were used to collect data on the teacher's pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde, teacher's choice of methods and strategies they use to teach literacy lessons and challenges teachers were facing in teaching literacy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms. Classroom lesson observations, on the other hand, were used to collect data on teacher's pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde language.

The chapter will present findings using the following research questions:

1. What is the teacher's pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde language in grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, Zambia?
2. Why do teachers choose the methods and strategies they use to teach literacy lessons?
3. How is the teaching of literacy in grade one classrooms lined up with the literacy curriculum?
4. What challenges are teachers facing in teaching literacy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms?

The next sub-headings present findings from the first research question.

#### **5.2 What is the teacher's pedagogical knowledge of literacy approaches in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, Zambia?**

This section presents findings on the teacher's pedagogical knowledge of literacy approaches in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, Zambia. The findings to this research question were collected qualitatively using semi-structured interviews with fifteen teachers and lesson observations during literacy lessons in the six primary schools.

Fifteen interviews were conducted to ascertain their pedagogical knowledge of literacy approaches. Their selection was based on their teaching of literacy to first-grade learners. The

interviews were conducted within the school after lessons, and this was done so as not to disrupt the normal school routine.

Furthermore, eighteen lesson observations were conducted in six schools to ascertain teachers' pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms. Three literacy lessons, once every fortnight, were observed in each school among grade one teachers. The selection of these teachers whose literacy lessons were observed, was based on their teaching of grade one learners, where there was only one grade one class and their rich descriptions of answers provided during interviews and high number of years of work experience in the case of where a school had more than one grade one class.

### **5.2.1 Findings from interviews with fifteen teachers**

This sub – section presents the findings from fifteen teachers on their pedagogical knowledge of literacy approaches in the Kikaonde language. Their selection, as earlier stated, was based on their teaching of literacy to grade one learners. The interviews were conducted within the school after lessons, and this was done so as not to disrupt the normal school routine. The following were the findings:

#### **a. Teacher understanding of the meaning of pedagogical knowledge**

Six teachers out of the fifteen interviewed understood and gave meaningful explanations of literacy pedagogy while the rest of the teachers did not. The following are some of the explanations given by teachers who understood the meaning:

Teacher Jane from Apple School said:

*“In my view, literacy pedagogy are the methods used by a teacher to teach literacy. It also includes the approaches that the teacher uses to teach literacy”.*

Teacher Beatrice from Banana School said:

*“In my view, literacy pedagogical has to do with the methods that should be used when you are teaching. This means a careful understanding of the methods which should be used in a class and how they should be used. The teacher should plan for these methods and approaches and how they will be used during the course of the lesson”.*

Teacher Kasema from Grape School said:

*“I think literacy pedagogy means literacy methods and approaches that a teacher uses when they are teaching literacy. I have to choose the methods that should be used when teaching literacy. For example, I use the look and say method and the phonics method*

*most of the time because in grade one, we are talking about teaching learners how to sound words, blend the sounds into syllables and words. The methods that I use are part of literacy pedagogy”.*

Teacher Kukena from Pineapple School said:

*“Literacy pedagogy should be the methods and approaches used when teaching literacy. A teacher can use methods and approaches such as the look and say, group work, pair work and even demonstrations when teaching literacy. Sometimes the teacher should also know how to manage a class and it is also part of literacy pedagogy”.*

The other nine teachers did not understand the meaning of pedagogical knowledge. Four teachers stated that they had heard of the word but had forgotten the meaning. Some of the teachers who attempted to explain the word said the following:

Teacher Thelma from Carrot School said:

*“I think literacy pedagogy is teaching learners how to read and write with good handwriting. When the pupils come to class, we teach them how to read and write”.*

Teacher Kyeeya from Pineapple School said:

*“I think it is about reading and writing as you know that in literacy, we teach reading. The parents expect that we teach the children well so that they know how to read and write. I am also doing the best to teach the learners except that the class is full as you know the enrolment in town schools is very high”.*

**b. Teacher knowledge of methods used in teaching literacy in their classrooms.**

The fifteen teachers who participated in the interviews mentioned that they used the phonics methods, look and say (whole language) methods, demonstrations, question and answer, read alouds, group work and class discussions when teaching literacy in grade one classrooms.

Ten teachers interviewed mentioned the phonics method, the look and say (whole language) methods, demonstrations, read alouds and the question and answer while three teachers only stated the look and say method, phonics method, read a louds and demonstrations. Two teachers mentioned the look and say method, phonics method, demonstrations, pair work, group work, class discussions and read alouds. The following are some of the verbatim by teachers who indicated the use of the phonics method, the look and say (whole language), demonstrations, read alouds and the question-and-answer approach.

Teacher Carol from Carrot School said:

*“I use the phonics method, the look and say method, demonstrations, read a louds and question and answer when teaching my learners. I use the phonics method when teaching learners the sound of the day. The method is also used when blending the sounds to form syllables and also words. When blending sounds into syllables and forming words from the syllables, I demonstrate to learners how to write on the board. I also ask some of them to go in front and demonstrate how to write syllables. I also prepare flash cards for learners and write syllables and words in Kikaonde on them and request learners to look at them and read the words. That is the look and say method.”*

Teacher Kukena from Pineapple School said:

*“I use the phonics method, look and say method, demonstration and question and answer and read alouds. After the learners have learnt the phoneme of the day and we blend the sounds into syllables and words, learners have to look at the flash cards and attempt to read the words or syllables written on them. This usually happens during the practice stage. The learners have to practice reading the syllables and words flashed at them randomly. I also demonstrate to learners how to write the syllables and words on the board. They are also asked to write some of the syllables on the board. I also ask the learners oral questions based on the stories we read for them during a literacy lesson.”*

Teacher Kasema from Grape School said:

*“I use demonstrations, the phonics methods, the look and say method, question and answer as well as read a louds when teaching. Some of the methods are also suggested methods in the teachers guides. The phonics method is used when teaching learners the sounds. In grade one, we usually start teaching learners individual sounds, the vowels and after I am done, I teach the consonant sounds. The consonant sounds learnt are then blended with vowel sounds for form syllables and words. I demonstrate how to go about the blending and learners are also expected to do the blending. I also ask oral questions to get feedback especially after reading the short story.”*

Teacher Beatrice from Banana School said:

*“I usually use the look and say method, the phonics method, demonstrations, question and answer and class demonstrations. The phonics method is usually used when you are teaching the first part of the lesson which involves teaching sounds to the learners. Once the sound of the day has been taught, vowel sounds revised in the lesson are added to form syllables. In the practice stage, I ask my pupils to read the syllables and simple words on the cards which I show them. The pupils have to look at the flash card and read the word in the shortest possible time.”*

Teacher Jane from Apple School said:

*“I use the look and say method, phonics methods, question and answer and demonstrations. I usually ask the pupils to read and say the syllables words that are on the cards. These cards are prepared in advance and a time comes during the lesson when I simply show the flash cards to the learners and they have look at the words and read the words quickly. I teach learners how to blend sounds and also show them how to write syllables and words”.*

Teacher Sharon from Mango School said:

*“I use the look and say method, phonics method, demonstrations and read alouds when teaching literacy. During literacy lessons, I show the learners pictures and sometimes real objects to identify and then they state the objects name. Sometimes, I write words on the board and learners are requested to look at the words and read them. That is how I use the look and say method” I teach learners how to blend sounds into syllables and words. The learners also practice how to write syllables on the board. They also have to answer questions asked in class.”*

Two teachers who mentioned the phonics methods, look and say, demonstrations, read aloud, pair work and group work said the following:

Teacher Muzhinga from Pineapple School said:

*“I mostly use the look and say method when teaching literacy. The look and say method require learners to say the word on the board or card. Pupils are sometimes required to say the name of real objects presented to them in a classroom. Sometimes, pupils are expected to say what they see on pictures displayed to them. I also teach them how*

*to combine syllables and form words. I also place learners in groups to read the syllables and words formed. This helps learners to interact at their level during the lesson.”*

Teacher Janet from Carrot School also said:

*“I use the look and say method, demonstrations, pair work and read aloud, look and say and the phonics method. I group the learners in groups to do certain tasks such as combining sounds to form syllables and words. Sometimes, I demonstrate to learners how to shape and write letters on the board after which I request learners to come and practice on the chalk board or in their books. I also read to the learners just to model fluency.”*

**c. Pedagogical training received in literacy instruction**

All fifteen teachers that participated in the interviews said that they had all received training in teaching literacy in the primary literacy programme during literacy trainings sponsored by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the United States Aid for International Development's (USAID) Let's Read Project, teacher group meetings in schools, and during zonal literacy workshops. Some of the teachers said the following:

Teacher Beatrice from Banana School said:

*“I received training in teaching literacy in the current primary literacy programme through teacher group meetings held at our school. One of the teachers was trained by the Ministry of Education officers at the district level, and she thereafter trained us as well. During training, we learned how to go about teaching literacy using the five steps as well as how to assess them. We have continued having teacher group meetings in order to perfect our skills.”*

Teacher Womba from Pineapple School said:

*“I was trained to teach this particular literacy programme by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the USAID Lets Read Project. Facilitators from both the Ministry of Education and the USAID Lets Read project trained us on how to teach literacy. You must be aware that this literacy programme was implemented in 2013, and some of us joined the ministry when the programme was already running. This meant that we were to undergo some form of training. The training is on-going because we have refresher trainings time and again.”*

Teacher Tendai from Grape School said:

*“I was trained by the experienced teachers during continuous professional meetings at this school. There are some teachers who were trained by the Ministry of Education at the district resource centre who were involved in the training. They trained us on how to teach literacy and the steps involved in doing so. The CPD meetings regarding the teaching of literacy are still ongoing because we have included them in our CPD plan.”.*

Teacher Jane from Apple School said:

*“I attended the literacy training during a zonal meeting in our area, and it lasted for five days. We were trained on how to teach an effective literacy lesson. We were trained on how to use teaching methods and strategies and the steps to follow when teaching a lesson. We still have zonal meetings during holidays, and we are retrained in several areas, such as the administration of literacy assessments, teaching, and the use of teaching and learning materials.”.*

### **5.2.2 Findings from lesson observations**

This sub-section presents findings from eighteen lesson observations conducted in six schools to ascertain teachers’ pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms. Three literacy lessons, once every fortnight, were observed in each school among grade one teachers. The selection of these teachers whose literacy lessons were observed was based on their participation in the interviews in the case where a school had only one class and their rich descriptions in interviews and length of work experience in in the case of schools that four classes. The teacher with the highest number of years in service and rich descriptions in the interviews was picked for lesson observations.

Each observation took one hour during the literacy lesson in class. These observations were conducted during the normal school routine. These observations were conducted once every two weeks. The reason for conducting three observations was to put the teacher’s behavior in context and understand it better. Furthermore, teachers were not expected to put up a show in all three observations and reveal the true picture. Each observation took one hour during the literacy period. Observations generated demographic information about the teacher and learners, such as numbers, age ranges, lesson topics, and outcomes. It also generated information on the use of methods in literacy teaching, focusing on both teacher and learner

activities in the introduction, development, and conclusion of the lesson. The researcher listened and observed the approaches the teacher engaged in. Furthermore, the researcher documented the content, activities, literacy approaches used, and any other relevant information on the observation guide. The study presents six observations of the six teachers from the six schools, while some of the other lessons taught by the same teachers are in the appendices.

### **5.2.2.1 Description of lesson observation 1 ( Apple School): Literacy lesson on the phoneme /l/**

#### **a. Demographic characteristics of the class**

The classroom had a total of thirty-four grade one learners in attendance out of the forty-six total enrolment. Twenty learners were girls while the other fourteen were boys. This school was located in the rural parts of Solwezi and learners were coming from a Kikaonde predominantly speaking community. Teacher Jane, the teacher was a female, and she has been teaching literacy for six years.

#### **b. Specific outcomes of the lesson**

The lesson had three specific outcomes namely:

- i. To identify and sound the sound /l/
- ii. Write sounds and syllables which containing sound/phoneme /l/
- iii. Make syllables, words and short sentences which contain sound /l/
- iv. Read syllables, words and short sentences having sound /l/.

#### **c. Rationale**

The rationale was that the lesson was going to help learners to acquire listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This was lesson number one in the series of five lessons.

#### **d. Lesson introduction**

Step 1: Present

The teacher introduced the lesson with a song in the Kikaonde about naming vowels, which lasted for about a minute. Thereafter, the teacher wrote the phoneme /l/ to be taught on the

blackboard. The teacher displayed a picture of a bee (lunyuki) in Kikaonde, as shown in Figure 1 below, to the learners and asked them to state what they saw.



*Figure 1: A picture of a bee (lunyuki in Kikaonde) used to introduce the teaching of sound /L?*

Source: Adopted from the Kikaonde Grade 1 Learners book (Buuku wa Kufuundamo 2013: 11).

Learners gave the correct response to the question by stating what they had seen in the picture. The teacher wrote words mentioned by the learners on the board. One of the words mentioned by the learners was the Kikaonde word "lunyuki," meaning bee in English. The teacher slowly and clearly wrote the sound /l/, which is at the beginning of the word "lunyuki, on the board. She thereafter asked one learner to come forward and write the letter sound on the board. The teacher asked the learners to listen carefully as she read the sound /l/. She thereafter asked them to read the sound after her and also pointed at some of the learners to read the sound in the sequence (I do, we do, and you do approach).

The teacher wrote the vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/, /aa/, /ee/, /ii/, /oo/, /uu/ on the board and asked learners to read them. The learners always revise reading the vowels every time consonant phonemes are taught because they are the ones used for making syllables and words.

#### **e. Lesson development**

##### Step 2: Model

The teacher proceeded to model reading by reading a short story which had sound /l/ from the book in Kikaonde as follows:

Laama mwaana ba Lemana. (English: Laama is Lemanas' son)

Ba Lemana balamanga bangalamwe. (English: Lemana keeps doves).

Laama wamona bangalamwe bavula. (English: Laama has seen a lot of doves)

The teacher proceeded to ask learners to answer the following oral questions based on the short story:

Laama mwana bananyi? (English: Who is the father of Laama?)

Toongaula byaambo biji nakilulumo /l/ mujiishimikila? (English: Name the words that have sound /l/ in the story which I have read?)

The teacher proceeded to model reading by reading a short story that had the sound /l/ from the book in Kikaonde, as follows:

Laama mwaana ba Lemana. (English: Laama is Lemanas' son)

Ba Lemana balamanga bangalamwe. (English: Lemana keeps doves).

Laama wamona bangalamwe bavula. Laama has seen a lot of doves.

The teacher proceeded to ask learners to answer the following oral questions based on the short story:

Laama mwana bananyi? (English: Who is the father of Laama?)

Toongaula byambo biji nakilulumo /l/ mujiishimikila? (English: Name the words that have the sound /l/ in the story that I have read.)

Most of the learners answered correctly the first question, while a few did in the second question.

### Step 3: Guide

The teacher told the learners that she was going to show them how to blend (combine) the sounds to form syllables (Kikaonde: Bipivwa byambo). She blended the following sounds on the board as learners followed through the demonstration.

i. /l/ + /a/ → /la/

ii. /l/ + /e/ → /le/

iii. /l/ + /ee/ → /lee/.

The teacher, thereafter, wrote the sounds on the board and asked learners to blend the following:

i. /l/ + /i/ → \_\_\_\_\_.

ii. /l/ + /o/ → \_\_\_\_\_.

iii. /l/ + /u/ → \_\_\_\_\_.

iv. /l/ + /uu/ → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher, after the learners had completed the syllable writing task, guided the learners in the syllable reading task. She called learners to come in front and read syllables on the board.



*Figure 2: Syllable reading demonstration in a grade one classroom*

The teacher told the learners that she was going to show them how to blend (combine) syllables to form words. She blended the following syllables on the board as learners followed through the demonstration.

i. la + la → lala.

- ii. le + la → lela
- iii. laa + la → laala.

The teacher, thereafter, wrote the following syllables on the board and asked learners to blend them into words as follows:

- i. le + la → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. Lee + la → \_\_\_\_\_

The teacher and learners went through reading aloud the syllables and words written on the board.



*Figure 3: Blending activity -Teacher demonstration.*

#### Step 4: Practice

The teacher led the class in reading words she showed to the whole class of learners. Thereafter, she pointed at a few learners and gave each one of them a card to look at and read the syllable or word on it. This activity lasted for about five minutes.

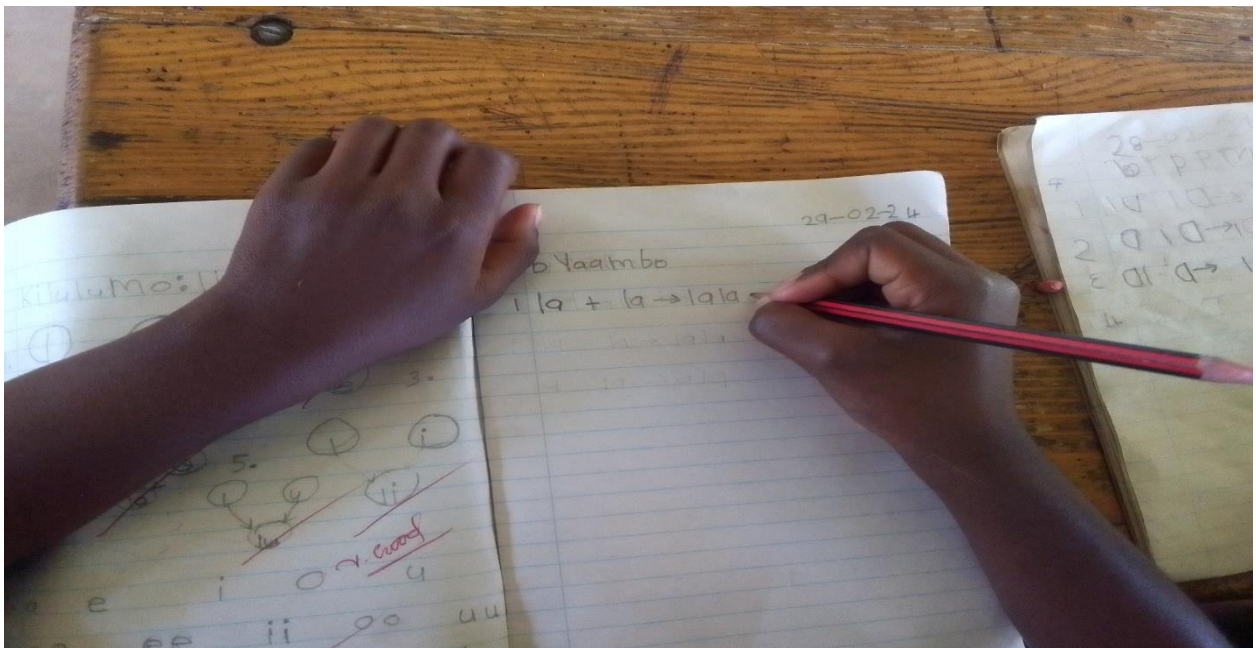
The teacher gave individual learners cards on their desks and asked them to read the syllable or word on the cards.

#### Step 5: Interact

The teacher gave the learners a blending task to fill in the blank spaces with the correct words made by blending two syllables. She gave two examples, as follows:

- i. lu + la → lula.
- ii. lee + la → leela.
- iii. Laa + la → \_\_\_\_\_.
- iv. Lee + lo → \_\_\_\_\_.

She thereafter asked learners to individually write the exercise in their books.



*Figure 4: Individual work: blending*

#### Lesson conclusion

The teacher picked some word or syllable cards and requested some learners to come in front, pick a word card, read the syllable or word, and show it to the class as a way of sharing it together. The lesson lasted for 1 hour and 8 minutes.



*Figure 4: reading activity.*

#### Apple School: Summary lesson observation table

Table 7 below is a summary of the lesson observation in Apple School, indicating the teacher and learner activities as well as the literacy methods and approaches the teacher used during the lesson.

Table 7: Summary of teacher-learner activities and methods used in Apple School

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <p>The teacher asked the learners questions based on the picture.</p> <p>Teacher writing and shaping sound /l/ on the board.</p> <p>The teacher read the sound on the board.</p> <p>Teacher revising with learner on vowels.</p>	<p>Picture reading.</p> <p>Writing the sound on the board.</p> <p>Reading the sound /l/ as read by the teacher.</p> <p>Vowel recognition and reading.</p>	<p>Look-and-say method</p> <p>Teacher and learner demonstrations.</p> <p>Read alouds.</p> <p>Question and answer.</p>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <p>Reading a short story has the sound of the day.</p> <p>Teacher modelling fluent reading.</p> <p>Asking learners questions based on the passage.</p> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <p>Teacher demonstrating to learners how to blend sounds and syllables.</p>	<p>Listening to the story read by the teacher.</p> <p>Answer oral questions asked by the teacher.</p> <p>Learners demonstrate the blending of sounds and syllables.</p>	<p>Read aloud</p> <p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Synthetic phonics method.</p>

<p>Teacher modelling syllables and word reading.</p> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <p>The teacher is leading in reading syllables and words.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners to read on syllable or word cards.</p> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <p>Teacher asking learners to write the excise individually.</p>	<p>Some learners are reading syllables and words.</p> <p>Learners read syllables and words.</p> <p>Individual reading of syllables and words.</p> <p>Individual writing.</p>	<p>Read alouds.</p> <p>Individual reading.</p> <p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Writing</p>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <p>The teacher asks learners to read words on cards as a way of sharing.</p>	<p>Leaners read out the sounds, syllables, and words on the cards.</p>	<p>Read alouds</p>

### 5.2.2.2 Description of lesson observation 2 (Banana School): Revision literacy lesson on sound /d/, /g/ and /ch/

#### a. Demographic characteristics of the class

The classroom had a total of thirty- four grade one learners in attendance out of a total enrolment of forty- five. Eighteen were boys while sixteen were female. The school was located in the rural part of Solwezi District, and it was a single stream. The learners in the classroom were predominantly Kikaonde speaking. Teacher Beatrice, the teacher was female, and her substantive position was that of class teacher. She had been teaching lower classes for the past seven years.

#### b. Specific outcomes of the lesson

The lesson was the fourth lesson in a series of five lessons and had the following specific outcomes:

- i. Learners to pronounce sound /d/, /g/ and /ch/
- ii. Blend the sounds with vowels to form syllables and words.
- iii. Read the words and short sentences.

**c. Rationale**

The rationale of the lesson was to help learners acquire relevant knowledge to improve their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

**Step 1: Present**

The teacher asked learners to stand up and sing a song as follows:

Kutanga, kutanga kwawama, kutanga kwawama. (English: Reading, reading is good, reading is good)

Kutanga, kutanga kwawama, kutanga kwawama. (English: reading, reading is good, reading is good)

The teacher told the learners to sit down after singing a song for about one minute. She gave the learners word cards and asked them to read the words on them. Some of the learners read the words on the word cards, while others failed to read. The teacher afterwards displayed a poster and asked learners to state what they saw in the picture shown in Figure 5 below.



*Figure 5: Picture of a desk (desiki in Kikaonde) used in the teaching of sound /d/*

Source: Kikaonde Grade 1 Learners Book (Buuku wa Kufuundamo, 2013: 75)

Learners stated the names of objects which were on the picture. The objects names were desiki (English: desk), chooko (English: chalk), dokota (English: doctor). The teacher wrote the words mentioned by learners on the board. The teacher also wrote the sounds at the beginning of the words desiki, chooko and dokota namely /d/, /ch/, and /d/ on the board. She also read out the sounds and thereafter, asked learners to read after her.

The teacher showed a flash card to the learners and asked them to read the vowel sound on it. Most of the learners raised their hands up. She requested four learners to go in front and read vowel sounds on the cards. The teacher, thereafter, wrote vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/ on the board and asked learners to read the vowels again. The vowels sounds are always revised as the teacher Learners stated the names of objects that were on the picture. The object names were desiki (English: desk), chooko (English: chalk), and dokota (English: doctor). The teacher wrote the words mentioned by the learners on the board. The teacher also wrote the sounds at the beginning of the words desiki, chooko, and dokota, namely /d/, /ch/, and /d/, on the board. She also read out the sounds and, thereafter, asked the learners to read after her.

The teacher showed a flash card to the learners and asked them to read the vowel sound on it. Most of the learners raised their hands. She requested that four learners go in front and read vowel sounds on the cards. The teacher, thereafter, wrote the vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/ on the board and asked learners to read the vowels again. The vowel sounds are always revised as the teacher begins to blend the sound being taught with the vowels to form syllables and words.

#### **d. Lesson development**

##### Step 2: Model

The teacher read aloud a short story that had the sounds being taught to the learners on that day. She went on to ask oral questions based on the story she had read to the learners. Learners were able to answer some of the questions asked by the teacher.

##### Step 3: Guide

The teacher guided learners again on how to pronounce sound /d/, /g/ and /ch/. She pointed at the three sounds randomly and asked learners to pronounce the sounds. The teacher told the learners she was going to show them an example of how to blend sound /d/, /g/ and /ch/ with vowels to form syllables. The following examples were given and written on the board:

- i. d + a → da
- ii. d + e → de.
- iii. g + a → ga.
- iv. ch + a → cho

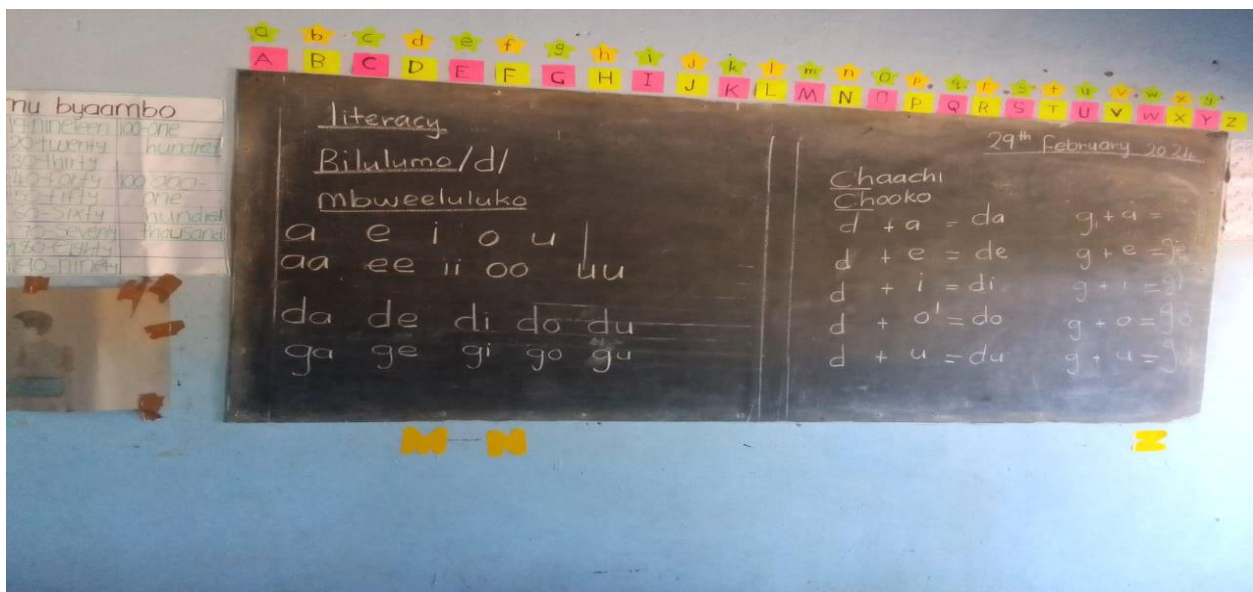


Figure 6: Examples of blending activities in the formation of syllables using sound /d/ and /g/

The teacher, after writing syllables, requested that learners go in front and blend the following sounds into syllables.

- i.  $d + a \rightarrow$  \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii.  $g + e \rightarrow$  \_\_\_\_\_
- iii.  $ch + a \rightarrow$  \_\_\_\_\_.
- iv.  $ch + u \rightarrow$  \_\_\_\_\_

When learners had completed the task of blending sounds on the board, the teacher told them that she was going to demonstrate how to blend syllables into words as follows:

- i.  $daa + mu \rightarrow daamu$ .
- ii.  $Chee + chi \rightarrow cheechi$ .

The teacher, after giving examples to learners, requested that they go to the front and blend the following syllables into words:

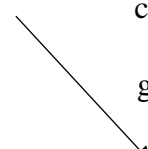
- i.  $doo + li \rightarrow$  \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii.  $da + la + mu \rightarrow$  \_\_\_\_\_.
- iii.  $ga + si \rightarrow gasi$ .

Step 4: Practice

The teacher gave the learners word cards to read in pairs (shared reading). Some of the following words were written on the word cards: daamu, kaamona, chimuna, cheechi, and gasi. The teacher went around to some of the desks to check on what some of the learners were doing.

Step 5: Interact

The teacher asked learners to match the words with the correct letter sound as follows: She gave learners one example.

- i. dokota                      chimuka
  - ii. chaachi                      gasi
  - iii. galadeni                      deesiki
- 

d. Lesson conclusion

The teacher concluded the lesson by going around marking the learners exercise books. The teacher further went through the exercise with the learners. She, furthermore, went on to give the learners an exercise. The whole lesson lasted for 1 hour and 10 minutes.

**e. Banana School summary lesson observation table**

Table 8 below is a summary of the lesson observation in Banana School, indicating the teacher and learner activities as well as the literacy methods and approaches the teacher was using during the lesson observation.

Table 8: Summary of teacher-learner activities and methods/approaches used in Banana School

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <p>The teacher leads a song about reading.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners to read word cards.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners to state what is on the picture.</p> <p>Teaching reading aloud the sounds.</p> <p>Teaching writing sounds on the board.</p>	<p>Learners sing along with the teacher.</p> <p>Learners are reading words on the word cards.</p> <p>Picture reading.</p> <p>Learners listen to the teacher reading.</p>	<p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Look and say</p> <p>Teacher demonstration.</p>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <p>Teacher reading a short story’</p> <p>Teacher asking questions based on the short story.</p> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <p>The teacher guided learners on how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</p> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p>	<p>Learners listen attentively to the teacher.</p> <p>Learners answer oral questions based on the story.</p> <p>Learners demonstrate blending sounds into syllables and syllables in words.</p> <p>Paired reading.</p>	<p>Read aloud</p> <p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Synthetic phonics method.</p> <p>Demonstration method.</p> <p>Learner shared reading.</p>

The teacher is going around checking on learners reading in pairs.		
<b>Step 5: Interact</b> Teacher asking learners to match beginning sounds with words.	Matching sounds in words.	Individual work.
<b>Lesson conclusion</b> Revision of exercises with learners.	Leaning on mistakes made in the exercise.	Question and answer. Demonstration.

**5.2.2.3 Description of lesson observation 3 (Carrot School) Literacy lesson on sound/nch/  
a. Demographic characteristics of the class**

The classroom had a total of thirty learners in attendance out of a total enrollment of 42. Thirteen of them were boys, while eighteen were girls. The school was located in the urban part of Solwezi. The learners ranged in age from 6 to 7. Teacher Carol was female, and her substantive position was class teacher. She had eight years' experience teaching lower primary classes and literacy.

**b. Specific outcomes of the lesson**

This lesson was the second out of a series of five, and it had the following specific outcomes:

- i. Identify and sound out the letter-sound /nch/.
- ii. Make syllables, words, and sentences using the sound /nch/.
- iii. Read words and simple sentences with the sound /nch/.

**c. Rationale**

The rationale of the lesson was that it was going to help learners develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

The pre-requisite knowledge was that learners already know the vowels and the previously learnt consonant sounds.

#### **d. Lesson Introduction**

##### Step 1: Present

The teacher, after asking learners to stand up, led them into singing a song. After they had sang a song which lasted about a minute, she asked them to remember the sound they had learnt in the previous lesson. Most of the learners pointed at, answered that they had learnt sound /n/ in the previous lesson and the teacher stated that it was correct. The teacher asked one of the learners who answered the question correctly to go and write sound /n/ on the board.

The teacher told the learners that they were going to learn about sound /nch/ and also stated the specific outcomes of the lesson. She asked learners to go in front and sit on a mat in front. The teacher, wrote the vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/ on the board and asked the learners to sound them since it was required that learners revise the vowel sounds before blending them with the sound being taught.

After revising the vowels with the learners, the teacher presented a picture and asked learners what they were able to see on the picture. Some of the learners responded that they could see a “nchibamambo” (English: judge). Other learners also responded by stating that they could see tables, chairs and most of the items on the conversation picture since the judge was seated on a chair in the court.

#### **e. Lesson development**

##### Step 2: Model

The teacher asked learners to listen attentively as she was going to read a short story about “nchibamambo” (English: judge). She also told them that questions were going to be asked after reading the story. The short story was as follows:

Nchibamambo ke muntu wingila mu kochi. (English: A judge is someone who works in a court)

Nchibamambo uchiba mambo abantu mu kije kya mambo. (English: A judge solves matters for people in the courts of law.)

The teacher, after reading the story, asked the following questions:

- i. Nchibamambo wingila pi? (English: Where does the judge work?)

- ii. Nanyi mingilo yingila nchibamambo? (English: Which work does the judge do?)

One of the learners in class answered the first question correct while another learner answered question two correctly. The teacher wrote the answers (kochi and kuchiba mambo) provided by the learners on the board.

### Step 3: Guide

The teacher asked learners to state which sound they could hear at the beginning of “nchibamambo” to highlight the phoneme of the day and when learners answered correctly, wrote it on the board. After writing it on the board, the teacher guided learners in pronouncing sound /nch/. Thereafter, she asked different learners to pronounce the sound. The teacher with learners also practiced writing the sound in the air.

After several learners had written the sound in the air, the teacher told the learners that she was going to show them how to blend the sound with vowels to make syllables. She gave the following examples:

- i. nch + a → ncha
- ii. nch + e → nche
- iii. nch + i → nchi

The teacher asked learners to raise their hands and go to the front and write the syllables formed by combining the following sounds:

- i. nch + o → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. nch + u → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher, together with learners, went through the syllables formed after blending the sounds.

The teacher, thereafter, told the learners they were going to form words using syllables. She went ahead to show how to blend the following syllables:

- i. nchi + ba → nchiba
- ii. nchaa + ba → nchaaba.

The teacher asked learners to go in front and blend the following syllables into words:

- i. ncha + mu + na → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher and learners also counted the syllables in the words formed using the syllable clap. She also showed learners syllable chart and asked them to blend syllables into words.

After blending the syllables into words, the teacher told the learners that they were now going to form short sentences using words and she blended the following words:

- i. nchiba + nkunyi → nchibe umone . (English: Cut the firewood)

She asked any learner to go in front and blend the following words:

- i. nchilan'ana + mashi → \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Step 4: Practice

The teacher, thereafter, divided the class into groups and gave each group flash cards to read the syllables and words on them as she went round checking what was going on. She also gave learners syllable flash cards and asked them to form words. She summarized this activity by asking individual learners to read the words on the flash cards.

#### Step 5: Interact

The teacher, thereafter, asked learners to write the exercise by forming words using the following syllables:

- i. nchi + ba → \_\_\_\_\_.  
ii. bii + ncha → \_\_\_\_\_.  
iii. nchaa + mu + na → \_\_\_\_\_.  
iv. Nchi + mwii + na → \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **f. Lesson conclusion**

The teacher concluded the lesson by going through the exercise with learners. She also gave them home work on the formation of short sentences using words.

#### **g. Carrot School summary lesson observation table**

Table 3 below is a summary of the lesson observation in Carrot School indicating the teacher and learner activities as well as the literacy methods and approaches the teacher was using.

Table 9: Summary of teacher-learner activities and methods/approaches used in Carrot School

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <p>Teacher asking learners to state what sound they learned in the previous lesson.</p> <p>The teacher asked the learners to write the sound they learned on the board.</p> <p>Teacher revising with learners on vowels.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners questions based on the conversation poster.</p>	<p>Learners answer questions asked by the teacher.</p> <p>Learners are writing the sound on the board.</p> <p>Learners answering questions on the conversation poster.</p>	<p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Demonstrations</p> <p>Look and say.</p>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <p>Teacher reading a short story as a model.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners questions based on the short story.</p> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <p>Teacher asking learners questions.</p> <p>The teacher is leading in blending sounds into syllables</p>	<p>Learners listen attentively to the story.</p> <p>Learners answer oral questions.</p> <p>Learners answer questions.</p> <p>Learners blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words and short sentences.</p>	<p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Synthetic phonics method.</p>

<p>and syllables into words and sentences.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words and sentences.</p> <p>Teacher leading learners in counting syllables.</p> <p>Teacher gives learners individual work.</p> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <p>The teacher divides learners into groups to read.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners to form words from syllables.</p> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <p>Teacher asking learners to write the exercise individually.</p>	<p>Learners count syllables in words.</p> <p>Individual work.</p> <p>Learners read words in groups.</p> <p>Learning to form words in groups.</p> <p>Individual learners are reading words on flash cards.</p> <p>Learners writing the exercise individually.</p>	<p>Individual work</p> <p>Group work</p> <p>Individual reading.</p> <p>Individual writing</p>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <p>The teacher led the discussion of the exercise with the learners.</p>	<p>Learners go through the exercise.</p>	<p>Question and answer.</p>

#### **5.2.2.4 Description of lesson observation 4 (Mango School) Literacy lesson on sound (nch)**

##### **a. Demographic characteristics of the class**

The classroom had a total of eighteen learners present out of a total of forty-two. Twenty-four learners were absent. Nine learners were male, while the other nine were female. The school was located in the rural parts of Solwezi. Teacher Sharon, the teacher was female and held the position of class teacher. The teacher had six years' experience teaching learners at the lower primary level.

##### **b. Specific outcomes of the lesson**

The lesson was the second in the series of five lessons and had the following specific outcomes: Learners to:

- i. Identify and elicit the sound /nch/.
- ii. Make the sound nch correctly.
- iii. Read and write syllables, words, and sentences with the sound /nch/.

##### **b. Rationale**

The lesson was going to help the learners acquire knowledge and improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

The pre-requisite knowledge was that learners had an idea of how to combine sounds with vowels to form syllables and words.

##### **c. Lesson introduction**

Step 1: Present

The teacher led the learners in singing a song in Kikaonde. The teacher, afterwards, wrote the words "Kibaaazwa, Nnuunka, and Nuunga, which she had taught in the previous lesson, on the board and asked learners to read them. After learners had read the words written on the board, they wrote the sound /nch/ on the board and told learners that they were going to learn how to make syllables and words using the sound. The teacher asked the learners to listen attentively as she read out the sound. She also asked the learners to read out the sound after her.

The teacher progressed in the lesson by writing vowel sounds (/a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/) on the board and revising with learners how to sound them. She also pointed at learners randomly and asked them to go in front and sound any of the sounds.

#### **d. Lesson development**

##### Step 2: Model

The teacher asked the learners to listen carefully, as she was going to read a short story and ask them oral questions at the end. The story was as follows:

Lukenamo waakusakisha kuuchimuna lukasu. (Lukenamo wanted to break the hoe.)

Nakumunchiinya naamba, nsakwambiila batata. (English: I told him that I was going to report him to my father.)

The teacher, after reading the story, asked the learners the following question:

Teelaula byaambo muji kilulumo /nch/ mu jiishimikila?. (English: Mention the words that begin with the sound /nch/ in the story.)

Some of the learners raised their hands and answered the question correctly.

##### Step 3: Guide

The teacher told the learners that she was going to show them how to blend the sound /nch/ with vowels to form syllables. She gave them the following examples:

- i. nch + a → ncha.
- ii. nch + e → nche.
- iii. nch + i → nchi.

The teacher told the learners that she was going to ask some of the learners to go in front and blend the following:

- i. nch + o → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. nch + u → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher and learners, thereafter, read aloud the syllables formed from the blending activity.



iv. Waanchiimuna

**Lesson conclusion**

The teacher, after collecting books for marking, went through the exercise with the learners. This lesson lasted for 1 hour and 8 minutes.

**Mango School summary, lesson observation table**

Table 9 below is a summary of the lesson observation in Mango School, indicating the teacher and learner activities as well as the literacy methods and approaches the teacher was using.

*Table 10: Summary of teacher- learner activities and methods/approaches used in Mango School*

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <p>Teacher asked learners to read words taught in the previous lesson.</p> <p>Teacher modelled the sounding of sound /nch/.</p> <p>Revision of vowel sounds.</p>	<p>Reading words learnt in the previous lesson.</p> <p>Listening attentively.</p> <p>Sounding and identifying vowel sounds.</p>	<p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Read alouds</p>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <p>Reading a short story having the sound of the day.</p> <p>Teacher modelling fluent reading.</p>	<p>Listening to the story.</p>	<p>Read aloud</p>

<p>Asking learners questions based on the story.</p> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <p>Teacher demonstrating to learners how to blend sounds and syllables.</p> <p>Teacher modelling syllable and word reading.</p> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <p>Teacher asking learners to practice a blending and segmentation activity in groups.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners to read on syllable/ word cards.</p> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <p>Teacher asking learners to write the exercise individually.</p>	<p>Answer oral questions asked by the teacher.</p> <p>Learners demonstrating blending of sounds and syllables.</p> <p>Some learners reading syllables and words.</p> <p>Learners to blend syllables in groups.</p> <p>Individual reading of syllables and words.</p> <p>Individual writing.</p>	<p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Synthetic phonics method.</p> <p>Read alouds.</p> <p>Group work</p> <p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Individual work</p>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <p>Teacher leads in discussing the exercise.</p>	<p>Learners discuss exercise with the teacher.</p>	<p>Class discussion</p>

### 5.2.2.5 Description of lesson observation 5 (Grape School) Literacy lesson on sound /sh/

#### a. Demographic characteristics of the class

A total of fifty-seven learners were present out of a total of seventy-eight. Forty-five learners were boys while the other twelve were girls. The school was located in the urban parts of

Solwezi. The class was taught by Teacher Kasema, a female teacher who had eight years' experience teaching at lower primary. Her substantive position was that of a class teacher.

**b. Specific outcomes of the lesson.**

The lesson was the second in a series of five lessons and had the following specific outcomes.

Learners to:

- i. Identify and pronounce sound /sh/ /SH/
- ii. Revise the vowels and syllables learnt in the previous lesson.
- iii. Listen to the story and answer questions orally.
- iv. Make words and sentences with sound /sh/.
- v. Read the new words.

**c. Rationale**

The lesson was going to help learners to acquire relevant knowledge on how to identify vowels, syllables as well as reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

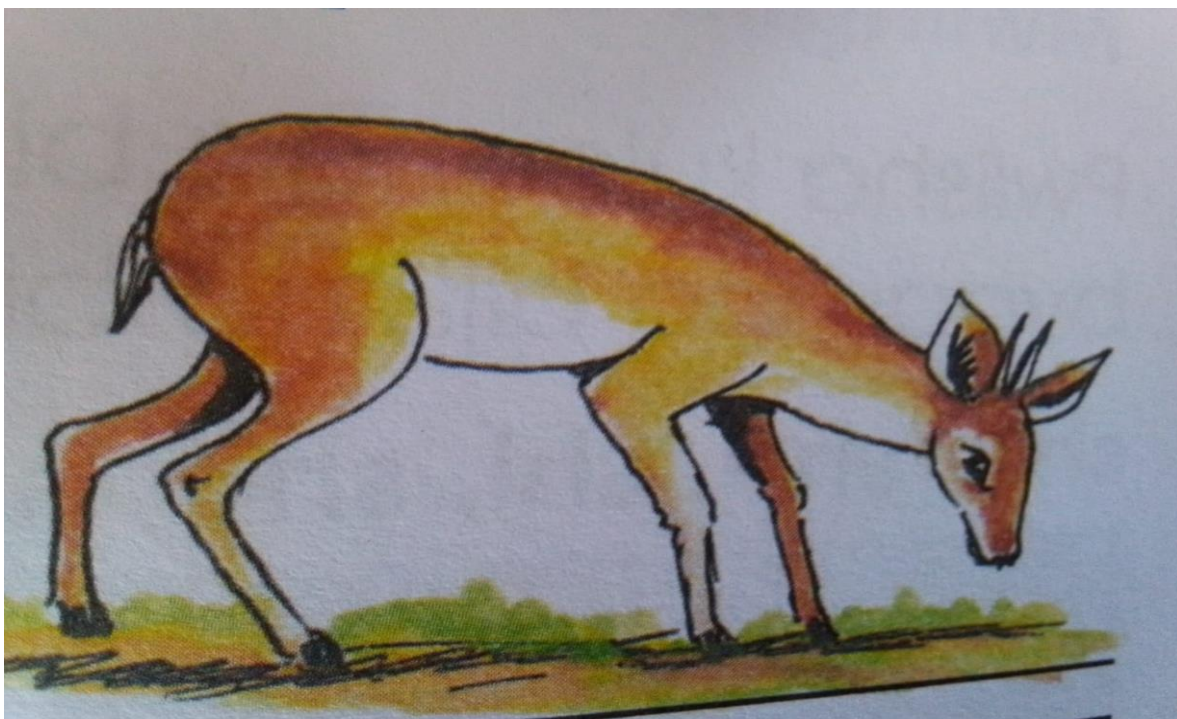
The pre-requisite knowledge was that learners had an idea on vowel sounds and how to combine sounds into syllables and words.

**d. Lesson introduction**

Step 1: Present

The teacher began the lesson by revising sound /by/ taught in the previous lesson by asking learners to read the words “byoola, byeela, byuupi and byuula” which she had written on the board. After some of the learners had read the words correctly, the teacher asked some of the learners to go in front and underline the sound /by/ in the words written on the board. She also guided those who failed to underline the correct sounds in the words.

The teacher told the learners that they were going to learn how to pronounce sound /sh/ and also how to make syllables and words using the same sound. She wrote /sh/ on the board and thereafter, showed learners a conversation poster and asked them to state what they were able to see.



*Figure 8: Poster of a duiker (kasha in Kikaonde) used to introduce sound /sh/*

The animal on the picture was a duiker (Kikaonde: Kasha) and she wrote the word and other words mentioned by learners on the board. She asked the learners to identify sound /sh/ in the words (Kikaonde: shama, shomeka and bishu) and some learners went in front of the class and pointed at the correct sounds. She, together with the learners, read the sound /sh/ to make sure that learners pronounced the word correctly.

The teacher picked flash cards and asked learners to read to vowel sounds on them. She wrote the vowels which learners had read out on the board. Most of the learners read out the vowel sounds correctly.

#### **e. Lesson development**

Step 2: Model

The teacher told the learners that she was going to read a short story and they were expected to answer oral questions at the end. The teacher read the story as follows:

Kasha kaashala mubushiiya. (English: The duiker has remained on the other side)

Kakubwela amba kaje bishu ne malasha. (English: It remained so that it eats vegetables and charcoal)

Malasha afumine kukishiki (English: Charcoal comes from burnt trees).

The teacher asked the following questions after reading the short story.

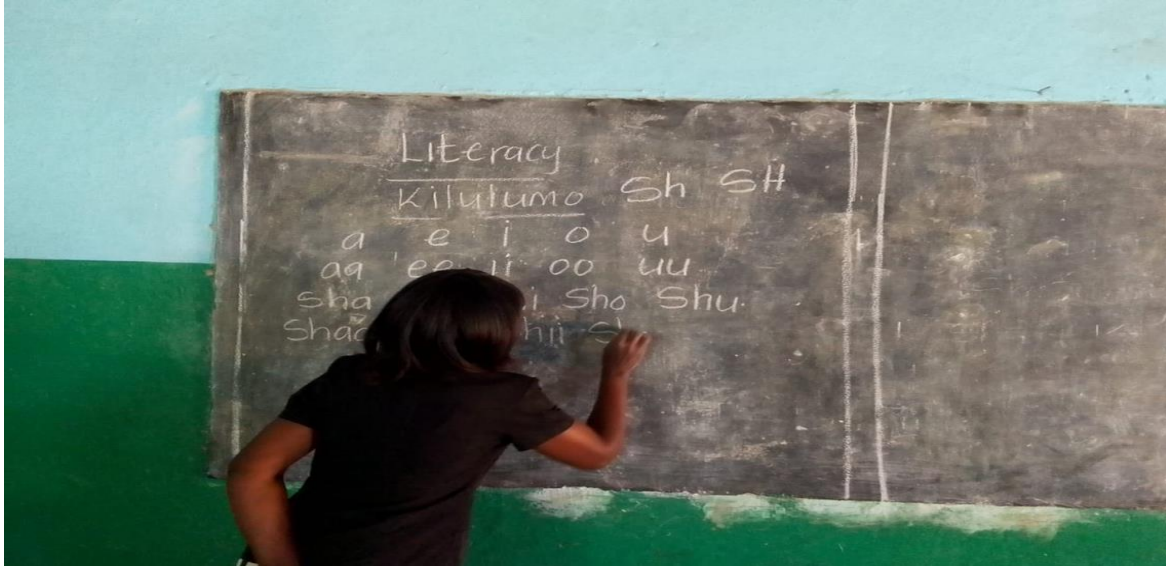
- i. N’anyi washaajile mubushiiya? (English: Who remained on the other side?)
- ii. Malasha afumunine kweepi? (English: Where did charcoal come from?)
- iii. Toongala byaambo bisatu mujishimikila muji kilulumo /sh/ /SH/? (English: Name three words which have sound /sh/?).

Four learners answered the oral questions. The teacher went on to read the answers provided on the board.

### Step 3: Guide

The teacher told the learners that she was going to guide them how to make syllables by combining sound /sh/ with vowels as follows:

- i. sh + a → sha.
- ii. sh + e → she.
- iii. sh + i → shi.



*Figure 9: Teacher demonstrating the blending of sounds to form syllables using sound /sh/*

She asked some learners to go in front and blend the following syllables.

- i. sh + o → \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. sh + u → \_\_\_\_\_.

After learners had attempted the class task, the teacher told learners that she was going to guide them on how to make words and sentences as follows:

- i. bi + shu → bishu. (English: Vegetables)
- ii. Ka + sha → Kasha. (English: Duiker)
- iii. Kasha + kashaala → Kasha kashaala. (English: The duiker has remained).

After guiding learners in forming words and syllables, the teacher asked some of the learners to go in front and blend the following:

- i. ma + la + sha → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. Shaala + usheele + malasha → \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Step 4: Practice

The teacher distributed syllable and word cards to the learners and requested individual learners to read as she went round assisting those who have challenges.

#### Step 5: Interact

The teacher, thereafter, requested learners to write the following work as an exercise:

- i. sh + a → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. sh + e → \_\_\_\_\_.
- iii. shee + la → \_\_\_\_\_.
- iv. bi + shu → \_\_\_\_\_.
- v. Kasha + kaashaala → \_\_\_\_\_.

**f. Lesson conclusion**

The teacher and learners went through the exercise and she helped those learners who did not do well in the exercise.

**g. Grape School summary lesson observation table**

Table 10 below is a summary of the lesson observation in School Grape indicating the teacher and learner activities as well as the literacy methods and approaches the teacher was using.

*Table 11: Summary of teacher-learner activities and methods/approaches used in Grape School*

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <p>Teacher asked learners to read words taught in the previous lesson.</p> <p>Teacher asked learners to underline the sound taught in the previous lesson.</p> <p>Teacher asked learners to identify items on the conversation poster.</p>	<p>Learners read words on the board.</p> <p>Learners underlined syllables in words.</p> <p>Learners identified items on the conversation poster.</p> <p>Learners identified vowel sounds on the flash cards.</p>	<p>Question and answer</p> <p>Demonstrations</p> <p>Look and say.</p>

Teacher asked learners to identify vowels on the flash cards.		
<p><b>Lesson development</b></p> <p><b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <p>Read a short story having the sound of the day.</p> <p>Teacher modelled fluent reading.</p> <p>Asked learners questions based on the story.</p> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <p>Teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds and syllables.</p> <p>Teacher modelled syllable and word reading.</p> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <p>Teacher asked individual learners to read from syllables/ words cards.</p> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <p>Teacher asked learners to write the exercise individually.</p>	<p>Listened to the story.</p> <p>Answer oral questions asked by the teacher.</p> <p>Learners demonstrated blending of sounds and syllables.</p> <p>Some learners read syllables and words.</p> <p>Learners read from syllable/ word cards.</p> <p>Individual writing.</p>	<p>Read aloud</p> <p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Synthetic phonics method.</p> <p>Read alouds.</p> <p>Demonstrations.</p> <p>Individual reading.</p> <p>Individual work</p>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <p>Teacher leads in discussing the exercise.</p>	<p>Learners discuss exercise with the teacher.</p>	<p>Class discussion</p>

### 5.2.2.6 Description of lesson observation 6 (Pineapple School). Literacy lesson on Sound /zh/

#### a. Demographic characteristics of the class

A total of seventy-four learners out of a total of ninety-eight attended the lesson. Thirty-four were boys while thirty-eight were girls. The school was located in a densely populated urban area within Solwezi District.



*Figure 10: Grade 1 learners in a densely populated area*

Teacher Kukena, female, was the teacher and she had nine years' experience teaching the lower primary section. Her present position was that of a class teacher.

#### b. Specific outcomes of the lesson

The lesson was the second in a series of five, and it had the following specific outcomes:  
Learners to:

- i. Identify and sound /zh/ /ZH/
- ii. Make syllables and words from the sound /zh/.
- iii. Read and write words with the sound /zh/.

### **c. Rationale**

The lesson was going to help learners acquire relevant knowledge in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

The pre-requisite knowledge was that learners had knowledge on how to blend sounds and syllables into words and simple sentences.

### **d. Lesson introduction**

#### Step 1: Present

The teacher asked learners to read the syllables and words taught in the previous lesson after writing them on the board. The syllables and words were “ba, ngaa, fwe, and kifwe.” She also pointed at individual learners to read the syllables and words she pointed at randomly on the board.

The teacher, afterwards, got the lid (Kikaonde: Kizhiko) of a container and asked the learners to name what she was holding. After the learners had named the object, the teacher wrote the word “Kizhiko” (English: lid) on the board and told the learners that they were going to learn how to identify the sound /zh/ and blend it with other sounds to form syllables and words. The teacher thereafter showed the learners a conversation poster and asked them to mention what they were able to see. The learners, among others, mentioned the word “muzhi” (English: village), and the teacher wrote it on the board. The teacher, furthermore, asked learners to identify the sound /zh/ in the word /muzhi/, which they did.

The teacher picked up flash cards and asked the learners to identify the vowel sounds on them. She wrote each vowel on the board after the learners had identified it. Later on, she read the vowel sounds to model good reading to the learners.

### **e. Lesson development**

#### Step 2: Model

The teacher told the learners that she was going to read a short story, and they were expected to answer oral questions at the end. She urged them to be quiet and listen attentively as she read the short story, as follows:

Kutongola jizhina jamukwenu bufuku kintu kyazhila. (English: Mentioning your friend's name in the night is forbidden.)

Kana kutongola jizhina Jaleesa. (English: Unless mentioning the name of God)

The teacher, after reading the story aloud, asked the learners the following oral questions:

N'anyi kintu kyazhila? (English: What is forbidden in the story?)

Byambo bika mujishimikila muji kilulumo /zh/? (English: Which words have the sound /zh/ in the short story?)

Some of the learners answered the questions correctly while others did not, and the teacher corrected the learners who did not answer the questions correctly.

### Step 3: Guide

The teacher told the learners that she was going to guide them in combining the sound /zh/ with syllables to come up with syllables and words. She gave learners the following examples:

- i. zh + a → zha.
- ii. zh + e → zhe.
- iii. zh + i → zhi.

She thereafter wrote the following and asked any of the learners to go in front and write the syllable from the following blends:

- i. zh + o → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. zh + u → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher afterwards went on to guide learners in forming words from syllables as follows:

- ji + zhi + na → jizhina.  
mu + zhi → muzhi.

She, thereafter, wrote the following and asked any of the learners to go in front and write the words formed from the following syllable blends:

- i. ja + zhi + la → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. Zho + to + la → \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Step 4: Practise

The teacher picked flash cards and sentence cards and requested learners to read out the syllable or word when she showed them. She also corrected some of the learners who failed to read the flash cards. The teacher also asked learners to read the following sentence cards:

- i. Jizhina jazhila ja Lesa. (English: God's name is holy)
- ii. Muzhi weetu wabaya. (English: Our village is big.)

#### Step 5: Interact

The teacher asked learners to write the following words in their books:

- i. Kyazhila
- ii. jizhina
- iii. Muzhi

#### **f. Lesson conclusion**

The teacher concluded the lesson by reading through the words with learners.

#### **g. Pineapple School summary lesson observation table**

Table 11 below is a summary of the lesson observation in Pineapple School indicating the teacher and learner activities as well as the literacy methods and approaches the teacher was using.

Table 12: Summary of teacher -learner activities and methods/ approaches used in Pineapple School

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <p>Teacher asking learners to read syllables and words taught in the previous lesson on cards.</p> <p>Teacher asking learners to identify and name objects on conversation poster and flash card.</p>	<p>Reading words from word cards.</p> <p>Learners identify and name objects on the conversation poster.</p>	<p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Look and say method.</p>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <p>The teacher read a short story with the sound of the day and asked the learners' oral questions.</p> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <p>Teacher demonstrating to learners how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</p> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <p>Teacher asking learners to read words and sentences from the flash cards.</p>	<p>Learners listened to the story and answered oral questions.</p> <p>Learners demonstrated how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words on the board.</p> <p>Learners read words and sentences from the flash cards.</p>	<p>Read aloud</p> <p>Question and answer.</p> <p>Demonstrations.</p> <p>Look and say</p>

<p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <p>Teacher asked learners to write words in their exercise books.</p>	<p>Learners writing in their exercise books.</p>	<p>Individual work</p>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <p>Teacher reading through the words again.</p>	<p>Learners reading through the words</p>	<p>Read alouds</p>

**5.3 Why do teachers choose the methods and approaches they use to teach literacy lessons?**

This section presents findings on why the teachers chose the methods and approaches they used to teach literacy lessons. The research question was qualitative, and data were collected through interviews with all fifteen literacy teachers in all six schools. These interviews are not different from the ones discussed earlier except that questions in the interview guide were now focused on establishing the factors that made teachers choose the methods and approaches they were using to teach literacy.

The fifteen teachers who participated in the interview stated that their choice of methods and approaches they taught were dependent on several factors, such as their belief in the effectiveness of the methods and approaches and their familiarity with the methods and approaches through continuous professional development (CPD) training they received.

Seven teachers stated that their choice of methods and approaches was based on their belief in the effectiveness of the methods and approaches. The following were some of the verbatim statements made by some of the teachers.

**Teacher Jane from School Apple said:**

*“I used the methods that I feel are effective. For example, I usually use the look and say method, read-alouds, group work, and pair work when I am teaching literacy. I use the methods for a number of reasons. For example, when I am using the look and say methods, learners easily look at the conversational poster or even a picture and*

*easily read or say what they are able to see. When using demonstrations, I am expected to demonstrate how to shape letter sounds on the board. This also helps learners to shape letter sounds in their books properly. The read-alouds also help me to model fluent reading among the learners.”*

**Teacher Beatrice from Banana School said:**

*“I choose the methods I used because they are effective. I make sure that I read the short story well during literacy so that learners can model my reading. I also use the look-and-say method because learners usually answer the questions I ask them. Learners find it easy to answer questions based on what they have seen. I also use individual work because I want to assess if the learner can work on their own.”*

**Teacher Saral from Carrot School said:**

*“I use the methods I mentioned because they help learners learn quickly. For example, if a learner is unable to learn during question and answer, they can understand during group work as they interact as a group. Asking learners to work in groups or pairs helps those who are shy to interact.”*

**Teacher Mweemba from Grape School also said:**

*“I consider the methods I use to be effective. The look and say method helps to capture the attention of learners. Learners pay attention when they look at a picture or word card. I also use pair work so that learners are able to interact well and one of them can help the other who did not understand.”*

The other eight teachers said that they used the methods and approaches they used during literacy lessons because they were familiar with them through continuous professional development training. The following are some of the verbatims from the teachers:

**Teacher Kukena from Pineapple School said:**

*“I am familiar with the methods and approaches I use during literacy lessons. I was trained during a literacy workshop with the Let’s Read Team. During the training, we were taught how to teach literacy using a variety of methods. I am also familiar*

*with the contents of the activity bank, which helps me know which activities learners should do and what approaches should be used.”*

**Teacher Sharon from School Mango said:**

*“I use the methods and approaches because of the training I received during Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs) at my school. When the primary literacy programme was introduced, we were trained by the district resource coordinator on the five steps involved in teaching literacy and the available methods and approaches to use. I choose from the methods we were taught.”*

**Teacher Thelma from School Carrot said the following:**

*“We learned how to use most of the methods I use now during TGMs. Our senior teachers were trained on how to teach literacy using the Primary Literacy Programme. They also taught us how to teach using various methods, as you already know that the lessons should be learner centred. I benefited from the training, and I use some of the methods we learned.”*

The responses from teachers indicate that the choice of methods and approaches used by teachers during literacy lessons was based on their belief that the methods used were effective and their familiarity with the methods and approaches because of the continuous professional development meetings they had undergone.

**5.4 How is the teaching of literacy in grade one classroom lined up with the literacy curriculum?**

This section presents findings of research question number three which sought to establish how the teaching of literacy in grade one classrooms was lined up with the literacy curriculum. The findings to this research questions were collected qualitatively using lesson observations in the six schools. The same eighteen lesson observations used to collect data for research question one was used to collect data for this question. 18 lesson observations, one every fought-night were conducted in each school among the six teachers. The selection of the six teachers out of the fifteen was based on their participation in the interviews in schools with one class and rich descriptions of teachers and longer teaching experience of grade one learners in schools that

had four grade one classes. The findings from the lesson observations are presented in the sub-section below:

#### **5.4.1 Literacy teaching components for grade one learners taught during literacy lessons**

This sub-section presents literacy teaching components for grade one learners taught during literacy lessons namely pre-reading activities, teaching of sounds, teaching of word formation, teaching of sentence construction, comprehension, teaching of handwriting and teaching of fluency. These above stated activities which grade one learners were engaged in are described below:

##### **a. Pre- reading activities**

There are several activities that learners were engaged in during the teaching and learning process. One of the activities done by the teacher and learners was talking about the reading material used in the teaching and learning process. The teachers would ask questions such as, what is it that I am holding? What can you see on this poster? What can you identify in this picture? These questions, which were asked by the teacher, elicited the participation of learners in a class discussion about the materials being used during the literacy lesson. Learners participated in the discussion by giving responses on what they were able to identify and interpret on the conversation posters, cards, and books. This trend was observed in all the lesson observations conducted in all six schools.

The teachers also took some time to discuss with the learners the parts of a book when using one. The teacher would call learners to the front to point at the front part of the book, the first line in the book, the bottom part of the book, and the back part of the book. This was observed in Apple and Mango Schools.

Another activity observed during the lesson observations was learners listening to short stories. The teachers, at one stage in the course of the lesson, requested learners to pay attention and listen to a short story. As teachers read the short story, they requested that the learners look at them and observe the direction of their reading, that is, from left to right. The teacher would thereafter request any learner to demonstrate in a book the teacher's direction of the reading. This activity was observed in three schools.

A number of oral activities were also observed during the course of the teaching and learning process. One such common oral activity was singing about the sound being taught that day. They were also songs about sounds made by animals in the local environment. These short songs, sung in the local languages, were sung at intervals such as the beginning of the lesson, after the end of one stage or segment in the lesson, and at the end of the lesson. This trend was observed in all six schools where observations took place.

The activities stated above that were observed during class observations fall under pre-reading activities in the literacy syllabus of the primary literacy programme and the national literacy framework.

### **b. Teaching of Sounds**

The teaching of phonemic awareness and phonics falling under the sound component were observed during all lesson observations. One activity prevalent in all the lessons observed was the identification of sounds in the short stories during the course of the lesson. In the development of the lesson under model, the teachers would read a short story and ask learners to state the words that had the sound being taught on that day. Learners would attempt to answer, and the right responses—the sound in this case—would be written on the board. Additionally, the teacher would pronounce a sound written on the board or on a sound card and ask learners to identify and point at. Furthermore, the teacher would read the sound being taught on that day and also ask learners to read aloud the sound as well. The activities stated above fall under phonemic awareness in the primary literacy programme and national literacy framework.

Another activity observed during the lessons was the teaching of the blending of sounds to form syllables and words. In Apple School, Teacher Jane taught the blending of the sound l with the vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/ to form the syllables la, le, li, lo, and lu.

The activity of blending sounds into syllables and words was also observed in Banana School. The sound /ch/ taught on that day was blended with vowel sounds /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/ to form the syllables cha, che, chi, cho, and chu.

The blending of sounds into syllables and words was also observed in Carrot School. Teacher Carol blended the sound being taught that day, /nch/, with vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/ to form the syllables ncha, nche, nchi, ncho, and nchu.

The same was also observed in Grape School. Teacher Kasema blended the sound /sh/ with vowel sounds /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/ to make the syllables sha, she, shi, sho, and shu.

The teaching of blending sounds into syllables and syllables into words was not different in Pineapple School. Teacher Kukena and learners blended the sound /zh/ with vowel sounds /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/ to form the syllables zha, zhe, zhi, zho, and zhu. Additionally, teachers and learners were also involved in word-building activities from syllables to come up with the following words:

All the content taught and activities undertaken by the teachers in the six schools as shown above fall under phonics in the syllabus as outlined by the primary literacy programme and national literacy framework.

### **c. Teaching of word formation**

The teachers in the six schools engaged learners in word formation activities. Words were formed from syllables made from the sound of the day. Some of the words built from the syllables in Apple School are as follows:

- i. la + la → lala
- ii. le + la → lela
- iii. laa + la → laala.

A similar activity was observed in Banana School. Teacher Beatrice and learners build words from the blending syllables as follows:

Chee + chi → cheechi

In Carrot School, the same word-building activity was observed. Teacher Carol and learners engaged in a word-building activity and built the following words from the syllables as follows:

- i. nchi + ba → nchiba
- ii. nchaa + ba → nchaaba.

iii. nchii + nchi + ka → nchiinchika.

Another word building activity was observed in Grape School where Teacher Kasema and learners build the following words from syllables as follows:

- i. bi + shu → bishu. (English: Vegetables)
- ii. Ka + sha → Kasha. (English: Duiker)

In the other two schools, teachers and learners were also involved in word-building activities from syllables to come up with the following words:

- i. bi + shu → bishu. (English: Vegetables)
- ii. Ka + sha → Kasha. (English: Duiker)
- iii. ja + zhi + la → jazhila (English: sacred)
- iv. Zho + to + la → zhotola (English: Pinch)

The word-building activities undertaken by the teachers in the six schools as shown above fall under word formation in the syllabus as outlined by the primary literacy programme and national literacy framework.

#### **d. Teaching of sentence construction**

There was a sentence construction activity observed in Pineapple and Grape schools out of the six schools. Teacher Kukena and Teacher Kasema guided learners in constructing sentences from some of the words built from syllables as follows:

- i. Jizhina jazhila ja Lesa. (English: God's name is sacred)
- ii. Muzhi weetu wabaya. (English: Our village is big.)

The same was observed in Grape School when Teacher Kasema was involved in a sentence construction process. She guided learners to come up with the following two-word sentence:.

Kasha + kashaala → Kasha kashaala. (English: The duiker has remained).

The sentence construction activity was undertaken by the teachers in only two schools. The sentence construction activity falls under sentences in the syllabus as outlined by the primary literacy programme and national literacy framework.

### e. Comprehension

There were aspects of comprehension observed in all the lessons in the six schools. During the lesson development, all the teachers asked the learners to pay attention and listen to short oral stories. Throughout the lesson observations, the teachers read the story and then asked the students oral questions. These oral questions were mainly centred on identifying the characters in the short story and identifying and stating words beginning with the sound being taught on that day. The teacher, after reading the short story, asked the learners the following questions, such as:

- i. Laama mwana bananyi? (English: Who is the father of Laama?)
- ii. Toongaula byaambo biji nakilulumo /l/ mujiishimikila? (English: Name the words that have the sound /l/ in the story that I have read.)

In Carrot School, for example, Teacher Carol, after reading a short story, asked learners the following oral questions:

- i. Nchibamambo wingila pi? (English: Where does the judge work?)
- ii. Nanyi mingilo yingila nchibamambo? (English: Which work does the judge do?)

The case was not different in Mango School, Teacher Sharon, after reading a short story, asked learners the following oral questions:

Teelaula byaambo muji kilulumo /nch/ mujiishimikila?. (English: Mention the words that begin with sound /nch/ in the story?)

In Grape school, Teacher Kasema, read a short story and afterwards asked learners the following oral questions based on the story.

- i. N'anyi washaajile mubushiiya? (English: Who remained on the other side?)
- ii. Malasha afumunine kweepi? (English: Where did charcoal come from?)
- iii. Toongala byaambo bisatu mujishimikila muji kilulumo /sh/ (English: Name three words that have the sound /sh/?).

The teacher in Pineapple School, after reading a short story, Teacher Kukena asked the following oral questions:

- i. N’anyi kintu kyazhila? (English: What is forbidden in the story?)
- ii. Byambo bika mujishimikila muji kilulumo /zh/? (English: Which words have sound /zh/ in the short story?)

The oral comprehension activity was undertaken by all the teachers in the six schools. This activity falls under comprehension in the syllabus as outlined by the primary literacy programme and national literacy framework.

#### **f. Teaching Writing**

There were aspects of writing observed during the course of the literacy lessons in all six schools. The teacher guided learners to write both capital and small letters of the sound being taught that day. Learners were also asked to go in front and demonstrate writing letter sounds and syllables on the board.

Teacher Jane in Apple School, after guiding the learners on how to write sound, also requested some of them to write the sound on the board. Additionally, the teacher, after guiding learners in blending sounds into syllables, also requested some of them to go in front and demonstrate writing the syllables formed on the board. Furthermore, the teacher requested that some of the learners write simple words formed from the syllables after she had given them guidance. Learners in Apple school during the interact stage were also requested to write an exercise on blending syllables to form words in their books, as shown in Figure 12 below.

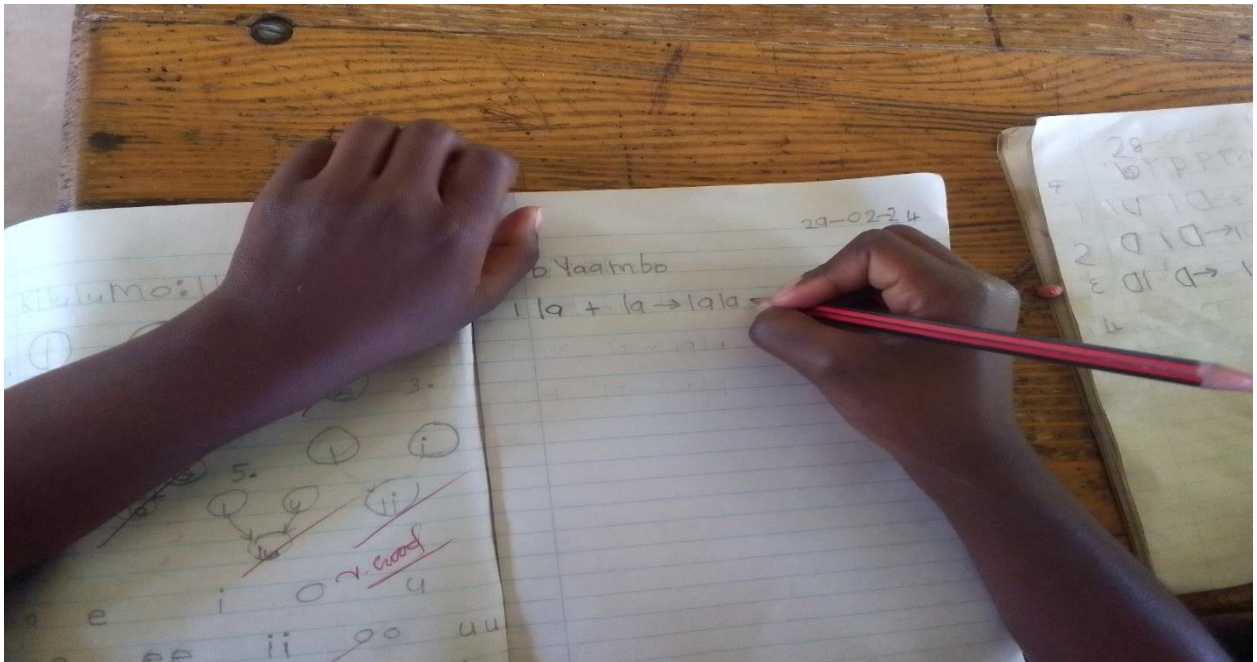


Figure 11: Individual writing tasks by grade one learners

A writing activity was also observed in a literacy lesson in Banana School. Teacher Beatrice guided learners on how to blend sounds into syllables and thereafter requested some of them to walk in front and write the syllables formed from blending the following sounds on the board.

- i. ch + a → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. ch + u → \_\_\_\_\_

The teacher, after guiding learners on how to blend sounds into syllables, requested some of them to go in front and write the words formed by combining the syllables of the following:

Chee + chi → cheechi.

Furthermore, the teacher during the interact stage of the lesson requested learners to write the following words and match words which beginning with the same sound in their books.

- |             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| 1. dokota   | chimuka |
| 2. chaachi  | gasi    |
| 3. galadeni | deesiki |

Writing activities were observed in Carrot School during lesson observations too. Teacher Carol, after guiding learners on how to form syllables from the sound of the day, requested that some learners go and write the formed syllables from the following questions:

- i. nch + o → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. nch + u → \_\_\_\_\_.

She again guided learners on how to form words from syllables and wrote them on the board. Thereafter, she invited some learners to go in front and write words formed from the following syllables.

ncha + mu + na → \_\_\_\_\_.

During the interact stage of the lesson, the teacher asked learners to write an exercise on the formation of words from syllables by giving them the following questions:

- i. nchi + ba → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. bii + ncha → \_\_\_\_\_.
- iii. nchaa + mu + na → \_\_\_\_\_.
- iv. Nchi + mwii + na → \_\_\_\_\_.

Writing activities were also observed in school Mango during lesson observations. Teacher Sharon guided learners how to write syllables from blending sounds on the board. She also requested some of the learners to go in front and write the syllable formed from blending the following sounds.

- i. nch + o → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. nch + u → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher also went on to guide learners how to write simple words formed by blending syllables on the board. She also requested some learners to go in front and write the simple words formed by combing the following syllables on the board.

Nchaa + ncha → nchaancha.

During the interact stage, the teacher requested learners to write the following words in their books and underline syllable /nch/ in the following words.

- i. Maanchaancha
- ii. Nchaaba
- iii. Nchiina
- iv. Waanchiimuna

Several writing activities were also observed during the course of the lesson observation in Grape School. Teacher Kasema, guided learners in forming syllables from the sound taught on that day and wrote them on the board. She, thereafter, asked some learners to go in front and attempt to write syllables from the following sounds on the board.

- i. sh + o → \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. sh + u → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher, thereafter, guided learners in forming words from the syllables and also asked some of them to write the words on the board formed from the following syllables.

ma + la + sha → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher, during the interact stage, requested learners to write the following questions by blending sounds to form syllables and syllables into words.

- i. sh + a → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. sh + e → \_\_\_\_\_.
- iii. shee + la → \_\_\_\_\_.
- iv. bi + shu → \_\_\_\_\_.

Finally, a number of activities were observed during the lesson observation in Pineapple school. Teacher Kukena, guided learners in writing syllables formed by blending sounds on the board. Thereafter, she requested learners to go in front and write syllables formed from the following sounds.

- i. zh + o → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. zh + u → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher, thereafter, went on to guide learners in forming words from syllables which she wrote on the board. She also requested some of the learners to go in front and write the words formed from the following syllables.

- i. ja + zhi + la → \_\_\_\_\_.
- ii. Zho + to + la → \_\_\_\_\_.

The teacher concluded the lesson by asking learners to write the following words formed during the course of the lesson in their exercise books.

In conclusion, the writing component was incorporated into literacy lessons in all six schools. The writing activities fall under the writing component as outlined by the primary literacy programme and national literacy framework.

### **g. Teaching fluency**

A few activities aimed at promoting fluency among learners were observed during the course of the lesson observations in three schools. Some of the activities the teacher did to promote fluency among the learners included the fluent reading of the short story in the model stage of the lesson as well random reading of syllables, words, and simple sentences on word cards during the practice stage of the lesson.

The teacher in Apple School promoted fluency by reading the short story with automaticity and good speed to model fluent reading. Another activity that was promoting fluency was the random pointing of vowels /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/ and /u/ by the teacher and asking learners to read them with speed. The teacher also asked learners to read quickly as she randomly pointed at the following syllables formed by blending sounds.

- i. La
- ii. Le
- iii. lee

The case was not different in Banana School. The teacher engaged in activities meant to promote fluency. She read the short story accurately and with speed to model fluent reading. She also randomly asked the learners to read the syllables and words. The following syllables and words were randomly pointed at for the learners to read.

- i. Chi
- ii. Cha
- iii. Chu

- iv. cheechi.

The same activities were seen in Grape School. Teacher Kasema, read a short story fluently to promote fluent reading. Furthermore, she randomly pointed at syllables and words formed and asked learners to read. The following syllables and words were randomly pointed at:

- i. Sha
- ii. She
- iii. shi

As has been explained above, the teaching of fluency was incorporated into literacy lessons in three schools. The fluency activities fall under the fluency component as outlined by the primary literacy programme and national literacy framework.

#### **5.4.2 Sequency of literacy instruction and specific outcomes**

The literacy lessons were sequenced in such a manner that each sound of the day was taught the first day and revised the second day. Another sound was introduced on the third day and revised on the fourth day. Friday was for revising all the two sounds that were taught in that particular week. The following were the sequences of lesson instruction in the six schools.

Sound (/l/) was taught in Apple School, and this was the first lesson in a series of five lessons taught that week. This sound was being taught in week three of term one, the 2024 school calendar. The following were the lesson outcomes:

- i. Learners to pronounce the sound /l/
- ii. Write sounds and syllables that contain the phoneme/ l/
- iii. Make syllables, words, and short sentences that contain the / l/
- iv. Read syllables, words, and short sentences.

#### **Sound /d/, /g/ and /nc/**

Sound /d/, /g/, and /nch/ were taught in Banana School, and this was the fourth lesson in a series of five lessons taught that week. The following were the lesson outcomes of the lesson:

- i. Learners should pronounce the sounds /d/, /g/, and /ch/.
- ii. Blend the sounds with vowels to form syllables and words.
- iii. Read the words and short sentences.

- iv. Segment words into sentences.

### **Sound /nch/**

Sound (/nch/) was taught in Mango School, and it was the second lesson in a series of five. The lesson was taught on October 17th, 2023. The lesson outcomes of the lesson were as follows:

- i. Identify and sound out the letter-sound /nch/.
- ii. Make syllables, words and sentences using sound /nch/.
- iii. Read words and simple sentences having sound /nch/.

### **Sound /sh/**

Sound (/sh/) was taught in Grape School, and it was the first lesson in the series of five. The lesson was taught on October 26th, 2023. The lesson had the following lesson outcomes:

- i. Identify and pronounce sound /sh/ /SH/
- ii. Revise the vowels and syllables learnt in the previous lesson.
- iii. Listen to the story and answer questions orally.
- iv. Make words and sentences with sound /sh/.
- v. Read the new words.

### **Sound /zh/**

Sound (/zh/) was taught in Pineapple School, and it was the second lesson in a series of five. The lesson was taught in October 2024. The lesson had the following lesson outcomes:

- i. Identify and sound /zh/ /ZH/
- ii. Make syllables and words from sound /zh/.
- iii. Read and write words from sound /zh/.

## **5.5 What challenges are teachers facing teaching literacy in grade one classrooms?**

This section presents findings on the fourth research question which sought to ascertain the challenges which teachers were facing teaching literacy in grade one classrooms. The findings for this research question were generated qualitatively using semi-structured interviews with the same fifteen teachers in the six schools. The selection of these teachers was based on their teaching of literacy to first-grade learners. These interviews were the same ones conducted to

collect data for research question one, two and three except that interview questions were now based on establishing challenges teachers were facing. The following were the findings:

**a. Too much literacy content to be covered in one hour**

Fourteen out of the fifteen teachers translating into 93.3 percent all stated that the literacy syllabus outlined too much content to teach in one hour, making it difficult for them to conclude the lesson within the stipulated time frame. Most of them stated that the five steps involved in teaching literacy were loaded with a number of teacher and learner activities, making it difficult for them to conclude the lesson. Furthermore, all fourteen teachers stated that all the teachers teaching reading using the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP), the current literacy programme, were guided on how to teach literacy using all five steps, and this left them with no choice but to follow the guidelines. The following are some of the verbatims from some of the teachers:

Teacher Jane from Apple School said:

*“One of the challenges I face teaching literacy is that there is so much to cover in one hour. The literacy lesson is divided into five steps: present, model, guide, practice, and interact. A lot of activities should be done in all these steps. For example, the teacher is expected to revise the sound learned in the previous lesson, introduce the sound of the day, and revise the vowel sounds in just step 1 (present) of the lesson. The teacher is expected to read a short story containing the sound of the day and ask oral questions in step 2 (model). This is also the same step where a teacher is required to model fluent reading. By the time all the steps are concluded, I find myself going beyond one hour.”*

Teacher Beatrice from Banana School said:

*“There is so much to teach in one day. If you check on the specific outcomes of a lesson, I have about four. I have to teach the sound of the day, and after that is done, I have to blend the sound of the day with vowel sounds to form words. Furthermore, I am expected to guide learners on how to blend words into sentences, and this takes a lot of time for learners to understand. There is also the reading of a short story and oral comprehension. Learners are also expected to practice what they have learned*

*and write an exercise at the end of the lesson. This makes the lesson very long and very difficult to complete the literacy lesson in one hour.”*

Teacher Carol from Carrot School said:

*“The one-hour literacy lesson is not enough because it requires that I teach all four skills of language, namely reading, writing, speaking, and listening, in the five stages of the lesson. The learners have to demonstrate writing in the first stage when we shape the letters and write on the board, and also during the interaction stage when they write the learned syllables and words in their books. Furthermore, the skills of listening and speaking are taught during the model stage, when I read a short story and the learners are expected to answer oral questions. They are expected to read sounds, syllables, and words in almost all four steps. These activities make it a bit challenging to complete the literacy lesson in one hour. This is one of the challenges I have faced in teaching literacy using the Primary Literacy Programme.”*

Teacher Sharon from Mango School said:

*“The biggest challenge I have had teaching literacy to grade ones is managing time. Managing time has not been easy for me because I have to follow the five steps as guided in our teacher guides and during our in-service trainings. The literacy lesson has many steps to follow, and if you have to involve the learners and also help them understand, the one hour is little. You have to teach the sound of the day and guide the learners on how to blend sounds into syllables, words, and simple sentences. I am also required to guide the learners on how to read and involve them in a number of activities. This takes a lot of time. I always exceed the one hour allocated to literacy.”*

Teacher Kasema from Grape School also said:

*“One of the challenges which I have teaching literacy using the Primary Literacy Programme is that there is just so much involved in one lesson and time is not enough to teach the sound of the day, read the story and learners answer oral questions, blend the sound with vowels to form syllables and syllables into words and sometimes simple sentences. I also must ensure that learners are involved in the learning*

*process by asking them to participate and this takes a bit of some time. The literacy hour is sometimes not enough for me and the learners to do everything planned”.*

Teacher Kukena from Pineapple School also said:

*“One of the challenges I have been facing in teaching literacy is that I usually fail to finish teaching in one hour. The literacy lesson has a lot of steps to follow and involves a lot of activities. This makes me not complete the literacy lesson on time. One other thing is that I cannot skip any of the stages because I am guided by the teacher’s guide and national literacy framework.”*

**b. Some urban based learners have challenges understanding the medium of instruction.**

Four teachers based in schools within the urban areas stated that some of the learners within the urban areas had challenges understanding Kikaonde as a medium of instruction, and it was challenging teaching reading to such learners. While this challenge was mentioned by the teachers in urban schools, it was not mentioned by those teaching in rural schools. They stated that some of the parents had come to Solwezi for work, and their children were mostly using English in the homes they were coming from. Some of the teachers mentioned that some parents, due to their negative attitude towards Kikaonde, the medium of instruction, were not helping their children with homework, and this impacted negatively on such learners as far as literacy development is concerned. The following is verbatim from some of the teachers teaching in urban schools:

Teacher Kasema from Grape School said:

*“One other challenge that I have been facing in teaching literacy using the current national literacy framework is that some of the learners are unable to understand the medium of instruction, which is Kikaonde. As you are aware, some of the learners in my class are coming from homes where they speak either English or other local languages, and when they are enrolled in grade one, it has been difficult to teach such learners. It simply means that you have to start teaching them the language as well as literacy. This means that their pace of learning is different from that of those who already understand the medium of instruction.”*

Teacher Womba from Pineapple School also said:

*“Some of my learners have challenges understanding Kikaonde, and it takes a long time for them to learn the language. I have learners from different backgrounds, and they usually do not speak Kikaonde at home. This is affecting my teaching because I now have to find other ways, including using another language, to help them understand. The use of another language other than Kikaonde may not be in line with the guidance, but I have no option.”*

Teacher Carol from Carrot School also said:

*“One of the challenges with which I am facing teaching literacy is that there is a language barrier for some learners learning in Kikaonde. I teach many learners who speak different languages at home, but when they come to school, they have to adjust to Kikaonde. Their performance in the first literacy assessment was very bad, but I have noticed that they have started to catch up. I am confident that they will soon catch up with their friends because the policy says we have to teach using Kikaonde and we cannot run away from government instruction.”*

### **c. Absenteeism by some learners**

Eight out of the fifteen teachers mentioned absenteeism as one of the challenges they were facing in teaching literacy to the learners. They mentioned that the literacy lessons were sequenced in such a way that if a learner was upended, it was very difficult to catch up unless a remedial lesson was taught, but remedial lessons were hardly conducted because of a lack of classroom space, more so in urban areas. The following was what was said by some of the teachers:

Teacher Mweemba from Pineapple school said:

*“I also have the challenge of some learners missing lessons, and this affects their progress as far as literacy is concerned. For example, I have seventy-eight learners present, and fifty-seven are present, meaning that twenty-one are absent. This happens almost on a daily basis. It is very difficult to reteach this lesson because I am expected to cover more work every day according to the syllabus and the framework. The current syllabus is made in such a way that two sounds are covered*

*every week, and when pupils are absent, they remain behind for a long time. Some of the parents have been engaged, but it is still a challenge for all learners to be present in school.”*

Teacher Kasema from Grape School said:

*“I have a challenge of absenteeism among my learners. I have twenty-four learners absent today. Some learners can be present today, but they will be absent tomorrow. This has been the trend as far as absenteeism is concerned. It is difficult to record any meaningful progress when learners are absent. The absenteeism of learners is a big challenge because the lessons are linked, and when one misses one lesson, it is difficult to catch up.”*

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

Chapter five presents the findings of the study on exploring literacy pedagogy in grade one classrooms in Solwezi District. Qualitative findings were presented in relation to teachers' pedagogical knowledge in literacy instruction, reasons for their choice of instructional methods and approaches, and whether they were following the literacy syllabus or not. Furthermore, challenges facing teachers teaching literacy were presented. The next chapter is a synthesis of the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **6.1 Overview**

Findings on exploring literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms in Solwezi, Zambia were presented in the previous chapter. This chapter will present a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature and theory presented in this study. It will furthermore, synthesize, reflect, and extend our current knowledge base on literacy pedagogy. The discussion is presented in line with the objectives of the study.

#### **6.2 Teachers pedagogical knowledge in literacy approaches in grade one classrooms of Solwezi District Zambia**

##### **a. Teacher understanding of pedagogical knowledge from interviews**

The study revealed that the majority of the teachers interviewed did not have a correct definition of pedagogy knowledge. While a few of them understood literacy pedagogy as methods and approaches used in the teaching and learning process, most of the teachers understood it as simply teaching learners how to read and write as evidenced by Teacher Thelma from School Carrot who defined literacy pedagogy as teaching learners how to read and write with good handwriting. Teacher Kyeeya from Pineapple School also defined literacy pedagogy being about reading and writing indicating that she had a narrow understanding of the term.

Koniq (2014) defines pedagogical knowledge as instructional processes, student learning, and assessment. Knowledge of instruction practices includes teaching methods, classroom management, and assessments. The author is of the opinion that some of the reasons why the majority of the teachers failed to define the term were because they did not simply know what the term meant. The other reason could be that they had failed to express themselves due to the limitations of the available linguistic resources at their disposal. Whatever the reasons may be, there are a number of learning implications. One of them is that the inability of some teachers to define terms in their area of specialty indicates that they may have some weaknesses in their

pedagogical content knowledge, and this entails that such teachers may not adequately teach and offer support to the learners (Mphathiwa, 2021). Additionally, the inability of some of the teachers to master complex terminologies in their area of specialty can hinder their comprehension of subject matter in their areas of specialization. Topping and Ferguson (2005) also state that teachers who can articulate and explain the terminologies in their area of specialisation tend to be successful in their instructional practices.

Based on the arguments presented by Mphathiwa (2021); Topping and Ferguson (2005)), we can infer that those teachers who failed to define the term literacy pedagogy may not have a complete understanding of instructional practices such as methods, aspects of class management, and assessment. What this entails is that grade one learners being taught by those teachers were not fully benefiting from a variety of methods and approaches that could have been used during the learning process by one who knows.

#### **b. Teacher's pedagogical knowledge of literacy methods and approaches**

Findings from the interviews and lesson observations revealed that teachers had pedagogical knowledge of a number of literacy teaching methods and approaches that they also used during literacy instruction. These teaching methods and approaches included the phonics method, look and say (whole language) methods, demonstrations, question and answer, reading aloud, and group work. Teacher Carol from school Carrot for example, explained during interviews, that she used the phonics methods, the look-and-say method, demonstrations, read a louds and question and answer when teaching the learners and she equally used the same methods during the lesson observations. What was revealed in the interviews was consistent with what was established during the lesson observations. She used the question and answer, look-and -say, demonstration method and group work which was employed by a few teachers.

Teacher Kukena from Pineapple School, Teacher Kasema from Grape School, Teacher Beatrice from Banana School and Teacher Sharon from Mango School equally, mentioned that they used the phonics method, demonstrations, question and answer and look and say which were also observed in the literacy lesson observations. While lesson observations were conducted in the six schools, only two teachers used group work during the lesson. The methods and approaches used and the implications of each of the methods and approaches are discussed below.

The study revealed that teachers were using the synthetic phonics method to teach literacy to first-grade learners. This method is used to teach the pronunciation of sounds in association with letters of the alphabet and how to blend sounds to form syllables and words (Torgerson et al., 2006). The teacher taught learners how to sound out the letter sounds in Kikaonde, blend the sounds learned to form syllables and words, and read both unfamiliar and familiar words. The use of the synthetic phonics approach as opposed to the analytic phonics approach to teach literacy to grade one learners should be commended and ties with (Johnston & Watson, 2005) who argues that synthetic phonics should be taught in the child's first year at school. This is because the use of the approach enables teachers to teach learners the sounds of the language, how to blend these sounds into syllables, and finally how to blend the syllables formed into words. Additionally, the use of the synthetic phonics method entails that learners are exposed to the smallest units of language, which are the sounds, and build these sounds into complex units such as syllables, words, and sentences. This bottom-up approach means that learners were going to easily understand the smaller units and thereafter build on the knowledge to understand bigger units such as syllables and words. The analytic phonics method, on the other hand, involves teaching sounds in the context of whole words, and this hinders first-grade learners from quickly learning how to read because they have to begin with complex units such as words to learn sounds.

Amadi (2019) advances some of the strengths of using the synthetic approach to phonics instruction, some of which are that its usage helps learners construct words for themselves, promotes learner-centred learning, reduces overdependence on the teacher, and allows learners to decode unfamiliar words they come across in texts with little assistance. Additionally, literature exists on the effectiveness of the use of this approach in literacy improvement. Olagbaju and Olaniyi (2023) in their study on the effects of explicit and differentiated phonics instructional strategies on achievement in literacy instruction found that participants in explicit phonics, as well as synthetic phonics, obtained the highest achievement score compared to those doing differentiated phonics instruction. The use of the phonics method by all the teachers observed during the literacy lessons implies that their learners were expected to learn how to read quickly and in the shortest possible time. This is because this approach was suitable for grade one learners and has a number of strengths for teachers to exploit. The teachers were also able to define the method during interviews, indicating that they understood it well.

It was also revealed that all the six teachers, who participated in lesson observations, used the look and say method, also referred to as the whole word method, during the literacy lessons. This method was used with other methods during the literacy lesson. The teachers conducted activities ranging from asking learners to look at sound, syllable, and word cards, conversational posters, and books and starting or reading what was on those cards and posters. Some of the learners were able to read syllables and words and mention the names of things on the conversational posters. One of the benefits of using this method is that it facilitates the rapid recognition of frequently encountered words, ultimately leading to the early reading of whole words (McBride-Chang & Treiman, 2003). Learners can quickly memorise words learned in their local languages using this method. This method, however, has several weaknesses. One of the weaknesses of the utilisation of this method is that too much reliance on it can limit learners' ability to decode unfamiliar words and develop phonemic awareness, which are very cardinal skills for proficient learning (McBride -Chang & Treiman, 2003). It is therefore expected that teachers planning to use this method should not use it in isolation but integrate it with other methods and approaches in order to address its weaknesses. The look-and-say method was used during the present and practice stages of the literacy lessons. Learners were requested to look at the word cards and read syllables and words. The use of the look-and-say method with other methods and approaches implies that the teachers were able to address some of the weaknesses associated with it. The teachers were not only able to utilise the method but also mentioned and explained it during interviews. This means that they understood the method so well and were able to utilise it in the classroom.

The demonstration method was also mentioned during interviews and utilised by all the teachers during the observed literacy lessons. Activities conducted by teachers during literacy lessons ranged from demonstrating the blending process of sounds into syllables and syllables into words. Learners were also requested to demonstrate the blending of sounds into syllables and words on the board. The willingness of learners to take part in demonstrations enabled some of the learners to be actively involved in the learning process. Active learning is one of the tenets of a constructivist classroom, and most activities should be centred on the learners. One of the advantages of learner-centred classrooms is that they enable learners to actively construct new knowledge based on prior experiences (Splan et al., 2011).

The utilisation of the demonstration method by teachers during literacy lessons has a number of benefits and implications for the learning process. The first benefit is that the method allows learners to utilise the practical application of theory and concepts, thus making the learning experience more tangible and memorable (Khomeni & Prabawanto, 2020). The implication, therefore, is that learners who participated in the demonstrations had a more tangible learning experience than those who did not. Furthermore, learners who participated in the demonstrations during the lesson were able to witness first-hand the principles being taught in class. In addition, demonstrations promote active learning, which is one of the tenets of constructivism.

Kareva and Dragaj (2020), in their study regarding the efficacy of the demonstration method, found that the method made the process of teaching easier and clearer for both teachers and learners. The implication of the use of the demonstration method by teachers is that learners found the content of the literacy lessons easier. Other than what has already been discussed, the demonstration method is an effective method to use when teaching speaking, especially in improving vocabulary and grammar. Since speaking is one of the macro skills in language, the use of the demonstration method, if used effectively, can promote the elements of vocabulary and grammar among learners.

Group work was also mentioned during interviews, but it was only used by two teachers during lesson observations. Teachers divided learners into groups and requested that they read words formed in groups. During group work, the teacher went around checking on the participation of learners in the group reading activity. Karim (2015) states that one of the advantages of group work is that learners working in groups can often deal with complex challenges and tasks with minimum assistance compared to learners who work individually. Group work is learner-centred, allows learners to interact, and provides learners with opportunities to initiate the interaction and adopt roles that would be difficult to perform if they were alone (Brown, 2001). Group work offers learners an opportunity to collaborate, which is one of the tenets of constructivism. Collaborative learning is defined as learning that allows learners to develop, compare, and understand multiple perspectives on an issue and come up with consensus while sharing a work load (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005). Additionally, learners actively construct

knowledge through collaborative learning and interactions with their experiences ((Gilakjani et al., 2013).

The use of group work by the teachers meant that learners in schools where group work was used had an opportunity for interaction and collaboration during the learning process. Other than that, group work offers learners an opportunity to feel secure because they cannot be criticised individually in groups. Furthermore, group work allows learners to work together, thus increasing their motivation and self-confidence. As learners share the learning task and knowledge amongst themselves, it leads to positive literacy learning outcomes (Sonita & Febria, 2022).

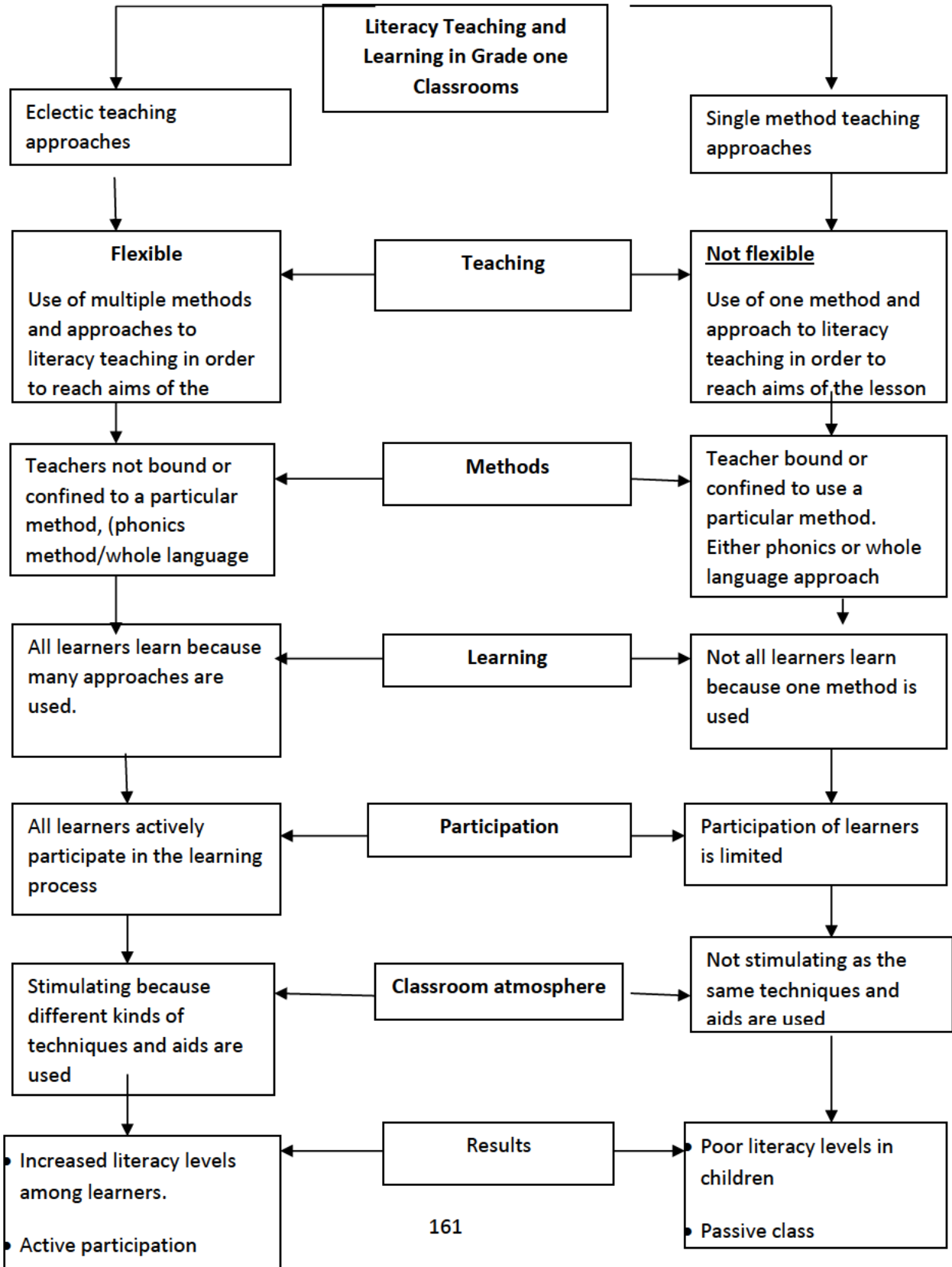
There were also some aspects of the use of the whole language approach in the literacy lessons. The whole language approach is a learning approach where language is learned as a whole and not as separate entities, meaning that all four macro-skills of language, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking, are integrated during the process of teaching (Goodman, 1986). Activities that typically characterise whole-language classrooms include shared reading, guided reading, reading aloud, and guided writing. One of the activities conducted in all the lessons observed was guided reading. All the teachers who were observed read a short story, modelling learners how to read while they listened attentively. Learners were asked to answer oral questions after the teacher had concluded reading the story. Furthermore, there were also activities involving reading aloud, as both the teachers and learners read aloud syllables and words. The use of some aspects of the whole language approach, such as reading aloud, implies that learners were more likely to improve their vocabulary and comprehension skills. This is consistent with (Fauzi, 2020), who argues that reading aloud can promote children's vocabulary as well as improve their listening and reading comprehension. On the other hand, there were no aspects of shared reading between the teachers and learners, let alone learners themselves, because limited opportunities were given to learners either in groups or pairs to do so.

While teachers had pedagogical knowledge of a number of instructional methods in the teaching of literacy, not all the methods and approaches to address the weaknesses of each of the methods used, such as the language experience method and the task-based approach, were

utilized. Furthermore, a few teachers engaged their learners in learner-centred approaches such as group work or pair work, which ensured the active participation of learners.

All instructional methods and approaches to literacy have some weaknesses and strengths. It is therefore very important for teachers to use a variety of instructional methods and approaches that promote the four macro-skills of language, namely speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Furthermore, teachers should use approaches and methods that ensure the active participation of learners in the learning process. This can only be achieved if the teachers become eclectic in their teaching. Mwanza (2016) defines eclecticism as a judicious selection of methods based on the topic, learning needs, and characteristics of the learners, and integrating the selected methods and activities in a way that promotes learning. While teachers had pedagogical knowledge on a number of methods and approaches, it remains unclear whether or not the choices of the used methods and approaches took into account the learning needs and characteristics of the learners because the pattern of teaching among the teachers remained the same. Furthermore, the steps followed in all the lessons were guided and written in the teacher's guide. It is imperative that teachers become eclectic and select methods and approaches based on learner characteristics as well as needs. The advantages of being eclectic in teaching are explained in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Advantages of using eclectic methods in literacy teaching



### **6.3 Why do teachers choose the methods and strategies they use to teach literacy lessons.**

The study revealed, through interviews conducted with the teachers, that their choice of methods and approaches used during teaching was based on two factors, namely, their belief in the effectiveness of the methods and their familiarity with the methods and approaches through continuous professional development trainings attended.

Teacher Jane from School Apple for example, explained that she used the methods she felt were effective. These were the same views held by Teacher Beatrice from Banana School and Teacher Mweemba from Grape School. What was revealed in the study points to the fact that teachers' beliefs in the effectiveness of particular methods and teaching strategies to a large extent influenced their choice to utilise them in a classroom. This finding in this present study ties with Brum (2021), who states that beliefs that teachers hold about particular methods or approaches make them more likely to utilise them or not in a classroom. Furthermore, Moje (1996) also suggests that teachers' perspectives and beliefs about literacy instruction, including their attitudes towards using teaching strategies, significantly impact their instructional decisions.

While the belief held by teachers in the effectiveness of some methods and approaches is supported by existing literature, there are several weaknesses in holding on to this position. The first being that belief alone is not enough to come to the conclusion that a method is effective, more so if it is not backed by formative data (Kreamer et al., 2019). Practicing teachers should use information from learners' formative and summative assessment results to ascertain suitable instructional methods and approaches suitable for the learners in that context.

The study, as earlier mentioned, also revealed that teachers' choice of instructional methods and approaches was based on their familiarity with them due to the continuous professional development training they received. Teacher Sharon from Mango School for example, explained that she chooses the method and approaches to use based on the training she had received during teacher group meetings at her school. Teacher kukena from Pineapple School and Teacher Thelma from Carrot School also held the same view. What was revealed in the present study ties with Nichols et al. (2005), whose study also revealed that teachers' reported use of selected reading methods and strategies was influenced by several factors, among them workshops attended. Other scholars, such as Jenkins (2018) and Moje (2008) , hold the same

view and state that professional development plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' literacy instructional practices, and teachers are most likely to use instructional methods and practices that they have learned through training and professional development meetings.

The importance of continuous professional meetings in improving teacher pedagogical knowledge cannot be ignored and has been documented. For example, a study conducted by Nichols et al. (2005) in the United States of America revealed that teachers involved in professional development experience made significant gains in their use of several reading strategies and methods. In the case of Zambia, and Solwezi in particular, the primary literacy programme was implemented when some of the teachers were already employed. This meant that these teachers needed to be trained in the suggested literacy strategies and methods to use. Furthermore, Kombe and Mwanza (2019) reported that lecturers in teacher training colleges were not adequately prepared to train student teachers with relevant skills and knowledge to teach literacy. This meant that both experienced and newly trained teachers needed to be trained on how to effectively teach literacy in the primary literacy programme. Continuous professional development meetings, therefore, became a medium to create pedagogical capacity among teachers.

While the importance of professional development meetings is key to improving the pedagogical knowledge of teachers, the choice of instructional methods and approaches can also be dependent on a number of factors, such as the interpretation of educational policies (Coburn, 2001), teacher pedagogical knowledge, and other parameters such as class size and the availability of teaching materials, to name only a few. Regarding the interpretation of education policies, there was no teacher who stated that their choice of teaching methods and approaches was based on the guidance given in their teacher's guide, although it is encouraged that teachers become eclectic and not stick to what is provided in the teacher's guide. It appears, rightly so, that the continuous professional development trainings underwent by the teachers focused more on training teachers in the suggested methodology as guided by the teacher's guide. Whether this could be the reason why teachers did not give this response or not remains speculation. Class size and the availability of teaching and learning materials can also determine the choice of instructional methods. A teacher, for example, who has a large class

and limited teaching and learning materials may opt to group work or pair work in order to maximise the utilisation of the limited materials.

Finally, the teacher's pedagogical knowledge is also key to the choice of methods that a teacher uses in a classroom. Harris et al. (2009) define pedagogical knowledge as knowledge of learning and teaching time, practice, strategy, and methods in the learning environments where formal education takes place. Usta and Karakuş (2016) also define pedagogical literacy as the competencies that enable teachers to make informed decisions in the selection of their pedagogical tools used in their education. A pedagogically knowledgeable teacher, therefore, is one who is knowledgeable about the teaching and learning processes. Such teachers chose teaching methods and strategies based on a number of factors, such as feedback from assessments, class sizes, and content knowledge, to name but a few. While teachers who participated in the study only considered two factors as a basis for their choice of teaching methods and approaches to use in class, it is important that this choice be made based on all factors available surrounding the teaching and learning processes, some of which have been highlighted.

#### **6.4 How is the teaching of literacy in grade one classrooms lined up with the literacy curriculum?**

##### **a. Components taught during literacy lessons**

The study revealed that teachers of literacy were following the literacy curriculum in terms of the components taught to the learners and the specific outcomes of the lessons. The content of the lessons as well as the specific outcomes were in tandem with the national literacy framework, as will be discussed.

Regarding the teaching components, the study revealed that seven major literacy components were taught: pre-reading, sounds (phonemic awareness and phonics), word formation, sentence construction, comprehension, writing, and fluency. Tasks related to these seven broad components were observed during the lessons and are consistent with the national literacy framework (Ministry of Education, 2013).

A number of activities related to pre-reading were observed during the course of literacy lessons. These activities ranged from exploring the concept of print through teacher-learner interactions with reading materials such as simple texts and conversation posters. Other tasks

conducted related to pre-reading were the reading of short stories as well as the concept of print awareness (left-to-right eye movement). Oral activities such as the singing of songs about the sound being taught that day were observed and tied to the knowledge, skills, and values stipulated under the pre-reading component of the national literacy framework.

Pre-reading activities play a vital role in enhancing reading comprehension because they prepare readers for upcoming concepts, connect new information with existing knowledge, and strengthen their foundation for the reading material (Agbevivi & Adogpa, 2022). Furthermore, Ekaningrum and Prabandari (2016) also mention that pre-activities provide orientation to content and context and minimise uncertainty that readers may have before reading a text. Another benefit of pre-reading activities, according to Alghonaim (2020), is that learners become better equipped to interact with texts, predict their content, and improve their comprehension skills. Other than what has been stated already, Harendika and Siswanti (2022), and Osei (2016) also mention that these activities, other than facilitating reading comprehension, also stimulate learners' schema and motivate them to predict text content. Osei (2016) further records that those activities provide early readers with the required background knowledge to comprehend texts effectively as well as organise their thoughts while reading.

The teaching of sounds (phonemic awareness and phonics) was observed in grade one classrooms too. There were a number of learning tasks involving identifying sounds and syllables, syllable formation, blending sounds, combining syllables to form words, and identifying words differentiated by vowel length. What was revealed in this study on the sound component ties with the provisions of the literacy curriculum of 2013 (MESVTEC, 2013). The teaching of the sound component to first-grade learners has numerous benefits. Melby-Lervåg et al. (2012) and Caravolas et al. (2012) state that phonemic awareness, the ability to identify and manipulate sounds in spoken words, combined with phonics-based reading instruction has been shown to be effective in improving word-level reading skills among learners. Melby-Lervåg et al. (2012) also state that phonemic awareness and phonics are beneficial for learners with word-reading difficulties.

In phonics, the sound-letter relationship is critical for literacy development. The National Reading Panel also recommends phonics as one of the five major components of effective reading instruction (Pittman et al., 2019). One of the benefits of phonics instruction is that,

when paired with phonemic awareness training, it improves word-reading skills (Caravolas et al., 2012). With the number of benefits discussed above, it implies that learners in grade one classrooms were more likely to benefit from the knowledge and skills arising from the teaching of phonemic and phonics instruction.

The study also revealed that there was a component of word formation embedded in the literacy lessons, and substantial time was spent on word formation tasks such as the blending of syllables. The role that word-formation tasks play in literacy development has been documented. Rashtchi and Pirali (2017) argue that teaching learners word formation rules can promote their vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, Meganathan et al. (2019) also mention that word formation tasks have been found to be beneficial for vocabulary development among learners.

The study also revealed that comprehension was one of the components covered during the course of the literacy lessons. The teachers read some short stories and asked learners questions based on a number of aspects, such as locating details in the story as well as identifying similar words with similar sounds in the story. There is documented literature on the benefits of oral comprehension activities in the development of reading among learners. Liswaniso and Pretorius (2022) state that the effective teaching of oral comprehension can lead to improved reading comprehension skills among learners. It is therefore expected that these first-grade learners were going to demonstrate improved reading comprehension skills since they were being taught oral comprehension.

Aspects of writing activities were also observed during lesson observations. The activities involved the grade one learner's writing sounds, syllables, words, and even simple sentences on the board during demonstrations and exercise books. Writing tasks present a number of benefits to learners learning to read. One of them is that learners who are engaged in writing tasks during reading lessons are more likely to attain writing proficiency (Webb, 2009). Gu (2016) also states that engaging learners in writing tasks stimulates their writing skills, ultimately leading to better understanding as well as the internalisation of content. The teaching of writing activities during literacy lessons implies that first-grade learners had an effective learning experience that was going to promote their writing proficiency.

There were also activities aimed at promoting fluent reading among learners. These activities included the reading of short stories as well as the reading of sounds and words by learners, randomly pointed at by the teacher. There are a number of benefits associated with the teaching of fluency. One of them is that it helps to enhance reading skills such as the proper use of tone and intonation (Musti et al., 2022). Kuhn et al. (2006), also states that teaching learners fluency impacts positively on their word recognition, reading fluency, comprehension, and overall reading achievement. The implication of this finding, therefore, is that if taught well and everyone of them attended all lessons, these first-grade learners were expected to become fluent readers as they advanced in grade.

In conclusion, all seven major literacy components, namely, pre-reading, sounds, words, sentences, comprehension, writing, and fluency, were incorporated into literacy lessons at different stages of the lesson. These components were taught as guided in the 2013 national literacy framework as well as the literacy syllabus. This implies that learners were learning what was provided for in the syllabus in terms of components, and secondly, they should be able to demonstrate reading skills such as being able to read a simple sentence at the end of the year considering the number of benefits that go with teaching what is in the syllabus.

#### **b. Coverage of sequence of literacy instruction**

The findings of the study also revealed that some of the teachers in four of the six schools were behind schedule in covering the literacy content as scheduled in the literacy syllabus. Some of the sounds taught should have been taught two weeks ago. This finding means that four schools, translating into 67 percent, were not going to complete the content to be covered in grade one if no learning time was created outside the school's normal routine to catch up with the syllabus. The non-completion of the syllabus has several disadvantages. Khademi (2022) mentions that the non-completion of the syllabus creates gaps in the learner's knowledge and skills attained, thus negatively impacting their overall reading achievement. It also results in poor performance in the summative assessments and impacts negatively on the quality of education.

### **6.5 Challenges teachers are facing teaching literacy in grade one classrooms**

There were a number of challenges that teachers were facing when teaching literacy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms. One of the challenges revealed in the study was the

inadequate time to cover literacy teaching content in one hour. This is exemplified by what Teacher Jane from Apple School said that one of the challenges she was facing teaching literacy was that there were so many activities to cover in the one-hour literacy lessons. She explained that by the time she concluded all the five steps of the literacy lesson, she had gone beyond one hour. The inadequacy of time to cover all the content of a literacy lesson was also highlighted by Teacher Beatrice from Banana School, Teacher Carol from Carrot School, Teacher Sharon from Mango School, Teacher Kasema from Grape School and Teacher Kukena from Pineapple school. Teacher Kukena from Pineapple School, specifically, explained that the literacy lesson had a lot of steps to follow and involved the teacher and learners engaging in many activities making her not completing the lesson on time.

All the fifteen teachers interviewed mentioned in the interviews, that there was too much literacy content to be covered in one hour. All of them mentioned that the literacy lesson had five major steps involved and required a lot of time to teach learners how to read the sound of the day, blend sounds into syllables, blend syllables into words, and also conduct other learning activities such as reading, speaking, writing, and oral comprehension. The lesson observations conducted also revealed the same challenge. This finding is consistent with Kombe and Mwanza (2019) and Gu (2016), who state that there was a general concern that teachers had inadequate time to complete all the teaching tasks in the literacy hour using the primary literacy programme. The lesson observations also revealed that all the teachers did not manage to conclude on time as their lessons lasted more than one hour. Furthermore, some of them did not implement some of the activities they had planned to undertake. One implication of this finding is that most of the teachers do not complete the teaching of the content planned for a particular lesson due to the time factor. This also means that first-grade learners were not acquiring the required competences and skills because of the inadequacy of time, which ultimately delayed their literacy development.

The study also revealed that some pupils in urban areas had challenges understanding Kikaonde, the medium of instruction used in the area, and it usually took a long time for such learners to both learn the language as well as learn to read and write it. This is exemplified by what Teacher Kasema from Grape School said that one of the challenges she had been facing was that some of the learners were unable to understand the medium of instruction used in the

area. The same sentiments were expressed by Teacher Womba from Pineapple School and Teacher Carol from Carrot School. This scenario was mostly attributed to the multilingual nature of urban Solwezi. This finding has several learning implications. One of them is that if learners are unable to understand the medium of instruction, they will most likely remain behind and not acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, and competences. Learning a language by learners is influenced by a number of factors, such as parental assistance rendered to that child, their attitude towards a particular language, the learners' interaction with peers, and the language itself, among other factors. Nalwimba (2019) found that the bad attitude of parents towards local language learning had an influence on the learners attitude towards learning that language. It is therefore important for the education system in Zambia to find a solution for such a scenario. A recommendation will be advanced in the appropriate chapter.

The findings of the study also revealed that absenteeism by learners was one of the challenges teachers were facing in teaching literacy. This is exemplified by what Teacher Mweemba from Pineapple School stated that some of the learners were fond of missing lessons daily. The same challenge was mentioned by Teacher Kasema from Grape School. The rate of absenteeism was high in all the schools where lesson observations were conducted. Lesson observations conducted in some of the schools revealed that up to 21 learners out of the seventy-eight total class enrolments, translating to 27 percent, were absent. In another school, twenty-four learners out of a total class enrolment of forty-two, translating to 58 percent, were absent. The high levels of absenteeism were alarming and had a negative had a negative impact on the literacy development of first-grade learners in these schools. Firstly, the learners who are absent from school miss out on the literacy content taught that day. This is because the primary literacy programme, the current literacy programme, being implemented is structured in such a way that one sound is taught in a day and revised the second day. Therefore, when a learner does not attend literacy lessons for just a day, they remain behind, ultimately leading to poor performance in the standardised literacy assessments (SLA) for work covered during that period. Furthermore, such learners lag in improving vocabulary, word formations, and sentence construction related to the learning outcomes for the sound taught when they were absent.

## **6.6 Chapter summary**

The findings of the study have been synthesised in relation to the literature and the theory presented in the earlier chapters of this study. The study has demonstrated that although grade one teachers of literacy had pedagogical knowledge of a number of instructional methods and approaches, most of the approaches used were not learner-centered hence the need for them to be eclectic. Furthermore, most of the teachers did not base their choice of instruction methods on the learners' needs, such as formative assessments; instead, the choices were based on beliefs about the efficacy of the methods and training received during continuous professional development meetings. The study has demonstrated the need to change from such a position. The study has further demonstrated that while the syllabus was being followed, some of the teachers were behind in the coverage of literacy content, which has a negative effect on learner performance and fighting the literacy challenge. The study has also discussed some of the challenges, such as absenteeism among learners and inadequate time to cover all planned lesson activities, which, if left unchecked, could have a negative impact on the teaching of literacy.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 Overview

The previous chapter discussed the study's findings. This chapter presents the answers to the research questions presented in chapter one. The aim of this study was to explore literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms in Solwezi, District Zambia. This chapter also explains the implications of the study for stakeholders in Zambia's literacy education field, such as the Ministry of Education, curriculum designers, and teachers in the field of literacy education. This chapter also makes recommendations and suggests areas for future research.

#### 7.2 Brief overview of previous chapters

This section presents a brief overview of the previous chapters. The first chapter provided an overview of the study, including its background, the context of the Zambian education system, the language policy since independence, and the factors hindering the development of mother tongue literacy pedagogy. Chapter one also presented the problem statement, study purpose, objectives, and research questions. The study's significance and its limitations are also highlighted.

Chapter two reviewed literature related to literacy pedagogy at global, African, and Zambian levels, aligning with the study's objectives. We first reviewed the literature on how different scholars have defined pedagogical knowledge and its importance in literacy teaching. Secondly, we reviewed the literature on pedagogical knowledge and teacher training in selected global countries, specifically Africa and Zambia, and identified gaps in these studies. We also reviewed the literature that highlights the importance of the mother tongue in literacy instruction, as well as some studies that focus on this aspect. We discussed the various teaching approaches and methods used for mother-tongue literacy worldwide, including in Zambia. The discussion also encompassed factors influencing teachers' selection of literacy instructional methods and strategies. Furthermore, the National Literacy Framework in Zambia, literacy teaching components in the national literacy framework, the scope and sequency of the literacy framework, the schedule of literacy instruction, and the advantages and challenges of using the

national literacy framework were discussed. In chapter two, we finally discussed the challenges of implementing mother tongue literacy programmes both globally and within Zambia.

Chapter three discussed the learning theory that guided the study. Constructivism, a theory of learning, guided the study. I discussed the proponents of the theory, the tenets of constructivism, the characteristics of constructivist classrooms, and the implications of this theory for literacy education. The conceptual framework for the study was also discussed.

Chapter four discussed the methods used in the study. The chapter explored various research paradigms and provided a rationale for selecting the interpretive paradigm for this study. The chapter also explored the fundamental types of methodological approaches, specifically qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, and provided reasons for choosing the qualitative approach and the case study design. The chapter also discussed the target population, sample size and sampling techniques used, data collection methods and instruments, rigour, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter five summarised the study's findings. First, the chapter presents the results of interviews with 15 teachers and six lesson observations, which reveal the teachers' pedagogical understanding of literacy approaches in grade one classrooms in Kikaonde, Solwezi District. Furthermore, I presented findings from interviews that explore the reasons behind teachers' selection of the methods and approaches they employ to teach literacy. The chapter then presented findings on how the literacy curriculum aligns with literacy instruction in grade one classrooms. Furthermore, the presentation includes findings on the challenges teachers encounter when teaching literacy in grade one classes.

Chapter six synthesized the study's findings in accordance with the reviewed literature and theoretical framework and discussed their implications.

### **7.3 Restatement and answers to the research questions**

This section provides the answers to the research questions. Below, I restate and respond to the research questions:

### **7.3.1 What is the teacher's pedagogical knowledge of literacy teaching approaches in Kikaonde language in grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, Zambia?**

The study revealed that many participating teachers possessed pedagogical expertise in various literacy teaching methods and approaches, including the phonics method, look-and-say method, demonstration approach, read-alouds, question-and-answer sessions, and group work, which a few employed. However, while teachers had demonstrated pedagogical knowledge of several instructional methods in literacy teaching, not all instructional methods used involved the active participation of the learners, such as pair work and group work. The teachers were not using methods and approaches that involved the active participation of learners because they had not understood the importance of using learner-centred teaching, which the constructivist theory of learning promotes. This finding implies that learners were not fully participating in the creation of knowledge as active participants in the learning process, which has a significant impact on literacy development. Furthermore, the interviews revealed that most of the teachers did not understand and give meaningful explanations of literacy pedagogy, implying that they may have some weaknesses in their pedagogical content knowledge.

### **7.3.2 Why do teachers choose the methods and strategies they use to teach literacy lessons**

Teachers chose the methods and approaches they used to teach literacy based on their belief in their effectiveness and their familiarity with these methods. Teachers attributed their beliefs to two primary factors. For instance, teachers who selected methods and approaches based on their familiarity did so because they had received training in these areas during continuous professional development trainings. These trainings enhanced the teachers' capacity and enabled them to select appropriate methods and approaches for teaching. Those who made their selections based on the efficacy of the methods and approaches held the belief that employing specific methods accelerated learners' learning.

### **7.3.3 How is the teaching of literacy in grade one classrooms lined up with the literacy curriculum?**

Lesson observations revealed that teachers were following the literacy curriculum in terms of specific outcomes and lesson content (components), which were in tandem with the Zambian national literacy framework. The literacy lessons covered the following main components: pre-reading, sounds (phonemic awareness and phonics), words, sentences, comprehension, writing, and fluency, all of which reflected the literacy syllabus. Some of the pre-reading activities observed during the lesson observations were teacher-learner interactions with reading

materials such as conversation posters, use of oral activities such as songs based on the sound of the day and print awareness. The teaching of sounds (phonemic awareness and phonics) involved sound identification, syllable formation, and blending of syllables to form words. The comprehension activities entailed reading short stories and posing oral questions based on the read passage, while the writing tasks included in the lessons required learners to write sounds, syllables, words, and simple sentences. However, the pace of syllabus coverage among most of the teachers was slow, as some were behind schedule by two or three weeks.

#### **7.3.4 What challenges are teachers facing in teaching literacy in Kikaonde in grade one classrooms?**

Teachers were facing several challenges in teaching literacy in grade one classrooms in Solwezi District. Teachers had trouble covering all the content of a literacy lesson in an hour because there was too much to cover. The lesson consisted of five major stages: Present, Model, Guide, Practice, and Interact. In the present stage, the teacher introduced the day's sound to the learners and revised the vowels. In the model stage, the teacher demonstrated fluent reading and asked the learners oral questions based on the short story. The teacher taught learners how to blend sounds into syllables and words; they read those sounds in the guide stage. The teacher and learners practiced reading in the practice stage, and learners wrote individual work in the interact stage. Teachers were unable to complete a number of planned activities due to an overload of teaching tasks. The other challenge was that some pupils in the urban part of Solwezi had difficulties understanding Kikaonde as a medium of instruction used in the area, being a multilingual community. Some of the learners were not indigenous people and came from homes where Kikaonde, the medium of instruction, was not used as a first or second language. As a result, it took a long time for such learners to learn the language as well as how to read and write it. The other challenge faced by teachers was the high levels of absenteeism by learners in all the schools. The learners who were not attending school remained behind in terms of content coverage and were not performing well in the standardized literacy assessments (SLA) administered in weeks five, ten, and thirteen. The sequence of the literacy syllabus, which taught each sound in a day and revised it the next, prevented these learners from catching up.

## **7.4 Potential Contribution to knowledge**

This section provides the potential contribution to knowledge for this study.

### **7.4.1 Theoretical contribution**

The study used the constructivism theory of learning (Alanazi, 2016; Dagar & Yadav, 2016; Koochang et al., 2009) as a suitable theory to explore literacy pedagogy and instruction in selected primary schools in Solwezi. According to the constructivism theory of learning, students should dedicate a significant portion of their time to learner-centered activities in the classroom, as this allows them to actively create new knowledge (Dagar & Yadav, 2016; Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997; Splan et al., 2011). The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning. Another tenet of the constructivist theory of learning is collaborative learning, a type of learning that allows learners to develop, compare, and understand multiple perspectives on an issue and come up with a consensus while sharing a workload (Gilakjani et al., 2013; Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005). The theory helped the researcher understand that active learning can only take place in learners when they are actively involved in the learning process. The teacher should use methods and strategies such as group and pair work, which provide space for learning and active participation while the teacher facilitates this process. Furthermore, the theory has helped the researcher understand that collaborative learning can only take place when the teacher uses methods and strategies that allow learners to develop, compare, and understand multiple perspectives on an issue while comparing workloads.

The study confirms that while literacy teachers in Solwezi possess pedagogical knowledge of various teaching methods and approaches, only a small number of them are implementing learner-centered methods, which presents a significant challenge. The recommendation from this study for more continuous professional development trainings with a bias towards learner-centred methods and approaches could make a contribution to enhancing pedagogical knowledge among teachers of literacy in Solwezi. The rich data gathered from interviews and lesson observations provided the researcher with insights into teachers' pedagogical knowledge in terms of how they teach, why they use the methods they use, and what challenges they face in the implementation of the syllabus.

#### **7.4.2 Methodological contributions**

The present study also makes a philosophical contribution by utilizing a qualitative approach to investigate literacy pedagogy in grade one classrooms, specifically within the Zambian context. According to Creswell and Cresswell (2017), individuals or groups use qualitative approaches to explore and understand the meaning they ascribe to social or human problems, with a focus on natural settings such as classrooms. Some of the benefits of using qualitative approaches in research are as follows:

- Its ability to gather rich and detailed data, thus providing insights into people's behaviour, attitudes, and motivations, is remarkable.
- This approach allows for flexibility and adaptability during data collection.
- It allows researchers to gather intricate data that quantitative methods might miss.

Most studies using qualitative approaches have focused on one method of data collection, such as interviews, focus group discussions, or classroom observations. This study, though qualitative, used both interviews and lesson observations to confirm or refute the findings of the other, especially when establishing teachers' pedagogical knowledge. For instance, the results from the interviews revealed that most teachers used group and pair work in their teaching, a finding that contradicted the findings from the conducted lesson observations. Furthermore, the study used a case study design to investigate literacy pedagogy in primary schools in Solwezi District, which uses Kikaonde as a medium of instruction.

#### **7.4.3 Other philosophical contributions**

This study's third philosophical contribution is its exploration and questioning of teachers' pedagogical knowledge based on actual literacy instruction in grade one classrooms. The study established that the current teacher pedagogical knowledge practices are not sufficient for the teaching of literacy in Zambia. The study's findings lay the groundwork for teacher training reforms that will enable Zambian teachers to be adequately prepared to teach literacy.

The other contribution of the study is that this study has added its voice in questioning the effectiveness of the current teacher training programmes offered by teacher training colleges in Zambia in training teachers of literacy. The study's findings may contribute to policy discussions about literacy instruction and teachers' pedagogical knowledge in Zambian grade

one classrooms. This study brings literacy pedagogy in Zambia and beyond into context, with the goal of helping all learners in class benefit from the use of effective literacy approaches.

### **7.5 Originality of the study**

This section presents aspects related to the originality of my research. The researcher conducted the current study in both urban and rural primary schools in Solwezi District, Zambia. He selected the study participants from schools that had undergone literacy teaching and pedagogical trainings, expecting every teacher to teach literacy effectively. The study is distinctive as the participants, hailing from various schools and regions within Solwezi District, were instructing first-grade students. This provided the researcher with valuable insights into the pedagogical knowledge teachers possess, the reasons behind their method selections, and the alignment of their instruction with the literacy curriculum. The study has created an awareness for the researcher to recognise the fact that there are still teachers of literacy in primary schools that still need capacity building in literacy pedagogical knowledge to enable them to use learner-centred methods and strategies. The study will assist the Ministry of Education in developing new language policies that promote inclusivity and recognition of linguistic diversity. The study will aid curriculum designers in modifying the literacy curriculum to facilitate the teaching of all planned content and activities. The study may also help the Ministry of Education align primary teacher training with the prevailing literacy program.

### **7.6 Limitations of the study**

This section presents the limitations of the study. The current study's findings are specific to schools in Solwezi, Zambia, making it impossible to generalize. Other schools in different districts, with different participants, may produce different results. However, the study's findings may shed light on teachers' pedagogical knowledge.

### **7.7 Recommendations**

This section presents the recommendations of the study. The study's findings and conclusions inform the following recommendations.

- a. To address the weaknesses associated with individual methods or approaches, teachers should become eclectic and use as many methods and approaches as possible. While all the 15 teachers had pedagogical knowledge of several instructional methods for teaching

literacy, only two of them engaged their learners in learner-centered approaches to ensure their active participation. This necessitates a greater emphasis on ongoing professional development training in teacher pedagogy in all schools throughout the year. We should carefully plan and tailor CPDs to meet the needs of all literacy teachers in the area of teaching pedagogy. These CPDs can include peer teaching, teacher coaching, literacy pedagogy seminars, and short trainings. Furthermore, administrators should strictly monitor all CPDs monthly, to ensure attendance by all literacy teachers.

- b. All the 15 teachers who participated in the interviews indicated that their choice of instructional methods was based on their belief in their effectiveness and those acquired from continuous professional development training. I recommend that teachers should base their selection and choice of instructional methods on various aspects related to the learners' teaching and learning process, including formative and summative assessment. This necessitates sensitising and training all teachers of literacy on the importance of formative and summative assessments termly, as well as other important aspects of the teaching and learning process, as a basis for choosing instructional methods and strategies.
- c. The Ministry of Education should review the one-hour literacy lesson's content to address the issue of insufficient time immediately, as it is significantly affecting the pace of syllabus coverage.

## **7.8 Implications**

The study implications on different stakeholders are discussed in this section below:

### **7.8.1 Implications for policy makers**

The present study's findings and conclusions indicate that the Ministry of Education in Zambia urgently needs to revise its policy on teacher training in pedagogy, particularly the theories that underpin literacy teaching methods and strategies. For instance, although the majority of teachers were well-versed in various instructional methods and strategies, only a handful opted for those that involved active learner participation. Their decision was influenced by their familiarity with these methods from Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions and their conviction in their efficacy. The teachers' arguments suggest that there remains an unexplored gap in their pre-service training. The teachers only talked about the training they

had received through continuous professional development, for example, and not from pre-service training. Furthermore, it is crucial to align teacher training with the existing literacy programmes to ensure that teachers acquire pedagogical practices that align with these programmes. This will improve teachers' capacity to teach literacy effectively. Furthermore, some of the grade one learners in the urban parts of Solwezi District found it challenging to learn in Kikaonde, the local language of instruction. This was primarily due to the fact that, as members of a multilingual community, some of the learners were unfamiliar with the language, having never used it at home or during playtime. This means such students learned the language and how to read and write it. This was slowing down the rate at which learners became literate. There is a need for policymakers to consider revising the language policy and putting in place one that bridges this gap, and translanguaging is one of the options to consider.

### **7.8.2 Implications for curriculum designers**

Teachers' reasons for choosing instructional methods and strategies, as well as the challenges they are facing in teaching literacy, indicate that there is a need to revise the literacy curriculum in order to address the implementation challenges. For example, most of the teachers indicated that the literacy content was too much to be taught in the literacy hour every day and it was becoming increasingly difficult to complete the work in a term. Curriculum designers should consider revising the literacy curriculum and striking a balance between the content and the time required to teach it. This means either removing some of the activities that learners should undertake during the literacy hour or increasing the time for the lessons while ensuring that the syllabus is covered at the end of the learning cycle.

### **7.8.3 Implications for teachers of literacy**

Teachers of literacy should come to the realisation that the current preservice teacher training programme does not prepare them fully to become effective teachers. Therefore, if the teaching programmes, to some extent, prepare them pedagogically to start teaching, they should strive to develop themselves further so that they become effective teachers. This can be achieved if teachers actively participate in the continuous professional development programmes that are planned by the school, the zones in which their schools are located, district and the subject associations to which they belong. Continuous professional development meetings can be

planned, but attendance and active participation is another thing that teachers of literacy should strive to achieve. The present study, for example, revealed that most of the teachers who participated in the interview did not fully understand the term pedagogical knowledge and what it entails. This inadequacy suggests that such teachers were ill-prepared in this area. Secondly, the teachers should be held accountable for not developing themselves. Teachers can be held accountable by conducting competence assessments. These assessments can help teachers invest in acquiring skills and knowledge in literacy pedagogy.

### **7.9 Suggestion for further research**

Based on the study's findings, the following research areas are suggested:

- a. The present study found that despite many teachers having pedagogical knowledge of several literacy teaching methods and approaches, the majority of them did not use those that involved the active participation of learners, such as group and pair work. Other studies could investigate factors not covered in this study, such as the absence of learners during literacy lessons in Solwezi and its influence on the literacy syllabus's coverage and outcomes. A study focusing on absenteeism is necessary, given its frequent emergence during lesson observations.
- b. This study investigated literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde's grade one classrooms at the primary level in Solwezi District. Because the failure rate is still high, there is a need to conduct a similar study in the English language at the secondary level.

### **7.10 Conclusion**

This study, which examines literacy pedagogy in Kikaonde in Solwezi District, aims to deepen our comprehension of the pedagogical knowledge teachers possess, the reasons behind their teaching methods, and the alignment of their lessons with Zambia's literacy curriculum. The researcher conducted the study to enhance the understanding of teacher pedagogical knowledge, utilizing qualitative research approaches based on the interpretive paradigm and the constructivism theory of learning. He conducted this study with the understanding that teachers who have received adequate training in literacy pedagogy can teach literacy effectively.

The researcher used relevant literature to conclude that, despite using several literacy teaching methods and strategies in Solwezi, most literacy teachers were not using those that involved the active participation of learners. This study is important because it deals with the subject of

literacy, which sits at the core of education in Zambia. Literacy is an important subject area at the primary level in Zambia because it is the basis for learning across all subjects.

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## **APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS**

### **Questions**

1. Briefly explain what literacy pedagogy is?
2. What method/s or approaches do you use in teaching literacy in Kikaonde?
3. Have you received any training in literacy teaching approaches you are currently using?
4. What do you understand about the National Literacy Framework?
5. What are the reasons for the choice of methods and approaches that you used when teaching?
6. Explain the competences that grade one learners should exhibit at the end of grade one as outlined in the Primary Literacy Framework?
7. What has been your experience of using the suggested approaches to teaching literacy using Kikaonde in the Primary Literacy Framework and syllabus?
8. How has been your experience teaching literacy in multilingual classrooms?
9. How have learners responded to literacy lessons taught in an Kikaonde. Has it led to literacy improvement in the mother tongue?
10. What challenges have you encountered teaching literacy in Kikaonde using the National Literacy Framework and literacy syllabus?
11. Describe any literacy approaches that you use when teaching literacy using an Kikaonde language?
12. Mention the literacy approaches that you frequently use in your literacy class.
13. Explain what is involved in the literacy approaches you just mentioned?

**APPENDIX 2: LESSON OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR LITERACY LESSONS**  
**PART A: DEMOGRAPHICS AND GENERAL INFORMATION**

1	Participant Code being observed	
2	Gender of teacher being observed	Male:
		Female:
3	Position in school	Class teacher
		Senior teacher
		Other:
4	Grade being observed	
5	No. of learners in class	Boys:
		Girls:
		Total No. of learners:
7	Age ranges of learners	
8	Lesson duration	
9	Lesson topic	
10	Lesson purpose / aim / outcome	
11	Lesson objectives	(i)

	(ii)
	(iii)
Lesson content	

**PART B: USE OF METHODS IN THE TEACHING OF LITERACY**

1	INTRODUCTION	CONTENT & ACTIVITIES DONE	
		<u>Teacher's activities:</u>	
		<u>Learners' activities:</u>	
		<u>Strategies/approaches</u>	
	LESSON DEVELOPMENT	CONTENT & ACTIVITIES DONE	
2	<u>Step one:</u>	<u>Teacher activities:</u>	
		<u>Learners' activities:</u>	
		<u>Strategies/approaches</u>	

<b><u>Step two:</u></b>	<b><u>Teacher activities:</u></b>	
	<b><u>Learners' activities</u></b>	
	<b><u>Strategies/approaches</u></b>	
<b><u>Step three:</u></b>	<b><u>Teacher's activities:</u></b>	
	<b><u>Learners' activities:</u></b>	

		<u>Strategies/approaches</u>	
3	CONCLUSION OF THE LESSON	<u>Teacher's activities:</u>	
		<u>Learners' activities:</u>	

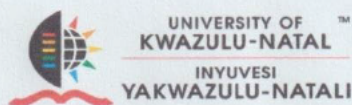
LITERACY METHOD/ APPROACHE USED	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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**Comments**

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## APPENDIX 3: ETHICS CLEARANCE: UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU- NATAL



14 August 2023

Kamalata Lukama (221119944)  
School Of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear K Lukama,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005673/2023  
Project title: Exploring literacy pedagogy in Kiikaonde in selected grade one classrooms in Solwezi District, Zambia.  
Degree: PhD

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 22 May 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

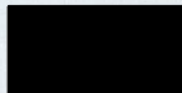
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 14 August 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

## APPENDIX 4: PERMISSION LETTER

School of Education, College of  
Humanities,  
University of KwaZulu-Natal,  
Edgewood Campus,

Dear School Principal,

### PERMISSION LETTER

My name is **Kamalata Lukama**. I am a Language Education PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, South Africa. I am hereby asking for your permission to conduct research in your school. **I am interested in learning Literacy pedagogy in Kiikaonde in selected grade one classrooms in Solwezi district, Zambia.** Your school is one of my field of studies. To gather the information, I am interested in asking teachers of literacy in your school to be interviewed and observe some of their lessons.

Please note that:

- Their confidentiality is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview sessions may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on their preference.
- Any information given by participating teachers cannot be used against them or the school, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- Teachers have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. They will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Their involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

I have attached the letter from the Ministry of Education, which permits me to conduct research in selected schools.

I can be contacted at:

Email: [kamalatalukama@yahoo.com](mailto:kamalatalukama@yahoo.com)



My supervisor is Dr. Nicolus Nyika, who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: email: [nyikan@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:nyikan@ukzn.ac.za) Phone number: +27 312603693.

You may also contact the Research Office through:

**Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Administration  
Research Office, Westville Campus**

**Govan Mbeki Building**  
**Private Bag X 54001,**  
**Durban.**  
**4000**  
**KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA**  
Tel:27312604557-Fax:27 31 2604609  
Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

## APPENDIX 5: GATE KEEPER AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

### Gate Keeper authorization letter to conduct research

*\*All correspondences should be addressed to*  
The District Education Board Secretary  
TEL: 08821647/08821457  
Email: solwezi@debsia@gmail.com

*In reply please quote:*  
No.....

  
REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY(DEBS)  
P.O. Box 110070  
SOLWEZI

10<sup>th</sup> May, 2023

To whom it may concern,

Dear sir/madam,

**RE: Permission for Data Collection- Kamalata Lukama (221119944)**

This letter serves to introduce Mr. Kamalata Lukama who is carrying out a research in literacy pedagogy in selected grade one classes in Solwezi District, Zambia. He is a PhD student in Language Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Your school was sampled for data collection. Kindly allow him in your school to collect data and we shall be grateful if the necessary assistance is rendered.

Yours faithfully,  
  
Jonathan Kayuka  
District Education Board Secretary  
Solwezi District



**APPENDIX 6: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 2 ON SOUND /S/ IN APPLE SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners read words learnt in the previous lesson on word cards</li> <li>• Teacher wrote and shaping sound /sS/ on the board.</li> <li>• Teacher read the sound on the board.</li> <li>• Teacher revised vowels with learner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word reading.</li> <li>• Writing the sound on the board.</li> <li>• Reading sound /s/ as read by the teacher.</li> <li>• Vowel recognition and reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look and say method</li> <li>• Teacher and learner demonstrations.</li> <li>• Read alouds.</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read a short story having the sound of the day.</li> <li>• Teacher models fluent reading.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners questions based on the passage.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrated to learners how to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listen to the story read by the teacher.</li> <li>• Learners answered oral questions asked by the teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Synthetic phonics method.</li> </ul>

<p>blend sounds and syllables.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher modelled syllable and word reading.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher led in reading syllables and words.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read on syllable/word cards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asking learners to write the excise individually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners demonstrated blending of sounds and syllables.</li> <li>• Some learners read syllables and words.</li> <li>• Learners read syllables and words.</li> <li>• Individual reading of syllables and words.</li> <li>• Individual writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds.</li> <li>• Individual reading.</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Writing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read words on cards as a way of sharing out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read out the sounds/ syllables/ words on the cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 7: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 2 ON SOUND /p/ IN BANANA SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read word cards having syllables learnt in the previous lesson.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners to state what is on the picture.</li> <li>• Teaching read aloud the sound /P/</li> <li>• Teaching writing sounds on the board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read syllables on the word cards.</li> <li>• Picture reading.</li> <li>• Learners listen to the teacher reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look and say</li> <li>• Look and say</li> <li>• Teacher demonstration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read a short story’</li> <li>• Teacher asked oral questions based on the short story.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher guided learners on how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words with sound /p/</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listen attentively to the teacher.</li> <li>• Learners answered oral questions based on the story.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated blending sounds into syllables and syllables in words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Synthetic phonics method.</li> <li>• Demonstration method.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher went round checking on learners reading in pairs.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to match beginning sounds with words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paired reading.</li> <li>• Matching sounds in words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner shared reading.</li> <li>• Individual work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision of exercise with learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from mistakes made in the exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstration.</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 8: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 2 ON SOUND /zh/ IN  
CARROT SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to state what sound they learnt in the previous lesson.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners to write the sound they learnt on the board.</li> <li>• Teacher revised with learners on vowels.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners questions based on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners answered questions asked by the teacher.</li> <li>• Learners wrote the sound on the board.</li> <li>• Learners answered questions on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstrations</li> <li>• Look and say.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read a short story as a model.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners questions based on the short story.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners questions.</li> <li>• Teacher lead in blending sounds into syllables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listened attentively to the story.</li> <li>• Learners answered oral questions.</li> <li>• Learners answered questions.</li> <li>• Learners blended sounds into syllables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Synthetic phonics method.</li> </ul>

<p>and syllables into words and sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words and sentences.</li> <li>• Teacher lead learners in counting syllables.</li> <li>• Teacher gave learners individual work.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked leaners to read.</li> <li>• Teacher asking learners to form words from syllables.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asking leaners to write the exercise individual.</li> </ul>	<p>and syllables into words and short sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners counted syllables in words.</li> <li>• Individual work.</li> <li>• Learners read words</li> <li>• Learning forming words in groups.</li> <li>• Individual learners read words on flash cards.</li> <li>• Learners writing the exercise individually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> <li>• Individual reading</li> <li>• Individual reading.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher led in discussing the exercise with learners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaners go through the exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 9: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 2 ON SOUND /nkw/ IN MANGO SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read words taught in the previous lesson.</li> <li>• Teacher modelled the sounding of sound /nkw/.</li> <li>• Revision of vowel sounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading words learnt in the previous lesson.</li> <li>• Listening attentively.</li> <li>• Sounding and identifying vowel sounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read a short story having the sound of the day.</li> <li>• Teacher modeled fluent reading.</li> <li>• Asking learners questions based on the story.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrating to learners how to blend sounds and syllables.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to the story.</li> <li>• Answer oral questions asked by the teacher.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrating blending of sounds and syllables.</li> <li>• Some learners reading syllables and words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Synthetic phonics method.</li> <li>• Read alouds.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher modelling syllable and word reading.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to practice a blending and segmentation activity in groups.</li> <li>• Teacher asking learners to read on syllable/ word cards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asking learners to write the exercise individually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners to blend syllables in groups.</li> <li>• Individual reading of syllables and words.</li> <li>• Individual writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher leads in discussing the exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners discuss exercise with the teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class discussion</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 10: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 2 ON SOUND /j/ IN GRAPE SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read words taught in the previous lesson.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners to underline the sound taught in the previous lesson.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners to identify items on the conversation poster.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners to identify vowels on the flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words on the board.</li> <li>• Learners underlined syllables in words.</li> <li>• Learners identified items on the conversation poster.</li> <li>• Learners identified vowel sounds on the flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer</li> <li>• Look and say.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read a short story having the sound of the day.</li> <li>• Teacher modelled fluent reading.</li> <li>• Asked learners questions based on the story.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listened to the story.</li> <li>• Answer oral questions asked by the teacher.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated blending of sounds and syllables.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds and syllables.</li> <li>• Teacher modelled syllable and word reading.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked individual learners to read from syllables/ words cards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to write the excise individually.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some learners read syllables and words.</li> <li>• Learners read from syllable/ word cards.</li> <li>• Individual writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthetic phonics method.</li> <li>• Read alouds.</li> <li>• Demonstrations.</li> <li>• Individual reading.</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher leads in discussing the exercise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners discuss exercise with the teacher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class discussion</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 11: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 2 ON SOUND /nch/ IN PINEAPPLE SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read syllables and words taught in previous lesson on cards.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners to identify and name objects on conversation poster and flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words from word cards.</li> <li>• Learners identified objects and naming objects on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Look and say method.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher read a short story having the sound of the day and asked learners' oral questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asked learners to read words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listened to the story and answered oral questions.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words on the board.</li> <li>• Learners reading words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstrations.</li> <li>• Look and say</li> </ul>

<p>and sentences from the flash cards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asking learners to write words in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners writing in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher reading through the words again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners reading through the words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 12: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 3 ON SOUND /k/ IN APPLE SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asked learners to read syllables and words taught in previous lesson on cards.</li> <li>• The teacher asked learners to identify and name objects on conversation poster and flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words from word cards.</li> <li>• Learners identified objects and naming objects on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Look and say method.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b></p> <p><b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read a short story having the sound of the day and asked learners' oral questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listened to the story and answered oral questions.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words on the board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstrations.</li> <li>• Look and say</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asking learners to read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asking learners to write words in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> <li>• Learners writing in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher reading through the words again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners reading through the words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 13: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 3 ON SOUND /d/ IN BANANA SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read syllables and words taught in previous lesson on cards.</li> <li>• Teacher asked learners to identify and name objects on conversation poster and flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read words from word cards.</li> <li>• Learners identified objects and naming objects on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Look and say method.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read a short story having the sound of the day and asked learners' oral questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listened to the story and answered oral questions.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words on the board.</li> <li>• Learners read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstrations.</li> <li>• Look and say</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asking learners to read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to write words in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners wrote in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read through the words again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read through the words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 14: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 3 ON SOUND /nch/ IN CARROT SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asked learners to read syllables and words taught in previous lesson on cards.</li> <li>• The teacher asked learners to identify and name objects on conversation poster and flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words from word cards.</li> <li>• Learners identified objects on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Look and say method.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b></p> <p><b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read a short story having the sound of the day and asked learners' oral questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listen to the story and answered oral questions.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words on the board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstrations.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asking learners to read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to write words in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners reading words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> <li>• Learners wrote in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look and say</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher reading through the words again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners reading through the words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 15: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 3 ON SOUND /zh/ IN MANGO SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asked learners to read syllables and words taught in previous lesson on cards.</li> <li>• The teacher asked learners to identify and name objects on conversation poster and flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words from word cards.</li> <li>• Learners identified objects and naming objects on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Look and say method.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b></p> <p><b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher read a short story having the sound of the day and asked learners’ oral questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learners listened to the story and answered oral questions.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words on the board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstrations.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asking learners to read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asking learners to write words in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners reading words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> <li>• Learners wrote in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look and say</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher reading through the words again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners reading through the words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 16: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 3 ON SOUND /j/ IN GRAPE SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asked learners to read syllables and words taught in previous lesson on cards.</li> <li>• The teacher asked learners to identify and name objects on conversation poster and flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learners read words from word cards.</li> <li>• Learners identified objects and naming objects on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Look and say method.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b></p> <p><b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher read a short story having the sound of the day and asked learners’ oral questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listened to the story and answered oral questions.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words on the board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstrations.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to write words in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> <li>• Learners wrote in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look and say</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read through the words again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read through the words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX 17: SUMMARY OF LESSON OBSERVATION 3 ON SOUND /fw/ IN PINEAPPLE SCHOOL**

Teacher activity	Learner Activity	Literacy method/ approaches used
<p><b>Lesson introduction</b> <b>(Step 1: present)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to read syllables and words taught in previous lesson on cards.</li> <li>• The teacher asked learners to identify and name objects on conversation poster and flash cards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words from word cards.</li> <li>• Learners identified objects and naming objects on the conversation poster.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Look and say method.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson development</b> <b>Step 2: Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher read a short story having the sound of the day and asked learners' oral questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 3: Guide</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher demonstrated to learners how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 4: Practice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners listened to the story and answered oral questions.</li> <li>• Learners demonstrated how to blend sounds into syllables and syllables into words on the board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read aloud</li> <li>• Question and answer.</li> <li>• Demonstrations.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher asked learners to read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Step 5: Interact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher asked learners to write words in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read words and sentences from the flash cards.</li> <li>• Learners wrote in their exercise books.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look and say</li> <li>• Individual work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lesson conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher read through the words again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners read through the words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read alouds</li> </ul>