



**Faculty of Arts and Design**

**The development of reading skills in the Oshiwambo  
languages of the Oshana region of Namibia: A case study of  
Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga in Junior Primary phase**

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**This full thesis was submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Language  
Practice**

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## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I, Eino Nghiikoshi Haifidi hereby declare that this thesis is my own work written in my own words and it has not been submitted for any degree in any other university. Where I have drawn on the words and ideas of others, these have been acknowledged by using references according to the Durban University of Technology Referencing Guide.

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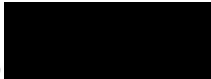
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## **ABSTRACT**

The development and promotion of indigenous languages have been given little attention in Africa (Batibo, 2005). Namibia being part of Africa is no exception and hence there is a lack of literature regarding the indigenous languages (Smit, 2012). The study was motivated by Tötemeyer's (2009) argument that there is a lack of reading culture which affects the development of reading skills, particularly in indigenous languages in Namibia. Since little research has been conducted in this area (Smit, 2012), there is a lack of information on indigenous language learning and development in Namibia. The study is the first of its kind done in Namibia looking at the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga concurrently as verified by the intensive review of literature done by me.

This research in form of a case study is a response to this gap in literature. The study focused on development of reading skills in two dialects of the Namibian Oshiwambo languages; namely Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga in the Junior Primary (JP) phase (grades 2 and 3). Data collected was essentially qualitative, relating to how teachers develop reading skills in indigenous languages with focus on factors facilitating or hindering the development of the reading skills. The data was collected through questionnaires, observations, interviews and focus groups discussions. The study used the interpretivist paradigm, although there are few elements of positivism.

In the findings, the study outlined factors facilitating the development of reading skills (e.g. drilling, repetition, peer reading/teaching, songs, poems, rhymes and short stories, using the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA), using scaffolding, modelling and cooperative learning strategies, using the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), using well illustrated story books with big font size, a print rich classroom environment, etc.), as well as factors hindering the development of reading skills (e.g. inappropriate use of punctuation marks, lack of readers with familiar texts and not using relevant children's prior knowledge, poor knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds (phonics), lack of a methodology for teaching reading, teachers' unpreparedness, difficulties with teaching digraphs, trigraphs, quadgraphs, diphthongs and vowel confusion, lack of teaching aids and reflective teaching, lack of in-service training/workshop on reading development in Oshiwambo languages, etc.) in the two Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga). The study concluded with a list of recommendations for the improved development of reading skills in these languages.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to our little boys, Tuhafeni and Tuyoleni.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ACE	=	Advanced Certificate in Education
BED	=	Bachelor of Education
BETD	=	Basic Education Teachers' Diploma
DEAR	=	Drop Everything And Read
DIRT	=	Daily Independent Reading Time
DUT	=	Durban University of Technology
EGRA	=	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ELCIN	=	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia
ELOK	=	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Owambo-Kavango
HoD	=	Head of Department
HOTS	=	Higher Order Thinking Skills
HRDPISNES	=	Human Resource Development Plan and Implementation Strategy for the Namibian Education Sector
IPM	=	Integrated Planning Manual
ISR	=	Independent Silent Reading
JP	=	Junior Primary
KWL	=	Know, Want to know, Learned
LoLT	=	Language of Learning and Teaching
MBESC	=	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
MoE	=	Ministry of Education
MoEAC	=	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
NIED	=	National Institute for Educational Development
NLS	=	New Literacy Studies
NPH	=	Namibia Publishing House
NSA	=	Namibia Statistics Agency
SACMEQ	=	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SBS	=	School Based Studies
SWAPO	=	South West African Peoples' Organization
TV	=	Television
UN	=	United Nation
UNAM	=	University of Namibia

UNESCO	=	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	=	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIN	=	United Nations Institute for Namibia
USSR	=	Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading
ZPD	=	Zone of Proximal Development



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

The study particularly looked at the development of reading skills in the Oshiwambo languages of the Oshana region of Namibia in the Junior Primary (JP) phase. According to the JP curriculum for the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC, 2014) for Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga, reading is an important skill for language development which is equally imperative for life-long learning. Similarly, the above was accentuated by Paris (2005, p. 184) that “learning to read is one of the greatest accomplishments in childhood because it is the foundation for learning and academic achievement”. The above means that reading is key to whatever we do in life since it is important for infinite learning.

Therefore, “learners must spend time acquiring phonological skills, vocabulary, phonics, and decoding and comprehension strategies in order to read fluently and with meaning” (MoEAC, 2014, p. 8). This means that the development<sup>1</sup> of reading skills<sup>2</sup> in the JP phase should be done based on the above indicated aspects as stated in the curriculum. The above indicated components are key for reading development and congruent with Paris (2005) statement that in early literacy, educators should ensure that children are taught alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, vocabulary and comprehension.

Factors facilitating, as well as factors impeding the development of reading skills at six schools in grade two and three were explored. According to Amakali, Viljoen and Namuandi (1984, p. 311) “*Oshiwambo* is a generic term which refers to all "languages" used by the OvaWambo<sup>3</sup> people. There is mutual intelligibility among the speakers of Oshiwambo.”

Furthermore, the development of reading skills in indigenous languages is associated with cognitive development and later academic success (Tötemeyer 2009), which it is also vital to improving the reading culture. This is underlined by a substantial body of international research

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to a language becoming more advanced in terms of development.

<sup>2</sup> Reading skills is the ability of a person to read, understand and make meaning from written texts.

<sup>3</sup> OvaWambo (plural) refers to Oshiwambo speaking people. Oshiwambo refers to the language spoken by OvaWambo people. Wambo (singular) term is used when referring to an Oshiwambo speaking person. Wambo is the root word which refers to the (Wambo) tribe.

which indicates that an increase in indigenous language use improves learning with understanding because it is based on clear understanding and on links with indigenous knowledge (Haacke; 1986; Chamberlain, 1998; Harlech-Jones, 1998; Alexander, 2001; Thondhlana, 2002; Rubagumya, 2003; Bunyi, 2012; Brock-Utne, 2013; Kazapua<sup>4</sup>, 2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February). Finally, the development of reading skills in mother tongue in the formative years will enable the children to develop holistically, such that their “cognitive, affective, and social development” are optimised because effective learning occurs “through a language that is well known” to the child (Kembo 2000, as cited in Mgqwashu, 2013, p. 2)

## **1.2 Rationale of the study**

The study is motivated by Töttemeyer’s<sup>5</sup> (2009) argument that there is a lack of reading culture in Namibia which affects the development of reading skills, particularly in indigenous languages. According to Smit (2012), there is little research which has been conducted in this area; hence there is a lack of information on indigenous language learning and development in Namibia. Furthermore, an extensive review of literature by me confirmed that there is indeed a gap as indicated earlier by the two authors above. This research, in form of a case study, is a response to this gap in literature.

## **1.3 Context of the study**

There are ten indigenous Namibian languages that have an orthography: Ju!’hoansi, Khoekhoegowab, Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Otjiherero, Rukwangali, Rumanyo, Setswana, Silozi, Thimbukushu (Töttemeyer, 2010). However, after Namibia’s independence in 1990, English was made the official language (Töttemeyer, 2010). This privileged the English language to receive more attention to the detriment of the indigenous languages (Töttemeyer, 2013; Smit, 2012) spoken in Namibia. As a result the indigenous languages are still not well developed in comparison to English, especially in relation to the development of reading skills (Töttemeyer, 2010). This caused weak literacy development and the lack of a reading culture in indigenous languages (Töttemeyer, 2013), and without this, academic performance in additional languages tends to be poor (i.e. An investigation into the causes of learners’ persistent poor performance in English Second Language in Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary

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<sup>4</sup> Muesee Kazapua is the Mayor of the City of Windhoek (the capital city of Namibia).

<sup>5</sup> Töttemeyer is one of very few researchers of the Namibian indigenous languages.



(NSSCO) level, MoEAC, 2019). To validate the above, reviewers of research for the New York State Education Department note that there is a strong and positive correlation between literacy in the native language and learning a second language. Students with the highest levels of native language literacy are those who eventually become the strongest readers in their second language (New York State Education Department, 2016).

The Oshiwambo speaking people represent more than 50% of the total Namibian population (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014; National Planning Commission, 2012), and hence the Oshiwambo languages make up a large part of the school curriculum. According to Murray (2007, p. 70), “seven different dialects of Oshiwambo are spoken in Namibia: Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Oshikolonkadhi, Oshimbalantu, Oshikwaluudhi, Oshingandjera and Oshikwambi, but only Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga have standardized written forms and are taught as subjects on schools.” In more details, Ohangwena region is a traditional base of Oshikwanyama language, while it is also spoken in some parts of Omusati region adjacent to Ohangwena region, as well as some parts of Oshana and Oshikoto regions. Oshikoto region is a traditional base for Oshindonga language and it is also spoken by some people in Oshana region.

#### **1.4 Approach to the study**

Due to the fact that I wanted a diverse analysis of the problem, three theories were used to provide lenses for analysis. It is therefore against this background that Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1964), Chall’s five stages of reading (1976), and New Literacy Studies (NLS) theory (Street, 2014) were used for the theoretical frameworks in the study. The sociocultural theory was used because it talks about how language skills are developed through social and cultural interactions. The five stages of reading were used because they provide a model of teaching reading which is sequenced in a way that the children first “learn to read” and then later they “read to learn.” The NLS will be utilised because it talks about the use of reading skills in social settings. Literacy is something people practice in real world within the society and should be studied as such (Gee, 2015).

The case in view is the development of reading skills in three Oshindonga medium schools and three Oshikwanyama medium schools in northern Namibia (Oshana region). The case study was used because it can produce richly detailed data that help the reader to understand a particular context and may help in the generation of hypotheses for further research (Cohen,

Manion and Morrison, 2013). The six schools were selected based on convenience in terms of travelling distances and accessibility. Data collected was essentially qualitative, relating to how teachers develop reading skills in indigenous languages, and factors facilitating or hindering the development of reading skills. The data was collected through questionnaires, observations, interviews and focus group discussions. Permission to conduct research was acquired from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, as well as from the Regional Director.

The study is primarily interpretivist (which is also sometimes known as '*constructivist*' or '*constructionist*' [Passer, 2014]), and based on the qualitative approach because it was meant to collect information from people's verbal responses and such information assisted me to understand and sufficiently address my research question(s). However, there are few aspects of positivism (used in the study) where a measurement of the practices of teaching reading against some established standards of what is effective in teaching reading is done. Positivism which is sometimes referred to as a '*realist*' or a '*functional*' paradigm "assumes that a single true reality already exists out there in the world and is waiting to be discovered" (Passer, 2014, p. 39).

### **1.5 Problem statement of the study**

As noted above, the link between the development of literacy in indigenous languages and good academic performance is well established, but little is known about literacy development in the indigenous languages of Namibia (in particular, Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga).

The research questions were:

- a) How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga?
- b) What factors enable the development of reading skills in these two dialects?
- c) What factors hinder the development of reading skills in these two dialects?
- d) Do principals and teachers believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga/Oshikwanyama in JP at their school?

These questions were well designed to address the areas on which my research study was focused in an attempt to get answers to my research objectives. It is always a good idea to have more sub-questions as long as they are well articulated, sequenced in logical order and with clear distinctions and priorities (Neuman, 2014; O'Toole and Beckett, 2014; Maree, 2011).

## **1.6 Research aims and goals**

The research aim and goals were to identify how reading skills are developed in Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) and to outline factors which enable or impede the development of reading skills in the indigenous languages selected. Identification of how reading skills are developed, as well as factors enabling or impeding the development of reading skills may give rise to suggestions for improved reading development in Oshiwambo languages.

## **1.7 Potential value of the study**

The study findings may be used by other scholars or academics with interest in the developments of reading skills in the Oshiwambo languages in Namibia, in particular; Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga.

The outcomes of the study will be presented in one or two research papers that will be submitted to peer reviewed academic journals.

In view of the lack of research in this area, the study results may also possibly be used by the University of Namibia (African Languages Department) to educate the indigenous language students about the state of the Oshiwambo languages in Namibia with regards to reading development.

The study outcomes will inform policy makers of issues to consider when dealing with reading skills development in indigenous languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga). This outcome is achievable in view of my position as a Senior Education Officer at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), and the role this position allows me to influence policy change because I am a member of two NIED curriculum subject panels. The study results will

directly assist teachers to improve teaching reading in Oshiwambo languages to the benefit of the children, which eventually will improve performance.

The above is congruent with the assertion of Cohen, et al. (2011) that it is very important to “choose a significant topic that will actually make an important contribution to our understanding and to practice” (2011, p. 107).

## **1.8 Structure of the study**

Chapter one introduces the study by giving the rationale and importance of the study, the context of the study, the approach used for the study and the problem statement of the study where the questions are also indicated. The research aims and goals as well as the potential value of the study are also covered, while the structure of the study is also outlined in the chapter.

Chapter two presents a wide range of literature related to the research topic including the Namibian languages’ history, the Namibian language policy framework and the importance of reading in mother tongue. The chapter also reflects on the early reading methodologies in indigenous languages and concludes with the publication history of children’s reading materials, as well as the current status of children’s reading materials.

Chapter three discussed the theoretical frameworks used in the study. A combination of three theories were used in the study, namely Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1964), Chall’s five stages of reading (1976), and the New Literacy Studies (NLS) theory (Street, 1984). The theories provided lenses through which the analysis of the data was done in order to accommodate analysis of different aspects.

In chapter four the research methodology is discussed, where the case study approach used in the study is also unpacked. The research paradigm and the sampling of the research participants, as well as the data collection process are all discussed in the chapter. The chapter concludes with the explanation of how the data was analysed, the ethical aspects of the study, as well as the limitations of the study.

The fifth chapter presented, analysed and discussed the data of the study. The importance of reading in mother tongue, teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga, English language dominance and time devoted to reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga were discussed and analysed in the chapter. The chapter further discussed the methodologies of teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga as well as the language policy and its implication regarding implementation. The reading resources, the factors facilitating the development of reading skills in mother tongue as well as factors hindering the development of reading skills were also covered in the chapter.

The final chapter reported on the conclusions and made recommendations related to the study outcomes. Chapter six closed off with the findings of how reading skills are developed in the two languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga). The factors facilitating the development of reading skills in mother tongue as well as the factors hindering the development of reading skills in mother tongue were outlined with recommendations.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the entire study. The chapter further provided the rationale of the study, the context of the study as well as the approach of the study. The problem statement of the study, the research aims and goals were also presented in this chapter. Finally, the potential values of the study, as well as the structure of the study were outlined in this chapter. I now move on to chapter two which focussed on literature review of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The objective of literature review is to send a message “to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic” (Passer, 2014, p. 477) that you are busy researching. This chapter reviews the literature related to the study. It reflects on Namibian languages history including the homeland segregation policy which was an apartheid policy (for divide and rule). One cannot discuss language issues in Namibia without touching on the colonial dispensation, especially that Namibia was colonised for 105 years by two different colonial masters (Germany and South Africa). The indigenous languages after independence, the language policy framework and its implementation is also presented in the chapter.

Although the study focused only on Oshiwambo (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) languages, I found it impossible to give a brief history of the two indigenous languages without touching on other indigenous languages in Namibia. The chapter further provide an overview on the status of early reading in indigenous languages, the African languages at the University of Namibia (UNAM) and English as an official language in Namibia. Additionally, the following topics were also discussed in the chapter: the importance of reading in mother tongue, early reading methodologies in indigenous languages, reading as a cognitive exercise rather than an oral performance, factors influencing reading at the JP school level and reading resources in indigenous languages.

#### **2.2 The Namibian languages history**

Namibia is a country in South West Africa with a population of 2 542 904 people and a size of 824 292 km<sup>2</sup> (Odendaal, 2011; National Planning Commission, 2012; Namibia Statistic Agency [NSA], 2014; UNESCO<sup>6</sup>, 2016). Namibia is three times bigger than Britain. Namibia borders with Angola in the north, Botswana and Zambia in the east, South Africa in the south and the Atlantic Ocean in the west (Kavari, 2006). According to Fourie (1997) and Tötemeyer

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(2010), Namibia has over 28 languages including dialects which are mainly made up of Bantu, Khoisan, Afrikaans and Germanic languages. Brock-Utne (1997, p. 243) indicated that Namibia is a multilingual nation which can be described as follows:

Namibia has the skin of a leopard. The skin of a leopard is also beautiful. It has this diversity of colours. If you look at the skin of a leopard through a microscope, you can find that also the black spots have some white in them, the white spots some black. The lion is strong, but the African kings – Zulu kings, Swazi kings, Setswana kings all wanted to adorn themselves with the skin of a leopard. We must keep this diversity, the multitude of colours, traditions, languages we have.

Namibia is a nation full of diversities and as a result our languages are made up of three main branches, (a) the Bantu languages such as Oshiwambo, Kavango and Otjiherero, (b) the Khoisan languages such as Nama/Damara or San, and (c) the Indo-European languages (English, Afrikaans, German, Portuguese and French).

The original inhabitants of the territory were the San<sup>7</sup> people (sometimes referred to as “Bushmen”) of Khoisan ethnicity who settled in Namibia 2000 BCE (Buschfeld and Kautzsch, 2014; Haacke, 2008; Ninkova, 2009; Güldemann, 2006; Hitchcock, 2002; Fourie, 1997). The term Khoisan is used to refer to the forager people of Southern Africa who speak using heavy click consonants (Barbieri, Güldemann, Naumann, Gerlach, Berthold, Nakagawa, Mpoloka, Stoneking, Pakendorf, 2014). Additional research indicated that some of the Khoisan people (for example Khoe-Kwadi ethnic group) migrated from eastern Africa in the pre-historic era, which preceded the Bantu pastoralists in the territory (Pickrell, Patterson, Barbieri, Berthold, Gerlach, Güldemann, Kure, Mpoloka, Nakagawa, Naumann, Lipson, 2012; Hasheela<sup>8</sup> 2016, Pers. Comm., 03 December).

The Khoisan people were later joined in the territory about 2000 to 3000 years ago by another group of the Nama people which are sometimes called “Khoekhoe” from Southern Africa branch of the Khoisan languages (Deumert, 2009; Lewis, Simons and Fennig, 2009). The Bantu speaking people arrived in Namibia from the seventeenth century from the branch of the Niger-

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<sup>7</sup> The San people are hunters, gatherers and foragers.

<sup>8</sup> Paavo Hasheela is an author of various Oshikwanyama books and an expert in indigenous languages.

Congo languages and they comprise of the Hereros, OvaWambo, Kavangos, and they settled in the northern and central parts of the country (Buschfeld and Kautzsch, 2014; Lewis, Simons and Fennig, 2009; Fourie, 1997). The term Bantu is elucidated by Pakendorf and Stoneking (2015, p. 1) that “linguists have coined the name ‘Bantu’ for a family of closely related languages that is widespread over sub-Saharan Africa (based on the root *-ntu* meaning ‘person’).” This is evident in our language situation in Namibia whereby a Herero, a Wambo or a Kwangali can understand each other if they speak slowly and distinctly, since their languages are cognate. This was also noted by Brock-Utne (1997) when she visited Namibia at one point and witnessed a conversation between a Herero and a Wambo, each speaking their own dialect.

The OvaWambo speak Oshiwambo language which comprises eight intelligible different dialects, namely; Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Oshingandjera, Oshikolonkadhi, Oshimbalantu, Oshimbadja, Oshikwaluudhi and Oshikwambi. However, only Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga have a standard written orthography and they are part of the school curriculum from grade 1 to 12 (Buschfeld and Kautzsch, 2014; Murray, 2007). The study focused on the two Oshiwambo languages with orthography.

Oshiwambo alphabet letters only represent one direct sound for a certain letter where there is only 22 direct letter-sounds in Oshikwanyama, while Oshindonga has 23. This is because the following letters (C, Q, R) do not exist in Oshiwambo words, but they only appear in names which are not originally African names (e.g. Catherine, Queen, Rachel, etc.), while the letter ‘Z’ only appears in Oshindonga, but not in Oshikwanyama, unless it is in an exotic name.

Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga are offered as subjects at UNAM. In addition, Oshikwanyama and Oshimbadja are cross-border languages as they are also spoken in southern Angola (Halme, 2006; Ntongo, 1998; Tötemeyer, 2010).

### **2.3 The Namibian languages and the Homelands policy**

The Nationalist party came to power in 1948 in South Africa and the policy of the government both in South Africa and its protectorate, Namibia, was to divide and rule by separating the ethnic groups into homelands according to their languages (Diescho, 1992). The apartheid



homeland policy was made and the Eiselen commission was commissioned to make inquiries into the Bantu education whereby the recommendations were formalized in the Bantu Education Act, Act 47 of 1953 (Fourie, 1997; Sullivan, 1998). In this Act, there were two main recommendations made for the Bantu languages, (1) “the Bantu languages were to be developed to include terminologies for expressing modern scientific concepts and more effective numerical systems, (2) the mother tongue should be employed as medium of instruction at least for the duration of the primary school.” (Fourie, 1997, p. 34). However, the first recommendation was never put in practice.

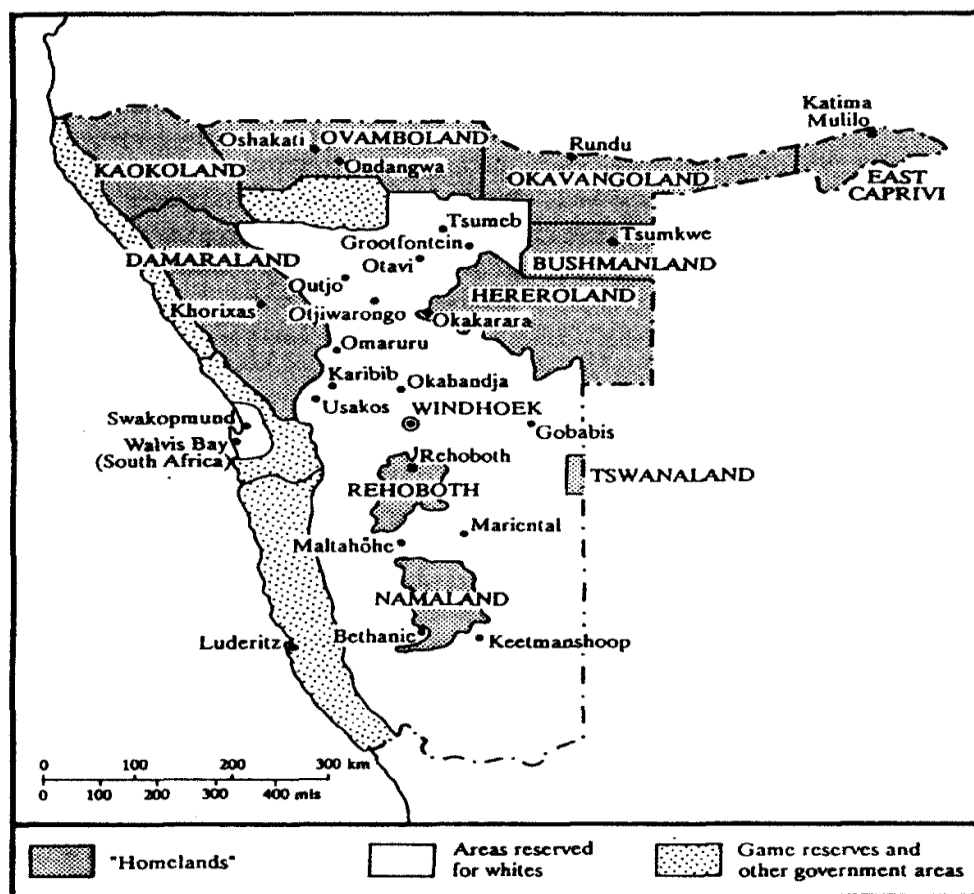


Figure 1 shows the ethnic “homelands” according to the Odendaal plan

Figure 1 above is sourced from Fourie (1997, p. 31) and illustrates how the most fertile areas taken by Whites, while the most infertile land was left for the Blacks in areas designated as communal land. The above figure also shows the distribution of language groups during the colonial dispensation. The Bantu people were concentrated in the homelands during the colonial dispensation and one needed a passport to move from one homeland to the other. The Odendaal plan was implemented in 1968 as a political policy to establish ten homelands based

on indigenous ethnic groups as a plan to empower Whites' domination in the territory (Odendaal, 2011). The White minority still remain with the most fertile land in Namibia up to date as commercial farmers. The study was carried out in Oshana region which is in the former Ovamboland homeland.

## **2.4 Indigenous languages after independence**

The indigenous languages only received full attention after independence in 1990 (Fourie, 1997). Article three of the Namibian Constitution deals with issues of languages and declared English as the only official language (Diescho, 1994). There are still challenges related to indigenous language development such as limited funding and the provision of basic education. As De Korne (2010, p. 115) argued that “the vitality of most indigenous languages in North America, like minority languages in many parts of the world, is at risk due to the pressures of majority languages and cultures.” The situation elucidated by De Korne above will be imminent in the near future in Namibia if the indigenous languages are not developed up to the level of English and equally accepted as languages of learning.

## **2.5 The Namibian language policy framework**

When Namibia gained independence in 1990, only 0.8% of the population were speakers of English as their first language (Wolfaardt, 2005). However, regardless of this lower percentage the government decided on English to be used as the sole official language, although Namibia was never colonised by Britain. According to Wolfaardt (2005) the decision to take English as the official language was made ten years (1980) before independence at a conference held at the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN) in Lusaka, Zambia by SWAPO<sup>9</sup> guided by the following eight points:

1. Unity: the language had to “neutralize any competitive or disruptive sociolinguistic [inequalities] that is likely to happen if one language were to be chosen from amongst others” (UNIN, 1981, p. 37);

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<sup>9</sup> The South West African Peoples' Organization was the liberation struggle organization fighting for the independence of Namibia. It is still the ruling party in Namibia to this date.

2. Acceptability: the language should be ‘a language with positive rather than negative associations for the people’ (ibid, p. 37);
3. Familiarity: the language has to be familiar to the people, especially with focus on education and government administration;
4. Feasibility: the chosen language has to be considered in terms of costs and resources available for effective implementation;
5. Science and technology: the language had to be a language of wide communication to be effectively used inside and outside the country;
6. Pan Africanism: the language should promote Pan Africanism to enable Namibia to be conversant to other African countries which have chosen English as their official language after independence;
7. Wider communication; the language should effective to be used beyond the borders at the international level;
8. United Nations (UN); the English language is the UN language which SWAPO used during the struggle for Namibian independence, so it was deemed fit if the principal language of the UN would become the official language (Geingob<sup>10</sup>, 1995; Brock-Utne, 1997; Wolfaardt, 2001; Cantoni, 2007, Frydman, 2011).

Geingob (1995, p. 176) argued that “when SWAPO decided during its struggle for independence to make English the official language of Namibia, and when the frames of the constitution decided to choose English as the official language, it was not an ad hoc decision. It was a considered decision.” This is because when the language decision was taken, eight criteria were taken into consideration to select English as the sole official language although the language was not part of the colonial history in Namibia (Frydman, 2011). This is unlike other African countries such as Malawi and Botswana which also have English as official language and being exoglossic nations like Namibia. Another example is Mozambique which inherited Portuguese as official language from their colonisers (Frydman, 2011). However, the situation of Namibia is quite different in view of the eight factors listed above that were considered in reaching the decision.

The language policy (MBESC, 1993) document of 1992 provides for English to be used as a medium of instruction after the junior primary phase (grades, 1-3) (MBESC, 1993). Although

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<sup>10</sup> Hage Geingob is the third president of Namibia. He is currently the president of Namibia

there have been attempts to review the language policy, it is still an ongoing process and the Language Policy discussion document of 2003 is still modelled on the language policy of 1992. According to the Language Policy discussion document (MBESC, 2003, p. 4), it states that “Grade 1 – 3 will be taught either through the mother tongue or a predominant local language. If parents or the school wish to use English as the medium of instruction in lower primary phase, permission must be obtained from the Minister of Basic Education, Sport and Culture with well grounded, convincing motivation.” This means that English can be given the power to dominate in the primary public schools if the school wishes to do so and this is a practice prevalent in private schools in Namibia today. According to Lessing and Mahabeer (2007, as cited in Naidoo, Reddy and Dorasamy 2014, p. 158) “learners who are instructed in a language different from their mother tongue, will experience problems in reading”. This is evident in Namibian schools as poor reading is experienced throughout the grades, for example Kirchner, Alexander and Töttemeyer (2014) argued that poor reading in grade 6 is caused by poor development of reading skills at the JP phase.

The language policy also stipulated that English should be taught as a subject from grade one to grade three and grade four will be a transitional grade in which English and a mother tongue or dominant language will be used interchangeably for instructions in the classroom. From grade four onwards English will be the only language of instructions, while mother tongue continues to be taught as a subject until grade twelve, although the policy did not clarify on how different mother tongue would be used in schools as Kangira<sup>11</sup> (2016, p. 5) argues that “the problem is compounded by the lack of a clear policy or direction on indigenous languages and follow up by authorities.” Additionally, Wikan, Mostert, Danbolt, Nes, Nyathi and Hengari (2007) stated that the language policy in Namibia created more problems for the country because many learners failed to cope with the demands of reading in English; hence Namibia is lowly ranked in literacy when compared to other similar countries. Wikan et al. (2007) concluded that this form of bilingualism is more subtractive, rather than additive and hence not useful for the country because many Namibian children are subjected to a “sink or swim” situation.

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<sup>11</sup> Professor Jairos Kangira is a Dean in the department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Namibia

Furthermore, the language policy also indicated that all national languages are equal regardless of the number of speakers or their level of development (Brock-Utne, 1997; Davids, 2011). This decision was done to avoid political instability in the country as Ngcobo (2003, as cited in Kangira 2016, p. 4) argues that “the language policy is objectively designed to maintain ethnic diversity and the politics of compromise.” However, on the contrary, Batibo (2005, p. 61) states that “it is not surprising, therefore, that the language policies of very few African countries make explicit reference to them in relation to national development. Most policies either ignore them completely, as in Botswana, or accord them mere symbolic status as national languages, as in Namibia, with no active role”. This is a true reflection of indigenous languages to this day in Namibia as indicated by Batibo 13 years ago.

According to Namibia Statistics Agency (2014), National Planning Commission (2012), Batibo (2005) and Fourie (1997), Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) are the most developed Namibian indigenous languages and this situation still persist to date. They further reported that the two languages are spoken by more than half of the population in Namibia and therefore they were given the most attention by missionaries<sup>12</sup> who developed their writing systems. Virtually, African languages developments have come about as a result of missionary work through church and religious advancements (Mandela, 1994).

As indicated earlier, there have been efforts to review the language policy starting with the workshop on African languages in Basic Education held in Okahandja on 18 September 1995. There was also a consultancy in 1995 undertaken by Brock-Utne to look into the use of Namibian languages in the formal education system and make recommendations. Some of the prominent recommendations were that it should be a requirement of citizenship acquisition that one should speak one of the Namibian languages and that all potential employees should at least be conversant in one of the Namibian languages contrary to being competent in English only. Another requirement was that the government should ensure that all jobs advertised should have a requirement of competency in one Namibian language plus English, but all these recommendations were rejected by cabinet - to the disappointment of the then Minister of Education, Nahas Angula (Brock-Utne, 2010).

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<sup>12</sup> According to the English Oxford dictionary, missionary (or missionaries in plural) is defined as a person/s sent on a religious mission, especially one sent to promote Christianity in a foreign country (Dictionary, 1989).

Later there was another conference in 2000 which focused on the language development in Southern Africa (Brock-Utne, 1997; Murray, 2007). Both platforms emphasised the importance of uplifting the indigenous languages in Namibia starting with special attention on the minority languages like the San language, in support of which the then minister of Basic Education and Culture, John Mutorwa stated that:

In our country before independence was achieved African languages were developed on a piecemeal basis. The result was that some languages received more attention more than others and some were hardly developed at all. For example one marginalized group of Namibian citizens, namely the Bushmen or San people received so little attention that no education was available for them in any language except Afrikaans” (Brock-Utne, 1997).

The statement by Mutorwa was seeking to enforce the clause of the language policy which indicated that all national languages are equal regardless of the number of speakers or their level of development. The year 2000 conference also made strong recommendations to revise the language policy which led to a publication of a discussion document on the language policy for schools in Namibia. In the discussion document recommendations were made such as the use of mother tongue education in the junior primary phase as being crucial for concept formation and the early development of literacy and numeracy skills; and referred to use of the mother tongue as “the best guarantee of educational success for the majority of learners” (Alexander, 2001, as cited in Murray, 2007, p. 73). There was also a proposal to extend the mother tongue instruction beyond grade three, but it was rejected because of lack of funds as it was deemed expensive. Furthermore, the then Minister of Education, Abraham Iyambo<sup>13</sup> in July 2011 organised a National Education Conference which made numerous recommendations and they were later endorsed in August of the same year by cabinet for immediate implementation.

NIED was tasked with the language policy review and to ensure that the recommendations are implemented without delay. In 2014 and 2016 public consultations were done to solicit ideas for the review of the language policy. The recommendation to extend the mother tongue instruction from pre-primary to grade five was made particularly in rural areas. However, it

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<sup>13</sup> Dr Abraham Iyambo died in February 2013

was declined due to the level of language development in Namibia as stated by Kangira (2016, p. 5) that “another major constraint on the implementation of the language policy is the availability of resources including human resources, funding, facilities, materials and books.” NIED drafted the language policy which recommended the establishment of the independent Institute for Languages Development to be responsible for all languages development in Namibia mainly with focus on orthography, terminology development, dictionary development and language research (MoEAC, 2017).

The draft language policy also clarified some misconceptions and challenges pertaining to mother tongue instructions as follows: “the option of mother tongue medium of instruction in the formative years of schooling was taken for pedagogical reasons and the problem of suitably qualified teachers is not endemic to the mother tongues but is a problem to all subjects” MoEAC, 2017, p. 8). This is in line with the overwhelming research which states that mother tongue instructions in the formative years enable better understanding of concepts and later achievement at school (Brock-Utne, 2013; Bunyi, 2012; Piper and Miksic, 2011; Tötemeyer, 2009; 2010; Batibo, 2005; Rubagumya, 2003; Thondhlana, 2002; Alexander, 2001; Chamberlain, 1998; Harlech-Jones, 1998; Haacke; 1986).

### **2.5.1 The language policy implementation**

The implementation of the language policy (MBESC, 1993) comes with challenges as the homogenous community in rural areas preferred mother tongue teaching which is not consistently done as such in Namibia. The majority of the rural communities consider English as a language of the elites, mainly those who were in exile. Kangira (2016, p. 2) stated that “the most painful thing that struck me was that the political elite in each of the countries studied have perpetuated the supremacy of foreign languages over indigenous languages.” This reflects the situation in Namibia as the politicians have decided on the language of instruction. It is common knowledge that there is a close relationship between language and power and this compromises the effective implementation of the language policy of 1992.

The language policy implementation suffered from its inception (1992) since the teachers did not understand English very well as they were used to Afrikaans as medium of instruction before independence (Fourie, 1997). In addition, the new generation of teachers also saw no

future in becoming indigenous language teachers as, contrary to the statement by Kangira (2016, p. 1) that “there is no language which is more linguistically superior to the other,” teachers saw indigenous languages as inferior to English. All languages are of equal importance, regardless of their levels of development but the sad reality in our society today is that the language policy is not put in practice.

Dauids (2011) stated that the language policy (1992) provides rights in theory to mother tongue speakers to have education in their own language but it is not always happening as schools can change to English at their own will, and English is privileged in the current language policy. He continues to say that this does not only deprive learners the right to education in mother tongue in the foundation years, but it also sometimes denies them the right to have their mother tongue taught as a subject, for example in some San areas where teaching is fully done in English in all subjects from pre-primary level. In the similar sentiments Wolfaardt (2005, p. 2359) argues that:

I have already mentioned that the people have the perception that African languages have no use. This negative attitude can be traced back to the history of education in this country. Perhaps even more important is the attitude of the politicians towards the status of African languages. Most educated people and people of relative importance, such as politicians, put their children in schools where English is the medium of instruction. Indeed, unless politicians take a stand to enforce the use of mother tongue in the first three years of school, African languages may never have the status they deserve in terms of the constitution and current language policy.

The arguments made by Wolfaardt (2005) indicate that the language policy is not effectively implemented mainly due to a lack of commitment from the politicians and the educated community. This is similar to what Kangira (2016) asserted in his paper that some parents have refused to have their children taught in mother tongue, demanding that their children be taught in English from the formative years of education under the pretext that English is a global language. The parents feel that with English their children are likely to succeed in later life, which is contrary to a substantial amount of research which indicates that an individual learns better when one learns in the mother tongue in the formative years. As argued by Wikan et al. (2007, p. 7) that “research shows that reading and writing skills acquired early in the first language will provide a strong foundation to learn to read and write in a second language. In other words, it is



argued that pupils will speak, read and write better in their second language if they already have high proficiency levels in their first language.”

Murray (2007) and Brock-Utne (2012) argued that there is general agreement that children learn better when they are taught in their first language because the concepts and skills learned in the first language can easily be transferred to the second language. Kangira<sup>14</sup> (2016) continues to state that their Otjiherero speaking neighbours bring their children to their house so that they speak English with them, a deliberate practice because they know that Kangira’s family are not conversant in Otjiherero but are native speakers of Shona<sup>15</sup>. Additionally, he said that the mother would make statement like “the people at home are speaking to my children in our language [Otjiherero] and I don’t like that. I tell them not to speak to my children in Otjiherero but they continue speaking that language”, stressed Kangira (2016, p. 6).

The above statements confirm that the language policy (1992) effective implementation in Namibia is not only failing because of the politicians (elites/bourgeoisies), but also because of the misguided mentality of the well-educated and the proletariats parents who think that English is the best language for their children. Apart from that, despite all the efforts made, the ministry of education is still accused that it is privileging English at the expense of the indigenous languages in Namibia since it does not implement the policy in practice, but only in theory. This was evident at the conference of the implementation of the language policy in 1992 where not even a single paper presented talked about the indigenous language (Haacke, 1994). The language situation was addressed at the 2011 national education conference<sup>16</sup> where various papers on mother tongue education were presented and recommendations made, but up to date the status quo remains the same as it was 26 years ago. It is also the view of Kangira (2016) that NIED tried to convince the ministry on numerous occasions to monitor the implementation of the language policy and to establish a language institute but all efforts were in vain as the ministry appears not to be interested in such ideas. Kangira (2016, p. 6) argued that “NIED raised the home language issue several times to try to convince the government in efforts to change the 1992 language policy, but all efforts were without any achievement.”

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<sup>14</sup> Professor Kangira is a Zimbabwean native and his mother tongue is *Shona*.

<sup>15</sup> Shona is a language spoken by three quarters of the total population in Zimbabwe. This is an example of how English serves as a lingua franca for speakers of different African languages.

<sup>16</sup> The conference was held in Windhoek and I personally attended it.

In addition, there are questions posed by Wolfaardt (2005, p. 2359) with regards to the implementation of the language policy in Namibia and up to date they are still not answered such as; “is there a way to improve the current situation regarding the language policy in Namibian schools? And will all stakeholders be determined to help change the current situation? Is there a feeling of complacency and indifference or a component of ignorance amongst the community towards these issues?” Wolfaardt (2005) concludes with a concerning question if there would be alternative avenues to assist the ministry of education and the government at large to effectively implement the language policy. After more than ten years now, these questions are still to be answered and nobody seems to be having answers soonest.

## **2.6 Status of early reading in indigenous languages**

The situation of reading development in indigenous languages in Namibia is a big challenge to the government, in particular the ministry of education and it can be compared to a statement made by Brock-Utne (2007) that a government wanting to provide education without considering mother tongue education use and readability is comparable to the act of wanting to give water to a village without considering the water pipes. This is because the indigenous languages materials development (and all other textbooks) is not primarily a government task in Namibia, but is the responsibility of the private sector publishers and the non-governmental organisations. As outlined in the Textbook policy (2008, p. 4) that the “textbooks for teaching in Namibia’s educationally recognized 13 languages of instructions are developed by the commercial publishers in collaboration with NIED.”

This is related to what Nyqvist (2016) stated, that developing countries have financial problems when it comes to funding publishing of local languages materials due to limited resources. The other challenge is that funding the development of reading material in a large number of mother tongues which are 30 or more in Namibia would be a very expensive process and hence unaffordable. Being a junior primary curriculum development officer based at NIED with a particular focus on the development of early literacy within the curriculum, I have observed the great need of readers<sup>17</sup> in the indigenous languages across the curriculum.

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<sup>17</sup> Textbooks/storybooks designed to support reading development are referred to as readers at JP in Namibia.

In my experience at NIED I have learnt that the ministry of education is only responsible for developing curriculum materials in various indigenous languages and for formulating syllabi with clear competencies for implementation and the readers should be consistent with the curriculum. It is the task of the publishers who are provided with curriculum documents by NIED to produce materials consistent with the curriculum. However, such materials are conditionally approved by NIED prior implementation to the schools.

At NIED my office is responsible for Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) literacy programme. We developed the EGRA tool for evaluating learners' reading competencies within the junior primary phase (grades 1-3). After developing the EGRA tool we carried out a pilot research in 2012 in two indigenous languages; namely Oshindonga, Khoekhoegowab, and English as a second language. According to the European Union report (2012) there is a need to improve the level of reading in the indigenous languages researched on in order to improve reading with understanding in the junior primary phase, which can facilitate later achievement at school. As per the statement from the report:

The Ministry of Education has highlighted the importance of the early development of literacy skills as the essential building block and foundation for all later learning. Thus the Ministry has seen the need to introduce a system for diagnosing the state of early reading in Namibia and has appointed an Education Officer, Mr Eino Haifidi to take responsibility for the implementation of the EGRA programme throughout the country.” (European Union report, 2012, p. 3).

After the 2012 pilot research, we conducted another pilot research in 2013 in three more indigenous languages, i.e. Oshikwanyama, Rukwangali and Otjiherero. The results were still appalling and dictated that immediate action is needed to upgrade the level of reading in indigenous languages. What was more disturbing is the fact that all research was conducted in the traditional regional bases where the indigenous languages are spoken by the inhabitants of such regions with a combination of urban, semi-urban and rural areas, and one expected the reading level to be good, especially in the urban areas. For example Khoekhoegowab – Hardap region; Oshikwanyama – Ohangwena region; Oshindonga – Oshikoto region; Rukwangali – Kavango region and Otjiherero was done in Kunene region in Opuwo area.

The EGRA tool consists of five subtasks which are benchmarked on the essential areas of early reading as follows; (1) phonemic awareness, (2) phonics, (3) non-word reading, (4) passage reading and (5) comprehension. These subtasks were reduced from seven to five after the pilot research study found the need to base the reading assessments on the key essential areas of early reading as indicated above.

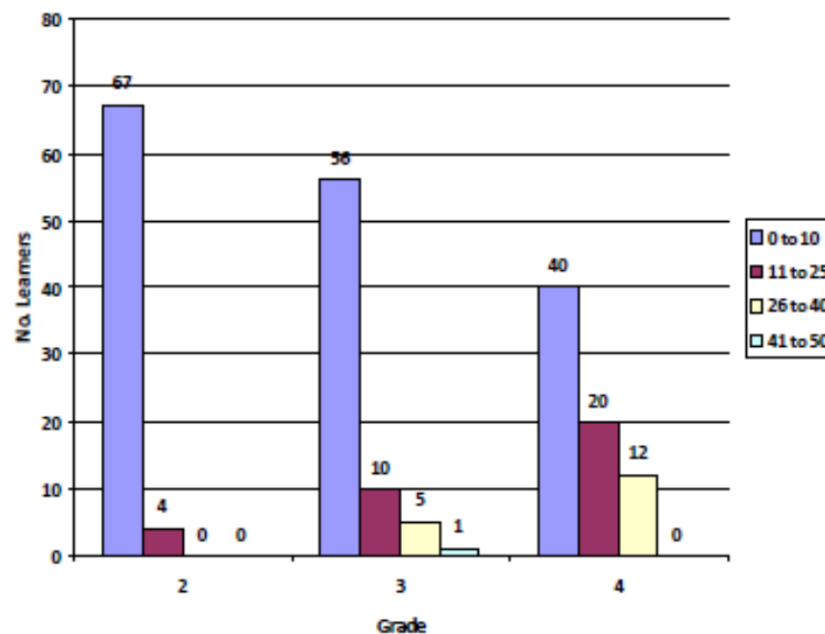


Figure 2 shows oral reading performance in Oshindonga.

The assessment total marks were out of 50. The above figure was sourced from the EGRA 2012 pilot research study (page 26) and it shows learners' marks for oral reading in grades, 2-4 in the EGRA subtask of passage reading of Oshindonga (subtask 4). This is a clear indication that early reading is very poor since most learners scored zero in a timed task of number of words read correctly per minute. It is highly evident from the graph that the poor reading is mainly in grade two where 67 learners scored between 0 – 10. It appears that the reading improves as the learners' progress to grade four, although according to the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ III report, 2012), Namibian grade six learners' reading skills are low in comparison to other countries. This means that Namibia is performing below the required reading standards in primary education as per the SACMEQ III (2012) report.

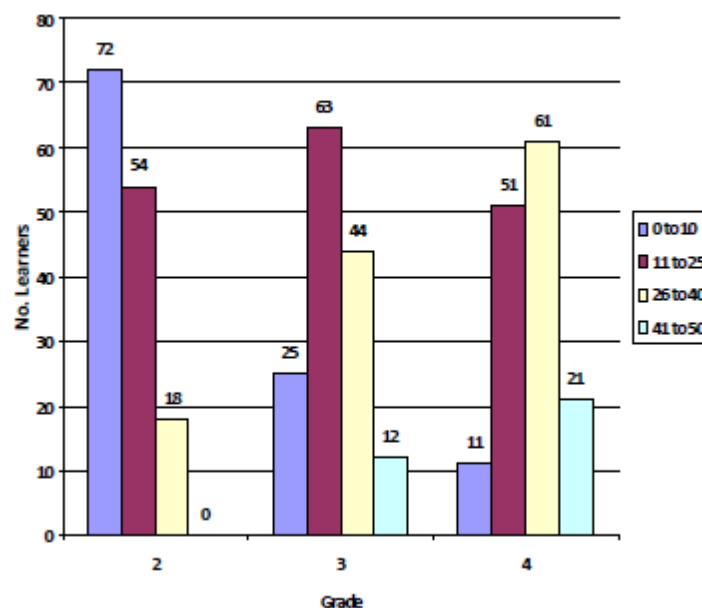


Figure 3 shows oral reading performance in Khoekhoegowab

The graph above was sourced from the EGRA 2012 pilot research study (page 28) and it shows the oral reading performance measured in scores out of 50 of learners per grade (grades, 2-4) in the EGRA subtask of passage reading in Khoekhoegowab (subtask 4). Similar to Oshindonga, early reading is very poor in grade two where 72 learners scored 0-10, although it shows some improvement in grade three and four. According to Hanse-Himarwa<sup>18</sup> (2016), reading in general is still a concern to the ministry as the level of basic reading is at 25.5%, which is below the required competency of 60%, and more than 80% learners did not reach the advanced reading level as compared to other countries in the SACMEQ III (2012) report.

Apart from the teachers' efforts to improve early reading, there is also a *readathon*<sup>19</sup> week activity which takes place annually countrywide in all public schools. The *readathon* activity is nationally organised and it awards the best readers as motivation to improve reading in the country. Additionally, the new revised curriculum which was implemented in 2015 in junior primary through to grade 12 consists of a reading period. The reading period is allocated across all grades (i.e. 1-12) and it happens at the same time at the school and its objective is to inculcate the reading culture within the spectrum of school as early as possible. There is a great need to infuse the reading culture in our children so that it improves as Diescho (2017, Pers. Comm.,

<sup>18</sup> Katrina Hanse-Himarwa is the current Minister of Education, Arts and Culture

<sup>19</sup> *Readathon* is a reading annual activity which happens in September in all public schools in Namibia which is an initiative to motivate reading in the country and eventually improve the reading culture.

21 February) argued that “what you feed grows, what you don’t doesn’t.” Namibians greatly lacks a reading culture, which is very concerning because it is believed to have immensely contributed to the high failure rate of learners through the schooling system (Ithindi, Engelbrecht, de Jager, 2018).

## **2.7 Overview of African languages’ students at UNAM**

There were 450 students enrolled for African languages during the 2017 academic year and five students are studying for master’s degree in Oshiwambo languages. Although UNAM offers teacher education in African languages, the teachers’ qualifications in African languages remains a crucial issue in Namibia (P. Mbenzi<sup>20</sup> 2017, Pers. Comm., 16 February). Idris, Legère and Rosendal (2007) claims that African languages teachers are poorly trained which contributes to the poor performance of learners in local languages, especially at grade 10 and grade 12 respectively. In Namibia, the lack of clear policy on indigenous language development has created a monopoly for English language to dominate the schooling system, as well as in general public life as argued by Kangira above (see 2.5).

## **2.8 English as the official language in Namibia**

As mentioned earlier, English was accorded a hegemonic position after independence as the official language at the expense of the indigenous languages (Diescho, 1992; Geingob, 1995; Brock-Utne, 1997). This caused impairments to the indigenous languages as they lagged behind in development (Smit, 2012). The poor English used in Namibia created some kind of illiteracy in both indigenous languages and English itself as nobody seems to master any of the languages, especially the new generation youths of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Brock-Utne (2012) avers that Africa is not Anglophone, Francophone or Lusophone, but Africa is supposed to be “Afrophone” because only 5% of the total population in Africa masters the language of their former colonisers.

Brock-Utne’s (2012) statement is actually fitting in the Namibian context although English in Namibia is used as a common second language for most Namibians since it dominates the public life (Buschfeld and Kautzsch, 2014). English use in Namibia is also applied as a medium

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<sup>20</sup> Dr Mbenzi is a senior lecturer in Oshiwambo languages at UNAM.

of instruction in all educational institutions and the media as I mentioned earlier. English is also the language of the parliament and it is also used “in public places like banks, shops, and other institutions, as well as for communication and scientific writing in academic circles” (Buschfeld and Kautzsch, 2014, p. 127).

Language is part of one’s identity (Batibo, 2005; Tötemeyer, 2009) although it is highly questionable nowadays as to whose identity is being associated with the current language situation of Namibia where English is the medium of instruction. Obanya (1980, as cited in Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir 2001, p. 115) argued that:

it has always been felt by African educationists that the African child’s major learning problem is linguistic. Instruction is given in a language that is not normally used in his immediate environment, a language which neither the learner, nor the teacher understands and uses well enough.

Learning in a second language impedes the acquisition of functional literacy (Tötemeyer 2009; 2010), and without proper development of the first language the reading culture in both languages is negatively affected as it is currently in Namibia. This is a reality in Namibia. The contributing factors to poor reading achievements in indigenous languages across the curriculum can be a result caused by English as a medium of instruction, and eventually have negative implications for the success of indigenous learners at school (Smit, 2012; SACMEQ III, 2012).

English in Namibia has promoted aliteracy<sup>21</sup> because speaking a language does not make one literate in that particular language and this can be comparable to the Namibian language situation where people use English for utilitarian purposes only (Tötemeyer, 2009). English in Namibia has dominated the indigenous languages to the extent that the youths do not want to associate themselves with their mother tongues and instead they would prefer to introduce themselves as English speakers. For example, in 2011 when I was studying towards a Bachelor of Education degree at Rhodes University on the inception day we were requested to introduce ourselves and our backgrounds. One Black male student introduced himself as an English

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<sup>21</sup> According to Oxford dictionary, aliteracy (sometimes spelled alliteracy) is having the ability to read, but not using it.

speaker to the surprise of the audience. After some days, it later came out that he is a Nama/Damara, but he does not like his mother tongue (Khoekhoegowab) because apparently he is modernized (civilized) and speaking his mother tongue was “*antiquated*” for him.

This scenario resonates with what Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2001) argued that there are also similar situations in South Africa where young people do not want to be associated with their mother tongue. They stated that “the young ones don’t want to speak their own language; they all want to be Americans. They watch TV and get all these American stuffs. They want to be like Michael Jackson and look down on their own culture” (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2001, p. 301). This indicates how English domination influenced the people to the extent that they think speaking English makes you smarter, for example, sometimes parents together with the school principals denigrate the use of Khoekhoegowab stating that it makes children stupid (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir 2001). However, it can be more appalling for one not to be able to read or speak their mother tongue, especially if one is reared in such a background. For example, one of my colleagues, a Khoekhoegowab native speaker prefers only speaking English as she says she feels more comfortable with English contrary to her mother tongue.

The dominance of English in Namibia is alarming and it can be compared to what Prah (2003; 2008) refers to as a form of neo-colonization where English language has remained to maintain Western interests. Prah (2003, p. 33) argued that “English in the developing world is an instrument of imperialism.” This is a true reflection of the Namibian society because English is strongly promoted at the expense of the indigenous languages and due to the fact that the indigenous languages are not well developed. It has been argued by some scholars that English is the language of science and technology - a statement which Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2004) differed with. Frydman (2011) also argued that Namibian languages and other African countries languages has not been given attention since they are regarded to lack scientific and technological terminologies. Although the scientific and technological terminologies can be developed like in KiSwahili, an African language which was developed with scientific and technological vocabulary. Academics argued that despite Africa being the most linguistically diverse continent, there is no linguistic evidence to prove that the African languages cannot be developed to the level of English (Pütz 1995, Bokamba 1995; Nghipondoka<sup>22</sup>, 2017).

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<sup>22</sup> Ester Anna Nghipondoka is the Deputy Minister of Education, Arts and Culture.



## 2.9 Importance of reading in Mother Tongue

The development of reading skills in indigenous languages is linked with cognitive development and later academic success (Tötemeyer 2009), and it is also vital to improving the reading culture. This is underlined by a substantial body of international research which indicates that an increase in indigenous language use improves learning with understanding because it is based on clear understanding and on links with indigenous knowledge (Haacke; 1986; Chamberlain, 1998; Harlech-Jones, 1998; Alexander, 2001; Thondhlana, 2002; Rubagumya, 2003; Bunyi, 2012; Brock-Utne, 2013; Kazapua, 2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February). Finally, the development of reading skills in mother tongue at the formative years will enable the children to develop holistically, such that their “cognitive, affective, and social development” are considered because effective learning occurs “through a language that is well known” to the child (Kembo 2000, as cited in Mgwashu, 2013, p. 2)

Năznean (2014) argues that using the mother tongue for communication in the classroom is more effective and develops a good teacher/learners relationship since everyone is comfortable with the language. The use of mother tongue in the classroom “motivates learners to take part actively in the class” (Năznean, 2014, p. 77) and it greatly contributes to the linguistic development of that particular language as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). Using mother tongue also supports the development of good self-esteem (Năznean, 2014) since struggling to learn in an unfamiliar so called “superior” second language does the opposite. The use of the native language in the classroom promotes language development, preserves the language for future generations by avoiding extinctions and it also preserves the indigenous knowledge as well as the heritage of the native speakers (Batibo, 2005; Davids, 2011; Nghipondoka, 2017). This means that if the indigenous languages are used by teachers and learners as LoLT then their preservation can become a reality. As Walsh (2006, p. 301) argued that, “books and recordings can preserve languages, but only people and communities can keep them alive.”

Using the indigenous language in the classroom is a motivation to attract more learners to school as they are more likely to succeed (Kosonen, 2005; Ilboudo, 2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February) and it also enables parents to participate in their children’s education (Benson, 2002). Using indigenous languages in the classroom is also said to be good for pedagogical skills since it helps learners to develop critical thinking which later yield learning with understanding (Cummins, 2000; Bialystock, 2001; King and Mackey, 2007).

The other benefit of using the native language in the classroom is for clarity as the teacher is well understood by all the students in the class especially when explaining some difficult concepts or when comprehension is compromised (Náznean, 2014). The vitality of mother tongue use is endorsed by Nelson Mandela, who said that “if you talk to someone in a language that he or she understands, that goes to the head. If you talk to somebody in his or her language that goes to the heart” (Nghipondoka, 2017, p. 4).

## **2.10 Early reading methodologies in indigenous languages**

It is argued that learning to read and write is a psycholinguistic and social process which happens within a society (Trudell & Schroeder, 2007). The scholars further averred that early reading methodologies in indigenous African languages should be congruent to the language’s orthographic representation as no orthography is purely phonemic or morphemic. This is because “every writing system in the world represents the phonology of a language to some extent, including even logographic systems such as Chinese” (Cook & Bassetti, 2005, p. 4).

Trudell and Schroeder (2007, pp. 168-169) stated that early reading methodology should involve the following aspects:

- ❖ Early reading should encourage auditory recognition of phonemes.
- ❖ Early reading activities should encourage syllable recognition.
- ❖ Early focus on tone and vowel length awareness is important in some African Bantu languages.
- ❖ Early focus on practice in remembering long series of syllables will support the ability to decode long words.
- ❖ Reading pedagogy should include chunking of word particles bigger than the syllable.

The structure and syntax of African Bantu languages is different from the Western languages. Orthographies of African agglutinative languages are transparent (Nurse & Philippson, 2003) in their syllable patterns and easily allow the connections between letters which is contrary to the opaque orthography of English (Trudell & Schroeder, 2007). Therefore, the entire adoption of Western reading approach will not successfully improve the effective teaching of reading in some African Bantu languages since their methodologies are based on their social and linguistic

origins and it somehow impedes learning to read in some African Bantu languages (Trudell and Schroeder, 2007).

There is a substantial amount of research which confirms that it is easier to learn to read in a native language or in a language one already speaks using a methodology which is relevant to that particular language concerned, contrary to learning to read in second language or a language one is not familiar with (Davies, 1994; Adams, 1994; Wikan et al., 2007; Ilboudo<sup>23</sup>, 2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February) although when teaching early reading in African Bantu languages consideration should also be taken to use strategies that are relevant to teaching any language “such as silent and oral practice with plenty of connected text, and focused development of comprehension skills” (Trudell and Schroeder, 2007, p. 174).

Learning to read in African Bantu languages sometimes fails because the teaching methodology is modelled on Western reading approaches or methodologies which are not always congruent with how to teach reading in transparent, consistent orthographies, as Trudell and Schroeder (2007, p. 166) argued that “literacy taught in this way fails significantly to address the features of written African languages which require the most careful attention of a learner and teacher, and as a result do not produce independent readers.”

The ultimate purpose of reading is to understand and to attain this early reading teaching methodology should encompass aspects such as; phonological awareness, syllable recognition, phonics, decoding and blending skills, vocabulary development skills and comprehension questions that enhances critical thinking for understanding. The early reading educators should be mindful to reject the phenomenon that reading methodologies inspired by English or French are always superior to their own approach as stated by Trudell and Schroeder (2007, p. 177) that “it should not be automatically assumed that the approaches to reading which have been popularised by the West will succeed in making independent readers in an African social linguistic context.” This is because Oshiwambo languages have a consistent and transparent orthography, unlike English which has the least consistent or least transparent orthography (Land, 2015).

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<sup>23</sup> Dr Jean-Pierre Ilboudo is the UNESCO Namibia office representative

## **2.11 Reading as a cognitive exercise rather than an oral performance**

Wood (2015, p. 3) described reading as a “complex organization of higher mental processes” which include metacognitive skills in terms of the areas of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Land (2015, p. 1) describes reading as “the most complex cognitive activity in which humans routinely engage”, while Verbeek (2011, p. 13) views reading to be about “getting meaning from certain combinations of letters.” Additionally, reading is described by Gates (1949, p. 6) as “the most intricate working of the human mind.” These writers recognise that reading is one of the most complicated cognitive activities of the human mind and is not simply a translating texts into speech.

The ultimate goal of reading is comprehension and it is enabled by the cognitive processes when the reader is engaging with written representations. On the contrary, “Sub-Saharan Africa have traditionally tended to view reading as primarily an oral performance rather than a cognitive exercise in accessing meanings in text” (Rule and Land, 2017, p. 3 – 4) as a result of Bantu education system which was designed not to equip natives with critical thinking skills. In addition, “children who read orthographically consistent languages are better at reading (Land, 2015, p. 2) pseudo words (pronounceable non-words) than children who read English”. This is because the reader brings to the reading experience vocabulary, grammar, intonation, tempo and understanding of the conventions of the language. For example when children come to school they already know how to speak the language with a number of vocabularies accumulated. For educators to succeed in teaching reading with understanding the process of teaching reading should be first implemented in teaching children to read in their mother tongue, or in languages they are already familiar with in elementary schools. Schroeder (2007, p.1) stated that “children’s mental development is enhanced when their foundational mother-tongue skills are used and nurtured in school.”

In addition, there is a significant amount of research which dictates that using a child’s mother tongue is more likely to yield achievement and later success in life as contrary to using a child’s second language (Trudell and Schroeder, 2007; Katjirua<sup>24</sup>, 2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February). Teaching reading should not only focus on decoding and correct pronunciation of words, but

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<sup>24</sup> McLeod Laura Katjirua is the Governor of Khomas region

it should include the ability to read accurately with correct prosody or expression as this will support the reader's construction of meaning of the written text and is referred to as "oral reading fluency" (Piper, Schroeder and Trudell, 2016).

When teaching oral reading fluency, the educator should be mindful of how different letters of the alphabet are used differently in different orthographies. Easy decoding of letters is essential for oral reading fluency which activates the cognitive processes without which children are highly unlikely to read with comprehension. For this to be achieved, the educators in elementary schools should ensure that the children can make sense of the texts read by drawing on their context (because if the sense is obscure, they cannot access the meaning of the text and cannot make sense of it) so that they can easily access meaning and develop critical thinking using their prior knowledge (Piper, Schroeder and Trudell, 2016). If this approach is well used by elementary educators, consequently children are more likely to become skilled readers who critically engage with the text read using predictions, prompts, noting the characters in the story and using context clues and this is what reading as a cognitive exercise is concerned with.

## **2.12 Factors facilitating reading at the Junior Primary school level**

### **2.12.1 Parental involvement**

Shikwambi (2014, p. 8) defined parental involvement as the "partnership between the home and the school with parental participation in school activities." This refers to communication between the parents and the school. Crosby, Rasinski, Padak and Yildirim (2015) argue that the involvement of parents in their children's literacy development is of crucial importance to assist in early literacy development. This resonates with Geske and Ozola (2008) who say that the children of parents who are literate, and who are read to at home are probable to have better reading literacy achievements and are more likely to succeed in later life. The children's literacy is significantly influenced by parents' involvement and collaboration with the school. In addition, Baker (2014, p. 21) also argued that "parent-child reading, telling stories, singing songs, as well as providing an ample amount of children's books in the home have been related to children's later language and literacy abilities" which is in line with Kgosidialwa and Bulawa (2018, p. 115) statement that "children whose parents were involved in their academic life

achieve more.” Finally, Siririka (2007) notes that “international research shows that there is a relationship between parental involvement and children’s success in literacy” (p. 2).

### **2.12.3 Socio-economic factors**

The social and economic factors are issues related to a combination of variables such as the education, occupation, income, wealth and residential place which are used to determine an individual’s behaviour within the society (The American Heritage, 2017). Geske and Ozola (2014) and Rowe (1995) indicated that the family’s financial position and their attitude towards education can also contribute to early acquisition of literacy. Literacy can be improved by having plenty of reading materials and literacy resources available at home which influence the early literacy of children (Raban and Coates, 2004). Furthermore, Naidoo et al. (2014, p. 158) stated that “learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds with poor availability of books at home have low literacy achievements.” This is congruent with Wikan et al. (2007, p. 68) statement that says:

substantially more learners from homes with a lack of reading materials did not read to improve their homework and did also not spend time on reading for enjoyment, as opposed to those with sufficient and ample reading materials available. Similarly more of these learners never borrowed books from the library and they generally did not prefer reading novels. Learners with limited access to reading materials considered themselves more often as poor readers. However, it was also found that several more of these learners were interested to become better readers and also wanted more opportunities to read than those with sufficient and ample access to reading materials.

### **2.12.3 Availability of reading materials**

The earlier children are exposed to reading materials, the better their early literacy is likely to be (Rowe 1995); the availability of reading materials both at home and school improves early acquisition of literacy in children greatly “the more a child is exposed to reading, the more likely the child is to acquire the requisite skills for reading” (Strategic Marketing and Research Inc., 2013, p. 6). Children who have more access to books and other literacy materials learn to

read more easily than the children with less literacy experience (Naidoo et al., 2014). Furthermore, Abraham (2009) argues that children need to know that words on paper have meaning and the fact that reading is done from left to right and from top to bottom. In conclusion, if children are exposed to all the above early, then they are likely to develop reading skills early and read with ease when they start at primary school.

#### **2.12.4 School attendance**

Children develop early literacy much earlier if they are consistently in school than if they are frequently absent from school (Kotte, Lietz and Lopez, 2005). I observed this when I was a teacher and noticed that truancy negatively affects effective performance of learners in school as they fail miserably because they miss the taught lessons.

#### **2.12.5 Qualifications and teachers' proficiency**

In Namibia, the issue of qualifications of teachers is a debatable issue and the teachers' unions always make it a political issue, rather than a professional one. This means that the teachers unions are always objecting that poor performance is caused by lack of qualified teachers, while the available research indicates the contrary. According to MoEAC (2011), Kisting (2011) and Lumbu et al. (2015) teachers' poor qualification and poor language proficiency are some of the causes of poor reading skills and eventually contribute to low achievements. A number of educators in Namibia have inadequate understanding of teaching literacy and reading and are not familiar with methods of teaching reading in context of the learner centred approach, perhaps because they were not taught to do so at pre-service teacher training institutions, and have not received in-service training in this.

The teacher training institutions such as former Colleges of Education and UNAM did not prepare the teachers well in teaching early literacy and reading, especially with focus to mother tongue teaching methodology (Ministry of Education, 2011; Lumbu et al., 2015). This relates to what Nghikembua<sup>25</sup> (2013, pp. 30 – 40) observes that:

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<sup>25</sup> Nghikembua is a Lecturer at UNAM

Initial teacher training methods in many places are so ineffective that they add little value to the ability of a future teacher to operate effectively in the classroom. This is worrisome - student teachers appear to be dissatisfied with the bridge between theory and practice. Their perception of what happens in their college or university courses seems difficult to reconcile with their practical experiences in the classroom. This seems to concur with my experience.

The above presentation is congruent with Amutenya's (2016, p. 24) statement that "teacher training does not equip teachers for the realities of the classroom." This resonates with the Human Resource Development Plan and Implementation Strategy for the Namibian Education Sector (HRDPISNES, 2015) which stated that the problem is caused by the lack of training on the subject content because "it is often falsely assumed that students entering teacher training already have sufficient subject knowledge obtained through their schooling" (p. 27) which is incorrect.

There are calls for teachers pre-service training to be based "on the latest empirical evidence and not on the way how we were taught decades ago" (Dr Charmaine Villet<sup>26</sup>, Dean of the Faculty of Education, UNAM) in order to effectively prepare teachers for the classroom. The above is in line with the HRDPISNES (2015) which states that "the training of teachers, in particular at the lower primary level, must be based on better Namibian research than what is currently available. Current practices in schools need to be understood better, and desirable and realistic changes ... to be proposed ... on the basis of a good mix of qualitative and quantitative research" (p. 27)

Similar to the Namibian situation, Taylor (2014, p. 17, as cited in Rule and Land 2017) found out that across all five South African teacher training "institutions, there may be insufficient focus on equipping student teachers to guide JP learners to become proficient readers and writers/producers of texts in a range of genres and modes. In particular, little or no attention is given to reading pedagogies across the sample."

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<sup>26</sup> Dr Villet made these remarks at the 17<sup>th</sup> Boleswana Biennial Research Symposium which took place in July 2018 in Windhoek. I personally attended the symposium.



In conclusion, the lack of teachers' effective reading pedagogies culminates in poor teaching of reading skills is prevalent in contemporary school based research focused on teaching reading skills (Rule and Land, 2017).

## **2.13 Reading resources in indigenous languages**

### **2.13.1 History of publication of reading materials in indigenous languages**

The first indigenous book was published in 1855 in Nama, while the Oshindonga book was first published in 1877 and the first Oshikwanyama books named "*Okambo kotete*" and "*Okambo kounona*" were published in 1937 at Oniipa (Tirronen, 1977). The publication of reading materials in the indigenous languages has always been rare prior to the 1880s and beyond, although it was continuously discussed at various missionaries' meetings in the north because readers were very scarce (Tirronen, 1977). The Lutheran Church published the first newspaper in Oshindonga language named "*Osondaha*"<sup>27</sup> first written by a missionary by the name Albin Savola assisted by Rautanen and Pettinen and published on 15 October 1901, which lasted until 1933 (32 years of publication). "*Osondaha*" newspaper's first Oshiwambo journalist was by the name Albin Itope. The newspaper was first produced twice per month, and then later once per month with a circulation of 225 copies per year, and later increased to 300 copies per year. At the beginning it was distributed free to readers on condition that they could read, then later from 1907 it costed 10 cents per year (Tirronen, 1977).

Furthermore, Tirronen (1977), indicated some other newspapers published by the Finnish missionaries as follows: (1) "*Omukwetu*"<sup>28</sup>, first published in September 1936 starting with one issue per month until in 1937. In 1938 – 1942 "*Omukwetu*" published two issues per month. From 1937, "*Omukwetu's*" circulation ranged from 2000 to 5000 in 1976 with 660 issues in total. In the early days, "*Omukwetu*" cost five cents per year, although "*Omukwetu*" is still published to date by ELCIN (Oniipa) costing N\$ 3.50. (2) "*Ons Vriend*" was published from 1935 – 1942 with the aim of assisting teachers to learn how to read Afrikaans as it was a medium of instruction then and it only had 44 issues in total. It is not reported how many copies of it were in circulation, neither how much it cost. (3) "*Ehangano*" is another newspaper which

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<sup>27</sup> Meaning 'Sunday' in English.

<sup>28</sup> Omukwetu newspaper is still published to date, but only four times in a year.

was published in 1945 – 1971 and it was initiated to supplement “*Omukwetu*” since the readership demands were high.

“*Ehangano*” had a circulation of 225 ranging from 450 – 1000 during its existence. (4) “*Okrisimesa*” was published in 1934 – 1936 which later changed its name in 1945 to “*Okrisimesa jaahungi*” with a circulation of ranging between 70 – 400 during its existence. Another newspaper called (5) “*Okrisimesa jaanona*” also appeared once a year in 1951 – 1953 (Tirronen, 1977). Additionally, the (6) “*Immanuel*” newspaper was also published by the Finnish missionaries, while the Roman Catholic published two Oshiwambo newspapers called “*Angelus*” and “*Omukumo*” (Fourie, 1997), although there is no record of precisely when they were published, neither their circulation figures or costs. A combination of two languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) was used in the publication of the missionaries’ newspapers and their objectives were to teach people how to read and write (Tirronen, 1977).

Apart from the missionaries’ newspapers, the government of the day also published some newspapers in Oshiwambo languages as follows; (1) “*Ehumo Komeho*” was published in Oshindonga language in 1961 – 1964 with four issues per year. In 1965 – 1971 (2) “*Medu Letu*” was published in Oshikwanyama language first with two issues per year, and then later to four issues per year. (3) “*Eume*” was published each month in 1965 and it is not clear when or how it ceased production and it is not reported how many copies were published (Tirronen, 1977).

### **2.13.2. Publishing of children’s materials in indigenous languages**

Currently, there are seven publishing houses in Namibia which publish children’s books including: Namibia Publishing House (NPH), Pearson Publisher, Pollination, ELOC Printing Press, Zebra Publishing House, Yambeka Children Media and Wordweaver. Due to a lack of funding, a publisher mainly only publish with help from sponsors and publishing children’s materials is very problematic in Namibia due to the small population (Tötemeyer, 2013). Another challenge in the publishing of African languages readers in Namibia is that there are no authors for children stories and the few stories available are printed in a low quality paper with poor layout and few or no illustrations at all (Tötemeyer, 2013). Some of the readers published in African languages are benchmarked on the Western context in terms of contents

and illustrations and this makes them difficult for African children to understand. As stated by Naidoo et al. (2014, p.159), “books in African languages are rare, and learners do not have the opportunity to read in their home language.”

Reiner (2011) argued that production in African language remains problematic and many publishing businesses are closing because it does not make business sense to publish in African languages in Namibia because “people have no interest in buying children’s books and it is not economical for us to keep publishing books that do not sell” (C. Bezuidenhout<sup>29</sup>, 2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February). This resonates with what Töttemeyer (2013, p. 13) stated that “even 500 copies take a long time to sell. This renders publishing for children a very expensive undertaking” in Namibia. This is what caused the dearth of reading materials in African languages in Namibia and it is detrimental to the development of our indigenous languages. In addition, the lack of reading materials is contributing to the poor reading culture in Namibia as reading is supposed to be first developed earlier in the mother tongue. It is obvious that people do not read because there is nothing to read, and publishers do not publish much at all in indigenous languages because no one buys what they do publish. The above is related to what Naidoo et al. (2014, p. 159) noted that “a number of classroom have no books, and even those classes which do have sets of readers, often have them at an inadequate level.” The above is in line with what Nyqvist (2016, p. 8) stated that “due to limited resources ... even providing only primary textbooks” is deemed very expensive. This is a situation synonymous to Namibia and a true reflection in view of the lack of adequate readers in the JP phase in Namibia.

## **2.14 Conclusion**

It is evident from the literature review that Namibia is a nation of language diversity which complements each other as mentioned by Brock Utne (1997) at the beginning of this chapter in her connotation about Namibian languages relations. However, more needs to be done in order to develop these languages for our future generations. The status of early reading in indigenous languages which was reflected in this chapter shows that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture has highlighted the importance of the early development of literacy skills as the essential building block and foundation for all later learning. The literature also indicates

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<sup>29</sup> Cynthia Bezuidenhout is the Publishing Manager at Namibia Publishing House.

the lack of effective development of indigenous languages at a university level which is of crucial importance to the development of reading skills – the topic researched in this study.

The effect of English language use in Namibia as the official language and a medium of instruction in schools were also discussed in the chapter with a review of the importance of reading in mother tongue, as well as the early reading methodologies in indigenous languages. I also highlighted on reading as a cognitive exercise and the factors influencing reading at the JP phase in schools. The history of reading resources in indigenous languages was also commented on in this chapter. The next chapter presents the theoretical frameworks used in the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

I used a combination of seminal and contemporary theories in this study, namely Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1964; 1978), Chall's five stages of reading (1976; 1989; 1996), and the New Literacy Studies (NLS) theory (Street, 1984; 1994; 2014). These were used as theoretical frameworks of the study. The sociocultural theory was used because it talks about how language skills are developed (especially how teachers teach and develop languages in the classroom), and the five stages theory was used since it talks about stages of developing reading skills, while the NLS was utilised because it talks about the use of reading skills in the society.

#### **3.2 Vygotsky's sociocultural theory**

The sociocultural theory is related to language development. In it Vygotsky argued that the language is learned through social and cultural interaction, hence teachers need to understand the learners' prior knowledge in order to develop their reading skills effectively (Vygotsky, 1964; 1978; Gauvain, 2008; Raban, 2014<sup>30</sup>). Language skills development occurs through adult-child interactions, but it can also happen through child to child interactions at school, in the community or at home (Mercer and Howe, 2012). Vygotsky proposed that language development is associated with cognitive development which happens within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and he defined the ZPD as the "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Gauvain, 2008, p. 410).

Furthermore, the ZPD shifts as learning happens because it "is the distance between what children can do by themselves and the next learning that they can be helped to achieve with competent assistance" (Van Der Stuyf, 2002, p. 2). Vygotsky stated that children should be taught reading traits which are appropriate to their potential because when children are learning to read they use their cognitive skills to learn a language with assistance of a more experienced

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<sup>30</sup> This article is based on Mary Clay's Literacy Processing Theory

individual in order to transform their thinking using language as a cultural tool (Vygotsky, 1978; Mercer, 2000; Mercer and Howe, 2012). Finally, the ZPD is an area where a child's existing knowledge is built from simple to complex creating a bridge to improved knowledge accumulation (Wellington, 2015).

In order for teachers to effectively develop learners reading skills in the junior primary phase, the sociocultural theory argues that the following things have to be done: (a) scaffolding of reading activities, (b) modelling of reading activities, (c) cooperative learning and (d) collaborative learning within the classroom (Anderson and Briggs, 2011; Mercer, 2000; Clay, 2005; Gauvain, 2008, Mercer and Howe, 2012; Doyle, 2013; Raban, 2014). Other activities which are important for reading are such as engagement with a print rich environment (with texts and pictures) which is motivating children to learn to read. Additionally, there are other technical aspects such as the directional progression of alphabetic text from left to right, and the interpretation of visual elements of print which should be used to make meaning can also add great value to the development of reading skills in elementary classrooms (Clay, 2005; Raban, 2012; 2014).

### **3.3 Scaffolding of reading activities**

The scaffolding of reading activities is articulated in the sociocultural theory as a form of instruction where a more experienced individual assists the learner through interaction to perform a certain task (Gauvain, 2008; Raban, 2014; Mercer and Howe, 2012). Scaffolding for learning is expanded by Bruner and others who stated that “an adult may not only offer useful information and guiding suggestions, they may even intervene to simplify slightly the task at hand” (Mercer, 2000, p. 139). Furthermore, scaffolding in education is defined (Jumaat and Tasir, 2014) as guidance or support that is provided by teachers, instructors or other more experienced individuals to assist learners to achieve their goals in learning. Nakale (2012) notes that scaffolding provides contextual support for meaning making by using simplified language.

The effective use of the scaffolding strategy reduces the chances for the learner to fail in executing the task and motivates learners to improve on their own (Mercer, 2000; Ketch, 2005). This means that teachers should assist children with reading from the initial stage and gradually reduce the amount of support to allow children to develop the reading skills with trial and error (Raban, 2014). Teachers should also prepare reading lessons encompassing appropriate

contents for scaffolding reading activities in the classroom based on the familiar context and pre knowledge of learners with differentiated levels of support to ensure that every child succeed as a reader. Teachers/parents should also bear in mind that children do not develop reading skills by imitation, but by practicing what is said to the child by the teacher/parent through conversations about text with appropriate feedback (Mercer, 2000; Mercer and Howe, 2012; Raban; 2014).

### 3.3.1. Modelling of reading activities

Modelling is an approach used by teachers/parents to help children develop strategies to solve problems. It is also used to encourage and support children in early reading activities such as vocabulary development (Gauvain, 2008). The sociocultural theory argues that in modelling a more experienced partner can take some more difficult task and model it to a less experienced individual for easy adaptation through reciting and drilling reading exercises (Moisil, Pah, Barbat, and Popa, 2006; Gauvain, 2008).

While some aspects of reading can be learnt and reinforced through modelling, other aspects, such as the cognitive activity of decoding text and synthesising concepts are difficult to observe and therefore need to be supported by explanation. Modelling is important to developing reading skills as outlined in Bandura's social learning theory. Teachers should always remember to model reading activities (and practice them with children) because modelling is associated with prompt practice (Moisil et al., 2006; Raban, 2012; 2014) for better reading results. Teachers should always focus on modelling the learner's correct form of pronunciation, instead of correcting the learner's speech for example: "*Teacher: So today we are going to read about the three little pigs and their house or... Child: Or the bricks house. Teacher: Mmm. The house of bricks, yeah*" (Raban, 2014, p. 10). This means that in this approach the teacher and learners work together for learning where the teacher works as a facilitator. Some examples of methods which can be done by teachers in the classroom are such as *Echo Reading*<sup>31</sup> and *Choral Reading*<sup>32</sup> and in both the teacher need to focus on the correct form of speech, but not on the errors made by children (Raban, 2014).

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<sup>31</sup> Echo reading is a reading method for modelling oral reading skills.

<sup>32</sup> Choral reading is an oral reading method where the teacher models how to read.

### 3.3.2. Cooperative learning within the classroom

Cooperative learning is another concept generated by the sociocultural theory which is used for problem solving where individuals work together in unstructured groups. Cooperative learning is related to collaborative learning, but they are different because in cooperative learning learners work together in small groups to complete a task with a common objective (Doolittle, 1997; Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998; Slavin, 2017; Mercer and Howe, 2012). When teachers are using cooperative learning they should be careful and do close monitoring because not all group work is cooperative and by “assigning learners in groups and telling them to work together does not in itself result in cooperative learning” (Johnson et al., 1998, p. 28).

Cooperative learning enables the transmission of cultural experiences based on learners’ prior knowledge which every learner brings to the group and are shared during group interactions. The characteristics of cooperative learning are as follows: positive interdependence, face to face interaction, individual accountability, small group and interpersonal skills and self-evaluation. When teachers are using cooperative learning in reading development skills they should bear in mind the following: a clear picture of what skills are to be learned, use activities that elicit oral language, provide opportunities for verbal interaction and monitor progress (Doolittle, 1997; Johnson et al., 1998; Slavin, 2017). Law (2015) argues that learning to read builds upon the oral language skills in conjunction with phonological skills. This means that once the child practices more on reading activities which uses oral language then his reading skills are likely to develop faster than his/her peers. Verbal interaction improves the child’s social experiences both at home and school. These social experiences develop into prior knowledge which the child uses when s/he reads, especially when reading familiar texts (Law, 2015). Some examples of methods which can be used in cooperative learning to develop reading skills are such as the *Directed Reading – Thinking Activity (DRTA)*<sup>33</sup> and *Talk like a Reader*<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> The DR-TA is an approach which uses a cycle of predict-read-confirm-predict to guide learners’ reading and thinking process.

<sup>34</sup> In this approach the teacher uses narrative texts to engage and motivate learners to read in small groups.



### 3.3.3. Collaborative learning within the classroom

Collaborative learning is another concept embedded in the ZPD. The term collaborative learning refers to “an instruction method in which learners at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal. The learners are responsible for one another’s learning as well as their own. Thus, the success of one learner helps other learners to be successful” (Gokhale, 1995, p. 1). In collaborative learning, a more knowledgeable individual, which can be a parent, peer or a teacher of a child, assists the one who is learning. The more able individual provides appropriately challenging task/s with the right quantity and quality (Gauvain, 2008) at the level of the less able individual (Rojas-Drummond and Mercer, 2003). This means the teacher can pair the learners for the purpose of achieving a goal in collaboration with each other. Some examples of methods to be used to develop reading skills in collaborative learning are such as *Reciprocal Teaching*<sup>35</sup> and *Talking Dictionary*<sup>36</sup>.

### 3.4 Chall’s five stages of reading

Jean Chall (1976; 1996) referred to her five stages of reading as model or scheme of arranging facts based on research because her proposed model of reading is partly inspired by Jean Piaget’s 1936 cognitive development theory. However, the reading stages are completely different from Piaget’s theory because they follow a hierarchy of teaching reading skills. Piaget’s cognitive theory consists of four stages as follows: sensorimotor stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage which are all concerned with development, rather than learning (DeWolfe, 2016). According to Wolf and Stoodley (2008, p. 10) “literacy is not something that just happens. One does not wake up literate. Nor does one become literate in the same way that one learns to walk.” This statement above indicates the need for educators to take these practical stages into account in teaching reading to children.

Chall’s stages of reading includes the pre-reading stage from birth (ages: 0-6), the decoding or initial reading stage from grades 1-2 (ages: 6-7), the fluency and unplugging from print stage from grades 2-3 (ages: 7-8), the reading for learning stage from grades 4-6 (ages: 9-14), the multiple viewpoints stage from high school (ages: 15-18) and the world view stage from

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<sup>35</sup> This is a technique which can be used to help learners to develop active reading skills in small groups.

<sup>36</sup> In this approach, pairs of learners help each other to read; one being the reader, while the other being a dictionary

college or university level (age: 18+). My study will only focus on the stages of reading which falls within the junior primary phase, i.e. grades 1-3.

These stages are sequenced in a way that the primary school learners first “learn to read” and then later they “read to learn” as they proceed through the schooling process. In order to achieve this the stages are articulated in a way that enables comprehension strategies because the ultimate purpose of reading is understanding and eventually reading with understanding is what makes someone to be a good reader. Teachers should keep these stages in mind as they teach reading; especially in the developing countries where it was found that children achieve only half of the reading competencies when compared to their peers in developed world (Chall, 1976; 1996). The practice that low reading competencies are attributed to developing countries strongly contributes to the hypothesis of the Matthew effect which states that the richer (children) get richer<sup>37</sup> and the poor get poorer in reading (Stanovich, 2009). Chall argued that reading is a form of problem solving which is based on prior knowledge and proceeds through the Piagean notions of assimilation and accommodation. “In assimilation, the child reacts by absorbing new situation to his/her existing cognitive structures. In accommodation, the child changes [his or her cognitive structures] in reaction to a series of challenges in his/her environment” (Chall, 1976, p. 23).

### **3.4.1. The pre-reading stage (0-6 years)**

This is a stage of emergent literacy and children learn that reading is done from left to right – top to bottom. In this stage children develop visual, visual motor and auditory perceptions skills which are essential in early reading. Children become aware that language is made up of sounds (phonological awareness). Phonological awareness is the ability to recognise spoken sounds, differentiate them and later understand that the language is made up of words. Spaull, Pretorius and Mohohlwane (2018, p. 5) stated that phonological awareness “follows a large to small developmental path: awareness of larger units such as words, rhymes and syllables which occurs in preschool, while developing an awareness of the smallest unit, the phoneme, usually happens with formal reading instruction.”

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<sup>37</sup> This is a term derived from a Bible meaning that the able children get more able, while the unable get more unable in terms of reading.

Furthermore, the words are made up of phonemes, and for children to be aware of them is called phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognise that each individual sound in a spoken word or sound are made up of phonemes and the ability to isolate and manipulate them, e.g. the word doll is segmented in three phonemes - /d/ /aw/ /l/. Children with good phonemic awareness are able to manipulate the phonemes in words, e.g. in response to the instruction “change the last sound in ‘doll’ to ‘g’,” they will say “dog”. According to MoE (2014), there is scientific evidence which proves that phonemic awareness positively influences the development of early reading skills.

Both phonological awareness and phonemic awareness are important in early reading because they are pre-reading skills which the child needs to acquire before learning to read (Chall, 1976; 1989; 1996; Snider, 1992).

### **3.4.2. Stage 1: Initial reading or decoding Stage (6-7 years)**

In this stage, children start learning the alphabetic principles where the alphabet is made up of letters. Phonics is the ability to associate the alphabetic letters with sounds, e.g. the word “dog” is made up of three phonic sounds /d/ /o//g/.

This stage is known as the “grunting and groaning or barking at print.” Children are more glued to print, rather than meaning making as they struggle with decoding individual letters or groups of letters in print to the correct sound and syllables as a process of “learning to read” (Chall, 1976; 1989; 1996; 2013).

### **3.4.3. Stage 2: The confirmation, fluency and ungluing from print Stage (7-8 years)**

The skills learned in this stage are built on what was acquired in stage 1 through reading familiar texts and moving to unfamiliar texts. The purpose of reading familiar texts is important to develop fluency in young children and it is not for learning new information, but to supplement what is already known by the reader, and to enable the reader to learn how what s/he knows is represented in print. More complex elements are learned at this stage and children’s decoding skills improve greatly with advanced fluency and increased reading rate (Chall, 1976; 1989; 1996).

Teaching automatic recognition of higher frequency words<sup>38</sup> to develop reading fluency is important at this stage as well as the recognition of patterns in words to make meaning which can be done with children by using familiar stories so that they become good readers. The guided reading technique is one of the activities which can be used at this stage where children are taught to read in smaller groups and according to their reading abilities with books selected at their level, but offering some challenges in terms of language, vocabulary, inferences, skimming and scanning, and complicated grammar. Guided reading helps children to become independent readers in the future and when using this approach, parents and teachers should model fluent reading strategies by reading aloud to children and monitoring their reading. Echo reading is another approach which can be used in collaboration with guided reading or purely on its own. One example of activities used with echo reading is when children listen to good models and then repeat what they hear which help them become proficient readers. Choral reading (reading in unison) is another activity which can be used at this stage.

For example, the teacher selects a familiar poem or song lyrics and writes it on chart paper or the chalkboard. The teacher then models oral reading fluency by reading the text using correct phrasing while pointing to each word as it is read by the children in chorus. The teacher needs to engage in conversation with children to help them with new vocabulary meaning and also use words children can decode easily. This is important for developing children's vocabulary which they can use to improve their reading skills. The "learning to read" process finishes at the end of this stage (Indrisano and Chall, 1995; Chall, 1996; Paris, 2005; Westberg, McShane and Smith, 2006).

#### **3.4.4. Stage 3: The reading for learning stage (9-14 years)**

Although their reading skills are still developing, the readers in stage 3 read mainly for meaning making and knowledge accumulation. This is the stage where "reading to learn" starts building on the skills acquired in stages 1 and 2 earlier. At this stage children start to read independently and find information in books on their own since the main objective in this stage is to master the ideas through reading with meaning. The reader's prior knowledge and experience is vital

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<sup>38</sup> Words which can be automatically recognised by children that occur most often in speech and writing within the immediate environment of the child.

at this stage since the reader reads for concepts, applies reading strategies, uses accumulated vocabulary to read for facts and for utilitarian purposes, for example reading guidelines to perform a specific task (Chall, 1976; 1996). Shared reading strategy, Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) strategy, the Know, Want to know, Learned (KWL) strategy and the Independent Silent Reading (ISR) strategy (also known as Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading – USSR, Daily Independent Reading Time – DIRT) are some of the teaching strategies which can be used at this stage (Paris, 2005; Westberg et al., 2006; Daniels, Hamby, and Chen, 2015).

It is important that at this stage children begin to use effective reading techniques for them to develop reading with comprehension, hence the use of the above teaching strategies are suggested. For example, the DRTA uses a cycle of predict-read-confirm-predict to guide children's reading and thinking process. The DRTA process reflects the processes proficient readers use when they are actively engaged with what they are reading. The KWL teaching strategy is used to guide children with non-fiction reading texts because it is designed to reflect on the thinking processes which are used by skilled readers when reading informational texts. In addition the ISR improves children's because it helps them concentrate on what they are reading, rather than the pronunciation of individual words. When children read silently they can form mental pictures of the text they are reading which enhances their understanding better. The ISR also improve children's reading skills in terms of their tempo and reading efficiency to read any text with maximum attention to meaning.

#### **3.4.5. Stage 4: The multiple viewpoints stage (15-18 years)**

At this stage the reader is involved in dealing with multiple points of view and the reading volume increases greatly. The skills learned in the previous stages are used to approach books and other reading tasks with more confidence (Chall, 1976; 1996). This stage is important because it refers to a reader understanding that different writers write about the same thing in different ways, and that this enables their cognitive development to become proficient readers.

#### **3.4.6. Stage 5: The world view stage (18+ years)**

This is the most matured stage of reading where new knowledge is produced through reading. At this stage “reading means the ability to use reading as one of many forms of knowing and experiencing” (Chall, 1976, p. 37). The reader at this stage is experienced and skilled enough to know what to read and what not to read in order to reach his/her objectives. Other skills of skimming or scanning are also used extensively at this stage for advanced reading. Skim reading is a strategy used by proficient readers to read texts quickly to get general meaning of the text. Skim reading is important because it provides the reader with a synopsis of the text immediately. Scan reading is also a strategy used by competent readers to find specific information from the text, e.g. names, numbers, etc. Both skim and scan reading strategies use rapid eye movements and can be used together by a proficient reader for the purposes indicated above (Chall, 1976; 1996).

The reading stages cannot be anticipated to work effectively when applied to all children in uniformity, especially those with special needs and children with learning difficulties with some stages because these stages are not a teaching methodology. Therefore, teachers need to be able to use a wide range of methodologies (such as the phonics approach, the language experience approach, the context support method, etc.) for teaching reading to assist struggling children to read at the level of their peers (Chall, 1976; Westberg et al., 2006) because individual children “take different paths to proficient reading” (Doyle, 2013, p. 641).

### **3.5 Street’s New Literacy Studies theory**

The New Literacy Studies (NLS) theory refers to how people use literacy and conceptualise it. The term “new” does not necessarily mean “new” as a latest model, but it rather refers to a contemporary way of thinking about reading by researchers within the New Literacy Studies (NLS, Street, 2014) such as situated literacies, situated learning, overt instructions, critical framing, innovative digital practices, and online social networks, etc. (The New London Group, 1996; Gee, 2003; Gee, 2005; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; Mills, 2010). The seminal theory was founded in the 1980s and it corresponds with the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky where literacy is regarded for communication purposes in multiple and social contexts engendered in ethnographic perspectives (Mills, 2010; Street, 2014; Kim, 2003).

Literacy is associated with language development as language acts as the tool for interaction in one's social environment (Mills, 2010), although literacy in the NLS theory is not defined as the ability to read and write. It is defined rather as reading texts with application of knowledge for specific purposes in specific context (Stephen, 2000). The act of reading happens within the social setting and social practices are what people do (Street, 2003), and "literacy originates from the premise that it is a social practice" where texts may be read, written or orally produced (Mgqwashu, 2013, p. 4). The NLS theory refers to what people do with reading skills as cognitive activities which happen within a society and it also involves critical thinking when one is learning to read and write since they have to be cognitively engaged with text (Street, 2003; 2005).

When learning to read, one is expected to acquire knowledge through interactions within a community and is "rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being" (Street, 2005, p. 418). In addition, "the ways in which teachers or facilitators and their students interact is already a social practice that affects the nature of the literacy being learned and the ideas about literacy held by the participants, especially the new learners and their position in relations of power." (Street, 2003, p. 78). This means that from the perspective of NLS theory, the act of development of reading skills within a classroom is also happening within the context of a society (Barton and Hamilton, 2012).

The NLS focuses on the literacy practices of reading in two models, the "autonomous" and "ideological" models. The autonomous model is based on the assumption that literacy will have an effect on social and cognitive practices to improve economic status of the individuals within the society (Street, 2003; 2005). This is false according to Street because literacy will not change everything in the society, but "it is simply imposing Western conceptions of literacy onto other culture" (Street, 2005, p. 417). In reality literacy acquisition varies from one culture to the other (Street, 2003). It is therefore important to note that literacy practices in the autonomous model target groups and communities in their cultural settings, while the ideological model "positions literacy as a social practice, which varies depending on context" (Adams, 2013, p. 26).

The ideological model is considered to be more valid because it is cultural sensitive and it suggests that literacy is a social practice that is always constructed through cultural knowledge because "the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in

conceptions of knowledge, identity and being” (Street, 2003, p. 78). The above also happens in the classroom when the teacher and children interacts which affects the nature of literacy learned and the ideas of literacy held by the individual (Street, 2003). We have to start where people are at, to understand the cultural meaning and uses of literacy practices and to build programmes and campaigns on these rather than our own cultural assumptions about literacy” (Street, 1994, as cited by Gains, 2010, p. 27).

The NLS is criticised because it only emphasises on socio-cultural factors, rather than on how children become literate to inform early literacy pedagogies (Gains, 2010). The digital age which includes the NLS, there is challenge to providing relevant literacy practices (especially in the Namibian context) because online information is dominated by occident cultures (Mills, 2010; Street, 2012). This practice disadvantages the individuals from indigenous languages, e.g. proletariat groups and low socio economic communities (peasants and pastoralists) who cannot have access to literacy pedagogies online in their local languages.

The above outlined situation still resonates with Walton (2007, as cited in Mills, 2010, p. 260) who argued that “digital literacies, such as online chats, blogs, digital media production, games, are ‘exotic practices’ for the majority of the world sustained by resources and leisure that are simply not available to most people.” The statement above is still a reflection of the local communities in Namibia, because there are no local languages available online and this makes it difficult to integrate digital literacy when teaching Oshiwambo languages. Due to the unavailability of local content online, teachers are challenged to translate the exotic content into the context of the language taught where necessary. According to UNICEF (2017, p. 11), “digital literacy skills are essential for children to have meaningful access to the internet, and children’s right to education in a digital world.” Although we have a number of social media Apps such as Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. and the connectivity is good in urban areas, the issue of internet affordability is still a challenge. The ‘exotic’ online resources situation is prevalent in Namibia and needs to be improved so that the children become digital natives in their local language.

### **3.6 Conclusion**



The seminal theories were extensively reviewed and their context was presented in this chapter. As termed “seminal”, the theories are still highly influencing contemporary work as indicated in the study in which they were used to complement each other for the purpose as indicated in the introduction of this chapter. The sociocultural theory is relevant in this study because it talks about how language development happens through social interactions based on one’s prior knowledge. The classical five stages of teaching reading theory provides crucial steps which are vital to keep in mind when teaching reading in modern times. Finally, the NLS talks about how reading happens within a society based on the context of literacy as a social practice which will continue to evolve with generations to come. The next chapter presents the research methodology used in the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction and overview**

The word methodology is derived from a Greek word “*méthodos*” which means “following after.” Therefore, “methodology can be understood as the reasoning that informs particular ways of doing research” (Gale, 1998, p. 2) in order to collect, organise and analyse the data (Tracy, 2013). Furthermore, Gough (2002) argues that research is difficult work, whether one is new or an experienced researcher because there are no clear stipulated universal agreements or conventions guidelines on how one should conduct research, whether using qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approach. “For example, there is clearly no universal agreement as to what researchers mean by methodology” (Gough, 2002, p.1) as this is interpreted to their own reasoning and understandings.

As Tracy 2013 (p. 260) argues, “some people call this section - research procedures, but many call it the “method” or “methods” section. Other scholars opt to name this section by using a descriptive heading – such as “examining the disabled body in sport participation.” Supervised research should be collaboration between the student and the supervisor/s and how they agree to undertake such a research project (Gough, 2002) in terms of specific research protocols, but there is no fixed routine in achieving this.

In this chapter I will outline the research aims and goals, the research paradigm used, as well as the case study approach used in this research. The research sites, the sampling of participants, the data collection methods used and the data analysis process will also be discussed in this chapter together with the ethical aspects which guided this study. The chapter concludes with the validity and limitations of the study before it occludes with a conclusion.

## 4.2 Research aims and goals

The link between the development of literacy in indigenous languages and good academic performance is well established. My research focused on the development of reading skills in the Oshiwambo languages in the Oshana region in Namibia: A case study of Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga in the Junior Primary phase. The research aim and goals was to identify how reading skills are developed in Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) and to outline factors which enable or impede the development of reading skills in the indigenous languages selected. Identification of how reading skills are developed, as well as factors enabling or impeding the development of reading skills may give rise to suggestions for improved reading development in Oshiwambo languages. The study focused on the development of reading skills in two dialects of the Namibian Oshiwambo languages, namely; Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga within the Junior Primary (JP) phase (grades 2 and 3).

The study was motivated by Töttemeyer's (2009) argument that there is a lack of reading culture which affects the development of reading skills, particularly in indigenous languages. It is noted that little research has been conducted in this area (Smit, 2012) and there is a lack of information on indigenous language learning and development in Namibia. O'Toole and Beckett (2014, p. 93) stated that "crucial to any good research is a good research question: one that turns the topic you have chosen into a source of investigation. And that usually means, grammatically, a single sentence that ends in a question mark". In order to achieve the goals of the study, the research process was guided by the following questions:

- a. How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga?
- b. What factors enable the development of reading skills in these two dialects?
- c. What factors hinder the development of reading skills in these two dialects?
- d. Do principals and teachers believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga/Oshikwanyama in JP at their school?

These questions were well designed to thoroughly interrogate the areas on which my research study was focused in an attempt to get answers to my research question. It is always a good idea to have more sub-questions as long as they are well articulated, sequenced in logical order and with clear distinctions and priorities (Neuman, 2014; O'Toole and Beckett, 2014; Maree, 2011). The questions can also either be open or closed questions depending on the purpose of

the research. The questions which are not well articulated may lead to me getting meaningless data which may not be relevant to the main research question. However, it is not guaranteed that a researcher will always get an answer to the research question and answers may not even be close to the anticipated outcomes, or it may end up with a call for further research in that field (O'Toole and Beckett, 2014; Maree, 2011).

The research goals here are to outline how the development of reading skills in Oshiwambo languages is done in the schools selected for this study and also point out factors which enable or impede the development of reading skills in the indigenous languages selected. The identification of these factors may give rise to suggestions for improved reading development in Oshiwambo languages. The above is a response to the situation noted by Tötemeyer's (2010; 2013) who observed that indigenous Namibian languages are still not well developed in comparison to English, especially in relation to the development of reading skills, and this caused weak literacy development and the lack of a reading culture in indigenous languages.

#### **4.3 Research paradigm**

Atieno (2009) stated that the word “paradigm” is two-fold, and means either an approach or a design, while Kuhn (1962, p. 1 as cited in Crotty 1998) argues that paradigm refers to a “set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed.” Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 107) asserts that “a paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs that deal with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines for its holder.” My research is primarily interpretivist (which is also sometimes known as ‘*constructivist*’ or ‘*constructionist*’ [Passer, 2014]), and based on the qualitative approach because it was meant to collect information from people’s verbal responses and such information assisted me to understand and sufficiently address my research question(s) using the interpretivism paradigm. As Thanh and Le Thanh (2015, p. 24) argues that when using an interpretivism paradigm the researcher views “the world through the perceptions and experiences of the people” in order to seek answers. Rahman (2017, p. 103) explained the qualitative approach as;

Any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons’ lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as about organisational

functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations.

My research did not use any statistical procedures and it focused on self-reported personal experiences, behaviours and feelings of the participants. This is in line with what is noted by Rahman (2017) above with regards to qualitative studies' characteristics. It is congruent with what Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2016, p. 7) states that "qualitative methodology refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data – people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior." This means that the qualitative approach is concerned with observable behaviours in the society, e.g. people's lives and how they behave in their daily lives (Kervin, Vialle, Howard, Herrington and Oakley, 2006). The data collection was conducted in the schools where the teachers taught who were participants in this study, in other words in the environment that is the context of their experiences. This happened through interacting with them to share their practical experience of how the reading skills are developed in Oshiwambo languages.

My approach is in line with Atieno's (2009, p. 16) argument that "qualitative methods are highly appropriate for providing valuable data from the participants in a setting or a process the way they experience it." I used the interpretive paradigm because it is one of the approaches used in descriptive research studies where my research falls. As described by O'Toole and Beckett (2014, p. 38) that "an obvious purpose of research is to want to find out and describe how something works, why it happens or what makes some group of people tick." I conducted interviews in this study with participants through social interactions in order to find out how the reading skills are developed in Oshiwambo languages. The findings are described and interpreted in Chapter five. In the interpretive paradigm there is no single truth or reality; hence there is a need to interpret it and this mainly only works well with the qualitative method in order to get multiple realities which include the reality from the point of view of each participant (Kervin et al., 2006; Crotty, 1998). Therefore, that is why I have used the interpretive design in order to gain data that can adequately answer my research question.

Finally, qualitative methods like case studies are predominantly using the interpretivism paradigm because they "often give rich reports that are necessary for interpretivists to fully understand contexts" of their participants (Thanh and Le Thanh, 2015, p. 25). However, there are few aspects of positivism (used in the study) such as the notion that no single approach is

ever sufficient to develop a comprehensive and valid understanding of a phenomenon (Kaboub, 2008). Positivism is sometimes referred to as a '*realist*' or a '*functional*' paradigm "assumes that a single true reality already exists out there in the world and is waiting to be discovered" (Passer, 2014, p. 39). The positivist "asserts that real events can be observed empirically and explained with logical analysis because only scientific knowledge can reveal the truth about reality" (Kaboub, 2008, p. 343). The above statements by Passer (2014) and Kaboub (2008) signposts what I did in the next chapter and hence positivism is partly used in the study.

#### **4.4 A case study approach**

I used a case study approach because my research study is focused on a specific case in real life situation. Yin (1984, as cited in Maree, 2011, p. 75) defined the case study approach as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." A case study approach was appropriate because my inquiry investigated the contemporary phenomenon of how reading skills are developed in Oshiwambo languages in real life contexts. The case study is used for this study since it produced a rich description of a tightly bound case using observations, and documenting the findings according to case study conventions (O'Toole and Beckett, 2014; Gillham, 2000: 2008). In this study the case is defined as the development of reading skills in Oshiwambo languages in grades 2 and 3 in six schools in Oshana region in northern Namibia. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013), case studies can produce richly detailed data that help the reader to understand a particular context and may help in the generation of hypotheses for further research.

Maree (2011) argues that the term case study has multiple meanings and is either critical, positivist or interpretive. It is not automatic that a single site is studied in a case study approach, but it might be various sites depending on the demands of cases under investigations. This is similar to what O'Toole and Beckett (2014, p. 51) argues that "there are a number of types of case study, but they all share these similarities of method".

Dumez (2015, p. 48) stated that when conducting a case study the following questions can be taken in consideration:

- a. “what is my case a case of?
- b. what is the stuff my case is made of?
- c. what can my case do? (or what do cases do?)”

In relation to the first question of what the case is made of, in my study I have to investigate the case by observing teaching and learning in a selected number of schools focused on grade 2 and 3 teachers, as well as school principals. My case study is focused on the development of reading skills in Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) of the Oshana region of Namibia. My case will show how reading skills are developed in these six schools which will eventually contribute to the great body of knowledge we currently have about reading. As Dumez (2015, p. 49) notes, “it is essential for researchers to know their case from different perspectives” in order to be able to develop different cases in distinct ways. The second question of “what is the stuff my case is made of?” shows me that every case is always made of multiple elements within the case (Dumez, 2015). My case is made up of multiple elements because I focused on several schools. The third question of “what can my case do?” is linked to the description of the case in line with the theoretical frameworks so that it can confirm or reject the assumption which is being sought within that case. In this regard, my case should provide an insight of how reading skills are developed in the JP phase.

Case studies may lack rigour because (Yin, 2003; 2009) sometimes researchers do not consistently follow procedures as articulated within the conventions of case study. This is dangerous because it may result in me allowing their personal views to influence the findings or the conclusions of the investigations conducted. To address this challenge, O’Toole and Beckett (2014, p. 51) argued that the case study needs “very careful articulation” because it involves a process of collecting data in a consistent manner where I interacts with other people following systematic steps in order to ensure validity and rigorousness.

Similarly, Rule and John (2011, p. 5) argue that a case study as a process “involves following a number of steps such as identifying a case, reading around the case and its context, gaining access to people, documents and places, gathering information about the case, analysing the data, writing it up and presenting it”.

## **4.5 Research sites**

The research was conducted at six schools which were selected because they are spread across Oshana region but within reach in terms of travelling costs and accessibility. Another reason for the selection of schools was because all the six schools selected use Oshiwambo language as the medium of instruction, with three being Oshindonga, and three using Oshikwanyama.

### **4.5.1 Oshindonga Schools**

Baba<sup>39</sup> Primary School is a rural Oshindonga medium school located in proximity of Ondangwa<sup>40</sup> town. The school was established in 1964 and its current vision statement is to “strive for quality education”, while the mission is “to provide higher quality teaching to our learners through hard work and dedication to enable them to be knowledgeable in all curriculum subjects and apply it in real life”. The school has 25 teachers including the principal and 2 Heads of Department, 1 secretary, 3 cleaners and 756 learners from pre-primary to grade seven. The learners at this school all of Oshiwambo ethnicity.

The school has a wireless internet connection which is unlimited and the password is kept by the principal. Teachers are allowed to use the internet for educational purposes; however there is no internet access for learners. The internet connection is good.

Chefy Primary School is an urban school and it is an Oshindonga medium school located in the midst of Ondangwa town. The school was established in 1993 and its current vision statement is “to be the school of excellence by offering quality, effective and efficient education”, while its mission is “to offer quality effective and efficient education through collaborative teaching to produce competent, innovative and knowledgeable learners”. The school has 28 teachers including the principal and 2 Heads of Department, 1 secretary, 2 cleaners and 886 learners from pre-primary to grade seven. The learners at this school are from different ethnic groups, mainly Oshiwambo, Portuguese and Ovimbundu<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> All the school names mentioned in the study are pseudonyms.

<sup>40</sup> All names of the towns mentioned in the study are real names.

<sup>41</sup> Ovimbundu is an ethnic group from southern Angola



The school has a wireless internet connection which is unlimited and the password is kept by the principal. Teachers are allowed to use the internet for educational purposes; however there is no access for learners. The internet reception is stable with a good connection.

Zopa Primary School is a rural school which uses Oshindonga as a medium of instruction and it is located near Ondangwa town. The school was established in 1922 and its current vision statement is “to provide a nurturing educational environment in which learners are sharing the responsibilities with teachers, parents and community to reach their full potentials in all areas of learning and become competent lifelong learners”, while its mission is “to deliver quality education, effective teaching and efficient learning to meaningfully contribute to vision 2030”.

The school has 19 teachers including the principal and 2 Heads of Department, 1 secretary, 2 cleaners and 624 learners from pre-primary to grade seven. This school’s learners are mostly Oshindonga speaking, of who a few are of Oshikwanyama background. The school has an unlimited wireless internet connection and the password is kept by the principal. Teachers are frequently allowed to use the internet for educational purposes; however it is not accessible to learners. The learners at this school are from Oshiwambo ethnic group. The internet is said to be very slow due to the rural area poor network reception with a lot of fluctuations.

#### **4.5.2 Oshikwanyama Schools**

Bonza Combined School is an urban school and it is Oshikwanyama medium. It is located in Ongwediva town and it was established in 1979. Its current vision statement is “to become an institution of excellence in education delivery”, while its mission is “to provide a challenging educational experience that will enable our pupils to become responsible citizens”. The school has 41 teachers including the principal and 2 Heads of Department, 1 secretary, 3 cleaners and 1083 learners from pre-primary to grade ten. The learners at this school are from different ethnic groups, mainly Oshiwambo, Portuguese and Bastards/Coloureds<sup>42</sup>.

The school has a wireless internet connection which is unlimited and the password is kept by the school secretary. Teachers are allowed to use the internet for educational purposes; however there is no access for learners. The internet network is stable with a good connection.

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<sup>42</sup> Bastards/Coloureds are ethnic people originally from Rehoboth, a small town in Hardap region, Namibia.

Mondjila Primary School is a semi urban school which uses Oshikwanyama as a medium of instruction and it is located on the outskirts of Ongwediva town. The school was established in 1980 and its current vision statement is “to provide excellent education”, while its mission is “we aim to offer education quality through access, equity, democracy, efficiency and lifelong learning”. The school has 23 teachers including the principal and 2 Heads of Department, 1 secretary, 2 cleaners and 731 learners from pre-primary to grade seven. The learners at this school are from different ethnic groups, mainly Oshiwambo, Portuguese, Damara, Basters/Coloureds and Kavango.

The school has a wireless internet connection which is unlimited and the password is kept by the librarian. Teachers are allowed to use the internet for educational purposes only, however there is no internet access for learners.

Mwayasha Primary School is an urban school which teaches through the medium of Oshikwanyama and it is located in Ongwediva town. The school was established in 1999 and its current vision statement is “to provide equal educational opportunities to all children,” while its mission is “to provide a conducive, safe learning experiences that will enable them to challenge the future.” The school has 34 teachers including the principal and 2 Heads of Department, 1 secretary, 1 administrator, 3 cleaners and 966 learners from pre-primary to grade ten. The learners at this school are from different ethnic groups, mainly Oshiwambo, Portuguese, Basters/Coloureds and Afrikaners.

The school has a wireless internet connection which is unlimited and the password is kept by the administrator. Teachers are allowed to use the internet for educational purposes, however access for learners is limited and is strictly controlled. This is done to prevent congestion and eventual overload of the network as it happened in the past where learners apparently ended up using the internet for non-educational stuffs, like social media, i.e. Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.

#### **4.6 Sampling and participants**

Sampling is defined as the process used to select the participants for the study. In this study “non-probability and purposive sampling rather than probability or random sampling

approaches” (Maree, 2011, p. 79) is used. Purposive sampling means that the research participants are selected based on some characteristics which ensure that from them I can get the data needed for that particular study (Maree, 2011). In this study I used stratified purposive sampling which means that participants were selected based on pre-determined criteria congruent with my research question. Stratified sampling is “a random sample in which the researcher first identifies a set of mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories, divides the sampling frame by the categories” (Neuman, 2014, p. 262).

To be specific, it means that the teachers were selected because they have the data needed to respond to my research question since they are the professionals responsible for teaching and the development of reading skills in the two languages studied. The sample is made up of two JP (Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama) teachers per school (grades 2 and 3) , i.e. six from Oshikwanyama schools and six from Oshindonga schools who were observed during the teaching and learning process and then interviewed later. Eventually they were twelve in total. The six principals were also part of the study by means of responding to the research questionnaires.

In the first step, two weeks’ before the data collection process I contacted the principal of each school by calling them on their mobiles and informed them in details about my research data collection process. I explained to them that I am a student at DUT and I am busy studying towards a Master degree on a full thesis mode and needed to conduct research by collecting data at their schools. I asked them to provide me with their school’s email address where I sent the gate keeper letters from the Permanent Secretary (Appendix A) in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, as well as the letter from the Director of Education in Oshana region which gave me permission to conduct the research (Appendix B).

Some principals were anxious because they knew me personally and knew that I work for the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) which is responsible for curriculum development and monitoring activities countrywide. They thought I was coming to monitor their schools’ activities in a discreet manner, but I calmly explained and assured them that this was purely for my study purposes and it had nothing to do with my work related issues. After that explanation, they happily allowed me to visit their schools.

The demographic information of the teachers who participated in the study is presented in Table 1 below. The acronyms for qualifications are explained as follow: BETD = Basic Education Teachers' Diploma, ACE = Advanced Certificate in Education, BEd. = Bachelor of Education.

School	Teacher	Age	Gender	Teaching Experience	Grade	Mother Tongue	Qualifications
1. Baba Primary School	Teacher 1	56	Female	30 years	2	Oshindonga	BETD, ACE
	Teacher 2	31	Male	6 years	3	Oshikwambi	BETD, ACE
2. Chefy Primary School	Teacher 3	39	Female	11 years	3	Oshindonga	BETD, ACE, BEd.
	Teacher 4	34	Male	11 years	2	Oshindonga	BETD, ACE
3. Bonza Combined School	Teacher 5	29	Female	5 years	2	Oshikwanyama	BETD
	Teacher 6	57	Female	31 years	3	Oshindonga	BETD, ACE
4. Zopa Primary School	Teacher 7	56	Female	33 years	2	Oshikwanyama	BETD
	Teacher 8	54	Female	31 years	3	Oshindonga	BETD
5. Mwayasha Primary School	Teacher 9	43	Female	17 years	2	Oshikwanyama	BETD, ACE
	Teacher 10	32	Male	7 years	3	Oshikwanyama	BETD, ACE
6. Mondjila Primary School	Teacher 11	53	Female	29 years	3	Oshikwanyama	BETD
	Teacher 12	28	Male	3 years	2	Oshindonga	BEd.

Table 1 Demographic information of teachers

Teacher 6 is a native speaker of Oshindonga and she somehow struggles to speak Oshikwanyama; hence mixing it most of the times with Oshindonga due to her mother tongue influence. Teacher 7 is a native speaker of Oshikwanyama, although she speaks Oshindonga fluently, but she also at times mix Oshikwanyama words during Oshindonga lessons, although it happens moderately. Teacher 12 is a native speaker of Oshindonga although he speaks Oshikwanyama fluently because he learnt it at school and he does not mix Oshindonga with Oshikwanyama during Oshikwanyama lessons.

As indicated in the table, all the teachers who participated in this study are qualified teachers with the basic teachers' training (BETD) and were all qualified to teach junior primary grades. This means that they were trained to teach all the subjects (with a choice of either Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga) within the junior primary curriculum, although some are not mother tongue speakers of the language they teach. The total number of the research participants is 18, i.e. eight female teachers and four male teachers. The six principals represented four males and two females. However, there were additional research participants teachers who provided data through focus group discussions which ranged between 6 – 10 people depending on the school's JP teacher population.

The teachers interviewed were selected targeting grades 2 and 3 in the JP phase because the effects of the ways reading is taught would be more strongly felt in those selected grades; hence my study is focused there. Additionally, I identified the gap for this study in the above grades. The schools which have more than one class group of the targeted groups' grades (i.e. grade 2 A, 2 B and 2 C), one class was selected at random by myself, while those with a single class group were automatically selected since they were the only class group at the school. I personally (verbally) requested the teachers to voluntarily participate in the study by explaining all the study processes and gave them the information letters (to read) which was also translated in Oshiwambo (appendix C). After agreeing they signed consent letters to participate in the study (see appendix D). All teachers voluntarily agreed to participate without any refusing to do so. When I selected the sample I was mindful of the statement by O'Toole and Beckett (2014, p. 129) who argued that "there might be a case for interviewing everybody, but think of the transcription and analysis burden", although contrary to this Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007, as cited in Cohen et al., 2011, p. 161) caution that "in qualitative research, the sample size should be large enough to generate thick descriptions and rich data. The data from six schools (6 principals, 12 teachers, 6-10 focus group teachers) provided me with sufficient information to answer my research question and avoid the bias that a smaller sample might be prone to.

The data collected from the sample of twelve teachers was supplemented by data gathered in the focus group discussions as well as the questionnaires issued to the six principals. The focus group discussions included all the JP teachers at the school visited and I was guiding the discussions on what was being discussed (see appendix E). These data collection methods are elaborated on further later in this chapter.

#### 4.7 Piloting of the data collection instruments

The instruments piloted were the principal's questionnaire, the classroom observation's checklist and questions for teachers' interviews. I did the piloting of my research instruments at two schools (one for Oshikwanyama medium and one for Oshindonga medium) which were not those participating in the study, but shared the same characteristics, i.e. they were all primary schools which use the two languages as medium of instructions. I did this to ensure the relevance of the instruments because I need to ensure that the instruments are effective, and if necessary, refine them so that they are effective prior data collection because "piloting and/or field testing of questionnaires is necessary" (Sacharo, 2015, p. 233) in order to ensure that the correct information is provided by the research participants. During piloting one need to have a list of things to do in sequence to avoid getting confused and eventually forgetting something (Rugg and Petre, 2007). My list included things I should do first upon my arrival at school, such as going to the office of the principal, talking to the teachers, conduct classroom observations, etc. until the last procedure before I leave the school. I had questions prepared to guide my classroom observation so that I keep the consistence with all the classroom observations conducted.

The questionnaires were piloted and adapted<sup>43</sup> to ensure relevance to the study, for example I removed more open ended questions to make the questionnaire shorter to fit to one page document to save time for the principals. This is because some of the principals were complaining that it was too long and they did not have time to complete it. At one school, the principal asked me to leave it (questionnaire) so that he could complete it later and send it to me, but he never did, despite numerous follow-ups. He later told me that he lost it (questionnaire), which reminded me of Rugg and Petre (2007) statement that one need to pilot with someone familiar and friendly to avoid disappointments, although it might not always be true, but the most important thing is to pilot with someone who matches your participants as closely as possible.

Hence I then learnt from that experience because it was clear that the length of the questionnaire discouraged him to complete it. I then decided to review and reduce the principal's questionnaires so that it could be completed within a reasonable amount of time and I ensured that the review did not compromise the data collected. The classroom observation checklist was piloted and adapted to ensure relevance to the study and I removed some items because they were repeated. The teacher's interview

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<sup>43</sup> Please see appendix F

questions were also piloted and adapted to ensure relevance to the study. I removed some questions which I found to produce the same information to avoid repetition.

#### **4.8 The data collection process**

The data was collected in June – July over a period of three weeks, where I spent two days at each school and I also had to go back to some schools to clarify some information such as the teachers' qualifications and teaching experience. According to Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014, p. 1) qualitative data “are a source of well grounded, rich descriptions of processes”. The data was collected through the medium of the first language of the teachers to increase the trustworthiness of the data collected, although flexibility was used to allow the participants who wanted to do so in English to do as such. I was dressed in casual wear so that when I arrived at the school they (principals and teachers) knew that I was not there for a formal visit in order to reduce the likelihood of participants responding to me in my formal role and eventually giving irrelevant data. I did that to avoid a limitation to the data I was looking for.

I also took pictures to enhance my data analysis because pictures can provide “detailed recording documenting the exact set-up or the participants in attendance” (Tracy, 2013, p. 115), as well as the classroom environments which can be useful during data analysis because they “can simplify the collection of factual information” (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 151). These methods were used to gather the data which eventually helped me to address my research question when I compared and analysed pictures closely. The data collection methods are explained in more detail below in the sequence in which they were carried out during the process of data collection.

##### **4.8.1 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are prepared sets of questions in written, printed or electronic format, with a variety of answers which can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Questionnaires are very important part of research because they allow the researcher to collect wide range of data; however the researcher should bear in mind the analysis process required by a specific questionnaire (Maree, 2011; Cohen, et al., 2011; MacDonald and Headlam, 2008) which may take a long time to analyse. My questionnaire consisted of only two open ended questions and other nine questions which were closed questions with a “yes” or “no” answer (please see appendix F).

I used the questionnaires to collect data from the principals with regard to their attitudes and understanding of mother tongue learning at their school and in general. The importance that principals attached to the development of a reading culture was also explored via this instrument, as well as policy issues regarding the teaching and learning of mother tongue at the school.

I gave the questionnaires to the principals immediately after my arrival at the school and explained my purpose of being there, and then I explained how they should complete them. I asked them to give their honest opinions with regards to the questions asked in the questionnaire because one “need to make it clear to the respondents what the task is” (Rugg and Petre, 2007, p. 105). I decided to use the questionnaires with the principals because they were relevant to my study as a method of data collection.

I collected the questionnaires from each principal on the second day at the school because I wanted to give them ample time to complete them (a lesson I learnt from piloting). However, there were a few hiccups with two principals not having completed the questionnaires on time, and they asked me to wait or rather come back a little later to collect it. On both occasions, I decided to wait in order to avoid disappointments later.

#### **4.8.2 Observation**

Maree (2011, p. 83) defines observation as a “systemic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participant, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them.” This type of data collection is conducted using our senses by seeing, hearing, touching, smelling or tasting and by using it as a qualitative data collection technique it allows deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigations. However, observation is highly selective and subjective by nature since as a researcher may inevitably tend to be biased by focusing on a specific area of interest and ignoring other parts (Maree, 2011).

I used structured observations to observe twelve reading lessons (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) taught in grades 2 and 3 at six schools over a period of three weeks. I experienced problems with observations because the schools have specific days where they only focus on teaching reading because it is not taught every day. For example, some schools only teach reading on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. With this challenge, I had to negotiate with the principals and teachers in advance as to when to come so that I did not disturb their teaching schedule.



I attended reading lessons because I wanted to see how teachers go about developing reading skills and to be more specific, my attention was primarily guided by the classroom observation's checklist which was purely designed for a reading lesson (see appendix G). Using structured observation means that I had predetermined kind of behaviours<sup>44</sup> (Maree, 2011) which I wanted to look at by using the checklist to guide my observation process and record comparable data relating to Chall's stages of reading development which covers the JP phase across all six schools. I also used other literature, i.e. Marie Clay's stages of reading development to guide my observation.

I used a daily journal to record what I observed during three weeks at various schools. Mulhall (2003, p. 307) argues that "the primary reason for using observational methods is to check whether what people say they do is the same as what they actually do". So, as a researcher I kept this in mind so that I could see if teachers taught in the ways they said they teach. Observation was used in this study because it provides access to people in real life situation where things can happen in a normal manner and provide me with a reality of the phenomenon under investigation in order to answer the research question. I used observation also to enhance my understanding of how the reading skills are currently developed in average classrooms in actual real life in the two languages in order to make valid conclusions and recommendations at the end of the study.

#### **4.8.3 Field notes**

Field notes are used in any fieldwork related activity and their purpose is to keep a good record of observation in order to generate useful data. A researcher needs to keep clear field notes which should be in his or her own handwriting because "field notes serve to consciously and coherently narrate and interpret observations and actions in the field, offering creative depictions of the data observed" (Tracy, 2013, p. 114) and they are very effective because they are in the researcher's own handwriting which makes them only "comprehensible to their authors" (Mulhall, 2003, p. 311).

As a matter of principle one should transcribe field notes within 24 hours of collecting them as this will enable the researcher to faithfully recall what he or she has noted, especially if some of the notes are written in codes (O'Toole and Beckett, 2014; Tracy, 2013) since the longer you leave them, the more you tend to forget and lose the authenticity. This study employed the use of field notes to note the activities

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<sup>44</sup> For the behaviours and other things I looked at during the observation, please see the observation checklist in appendix G.

and behaviours in the classrooms during the three weeks fieldwork for data collection which were transcribed every evening after the field trip to ensure authenticity. I used the field notes to allow me to remember and also to record activities or behaviours during my classroom observations which I interpreted later to understand the aspects I was investigating so that I could answer my research question.

#### **4.8.4 Semi-structured interview**

The study used a semi-structured interview where a set of prepared questions focusing on specific aspects on the lesson taught (see appendix H) were asked according to a sequenced order in a conversational setting between the researcher and the interviewed participants<sup>45</sup>. “This type of interview involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions” (Berg, 2001, p. 70) which are asked in a systematic and consistent way, although the interviewees are allowed to deviate.

I used the semi-structured interviews because I wanted to personally listen to the interviewee and make probes to ensure that I collected the relevant data in order to answer my research question. Doing so gave me relevant information because my questions were also open ended which enabled me to have a natural discussion/conversation with the interviewee.

The semi-structured interview was also conducted in order for me to “delve deeply into a topic and to understand thoroughly the answers provided” (Harell and Bradley, 2009, p. 41) by the respondents. The interviews focused on the reading lessons taught and other issues such as factors that teachers believed hinder/enable the development of reading skills, the policy issues on mother tongue teaching and others like how they understand reading skills and how they are developed in Oshindonga/Oshikwanyama.

In semi-structured interviews the researcher has to be careful not to be diverted from the aspects which are not relevant to the study, but one should always remind the interviewee to get back on track through guiding probes or by repeating the question with emphasis on the needed information. Semi-structured interviews are important because they “allow respondents to talk freely about their experiences and feelings without the researcher losing track” (Kawana, 2007, p. 29). In my study I interviewed teachers who were observed during the teaching and learning process of Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga lessons. I did not experience challenges here because I interviewed the teachers during break time in their classrooms and also after school.

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<sup>45</sup> Please see the questions in appendix H.

I talked to the teachers one-on-one and asked them some of the following questions; what do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why? If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why? Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga languages? What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga languages? The interviews were recorded (with a recording device) with their permission for the purpose of verbatim transcriptions.

#### **4.8.5 Focus groups discussions**

A focus group is a discussion approach used with multiple participants sharing their knowledge and experience about a certain topic. Ndafenongo (2011, p. 37) explained focus group discussion as "a group of individuals, usually six to eight, brought together for a more or less open-ended discussion about an issue." There is a substantial amount of research that suggests that focus groups discussions do produce rich detailed data when compared to other research methods (Dicicco and Crabtree, 2006). Focus groups discussions should not be confused with a group interviews because in focus group discussions are able to build on each other's ideas and debating is allowed, as well as unexpected comments (Maree, 2011), whilst this is a different case in a group interviews because there the interviewer asks different questions. A focus group is a group of individuals, usually six to eight, brought together for a more or less open-ended discussion about an issue

I conducted six focus groups discussions in which all the JP teachers at the schools where I collected my data participated. This means that even the teachers who were not observed (grades 1 – 3) were part of the focus group discussions. Focus groups discussions were used to access JP teachers' understanding and experiences of teaching reading in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga languages.

I took a back-position as moderator of the discussions in order to allow teachers to drive the discussions so that they were comfortable and at liberty to share their experiences on the development of reading skills in the two languages indicated above, as well as how digital literacy is addressed at their school. The discussions of the focus groups were recorded (with a recording device) with the participants' consent in order to provide me with accurate record of data. Maree (2011), advises that it is imperative to note that focus groups' discussions are not natural settings of discussions because their samples sizes are too limited or too small to be generalised on larger populations.

I experienced challenges with this method because it was not easy to get the teachers to gather at one place at the time communicated to them earlier. This was because the focus group discussions were conducted after school where the level of concentration is usually low or sometimes because teachers had some other commitments to attend to immediately after school. However, at schools where we had severe challenges; we started the discussions as long as a substantial number of JP teachers at the school were present. Those who came late found us already in the process.

#### **4.9 Data analysis**

Data analysis is explained as the “process of examining all the materials that have been collected, to make sense of them, and help to address the research question” (O’Toole and Beckett, 2014, p. 29). Qualitative data analysis is also said to be a process which is usually based on interpretive approach focused on closely examining the data collected which is iterative and non-linear (O’Toole and Beckett, 2014; Maree, 2011) and eventually reporting on it. I concur with the above authors because I started analysing my data from the beginning of the data collection process by making comparisons with literature and what I was finding in the field as the process unfolded.

According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (1999, p. 323), “data gathering involves development of ideas and theories about the phenomenon being studied, even as the researcher makes contact with gatekeepers and sets up interviews”. This resonates with O’Toole and Beckett (2014, p. 157) who says that “if you are collecting qualitative data, you will almost certainly have already made a start on its analysis long before you finish the collection”. Furthermore, they argued that qualitative data analysis can be less straightforward than quantitative data analysis because one has to comb the data many times thoroughly. This was also suggested by Pope, Ziebland and Mays (2000, p. 116) that: “analysing qualitative data is not a simple task or quick task. Done properly, it is systematic and rigorous, and therefore labour-intensive and time consuming”.

Information from questionnaires, observations, interviews and focus groups from all the schools in my sample were transcribed verbatim by me. As O’Toole and Beckett (2014, p. 159) argued that “interviews and focus groups, of course, have to be transcribed, and the lines of these numbered too”. This was a very cumbersome process of my research study because it is very time consuming and one needs to have a fresh mind to keep focused. I did the transcription of my own interviews because I wanted to acquaint myself well with the intimate knowledge of my data and to ensure that my transcriptions were accurate

for later effective analysis (Maree, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011; O'Toole and Beckett, 2014). The six principals were coded with numbers as principal one to principal six. The teachers were also coded with numbers from teacher one to twelve. This was done to ensure confidentiality of the research participants and also to enable consistent data analysis.

I compared the transcriptions across the schools through the lens of the theoretical frameworks used, organised and coded according to the following themes:

- ❖ importance of reading in Mother Tongue;
- ❖ display of 6 schools' principal's response;
- ❖ teacher's understanding of a good reader;
- ❖ teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga at JP;
- ❖ English dominance at JP;
- ❖ time devoted to reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga at JP;
- ❖ methodologies of teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga at JP;
- ❖ using one-on-one interactions;
- ❖ language policy and its implementation at JP;
- ❖ reading resources at JP;
- ❖ cognitive reading at JP;
- ❖ use of digital literacy in teaching reading in mother tongue at JP;
- ❖ factors facilitating the development of reading skills in mother tongue at JP;
- ❖ factors hindering the development of reading skills at JP

The themes used are relevant to the research objectives and they are useful because (Mosha, 2014, p. 68) they are “the basis upon which arguments and the data extracts are organized, providing headings for discussion and stages in the argument in data analysis.” The extent of commonality and differences among teachers and schools was noted. Information from this compilation of data was extracted and used to answer the research question. Strydom and De Vos (1998, p. 203) referred to the above as “a process of breaking data into constituent parts to obtain answers to research question and to test research hypotheses”.

I kept all my original data sets because in qualitative research it is advisable for the researcher to always go back to the initial data (or even to participants) in order to do verifications, and in case new insights

and possibilities for interpretation come to mind before making final conclusions about the research findings. I called the school principals at some schools to inquire about some participants' teaching experience and age which I had actually forgotten to capture when I was at the school. During these calls, I also thanked the principals again for allowing me to collect data at their schools, although I initially did so during the data collection process.

#### **4.10 Validity**

Validity is defined as truthfulness and “it refers to how well an idea ‘fits’ with actual reality.” (Neuman, 2014, p. 210). In order to ensure validity my research instruments were first reviewed by my supervisors and later piloted at two schools similar to those participating in the study. Afterwards, the research instruments were adapted to ensure that they yielded data was directly relevant to the research question of the study in order to ensure reliability; credibility as well as trustworthiness (please see # 3.7.2 and 3.7.4 above). Finally, the instruments (letter of information, consent letter, focus group discussions and interview questions) were translated into the vernacular language of the participants (Oshiwambo – see appendices C, D, E and H) in order to ensure that there was no language barrier, and so that the data yielded was valid. This process was conducted in order to ensure that the instruments were effective and should measure what they intended to measure. I would also like to note here that it is not possible to have perfect reliability and credibility in qualitative studies, but it is an ideal situation we all strive for (Neuman, 2014).

Triangulation is defined as observing an object from different viewpoints which is used in social research to “learn more by observing from multiple perspectives than by looking from only a single perspective” (Neuman, 2014, p. 166) in order to make valid conclusions. Triangulation of the data from questionnaires, observations, interviews and focus groups was done by comparing methods of data collection. Data triangulation is “critical in facilitating interpretive validity and establishing data trustworthiness” (Maree, 2011, p. 39). Finally, the data verification was done through data triangulation to ensure validity as much as possible because triangulation increases the credibility of the findings (Høyland et al., 2015).

I organised my data in the sequence it was collected so that I did not get confused when navigating between the data collection methods used. For example 1) I have written down the responses of all the questionnaires, 2) followed by the observational field notes, 3) loaded the recorded interviews in the computer from the recording device, 4) written down the verbatim transcribed numbered interviews with

schools and participants coded names (appendix J), and finally 5), I also summarised the data from the group discussions in one document. 6) I later used the colour coding using different coloured highlighters to colour-code data with the same colour which is similar to the other across the data and that is how the above themes were determined (4.9).

#### **4.11 Ethical aspects of research**

Ethics can be defined as the ability to distinguish between right or wrong, or rather between what is acceptable and unacceptable which eventually constitutes a code of conduct. The code of conduct can be similarly compared to the religious Ten Commandments or simply as a matter of common sense (Resnik, 2011). In this respect, there are issues the researcher has to comply with prior to the data collection process like seeking permission to have access to the research sites.

As I indicated earlier, I requested permission from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture as well as from the Regional Education Director of Oshana region (appendix A and B) in order to gain the access to the schools as “approval from the top or high-level managers is required” prior the actual research process (Høyland, Hollundv and Olsen, 2015, p. 227). In addition, prior to conducting research, I obtained ethical approval from the ethics committee of the Durban University of Technology (appendix I). I also signed anonymity and confidentiality forms with participants in order to protect their identity and keep confidential information. All the participants willingly gave their consent and no one refused<sup>46</sup> to participate voluntarily (appendix D), although I had a plan in mind to approach the next participant available meeting the criteria in case there had been one declining to participate in the study. In line with principles outlined by O’Toole and Beckett (2014) and Cohen et al. (2011) I did not discuss the research data with anyone else apart from my supervisors. I also used the research information only for the purpose of the study and I kept the participants’ real names anonymous by using coded numbers (e.g. Teacher 1, etc.) to protect their identities.

An informed consent letter “protects and respects the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 77). These letters were issued to the participants and I explained the contents to them, then the participants signed them before the data collection process started. I also informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time without giving any explanation/reason.

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<sup>46</sup> Perhaps because of my professional position at NIED, especially for some of the teachers who knew me as such.

#### **4.12 Limitations of the research study**

Atieno (2009) argues that qualitative research is disadvantaged because its findings cannot be extended to larger populations unlike findings of quantitative studies if their samples are representative and large enough. Qualitative approach is subject to ambiguities which can be detrimental to the conclusions of the study. A limitation emerging from the study is that because of my position at work, some teachers (those who know me) and children might have not behaved in their natural manner during the observation or the interview process which can lead to me getting skewed data information or unrealistic data in answering the research question. As noted in 4.8, in order to mitigate the above, I was dressed in casual wear so that they (principals and teachers) knew that I was not there for a formal visit so that I get untwisted data. In view of trustworthiness, question 1.3 (Appendix F) might not have been honestly responded to by the principals and this is a limitation to the data provided. Finally, the data was collected from only six schools and therefore cannot be generalised.

#### **4.13 Conclusion**

In this chapter I outlined my research questions and goals. The interpretivism paradigm was used in the study where I used a case study approach. As I indicated earlier above that the term case study has multiple meanings as either critical, positivist or interpretive (Maree, 2011), the study has some elements of positivism. The chapter also presented how my research was conducted and which research methods I used to collect my data. I used questionnaires, observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and I explained why they were used in the study. I used the qualitative approach because my study was qualitative in nature and it is the methodology I am most comfortable with. I therefore chose to use qualitative approach because it is congruent with my experience.

As stated by Gale (1998), it is important for the researcher to understand the methodology which s/he uses in order to avoid getting stuck in the process later. The research sites, the sampling of the participants, piloting of the data collection instruments and the process of data analysis were also addressed in this chapter. Finally, the chapter ended with a reflection on the ethical aspects, validity and limitations to the study. In the next chapter I will be presenting the research findings.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents analyses and discusses the data collected from the study. The data was collected using four data collection methods which are questionnaires, observation, interviews and focus group discussions. Field notes were also used as part of observation. Data from the questionnaires and observation is presented to complement the data from interviews and the focus group discussions which are discussed extensively altogether in context of a qualitative study. Data analysis and discussion is done within the chapter's themes.

The data in this chapter is analysed and discussed in line with the three theoretical frameworks indicated in chapter three; namely (a) Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, (b) Chall's five stages theory of reading and (c) Street's new literacy studies theory. In order to make data more logical and comprehensible to the reader, the data is presented and discussed under the following themes:

- ❖ importance of reading in mother tongue;
- ❖ display for six school principals' response;
- ❖ teachers' understanding of a good reader;
- ❖ teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga;
- ❖ English language dominance;
- ❖ time devoted to reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga;
- ❖ methodologies of teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga;
- ❖ using one on one interactions;
- ❖ language policy and its implementation, reading resources;
- ❖ cognitive reading;
- ❖ use of digital literacy in teaching reading in mother tongue;
- ❖ factors facilitating the development of reading skills in mother tongue; and
- ❖ factors hindering the development of reading skills.

## **5.2 Importance of reading in mother tongue**

All principals responded that the development of reading skills in the mother tongue is important in order to understand the message of the writer clearly and also to expand vocabulary which is useful for one to become a fluent reader in his or her native language. Principal 1 stated that it is important in order to understand the message of the writer clearly. All the principals further indicated that reading in mother tongue improves critical thinking and good reasoning because the person fully understands the context. This is congruent to what Street (2003; 2005) argued in the NLS theory that reading also involves critical thinking which is crucial when people are learning to read in the society. Furthermore, as noted by Vygotsky, one is able to think critically once the context is well understood using the ZPD to solve a problem.

The development of reading skills in the mother tongue also helps in enriching oneself with a lot of information in order to acquire more knowledge, skills and understanding in general as principal 2 stated that it makes learning easier such that children best learn in their mother tongue as compared to a foreign language because they are enriched with more information. Principals argued that developing reading skills in mother tongue is a stepping stone to enable one to read other languages well because the native language is the primary or the foundation level of all the other secondary languages to be learned. They stated that one is also more confident when s/he is well equipped with knowledge in their own language (when they start with it right away from pre-primary or kindergarten) and it is likely not to be so difficult to master the skills or knowledge in another language for instance English or Afrikaans.

According to principal 4, reading in one's own language makes learning easier such that children learn best in their mother tongue as opposed to learning in the second language. Principal 4 also feels that developing reading skills in the mother tongue should start at the junior primary level because at that phase it is very important that the children master their own language. Principal 4 is of the impression that the use of English as a medium of instruction at the junior primary is wrong because it delays the learning process. According to principal 5, developing reading in mother tongue is important because it fosters indigenous knowledge since language is culture and children are learning their values and norms, as well as the history of their ancestors through language use. This will enable children to learn to be tolerant of others' cultures and have a culture of sensitivity and acceptance of cultural diversity.

Principal 3 argued that another important factor about developing reading skills in mother tongue in early reading is that children could easily understand activities across the curriculum and complete it successfully because they understand the context. In addition, principal 3 is also of the view that everything in learning starts with language and learning is likely to be highly effective when one learns in his or her mother tongue.

Generally the principals felt that it is necessary to develop reading skills in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga languages for them to be used as Languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) because children learn better when they read in their mother tongue, which will also result in the development of other language skills such as writing, listening and speaking skills. Principal 1 argues that if Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga are used as LoLT, it will improve children's passion for their language and will also eventually help improve the reading culture as well as laying the strong foundation for future generations to come. According to principal 3, mother tongue learning is also important for teachers and children to communicate easier and also enable children to be more confident and actively participating during lessons which later improve academic performance as children will understand what they are reading.

Principal 5 further indicated that if reading skills are developed in mother tongue, the mother tongue can be effectively used for national development because most of the developed and highly industrialised countries in the world use their mother tongues in schools and as a medium of instruction, e.g. Russia, China, Germany, etc. Therefore, principal 5 believes that the development of reading skills in mother tongue is important to instil the culture of thinking and eventually for the development of our country.

The principals felt that developing reading skills in the mother tongue is an ideal situation for Namibia because it will provide access to education for many citizens. Access is among the four goals (Access, Equity, Quality and Democracy) of our education system in Namibia which calls for general comprehensible education in terms of acquired basic reading skills (Angula, 1992). Comprehensible education will only be realised if reading skills are developed in the mother tongue and eventually the teaching is done in mother tongue. The principals further argued that in Namibia English poses a big threat to local languages because the value and preference given to English is too high to the disadvantage of local languages.

The principals further argued that for instance the language policy (which calls for equal promotion of local languages) remains a dream because it is only implemented in theory but not in practice since there are a number of schools using English as a medium of instruction, even at deepest rural areas where the children do not understand English. They (principals) blame the language policy which gives an option for English to be used as the medium of instruction in junior primary phase, provided that permission was obtained from the Minister of Education in advance (please see 2.5 above). This practice is mostly common with private schools, or with public schools which are in urban areas where there is a high number of children of mixed ethnicity. When there are a high number of children from various backgrounds, the only language appropriate is English because it is the most commonly spoken second language, although it's not the best choice since children do not always understand English. Although, there are some urban public schools where the majority of learners speak the same language, they still opt for English for prestige. This eventually results in high failure rate. Some schools only choose to use English as an act of showing that they are contemporary and not antiquated. According to principal 5, English is slowly becoming a national language (although already an official language) in Namibia because it is taking over from indigenous languages in terms of popular usage.

In addition, some of the focus group discussions indicated that reading skills development in mother tongue is important for concept development, communication with elders and other illiterate people who do not know English. They also further stated that mother tongue development is important for identity, language preservation and cultural values and norms. As Tötemeyer (2009, p. 1) stated, "language is of course, intimately part of your identity."

### 5.3 Display for 6 school principals' response

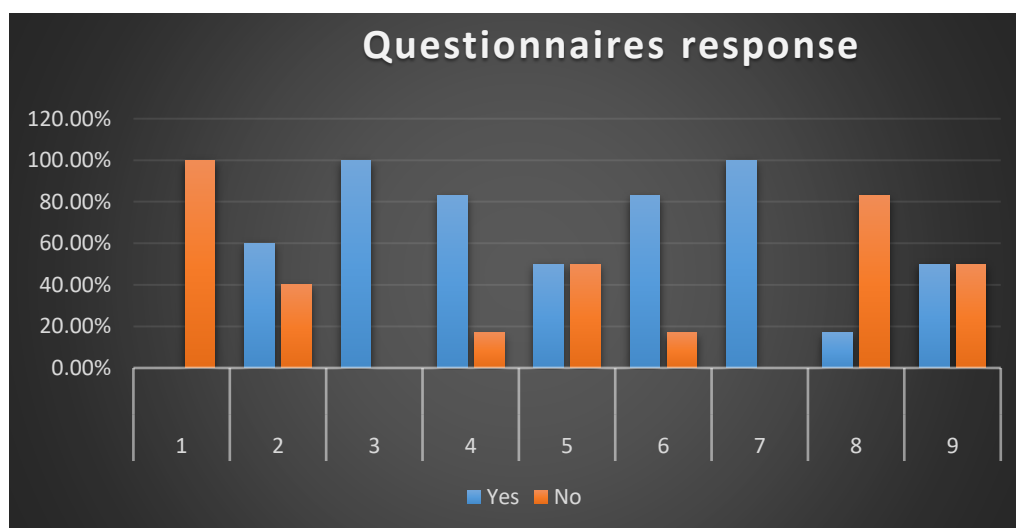


Figure 4 above shows questions which were asked in the questionnaire given to the principals.

The questions from 1-9 are represented as indicated below and the bar graph shows the percentage.

Question 1: Are there sufficient mother tongue reading materials in the JP phase?

Question 2: Are there policies that support mother tongue teaching (reading) at JP?

Question 3: Is the language policy implemented at the school?

Question 4: Are JP teachers qualified to teach mother tongue i.e. Oshindonga?

Question 5: Do JP teachers get in-service training in teaching reading in mother tongue?

Question 6: Does the region provide assistance/support for mother tongue teaching?

Question 7: In your view, is mother tongue teaching important to children?

Question 8: Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga/Oshikwanyama in JP at your school?

Question 9: Does the school develop the reading skills by using games, online blogs, or other digital media at the JP phase?

From the bar graph above, it is clear that principals believe that there are not sufficient reading materials at JP phase at all the six schools visited with 83% indicating that they do not have enough readers at their schools, while 17% stating that they have enough readers. This means that 17% have readers, but not necessarily readers from the JP grades (1-3), but may be borrowed from other grades (e.g. grade 4). This is confirmed by the response in question one that there are not sufficient mother tongue reading materials in the JP phase at all schools. Although Teacher 3 and 4 said there are enough books at the school, they were not able to provide proof when I asked them to do so, plus their principal indicated the contrary.

My observation also found that there were not enough books for each child. Please see 5.11 below for more clarity regarding the insufficient books.

According to the teachers, the language policy is implemented at all schools to advocate for mother tongue teaching (or dominant language) to be used as a medium of instruction. Although 17% of the JP teachers at the schools visited are not qualified to teach mother tongue, they are all qualified to teach at JP by training. Mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction in all subjects (except English), and is also taught as a subject (i.e. Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga). Teachers who do not qualify to teach the mother tongue (e.g. Teacher 6) were trained in either Oshindonga (or Oshikwanyama) and found themselves teaching in an Oshikwanyama (or Oshindonga) school (due to other factors, e.g. marriage, etc.) where they are simply allowed to teach because the two languages are cognate.

According to the data, 50% of the schools indicated that the JP teachers get in-service training in teaching reading in mother tongue, while the other half indicated the opposite. 83% of the schools said that the region does provide assistance/support for mother tongue teaching (Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga), while 17% indicated the contrary. As discussed earlier, all principals stated that mother tongue teaching instruction is important to children. Based on the questionnaire results, 50% of the schools (Baba, Chefy and Mwayasha) indicated that they do use digital literacy to support the development of reading skills by using games or other digital media such as you-tube videos or downloading other useful teaching aids, etc. Please do see 5.13 below about digital literacy where I explain in more detail. It was very clear from the principals' answers that they understood that I was not referring to online games, since is not very common in their context. However, from my observations only Mwayasha primary school was doing so, although all schools had unlimited Wi-Fi internet connections.

#### **5.4 Teachers' understanding of a good reader<sup>47</sup>**

According to the teachers a good reader is someone who knows punctuation marks, s/he reads with understanding, s/he reads with confidence and uses correct intonation. The good reader should also read with automaticity and fluency, as well as use correct segmentation of words. This is congruent with what I earlier discussed in chapter three (3.3 and 3.3.3) under Chall's five stages theory of reading. Teachers

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<sup>47</sup> A good reader here means a person who is able to read considering all the punctuation marks and making meaning out of the text.

have also indicated being exemplary, reliable, and hardworking as other standards a good teacher should pose, but this is not true as these aspects are not linked to reading skills.

### 5.5 Teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga

According to my observations, teaching reading at JP relies heavily on the phonics approach which is over-used. The phonics approach uses the alphabetic principles and this was also confirmed by all teachers during interviews as well as focus group discussions. All teachers interviewed indicated the phonics method as the best for teaching reading at JP. One teacher states “*we mainly focus on letter sounds starting with, with, with graphs, words which have one sound revolving around vowels or full of vowels. For example Tate<sup>48</sup>, Meme..... such short words. From there we come to the next step where we focus on digraphs, before we continue with the trigraphs. Starting from simple to complex, but mainly we focus on the vowels* (appendix J, p. 197, line 68).

Another teacher said that “*in reading we start with, like I said we start from the known to the unknown like we have started with vowels*. By using the approach of simple to complex means that one take the sound which s/he think is already known by the children and easily distinguished from other speech sounds in a particular story and practice with children. Then later the teacher takes new sounds from the story and teaches what letters stand for these sounds using simple words they are used to.

Some teachers also indicated songs as important in teaching reading. During my observation echo and choral reading techniques were over-used, although upon my inquiries teachers were not aware that they are using such approaches because they did not know them by name. I also noticed that in 10 out of 12 classes (85%) children are reading in a chanting or reciting way repeating the same passage (or text) without understanding and without the teacher making any effort or paying attention to correct them. In some cases the teachers will be doing some other things (like operating his/her mobile phone) while blindly keeping on saying “next”. I realised that teachers are automatically reacting without thinking because it is the norm for them which happens in ordinary days of teaching, although they are supposed to scaffold reading activities (see 3.2.1 above) as noted that scaffolding provides contextual support for meaning making by using simplified language (Nakale, 2012). When the teacher blindly says “next” it does not provide context support for the children to make meaning, so that they develop reading skills effectively.

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<sup>48</sup> Tate means father, while Meme means mother in Oshiwambo

According to Wood (2015) reading is a complex organisation of mental processes in line with metacognition skills, but this is not what I have observed at some schools (see reading as noted 2.11 above in chapter two) since I did not see the conscious development of these aspects happening (comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Chall (1976; 1996) also argued that reading is a form of problem solving based on prior knowledge (see 3.3 above). As earlier indicated in 2.11 above, reading should include the ability to read accurately with correct prosody or expression as this will support the reader's construction of meaning of the written text and is referred to as "oral reading fluency" (Piper, Schroeder and Trudell, 2016). Children should be taught to read with understanding because the ultimate purpose of reading is to understand (see 2.10).

The tempo of reading is also a cause of concern at JP because some teachers do not care or mind to remind the children to use the correct reading tempo<sup>49</sup> in order to develop fluency and eventually read with understanding. Some teachers do not enforce the use of correct tempo in reading. I observed that in some classrooms children were reading very slowly which can compromise understanding as I noticed that when teachers asked them (slow readers) questions, they could not provide correct answers. Some teachers also do not know how guided reading as a methodology of teaching reading is done because for them as long as they guide or assist the child to read it means they used guided reading method. According to MoE (2014, p. 23) "guided reading is a classroom activity in which children are taught in groups according to reading ability. The teacher works with each group on a text carefully selected to offer an appropriate level of challenge to the group. The books selected should be comfortable for the readers, but offering some challenge." Naidoo et al. (2014, p. 156) also argued that "during guided reading learners of similar reading requirements are grouped and instructed under the guidance of an educator" using big books or prepared texts which are of interest to the children. The overall purpose of guided reading is to enable children to read with understanding.

This came out from the interviews where Teacher 10 remarked that "*they can only read well when the teacher use guided reading like I was doing*" (appendix J, p. 197, line 136). Although when I observed him I did not see any process of guided reading method being used, apart from him assisting children here and there. The above scenario supports Mulhall's point (2003, p. 307) about the importance of using observation method "to check whether what people say they do is the same as what they actually do" (see 4.7.3 above). Additionally, this presents evidence of the value of observation in gathering authentic data.

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<sup>49</sup> Reading tempo means reading at the correct pace and speed in order to enable understanding.



The use of prior knowledge in teaching reading at JP is also misunderstood by some teachers and hence wrongly used. In one lesson the teacher asked the children to sing a song about counting from one to ten and later she introduced a reading topic which was not in any way connected to the song used to activate children's prior knowledge. Upon inquiry on how they measure children's reading ability in mother tongue, one teacher remarked that:

*I do give them the reading text which they practice in advance, and later they come read for me to assess their reading. That way I am able to find out that this one can read, and we award scores over ten marks. If one cannot even read a single word, then you know already that this one cannot read. Sometimes one can read, but not according to the punctuation marks and that's where we focus more so that they can read properly (appendix J, p. 197, line 57).*

This shows that some teachers know how to effectively monitor the development of reading skills in mother tongue which I observed in some classrooms that indeed some know how to help the children build reading skills. Some teachers also have a strategy of allocating time for children to read certain passages in order to improve fluency as one teacher stated: *I will then highly emphasise on the time, indicating that each child only has so, so minutes so that they are aware to finish within the allocated time. For example, each will only have two minutes, so we have to read within the limited time (appendix J, p. 197, line 122).*

## **5.6 English language dominance**

JP teachers said that sometimes they ask children to write a sentence in Oshikwanyama, but instead children will write it in English and you find English written in Oshikwanyama activity books. Some teachers claimed that this was caused by the lack of Oshiwambo background because some children attended private owned kindergartens or pre-schools where they mostly do not use Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga) for teaching, but only English. This is due to the fact that some kindergartens/pre-schools are not registered with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture; hence they follow their own curriculum which does not conform to the ministry's language policy. Furthermore, this practice "also gives a strong signal that that the mother tongue is inferior to the second or foreign language" which is not true (Hartney 2011, p. 23) as Kangira (2016, p. 1) affirmed that "there is no

language which is more linguistically superior to the other”. This echoes the point I made earlier in 2.5 above in chapter two.

Another fact is that some kindergartens/pre-schools are only there for commercial purposes and their target is only to make money, rather than to educate children. As Teacher 3 argued: *That’s why even, and sometimes we admit these children were never taught Oshiwambo, they were just at private schools, and then maybe because the private schools are getting expensive they are here. A lot of them are coming here. They can be Oshiwambo speaking children, but the fact that they were not taught Oshiwambo, it is a challenge because they keep speaking English* (appendix J, p 197, line 43).

Teacher 5 further argued: *Children of nowadays do not want to speak Oshikwanyama at all, they only want to speak English. This is very dangerous because they will no longer know their mother tongue because now they are only speaking English both at home and school since we are in town. This is to be blamed on their parents who think that English is the best language more than Oshikwanyama. Parents do not want to talk Oshiwambo with their children at home and this is very bad because us language teachers are suffering and highly challenged* (appendix J, p. 197, line 85).

The above is in line with what I earlier indicated in chapter two (2.8) that some people are inclined to think speaking English makes you smarter, for example, some parents together with the school principals denigrate the use of their mother tongue stating that it makes their children stupid (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2001). The dominance of English in Namibia is alarming and it is clear that people are indoctrinated to believe that English is superior to their vernaculars, which is not true – this notion is dismissed by Hartney (2011) above.

Furthermore, the practice of speaking English has negative effects on the children’s cognitive development because communication in the first language is always richer and more nuanced than communication in an additional language. For example if children are listening to teachers explain things through a second language in which they have limited understanding, their conceptual development will be similarly limited. Also, if they have to devote some cognitive effort to understanding the medium in which information is received, they have less cognitive space to cope with new concepts. So for both of these reasons, conceptual development through the (perfectly understood) mother tongue is richer, deeper and accompanied with more confidence than concepts acquired in a second language. In addition, it is

important to learn the first language properly because such a foundation control how the second language is acquired (Junias, 2009).

According to some teachers (at Bonza Combined School – urban school) some children have told them “*I don’t like Oshiwambo, but I like English*” because they are raised speaking English at home and when they come to school they only want to speak English. The inclination of speaking English results in children developing a lack of value of their mother tongue as they are not motivated to speak it and parents are to blame here. The main fact is because English is the medium of instruction; hence children are often speaking English in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga lessons. In Namibia, parents have been reported to resist the use of indigenous languages at school and at home, as an example;

Otjiherero speaking parents would bring their two children to our house so that we could speak to them in English because we could not speak Otjiherero with the children. The mother would say: the people at home are speaking to my children in our language and I don’t like that. I told them not to speak to my children in Otjiherero but they continue speaking that language (Kangira, 2016. p. 6).

As earlier outlined in chapter two (2.5.1), Professor Kangira is a Zimbabwean native and his mother tongue is Shona. So, this is a deliberate act on the part of parents so that their children are only talked to in English. The above conforms with Batibo’s (2005, p. 98) statement that “most parents wish their children to have proficiency in the ex-colonial language at the expense of their mother tongue” which has negative consequences to the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga because the children are not passionate about their mother tongues and it is evident they are not proud of speaking their mother tongue, whether it is at home or at school.

Batibo (2005) notes that speakers of the minority language experience many disadvantages such as low esteem with their languages and this leads to bilingualism where a weaker language<sup>50</sup> becomes endangered and gradually disappears. The above practice is dominant in Namibia because parents do not care whether their children –

learn the mother tongue, in as much as they are no longer strict about how perfectly it is acquired or if it is acquired at all. The children learn the mother tongue less and less

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<sup>50</sup> In this case Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga)

perfectly and may learn only fragments of it, giving more attention to the stronger language<sup>51</sup>, which becomes increasingly dominant in their lives. As a result, the weaker language is used less frequently ... and may ... start to erode (Batibo, 2005, p. 64).

Teachers argued that English disturbs Oshikwanyama in a manner that the child can count well in English, but s/he doesn't know how to count in Oshiwambo, despite being taught how to count in Oshiwambo too. This means that English language has increasingly become dominant (as argued above by Batibo) without the possibility of developing Oshikwanyama or actually Oshiwambo. Teachers further said that they try to teach children Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga (Oshiwambo) in class, but it is always challenging because most children find it difficult to consistently speak Oshiwambo without mixing with English, especially at the urban schools. As Batibo (2005, p. 64) concludes that "if the weaker language speakers see many advantages in joining the community of the stronger language speakers, they may not resist at all but abandon their language in favour of the other."

Teachers added that children who do not know how to speak Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga are the very same children who do not know how to read it. This is argued by Töttemeyer (2009; 2010) that without proper development of the first language [in speakers of it] the reading culture in both languages (first and second language) is negatively affected as it is currently in some languages in Namibia. The contributing factors to poor reading achievements in indigenous languages across the curriculum can be the use of English as a medium of instruction at some public or private schools in the JP phase, which is contrary to the language policy.

On the contrary, Teacher 7 from Zopa Primary School (rural school) stated that she did not really observe too much domination of English language, but said it just happen a little bit because "*these children do not really know English, especially these ones with us the ageing teachers. We do not know English well. Therefore they do not have enough English vocabulary so that they can use it to interfere in Oshindonga lesson*" (appendix J, p. 197, line 100).

## **5.7 Time devoted to reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga**

Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga subjects have nine periods per week in the JP timetable. However there is no national policy guidance on how much time should be devoted to developing reading skills and how

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<sup>51</sup> English

it should be done, although some schools have their own internal policy on when to teach reading in the indigenous languages (Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga). For example, some schools only teach reading on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays. However, there are some other schools which do not have any specific lesson dedicated to reading, but they claimed that reading skills are just taught like any other language skills since they are integrated and overlap each other during the Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga lessons. The above echoes what is argued by Kangira (2016, p. 5) in chapter two (2.5) that “the problem is compounded by the lack of a clear policy or direction on indigenous languages.”

Teacher 4 stated that *“almost whenever we are teaching other skills such as listening and....uhm, and language usage reading automatically comes in.... writing, when one is writing something she have to reading it first. Once he listen to the story, he has to read questions so that he can answer them. Reading itself comes in when there is a reading lesson, but we do integrate reading in all skills so that they can read well”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 59). The teachers’ use of incorrect English above is very appalling and congruent with what Rule and Land (2017) stated that the teachers’ poor understanding of how to teach reading has negative implications for teaching reading because “as a result, [teachers] cannot teach reading effectively in spite of their efforts to do so” (p. 2). Teaching reading should equally focus on correct pronunciation for effective development of reading skills (Trudell and Schroeder, 2007; Katjirua, 2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February). Please see 2.12.5 in chapter two where I noted that teachers’ poor language proficiency are some of the causes of poor reading skills (MoE, 2011); Kisting, 2011; Lumbu et al., 2015).

Teacher 8 also remarked *“we do read in Oshindonga, they do read during the reading lesson, and this means that they may read every day. Even during the Environment studies lesson they might read because one has to give them certain sentences or some words for them to read them”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 119). This indicates that the teacher expects children to read just for the sake of reading without any effort to focus on the development of the skill of reading for meaning as Teacher 9 also stated *“each week, in each every lesson there is reading included this means that every day, because they do have Oshikwanyama each day “Monday to Friday”* (appendix J, p. 197, line, 134).

The other concern is the reading lesson mentioned by teachers. The reading lesson policy initiated for the Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) strategy was implemented in 2015 after the reviewed JP curriculum, indicating that reading should be allocated a 40 minute lesson which is done across the board at all public schools. The policy further dictates that during the reading lesson everyone at the school from the cleaner

to the principal should read anything of their own interest and it is not allowed for the teacher to use this period for any other purpose. The reading lesson was initiated in an effort to inculcate the reading culture in the society as Diescho (2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February) argued that there is a great need to infuse the reading culture in our children so that it improves “what you feed grows, what you don’t doesn’t.” However, the DEAR lesson does not focus on developing reading skills possibly because the teachers do not really get the idea of the value of free reading, maybe because they themselves are not keen readers, although it might have an indirect impact.

The challenge I have discovered with the reading lesson during my observation is that some teachers completely have no idea of how the reading lesson should be done and as a result they also do not use it for its intended purpose. Some teachers use the reading lesson for other purposes such as teaching other subjects with a backlog to catch up. Furthermore, some children in JP do not know how to read on their own without the assistance of the teacher because I observed them wandering around the page and completely lost, while some are just looking at the pictures, and some sleeping. Perhaps this happened because the teacher did not train the children to use their finger to point where they are reading, which is a very important skill to use in developing reading skills to beginner readers.

Another crucial factor is that most of the children are opting to read English materials instead of Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga reading materials since they are free to read whatever their choice is during the reading period. This is opposed to what Töttemeyer (2009; 2010) argued that the development of reading skills in indigenous languages is linked with cognitive development and later academic success. In view of the sociocultural theory, the development of reading skills comes as a result of cognitive development which happens when children are interacting with adults, cultural norms and their immediate environment. As noted in 3.2 in chapter three, language skills development occurs through adult-child interactions, or through child to child interactions (Mercer and Howe, 2012). Furthermore, learning to read in a second language impedes the acquisition of functional literacy (Töttemeyer 2009; 2010), and without proper development of the first language the reading culture in both languages is negatively affected as was evident during my observation.

## **5.8 Methodologies of teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga**

Teachers are over using the phonics approach at JP according to my observations, interviews and the focus group discussions (see 5.5 above). The phonics methodology of teaching reading is the most

common approach which is familiar to teachers although most of them are not well versed with it. As Teacher 8<sup>52</sup> remarked, “*oh, teaching Oshindonga, especially I don’t know the letter sounds (phonics). They are very difficult for me..! Because I cannot model them correctly to the children*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 111). This resonates with what Nghikembua (2013, pp. 30 – 40) observes (chapter two, 2.12.5) that “initial teacher training methods in many places are so ineffective that they add little value to the ability of a future teacher to operate effectively in the classroom”. In line with the above, Amutenya (2016, p. 24) also stated that “teacher training does not equip teachers for the realities of the classroom.” Furthermore, Uushona (2018) also added that “there is a gap between what the novice teachers were taught at the university or college, and what they are required to teach in schools” (p. i).

The overuse of phonics method (sometimes called the bottom-up approach, Mackie, 2007) is probably happening because Oshiwambo languages have a consistent transparent orthography similar to Italian, German, Greek, Spanish and Finnish (Land, 2015). For example their alphabetic (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) letters only represent one direct sound for a certain letter, unlike English where letters often represent different sounds in different words and hence it is known as the least transparent/consistent orthography which makes it very difficult for beginner readers to read (Hutzler, Ziegler, Perry, Wimmer and Zorzi, 2004 as cited in Land 2015). Land (2015, p. 2) further explained that “learning to read appears to be easier in languages with consistent orthographies, that is where letters always represent the same sounds”. Although Mackie (2007, p. 2) stated that the phonics approach “was the dominant method until the 1960s”, my study indicates the contrary as the approach is still omnipresent to this day in Namibia where it still appears to be the traditional approach in early reading teaching.

Teacher 3 also said that teaching reading is very challenging when I asked her how reading skills are developed in Oshindonga “*I don’t know, maybe through reading, that’s difficult*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 38). I fully agree with Teacher 3 and Teacher 8 because I observed that some teachers do not know how to correctly model the sounds represented by the letters to the children, although they are not aware of their own shortcoming. According to the sociocultural theory, teachers should always focus on correctly modelling the sound of the letter to the children in order to teach the correct sound of the letters as intended. It is also used to encourage and support children in early reading activities such as vocabulary development (Gauvain, 2008). Please see 3.2.2 in chapter three where it is outlined that in modelling, a more experienced partner can take some more difficult tasks and model them to a less experienced

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<sup>52</sup> Teacher 8 is a native Oshindonga speaker.

individual for easy adaptation through reciting and drilling reading exercises, especially with emergent readers.

In addition to the phonics method of teaching reading, I have also observed the sight words or whole word (familiar words) approach (sometimes called top-down approach, Mackie, 2007) which focuses on identifying individual words from stories/classroom walls and using flash cards with words which become familiar to the children. According to Chall (1996), sight words develop fluency and fluency is important in developing early reading skills (see 3.3.3 above). However, the aim here is for the children to learn to recognise whole words without having to sound them out by means of decoding which is a cognitive exercise. Please see 2.11 in chapter two. As noted in chapter four (4.7.1), in the followings sections I have used pictures to enhance my data analysis because pictures can provide the evidence documenting the exact set-up of the researched aspects in context (Tracy, 2013).

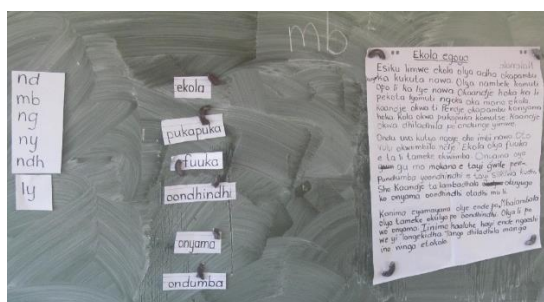


Figure 5: Sight or familiar words on flash cards



Figure 6: Sight words on flash cards

In figure 5 above the teacher is using the sight/familiar words on flash cards from the story to teach reading. Figure 6 on the right shows the teacher using the sight words flash cards with children to create their own sentences. Children have to know the words which they pick to create meaningful sentences while the teacher assists them. The point in this exercise is to enable the children to become familiar with common words and recognise them instantly (automatically). This is the basis of automaticity in reading as the use of sight/familiar words (high frequency words) to develop fluency is important as indicated in stage two of Chall's (1976; 1989; 1996) stages of reading, as well as the recognition of patterns in words to make meaning which can be done with children by using familiar stories so that they become good readers (see 3.3.3 above).





Figure 7: The look and say method

The look and say method was also observed in some classrooms as shown in figure 7 above. With this method children learn to recognize whole words or sentences rather than individual sounds to read in order to develop automaticity.

There are other methods of teaching reading such as the language experience approach which use children's own words to help them read, and the context support method which uses what is interesting to the reader. It is important to choose books that interest them. For example, if boys like cars, choose a book with pictures and simple words about cars to catch their interest. I did not observe the above methods used in any classroom, although these teaching approaches could be used in teaching Oshiwambo languages to develop reading skills. In Chall's (1976; 1996) third stage of reading development, appropriate skills could be taught by using the above approaches where "reading to learn" starts building on the skills acquired in stages 1 and 2 earlier. As indicated earlier in 3.3.4 in chapter three, the reader's prior knowledge and experience is vital since the reader reads for concepts, and applies reading strategies, reads for facts and for utilitarian purposes, for example reading guidelines to perform a specific task.

I have noted teachers using various strategies for teaching early reading such as clapping and counting syllables in words to teach reading skills as shown in the pictures below (figure 8 and 9). Clapping hands is a very important teaching strategy because it produces a sound that enables the children to mark the boundaries of syllables, which is important for phonological awareness which is in turn crucially important skill in early reading (see 3.3.1 above). The syllables are underlined in red in figure 8 below; while in figure 9 below, they are separated with hyphens (please see 3.3.1). These activities are very

important for developing phonemic awareness and sound discrimination which is a pre-requisite skill in early reading and this is where emergent literacy is practiced. In this stage children develop visual, motor and auditory perception skills which are essential in early reading. Children become aware that language consists of sounds with spoken words that are segmented and blended for reading (Chall, 1976; 1989; 1996; Snider, 1992).

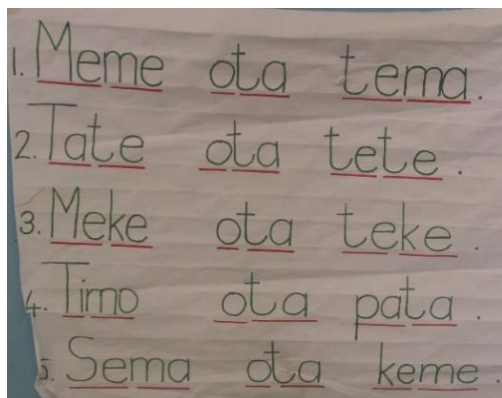


Figure 8: Syllables underlined in red



Figure 9: Syllables separated with hyphens

Teacher 5 also indicated that *“things which help in teaching reading in Oshikwanyama are mainly vowels, mainly when teaching children to learn them on their hands. If each child learn that this vowel is placed where on her fingers it makes it easier for them to read, especially as a reminder when she come at a difficult word she will remember that particular vowel”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 65).

The pictures below (figure 10 and 11) show how the five vowels<sup>53</sup> are allocated to the fingers with numbers and taught to children to help them develop their reading skills and this is in a way using phonics approach. Upon inquiry to the teachers, the numbers are allocated to keep the logic/sequence in order to avoid confusing children. This is a strategy inspired by the teachers’ own initiative as Trudell and Schroeder (2007, p. 177) stated that *“early reading educators should be mindful to reject the phenomenon that reading methodologies inspired by English or French are always superior to their own approach”* and also take note that materials designed by teachers through innovations and practically used by children can effectively improve their literacy skills as opposed to exotic prepared approaches to teaching reading skills (see 2.10).

<sup>53</sup> Vowels in Oshikwanyama are called “Oulitumbuli”, while in Oshindonga they are called “Uuyitumbuli”



Figure 10: The five vowels with numbers on the fingers

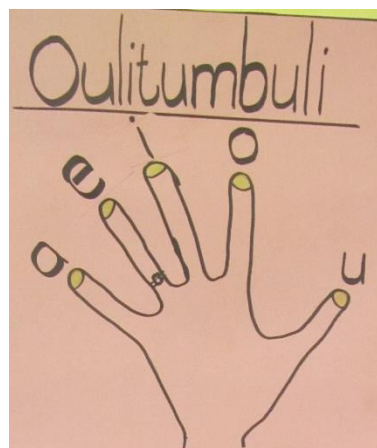


Figure 11: The five vowels without numbers on the fingers

I observed the use of fingers with vowels in two classes during the classroom observations and noted that the strategy is effective in teaching reading. As I indicated already (2.10) it is easier to learn to read in a native language or in a language one already speaks using a methodology or strategy which is relevant to that particular language concerned, contrary to learning to read in second language or a language one is not familiar with (Davies, 1994; Adams, 1994). Additionally, the sociocultural theory (see 3.2.2.) stated that modelling should be done by teachers/parents to help children develop strategies to solve problems and the above strategies are good examples of such.

There were other strategies used by teachers to teach reading such as scaffolding, modelling, independent silent reading, Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA), choral reading and echo reading. Scaffolding of reading activities (see 3.2.1) is a form of instruction within the sociocultural theory where a more experienced individual (a teacher) assists the learner through interactions to perform certain tasks (Gauvain, 2008; Raban, 2014; Mercer and Howe, 2012). In the DRTA strategy one teacher used the cycle of predict-read-confirm-predict to guide children's reading when they read a story called "*Egumbo lyomusamane Ngato*"<sup>54</sup>. The teacher activated the children's cognitive processes by stopping (a couple times) to ask children to predict what happen next in the story, before she confirmed together with children and again continued to repeat the process until the story finishes.

Some teachers (Teacher 3 and 5) as experienced readers were actively assisting children through interactions by using echo reading to develop their reading skills using their experience. They did this by writing digraph sounds (e.g. 'nk', 'mp', 'nd') on the chalkboard and read them first, while asking

<sup>54</sup> The house of a man called Ngato.

individual children to stand up and repeat after them. This is advocated for in the sociocultural theory under scaffolding of reading activities that “a more experienced individual can assist the learner through interactions to perform a certain task” (Gauvain, 2008; Raban, 2014; Mercer and Howe, 2012). Some teachers also provided useful feedback to the children for example modelling the correct pronunciation of words and demonstrating the correct reading tempo which they have to use when reading. For example Teacher 2 while teaching (Oshindonga) at one point remarked “*hasho hatu leshe nga, leshe ni nawa ngaashi twiilongeni*.<sup>55</sup>” The teacher then demonstrated how to read with the correct tempo, and children imitated him.

Independent silent reading is a critical component of a well-designed reading lesson. When you provide time every day for your children to practice reading in a book they have selected, children not only grow their vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, word attack skills, and determinations, but they also develop a love of reading and discover that reading can be interesting which we need to do in order to inculcate the reading culture. Independent silent reading has a lot of names such as Sustained Silent Reading (SSR), Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USSR) and Daily Independent Reading Time (DIRT).

Choral reading is a technique for oral reading where the teacher models how to read. This oral reading technique helps readers preview texts and analyse phrasing and emphasis. Echo reading is a technique for teaching reading where children listen to the sound made by the teacher and the whole class or group repeat (or echo) the teacher’s sound as they read the same text. One of the effective strategies for young children to become proficient readers is by listening to good models. One can model proper oral reading skills using an “echo reading” technique. You will have to read and explain what you are doing, and that the children should echo you. I have observed the above aspects in my study where some early grades teachers encouraged auditory recognition of phonemes by using echo or choral reading strategies. This exemplifies what I noted earlier in 2.10 in chapter two (Trudell and Schroeder, 2007). It is vital for the elementary teachers to always keep it in mind when teaching young (or beginner readers) children to read.

Early reading should encourage auditory recognition of phonemes in order for a child to do sound discrimination before we proceed to teaching phonics. For example, by clapping hands to make the children aware of syllables. This is because when children come from home, their spoken first language is already developed with a fast developing vocabulary and their phonemic awareness level is low which

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<sup>55</sup> That is not how we read, please let’s read well like how we learned to read.

a teacher should assist to improve in order for children to learn to read. “When learners learn to read in their first language, their existing vocabulary, phonemic knowledge, and understanding of the structure and functioning of the language should aid their prediction and recognition of words” (Land, 2015, p. 61). I am fully aware that this study was focused on grades 2 and 3, excluding grade 1 where mostly the practice of teaching phonemic awareness is taking place, but I would like to indicate here that some children (as well as some teachers) were struggling with phonics which warranted a remedial teaching of the phonemic awareness by a teacher who is well versed with phonemic awareness and phonics.

I observed cooperative learning only in one classroom where the teacher put children in small groups and asked them to answer the following questions (where did the story take place? what was the name of the main character in the story? and how did she solve her problem?) while reading the story about “*Okakadona okanandunge*<sup>56</sup>”. The teacher was moving around with groups while they were reading to assist and later asked each group to answer the question with face to face interaction (and low voice) while other groups were not hearing. According to Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (as explained in 3.2.3, chapter three), cooperative learning is an approach used for problem solving where individuals work together in unstructured groups to complete a certain task with a common goal (Doolittle, 1997; Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998; Slavin, 2011; Mercer and Howe, 2012).

Finally, there was no collaborative learning (as outlined earlier in 3.2.4, chapter three) done in all the classes observed, since I did not see “an instruction method in which learners at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal” (Gokhale, 1995, p. 1).

## **5.9 Using one on one interactions**

Using one on one (face to face) individual support and motivation/encouragement is also an effective strategy to develop reading skills. As indicated earlier in 3.2 in chapter 3, in terms of the sociocultural theory, language develops through adult-child interactions, but it can also develop through child to child interactions (Mercer and Howe, 2012) (Please see 5.8 above). The use of one on one (face to face) individual support is also expounded by Meyer (2003, p. 61) that “facial gestures and hand gestures of the face to face discussions ... derive important cues to the meaning and feelings of the speaker.” This means that the face to face interactions include gestures which are used as comprehensive inputs for one

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<sup>56</sup> The Smart Girl

to understand. Furthermore, Teacher 5 said that by moving around *“the tables it motivates the child to know that the teacher is coming, so I should focus on my paper. It is different from when you’re only standing in front or seated at your table”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 67). This approach is effective to use with children who have special needs.

The above is outlined in the NLS theory that “the ways in which teachers or facilitators and their students interact is already a social practice that affects the nature of the literacy being learned and the ideas about literacy held by the participants” (Street, 2003, p. 78), while Mgqwashu (2013, p. 4) added that based on the NLS approach “literacy originates from the premise that it is a social practice because literacy cannot be separated from people since it is situated in the interactions between people in the context in which they engage with it.”

## **5.10 Language policy and its implementation**

The language policy is known by 30% (4 out of 12) of the teachers observed and interviewed, although some teachers I interviewed are confusing the language policy with the national policy for JP. The language policy is only well known by some Heads of Department and some Principals. The language policy discussion document (MBESC, 2003, p. 4), states that “Grade 1 – 3 will be taught either through the mother tongue or a predominant local language” (as earlier indicated in 2.5, chapter two).

Teacher 3 indicated that *“Mmh, yes. The language policy says children must be taught in the mother tongue. All subject in JP should be taught in the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue of the majority, of the children that are attending that school, unless if the school has a lot of different home languages mixed, uuh, children”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 43). While Teacher 10 said that *“the language policy says that the child should be taught in his or her mother tongue or the language that is spoken, that is mainly spoken in the surrounding of that school. From grade one up to grade three, because this help the child to be, to get knowledge in reading the other language like English”* (appendix J, p. X, line 148). Another teacher (Teacher 4) added that *“Yah, I’m aware of it. Children have to be taught in their mother tongue from grade one to grade three in all subjects, except English which is taught as a subject. Like with us here we use Oshindonga”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 58).

The above statements shows 30% of the teachers know the language policy and they are implementing it consciously in their everyday activity. A very alarming finding is that the language policy is unknown by

70% of teachers observed and interviewed, although they are supposed to know it from the tertiary institutions they studied at or through in-service trainings (professional development workshops). This is very worrying because as teachers they are primary implementers of the language policy and without them knowing it, it means the policy may be wrongly implemented or it is completely not implemented at all which is detrimental to our education system.

When asked about the language policy, teachers responded as follows: Teacher 5 said *“Oh, I, I don’t really want to say, but in short, I don’t know, and I don’t know it in context because I did not do further study, but I only know what I learned at school, but in depth I do not understand it, maybe once I do further studies on my career”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 73). Teacher 7 remarked *“Shuu, language policy? Mmh, I don’t think I know it, I don’t know it”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 103). Teacher 2 said *“Yes, yes, yes. It is telling us that we should teach the children like how I said like phonics, we should focus too much in phonics instead of letter’s name. Iyaah, that means that if the child does not know mother tongue, vernaculars. That child will not be promoted to another grade. For example if s/he has an E symbol in Oshindonga in reading it means that s/he did not master and s/he has to repeat. Because the child need to master the mother tongue* (appendix J, p. 197, line 28). This teacher is very confident that he knows the language policy, but he is misinterpreting it. The teacher confuses the language policy with the promotion policy because the language policy does not talk about phonics or letter names, nor does it talks anything about the promotion of children.

Teacher 9 added that *“Mmh, that policy, mmh, I remember..... but I do not completely remember what is contained there, but we do not really get meetings or workshops talking about language policy mainly from the HoD. We do not get exposed, unless if you do it on your own for yourself. Meaning that if the child learns in the language that is his or her mother tongue or the language that is indigenous or the language that is spoken in that area it is not that difficult when she or he changes from that language to the official language (English)”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 133).

This teacher is not sure of what she is talking about and hence trying to play the blame game on the HoD for not knowing the language policy and how it is implemented at their school. Although the principal and HoD are supposed to always orientate novice teachers about these (policies, administration, etc.) documents and how to practically implement them, but it is not a transgression if they did not do it. Although this is just an excuse because initially the teacher is supposed to basically know that from his/her pre-service training course at college/university since it is part of the curriculum there. It was

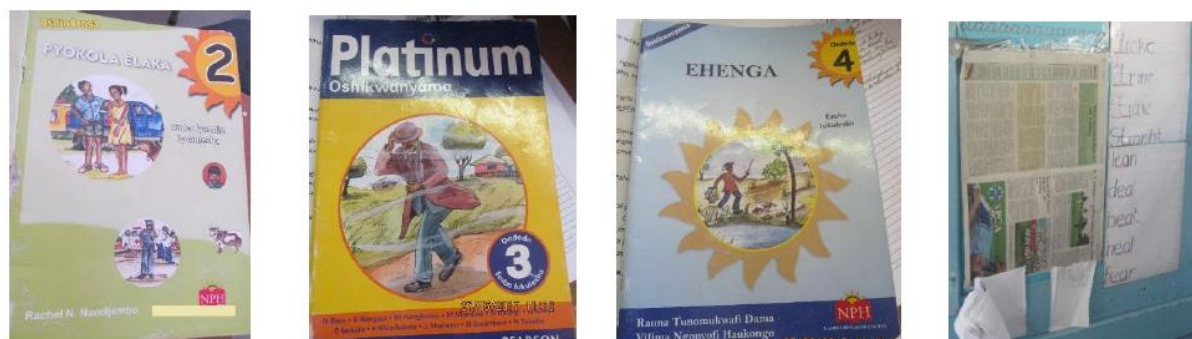


evident from the interviews that most teachers are not aware of the language policy, nor its implementation at their schools. However, some indicated during the group discussions that the language policy is unconsciously or somehow accidentally implemented at their schools.

Additionally, Teacher 10 said “*at our school we use, the language that we use is the medium of learning from pre grade, from grade one we use English language and I think that is what is disadvantaging Oshiwambo language to be below English. This means that the medium of learning from grade one to grade ten the medium of learning in the whole school is English* (appendix J, p. 197, line 148). This clearly shows the dominance of English language to the disadvantage of Oshiwambo languages. As Kangira (2016, p. 2) stated that “the most painful thing that struck me was that the political elite in each of the countries studied have perpetuated the supremacy of foreign languages over indigenous languages” (see 2.5.1). The situation described above has been caused by our language policy as outlined in 2.5 above.

## 5.11 Reading resources

The texts used in reading lessons at JP (grades 2 and 3) are indicated in figure 12 below.



<i>Pyokola Elaka</i>	<i>Platinum</i>	<i>Ehenga (grade 4)</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>
<i>Oshindonga/</i>	<i>Oshindonga/</i>	<i>Oshikwanyama</i>	<i>English</i>
<i>Oshikwanyama</i>	<i>Oshikwanyama</i>		

Figure 12: Text used in reading lessons at JP

The two readers indicated above (*Pyokola Elaka* and *Platinum*) are the only versions I observed being used at JP for reading. At some schools they have both types of readers, but at most schools they are very few. For example six children are sharing one reader (*Pyokola Elaka*) at one rural school at the same time. However, one teacher at an urban school claimed that they also have a reader called *Ependuko*



which I did not see. The grade 4 reader (*Ehenga*) was borrowed by one teacher for use in grade 3 because the school did not have anything to use for reading in grade 3 (see appendix J, p. 197, line 159). Teacher 8, a grade three teacher, confirmed this during the interview that “*we may also read a story which we sourced from the upper grades*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 120).

My observations further revealed that a high percentage of schools which lack readers are rural schools, unlike in urban schools. As Teacher 5 (a teacher from an urban school) said that “*almost each child has his or her own, but if we are short, maybe only with two or three there. Plus they are also in line with the new curriculum*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 69) and at one urban school they do have some reading books for stories only (see appendix J, p. 197, line 129).

However, there are some schools where teachers indicated that their readers are not in line with the curriculum as Teacher 7 remarked, “*no, we do not have enough books. We only try to source readings from some other sources and make sure that the readings are at the level of the children, or I take some books which we have, but are not in line with the curriculum and I take stories which are in line with our topic of the day or week*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 99), although there are some teachers who had books which are in line with the curriculum, e.g., Teacher 5 who said “*yes, we do have enough. Almost each child has his or her own, but if we are short, maybe only with two or three there. Plus they are also in line with the new curriculum*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 69, and also see line 54).

At some urban schools one Teacher 6 indicated that although the readers are not enough, they do make some photocopies to ensure that every child has a copy to read from during the reading lessons, although it can be quite challenging at times because children mess up the pages’ sequence and get lost in the process of reading “*things which are challenges are such as we do not have enough books, you make copies and one child can be at this page, while one is on a different page*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 81). Teacher 11 added “*we have a great needs of reading books. The Oshikwanyama books are not enough and the ones we have does not really have context which can be read by a child to learn Oshikwanyama well, but there are only smaller pieces with small passages. For now we really struggle to get the correct readers and we make copies*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 156, also see line 165).

The newspaper above is displayed in one of the urban school’s classrooms as a source of reading, however it is in English and when I asked the teacher he said that they used it to supplement reading activities for

English. He further said that they also use newspapers in Oshiwambo language sometimes, although this appears to be a challenge at times because their content is not at the level of the children in JP phase.

As Teacher 10 remarked “*aaye*<sup>57</sup>, we do not have enough readers, but we do try to look for newspapers but the challenge is that the newspapers are written in a language that is beyond these children’s level because it is meant for people who already knows how to read and they are not really helpful due to that fact because the child needs simple stories which are interesting and at their level” (appendix J, p. 197, line 144). Vygotsky argued that children should be taught reading traits which are equivalent to their potential in order to develop their reading skills effectively (as noted earlier in 3.2 in chapter three).

According to teachers interviewed and focus groups discussions, children sometimes bring reading books from home which are put in a reading corner for reading purposes (not all children bring books from home because only some can afford to do so due to the socio economic factors). As I earlier indicated in chapter 2 (2.12.2), literacy can be improved by having plenty of reading materials as outlined in Chall’s reading stages (Wolf and Stoodley, 2008, p. 10) and “literacy is not something that just happens. One does not wake up literate. Nor does one become literate in the same way that one learns to walk.” Hence there is a need for parents and educators to ensure that children are earlier exposed to reading materials both at home and school environment.

However, poor parents cannot afford to buy books. Relatively, Stanovich (2009) used the notion of the Mathew effect to explain the above situation that children who are poor continue to be more poorer, while the rich children advance to more richness in terms of reading (see 3.3 in chapter 3).

Furthermore, some reading corners are completely empty (figure 13 below), while some are not even organised in a manner which promotes a reading culture (figure 14 below). Please see the figures below.

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<sup>57</sup> Aaye means NO in Oshiwambo language.



Figure 13: Empty reading corner



Figure 14: Disorganised reading corner

The above figures show the reading corners in some classrooms observed.

The reading corners in most classes visited are dominated by English reading materials where most of them are exotic in nature with only few reading corners with Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga reading materials. In some classrooms the reading corners exist only by name (figure 13 above) and they are not used at all or in some instances they are only for symbolic purposes to satisfy the demand of the policy, but in reality they do not exist since there is nothing in such a corner apart from the label “reading corner” on the wall. The failure to maintain an attractive reading corner deprives children of exposure to reading materials and experiences which is contrary to the good practice I pointed to in chapter 2 (2.13.3) that “the more a child is exposed to reading, the more likely the child is to acquire the requisite skills for reading” (Strategic Marketing and Research Inc., 2013, p. 6).

## 5.12 Cognitive reading

According to my observations, the interviews and the focus group discussions with the teachers, activation of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) is low at JP phase in most of the schools which were part of the study. This is because sometimes teachers ask children irrelevant things for example singing a numeracy song to introduce a reading lesson which does not have anything to do with numbers. According to the sociocultural theory and Chall’s stages of reading, prior knowledge relating to the content of text read is an important aspect in developing reading skills effectively (see 3.2 in chapter 3). It is important to outline what I earlier detailed in chapter two (2.11) that reading is a “complex organization of higher mental processes” Wood (2015, p. 3), while Land (2015) described reading as one of the most complex activity of the human mind.

However, few teachers (4 out of 12) were doing activities which activated HOTS for example giving jumbled/unjumbled words for activities and also asking children to retell the stories they read, as well as asking non-literal questions from the story read. As Teacher 4 indicated that “*after reading I can ask him to retell what he read about. If he can retell what he read, then that shows that he understand. I also ask them questions related to what they have read so that they can give me answers on what they read. If he was not reading with understanding, then he cannot be able to give you the answer* (appendix J, p. 197, line 52).

Teacher 4 confirmed what I stated earlier in chapter two (2.10) that ‘the ultimate purpose of reading is understanding’ which he ensures by asking the children to retell the story read.

HOTS were also activated at some schools by engaging children with some activities for example games like crosswords puzzle to complete and acrostic poems done with the assistance/guidance of the teacher. Additionally, Teacher 5 stated that *“mainly I check them if they are reading focused on words and to make sure that the child is focused on that particular word because she or he may only hear others reading it and memorize it. One need to know her children very well and guide their thinking”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 67). Similar to what I earlier noted in chapter two (2.11), Teacher 5 is making sure that reading is done as a cognitive exercise rather than just an oral performance in order for children to make meanings from the text (Rule and Land, 2017).

### **5.13 Use of digital literacy in teaching reading in mother tongue**

As noted above in 5.3 above regarding digital literacy, 50% of the schools said that they do use digital literacy to support the development of reading skills by using games, online blogs, or other digital media. However, from my observations I only saw teachers at Mwayasha primary school using internet for educational purposes (e.g. teachers browsing the internet for information to prepare lessons or downloading you-tube videos for educational purposes). Furthermore, I also observed children accessing internet in the school library at Mwayasha primary school only and they were doing so under the supervision of the teacher.

Some teachers during the focus group discussions found it funny to use internet for teaching Oshiwambo languages, although they indicated that internet is a great source of information (As indicated by Davis, 2011, p. 1961, that “internet provides instant access to vast amounts of information”) for teaching, but said *“ndee hashiwambo nee”*<sup>58</sup> because the Oshiwambo languages are not available on internet. This was outlined in the NLS theory that online information are exotic in nature and cannot be used for local languages teaching, unless the teacher has to translate the contents to fit their own contexts, but this is not always an easy exercise. As noted by Nzwala (2015, p. 1) that teachers have “difficulties in translating concepts from English to ... mother tongue.”

### **5.14 Factors facilitating the development of reading skills in mother tongue**

According to the outcomes of the interviews with teachers and focus group discussions, intelligence is one of the factors that enhance the development of reading skills easily. According to Teacher 1 *“the*

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<sup>58</sup> This means that “but not for Oshiwambo” languages.

*intelligent ones do not struggle to read at all*" (appendix J, p. 197, line 6). This means that children who are naturally gifted can develop reading skills more easily with less assistance from the teacher, unlike their peers who are less intelligent.

Teachers also indicated the use of various teaching strategies such as the use of fingers to teach the vowels (please see 5.8, figure 10 and 11 above) as also one of the factors which develop reading skills effectively, especially with children who have special needs<sup>59</sup>. The phonics approach is also said to be among the factors which can be used to develop the reading skills by teachers, although one needs to master the letter-sound relationships in order to model them correctly to the children. This resonates with the statement I earlier made (chapter two, 2.10) that early reading teaching methodology should include aspects such as phonological awareness and phonics.

According to the focus group discussions, the newly introduced reading period is found to be helpful in developing reading skills in all languages. The translation of the curriculum by NIED from English to Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga is highly effective in improving reading skills because the teachers are interpreting the curriculum with full understanding of the context without any language barrier. This exemplifies what I stated earlier (chapter two, 2.11) that reading in a mother tongue or a language that one is already conversant in enables a reader to read with great understanding. Although the above is reported as such by teachers, I did not observe it during my study.

According to Teacher 3, competition is one of the aspects which help to develop the reading skills which is done when the teacher presents something (for example an eraser, pencil, etc.) in the classroom to be won and tell children that whoever reads a word or sentence first will win the item. *"Competition, like I will make competition. Whoever read well is going to be a winner, to be done like that, they will read in pairs, then we look at the ones that are reading well, then at least, or some, something to be won. For them to, to.... Because sometimes when you're telling them to read they think is just a normal reading, but even if you're telling them is for the, the CASS<sup>60</sup> mark, they don't really care, but if it is something to be won just to motivate them to read well because some of them they can know, they know how to read, but the fact that they just know that it's just a normal reading, they don't really take it serious"* (appendix J, p. 197, line 32).

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<sup>59</sup> Previously called slow learners. Some teachers are still using the discouraging term "slow learners". Please see appendix J, p. 197, line 6.

<sup>60</sup> Continuous Assessment

Children also develop reading skills by choosing their own words to construct sentences (please see 5.8 above, figure 6) which they read. The use of games, word puzzles, word tracking are indicated to be helpful in developing reading skills (Ngula, 2011 and JP Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga Syllabi, MoE, 2015). *Mmm, what is helpful in teaching Oshikwanyama is using games like, like word puzzles, blending letters and also to do words tracking by searching from the puzzles like with words written on the chalkboard and then kids will find them by circling them out with a pencil in a puzzle* (appendix J, p. 197, line 140). That was Teacher 10's response on the question of the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language.

Using flash cards (please see 5.8 above, figure 5, 6, and 9) and pictures to help a reader associate the form of a word with its meaning is also one approach found to be useful in developing reading skills which are also advocated for in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory because pictures enhance children's reading skills as earlier illustrated in 3.2 in chapter three. The use of teaching aids like posters with difficult words which are explained in advance by the teacher preceding the story to be read are also useful in developing reading skills because this helps a reader associate the form of a word with its meaning. The above approaches enhance word recognition skills and develop automaticity which is essential skills in early reading. They (approaches) also allow the reader to give attention to the meaning rather than to working out each word individually.

My study also found that drilling/repetition (or reciting), peer reading/teaching, songs and rhymes (as indicated in 3.3.1, chapter three), poems and short stories are interesting approaches for children when teaching reading and are among the factors which develop reading skills effectively, but only when used correctly for that purpose. This is because repeated exposure to the printed form of a word or using rhymes or poems enables a reader to develop a strong schema for that word, and so to recognise it effortlessly. As Teacher 10 remarked, *"mmhuu, reading skills are taught by teaching reading with phonics, vowels and then you, you teach words construction and blending. That way the kids can read, but it is not easy cause, cause it have to be repeated for many times so that they learn, especially kids in these lower grades are very difficult to deal with when teaching reading"* (appendix J, p. 197, line 143). Teacher 3 also indicated that children read because *"sometimes they need to identify rhyming words in poems"* (appendix J, p. 197, line 45).

The focus group discussion also later confirmed that peer reading/teaching, poems, songs and rhymes are effective methods in developing early reading skills. In conclusion, according to Keene and Zimmerman

(1997) reading at elementary grades should focus on recognition of common words which will be explicitly, systematically and repeatedly taught over a long period of time in order to develop a strong schema so that children can read with understanding.

The followings are also some of the factors that facilitate the development of reading skills. Some of the factors were observed, while some came from the teachers' interviews or from focus group discussions:

- 5.14.1 Well illustrated story books with big font size which were used in one classroom: teachers indicated that they are easy to read for children as opposed to books with small fonts. I noted in various classes during my observation that children can read bigger fonts read with ease, unlike when reading smaller fonts.
- 5.14.2 In-service training/workshop focusing on teaching reading in vernaculars (Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga). This was an overwhelming need expressed by all the group discussions that it will greatly help improve the teaching of reading in the two languages under study and it is also in line with the NLS theory which advocates for contemporary approaches for literacy development. Some participants said that since they started teaching 24 years ago they never attended a workshop/training specifically focusing on literacy development practices.
- 5.14.3 Stories on flip charts and other reading materials displayed on the class wall to create a print rich classroom environment (please see appendix K). I earlier indicated in 3.2 (chapter three) that engagement with a print rich environment with texts and pictures motivates children to learn to read (Clay, 2005; Raban; 2012; 2014). I observed this in some classrooms where some children read alone from the classroom walls during break time.
- 5.14.4 Familiarity with the directional movement concept of left to right – top to bottom is also said to add great value to the development of reading skills in elementary classrooms (Clay, 2005; Raban; 2012; 2014). Please see appendix L. Teacher 8 stated that “*by pointing words that they are reading from left to right – top to bottom, I do note that one has learned how to read or not.*” I observed some children pointing with their fingers (from left to right – top to bottom) to follow when reading. This strategy is reinforced by the teacher in the whole class during reading.



- 5.14.5 Reading at the pace or tempo of natural speech is also a very important skill that should be reinforced by primary teachers to develop reading skills (see 2.11). As indicated in 5.8 above (Teacher 2, p. #00) during teaching while I was observing Oshindonga lesson.
- 5.14.6 According to some teachers, blending letters (as earlier noted in 3.3.1, Chall, 1976; 1989; 1996; Snider, 1992 – chapter three) and reinforcing the correct use of punctuation marks develop reading skills effectively. Some teachers responded as such when I asked them (during interviews – see appendix J, p. 197, line 140) about the factors which develop reading in Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga. I also observed that most teachers were reinforcing the correct use of punctuation marks, for example when introducing the lesson, Teacher 11 reminded the children about the punctuation marks which guide us when reading while Teacher 12 consistently reminded the children to observe the punctuation marks as they read in order to improve their reading skills.
- 5.14.7 The community where the child stays also plays a main role in the development of reading skills of a child. As Vygotsky argued, language development happens in the community or the home of the child (Mercer and Howe, 2012). In the same vein, the NLS argues that language development happens within one's social environment (Stephen, 2000; Mills, 2010). As Teacher 12 stated *“ahm, the factors that, the ones that are enabling the kids to read well is like in the community where they stay, uhm, some of them from the home they have already speak their language, so that also contribute to them to, to, or enable them to, to read and may, some of them they read literatures, they listen to their radios they, there are many sources of our reading in the language in the community to, it also help them to boost the reading in their language* (appendix J, p. 197, line 170). Teacher 12 also suggests that when children listen to the radio in their first language it adds value to the development of their reading skills.
- 5.14.8 Having sufficient readers (books) with familiar texts and using children's prior knowledge (as noted in 3.3.3., Chall, 1976; 1989; 1996, chapter three) (also see 5.11 above). According to the Text Book policy, when children are not sharing books “it will have a direct and measurable impact on the quality of learning opportunity for all learners” (p. 3).

As stated by Teacher 2 *“the challenges are the children who are not exposed, not exposed to materials, reading materials, there are no enough readers.”* Adding to that, Teacher 10 said *“we do not have enough readers ... the child needs simple stories which are interesting and at their*

level.” Teacher 11 also argued that “*we have a great needs of reading books. The Oshikwanyama books are not enough and the ones we have does not really have context which can be read by a child to learn Oshikwanyama well.*” Teacher 12 further added that “*readers are not, are not..... at the moment is a curriculum revised. In Oshikwanyama we really having a problem with the reading, the readers, they are not enough. Only few, we’re not, we’re not having enough readers.*”

Furthermore, with regard to familiar text Teacher 9 remarked that “*Each Monday I do give ... words that are difficult, so they practice before we read the story then they are already familiar with such words, those words which are quite difficult they are already familiar. This makes one, especially if he is able to read all words well to develop interest in what is being read.*” The above explanations mean that by not having sufficient readers or readers which do not have familiar words which are at the level of the children is a challenge in developing reading skills in the two languages (Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga). Regarding prior knowledge activation, I observed one teacher who started the lesson by singing a song of vowels sounds to activate the children’s prior knowledge where the teacher later asked children about sounds learned the previous day as part of prior knowledge activation. The teacher further asked children to give her words containing a digraph of a given sound and wrote them on the chalkboard to introduce her lesson.

5.14.9 Using cooperative learning as indicated earlier (3.2.3, in chapter 3) which is based on Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory and is used for problem solving where individuals work together in unstructured groups. (Doolittle, 1997; Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998; Slavin, 2011; Mercer and Howe, 2012) (Please see 5.8, page 97 above for more explanation).

5.14.10 Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS): I found the use of HOTS at JP to be generally low (4 out of 12 teachers), where HOTS was used showed that it is very effective for developing reading skills. As highlighted above (5.12), the use of HOTS actively engages the children and enables them to think critically (cognitively). I noted that HOTS is used with activities such as games, jumbled words, using crossword puzzles, asking children to retell or roleplay the stories they read, using acrostic poems as well as asking non-literal questions from the stories read. As Teacher 4 said “*after reading I can ask him to retell what he read about. If he can retell what he read, then that shows that he understand*”.

The following factors were indicated by teachers during the focus group discussions as other factors influencing the development of reading skills in mother tongue at JP:

5.14.11 School attendance is also one important factor in developing reading skills as indicated in 2.12.4, chapter two. This factor was mentioned by some teachers during the focus group discussions, who said that *“school attendance is very important for the child to learn to read because the more he come to school, the more he learn how to read because we teach reading every day”*. According to Kotte, Lietz and Lopez (2005) children develop early literacy much earlier if they are consistently in school as opposed to when they are frequently absent.

5.14.12 Time devoted for reading: The more the children read, the more they develop their reading skills. This emerged from the focus group discussions as one teacher said more *“practice makes perfect.”* In 5.7 above I indicated that Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga subjects have nine periods per week in the JP timetable, although there is no national policy guidance on how much time should be specifically for reading.

5.14.13 Teaching of digraphs and trigraphs and using the reading corner correctly: I observed this in some classes for example where Teacher 5 remarked *“from there we come to the next step where we focus on digraphs, before we continue with the trigraphs.”* Please also see page 19 above, last paragraph.

5.14.14 Using scaffolding and modelling teaching approaches with the correct intonation. Please see 5.8 above (p. 19) where the teacher used the DRTA teaching strategy for the cycle of predict-read-confirm-predict to guide children’s reading.

5.14.15 Parental involvement: As outlined earlier in 2.12.1 (chapter two), that the consistent partnership between parents and teachers when regularly participating in school activities is also a very important activity which helps to develop the reading skills. Please see 5.6 above where Teacher 5 remarked that *“children of nowadays do not want to speak Oshikwanyama at all, they only want to speak English both at home and school since we are in town. This is to be blamed on their parents who think that English is the best language more than Oshikwanyama. Parents do not want to talk Oshiwambo with their children at home and this is very bad.* This resonates with my earlier indication (chapter two, 2.12.1) that children’s literacy is significantly influenced by parents’ involvement and collaboration with the school.

## 5.15 Factors hindering the development of reading skills

If the children are not exposed to reading materials and they have lack of readers at school it will negatively affect the development of their reading skills. The lack of readers is caused by the poor market of children publishing since the task is left on the hands of the publishers who are more profit driven than having a social responsibility. Furthermore, as indicated in 5.11 above, not all children will afford to buy books due to their socio economic factors.

The above is in line with what I earlier indicated in chapter two (2.13.2) that publishing children's material is very problematic in Namibia (Tötemeyer, 2013) where there are no authors to publish on African languages, especially for children's stories. As earlier stated (2.13.2), the publication of reading materials in the indigenous languages has always been scarce since the 1800s, although the first Oshindonga book was published in 1877, while the first Oshikwanyama books named "*Okambo kotete*" and "*Okambo kounona*" were published in 1937 at Oniipa (Tirronen, 1977).

According to the teachers interviewed, there is a lack of commitment from parents because they are not helping their children to develop reading skills. Some teachers indicated that parents feel that teaching is 100% a teacher's responsibility and this causes delays of reading skills development. Teacher 11 said "*I think here the parents are involved and they are to blame because they do not have interest or commitment so that we put the child in between for effective learning. These children also do not know the value of education since they were not informed about it*" (appendix J, p. 197, line 151). This means that some children do not read at home because they are not motivated to do so, while some are not enlightened about the value of education at home. (See 5.6 above).

The followings are also some of the factors that hinder the development of reading skills. Some of the factors were observed, while some came from the teachers' interviews or from focus group discussions:

5.15.1 Poor knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds (phonics): If the teacher does not know the correct letter sound relationships and how this works in phonics, this is a limitation to developing reading skills. According to my observations, some teachers are confused about the relationship between letter sounds (phonics) and letter names. It appears that they were not taught the correct letter relationship of letters and sounds (phonics) in their pre-service studies. Teacher 2 argued that "*the other challenge here is that the, the letter sounds are very challenging and not*

*many people have mastered them since we were not taught them at College, especially in Oshiwambo language*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 26). This reflects the literature (chapter two, 2.12.5) which states that teacher training institutions such as former Colleges of Education and UNAM did not prepare the teachers in teaching early literacy and reading, especially with focus to mother tongue teaching methodology and subject knowledge (MoE, 2011; Lumbu et al., 2015)

Additionally, the above is congruent with what I earlier discussed in 5.8 above that Teacher 3 responded that *“I don’t know, maybe through reading, that’s difficult”* when I asked her how reading skills are developed in Oshindonga, while Teacher 8 acknowledged that the phonics are indeed difficult by saying *“oh, teaching Oshindonga, especially I don’t know the letter sounds (phonics). They are very difficult for me..! Because I cannot model them correctly to the children”* as outlined above in 5.8 (appendix J, p. 197, line 111). This also confirms what I earlier stated in chapter two (2.12.5) that a number of educators in Namibia have inadequate understanding of teaching literacy and reading.

5.15.2 Lack of a methodology for teaching reading: Some teachers do not know how to teach reading at all and they completely have no idea as Teacher 3 responded that *“I don’t know, maybe through reading”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 38) when asked how reading skills are developed in Oshindonga. As noted earlier in chapter two (2.10) by Trudell and Schroeder (2007), early teaching reading methodologies should focus on auditory recognition of phonemes, encourage syllable recognition, tone and vowel length awareness, practice on long series of syllables and should include chunking of words.

The above is clearly in line with literature referred to (2.12.5) in chapter two which states that pre-service teachers are poorly prepared in early literacy teaching in mother tongue and are not familiar with methods of teaching reading.

5.15.3 Different ethnic groups: The fact that some of the school populations are made up of speakers of different languages such as Oshiwambo, Ovimbundu, Portuguese, Basters/Coloureds, Damaras, Kavangos and Afrikaners poses a threat to developing reading skills because not all children are able to speak Oshiwambo since they speak a different language at home. Teacher 4 stated that, *“you know some children are not Oshiwambo speakers by birth and they use another language at home. It is very challenging because when you are teaching Oshindonga, these children are always struggling to catch up”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 51). While Teacher 12 added that *“the*

*limiting factors are only these ones that ... some of the learners they are not like really, uhm..., let me say Oshiwambo speaking people because they are from different places, some are from Angola and you can see that their languages sometimes..., some they only speak Portuguese, they mostly the language they speak at home some can be Portuguese, or in other languages those one they limit them to be like really able, or it doesn't like, they limit them to from really knowing a language very well when it comes to reading"* (appendix J, p. 197, line 171).

Furthermore, the issue of Oshiwambo dialects as indicated earlier in 2.2 (chapter two) that Oshiwambo language consists of eight different dialects (Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Oshingandjera, Oshikolonkadhi, Oshimbalantu, Oshimbadja, Oshikwaluudhi and Otshikwambi) also has implications for developing reading skills. If an Oshikwanyama child is attending Oshindonga medium school (and vice-versa) s/he suffers since there are words which completely differ, although these eight are cognate languages. For example to “run” in Oshikwanyama is “*tondoka*”, and in Oshindonga is “*matuka*”, while “wash” in Oshikwanyama is “*kosha*” and in Oshindonga is “*yoga*”.

These words can be challenging for a speaker of a different dialect because the home languages differs as Teacher 9 argued “*they may read based on his or her mother language, either Oshingandjera, Otshikwambi, or Oshindonga and mainly when they are reading one will attempt to put things in his mother language like the way they do at home. So it is very difficult for one to read with a correct intonation of Oshikwanyama ... that is also one big challenge.*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 126). Although the children are allowed to speak their home language in class, they are restricted to learn all the skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) of the language which is used as a medium of instruction at the school (i.e. Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga).

For example “*Olupale*” in Oshikwanyama means a sitting place in a traditional homestead, while in Oshindonga it means a place where harvested crops are gathered. “*Oshinyanga*” in Oshikwanyama means a church office, while in Oshindonga it means a sitting place in a traditional homestead. All these words are spelled precisely the same, but differ only by way of intonation.

The issue of Oshiwambo dialects is not only limited to children, but teachers are also affected as I earlier indicated in chapter four (4.5.2) that Teacher 6 is a native speaker of Oshindonga and she somehow struggles to speak Oshikwanyama; hence mixing it most of the times with Oshindonga

due to her mother tongue influence. I observed Teacher 6 giving instruction to an Oshikwanyama child speaking in her native language (Oshindonga) to run and get her a chalk from the office, i.e. ‘*matuka wuye wuka talelendje ompya*<sup>61</sup> *kombelewa*.’ In Oshikwanyama this sentence should be “*tondoka uye uka talelenge omhnja*<sup>62</sup> *kombelewa*.”

Due to the fact that the two languages are cognate, the child somehow understood that the teacher is sending her the chalk from the office, but since ‘*matuka*’ and ‘*tondoka*’ are completely different words, she did not run because she did not understand that the teacher needed the chalk urgently. As reported earlier, Teacher 7 is a native speaker of Oshikwanyama and teaches Oshindonga which she is fluent in, but she also at times minimally mix Oshikwanyama words during Oshindonga lessons due to mother tongue influence which she said mostly happens when she is reprimanding the children. In relation to this, please also see 5.3 above on page 5, last paragraph.

5.15.4 Transfer between schools: The transferred children can be challenging, especially if they come from a rural school to an urban school because the level of understanding is mostly different since at times urban schools are more advanced in teaching reading, plus the benefit of the exposure of the print media environment. The issue of changing teachers also has negative implications on the development of reading skills because the child first has to be comfortable with the teachers, as well as the other children in the class. “*The challenge is the learners that come, let say the learner just came, he was not taught Oshiwambo before, or he was taught Oshiwambo but he’s another language like Oshikwanyama. It’s a challenge, or learners that are transferred, their, those are transferred, they only know the basics. Like some of them, they only know vowels and that’s it.*” Teacher 3 remarked (appendix J, p. 197, line 36). As per the example given above by Teacher 3, the transferred child can also be linguistically challenged because if a child speak Oshikwanyama at home (or it’s his/her mother tongue) and s/he transfers to Oshindonga school. Furthermore, the transferred child may also be psychologically affected by being in a complete new environment with strangers.

5.15.5 Punctuation marks: As indicated earlier above (5.4, 5.5 and 5.14.16), the correct response to punctuation needs to be reinforced in order to develop the reading skills. However, if the function of punctuation marks is not understood, and readers are not able to respond correctly, it will

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<sup>61</sup> Ompya means the chalk for writing on the chalkboard in Oshindonga.

<sup>62</sup> Omhnja means the chalk for writing on the chalkboard in Oshikwanyama.

negatively affect the development of the reading skills. This was also said in the group discussion that the lack of use of punctuation marks contributes to poor reading skills as Teacher 2 remarked *“when the child is reading s/he should be using the punctuation marks correctly. Like at our level, s/he should be using the punctuation marks well.”* In addition, when I asked Teacher 4 about how he measure children’s reading abilities in Oshindonga, he responded that *“sometimes one can read, but not according to the punctuation marks and that’s where we focus more so that they can read properly. That is how I find out who knows how to read and who does not know.”* As stated by Piper, Schroeder and Trudell (2016) in chapter two (2.11), teaching reading should include the ability to read accurately with correct prosody or expression guided by the punctuation marks.

5.15.6 Teachers’ over-confidence: Based on my observation, interviews and focus group discussions, some teachers are over-confident and see themselves as omniscient in the process; hence they do not ask other teachers about how to develop reading skills. On the contrary, according to the focus group discussions some teachers are also selfish and do not want to share with others about how best to teach reading skills.

5.15.7 Digraphs, trigraphs, quadgraphs and diphthongs: It is important to understand how these language aspects function in texts for effective development of reading skills. However, in most cases teachers do not understand how they function or they do not know how to teach how to teach children to decode them effectively. Teacher 4 stated that *“the problem is only with the children who are challenged by reading digraphs. I noted that a lot are challenged by digraphs and trigraphs so much. So, what didn’t go well in this lesson is the digraphs”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 46). Teacher 10 added that *“this really help in teaching reading ... especially the digraphs and trigraphs ... do help kids to, to, to, mm, to.... blend letter-sound”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 140). Apart from the teacher interviews, the group discussions also pointed out quadgraphs and diphthongs as other challenging aspects in developing reading skills at JP phase.

5.15.8 English dominance: As mentioned earlier above in 5.6 and 5.9, children of the present days do not want to talk Oshiwambo, but instead they prefer talking English even during Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga lesson. Teacher 9 argued that *“this is difficult to them and that is why every time we read I have to remind them that we are not reading English, but we are reading Oshikwanyama”* (appendix J, p. 197, line 126). I also observed children speaking English during



Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga lessons, although they were supposed to be interacting only in the vernacular during those lessons.

The above is congruent to what I earlier noted in 2.8 (chapter two) that the contributing factors to poor reading achievements in indigenous languages across the curriculum can be a result caused by English as a medium of instruction (Smit, 2012; SACMEQ III, 2012) as allowed subject to the minister's approval. As earlier reported, English in Namibia has dominated the indigenous languages to the extent that the young people do not want to associate themselves with their mother tongues and instead they would prefer to speak English in vernacular lessons, or even worse some individuals would prefer to introduce themselves as English speakers ignoring their mother tongue (as noted in 2.8, chapter two). This is very appalling!

- 5.15.9 Lack of readers (books) with familiar texts and not using relevant children's prior knowledge: Teacher 10 remarked that *"the challenges are mainly we do not have books with stories that are, ... so interesting like folk tales for example stories talking about monsters because if the child is reading something interesting he or she becomes very curious to get the outcome of the story. If the child is reading a story with pictures then it stimulates his or her imagination in a way that she or he can figure out what is happening. This makes them to be interested when there are story books that are interesting because this makes the child to imagine like it is real (appendix J, p. 197, line 141).*

I have observed by evaluating the readers and also noted during interviews and group discussions that some readers are exotic with no connection of local context. I earlier noted this in chapter two (2.13.2) that some published African languages readers are based on the Western context in terms of contents and illustrations and this makes them difficult for African children to understand which is in line with the above finding. This echoes Naidoo et al. (2014) sentiments that "books in African languages are rare, and learners do not have the opportunity to read in their home language."

- 5.15.10 Pronunciation: In my observations, I noticed that some teachers are not pronouncing the words in Oshiwambo correctly to the children. This is in most cases caused by mother tongue influence. Please see 5.8 above where Teacher 2 reinforced the correct pronunciation of words which they have to use when reading. I earlier indicated this in chapter two (2.11) that teaching

reading should focus on correct pronunciation of words in order to develop oral reading fluency (Piper, Schroeder and Trudell, 2016).

5.15.11 Vowel confusion: Some children confuse vowels which can be very challenging when they try to read certain words. Teacher 9 argued “*I only noted vowels as the main area where they confuse them between Oshiwambo and English*” (appendix J, p. 197, line 130). This is caused by the fact letter “A” has many acceptable sounds in English (i.e. apple, aeroplane, already, made, etc.) which children end up using in Oshiwambo languages where it is wrong except for the ‘apple’ sound.

5.15.12 Teachers’ unpreparedness: For example what I earlier stated above in 5.5 that children are reading in a chanting or reciting way repeating the same passage (or text) without understanding and without the teacher making any effort or paying attention to correct them. In some cases the teachers will be doing some other things (like operating his/her mobile phone) and blindly keeping on saying “next”. This obviously indicates that the teacher was not prepared for the lesson and is not paying attention to the learners’ reading development, and not trying to see what their reading skills developmental needs are. I further observed a number of teachers who were not prepared and they made children to do choral reading, echo reading, individual silent reading and singing all over in one lesson without giving any support.

5.15.13 Lack of teaching aids: This also negatively affects the development of reading skills as I noted at a number of schools observed and it is very alarming. Some teachers are teaching reading without relevant stories that are interesting to children, e.g. an interesting short story written on the poster. As Teacher 10 remarked that the children “*needs simple stories which are interesting and at their level.*”

5.15.14 Digital Literacy: I found the lack of digital literacy at most of the schools (11 out of 12) which negatively affect the development of reading skills. As indicated in 5.13 above, I only saw teachers at Mwayasha primary school using internet for educational purposes for example browsing the internet for information to prepare lessons and downloading you-tube videos for educational purposes. Davies, 2011, p. 1961, that “internet provides instant access to vast amounts of information” for teaching, but at 11 of the schools I visited, teachers were not using internet to access information as noted by Davis (2011) above. Teachers said that internet only provides a vast amount of information in English language as stated by Nyqvist (2016), that the English

language materials are freely available everywhere (including online sites) and they are also not expensive. However, teachers said that Oshiwambo languages are not available on internet as outlined in the NLS theory that online information are exotic in nature and cannot be used for local languages teaching, unless the teacher has to translate the contents to fit their own contexts, but this is not always an easy exercise. Furthermore, this is a limitation to having access to literacy pedagogies online in local languages (Mills, 2010) and is a great challenge in the digital age.

5.15.15 Readers not in line with the curriculum: As stated above (5.11), there are also some readers which are not consistent with the curriculum which I picked up during my classroom observations when I examined the readers closely and this contribute to the poor development of reading skills. This finding confirmed my observation as earlier noted in chapter two (2.6) that there is a great need for readers in the indigenous languages across the curriculum to be published. As said earlier, the private sector publishers are tasked with the publication of readers (textbooks) which are in line with the curriculum which are then evaluated by NIED prior implementation with the schools. As noted in the Textbook policy (2008) that the textbooks should be developed “following the curriculum and syllabi developed by NIED” (p. 4).

The following factors were indicated by teachers during the focus group discussions as other factors hindering the development of reading skills at JP:

5.15.16 Reflective teaching: Some teachers do not reflect on what they taught and this has a negative effect on teaching reading.

5.15.17 Inappropriate language use: This is also one of the factors which hinder reading skills development because if the teacher is using incomprehensible terms for instructions, then the children will not understand. I noted this during observation in one class where the teacher used the word ‘elucidate’ when asking the children to explain what was in the story they read about. It was clear that the children did not understand him and he had to simplify what he meant using simple words and only after that they (children) responded positively.

5.15.18 Lack of in-service training/workshop focusing on reading development in vernaculars (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga): This confirmed what I earlier indicated in chapter two (2.12.5) that teachers are not familiar with methods of teaching reading, perhaps because they were not

taught to do so at pre-service teacher training institutions and have not received in-service training in this.

5.15.19The Integrated Planning Manual (IPM: MoEAC, 2015): The IPM is not clear on the letter-sound relationship (phonics). According to the teachers interviewed the IPM is more focusing on single letter sound and it also covers things which are not taught in some grades. For example digraphs, trigraphs and quadgraphs are not taught in grade one, but are indicated as taught from grade one in the IPM which is misleading teachers. The IPM is only in English, but not translated in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga so that teachers can read it with understanding.

5.15.20Children with special needs: The children with special needs are quite challenging when it comes to developing reading skills because of their conditions and nature. Chall argued that her stages of teaching reading may not work with the children with special needs and children with learning difficulties because of their unique conditions which need a different approach (see 3.3.6 above).

## **5.16 Conclusion**

This chapter presented, analysed and discussed the data in view of the three theoretical frameworks used in the study. The chapter outlined a number of aspects related to the development of reading skills in JP phase such as the importance of reading in mother tongue, a graphic display of the six schools principals' responses, teachers' understanding of what a good reader is.

The following topics were also discussed in the chapter: teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga, English language dominance, time devoted to reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga, methodologies of teaching reading in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga, using one on one interactions, language policy and its implementation, reading resources, cognitive reading, use of digital literacy in teaching reading in mother tongue, factors facilitating the development of reading skills in mother tongue and the factors hindering the development of reading skills. In the next concluding chapter I will present the research findings and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I present the main findings, conclusions and recommendations emerging from the previous chapter where data was presented, analysed and discussed. In particular, I present conclusions focusing on my research question(s) where I first outline factors which facilitate the development of reading skills in mother tongue as well as the factors hindering the development of reading skills at Junior Primary. The chapter also presents conclusions on the issues attached to the research question in line with the theoretical frameworks. The chapter concludes with a call for further research in aspects found necessary.

#### **6.2 Summary of the research design**

The study focused on the development of reading skills in two dialects of the Namibian Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga). The first objective of this qualitative study was to look at the development of reading skills in the Oshiwambo languages of the Oshana region of Namibia: A case study of Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga in JP phase (grades 2-3). Secondly, the factors which facilitate or impede the development of reading skills in the two indigenous language indicated above were also outlined. Thirdly, the study was to find out if there are enough readers in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga. As mentioned earlier in chapter one (1.7), the study results will directly assist teachers to improve teaching reading in Oshiwambo languages to the benefit of the children, which eventually will improve performance across the curriculum.

The study was conducted in the Oshana region in northern Namibia (near Angola) and is motivated by Töttemeyer's (2009) argument that there is a lack of reading culture which affects the development of reading skills, particularly in indigenous languages. From the extensive review of literature I did, it emerges that little research has been conducted on the development of reading skills in indigenous languages in Namibia. This finding is in line with Smith (2012) who argues that little research has been conducted in this area, hence there is a lack of information on indigenous language learning and development in Namibia. This study is unique because it is the first of its kind to be conducted in Namibia as based on the extensive review I did, supported by the above authors (Töttemeyer, 2009 and Smit, 2012).

The study was based on the interpretive paradigm, although there are some few elements of positivism used as explained earlier in chapter four.

### **6.3 Summary of findings**

The study concluded that the reading skills in Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga in JP phase (grade 2 and 3) are developed using the factors indicated below to facilitate the development of reading skills. The factors are presented in groups as follows:

- Factors associated with decoding skills
- Factors associated with automaticity
- Factors associated with reading with understanding
- Factors associated with enjoyment of reading and building a reading culture
- Factors associated with teacher development
- In-service training/workshop focusing on teaching reading in vernaculars.
- Factors associated with resources

Furthermore, the study concluded with factors which hinder the development of reading skills and they are categorised in the following groups:

- Factors associated with resources
- Factors associated with lack of parental support and English dominance
- Factors affecting reading with understanding
- Factors associated with poor teaching skills
- Factors associated with inter-lingual differences

The factors are unpacked in more details in the following section in line with the theoretical frameworks used in the study where possible.

### **6.3.1 Factors facilitating the development of reading skills in mother tongue**

#### **6.3.1.1 Factors associated with decoding skills**

##### **6.3.1.1.1 The fingers strategy**

The use of fingers to teach the vowels (please see in chapter five, 5.8, figure 10 and 11) where the five vowels are allocated to the five fingers which are then allocated numbers to avoid confusing children. This strategy uses the phonics approach using vowels sounds to develop reading skills and it is in line with the initial reading stage of Chall's reading development stages. The use of fingers to teach vowels is locally innovated, hence is considered highly effective when compared to some exotic approaches for teaching reading as Trudell and Schroeder (2007) argued that elementary teachers should use local approaches for teaching reading as opposed to other exotic strategies.

As I earlier stated in chapter two, learning to read in African Bantu languages sometimes fails because the teaching methodology is modelled on methods that have been found to be effective in reading English, e.g. whole word and whole language strategies which are not always effective with how to teach reading in transparent, consistent orthographies (e.g. Oshiwambo). Literacy taught in this way fails significantly to address the features of agglutinative African languages (Trudell and Schroeder, 2007, p. 166) because the orthography representation differs. Furthermore, in agglutinative languages the whole word recognition is not effective because readers have to take note of every element of every agglutinated word.

##### **6.3.1.1.2 The phonics approach**

The phonics approach which uses the alphabetic principles was found highly effective in developing reading skills at JP. The phonics approach is omnipresent in Namibia because learning to decode is easier in languages with consistent orthographies (Land, 2015) such as Oshiwambo languages. As earlier stated in chapter two (2.2), Oshiwambo alphabet letters only represent one direct sound from each letter. Yet my findings noted that there is an overuse of the phonics method by teachers which is happening because Oshiwambo language has a consistent transparent orthography. Teachers are therefore finding the phonics approach easier to use and eventually ends up overusing the approach. The phonics approach is in line with stage one of Chall which is the initial reading stage.

#### **6.3.1.1.3 The hands clapping strategy**

This strategy is used to assist children develop an awareness of how words are made up of syllables that can be thought of as separate, which they need to be aware of in order to decode words. Please also see 5.8 in chapter five. This strategy is recommended for teaching early reading in Chall's stage one (1976; 1989; 1996; Snider, 1992) because it is important for developing phonemic awareness which is important for beginner readers.

#### **6.3.1.1.4 The use of digraphs and trigraphs.**

I observed some teachers using digraphs and trigraphs for teaching reading to develop reading skills which is essential for teaching literacy because becoming literate does not happen automatically (Wolf and Stoodley, 2008 – chapter three, 3.3), since it is not innate like how one learns to walk. The use of digraphs and trigraphs are suited for use in Chall's stage two onwards. I also found reading corners to be effective in developing reading skills, but only when used correctly (see chapter five, 5.11).

#### **6.3.1.1.5 The directional movement concept of left to right – top to bottom and blending letters**

I found out that the directional movement concept of left to right – top to bottom is a strategy which is used by teachers where children point with their fingers to show where they are reading. It is very effective for developing reading skills because it informs the teachers which words learners have difficulties with and prompt assistance is done as noted by Clay (2005) and Raban (2012; 2014) in chapter three (3.2). Teacher 8 stated that when children point at words they are reading she consciously monitors how they read; hence I find it to be a good strategy for developing reading skills. In addition, the above is congruent to the Chall's pre-reading stage of emergent literacy where children learns that reading is done from left to right – top to bottom.

I noted that the blending of letters is also a useful approach in developing reading skills because it develops decoding skills which are important in early reading. The above finding confirms what is stated in chapter two (2.10) that early reading teaching methodology should encompass aspects of decoding and blending skills. The above is in line with Chall's stage one for initial reading and decoding where children read by grunting and barking at print to decoding letters in order to blend words for reading purposes.



### **6.3.1.2 Factors associated with automaticity**

#### **6.3.1.2.1 Using competition, flash cards and pictures**

My study found out that using competition for reading related activities where the winner is rewarded is highly effective for developing reading skills. I observed one teacher using flash cards which were read by children in a competing manner and the winner was rewarded with an eraser. Furthermore, during focus group discussions, some teachers reported that children will compete keenly in demonstrating reading skills if there is an item to be won such as a ruler or an eraser. The active competing is consistent with the sociocultural theory because it activates the children's ZPD to be able to solve problems effectively. The use of flash cards (5.8; 5.14) and pictures are also important for developing reading skills because they help the reader to associate the form of a word with its meaning and develop a strong schema. This is in line with the sociocultural theory which states that pictures enhance children's reading skills (also see 3.2 in chapter two).

#### **6.3.1.2.2 Time devoted for reading and school attendance**

My study found out that time devoted for reading in the classroom is very important in developing reading skills at JP phase because the more children read in a certain language, the more fluent they become in that particular language (Please see chapter five, 5.14.11). The time devoting strategy is consistent with Chall's stage two which deals with developing fluency in young children. The school attendance is also another finding which resonates with Kotte, Lietz and Lopez (2005) statement that children are highly likely to develop reading skills if they are consistently at school. The above finding was also confirmed by some teachers that school attendance is very important for the child to learn to read because the more s/he come to school, the more s/he learns how to read (see chapter five, 5.14.10) through consistent practice and exposure.

#### **6.3.1.2.3 Drilling, repetition, peer reading/teaching, songs, poems, rhymes and short stories**

My study found that drilling/repetition (or reciting), peer reading/teaching, songs and rhymes as indicated in chapter three (3.3.1), poems and short stories are approaches which effectively develop reading skills for children, but only when used correctly for that purpose. For example they should be at the children's level as advocated for in the sociocultural theory. This is because repeated exposure to the printed form of a word or using rhymes or poems enables a reader to develop a strong schema for that word, and so to

recognise it effortlessly. The activities listed above are used in Chall's pre-reading stage, as well as stage one and two to develop reading skills effectively.

### **6.3.1.3 Factors associated with reading with understanding**

#### **6.3.1.3.1 The time allocation strategy and reading pace or tempo**

The strategy of allocating time for children to read certain passages in order to improve fluency is also effective in developing reading skills as mentioned by Teacher 9 that allocating limited minutes to children to read helps to develop their reading fluency effectively. Once reading fluency is developed, and then the reading with understanding is facilitated because the reader reads faster in order to remember what s/he read. This strategy is in line with stage two of Chall where fluency happens in order to increase the reading rate of children.

#### **6.3.1.3.2 The Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)**

My study found the DRTA strategy effective in developing reading skills because it guides children's reading while critically engaged with text to achieve comprehension. This is because the DRTA strategy uses a cycle of predict-read-confirm-predict to cognitively engage children during reading and help them to easily understand what is read. The DRTA is important in early reading because it develops children holistically, especially if they are reading in a familiar language (Kembo 2000, as cited in Mgqwashu, 2013). Furthermore, the DRTA ensures that reading is done as a cognitive exercise, rather than an oral performance which is in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (ZPD) where the problem is solved cognitively under the guidance of the most capable peer.

#### **6.3.1.3.3 Using scaffolding, modelling and cooperative learning strategies**

The findings above are a confirmation of what I earlier noted in chapter three (3.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3) that in order for teachers to effectively develop children's reading skills in the junior primary phase, the sociocultural theory, incorporating the concept of the zone of proximal development argues that the following things should be done: scaffolding of reading activities, modelling of reading activities, and using cooperative learning in reading activities (Mercer, 2000; Clay, 2005; Gauvain, 2008, Mercer and Howe, 2012; Doyle, 2013; Raban, 2014)..

Additionally, during my observations, I found modelling used by Teacher 2, as noted in chapter five (5.8) where the teacher modelled reading by demonstrating how to read with the correct tempo, and children imitated (echoed) him which in the process develops the children's reading skills. Furthermore, I observed cooperative learning being used by one teacher where she put children in unstructured groups and asked them to answer some questions. This echoes the sociocultural theory which states that cooperative learning is used for problem solving where individuals work together in unstructured groups to solve problems (Doolittle, 1997; Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998; Slavin, 2011; Mercer and Howe, 2012).

#### **6.3.1.3.4 Using the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)**

During my observations, interviews and group discussions I found out that the use of HOTS is generally low at JP. However, the four teachers (4 out of 12) who used it showed that it is an effective strategy for developing reading skills when used, for example by asking children non-literal questions, etc. The HOTS are used for problem solving which is done through critical thinking as related to in chapter three (3.2) where Vygotsky argues that language development is associated with cognitive development which happens in the ZPD (Gauvain, 2008). Furthermore, Chall noted (chapter three, 3.3) that reading is a form of problem solving through the process of assimilation and accommodation (Chall, 1976; 1996) which relates to the use of the HOTS in relation to her stages of reading. The NLS (chapter three, 3.4) also refers to what people do with reading skills as cognitive activities which happen within the society and it also involves critical thinking when one is learning to read because they have to be cognitively engaged with text (Street, 2003; 2005) in order to solve the problem.

#### **6.3.1.4 Factors associated with enjoyment of reading and building a reading culture**

##### **6.3.1.4.1 Using one-on-one interactions, consistent motivation and reading corners**

Using one-on-one (face to face) individual support and motivation/encouragement is also an effective strategy to develop reading skills. As indicated earlier in 3.2 in chapter 3, in terms of the sociocultural theory, language develops through adult-child interactions, but it can also develop through child to child interactions where the less capable peer learns from the more capable peer (Mercer and Howe, 2012). According to my observation and group discussions, I found out that these approaches are best used with the children with special needs or children with serious reading problems where interactions with the teacher help them to develop their reading skills. My other finding from observation and group

discussions is that consistent motivation/encouragement for children to read also inculcates a reading culture. The use of reading corners is consistent with Chall's stage three where reading for learning happens and it also instil a reading culture.

#### **6.3.1.4.2 Children's own words, games, word puzzles and word tracking**

My study found out that children develop reading skills effectively when using their own words to construct own sentences (with flash cards) as indicated in figure 6 (5.8) in chapter five. This is because they use words from their mother tongue which are already comprehensible to them and they enjoy it. This relates to what I earlier outlined in chapter two (2.9) that the use of mother tongue improves learning with understanding because it is based on clear understanding and on links with indigenous knowledge. The use of games, word puzzles, word tracking are also useful in developing reading skills as noted by Ngula (2011) and JP Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga Syllabi (MoE, 2015). Teacher 10 also said that games, word puzzles and word tracking are helpful in teaching reading in JP phase. The above activities are part of child play which is in line with the sociocultural theory which states that play greatly develop children cognitively (Puentedura, 2012).

#### **6.3.1.4.3 Well illustrated story books with big font size**

I found out that bigger font size is read by children with ease as opposed to books with smaller fonts. I noted in various classes during my observation that children can read bigger fonts (from point 16 and above) with ease, unlike when reading smaller fonts of 12 points and below. Additionally, well-illustrated books with interesting pictures for children are also found to be very interesting to read to children, especially if they have a bigger font pt. 16 and above. As earlier outlined in 6.3.1.2.1 above, the use of pictures is consistent with the sociocultural theory.

#### **6.3.1.4.4 Print rich classroom environment**

The study also found out that reading materials displayed on the class wall to create a print rich classroom environment (please see appendix K) are highly effective in developing reading skills (e.g. pictures, etc.). As earlier stated in chapter three (3.2), engagement with a print rich environment with texts and pictures motivates children to learn to read (Clay, 2005; Raban; 2012; 2014). The above is consistent with the NLS theory which advocates for literacy practices of engaging with different types of texts (Gee, 2015)

which are important in improving reading skills. The print rich classroom environment is also consistent with the sociocultural theory which argues that pictures enhance children's reading skills.

#### **6.3.1.4.5 The DEAR strategy**

I found out that the DEAR strategy in Namibia is used in the reading lesson recently introduced in the revised JP curriculum for 2015. The reading lesson adds value to the development of reading skills in general, although not specifically to the indigenous languages only. This is because the DEAR strategy enables good habits of reading where children are consistently exposed to reading activities and eventually 'practice makes perfect.' The DEAR strategy is a good practice (when used appropriately) to develop a reading culture. The DEAR strategy is in line with Chall's stage three where reading to learn happen for meaning making and knowledge accumulation. As per Chall's stage three, children in the DEAR lesson should read independently on their own to master ideas through reading with meaning and eventually develop a love for reading. As stated by Diescho (2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February) in chapter two (2.6) that there is a great need to infuse a reading culture in our children in Namibia. This is because the poor reading culture is believed to have immensely contributed to the high failure rate of learners throughout the schooling system in Namibia (Ithindi, Engelbrecht and de Jager, 2018).

#### **6.3.1.5 Factors associated with teacher development**

##### **6.3.1.5.1 In-service training/workshop focusing on teaching reading in vernaculars**

My questionnaire and focus group discussions data pointed out that the provision of regular in-service training/workshop focused on teaching reading in vernaculars (Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga) are also very important in providing teachers with the necessary skills of developing reading skills socially in the mother tongue. Furthermore, some teachers pointed out that they never received training on teaching reading in vernaculars for the past 24 years since they started teaching. The provision of workshop or training echoes the NLS theory which states that literacy development happens socially (Gee, 2015) in a society. Although, according to the principals (involved in the study), only 50% (6 out of 12) of their teachers received such trainings.

### **6.3.1.6 Factors associated with resources**

#### **6.3.1.6.1 Translation of the curriculum**

I found out that the translation of the curriculum by NIED from English to Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga is highly effective in improving reading skills because the teachers are interpreting the curriculum with full understanding of the context without any language barrier. This is in line with what I noted in chapter two (2.11) that reading in a mother tongue or a language that one is already conversant in enables a reader to read with great understanding. I did not observe the teacher reading the translated curriculum in my study, but it was reported as such by some teachers from their experience during the group discussions.

#### **6.3.1.6.2 The community and parental involvement, sufficient readers with familiar texts and using children's prior knowledge**

I found out that the community where the child stays plays a main role in the development of reading skills of a child which is congruent to Vygotsky's sociocultural which states that language development happens in the community or the home of the child (Mercer and Howe, 2012). As I previously stated, the NLS theory notes that language development happens within one's social environment (Gee, 2015; Mills, 2010; Stephen, 2000) which was exemplified by Teacher 12 as one of the factors developing children's reading skills is the community of the child. Additionally, I also found the consistent parental involvement between parents and teachers a very important activity which greatly helps to develop the reading skills.

My findings indicate that the availability of sufficient readers with familiar texts, either at home or at school adds value to the development of reading skills because the child is constantly exposed to the print media environment. The print media also includes newspapers in the mother tongue as indicated in chapter five, 5.11. The above is rooted in the NLS theory which advocates for literacy practices in the society.

The use of familiar texts echoes Chall's stage two and they are important in developing reading fluency in children. Vygotsky's scaffolding of reading activities also calls for teachers to use familiar texts for effective guidance and support which is at the level of the children (i.e. not too easy and not too difficult). Finally, the use of children's prior knowledge is also equally important in developing readings skills.

However, my finding indicates that only when the relevant prior knowledge is used is it likely to add value. The above is in line with the sociocultural theory which argues that children's prior knowledge is important for cognitive development and the effective learning in the ZPD. Furthermore, cognitive development is important in developing reading skills.

#### **6.3.1.6.3 High achieving children**

General high achievement is a factor I found to effectively develop the reading skills easily because the naturally gifted child does not struggle to read as earlier stated by Teacher 1 (appendix J, p. 197, line 6). Furthermore, high achievement is generally associated with good development of reading skills and the naturally gifted child can develop reading skills easily with little assistance from the teacher, unlike their peers who have poorer general achievement.

### **6.3.2 Factors hindering the development of reading skills**

#### **6.3.2.1 Factors associated with resources**

##### **6.3.2.1.1 Lack of exposure to reading materials and lack of readers**

My study found out that the lack of exposure to reading materials and the lack of enough readers affects the development of reading skills. The above factors are confirmed by what I noted in chapter five (5.11) that there are not sufficient readers at most of the schools (5 out of 6) observed. At some schools there is only one reader '*Pyokola Elaka*', while at some schools there is only a '*Platinum*' reader. All the above indicates that there were not enough readers for all the children. This contravenes the textbook policy (2008) which states that the provision of textbooks should be on a 1:1 learner ratio.

The above finding also confirmed that production in African language remains problematic in Namibia – see chapter two (2.13.2) (Reiner, 2011; C. Bezuidenhout<sup>63</sup>, 2017, Pers. Comm., 21 February; Töttemeyer, 2013). This also relates to what Nyqvist (2016) stated that “even providing only primary textbooks” (p. 8) is deemed very expensive in Namibia (chapter two, 2.13.2).

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<sup>63</sup> Cynthia Bezuidenhout is the Publishing Manager at Namibia Publishing House.

Finally, my finding echoes that of Naidoo et al. (2014) which reported that classrooms in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) had no books and the ones available are not sufficient (see chapter two, 2.13.2). This finding further confirms what I noted in chapter two (2.6) that as a JP curriculum developer based at NIED I have observed that there is a great need of readers in local languages across the JP curriculum.

#### **6.3.2.1.2 The Integrated Planning Manual and children with special needs**

As outlined in the previous chapter (5.15.19), I found that the IPM is not clear on letter-sound relationship (phonics). The IPM shows digraphs, trigraphs and quadgraphs as taught in grade one, which is not correct. Another challenge is that the IPM is only in English and is not translated in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga like other curriculum documents so that teachers can read it with understanding. My data from the focus groups indicated that children with special needs are very challenging when it comes to developing reading skills because of their conditions and nature.

#### **6.3.2.1.3 Poor use of digital literacy**

My study found out that educators are not making as much use as they could of their internet connectivity in order to use digital literacy as necessary to develop reading skills. This is because all the schools I visited have unlimited internet connectivity and teachers are not using it nearly as effectively as they could. They clearly need help and support in learning how to use internet to lessen their burden and improve their teaching.

In addition, I found out that a large number of schools are not using digital literacy due to the fact that Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) are not on internet<sup>64</sup>, but only a large amount of information in English is available online (Nyqvist, 2016). The unavailability of Oshiwambo languages is in line with what some writers writing from an NLS perspective saying that online information are exotic in nature and cannot be used for local languages teaching (Mills, 2010). Although lately (2019) I discovered that there is a new project called The African Story Book Project (<https://www.africanstorybook.org/>) working on the development of print stories in local languages, it should be noted that this is a new initiative and is still developing.

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<sup>64</sup> There is no Oshiwambo language interface on internet which can guide/direct teachers to what they need.



#### **6.3.2.1.4 Readers not in line with the curriculum**

As stated in the previous chapter (5.11 and 5.15.15), I found out that there are also some readers which are not consistent with the curriculum which contribute to the poor development of reading skills. This finding is in line with my observation in chapter two (2.6) that there is a great need for readers in the indigenous languages across the curriculum to be published. As said earlier, publishers take on the responsibility with the publication of readers which are in line with the curriculum. These are evaluated by NIED prior implementation with the schools.

#### **6.3.2.2 Factors associated with lack of parental support and English dominance**

##### **6.3.2.2.1 Poor parental involvement and the effect of English dominance**

As opposed to 6.3.1.6.2 above, poor parental involvement is also found to cause poor development of reading skills as Teacher 11 (chapter five, 5.15) stated that some parents feel that teaching is 100% a teacher's responsibility, which is incorrect. Furthermore, the English dominance is also blamed on the parent as Teacher 5 noted (chapter five, 5.6) that children of today do not want to speak Oshiwambo which is influenced by their parents who speak English with their children at home.

I also found the practice of children speaking English during Oshikwanyama lessons to negatively affect the development of reading skills. As Teacher 9 argued (chapter five, 5.15.8), it is difficult for them because when teaching Oshikwanyama she frequently has to remind children to stick to speaking Oshikwanyama during the lesson because they regard English as a highly desirable language. This finding concurs with what some principals (involved in the study) stated that English poses a big threat to local languages because the high value and preference given to English disadvantages local languages.

The above resonates with De Korne's (2010) statement that the existence of most indigenous languages, especially the minority languages in various parts of the world is at risk of extinction due to the pressures of major languages. Finally, I found the English dominance more common in urban schools when compared to rural schools, as noted by Teacher 7 who said that children at rural schools do not know English well. According to Nyqvist (2016), the domination of the English language is caused by the freely available and also inexpensive English-learning materials which are ubiquitous in Namibia. Furthermore, as earlier noted in chapter two (2.5), English language became dominant because it was chosen to be the official language based on the eight reasons given.

### **6.3.2.3 Factors affecting reading with understanding**

#### **6.3.2.3.1 Inappropriate use of punctuation marks**

The correct use of punctuation marks should be reinforced consistently in order to develop the reading skills. As earlier outlined in chapter five (5.4; 5.5; 5.14.6; 5.15.5) if the function of punctuation marks is not correctly understood, then children are not able to respond correctly, and this will negatively affect the development of the reading skills. The need for correct use of punctuation is argued by Piper, Schroeder and Trudell (2016) who say that teaching reading should focus on the ability to read accurately with correct prosody or expression guided by the punctuation marks.

#### **6.3.2.3.2 Lack of readers with familiar texts and not using relevant children's prior knowledge**

The finding of lack of readers with familiar texts is similar to 6.3.1.1.1 above, but different in a sense that this refers to the familiarity of the texts in the readers to the children. This means that at some schools they may have readers which do not have familiar texts, or they are not at the level of the children. As stated by Teacher 8 (chapter five, 5.11), sometimes they use books from higher grades and make sure they take out activities which are at the children's level or simplify them to fit children's context and level. This finding relates to literature in chapter two (2.13.2) by Tötemeyer (2013) that publishing children's materials is very problematic in Namibia since there are no authors to publish in African languages, especially for children's stories. This is also in line with Tirronen's (1977) statement that the publication of reading materials in the indigenous languages has always been rare since publishing started in the 1800s.

Additionally, I found that some texts from the United States of America or Europe have content that is incomprehensible to children living in a Namibian context (see chapter five, 5.15.9). The finding resonates with the literature by Naidoo et al. (2014) that in Southern Africa, books in local languages are rare and this limits the children to read in their mother tongue. This also echoes the Department of Education (2008a as cited in Naidoo et al., 2014, p. 159) that "the language of the resources at school (for example, books, posters) is not equivalent to the home language of the learner." This literature is parallel to my finding of readers being exotic.

The other factor I found to be limiting the development of reading skills is the teachers' failure to use relevant children's prior knowledge. As presented already on the contrary above in 6.3.1.6.2, failure to use relevant children's prior knowledge negatively affects the development of reading skills. I noticed

that there is a lack of understanding by some teachers about how the prior knowledge should help children to be stimulated cognitively before the lesson which is important for their understanding.

#### **6.3.2.4 Factors associated with poor teaching skills**

##### **6.3.2.4.1 Poor knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds (phonics)**

My findings shows that some teachers do not know the relationship between letters and sounds so that they can model them correctly to children because they were not taught them at the pre-service training institutions (see chapter five, 5.15.1). Some teachers also confuse phonics with letter names. As Teacher 8 said teaching Oshindonga is difficult because she does not know the phonics, while Teacher 2 also stated the same saying she did not learn the phonics well at the teachers' College.

The above findings concurs with literature which states that Namibian pre-service institutions did not prepare the teachers well in teaching early literacy and reading, especially with focus on mother tongue teaching methodology (MoE, 2011; Lumbu et al., 2015). This echoes Nghikembua's (2013, pp. 30 – 40) statement that pre-service teacher training in most places is not effective; hence it adds little value for teachers to operate effectively in the classroom. Amutenya (2016) also notes that teacher training does not prepare teachers for classroom realities. Finally, Uushona (2018) also argues that there is a gap between what teachers are taught at the university and what they are expected to do in schools.

##### **6.3.2.4.2 Lack of a methodology for teaching reading**

I found out that some teachers do not know how to teach reading at all. For instance, Teacher 3 stated that she has no idea at all of how to teach reading (see chapter five, 5.8; 5.15.2) when asked how reading skills are developed in Oshindonga. This is a very alarming finding and a confirmation of literature noted in chapter two (2.12.5).

##### **6.3.2.4.3 Teachers' over-confidence, teachers' unpreparedness and inappropriate language use**

One of my findings from observation, interviews and focus group discussions is that some teachers see themselves as omniscient on issues related to teaching reading, while in reality they do not know and need more skills related to literacy teaching (see chapter five, 5.15.6). The above finding is a limiting

factor in developing reading skills, as well as the other finding of teachers being selfish to share literacy expertise with others.

The teachers' unpreparedness is also one of the findings which I noticed (through observation) happening at JP phase at a very high rate (10 out of 12 teachers). This was evident in some classes where there was an overuse of choral and echo reading and children were reading in a chanting or reciting way repeating the same passage without understanding. In some instances, children were singing for the whole lesson without the teacher giving any support. Croasmun, Hampton and Herman (2006, as cited in Amutenya, 2016) notes that it is quite common for teachers to come to class unprepared. I further noted that this trend is highly common with experienced teachers.

Another factor which hinders reading skills development is the use of incomprehensible language for instructions used by some teachers. The use of incomprehensible terms with children is a challenge because they do not understand instructions.

#### **6.3.2.4.4 Digraphs, trigraphs, quadgraphs, diphthongs and vowel confusion**

With regard to digraphs, trigraphs, quadgraphs and diphthongs I found out that if a teacher does not know how these orthographic features function, then it is difficult for the teacher to teach them with understanding to children. These aspects should also be taught in sequence (simple to complex), i.e. from digraphs, trigraphs, quadgraphs and then to diphthongs, but they should never be taught in the same lesson. I noted that if not well approached, these aspects can also be detrimental to the development of reading skills as Teacher 4 said that they are very challenging and confusing to children. Furthermore, I found out that some children confuse vowels which are a limiting factor in developing reading skills. As outlined in chapter five (5.15.11), this is caused by English language influence (chapter two, 2.8 and chapter five, 5.6) which confuses children.

#### **6.3.2.4.5 Lack of teaching aids and reflective teaching**

The lack of teaching aids is one of the factors impeding the development of reading skills in Oshiwambo languages according to my finding. The use of teaching aids is important in contributing to children's learning, as noted by Amakali (2007, p. 55) that "if you are teaching without teaching aids, it is difficult to make learners understand a particular thing", but try to teach with teaching aids that include all children's six senses where possible. I noted the use of the chalkboard to be common in all classes visited,

which concurs with Amakali's (2007) finding in Namibia that "the most common used ... learning materials were the chalkboard" (p. 55), while Ithindi (2015) also maintains that the common use of the chalkboard is because it is the most easily available teaching aid in every classroom. The finding of lack of teaching aids is directly attributed to the lack of readers and lack of readers with familiar texts as indicated above in 6.3.1.1.1 and 6.3.1.3.2 respectively.

My other finding is that teachers do not do reflective teaching which is important for knowledge enhancement and self-correction (Hamatwi, 2016). I noted during interviews that most teachers do not improve/change their teaching approach, even if it was not so effective the previous day. This showed that reflective teaching was not done by most teachers, and that this failing is detrimental to the development of reading skills.

#### **6.3.2.4.6 Lack of in-service training/workshop on reading development in vernaculars**

According to my findings, there are some teachers who reported a lack of in-service training or workshops on teaching reading in Oshiwambo languages which is very alarming. It is shocking to note that there are some teachers who never received in-service training on teaching reading (literacy) in Oshiwambo languages since they started teaching some 24 years back. This is appalling because some teachers also indicated that they were not taught how to teach reading in Oshiwambo languages at tertiary institutions as noted in chapter five (5.15.1).

#### **6.3.2.5 Factors associated with inter-lingual differences**

##### **6.3.2.5.1 Different ethnic groups and pronunciation**

My study found that children's population at schools are made up of different ethnic groups who are speakers of different languages, e.g. Oshiwambo, Ovimbundu, Portuguese, Basters/Coloureds, Damaras, Kavangos and Afrikaners (see chapter five, 5.15.3). This is a challenge to the teaching of reading because children speak a different language at home; hence their exposure to Oshiwambo language is limited to school.

Teacher 4 confirmed this finding that due to the fact that some children are not Oshiwambo speakers, they are challenged in teaching reading effectively since such children are always struggling to catch up. Teacher 12 also added that a different mother tongue as a limiting factor to developing reading skills in

Oshiwambo languages, because although Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) are cognate, there are some words which completely differ in terms of writing and meaning (see chapter five, 5.15.3).

This finding is not only limited to children, but non-native teachers of the language they teach are also affected because the pronunciation of some of Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga words are influenced by mother tongue as noted in chapter five (5.15.3). The effect of wrong pronunciation of words also negatively affects the development of reading skills.

#### **6.3.2.5.2 Transfer between schools**

Transferring of children from one school to the other also has a negative impact on the development of reading skills, especially if it is done in the middle of the year. Children transferring have multiple challenges, for instance the language challenges, especially if a child transferred from Oshindonga medium school to Oshikwanyama medium school (and vice versa). I emphasised on this finding earlier in chapter five (5.15.4) that when children in JP phase change teachers whom they are already used to in most cases it is a challenge since they first have to get used to the teacher, as well as to other children to adapt socially (linguistic) and psychologically. In this process, the child's learning is affected in general. The transfer between a rural school and an urban school also has negative language learning implications.

### **6.4 Recommendations**

#### **6.4.1 Factors facilitating the development of reading skills in mother tongue**

##### **6.4.1.1 Factors associated with decoding skills**

###### **6.4.1.1.1 The fingers strategy**

This is a method for learning how to decode vowels. I recommend the use of this strategy because it is free and readily available with every child and it is also cost effective. This strategy is highly effective in developing reading skills because it easily becomes familiar to the child once it is well introduced and taught. Teachers should be careful not to mix up the fingers sequence, but keep the consistency for effective learning. Furthermore, teachers can use this strategy with the syllabic approach such as *ma*, *me*,

*mi, mo, mu; ka, ke, ki, ko, ku; ta, te, ti, to, tu*, etc. to drill it to the children for better syllabic understanding which eventually is an aid to developing reading skills.

#### **6.4.1.1.2 The phonics approach**

Since this is the popular strategy with teachers, I recommend that pre-service and in-service teachers get proper training on phonics because most of the teachers observed/interviewed indicated that they were not well trained on phonics at pre-service training institutions. Secondly, teachers should complement the phonics approach with other strategies of teaching reading for good results and to avoid over-reliance on the phonics approach as it is currently happening.

#### **6.4.1.1.3 The hands clapping strategy**

I recommend that teachers use this strategy to develop reading skills because it is free and easy to use, it is available with every child, plus it is cost effective. However, teachers should correctly model the correct use of this strategy to the children in order to ensure its success. As stated earlier, this strategy is important for developing decoding skills and phonemic awareness. The strategy is also important for teaching children that words are segmented in syllables which can be represented by each single clap.

#### **6.4.1.1.4 The DEAR strategy**

Since there is already a DEAR lesson introduced with the revised curriculum in 2015, I recommend that guidelines should be drafted to assist teachers on how to effectively use the reading lesson. This is necessary because currently the reading lesson has no guidelines on how it is used and at all schools visited teachers had no clear idea how it should work. Therefore, clear guidelines will ensure that the DEAR lesson is put to good use to develop reading skills across the curriculum and also to inculcate the reading culture in young children. Furthermore, children should read independently in the DEAR lesson and after the DEAR lesson teachers should ask children questions to ensure they understood what they read.

#### **6.4.1.1.5 The directional movement concept of left to right and blending letters**

I recommend that when using this strategy, teachers should ensure that during reading children are pointing with their fingers from left to right – top to bottom in order to consistently follow when reading or when others are reading aloud in the classroom. The strategy is suitable for use with the whole class

or with individual readers. The teacher must ensure that all children are trained on how to use this strategy for its effectiveness. Blending of letters is a useful approach in developing reading skills because it develops decoding skills and I recommend that teachers should first know how it is correctly used before teaching it to children. I further suggest that teachers should acquaint themselves with the Namibian EGRA subtask three which is focused on decoding skills.

#### **6.4.1.1.6 The use of digraphs and trigraphs**

I recommend that teaching digraphs and trigraphs should always be taught in sequence introducing one after the other at a time, i.e. from simple to complex. I hereby warn teachers that these aspects should never be taught in the same lesson because they will confuse children. Furthermore, these aspects should not be taught under their direct title, but should be incorporated in a topic, e.g. when teaching using short stories. The teaching of reading at JP phase is recommended to be done in sequence (simple to complex) as indicated in Chall's stages of teaching reading, as well as in the EGRA approach.

I recommend the teachers to use Chall's stages of teaching reading and EGRA since they are all based in a way that the children first "learn to read" and then later they "read to learn" as they proceed through the schooling system.

#### **6.4.1.2 Factors associated with automaticity**

##### **6.4.1.2.1 Competition, using flash cards and pictures**

I recommend that teachers should plan well in advance when using class competitions and things to be competed for should be of educational value to the children, e.g. eraser, pencil, etc. Flash cards should have clearly written words (visible) using the primary fonts that are at the level of the children, and should also be prepared well in advance so that they are in line with the lesson being taught. Teachers should use educational pictures which are fun, at the level of the children as well as interesting to the children to stimulate learning.

##### **6.4.1.2.2 Time devoted for reading and school attendance**

Although based on language teaching all skills should be equally developed, there should be a specific skill focused on a daily basis. I recommend that there should be a policy to guide the teaching of language



skills at JP phase to ensure that all skills are proportionally developed. This can be done in percentage (%) allocation to guide teachers to address all skills equally. It is important for teachers to monitor the attendance of children consistently and make up for children who were absent so that they catch up with others in terms of the skills accumulated during their absence from school. Finally, I would like to indicate that consistent school attendance is important because the more time children are in school, the better they develop their reading skills through consistent practice and exposure. I therefore recommend for children to be consistently kept in school at all times for better future.

#### **6.4.1.2.3 Drilling, repetition, peer reading/teaching, songs, poems, rhymes and short stories**

I recommend that when using the above indicated aspects for teaching reading the teacher must ensure the correct use of the strategy being used for it to be effective. The teacher should also make sure that the poems, rhymes, songs and short stories are in the context of the children and at their level without incomprehensible terms to enable the development of reading skills.

#### **6.4.1.3 Factors associated with reading with understanding**

##### **6.4.1.3.1 The time allocation strategy and reading pace or tempo**

This strategy is recommended to use for developing reading skills because it promotes fluency and reading with understanding which is good for later achievement in school. Teachers should know how much time to allocate to a certain number of words, e.g. one minute for 80 words in grade 2. This strategy can better be used for reading aloud activities where the teacher can do the timing of read activities. I highly recommend teachers to familiarise themselves with the EGRA Namibian tool, in particular subtask four which is for passage reading and a timed task. Generally, teachers can also read about the EGRA concept which is available online or get the Namibian EGRA documents upon request from NIED at +264 62 509 000.

##### **6.4.1.3.2 The Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA)**

I recommend that the teacher teaching with this cycle of predict-read-confirm-predict approach should be well versed with it and should know what s/he is doing in that particular lesson. S/he should also be well prepared for the lesson in order to effectively use the DRTA approach. The DRTA strategy is important for guiding children's reading and cognitive processes so that they actively think about what

they are reading in order to make meaning. Teachers should ensure that whatever is read using the DRTA approach is based on the children's prior knowledge in order to promote active learning, and as per the sociocultural theory.

#### **6.4.1.3.3 Using scaffolding, modelling and cooperative learning strategies**

When using scaffolding, teachers should closely monitor the children's progress to ensure they understand what is being scaffolded by the teacher. I recommend for the DRTA teaching technique to be used with scaffolding. I further advise teachers to practice modelling well in advance to ensure that what they are modelling to the children is correct, e.g. the modelling of the relationship between letters and sounds. If the teacher is not sure of the relationship between letters and sounds, it is highly recommended that they ask other teachers who know better (at the school, in the cluster, the subject advisor, etc.) to ensure that the correct relationship between letters and sounds is taught.

I recommend that modelling be done with Echo Reading or Choral Reading approaches. Teachers should be careful when using cooperative learning and do close monitoring because not all group work promotes cooperative learning and it is not automatic that putting children in groups will always result in cooperative learning.

#### **6.4.1.3.4 Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)**

I recommend that teachers use the HOTS to promote critical thinking and ensure active learning. The activities given in the previous chapter (5.14.10) are not the only activities used for HOTS activation, but there are more activities. Teachers are therefore advised to explore more activities, which they will find comfortable to use.

#### **6.4.1.4 Factors associated with enjoyment of reading**

##### **6.4.1.4.1 Using one-on-one interactions, consistent motivation and the reading corner correctly**

When using the one-on-one approach, the teacher should give other children enrichment tasks, while addressing individual children. The teacher can also use the highly achieving children to do peer teaching/reading while busy with one-on-one interactions. The one-on-one approach is not suitable for larger classes. I recommend for teachers to consistently motivate children to read because it encourages

them to read better and eventually perform better across the curriculum. Finally, I recommend that the reading corners should be provided with the mother tongue reading materials and also be well arranged to allow easy access of materials by children. JP Teachers should ensure that reading corners are truly reading corners, but not some kind of ‘simulation’ as illustrated in figure 14 in chapter five (5.11).

#### **6.4.1.4.2 Children’s own words, games, word puzzles and word tracking**

I recommend that teachers use children’s own words to construct sentences using flash cards. The teacher may use the highly achieving children to guide others in this process, while s/he is attending to the most struggling children with the task. I further recommend that the teacher uses games, word puzzles and word tracking which are familiar to the children, e.g. with relevance to children’s indigenous knowledge (context) because the use of indigenous knowledge in the classroom promotes active learning. This also preserves the language for future generations to avoid its extinction as well as the heritage of the native speakers.

#### **6.4.1.4.3 Well illustrated story books with big font size**

Elementary teachers are advised to use the reading books which are at the level of children as per the requirements of the sociocultural theory and which are interesting to them when teaching reading at JP phase. Illustrated pictures should be appealing to children, but not terrifying monsters. I recommend that teachers use font size pt. 16 and above when teaching reading. Ideally, the font style should be primary font (recommended for primary schools’ use, i.e. ABC Junior Plain) to avoid confusing children at JP phase, especially with letter ‘a’, i.e. ‘a’ in primary font, etc.

#### **6.4.1.4.3 Print rich classroom environment**

JP teachers are advised to be creative and initiate new ideas for mother tongue reading materials which should be displayed in the classroom to enhance reading. Based on my classrooms’ observation, English materials are dominating display, contrary to mother tongue materials. I call on JP teachers to challenge this practice so that mother tongue is uplifted to the same level with English in the near future. Teachers should also proportionally allocate the materials displayed to subjects taught so that there is not only one subject dominating. Teachers should also ensure that the recommended JP classroom items (e.g. primary numbers’ names, days of the week, months of the year, weather charts, etc.) are also available in the mother tongue by translating them and display them in their classrooms.

#### **6.4.1.4.4 Reading for children**

Although I did not observe any teacher reading exciting stories to children, I hereby recommend for teachers to do so. Teachers should take note that the stories read should be above the children's reading level (but not too difficult) so that children are inspired to read more challenging books to improve their reading skills.

#### **6.4.1.5 Factors associated with teacher development**

##### **6.4.1.5.1 In-service training/workshop focusing on teaching reading in vernaculars**

It is highly recommended for teachers to be trained in teaching reading in mother tongue by subject experts/advisors from the regional advisory services or by any other experts. However, if the subject advisors are not available immediately, I suggest that teachers should organise themselves at school, cluster, circuit or regional level in groups and share their literacy practices (expertise) in teaching reading in the vernacular as per the NLS theory. The above arrangements can also be done and invite subject advisers, experts or retired teachers who are well versed in certain aspects, such as phonics to come and train the cohorts of teachers as requested. In addition, I recommend that UNAM as an institution responsible for training pre-service teachers in Namibia should thoroughly train teachers in in early literacy teaching in mother tongue, as well as the methods of teaching reading at JP phase. UNAM should also educate pre-service teachers more on subject knowledge to ensure that teachers are well capacitated when entering the classroom for the first time.

#### **6.4.1.6 Factors associated with resources**

##### **6.4.1.6.1 Translation of the curriculum**

The school principals, HoDs, as well as teachers should ensure that they have the translated (2015) revised curriculum which is in their mother tongue for effective teaching of reading. The curriculum documents are also available online on the NIED website (<http://www.nied.edu.na/documents/syllabuses/>). Please do take note that some documents are available in local languages, while some are only available in English. If the school has no internet access, the documents can be requested from NIED at this contact number: +264 62 509 000.

#### **6.4.1.6.2 The community, parental involvement, sufficient readers with familiar texts and using children's prior knowledge**

It is important for teachers to know their children's home environment so that they can assist individual children as per their unique needs in terms of developing reading skills. I recommend that parental involvement should be promoted by both teachers and parents by initiating platforms to collaborate on, e.g. inviting parents to school to come view their children's work/progress, the consistent monitoring by teachers if the child is assisted with his/her homework by parents at home, parent's meetings, etc. Teachers should improvise where possible to avail reading materials which are at the children's level and familiar to them, such as writing short interesting stories for children, or involving parents to assist with the provision/writing of relevant stories.

The EGRA concept of short story writing is used in order to teach reading with understanding. Please see the Namibian EGRA manual for more information. Finally, teachers should ensure that the relevant prior knowledge used to introduce the reading lesson is in line with the topic of the lesson being taught. For example, teachers should use the ABC (or any literacy related) song to introduce the reading lesson, but not a numbers (numeracy) song since the lesson has nothing to do with numbers.

#### **6.4.1.6.3 High achieving children**

I highly recommended that teachers use high achieving children as resources for peer teaching, especially in classrooms with a large number of children and where the teacher may be engaging with individual struggling children for face to face or one-on-one interactions. This is in line with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which states that a more capable peer can teach a less capable peer through interaction.

However, teachers should keep in mind that the highly achieving child is also a learner in the class and may need further assistance in some aspects. So, when the teacher is co-teaching with the highly achieving child, s/he should keep an eye on how the co-teacher is progressing. Additionally, the teacher should not forget assessing progress of the co-teaching child equivalently with other children in the class because eventually the child should also have required marks for (termly/yearly) promotional purposes. The highly achieving child should not be promoted blindly under the pretext of being highly achieving, but promotion should be done by meeting the competencies as required in that particular grade. This

approach can be used in big classes, but the teacher should consistently manage the class and not leave the class management responsibility to the co-teacher.

## **6.4.2 Factors hindering the development of reading skills in mother tongue**

### **6.4.2.1 Factors associated with lack of resources**

#### **6.4.2.1.1 Lack of exposure to reading materials and lack of readers**

With focus on the lack of exposure to reading materials, communities, parents, teachers, business people and political people should come together and support the schools within their immediate communities to secure sufficient readers. I hereby recommend that teachers should use the African Story Book Project website (<https://www.africanstorybook.org/>) to access readers in their local languages if they are available online and use them to develop reading skills. I recommend that the government through the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture should take over the primary function of funding children's publishers in order to ensure there are sufficient books provided to schools, especially for mother tongue teaching. In fact publishing textbooks for schools is a government's social responsibility which should be funded through taxpayers' funds.

#### **6.4.2.1.2 The Integrated Planning Manual and children with special needs**

The IPM should be clear on the letter-sound relationship and it should clearly indicate items taught in each grade separately. I recommend that the IPM should also be translated in Oshiwambo languages like other curriculum documents so that teachers can read it with understanding. External assistance should be requested for children with special needs, for example referral to the school counsellor or to a specialist in order to improve the learning condition of the child. Where the situation persists, the child should be referred/transferred to a special school where teachers are trained to deal with such children.

#### **6.4.2.1.3 The use of digital literacy**

I recommend the use of digital literacy where possible, especially if the teacher is able to translate the content in Oshiwambo context perfectly in order to develop the reading skills effectively. The teachers are also advised to develop their own stories which they can freely upload on the African story book project website (<https://www.africanstorybook.org/>). However, a long term solution will be to develop

our languages to an extent that they are also available online or as LoLT so that it will be much easier for the teachers to access information which are in their language

#### **6.4.2.1.4 Readers not in line with the curriculum or are exotic**

Readers which are not in line with the curriculum should not be allowed in schools to avoid confusing the teachers and children. However, if teachers find themselves with books which are not in line with the curriculum or are exotic, then they should closely evaluate the book to pick only what is relevant to the curriculum in order to promote quality teaching. Furthermore, teachers should contact subject advisors for more professional advice, or alternatively contact NIED at this contact number: +264 62 509 000.

#### **6.4.2.2 Factors associated with lack of parental support and English dominance**

##### **6.4.2.2.1 Poor parental involvement and English dominance**

I highly recommend for parents to be consistently involved in their children's education so that they put the child between themselves and the teacher for effective learning. It is important because children whose parents are consistently involved in their education achieve more in terms of academic performance and future careers (Kgosidialwa and Bulawa, 2018 – as noted in chapter two, 2.12.1). I further recommend that the use of English over the mother tongue should be discouraged by all (parents and teachers) because according to some principals (involved in the study), learning in a mother tongue promotes learning with understanding. Secondly, it is also important to preserve our local languages to avoid extinction.

#### **6.4.2.3 Factors affecting reading with understanding**

##### **6.4.2.3.1 Punctuation marks**

It is recommended that teachers teach the punctuation marks with clear and practical examples to children. Teachers should also model the correct use of punctuation marks to children through echo reading so that children learn by practice in order to improve their reading skills.

#### **6.4.2.3.1 Lack of readers with familiar texts and not using relevant children's prior knowledge**

I recommend for teachers to ensure that the readers have texts that deal with familiar concepts and are at the appropriate level of the children before use in order to promote learning with understanding. The use of relevant prior knowledge for children is very important in the development of reading skills; hence teachers are required to ensure that it is correctly done. The use of relevant prior knowledge is already discussed in 6.3.1.6.2 above where I recommended for teachers to ensure that the prior knowledge used to introduce the reading lesson should be in line with the topic of the lesson.

#### **6.4.2.4 Factors associated with poor teaching skills**

##### **6.4.2.4.1 Poor knowledge of the relationship between letters and sounds (phonics)**

As I earlier stated above in 6.3.1.6.2, JP teachers should get proper training on phonics in order to clearly establish the letter-sound relationship and understand it well. I also earlier recommended in 6.4.1.5.1 that teachers and principals should make arrangements to invite experts or retired teachers who are well versed in phonics to train them.

##### **6.4.2.4.2 Lack of a methodology for teaching reading**

As outlined in chapter two (2.12.5), there are calls for teachers' training to be based on contemporary issues guided by recent research. I highly recommend effective teachers' training to be done as a matter of urgency in order to improve literacy teaching, especially with focus on mother tongue teaching. The training based on contemporary issues will be helpful to teachers who were not well trained in methodologies for teaching literacy in mother tongue teaching and eventually will ensure the development of reading skills in our schools.

I further suggest that the Student Based Studies (SBS) at UNAM be done from year one with observations for four weeks. In year two to year four students should do actual teaching for two to three months in order to fully integrate theory with practice, as well as classroom exposure. Furthermore, the SBS in mother tongue teaching should focus more on methodologies for developing reading skills.



#### **6.4.2.4.3 Vowels confusion, teachers' unpreparedness and inappropriate language use**

The teacher should consistently model the correct vowel sounds in Oshiwambo language so that children clearly make a distinction between Oshiwambo and English.

It is highly unprofessional and indeed very embarrassing for teachers to go to the class while not prepared, regardless of one's teaching experience (this can only be compared to a soldier going to war without a gun). The result of that is deleterious to the children and it has far-reaching repercussions. I was indeed shocked and embarrassed to see a number of teachers unprepared during my presence in their classrooms. I am still pondering as to what happens in such classes when there is no visitor/observer?

I therefore recommend that teachers henceforth stop it! It does not matter how many years of experience one has accumulated, but the fact is every year one teaches different children who are unique in terms of needs and personal development. Their needs will only be holistically addressed by the teacher when s/he plans for that particular lesson which should always include learner support. Additionally, the curriculum taught is not static as it keeps changing depending on the demands of the nation in terms of the contemporaries. By this I mean to indicate that one's experience is mainly attached to the Namibian curriculum which changes every seven years. Therefore, the teaching of the revised curriculum can completely be different; hence there is a need to plan for lessons every day or weekly.

#### **6.4.2.4.4 Teachers' over-confidence and digraphs, trigraphs, quadgraphs and diphthongs**

Teachers are advised to consult each other and share expertise related to literacy teaching in order to ensure that the correct approach for teaching reading is done. As outlined in 6.4.1.1.6 above, digraphs, trigraphs and quadgraphs should always be taught in sequence introducing one after the other at a time, i.e. from simple to complex. Teachers are further cautioned that these aspects should never be taught in the same lesson because they will confuse children. Additionally, the digraphs, trigraphs, quadgraphs and diphthongs should be taught according to the scheme of work (IPM) for the particular grade. For example, none of them is recommended to be taught in grade one.

#### **6.4.2.4.5 Lack of teaching aids and reflective teaching**

The teaching career naturally demands for one to be creative and innovative in order to come up with teaching aids which are interesting to the children to infuse effective learning. I therefore recommend for

teachers to be creative and innovative to come up with relevant teaching aids to support the teaching and learning process. Teaching aids may be designed inclusive of the child's six senses, i.e. smell, touch, see, hear, feel and taste. I further recommend teachers to engage in reflective teaching by doing daily self-evaluation for knowledge enhancement and eventually future improvements on their teaching skills.

#### **6.4.2.4.6 Lack of in-service training/workshop on reading development in vernaculars**

Similar to 6.4.1.5.1 above, pre-service teacher training should be done thoroughly in mother tongue teaching in all the language skills to avoid producing sub-standards teachers as we currently have some in our schools, based on the above finding. Equally, in-service training should be consistently done for professional development of teachers and to fill the skill gap as evident in the findings.

#### **6.4.2.5 Factors associated with inter-lingual differences**

##### **6.4.2.5.1 Different ethnic groups and pronunciation**

I recommend that the teacher is aware of the language background of all his/her children in class so that s/he knows how to deal with non-native speakers of the language learned at school (Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga). Children who are non-native speakers of the language taught should have remedial lessons for the language so that they are not left behind by others. The teacher should encourage such children to practice the language with other children at informal sessions such as during break time or in their community at home when playing with others.

This is because learning a new language happens much faster and easily when there is consistent exposure and regular practice, with the use of comprehensible inputs. Additionally, if the teacher is not a native speaker of the language s/he teaches, s/he should consult other native speakers (e.g. children, teachers, parents, etc.) of the language (or the subject advisor) to ensure correct pronunciation and meaning (in context) of the word or idiom before teaching. This should be done to ensure the correct teaching of such words or idioms because once wrongly taught, it is very difficult to correct later.

##### **6.4.2.5.2 Transfer between schools**

I hereby suggest that the teacher who receives transferred children (especially in the middle of the year) has to be considerate of the child's needs and keep a close eye (monitor) on the child to avoid him/her to

be withdrawn or getting abused (bullied) by others as a new comer. The teacher should also take note of the language spoken by the child at home (or mother tongue) and ensure that the child is made comfortable to learn. Further, the teacher should talk to the transferred child/children individually consistently in order to get their feelings and expressions about the new environment, as well as assisting as necessary so that the child is not psychologically affected.

## **6.5 Further Research**

Apart from the above findings, as outlined in the previous chapter (5.10), the language policy is only known by 30% (4 out of 12) of the teachers observed and interviewed, some HoDs, as well as some principals. There is a need to conduct research to establish the effect of language policy implementation at JP phase. In my view, it is important to ensure that teachers, HoDs and principals are aware of what the language policy is saying and why it recommends for mother tongue teaching in JP phase (0 – 3), why it is important, as well as how it influences learning at JP. I am making this suggestion because I noted that some teachers, HoDs, principals do not understand the language policy, yet they are expected to fully implement the policy effectively.

Secondly, I did not explore the influence of libraries in developing reading skills. In my view it is also an issue worth exploring because some of the schools I visited have libraries which were not part of this study. Thirdly, there is an urgent need to conduct research on pre-service teachers training to explore if the calls being made for them to be trained based on contemporary research are heeded by teacher educators. Additionally, the finding that some teachers indicated that they are not taught how to teach phonics (or how to teach reading with understanding) at the pre-service institutions is alarming and needs to be rectified urgently to avoid a further production of sub-standard teachers. Fourthly, there is a need to conduct research on the impact of lack of in-service teacher training of JP teachers on teaching reading. This is because some teachers indicated that they have not been trained in reading in mother tongue since they started teaching some 24 years back.

The fifth point is to conduct research on the teachers' unpreparedness and how it affects teaching in general. In my opinion, this is essential in order to sensitise teachers on why it is important to prepare for every lesson well in advance and also to point out the dangers it poses to the children in terms of learning. Sixthly, as noted in the limitations (4.12), there is a need to conduct a similar study in grade one. Finally,

there is a need to conduct research on how children with special needs develop reading skills in Oshiwambo language.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the conclusions and recommendations which emerged from the previous chapter where data was presented, analysed and discussed. The conclusions related directly to my research question(s) where I first outlined the factors which facilitate the development of reading skills in Oshiwambo language (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga), as well as the factors hindering the development of reading skills at JP. Furthermore, conclusions and recommendations were done in line with the theoretical frameworks used in the study, as well as other related literature.

The conclusions and recommendations of this study respond to Tötemeyer's (2009) argument that there is a lack of reading culture which affects the development of reading skills in indigenous languages. As noted by Smit (2012) that little research has been conducted in indigenous languages and hence there is a great lack of information about indigenous language learning and development in Namibia. The exclusive findings of this study as presented in the chapter are an attempt to fill the gap of lack of literature in our local languages, i.e. Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga). This study is the first of its kind done in Namibia (looking at Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga concurrently) as verified by my intensive review of literature and the existing research by Tötemeyer, 2009 and Smit, 2012. I hope that the findings will be put to good use to change the status quo in mother tongue teaching and learning in Namibia. Therefore, it is up to the parents, educators and policy makers to implement the recommendations herein to realise this change. The chapter finally concluded with a call for further research in aspects found necessary by me.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: The Permanent Secretary Approval letter



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

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#### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

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Tel: +264 61 -2933200  
Fax: +264 61- 2933922  
Enquiries: C. Muchila  
Email: [Cavin.Muchila@moe.gov.na](mailto:Cavin.Muchila@moe.gov.na)

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park  
Private Bag 13186  
Windhoek  
Namibia

File no: 11/1/1

Mr Eino Haifidi  
[Eheavydy@gmail.com](mailto:Eheavydy@gmail.com)  
+264811285195

Dear Mr Haifidi

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OSHANA REGION**

Kindly be informed that permission to conduct research for your Master's Degree in Oshana region is herewith granted. You are further requested to present the letter of approval to the Regional Director to ensure that research ethics are adhered to and disruption of curriculum delivery is avoided.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the ministry. You may contact Mr C. Muchila at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for provision of summary of your research findings.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours

  
SANET L. STEENKAMP  
PERMANENT SECRETARY

Private Bag 13186  
Windhoek, Namibia

28/4/16  
Date

*All official correspondences must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary*

## Appendix B: The Director of Education Approval letter



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**OSHANA REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE**  
*Aspiring to excellence in Education for All*

Tel: 065 229800  
Fax: 065 229833  
Enquiries: Gerhard S. Ndafenongo  
e-mail: [ndafenongogs@gmail.com](mailto:ndafenongogs@gmail.com)  
Refno: 11/1/1

906 Sam Nuyoma Road  
Private Bag 5518  
Oshakati, Namibia

**MR EINO HAFIDI**  
**P.O. BOX 889**  
**OSHAKATI**  
Cell: 0811285195, e-mail: [cheavydy@gmail.com](mailto:cheavydy@gmail.com)

Attention: Mr Haifidi

### RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT 10 SCHOOLS IN OSHANA REGION

1. I acknowledge receipt of your e-mail communication dated 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and therefore it bears reference;
2. Kindly be informed that permission is hereby granted to conduct the study entitled: **Development of reading skills in Oshiwambo in the Oshana Region in Namibia, A case study** within selected schools in Oshana Region. You are hereby requested to present the letter of approval to the principal of the selected schools to ensure that the research is authorised, authentic and procedures are adhered to.
3. This permission is subject to the following strict conditions; (i) There should be minimal or no interruption on normal teaching and learning, during a class or scheduled afternoon session, and (ii) Ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity should be respected and retained throughout this activity i.e. voluntary participation, and consent from participants..
4. Both parties should understand that this permission could be revoked without explanation at any time.
5. Furthermore, we humbly request you to share with us your research findings with the Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture\_ Oshana Region. You may contact Mr GS Ndafenongo, the Deputy Director: Programs and Quality Assurance (PQA) for the provision of summary of your research findings.
6. I wish you the best in conducting your study.

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

**THELTON M. AMUKANA**  
**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**



*All correspondence should be addressed to the Director of Education, Arts & Culture*



## Appendix C: Letter of information



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the research study:** The development of reading skills in Oshiwambo languages in the Oshana region in Namibia: A case study.

**Principal investigator/researcher:** Mr Eino Haifidi, **Qualifications:** Masters of Education (University of Melbourne, Australia), Bachelor of Education Honours (Rhodes University, RSA), Advanced Certificate in Education (North West University, RSA), Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (Ongwediva College of Education, Namibia).

**Supervisors:** Dr Sandra Land and Dr Sylvia Zulu

**Brief introduction and purpose of the study:** As part of the requirements for a Master's Degree in the School of Media, Language and Communication at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), I have to carry out a research study. My study is concerned with finding out how the current reading skills of the two dialects of the Oshiwambo languages (Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga) in northern Namibia are developed in the junior primary phase level (grades 2-3).

**Outline of the procedures:** You are selected to voluntarily participate in this study because you are in a position of providing data which will help me to answer my research question since you are a teacher in junior primary or principal of the school.

Please note:

- Your participation in this research is voluntary and you do not have to take part in this research if you do not want to.
- Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you do not have to take part in this research

if you do not want to.

- You are free to stop participating in the study at any time.
- All data collected in this research will be kept confidential.
- Your personal information will not be shared with anyone else.
- This consent form will be stored separately from your data.
- Your name will not be stored with the data I collect

I will collect data through interviews, questionnaires, a focus group and observation of reading class lessons. The interviews will be conducted in the classroom or in the staff room during breaks or in the afternoon after classes. I will interview you after I have observed your lesson. The interview will be based on your lesson and will last for 10-15 minutes. The interview is not a test. Its purpose is to ensure that I appreciate your understanding of the teaching and learning processes in your lesson and how they relate to the development of reading skills. Please feel free and you should know that you are free to withdraw at any time from the interview.

I will remove all clues to your identity in the thesis by using pseudo names and other codifications such as numbering the questionnaires to ensure anonymity. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous, unless if you ask me to acknowledge your contributions.

**Risks or discomforts to you:** The researcher does not anticipate risks or discomforts to you because your participation will include only one short interview and/or one focus group. However, in the event of any discomfort the researcher will have to suspend the interview and re-arrange for another day when your recovery is confirmed.

**Benefits:** You will have the advantage of getting the research results upon request. The researcher will benefit in terms of new knowledge based on findings pertaining to the researched topic and subsequently by publishing.

**Reason/s why you may be withdrawn from the study:** If you wish to withdraw from the research at any time you will be allowed to do so. In the event of you falling sick or any unforeseen issue, you will be allowed to stop participation if you wishes to withdraw.

**Remuneration:** As indicated earlier, participation in the research is voluntary and there is no remuneration done to anyone.

**Costs of the study:** You will not be expected to cover any costs towards the study.

**Confidentiality:** The data will be kept in a locked case in a locked room to ensure maximum confidentiality. The dissemination of the data will be done with pseudonyms in order to protect your identity and codifications such as numbering the questionnaires will be done to ensure anonymity of the participants.

**Research-related injury:** The research type does not pose danger to cause injury and your full consent is required in advance. However, in any event of uncertainty there will be no compensation.

**Persons to contact in the event of any problems or queries:**

If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me, (Eino Haifidi) on +264 81 128 5195 or [ehavydy@gmail.com](mailto:ehavydy@gmail.com). My supervisor, Dr Sandra Land, can be contacted by email at [SandraL@dut.ac.za](mailto:SandraL@dut.ac.za). You can also contact the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on +27 31 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support, Prof S. Moyo on +27 31 373 2577 or [moyos@dut.ac.za](mailto:moyos@dut.ac.za)

**General:**

-

Potential participants must be assured that participation is voluntary and the approximate number of participants to be included should be disclosed. A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population e.g. Oshiwambo.

## Letter of Information in Oshiwambo



### OMBAPILA YOMAUYELELE

**Oshipalanyole shomapekapeko:** Nghene omalaka Oshiwambo haa tungwa po moNamibia mOshitopolwa shaShana: Etalo moule

**Edina lomupekapeki:** Mr Eino N. Haifidi, **Eedjapo:** Master of Education (University of Melbourne, Australia), BEd. Honours (Rhodes University, RSA), Advanced Certificate in Education (North West University, RSA), Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (O. C. E., Namibia).

**Omadina Ovataleli:** Sandra Land, PhD and Sylvia Zulu, PhD

**Efatululo pauxupi, nelalakano loshinyangadalwa eshi:** Oshili oshitopolwa shoinakuwanifwa monghatu yokulihongela ondodo yoMaster Degree mofikola yoikundaneki, omalaka nomakwatafano oyo ili moUnivesiti yaDurban of Technology. Oshili oshinakuwanifwa shomulihongi keshe opo a kale a ninga omapekapeko e na sha nelihongo laye. Elihongo lange otali tale kombinga yomikalo odo hadi longifwa mokulesha opo kuyambulwepo omalaka etu Oshiwambo (Oshikwanyama nOshindonga) monooli yaNamibia meendodo dopetameko (Eendodo 2-3).

**Omalandulafano:** Ouli wa hoololwa opo u kufe ombinga momapekapeko e nasha nelihongo lange shaashi ouli omuhongi meendodo dopetameko ile omukulunhufikola oo ta dulu oku vatela nge opo ndi mone omauyelegele oo taa ka kwafelange opo ndimone omanyamukulo komapulo ange.

Didilika:

- Ekufombinga loye momapekapeko omu olo paliyambo loye mwene ove ito dulu okufininikwa u kufe ombinga ngeenge ino hala okushininga.
- Owa mangeluka efimbo keshe oku xulifapo ekufombinga loye momapekapeko aa ngeenge ino hala vali okushininga.
- Omauyelegele aeshe taa ongelwa momapekapeko omu otaa ka tuvikilwa noukeka.
- Omauyelegele oye opaumwene itaa ka yandjwa nande okulye.
- Ombapila ei otai ka pungulwa ponhele yelikalekelwa ihe li pamwe nomauyelegele opaumwene.
- Edina loye ita li ka pungulwa pamwe nomauyelegele oo a ongelwa.

Ohandi ka ongela omauyelegele momukalo womapulapulo opakanya, omapulapulo opaembapila, okutalela eetundi dokuhonga okulesha pefimbo lehongo, oshoyo ovahongi mougudu. Omapulapulo opakanya otaa ka ningwa konima yotundi mongulu, ile mombelewa pomafimbo okafudepo, ile komatango konima yokudimbuka. Omapulapulo opakanya otaa ka tala kwaasho shelihongwa motundi, no taa ka kufa ominute difike lwopo 10-15 lwaapo. Omanyamukulo aeshe toka yandja otaa ka tambulwako ove kala wa didilika nokutya omapulapulo aa ka eshi ekonakono ndele omukalo wo ku nghene otundi yoye ya li.

Keshe enyamukulo toka yandja otali ka tambulwako ashike shaashi otali kwafelenge moku nyamukula omapulo omapekaepko ange. Oto teelelwa u kale wamanguluka ove kala yoo u shii kutya ekufombinga momapekaepko aa oli li pahalo loye mwene nongeenge ino hala vali oto dulu oku li kufamo efimbo keshe.

Ohandi ka kufamo oinima aishe oyo tai ka holola oukwatya woye pamukalo wokulongifa omadina oipupulu oshoyo okulongifa oinima imwepo ngaashi oku tula eenomola komapulapulo opambapila opo paha kale okafekela kutya omanyamukulo okwa yandjwa kulye. Omauyeleele aeshe oo to ka yandja itaa ka ulikwa kutya okwayandjwa kulye, kakele ashike ngeenge wapulange ndishininge.

**Omaupyakadi e nasha nomukufimbinga:** Omupekaepki i na teelela pakale pena omaupyakadi a sha kombinga ya nakukufa ombinga momapekaepko aa shaashi omapulapulo opakanya otaa kwata ashike ominute dishona lela (10-15). Ashike ngeenge opaka kala pena omaupyakadi kombinga yomapulapulo opakanya, omupekaepki okuna okuxulifapo manga omapulapula aa fiyo opefimbo ile mefiku olo omukufimbinga a kolekwa vali a manguluka.

**Omauwa:** Omukufimbinga ota dulu okumona oshidjemo shomapekaepko ngeenge okwe shi pula komupekaepki. Omupekaepki ota ka mona onunongo wa wedwapo shelikwatelela kombinga yoshidjemo shomapekaepko, oshoyo omauwa kombinga yokunyanyangida oshidjemo moishangomwa.

**Omatomelo oo taa dulu oku kufifa omukufimbinga mekufombinga laye momapekaepko aa:** Omukufimbinga keshe oo taka kala a hala oku li kufamo momapekaepko aa ota ka mangululwa keshe efimbo oshoyo ngeenge omukufimbinga okwa ombokelwa ile a mona oupyakadi wonhumba ota ka mangululwa mekufombinga momapekaepko aa pahalo laye.

**Eefuto:** Ekufombinga momapulaapulo aa olili pakuliyamba onghene kapena ofuto yasha tai pewa omukufimbinga.

**Oifuta inasha nelihongo:** Omukufimbinga ina teelelwa a fute sha shinasha nomapekaepko aa.nomapekaepko aa.

**Oiholekwa:** Omauyeleele otaa ka pungulwa monduda yapatwa opo ku kalekwepo oiholekwa ngaashi tashi shiiva. Omauyeleele otaa ka shangwa nomadina oipupulu, meenomola ile momadidiliko amwepo opo ku kalekwepo eameno lovakufimbinga.

**Oshiponga shi nasha nomapekaepko:** Omapekaepko ka e na sha shanyika oshiponga komukufimbinga onghene ediminino lanakukufa ombinga olina oku ningwa petameko. Ashike, ngeenge opwa ka holoka sha kapena ofuto yasha.

**Ovanhu ovo to dulu oku kwatafana navo ngeenge una omapulo:**

Ngeenge owa pumbwa omauyeleele a wedwapo, ninga ekwatafano na Eino Haifidi konomola yongodi tai landula +264 81 128 5195 ile ko email ei [heavydy@gmail.com](mailto:heavydy@gmail.com). Oto dulu yo oku kwatafana nomutaleli wange Sandra Land ko email ei [SandraL@dut.ac.za](mailto:SandraL@dut.ac.za). Oto dulu yoo oku kwatafana nomukulunhu wokangudu komapekaepko konomola yongodi tai landula +27 31 373 2375.

Omanyenyeto naa lopotwe komukulunhu wiliki womapekaepko oshoyo omavatelolo momalihongo, Prof. S. Moyo konomola yongodi tai landula +27 31 373 2577 ile ko email ei [moyos@dut.ac.za](mailto:moyos@dut.ac.za)

**Omawedelepo:**

Ovakufimbinga ovena oku kala va kwashilipalekwa kutya ekufombinga momapekapeko aa olopaiyambo voo naaveshe ovo tava kufa ombinga ovena oku shiivifwa. Okopi yombapila ei oina okukala ya pewa omukufimbinga keshe. Ombapila ei oina yo oku kala ya tolokwa melaka lova kufimbinga momapekapeko, ngaashi Oshiwambo.

## Appendix D: Letter of Consent



### Statement of agreement to participate in the research study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Mr Eino Haifidi about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: REC 13/17.
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

---

**Full Name of Participant**

---

**Date**

---

**Time**

---

**Signature/Right  
Thumbprint**

I, Eino Haifidi herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

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**Full Name of Researcher**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature**

---

**Full Name of Witness (If applicable)**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature**

---

**Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature**

## Letter of Consent in Oshiwambo



### OMADIMININO

#### Omushangwahokololo wediminino loku kufa ombinga momapekapeko aa:

- Ohandi koleke kutya onda lombwelwa komupekapeki, Mr Eino Haifidi kombinga yomauwa a kwatelwamo, no shoyo omaupyakadi oo taa dulu oku holoka momapekapeko aa – Onomola yeyandjo loufemba momapekapeko aa oyo ngaha: REC 13/17
- Onda pewa nonda lesa neudeko mombapila ei (Ombapila yOmauyelele) i nasha nomapekapeko aa.
- Ondi shishii nokutya oshidjemo shomapekapeko aa, mwa kwatelwa omauyelele opaumwene ngaashi eedula, oukakwashikekookanhu, efiku ledalo, omaxupipiko omadina oshoyo imwepo yo yawedwapo oina oku kala ya shangwa nomadidiliko oipupulu.
- Ngaashi naanaa shili pamhango yomapekapeko, ohandi tu kumwe nasho kutya omauyelele oo a ongelwa otaa dulu oku longekidwa palongifo lokompiuta komupekapeki.
- Ohandi dulu kuli kufamo mekufombinga momapekapeko aa pehena etomhelo lasha efimbo keshe.
- Onda mona omhito yawana nawa oku pula omapulo pamaliudo ange mwene nonda tokola oku kufa ombinga momapekapeko omu.
- Ondi uditeko yoo kutya omauyelele oo taa ka monika konima yomapekapeko aa ohandi ke a pewa ngeenge nde a pula.

---

**Edina liyadi lomukufimbinga**

---

**Efiku**

---

**Efimbo**

---

**Eshaino/Omunwe**

Ame Eino Haifidi ohandi kwashilipaleke apa kutya omukufimbinga ondemu lombwela nokumu fatululila nawa oinima aishe oyo ya kwatelamo omapekaapeko aa.

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**Edina liyadi lanakuninga omapekaapeko**

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**Efiku**

---

**Eshaino**

---

**Edina liyadi lomukwashilipaleki**

---

**Efiku**

---

**Eshaino**

---

**Edina liyadi lomukalelipo paveta**

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**Efiku**

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**Eshaino**



## **Appendix E: Focus group discussions' guiding tool**

- 4.1 The characteristics of a good reader;
- 4.2 How they view mother tongue teaching;
- 4.3 The challenges of mother tongue reading, e.g. the SWOT analysis of reading skills in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga languages.
- 4.4 Language policy implementation
- 4.5 Factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga languages.
- 4.6 Factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga languages.
- 4.7 Reading activities which enables cognitively engagement.
- 4.8 How reading skills are learned in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga
- 4.9 The availability of sufficient readers in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga
- 4.10 Digital literacy teaching at JP phase
- 4.11 Any other issue of interest that may arise in the discussions.

The above points were translated/versioned in Oshiwambo language below.

- 4.1 Omaukwatya omuleshi muwa
- 4.2 Osho veshii kombinga yokulonga elaka lOshiwambo
- 4.3 Oudjuu wokulonga elaka lOshiwambo, ngaashi. Oinima oyo tai dulu oku vatela mokulonga okulesha mOshikwanyama, oshoyo mOshindonga.
- 4.4 Etulo moilonga lomufindahongo wehongo lomalaka
- 4.5 Oinima oyo hai vatele mokulonga okulesha mOshikwanyama ile mOshindonga.
- 4.6 Oinima oyo hai keele elongo lokulesha mOshikwanyama ile mOshindonga
- 4.7 Oinima oyo omuhongi ha longifa opo a kwashilipaleke kutya ounona ota va lesa nelitulemo
- 4.8 Okulesha oha ku longwa ngahelipi
- 4.9 Ope na ngaho omambo okulesha a wana mOshikwanyama ile mOshindonga
- 4.10 Oinima oyo i nasha nokulonga okulesha koikwakompiuta
- 4.11 Keshe osho shi nasha nokulonga okulesha.

## Appendix F: Principals' questionnaire

Questions (please tick ✓)	Yes	No
1.1 Are there enough mother tongue reading materials in the Junior Primary (JP) phase at the school?		
1.2 Are there clear policies that support mother tongue teaching (reading)?		
1.3 Is the language policy implemented correctly at the school?		
1.4 Are JP teachers well qualified to teach mother tongue, i.e. Oshindonga?		
1.5 Do JP teachers get in-service trainings in teaching reading in mother tongue?		
1.6 Does the region provide assistance/support for mother tongue teaching?		
1.7 In your view, is mother tongue teaching as a subject important to children?		
1.8 Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga/Oshikwanyama in JP at your school?		
1.9 Does the school develop the reading skills by using games, online blogs, or other digital media at the JP phase?		
<p>1.10 Do you think reading in the mother tongue is important (or unimportant)? Please explain your answer.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>		
<p>1.11 Do you think it is necessary to develop Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga to be used as Languages of Learning and Teaching? Please explain your answer.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>		

## **Appendix G: Observation checklist**

- 1.1 How did the teacher engage the learners' prior knowledge?
- 1.2 What skills did the teacher use to engage learners' High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) in reading?
- 1.3 How much time of the lesson the teacher spends talking?
- 1.4 How much time of the lesson the children spend reading in mother tongue?
- 1.5 What type of reading is used in the classroom? (Shared/Guided/Independent)
- 1.6 Are the children reading for information, facts, pleasure, or another purpose?
- 1.7 Are the children reading using choral/echo reading techniques? Or are they reading with cognitive engagement?
- 1.8 Did the teacher use resources (teaching aids) to support the teaching and learning process?
- 1.9 Are children reading familiar or unfamiliar texts?
- 1.10 Did the teacher model activities for reading?
- 1.11 Did the teacher use the language appropriate for the lesson?
- 1.12 Was there scaffolding of reading activities during the lesson? If yes, what scaffolding activities did the teacher use?
- 1.13 Did the teacher use cooperative/collaborative strategies for teaching reading skills?
- 1.14 To what extent are the teaching and learning activities in the lesson in line with Chall's reading stages for this grade?
2. Teacher's interviews questions (questions were asked after lessons' observations. Conversations with teachers were conducted in Oshiwambo for easy understanding)

## **Appendix H: Teachers' interviews questions**

Teachers' interviews questions (questions were asked after lessons' observations.

Conversations with teachers were conducted in Oshiwambo for easy understanding)

- 2.1 What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?
- 2.2 If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?
- 2.3 Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?
- 2.4 Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?
- 2.5 What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in  
Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga languages?
- 2.6 What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in  
Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga languages?
- 2.7 How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?
- 2.8 How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga at JP?
3. Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga/Oshikwanyama in JP at your  
school?
- 3.1 In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?
- 3.2 How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in  
reading in mother tongue language?
- 3.3 How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga  
languages?
- 3.4 Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your  
answer?
- 3.5 How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?
- 3.6 What type of readings do children read?

Questions translated/versioned in Oshiwambo language:

- 3.1 Oshike uwete sha enda nawa (ile inashi enda nawa) motundi yoye, nomolwashike?
- 3.2 Ngeenge oto ka longulula vali otundi ei, oinima ilipi to ka lundululamo, na omolwashike?
- 3.3 Omalalakano otundi yoye okwa hangwa tuu? Ngeenge osho ile hasho omolwashike?
- 3.4 Otundi yoye oyali tuu tai hokwifa kounona? Ngeenge osho ile hasho omolwashike?
- 3.5 Oinima ilipi oyo hai vatele mokulonga okulesha mOshikwanyama ile mOshindonga?
- 3.6 Oinima ilipi oyo hai keele elongo lokulesha mOshikwanyama ile mOshindonga?
- 3.7 Oho kwashilipaleke ngahelipi kutya ounona voye ota va lesa nelitulemo?
- 3.8 Okulesha oha ku longwa ngahelipi?
- 3.9 Ope na ngaho omambo okulesha a wana mOshikwanyama ile mOshindonga?
- 3.10 Eshi wa tala Oshiingilisa ohashi fininike omalaka etu kongudi?
- 3.11 Omikalo odo ohadi vatele ngahelipi mokulonga okulesha momalaka etu?
- 3.12 Omikalo dilipi holongifa mokulonga okulesha Oshikwanyama/Oshindonga nomolwashike hodi longifa?
- 3.13 Ou shii sha kombinga yomufindahongo wehongo lomalaka? Fatulula enyamukulo loye?
- 3.14 Ounona ohava lesa shifike peni momalaka avo motundi?
- 3.15 Ounona ohava lesa shike motundi?

## Appendix I: Ethical Approval



9 June 2017

IREC Reference Number: **REC 13/17**

Mr E N Haifidi  
P O Box 889  
Oshakati  
Namibia

Dear Mr Haifidi

**The development of reading skills in the Oshiwambo languages of the Oshana region of Namibia: A case study of Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga**

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your final data collection tools for review.

We are pleased to inform you that the questionnaires have been approved. Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor J K Adam  
Chairperson: IREC



## Appendix J: Verbatim transcribed teachers' interview

Interview for Baba Primary School begins

Line	Baba Primary School
1	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why? You may answer in Oshiwambo or English.</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> The lesson went well. But what I have seen the need to improve it as there are children who do not understand and they do not know how to read. I think I will follow up with those children individually after school so that they can repeat.</p>
2	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> I have to focus on the children who do not know how to read and assist them more closely.</p>
3	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> Yes, they were met, but there are some four children who made me not to meet the objectives 100%. I wanted each learner to read independently, but I noticed that the four children cannot read on their own.</p>
4	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> Yes, it was. Because they were reading about the trip of other children when they went to visit as well as how they were using their senses since we are also learning about senses. So they were using eyes, ears and they felt that it is good. Then they figured out that one hear with ears, smell with the nose, etc.</p>
5	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshindonga languages?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> Is when they read as a whole class, then read in pairs, so that even if there is something a child did not know well, s/he will remember it well including the sight words although I did not use them. I used letters to indicate to them that this letter and this is read like this, etc. I also use the vowels (e.g. a,e,i,o,u) for the children to learn to read.</p>

6	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshindonga languages?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> New letters are a challenge to the children, especially the trigraphs (e.g. mby). If a child was never taught this already then it is very difficult to him/her to read it. Even if s/he knows how to read, s/he can get stuck at the words with trigraphs. Other challenges are new things, especially to the slow learners it is very difficult, but the intelligent ones do not struggle to read at all.</p>
7	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> I ensure it when I ask like “<i>who will read?</i>” Every child’s hand will be up competing to read.</p>
8	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshindonga at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> I first teach sounds individual letters to children and they sound it back for example “<i>M</i>” = “<i>Mmm</i>”. We later sound words and also by teaching phonics. Sounding letters, sounding words and phonics, and sight words.</p>
9	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> Yes, there are some readers for Oshindonga, but some are not enough.</p>
10	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> When the child knows how to read Oshindonga, s/he also attempts to read English, but if the child does not know how to read Oshindonga, then s/he cannot also read English. And that is why we try to teach a child Oshindonga first so that s/he learn letters first.</p>
11	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> We have, um, we have to use letter sounds, then sounding, mmh, words, pronunciation, and also to read like, like everyday you have to read them a story and phonics, and verbs, and adjectives. I mean the sight words too.</p>
12	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children’s reading abilities in Oshindonga languages?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> Children, when I’m assessing them I take this book and I call one child to come here at the table and ask him/her to read.</p>



13	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> Yes I know it. It is stating that the child should be taught in his/her mother tongue and it is how it is implemented at our school since we use Oshindonga as a medium of instruction. Because the policy says that once the child know the mother tongue, then s/he can learn other languages with ease.</p>
14	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> Children do read a lot, because almost whatever you do the child has to read in Oshiwambo or I mean in Oshindonga. Even if it is in Mathematics, or Environment, all subjects except English is the only one which is not their mother tongue since everything they are doing is mother tongue. So they do it more often.</p>
15	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 1:</b> Mmh, children? They read things related to what they are taught. For example now we are busy with senses, so we are learning about the trip of the children when they went to visit with, with, their class group. So they used eyes and ears which are integrated to all the things which they are taught, even in Oshindonga, English or Environment. If some are not in the readers, we try to prepare something related to the activity, or topic which they are busy with.</p>
16	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why? You may answer in Oshiwambo or English.</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Yes it went well because many children were doing, or participating. They also shown interest in reading. Most of them if you are comparing with their reading, their reading pace has improved.</p>
17	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Oo, if I were to re-teach the same lesson I will change it from, I will no longer give them words like I used the words on the chalkboard, but I will, they will identify, I will give them the story and they will identify words which they cannot, or they do not understand or which they can't read. We will then write them on the chalkboard, and, and we will then discuss about them. Because then it was me who identified the words and I already written them on the chalkboard for them it was just to read them. This will help them to identify the most difficult</p>

	<p>words and they will also in the process learn to read. They also know that perhaps I have taken some words which I think are difficult to them it might be the opposite. So it is better for them to do it themselves so that they know exactly.</p>
18	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Yes, cause every child got a chance, but those who did not get I used all the approaches like those who read individually and also read as a whole class. Every child got a chance to read and a lot of chances as they were raising their hands. They also understood the story for example where they are recapping although they are not many I think they learned something from the story.</p>
19	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Mmh, it was interesting because for example the story was funny and a lot of children were laughing when, or when the Jackal – Hyena was climbing on the, the chimney and he fell in water. You can see that a lot of children were laughing which you can see that they were reading with understanding. It is not like when sometimes somebody is reading and you may find that children are reading but reading without understanding. But if you see that the child is reading an interesting story funny story s/he would like to understand that, what will happen next. S/he will have an interest or that curiosity.</p>
20	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshindonga languages?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Oo, Ok. Reading itself from grade 1 &amp; 2 the focus is on the phonics. Yeah, when they are sounding letters it is very helpful, while here when it comes to this stage like we are in second term were are mostly focused on, on.... or even phonics you add them, as well as the reading pace of the children so that they are reading. You know there are some children who read word by word like those, but we want the pace to be advance, but not reading like at those grades, but there should be integration of reading pace and phonics. This is because most of them have mastered, especially this term. There are many stories to read, like we do have a reading period. The reading period in there on Fridays and the reading lesson whereby we focus only on the reading skills. It is very much helpful.</p>

21	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshindonga languages?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Oo, the challenges are the children who are not exposed, not exposed to materials, reading materials, there are no enough readers, children are not motivated to read at home or rather encouraged to read, for me what is important is for reading to first start at home. That is the most important thing of all. I have noted that some children sometimes can read on their own when given a book s/he can read by looking at the letters and slowly blend them. You can start with vowels, consonants, trigraphs, diphthongs, etc. But I most like motivation from home for reading. At least there is a need for children to have reading books at home to inculcate the reading culture, or interest in reading. Reading should not be forced to children, but interest come first.</p>
22	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Sometimes for one to find that out, you may put in some questions. You can ask them questions like; what did you read? And then they will respond telling what they have read. Then in that way you find that they were following. You can ask them questions based on what they have read. As if they are recapping, so that you check if they were following.</p>
23	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshindonga at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Phonics, you know that we focus on vowels for example a, e, i, o, u. Once the child have learned the vowels, then that is when you can add other letters of the alphabet. But alphabet we don't focus much on it, because it is letter's name, but we focus on letter's sound. Like for example "A" /a/ or "B" /b/. It is really helpful.</p>
24	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Yes, we do have enough books, but not really enough for each child. There are few sharing for example two to three. We do have books.</p>
25	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English supress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> No....., No, we do not have that, mainly they are good in Oshindonga, unless using Oshindonga words in the English lesson. That is very common.</p>

26	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> You know that when the child master phonics, then mainly that child will not struggle much with reading. The letter sounds are really helpful so that the child can blend letters. For example: A-pple. The other challenge here is that the, the letter sounds are very challenging and not many people have mastered them since we were not taught them at college, especially in Oshiwambo language. But they are very helpful.</p>
27	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshindonga languages?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> I measure the child's reading speed. When the child is reading s/he should be using the punctuation marks correctly. Like at our level, s/he should be using the punctuation marks well and s/he must be reading words precisely as they are without omitting some letters or adding more letters. The child also need to read with patience. All these things are included in reading. And when the child is reading well when it comes to this level of grade three, the child need more guidance to be aware of what is important when reading. There are some children who can read, but for example reading like "M — e — m — e, o — t — a". That is way too slow and that is not how one should read. This child need assistance because s/he is reading letter by letter or word by word and reading is not done like that because in the end there will be no understanding.</p>
28	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> Yes, yes, yes. It is telling us that we should teach the children like how I said like phonics, we should focus too much in phonics instead of letter's name. Iyaah, that means that if the child does not know mother tongue, vernaculars. That child will not be promoted to another grade. For example if s/he has an E symbol in Oshindonga in reading it means that s/he did not master and s/he has to repeat. Because the child need to master the mother tongue. It also help the child to, or the children who knows their mother tongue well they are more likely to do well in English. If the child is struggling in Oshindonga, that child will also struggle in English, but if the child is reading Oshindonga fluently, s/he will not struggle to read English at all. So, it is very important for the child to master the mother</p>

	tongue. It can be that the child did not do well in English, but can be promoted to another grade, but not in the case of Oshindonga.
29	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> We have nine Oshindonga lessons per week plus the reading lesson where the child is free to take any reading material in whatever language of his/her choice to read. Because even me as a teacher, I do have to be reading something during this lesson but not assisting children to read. This is really helpful. However, sometimes, but I don't know if it is allowed, but sometimes we do "when there is a need" and sometimes we can be flexible and tell the children to take their Oshindonga books and tell them to take a topic of their choice to read. But there I do not ask what they read because it is not allowed. The reading lessons are only two per week. Monday = Listening, Tuesday = Speaking, Wednesday = Reading, Thursday = Writing and Friday = Grammar.</p>
30	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 2:</b> They read folk tales, iyaah, or stories about Jackal which are traditional stories based on the themes.</p>

Interview for Baba Primary School ends

Interview for Chefy Primary School begins

Line	Chefy Primary School
31	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> What didn't go well uum, is the, the way the some were reading, the speed. The speed some of them they don't have speed in reading, the noise, the, some of them didn't want to follow. And then when I was helping the ones that are doing learning support. The moment I'm paying attention to them, the other ones are doing what they want, they are doing other things not related to the lesson. Most of them they read well, they know Oshiwambo, they even build up words, sounds, the phonics that they were given, at least they understood the content of the story. It was not like reading without knowing what they are reading about.</p>
32	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p>

	<p><b>Teacher 3:</b> What I will improve is, uum, just the skills, competition, like I will make competition. Whoever read well is going to be a winner, to be done like that, they will read in pairs, then we look at the ones that are reading well, then at least, or some, something to be won. For them to, to.... Because sometimes when you're telling them to read they think is just a normal reading, but even if you're telling them is for the, the CASS mark, they don't really care, but if it is something to be won just to motivate them to read well because some of them they can know, they know how to read, but the fact that they just know that it's just a normal reading, they don't really take it serious.</p>
33	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> Yah, because my, when I was asking, because mine was reading comprehension. When I ask the questions, they know what the story is talking about.</p>
34	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> Yaah, it was, because they can see what they are reading, the picture stories. It was interesting.</p>
35	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> Like if they are reading, if you are using some flash cards, or maybe, uhm, giving them flash cards to build sentences, or writing their own sentences and read about them. If they are reading something that they came up with by themselves, it helps them, more than you just read what you brought to them. Then, the sounds, knowing the sounds contribute more. If they know how to sound letters, they can read the sounds of letters, uum, picture stories.</p>
36	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> The challenge is the learners that come, let say the learner just came, he was not taught Oshiwambo before, or he was taught Oshiwambo but he's another language like Oshikwanyama. It's a challenge, or learners that are transferred, their, those are transferred, they only know the basics. Like some of them, they only know vowels and that's it. It becomes a challenge because the</p>

	moment you are, you want to go ahead with what you planned, but you cannot because you have to make time for these people you want them to catch up, but the fact that they are far, they are not at the levels of others, it becomes a challenge.
37	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> You ask questions, what they are reading about, or mmh, you supervise them, every time they are reading you are there guiding them, yah.</p>
38	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshindonga at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> I don't know, maybe through reading, that's difficult.</p>
39	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> Yah, they are enough. For Oshindonga, they are enough.</p>
40	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> Mmh, no, it doesn't. Not here.</p>
41	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> Like phonics, umm, when, you cannot read without knowing sounds. You put the sounds together and then it makes a word, or you, you, you.... Like when it comes to flash cards you can give a word and then, or you can give a word even not in the flash card then you say they, mmh, divide them in syllables, they divide the words in syllables. Is also another way of teaching words if you're like to give a word they divide them in syllables, and then it helps and they read. For flash cards I said uhm, when they are manipulating the words they are building sentences, "let me say reading sentences" with flash cards they won't forget that, so the sentence that he made himself with the words, you can give him like ten cards, then you say "choose the words that you want and make your own sentences" that sentence he made with those cards he will never forget it, or you break it up and ask him to put it back.</p>
42	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> I don't know, that's difficult.</p>

43	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> Mmh, yes. The language policy says children must be taught in the mother tongue. All subject in JP should be taught in the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue of the majority, of the learners that are attending that school, unless if the school has a lot of mixed, uuh, learners. But it's also a challenge sometimes because they are used to English, you see town kids. Some of the words they don't even know, even when..... they are used to English. That's why even, and sometimes we admit these children were never taught Oshiwambo, they were just at private schools, and then maybe because the private schools are getting expensive they are here. A lot of them are coming here. They can be Oshiwambo speaking children, but the fact that they were not taught Oshiwambo, it is a challenge because they keep speaking English. Now that we are receiving such numbers, I think it is challenging.</p>
44	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> They, every day they read, except listening and res, uh... most every lesson, even if they are going to write, every lesson they read, we integrate the skills, but yah, listening they have to read sometimes, it depends what they are going to listen to, because even if they are going to listen to a story you write questions and answer, and then they read the questions. Unless speaking, when they are speaking their own choice. In that lesson normally we don't read, but in listening and speaking they do, writing they do, and uhm, listening and responding.</p>
45	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 3:</b> They read because sometimes they need to identify rhyming words in poems. Sometimes you can ask them to bring newspapers, you see sometimes there is this daily news. With daily news you can even ask them to pick newspapers and read. Tell the class what they read about, they come and tell the class, they bring their newspapers at school reading for understanding or enjoyment, sometimes is just for enjoyment. They also read their own stories that they wrote.</p>
46	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?</p>



	<p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Yah, what went well is that a lot of children shows that they can read. They read according to punctuation marks and they are reading with understanding. The problem is only with the children who are challenged by reading digraphs. I noted that a lot are challenged by digraphs and trigraphs so much. So, what didn't go well in this lesson is the digraphs.</p>
47	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> I will select digraph words and I will specifically focus on teaching digraphs only. I will also give them digraphs words as homework so that they can go practice at home because it is very helpful for them to improve because some doesn't have time to read at school. So, the homework really help them to improve their reading greatly.</p>
48	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Yes, they were met, because the majority of the learners.... The objective was just for learners to read aloud, uhm, and adhering to punctuation marks for them to be able to read a grade level text with understanding and using correct pronunciation. It was the objectives, and they were met because most of the learners can read.</p>
49	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Yes, it was interesting. Because some were really participating when I asked them questions related to the story they were, most of them they were able to respond to the questions correctly and there were pictures that helped them to understand these words.</p>
50	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Mostly for the children to learn Oshindonga one have to use pictures, it is very much helpful because if one can't read the word, she or he can read the picture and predict what is displayed in the picture. The other thing is to segment words into syllables because once the child know how to do syllables, the he can read well. Even when he finds a difficult word he can just use the syllable approach of clapping hands to read that word.</p>

51	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Sometimes is the child's language especially that most children here are taught Oshiwambo, but they are not Oshiwambo speakers at home, and they only learn it at school. You know some children are not Oshiwambo speakers by birth and they use another language at home. It is very challenging because when you are teaching Oshindonga, these children are always struggling to catch up. Apart from the language, there is also an issue of lack of commitment from parents because they are not helping the child at home to improve the language and this leads to stagnation of the child to learn Oshindonga at school.</p>
52	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Yah, there I take note of it after I ask the child to... after reading I can ask him to retell what he read about. If he can retell what he read, then that shows that he understand. I also ask them questions related to what they have read so that they can give me answers on what they read. If he was not reading with understanding, then he cannot be able to give you the answer. Mostly I also try to explain the new/difficult words in the text to be read so that it can be easier for them to read with understanding.</p>
53	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshindonga at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Yah, reading skills are developed by using phonics and also fluency. There are also other methods like, yah a lot of them like sounds.</p>
54	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Yah, we do have enough books with interesting stories and they are in line with the syllabus.</p>
55	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Yah, because many children, it really disturb Oshindonga because many children, or most children use English so much. When they are taught Oshindonga, there is always a conflict because sometimes children would be reading Oshindonga words using the English pronunciation, because most children</p>

	value English more than Oshindonga. Sometimes we can be busy with Oshindonga lesson, but children will ask you in English.
56	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> I said that already.</p>
57	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshindonga languages?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> I do..., they do come read after I taught them how to read, for example today it was just about learning to read. There is that type of reading where I am assessing one if she can read. I do give them the reading text which they practice in advance, and later they come read for me to assess their reading. That way I am able to find out that this one can read, and we award scores over ten marks. If one cannot even read a single word, then you know already that this one cannot read. Sometimes one can read, but not according to the punctuation marks and that's where we focus more so that they can read properly. That is how I find out who knows how to read and who does not know because there are some children who can read like an adult.</p>
58	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Yah, I'm aware of it. Children have to be taught in their mother tongue from grade one to grade three in all subjects, except English which is taught as a subject. Like with us here we use Oshindonga.</p>
59	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Reading, reading mostly...., almost whenever we are teaching other skills such as listening and....uhm, and language usage reading automatically comes in.... writing, when one is writing something she have to reading it first. Once he listen to the story, he has to read questions so that he can answer them. Reading itself comes in when there is a reading lesson, but we do integrate reading in all skills so that they can read well.</p>

60	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 4:</b> Mostly they do read story books only, learners' books. Others they only do read them during the reading lesson like now we do have a specific lesson for reading where everyone reads, including the teacher and that's where they do read things like newspapers, or their own reading book which they bring along. They bring their own reading books which we put in our reading corner. This is a book which the child select on her own based on her own interests, for example bought by the parents at home, or even bringing a newspaper along so that he can read.</p>
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Interview for Chefy Primary School ends

Interview for Bonza Combined School begins

Line	Bonza Combined School
61	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> They were talking well, especially at the beginning when I wanted to check if they have known words...., mmh, or say numbers, weeks and months in Oshiwambo words because these are things which they supposed to know. Most of them demonstrated that they have learned them, although there are some who, who cannot say them in Oshiwambo. Uuuh, what didn't go well is that there are children who cannot blend the letters, there are some who are really struggling, especially with the digraphs.</p>
62	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Mmh, I could, I could...., mmh, I will teach the digraphs separately as my focus of that particular day because today it was a mixture of both graphs. I could teach a lesson only focusing on the digraphs so that the children's thinking can only focus there alone, without other graphs included to avoid confusing them on their sounds.</p>
63	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Mmh, I know they were achieved because most of them, because I wanted them to read body parts words, which most of them read and have</p>

	demonstrated that they can read them very well. Mainly also that they can differentiate where there are diagraphs and blend the sound.
64	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Yes, I think it was interesting, especially, mmh, especially that they were participating, most of them were participating actively, as well as when it came to asking them to show particular body parts on their bodies, that excited them more because when they are reading it, then they touch them on the body here and there. Those are the main two things which I have seen that made them to be interested in the lesson.</p>
65	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Things which help in teaching reading in Oshikwanyama are mainly vowels, mainly when teaching children to learn them on their hands. If each child learn that this vowel is placed where on her fingers it makes it easier for them to read, especially as a reminder when she come at a difficult word she will remember that particular vowel. Vowels and sounds of all letters, sounds mainly and vowels help the child to read.</p>
66	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Eish, how do I say this... Mainly it is the sounds which are conjoined. If the child was not earlier taught separate sounds, it later becomes a challenge to him or reading without any picture. Because when there is a picture it guides the child much better because reading without a picture it confuses the child because the picture gives a prediction of what is read. That means the story read need to have a picture in line with the story context.</p>
67	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Mmh, uuhm, mainly I check them if they are reading focused on words and to make sure that the child is focused on that particular word because she or he may only hear others reading it and memorize it. One need to know her learners very well and guide their thinking, mainly to ensure that when a particular child is reading, if it is on the chalkboard she or he should focus on the board. If it is on</p>

	<p>the paper, it is just on the paper. Also to, to move around the tables it motivates the child to know that the teacher is coming, so I should focus on my paper. It is different from when you're only standing in front or seated at your table.</p>
68	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> We do teach, umm...., we do teach reading with these methods, especially in grade two we continue where they have stopped at grade one. So we mainly focus on letter sounds starting with, with, with graphs, words which have one sound revolving around vowels or full of vowels. For example Tate, Meme..... such short words. From there we come to the next step where we focus on digraphs, before we continue with the trigraphs. Starting from simple to complex, but mainly we focus on the vowels because if the child have known the vowels because when they come from grade one they already know all the letter sounds and here is just to focus on vowels so that they can blend letters using the sounds which they already know. Once the child have known the vowels, it is very easy for her or him to read because she can blend the letters to read words.</p>
69	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshikwanyama in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Yes, we do have enough. Almost each child has his or her own, but if we are short, maybe only with two or three there. Plus they are also in line with the new curriculum.</p>
70	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> English disturbs Oshikwanyama in a manner that children who comes from the houses where Oshiwambo is not spoken, let me say Oshiwambo because not all of them are Oshikwanyama speaking. We try to teach them in the class, but those that don't speak Oshikwanyama or Oshiwambo are always having challenges or difficulties to differentiate words which they speak in English and translate them to Oshiwambo. For example the child can count well in English, but she doesn't know the numbers in Oshiwambo, she know it in English, but she doesn't know it in Oshiwambo. This means that English language is dominating too much without the possibility of developing Oshikwanyama or actually Oshiwambo. This is very difficult to some children to learn to speak Oshikwanyama, either speaking or reading, because those who does not know how</p>

	to speak Oshikwanyama are the very same children who does not know how to read it. If they are speaking Oshikwanyama, you could see that they are trying, but when it comes to reading you could really see that they are struggling very much.
71	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> They can be very helpful in a manner that the child, I mean the brain of the child is developing from the known to the unknown because if she learn one single sound of a letter, when you are going to blend the letters she already knows both sounds and she will only need to blend as that is where the emphasis is here.</p>
72	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> I ask them to read and listen how they are reading and give marks.</p>
73	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Oh, I, I don't really want to say, but in short, I don't know, and I don't know it in context because I did not do further study, but I only know what I learned at school, but in depth I do not understand it, maybe once I do further studies on my career.</p>
74	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> In a week we have two, in each week they have two lessons specifically focusing on reading, like every Wednesday they read. The rest are just integrated here and there.</p>
75	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 5:</b> Mainly they read stories and words, new words which comes from a story which they listen to during the listening lesson, or other readings related to the integrated topic for that particular week. Apart from that, they have 20 minutes for the reading lesson as per the timetable where they may read other things like newspapers or any other book.</p>
76	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?</p>

	<p><b>Teacher 6:</b> Our lesson went well because learners were interested. I noted this because they answered questions well and they also responded well to the words I wrote on the chalkboard. That's why I can say the lesson went well. What didn't go well is, uum, towards the end the children were like, uum, like making noise.</p>
77	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> Mmh, if I'm to re teach it..... but I don't think it needs to be repeated because.... ya.</p>
78	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> Yes, they were achieved because I wanted them to know the letters as well as reading jumbled words correctly. So, we have done all those things and they understand them.</p>
79	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> Children were interested, so it was really interesting because they were raising their hands well and they were not making noise. And what else..... mmh, aaye<sup>65</sup>.</p>
80	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> Ok, the things which are interesting to the children are such as when they are reading looking at the pictures, uhm, and, and you have to start with what children knows already. For example starting with vowels and children can read.</p>
81	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> Things which are challenges are such as we do not have enough books, you make copies and one child can be at this page, while one is on a different page. That brings about..... in particular teaching aids are lacking.</p>
82	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> I make sure they read because they have to answer questions which I ask later to check if they were following during reading.</p>

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<sup>65</sup> Aaye means no in Oshiwambo.



83	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> In reading we start with, like I said we start from the known to the unknown like we have started with vowels. Then you take the sound which you think is new to the children and later you take individual words for that particular sound in that story. Then later you take difficult words and teach them.</p>
84	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshikwanyama in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> The books are not really enough, but we do make copies because it may be that in that particular book there is no.... that particular thing is not just there, iyaah, it's not there. Like we had a topic about decisions making, so we do not have a story like that in the complete book.</p>
85	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> Yes indeed...! Children of nowadays do not want to speak Oshikwanyama at all, they only want to speak English. This is very dangerous because they will no longer know their mother tongue because now they are only speaking English both at home and school since we are in town. This is to be blamed on their parents who think that English is the best language more than Oshikwanyama. Parents do not want to talk Oshiwambo with their children at home and this is very bad because us language teachers are suffering and highly challenged.</p>
86	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> The child build knowledge on what she see, building on what she see. And the sounds, once you identify that specific sound it help because she may find some words in that particular sound which help her to read. Like we did in our story so that children can take words with that particular sound.</p>
87	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshikwanyama languages?</p> <p><b>Teacher 6:</b> I ask them to read and listen to them, then I give them marks.</p>
88	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p>

	<b>Teacher 6:</b> Mmh, language policy.....? Huh, (laughing)..... No, I do not know anything about that.
89	<b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class? <b>Teacher 6:</b> Only during the reading lessons.
90	<b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read? <b>Teacher 6:</b> Ok, children do read in books, we do have books..... We sometimes do have some pamphlets. For example if you are giving a home work for children to bring the, the, or look into the newspaper and find a story on something.

Interview for Bonza Combined School ends

Interview for Zopa Primary School begins

Line	Zopa Primary School
91	<b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why? <b>Teacher 7:</b> What went is..... how do I say this.....? Is to read because it was the main part of the lesson and it is what we focused on reading. So what went we is that the children understood the story and they read as I expected. What didn't go well is the few children who are struggling to read the trigraphs and some were reading without understanding. There are some who are reading with laziness for example instead of reading "ekola" they instead read it like without the correct intonation and it lose its meaning.
92	<b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why? <b>Teacher 7:</b> If I was to reteach the lesson, I will focus on the trigraphs sounds.
93	<b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further? <b>Teacher 7:</b> Yes, it was achieved, because when I asked them to read taking note of the vowels and the sight words they did it well.
94	<b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not? <b>Teacher 7:</b> Yes, it was interesting....! because when I used the flash cards I noticed that children were more interested because they were competing to read.

95	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> Mainly are the flash cards, the pictures, letter sounds so that children knows the letter sounds because if the child do not know the letter sound, the she cannot read. So, it is very important to put the emphasis there when teaching so that children can learn how to read.</p>
96	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> Some children comes from different schools not knowing anything about reading and this makes it difficult for a teacher to teach as indicated by the basic competencies requirements because you have to lower the standards in order to accommodate all the children.</p>
97	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> When children are reading with understanding, you learn it when the child is reading...., even someone nearby could understand what she or he is reading, but if a child does not know how to read he may just read without the correct meaning. I further also do take note that they are observing the punctuation marks when they read.</p>
98	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshindonga at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> Through teaching phonics and use other things like, like..... ya, etc.</p>
99	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> No, we do not have enough books. We only try to source readings from some other sources and make sure that the readings are at the level of the children, or I take some books which we have, but are not in line with the curriculum and I take stories which are in line with our topic of the day or week.</p>
100	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English supress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> Not really so much, I have not observed it much. If it is happening maybe just a little bit because when you are in Oshindonga lesson, children only speak Oshindonga unlike when it is English lesson where they might use Oshindonga. This is because these children do not really know English, especially</p>

	these ones with us the ageing teachers. We do not know English well. Therefore they do not have enough English vocabulary so that they can use it to interfere in Oshindonga lesson. They only mainly know simple words like “Ms or Mr” because they memorise it since it is a word that they hear every day, but with some other words they can’t.
101	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> By using flash cards, pictures and teaching letter sounds. Undermine</p>
102	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children’s reading abilities in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> I..., I..., I give others work to do like a story book to read or different stories then I call them individually and give them a passage to read and this is where I observe how they are reading.</p>
103	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> Shuu, language policy? Mmh, I don’t think I know it, I don’t know it.</p>
104	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> They do read in an integrated manner like every day they do read, although it is not a reading day.</p>
105	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 7:</b> They may read prepared stories on posters, or newspapers, or.... We do use a lot of reading resources. We might use newspapers, or leaflets, or pamphlets, etc.</p>
106	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn’t go well) in your lesson and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> Children were reading well and they said the letter sounds correctly, they read words well, but there are only few who are struggling to read. Some children were also struggling to identify letter sounds.</p>
107	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> If I am to re-teach the same lesson I will focus on letter sounds because a lot of children do not know letter sounds and this is what they need to know for</p>

	the to know how to read. That is the reason why some failed to identify the sounds because they don't know them.
108	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> Yes, because most children answered the questions well and they were able to identify words with specific sounds, and they were also able to write.</p>
109	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> Yes, it was really interesting..! Children were happy and actively participating, as well as reading was very good.</p>
110	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> Mmm, it's for example flash cards with letters or with words, pictures..... these can help the children to read easily because when the child look at the picture and the word it will simplify the reading process in her mind.</p>
111	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> (laughing) Oh, teaching Oshindonga, especially I don't know the letter sounds (phonics). They are very difficult for me..! Because I cannot model them correctly to the children.</p>
112	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> I ask them questions, because I always ask questions after reading which they may respond verbally or by writing, or may be identifying letter sounds like what we did today.</p>
113	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshindonga at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> We use flash cards, pictures and letter sounds..... also newspapers in Oshiwambo.</p>
114	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshindonga in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> Yes, we do have this one. They do read there...</p>
115	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p>

	<b>Teacher 8:</b> (laughing) Mmm, not really, but they may be speaking Oshindonga during the English lesson, except only sometimes when they say numbers in Oshindonga lesson where they may say them in English.
116	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> Mmh, I really don't know.</p>
117	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshindonga language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> Mmh, I see it through their responses to questions. After they read a passage, then I will ask a question, then that's how I find out if he or she knows how to read, or I might give a certain reading passage and they have to read pointing at the letters they are reading then I could see if she or he knows how to read. Because one may be reading tetetetete, but it can be that he's not reading where he is pointing, but just lying. So, by pointing words that they are reading from left to right – top to bottom, I do note that one has learned how to read or not.... or through answering questions.</p>
118	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> No.</p>
119	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> We do read in Oshindonga, they do read during the reading lesson, and this means that they may read every day. Even during the Environment studies lesson they might read because one has to give them certain sentences or some words for them to read them. Here you can also observe if a child knows how to read, meaning that in all subjects taught, the child can learn how to read Oshindonga because Oshindonga is the medium of instructions.</p>
120	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 8:</b> Ee<sup>66</sup>, we do follow the curriculum which indicates that sometimes reading can be done from the newspapers, sometimes it says we have to come up with story books to read, sometimes we do read just stories, sometimes the instructions is to do unprepared and prepared reading. Things like that... We may also read a story which we sourced from the upper grades.</p>

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<sup>66</sup> Ee means yes in Oshiwambo.

Interview for Zopa Primary School ends

Interview for Mwayasha Primary School begins

Line	Mwayasha Primary School
121	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Mmh, what went well is that children most children were able to read, uhm, they read well although the lesson, not all of them got the chance to read. What didn't go well is that it's difficult, difficult because not all of them read aloud, but you try so that they can read. And the time, time use was not also good because I planned for them to read within limits of some minutes, but some children were exceeding the time limits which distracts the whole process.</p>
122	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Mmh, mmh, just a little bit. Mmh, I could, I could re-teach the lesson. I will change....., you know there is always something to improve in a lesson. May be I am thinking that I will shorten the story so that they use little time, I will remove some passages so that it is short. I will then highly emphasise on the time, indicating that each child only has so, so minutes so that they are aware to finish within the allocated time. For example, each will only have two minutes, so we have to read within the limited time.</p>
123	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Mmhu, yes, they were met, because I was observing how they are reading. Are they reading with, are they reading with speed? Are they reading fast, are they reading words correctly? Most of them were reading words correctly, some read well with the correct intonation.</p>
124	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Reading nee, mmh, I think it was interesting because..... mainly with reading I don't like to give them....., I like them to read something new because we were looking at..... I wanted them to read something new and that's why I did not give them that chance. I gave them different books so that they, they are</p>

	<p>not bored... I gave them books to read while the one is coming to read in front. When they are coming in front to read they are reading something new so that they will be... because when they are reading something familiar, it is like they get used to it and they memorise it.</p>
125	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> In Oshikwanyama what help in reading is mainly children, mmh, phonics, once they have known how the phonics are sounded then, then I focus on vowels so that when they see the vowels they are able to read it because if there are those who are struggling mainly they do not know. Especially if there is a vowel “u” they first have to recite silently like “ma, me, mi, mo, mu” before they read. If the child first learn the phonics and learn how to read vowels with fluency, then it is clear that the child will be able to read if such vowels are grouped together to make up a word. Then if such words are used to make up a sentence then the child would still read such sentences. First you teach phonics, then vowels, words and then later sentences so that they will read with ease.</p>
126	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> The challenges are there because we have all languages here, Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Oshikwambi, Oshingandjera, English and others. When we teach sounds in English they do have difficulty with differentiating between vowels in Oshiwambo and English. This makes them, when reading Oshiwambo they confuse English vowel sounds with Oshiwambo. This is difficult to them and that is why every time we read I have to remind them that we are not reading English, but we are reading Oshikwanyama because vowels are the same in Oshikwanyama, unlike in English where some are similar. The main challenge here is to differentiate between languages which makes them to combine them. We do have children who are from...., some do speak Oshindonga, some Oshikwambi...., so it is very difficult for one to read with a correct intonation of Oshikwanyama. They may read based on his or her mother language, either Oshingandjera, Oshikwambi, or Oshindonga and mainly when they are reading one will attempt to put things in his mother language like the way they do at home. That is also one big challenge.</p>



127	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Mmhu, mainly I do, mainly I like to do...., because mainly every week we do have a new topic. I like to give sight words for that particular week, letter sounds of that week. Each Monday I do give phonics for the week then they will practice because it is done so that there are words that are difficult, so they practice before we read the story then they are already familiar with such words, those words which are quiet difficult they are already familiar. This makes one, especially if he is able to read all words well to develop interest in what is being read.</p>
128	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Mmh, we do it like I said earlier. First you teach phonics, then graphs, then words and then later you teach sentences so that they will read easily.</p>
129	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshikwanyama in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Mmm, we do have enough books. Like Oshikwanyama Platinum learners' book which includes things like reading, mmh, grammar.... We do have a reading book where there are only stories. The learners' book covers all the skills taught in Oshikwanyama. We also do have Ependuko. We do have a reading big book for Platinum which I display on the chalkboard when reading, but it only have stories.</p>
130	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English supress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> I have mainly noted, I noted that vowels, vowels do comes with..... children do not differentiate that right now we are in Oshikwanyama or right now we are in English. Especially if we teach vowels in English, when they will read Oshikwanyama, for example “e” they mainly do read it like “i” because that’s what they are used to reading it like that in English because in English it is correct like that. For example if they are reading “me” in Oshiwambo, instead they read it like “mi” as if it is in English. I only noted vowels as the main area where they confuse them between Oshiwambo and English.</p>
131	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p>

	<b>Teacher 9:</b> I have no idea, maybe, ja.....
132	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> First, firstly, especially now I do, we do read..... I give them chances to read... first we use vowels, and I do find that the child have learned vowels well, he or she have learned phonics well. I do note that mainly when I ask them to read we do read all Oshikwanyama phonics where I give each child and observe where they have challenges so that when we do remedial then I focus on their weaknesses and give them.... I mainly focus on their weakness. Once I see that the child is reading well, all the graphs I then see that she or he has learned all the letters, unless maybe what will be difficult for him is only blending to form up words when reading. These are the children whom I do put in that category for remedial lessons so that I can help them to advance to the level of others. Especially if I see that their ability is poor and they are reading like....., reading very slow and he recite the vowels first (e.g. ma, me, mi, mo, mu) I do mix up the vowels and ask them to read them so that they master them. In the remedial teaching I do mainly concentrate on graphs by putting them in such a way that on top there are vowels which are inconsistent or mixed up, then each vowel get allocated to a letter so that they don't only read like "a, e, i, o,u", or "ma, me, mi, mo, mu" so that they can be able to read them when jumbled.</p>
133	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Mmh, that policy, mmh, I remember..... but I do not completely remember what is contained there, but we do not really get meetings or workshops talking about language policy mainly from the HoD. We do not get exposed, unless if you do it on your own for yourself.</p>
134	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 9:</b> Each week, in each every lesson there is reading included. Every day we do repeat phonics, we repeat words every day including reading. Even if we are learning grammar they still have to read sentences, even if it is listening, sometimes they will have to read questions, story, etc. This means that every day, because they do have Oshikwanyama each day "Monday to Friday".</p>
135	<b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?

	<p><b>Teacher 9:</b> The read stories, especially stories in that reading book are in the big book I talked about earlier. We do not ask them to read things like newspapers in Oshikwanyama, but I motivate them to do so at home.</p>
136	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> Ouch, those kids nee, we have a long way to go..., we are still struggling because most cannot read words correctly, but what almost went well, it only went well because of them reading after me. The teacher read first, then they follow, but making them to read one by one most of them are still struggling. They are reading words wrongly and reading very low when reading one by one. Those who are reading correctly are very few. They can only read well when the teacher use guided reading like I was doing.</p>
137	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> If I am to re-teach this lesson I will change, I will first teach vowels, then continued to construct words, and then we will start reading shorter passages, for example only with four sentences. This will help me in order to assist those that are struggling to read.</p>
138	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> Aah, mmm, aa..., it is averagely achieved, but it is not fully achieved because it was supposed to be that by the end of the lesson each child could be able to read aloud standing in front of the class reading aloud alone. However, most of them are not able to do that and that is why I am saying that the lesson objectives were not really met.</p>
139	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> Ee, it was interesting because they were learning how to protect themselves not to be called by strangers and accept it or also avoiding strangers completely before they are informed of who they are because they were learning about self-protection.</p>

140	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> Mmm, what is helpful in teaching Oshikwanyama is using games like, like word puzzles, blending letters and also to do words tracking by searching from the puzzles like with words written on the chalkboard and then kids will find them by circling them out with a pencil in a puzzle. This really help in teaching reading, as well as knowing phonics, especially the digraphs and trigraphs, and vowels and also punctuation marks do help kids to, to, to, mm, to.... blend letter-sound with letter names that they are reading.</p>
141	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> The challenges are mainly we do not have books with stories that are, stories that are so interesting like folk tales for example stories talking about monsters because if the child is reading something interesting he or she becomes very curious to get the outcome of the story. If the child is reading a story with pictures then it stimulates his or her imagination in a way that she or he can figure out what is happening. This makes them to be interested when those stories, when there are story books that are interesting. This makes the child to imagine like it is real.</p>
142	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> O, I do, I do, firstly before we start I do ask them then they tell me, then they tell me what to do at that particular time. Once they tell me then we, but mostly they always want to hear that if a certain thing is said, what actually is being said. That helps in attracting the children's interest towards what is being said.</p>
143	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> Mmhuu, reading skills are taught by teaching reading with phonics, vowels and then you, you teach words construction and blending. That way the kids can read, but it is not easy cause, cause it have to be repeated for many times so that they learn, especially kids in these lower grades are very difficult to deal with when teaching reading.</p>

144	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshikwanyama in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> Aaye, we do not have enough readers, but we do try to look for newspapers but the challenge is that the newspapers are written in a language that is beyond these children's level because it is meant for people who already knows how to read and they are not really helpful due to that fact because the child needs simple stories which are interesting and at their level.</p>
145	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> English disturbs Oshikwanyama mainly like here in our environment (in town) many children do not speak Oshikwanyama at home. This means that mostly they are not motivated to talk in their language from home and that is why mostly...., even when they are in Oshikwanyama lesson they do try to bring in English words. And mainly because we do have children of mixed race, there are some children who are not Oshiwambo natives and when they are playing with others, or when..., they do influence others when they will come read Oshikwanyama because most of the times they use English instead of Oshikwanyama. I would emphasise that the commitment for Oshikwanyama is mainly lacking in our environment.</p>
146	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> We can use things which I said earlier like teaching phonics and vowels..., also digraphs and trigraphs, etc.</p>
147	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> We do, we do..., I prepare a reading passage from a book or a reader that we have. Then from there I take children one by one and bring them to read by me, reading following each other and I guide him or her where she or he is getting stuck. This help that when a child comes here and we read together like teacher learner reading then that is where I find out that this child does know how to read or not by measuring the number of words she read.</p>
148	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p>

	<p><b>Teacher 10:</b> Ee, o, o..., the language policy says that the child should be taught in his or her mother tongue or the language that is spoken, that is mainly spoken in the surrounding of that school. From grade one up to grade three, because this help the child to be, to get knowledge in reading the other language like English. Meaning that if the child learns in the language that is his or her mother tongue or the language that is indigenous or the language that is spoken in that area it is not that difficult when she or he changes from that language to the official language (English). At our school we use, the language that we use is the medium of learning from pre grade, from grade one we use English language and I think that is what is disadvantaging Oshiwambo language to be below English. This means that the medium of learning from grade one to grade ten the medium of learning in the whole school is English.</p>
149	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> Mainly each week they do read. We do try to have 20 minutes specifically focusing on reading without including other skills or activities. Also, when we are teaching subjects like Environmental Studies we do try to put in two or three Oshikwanyama words. We also do have, like each Wednesday we have a new period for reading after the implementation of the new curriculum in 2015. This period only focuses on how to nurture reading or reading methods, but it is done, it doesn't have to..., sometimes it is not based on Oshikwanyama, because it is saying that a child should read whatever she or he want to read whether they are written in English or Oshikwanyama, but mainly we do try to have 20 minutes each day focusing on reading only.</p>
150	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 10:</b> We only have learners' books such as Oshikwanyama Platinum, while the other one is written "Oshikwanyama reading book".</p>

Interview for Mwayasha Primary School ends

Interview for Mondjila Primary School begins

Line	Mondjila Primary School
151	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?</p>

	<p><b>Teacher 11:</b> They were really following and were not making noise. They were following because when I gave them chances to read they really read well following where the others have ended. I think they were really following, but there are some who are struggling and yet not ready, although he or she can see where the other has ended, she or he is reading badly or not at all which is caused by lacking motivation. I think here the parents are involved and they are to blame because they do not have interest or commitment so that we put the child in between for effective learning. These children also do not know the value of education since they were not informed about it.</p>
152	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> If I am to re-teach this lesson, I will start with the special need children who are slow readers so that I start with them so that those who already know will be the last ones because they are faster, these ones needs more time.</p>
153	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Mmmh, ee, I think they were met. I think they were achieved because we said that after the lesson there will be questions which they responded to.</p>
154	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Yes, I think so because they were reading with interest and those that I did not mention were like they are left behind and feeling bad.</p>
155	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> I think when teaching Oshikwanyama we need teaching aids like wall posters with letters and difficult words put on cards also help the children to practice reading.</p>
156	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> We have a great needs of reading books. The Oshikwanyama books are not enough and the ones we have does not really have context which can be read by a child to learn Oshikwanyama well, but there are only smaller pieces with</p>

	small passages. For now we really struggle to get the correct readers and we make copies.
157	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Mmh, uugh, that is very difficult! I do record them when they are reading and award them marks and the one who score low points after I observed him or her then with this I see if my children are reading or not reading.</p>
158	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Uugh, do I really know. Maybe like what I said earlier.</p>
159	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshikwanyama in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Aaye, like that one is for grade four, I was just checking on it to get something to use but I did not get anything from it. This one is for us, but if you check in there are maybe only four headings which may not be consistent with the curriculum.</p>
160	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> English does come in Oshikwanyama lesson like with some children, especially one child I have in my class just joined us from a school where they don't teach Oshikwanyama and he is struggling so much. Sometimes I have to explain to him in English so that he can follow what we are talking about because he totally do not understand Oshikwanyama. Mainly also because our medium of instruction is English, children are often speaking English in Oshikwanyama.</p>
161	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Meme<sup>67</sup>..! That one I don't know, it is very difficult.</p>
162	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> I do, some children who knows how to read Oshikwanyama well they read fast and do not struggle and those who do not know they repeat a lot back and forth. I only use a method of noting on paper by checking who is improving and who needs more assistance. By that way I am also giving points.</p>

<sup>67</sup> Meme means mother in Oshiwambo.



163	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Mmmh, mh, no.</p>
164	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Ee, when we are awarding marks when they read we do take the whole day using lessons for that specific day so that all children finish because the time is not always there and they topics are different. They need to read the same thing, by the same thing I mean the topic because the topics are always different you have to..... they read every day.</p>
165	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 11:</b> Mostly we use readers or copies. We also do send them to get newspapers so that each one get his or her own newspaper where she or he will come read or retell what the story is all about.</p>
166	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What do you think went well (or didn't go well) in your lesson and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> I think what went well in the lesson is that, mm, all the learners were given a chance to participate in the lesson or were all given attention when it comes to reading. Uhm, only probably some of the learners that really don't know how to read that much very well, those learners that I think they, they..., the ones that are not reading, their reading skills, they are not really that much developed yet. So, those are the only ones who could not read and all those story.</p>
167	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> If you are to re-teach the same lesson, what can you improve and why?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Aahm, what I will change is only just to probably attend to this, or the learners that are struggling, the real ones, probably get simple, simplified texts for them which is easier, which will help them to take them through and then just read probably bit by bit.</p>
168	<p>Do you think the objectives of the lesson were met? Can you explain further?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> I can say the, the objectives were met because if you look at the majority of the learners I, I, I can say almost the whole class the learners could read and they're write some words cause it was the intended outcomes of the</p>

	<p>lesson. Only few ones that did not manage to read and..., yah, I can say it was..., the objective were almost met.</p>
169	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you think this lesson was interesting to the children? If yes, why, and if no, why not?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Aahm, referring to what they were now..., to their response I can say it was interesting because everyone was willing to participate and no one was really feeling like left out or not actively participating in the lesson.</p>
170	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that enable the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Ahm, the factors that, the ones that are enabling the kids to read well is like in the community where they stay, uhm, some of them from the home they have already speak their language, so that also contribute to them to, to, or enable them to, to read and may, some of them they read literatures, they listen to their radios they, there are many sources of our reading in the language in the community to, it also help them to boost the reading in their language.</p>
171	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What are the factors that hinder the development of reading skills in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> The limiting of..., the limiting factors are only these ones that uhm, this is a..., some of the learners they are not like really, uhm..., let me say Oshiwambo speaking people because they are from different places, some are from Angola and you can see that their languages sometimes..., some they only speak Portuguese, they mostly the language they speak at home some can be Portuguese, or in other languages those one they limit them to be like really able, or it doesn't like, they limit them to from really knowing a language very well when it comes to reading.</p>
172	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you ensure that when your learners are reading they are cognitively engaged?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> That's involve at least when you're, when you have reading lessons we have to engage in some activities that, they also help the learners to....., like reading games, uhm, having poems, uhm, those things they can make the learners to feel like actively involved and they won't feel as if it's just a normal reading.</p>
173	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How are reading skills developed in Oshikwanyama at JP?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Through using games, like, uhm..., and poems.</p>

174	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Do you believe there are enough readers in Oshikwanyama in JP at your school?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Uhm, readers..., readers are not, are not..... at the moment is a curriculum revised. In Oshikwanyama we really having a problem with the reading, the readers, they are not enough. Only few, we're not, we're not having enough readers. For now we're only having one, Oshikwanyama Platinum and that's the only one we have for the revised curriculum.</p>
175	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> In your view, does English suppress the mother tongue learning? If so, how?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> I think it does because languages like, languages are just languages when it comes to the..., when it comes to languages, uhm, there is no much bigger difference because if it is..., the learners get to know the letters those are the same that are used in Oshiwambo apart now just from how we read in English, but is suppose just a language like Oshikwanya.... aahm, Oshikwanyama very well.</p>
176	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How best can early literacy practices be used to improve reading skills and interest in reading in mother tongue language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Uhm, I teach reading skills development in Oshikwanyama and this will improve, uhm, things like to, like to bring interest in Oshikwanyama.</p>
177	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How do you measure children's reading abilities in Oshikwanyama language?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Aah, we them or..., its, its, its either provide, uhm, you, you provide some words, or you make posters whereby you writes words. Its either are the words of the same sounds or the words that are having the double ee for example like that then you take the kids individually, then you make the kids read through the words or you can take a simple text according to their level then you call the kid individually and then you ask the kids to read through to check how he's reading skills. And by the, the, the fact that we always make sure that we have sight words and all those things that we give them to read through different ones. And then you check how the kid is reading through them.</p>
178	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> Are you aware of the language policy at JP phase? If yes/no, please explain your answer?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Yes, I'm aware. Uhm, the language policy about..., yah, is... I.. Ok, the policy of languages is the, the, the, the learners, the, the, the, the what, the</p>

	<p>medium of instruction is selected upon over the language that people speak in the community, but now its, its, its, it comes out that if like a community like ours... the majority of the learners are not even, they don't share the same languages, is where when the school brings in the, what.. like a medium of instruction to be the second language like in our case we have English and that's what we use throughout all the subjects except in Oshikwanyama, the first language. Ahm, it is applied like how, it is applied as Oshikwanyama is only being spoken in the Oshikwanyama or is only being used in Oshikwanyama lessons, but apart from the other periods we use English which is a second language.</p>
179	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> How often do children read in their mother tongue in class?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Its like, uhm, per week we have a reading lesson, just a normal reading lesson and we have that obvious lesson which is for reading. Those are our chances of making our learners read through the vernacular. One reading or like a focus of reading each week, and then you have other reading lesson which we either change whether it is English or Oshikwanyama and that's how the chances of them reading. You can say their chances of reading in each week is having two periods per week.</p>
180	<p><b>Interviewer:</b> What type of readings do children read?</p> <p><b>Teacher 12:</b> Aahm, you, it's either we make them read through the books that we have now, they read through the words, sight words that you can get on the posters, or they make flash cards, they can read on them and, ya, anything or any text that you can type and then you give them to go read through stuffs. Those are the mostly things which we make use to read.</p>

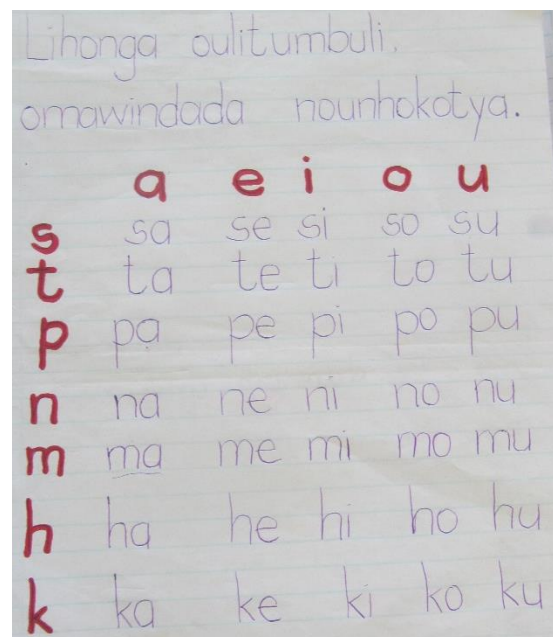
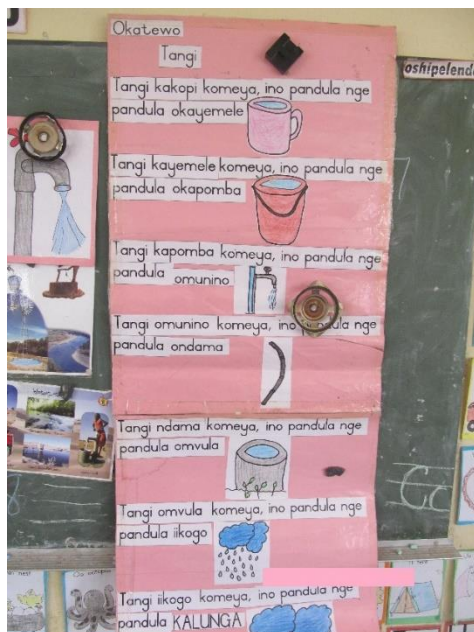
Interview for Mondjila Primary School end

## Appendix K: Stories on flipcharts and print rich pictures from classroom environments

Egumbo lyomusamane Ngato

Omusamane Ngato nomukulukadhi gwe  
Ndina oya dhike egumbo lyawo momuku-  
nda Ehale. Ongandjo yalyo oya dhikithwa  
ominene dhomisati.  
Oondunda dhalyo odha pangelwa niiti yo-  
mbango. oshoka omeya gombango emaluli.  
Iiti yayo ihayi tukwa nuupu.

Uuyanda walyo uule wa gumbwa nomano-  
Oshigunda shoongombe dhawo oshinene sha  
gama kuuzilo wegumbo. Iilya yawo ehayi pungu-  
lwa miigandhi iinene.



Pictures showing the directions of reading by pointing (left to right, top to bottom)

