

The Impact of Teachers' Instructional Practices in Maintaining Reading Fluency to Primary School Pupils in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study identified the impact of instructional practices used by teachers to teach reading fluency to primary school pupils in Iringa Municipality. A qualitative approach and a case study design were used to describe and understand the participants' views and experiences, whereas purposive sampling was used to select primary school language teachers. Interviews, observation, focus group discussion, and document review were used to collect data. The findings of the study revealed that teachers considered group reading among pupils, modelling for role-play, reading short and long stories, assisted reading practices, and activities of reciting simple and compound sentences as the common instructional practices used in teaching reading to pupils. The relevance of instructional materials was through reference to the requirements by the given competencies listed in the syllabus, assigned to the specific level, involving content from textbooks and further amplified by visual aids like wall charts. The study recommends language teachers be aware of the instructional practices used during reading sessions and make thorough preparations before reading sessions to familiarize them with the content they plan to teach the pupils.

Keywords: Fluency, Instructional Practices, Reading, Teaching Strategies

1.0 Introduction

In the educational academic context, understanding word meanings and the purpose for writing, as well as getting knowledge of new words, are all very important reading skills that support reading fluency to guide

comprehension (Ruiz, 2015). Possessing the ability to understand textual information plays a critical role in helping learners quickly locate information that is pertinent to the text, excluding information that is irrelevant to the text, and focusing on the needed information.

However, in a multilingual setting, where learners have two or more languages of instruction, previous research has shown that similar strategies of instruction can be used while reading (Gass & Selinker, 2001). To comprehend reading passages, multilingual learners may get an opportunity to utilise their knowledge of vocabulary, sounds, meaning, language, and textual structure as well as reinvent their prior knowledge (Barnhardt, 2005).

This, in turn, implies that academic success will require learners to be able to exercise fluency in understanding, analysing, and applying the information they gathered through what they read (Clarke, Truelove, Hulme & Snowling, 2013). It means that the importance of being able to understand written material increases significantly in all academic areas as learners progress from one level to another (Clarke et al., 2013). It is then especially important to help students with reading difficulties overcome the reading problems that may prevent them from literacy success before they reach the fourth grade. This is because, in lower-level elementary grades, students are focused on learning to read, while students beyond third grade are reading to learn (Sloat, Beswick & Williams, 2007; Clarke et al., 2013).

Prior research strongly supports the vital role of early identification in the prevention of reading difficulties and the urgent need to teach children to read during the first few years of school so that they can “read to learn” in grade 3 and beyond and avoid the long-term negative

effects, teachers can utilize and integrate reading comprehension strategies in their daily instructional practices to increase the reading fluency of the learners (Sloat et al., 2007). These strategies include, but are not limited to, graphic organisers (DiCecco & Gleason, 2002), collaborative strategic reading (Vaughn et al., 2011), peer-assisted learning strategy (Rafdal et al., 2011), story-mapping (Zahoor & Janjua, 2013), and self-questioning (Rouse, Alber-Morgan, Cullen & Sawyer, 2014).

In addition to these strategies, numerous classroom-based reading comprehension assessments have been used by teachers to measure the learners' reading understanding of academic material as well as to measure the effectiveness of a particular instructional method or teaching strategy. In different countries, particularly the United Kingdom, discussions in the field of education and psychology have been held on the relationship between social skill proficiency and academic excellence in the language (Tavakoli, Nakatsuhara & Hunter, 2019) in relation to the work of psychologist Edmund B. Huey (1901) who published, *The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading*, the first book to review the science of reading.

In Kenya, research showed that learners of English as a foreign language faced a variety of challenges including poor language background, which makes the learning of English to be difficult. The learners had their first languages, which were different from English. The study suggested that teachers should provide a warm classroom environment and different methods to motivate learners to learn English as a foreign language (Dhillon & Wanjiru, 2013). Some countries, like Tanzania, don't use English as their first language of communication. Studies reveal that the engagement of young children in activities such as co-

curricular activities that challenge them to read and write gives them a strong foundation in their fluency as they develop through their standard years (Cantoni, 2007; Gilakjani 2012; Mawere, 2012; Rugemalira, 2005).

Tanzania's government has shown a strong commitment to providing primary education for all of its children by investing much in education. As a result, it has achieved a high level of literacy among its citizens from the early 1970s to the 1980s (Kitta, 2004). In addressing pupils' poor literacy, the Tanzania government launched the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) in 2005 which resulted in a significant increase in pupils' enrolment in primary schools. The Tanzanian government further transformed several teacher colleges into universities to provide teacher education courses, consequently preparing teachers to cater for the increasing demands of the notable enrolments as well as pupils of literacy (Chambulila 2013; MoEVT, 2013).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Learning to read well is a challenging goal for young learners at the primary level. While other tasks human beings learn such as walking, talking, and eating, come naturally and are essential to everyday life; learning to read is a requirement for children. However, it is foreign to our customary growth. The society today is literacy advanced, dependent on the written word, meaning that a person who struggles to be fluent falls to a disadvantage, one that negatively impacts their life.

DiSalle and Rasinski (2017) examined the challenges that primary school learners of the language subjects come across and noticed that pupils still find it a struggle to articulate literacy in both English as a foreign language and Kiswahili, their local language both of which are

used as media of instructions in Tanzanian primary schools. Therefore, to improve pupils' language proficiency as well as their literacy, the huddles that pupils face in mastering reading must be addressed. Where pupils undergo more than one language of instruction; it is important to assess the strategies and practices of instruction that are used in encouraging fluency, which can lead to academic success.

2.0 Materials and Methods

This study used a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach was used because of the nature of the data that sought to generate meaning and understanding through useful rich descriptions of educational problems. A case study design was employed to describe and understand language teachers' experiences and standard four learners' views. The study was conducted in Iringa Municipality, whereby four schools were selected, among which two schools used English as the medium of instruction (MoI) and the other two used Swahili as the medium of instruction.

The study area was also chosen purposively on the basis that the researcher sought to develop new knowledge about the teaching-learning situation to contribute to language educational practices in Tanzania. Semi-structured interviews, observation, focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary reviews were employed in this study. Moreover, all qualitative data collected from the participants were analysed thematically through specific procedures such as reading and re-reading, coding generating initial themes, reviewing themes defining and naming themes, and writing up the report.

3.0 Findings

Under the set of common instructional practices and strategies, the study sought to discover the available practices and strategies that teachers used to expose children to reading to develop and maintain their fluency.

3.1 Common Instructional Practices and Strategies Used in Teaching Reading to Pupils

The study took place at two English medium schools anonymously labelled School A and School D. Also, two Swahili medium schools were anonymously labelled School B and School C. During the semi-structured interview, it was revealed that the English medium schools used individual reading, group reading and role-play as teaching strategies, while reading short stories, long stories, doing grammatical exercises and reciting simple sentences and compound sentences were the teaching practices. One of the pupils said that:

I learn reading at school by seeing, listening and understanding the way the teacher teaches us in the lessons with stories and passages (Interview with Pupil₄, School D, 13th June 2022).

The pupil's claim indicates how the role of teachers is impactful in developing and maintaining pupils' reading fluency because pupils depend on the teacher and are guided by what they are instructed to follow and observe by the way the teacher teaches.

Meanwhile, at the Swahili medium schools, School B and School C, the study found that participatory methods, group reading and assisted reading were being used as teaching strategies, while writing practices, comprehension stories and question-and-answer were the teaching practices exercised. During the semi-structured interview, one teacher was quoted saying:

The group reading, for example, involves reading exercises that I rely on to engage pupils and explain to them the topics of the lesson they are attending, and through question-and-answer, the pupils demonstrate to us what they know about what we are reading about, and what they don't know, helping the teacher to note the weaknesses (Interview with Teacher₂, School B, 10th June 2022).

The foregoing statement reveals that the discussion reading strategy provides an engaging way for teachers to observe fluency development in pupils, acting as a tool for assessment, by indicating where pupils' needs can be met with an aim of maintaining reading fluency. During observation, it was noted that teachers directed pupils' attention by assisting through the use of appropriate teaching aids, prior prepared before the lesson, as a strategy to help pupils read. This would be then followed with the teacher modelling for pupils to show proper fluency in what is read or in some cases, teachers would choose pupils who are fluent to model for other pupils as an example to relate to.

The findings revealed that modelling for pupils and using the teaching aids, would engage pupils in the discussion, practising question and answer, whereby teachers would regulate the reading sessions with a participatory teaching strategy. This indicates that these activities encourage pupils' confidence in accepting a challenge willingly in putting their reading skills to the test. One teacher from School B reinforces this by reporting:

There exists a problem in accurately monitoring the development of fluency in the pupils in their reading tasks because pupils are not as readily confident as expected to stand before their fellows alone to read out loud, but it is noticed that the pupils prefer the group reading strategy because, in the process of doing so, the collective participation in reading together reinforces proper

*pronunciation as well as fluency (Interview with Teacher₂,
School B, 10th June 2022).*

About the foregoing quote, during classroom sessions, the researcher observed that when individual pupils were selected for a reading task, a repeat reading practice by the rest of the pupils was encouraged by the teacher in a choral reading strategy aimed to reinforce the correctness of the read text, which aimed to give the selected pupil a learning experience; as a result, it helps to observe prosody and develop fluency. At the English medium school A, the researcher observed a lesson in session on letter-writing, where pupils were tasked to structure and, identify correctly the parts of a friendly letter and then read it out loud before the class for grammatical accuracy. The teacher read a sample letter audibly, pausing after short sentences to ask what the pupils understood while listening.

In addition, the teacher then drew a blank outline of a friendly letter on the blackboard and engaged the pupils to name the parts of a friendly letter following what they heard earlier while the teacher read. Pupils randomly volunteered to name the parts of a friendly letter, however, the teacher expressed visual confusion where a pupil failed to correctly identify the parts of the friendly letter and this was turned into a learning opportunity by the teacher, letting the other pupils teach the struggling pupil.

The researcher found out from teachers' detailed description of the course of instruction for reading fluency that teachers designed the start of a session in almost the same way to include fluency in all activities to be examined, by having pupils start with brainstorming questions on different vocabularies where indications of reading fluency are noted by

pupils answering the questions correctly with the teacher's guidance as necessary.

Figure 1: A Sample of a Teacher's Detailed Description of Course of Instruction from School A

MAIN COMPETENCE: COMPREHEND ORAL AND WRITTEN INFORMATION.

SPECIFIC COMPETENCE: READ AND COMPREHEND WRITTEN INFORMATION.

MAIN ACTIVITY: Understanding written information

SPECIFIC ACTIVITY: By the end of 60 min each class four, pupil should be able to arrange the main parts of a friendly letter correctly.

TEACHING AIDS/RESOURCES:
TIE (2018) - I Text books.

REFERENCE: English TIE - LOW English Standard 4 Pupils Book TIE: DSM

LESSON DEVELOPMENT				
STAGE	TIME	TEACHING ACTIVITIES	LEARNING ACTIVITIES	LEARNING INDICATORS.
INTRODUCTION	5 min	- Asking brainstorming questions about different vocabularies	- Answering brain storming questions	- Answering the questions correctly.
NEW KNOWLEDGE	20 min	- To guide pupils to read various sample letters	- To read various sample letters	- Reading accurately
REINFORCEMENT	20 min	- To guide pupils to identify basic parts of a friendly letter	- To identify basic part of a letter	- Identifying the key parts of a friendly letter
CONCLUSION	5 min	- To sum up by noting down important hints.	- To note down important hints.	- Noting down the important hints.

Source: Field Data (2022)

Figure 1 indicates teaching activities done by the teacher to help pupils understand the written information in 60 minutes, asking brainstorming questions about different vocabularies, guiding pupils to read various sample letters, telling pupils to identify basic parts of a friendly letter, and summing it all up by noting important learning points. While at English medium School D, the researcher observed pupils learning about occupations. The pupils were tasked to identify new vocabularies in form of the occupations from the simple sentences they read from provided textbooks. Pupils mentioned the occupations and the teacher went further to have random pupils spell out the name of the occupation for the rest of the pupils and discuss the meaning of these occupations.

This was followed by the teacher selecting pupils to tell the rest what each occupation represented, for example, a teacher is a person who teaches pupils, with more mentioned examples like a doctor, a pilot and a nurse. However, pupils had a challenge describing what a lawyer does since the lawyer is not a daily occurrence in children's daily lives. The teacher took note of this and started a role-playing strategy, where the teacher did a specific role, and then the children described the occupation the teacher had mimicked while role-playing. The identified occupations would then be spelt by the pupils, except where a pupil failed to spell the word tailor because they said *-er* instead of *-or*.

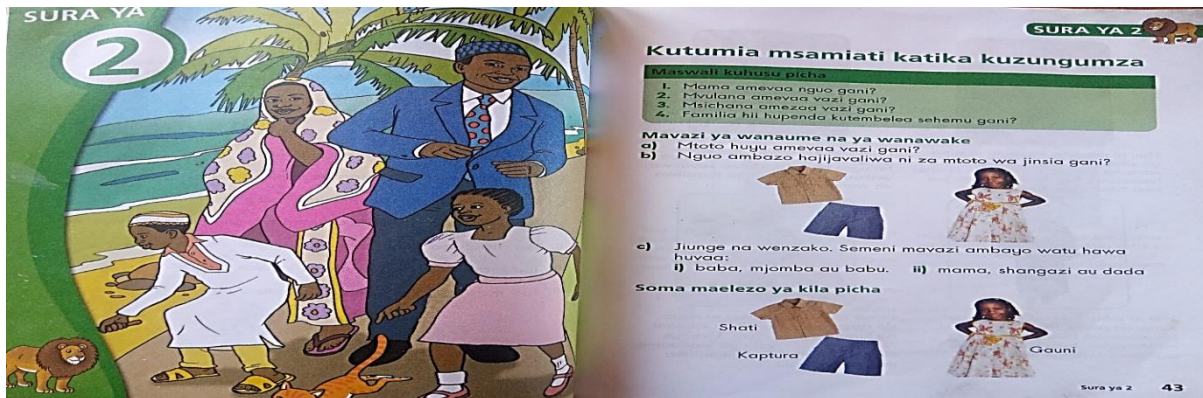
The teacher further engaged pupils in choral reading drills while spelling after a pupil had spelt a new vocabulary. The teacher then displays a wall chart showing the pictures of occupations along with their names and, picked pupils to describe the pictures shown and spell out loud the names below the pictures. The wall chart helped a pupil who had failed to spell the word policeman where they replaced the *c* with *s*. The session was concluded by the teacher assigning the pupils to write down in their exercise books the new vocabularies of occupation they had learnt and write down what these new vocabularies meant.

Meanwhile, at the Swahili medium School B, it was found that pupils were learning how to use punctuations to develop proper fluency in Swahili reading, where pupils had to mention the punctuation that they know and explain how they are used in speech as well as reading. The teacher demonstrated for them by reading a selected passage in the textbook, following punctuation and guiding the pupils individually to read short sentences from the textbooks, with emphasis on punctuation, instructing pupils to read as if they were talking naturally in Kiswahili.

With the modelling strategy, the teacher read a second time for the pupils, but pausing at every punctuation as if talking to demonstrate fluency in reading. The teacher then uses the repeat reading strategy, where two pupils are tasked to read for the rest of the pupils, as demonstrated and modelled by the teacher. Pupils read to the rest as if they were talking, taking from the example the teacher had demonstrated earlier with other pupils repeating after them.

The two pupils that had been selected to lead the rest however demonstrated a challenge with expressing commas and properly saying ‘question asking’ sentences. The teacher read again, as explained before, emphasizing for the pupils the punctuation marks in the passage as they occurred. Finally, the study took place within Swahili medium school C, and the topic the pupils were interacting with was from a textbook about different clothes for different occasions and seasons.

Figure 2: A Topic about Dressing as Learnt at School C



Source: Field Data (2022)

Given Figure 2, the researcher reviewed a standard 4 Kiswahili textbook, in reflection on the lesson about clothes done at School C. It showed that the pupils interacted with the teacher according to what was observed from the figure leading to guided conversations about dressing.

The teacher introduced a lesson about clothing, where pupils were to practice conversation and construct sentences involving the use of clothing. The teacher asked the pupils to mention the clothes they knew and, which clothes belonged to women, which clothes belonged to children and which clothes belonged to men, referring to a figure in the textbook.

The lesson continued with sentences about clothes and their use, tasking the pupils to construct sentences concerning how clothes are used. The teacher wrote short sentences on the blackboard afterwards and asked the children to read them aloud using a choral reading strategy. The teacher described a variety of clothes, asking about the use of each particular cloth mentioned. Children then read sentences with different clothes items in the sentences and the teacher asked, “What is the said cloth meant for, in the sentence?”

The teacher again wrote short sentences on the board and asked the pupils to read them in a choral reading practice. The teacher mentioned examples of clothes like a sweater and a suit and asked the pupils to describe their use and for what occasions and seasons. Pupils were then led to write sentences that describe any clothing, and what it is used for. Later, the teacher wrote more short sentences on the blackboard, asking pupils to try and read them aloud, to see if they could read them properly. A pupil was offered to read the short sentences on the blackboard and other pupils read after what the pupil had read. The pupils were finally tasked to write five short sentences that contain any cloth and describe what those clothes mentioned are used for.

The study findings revealed that teachers considered teaching strategies of group reading by pupils, role-play in terms of modelling, from both

pupils and teachers, involving pupils in participatory methods of reading and generating an understanding of developing fluency. These teaching strategies acted as tools to assess the pupil's grammar, pronunciation of new vocabulary and the proper use of punctuation. In addition, teachers used reading practices that included a combination of both short and long stories, from both story books and school textbooks, coupled with reading practices of reciting simple and compound sentences and engaging the pupils in core reading exercises or assisted reading practices.

3.2 How Instructional Materials are Identified by Teachers as Relevant to Pupils

The study examined how teachers identify and deem teaching materials for reading relevant, for example, teaching aids and textbooks for the level of their pupils in helping pupils maintain and improve reading fluency. The findings from the interview show that teachers regularly used textbooks, designated for the standard four-level, which contain resources like passages, short stories and sentences for teaching reading. Due to the obvious reason of pupils attesting to enjoyment from stories and experimenting with imagination, teachers also used storytelling from available storybooks that proved to be reliable tools for engaging fluency.

Proper preparation terms early, before lessons, helps teachers to be in tune with their fluent ability, for them to model it for pupils, which in turn, encourages pupils to receive ideal knowledge of what they are learning to read because of teachers' prior research from their teaching materials or books and is contributing to pupil's reading fluency.

This seemed to put teachers on a task of matching what pupils are required to learn and what teachers have to teach, where this was supported by one teacher from School A that:

At standard four, preparation and planning to achieve reading goals are coupled with constant reference to the standard four textbooks. Textbooks provide different learning topics that are relevant to be lessons, synchronized with what the teacher is to teach, meaning that teachers must refer to textbooks often for efficiency in developing fluency (Interview with Teacher₁, School A, 10th June, 2022).

The information provided above implies that referring to what the textbooks have to offer for a teacher's lesson, teachers have to be keen to keep in step with the standard four textbooks' content by thoroughly preparing the required reading materials to achieve appropriate relevancy for the pupils as noted below by one teacher:

The teacher should consider pupils' reading ability, lesson content and targeted competence during the preparation of reading materials because it can prove efficient, whereby the teacher can know the ideal target to follow and the right things to use for the topic to be taught, which can efficiently help pupils' understanding and lead them to be fluent as they learn from the prepared teacher (Interview with Teacher₂, School B, 11th June 2012).

The given explanation revealed that proper preparation in terms early-on, in time, before lessons, helped teachers to be in tune with their fluent ability, for them to model it for pupils, which in turn, encouraged pupils to receive ideal knowledge of what they were learning to read because of teachers' prior research from their teaching materials or books that contribute to pupil's reading fluency.

In support of the findings, the researcher reviewed the standard four syllabus' contents and noted that, during this particular period for the pupils, teachers aimed to concentrate on helping pupils read and comprehend written information, under the aspect of reading simple texts on different topics for comprehension. This involved teaching and learning activities like reading simple text to interpret contents, reading simple texts on different topics for comprehension, reading information and summarizing ideas in writing, reading simple texts to describe events on different topics as well as reading and using vocabulary which the reading materials must observe.

The findings from the interviewees revealed that teachers considered the curriculum as important in that it directs teachers in instruction and preparation of teaching materials in meeting pupils' needs, whereby a teacher from school was quoted saying:

The curriculum is also something we refer to in helping us to identify the right materials to develop pupils' learning, guided as well in the textbooks themselves as we teach''
(Interview with Teacher₄, School D, 13th June 2022).

Giving the example of School C where pupils were to read short sentences correctly about the use of clothing in conversation, the teacher from that school claims that:

When teaching, the textbook gives instructions and directions on what we can do in a given lesson, for example, the, the stories in the forms of simple passages come with exercises and pictures, hand in hand with what the pupils are to learn in the lesson (Interview with Teacher₃, School C, 12th June 2022).

Upon observation the study found that for every lesson undertaken, teachers carried out a practical approach of using the required teaching aids, especially relating to viewing optically the pictures and word charts, that would connect pupils' minds towards learning a new vocabulary, where the teacher would emphasize rephrasing the new vocabulary over and over in the process of assisted reading, followed by allowing all the pupils to listen carefully and chorus or speak out all together what has been learnt.

During the focus group discussion with the pupils, it was revealed that pupils mentioned wall charts often, as another viable option that they preferred to interact with besides textbooks with the aim of maintaining fluency one pupil reports, *“Our teachers put up wall charts in class when we have had a lesson of new difficult words, to help us remember every day when we look at the charts”* (Interview with Pupil₁, School B, 11th June, 2022). However, it was observed that some of the charts in the classroom were old and ragged, and some were poorly made and needed to be renovated to serve the pupils with a proper learning environment.

From the information provided above, it seems that this poses a disservice and should be addressed by heads of the schools to try and encourage the creation of sections or learning spaces on walls for pupils, to help develop their fluency through daily interaction with a talking wall.

3.3 Other Strategies that can be used to Improve Fluency in Pupils

In this aspect, the study discovered from the participants what they considered as certain plausible ways that teachers of language in Kiswahili and English can use to implement a steady development of fluent learners and what ideas can be conceptualized to contribute to the

improvement of reading fluency of their pupils. The findings from the interviews show that teachers suggest the use of storytelling as a viable strategy and practice during sessions that are specifically designed to engage reading, where pupils will each have a required role to play to participate as a teacher from School A suggests:

Storytelling can be viewed as a fun activity, where the teacher brings a form of entertainment at the disposal of the pupils where activities like acting, in the form of role play as well as songs could drive the session into a meaningful discussion period with the pupils, which helps the teacher to assess desired development of the pupils' fluency (Interview with Teacher₁, School A, 10th June 2022).

It implies that teachers consider developing the reading fluency of pupils through a sense of play methods that can encourage a learner-centered environment which makes it easy for a teacher to observe pupils, as they express themselves from a natural mindset from the storytelling themes. Teacher attention to pupils is equally important, especially in terms of listening to how pupils pronounce words, read sentences, or how pupils speak. This observation implied that taking time to listen to pupils as they read loudly is very important and helps teachers to guide in case of pronunciation and grammatical mistakes, helping pupils reading habits to be fluent with time.

From the pupils' perspective, the study revealed that pupils largely depend on teachers for the development of their reading fluency, and this is mainly through oral communication, or from textbooks, story books, and wall charts. This is supported by the fact that pupils spend most of their time with teachers at school and it is teachers who nurture them. A pupil from School A reported that:

The teacher is the one who can help us to improve our fluency in reading because they know more than us, and so we look up to them to guide us when they provide us with materials to read as we learn (Interview with pupil₂, school A 10th June 2022).

This indicates that teachers' training is an important factor to consider because it is from the teachers' experience that teachers will show efficiency in developing pupils into fluent readers.

4.0 Discussion of Findings

4.1 The Common Instructional Practices and Strategies used in Teaching Reading to Pupils

Teachers of language subjects like English and Kiswahili have a set of instructional practices and teaching strategies that can effectively assist them in exposing children to reading as well as attending further to this need. The findings show that most of the teachers of language and literacy in English and Kiswahili commonly use instructional practices and teaching strategies such as group reading, role play, modelling, choral reading and assisted reading. However, it seems that they lack the exact knowledge of what it is they are doing and the impacts thereof as they carry out these activities in their working experience, hence they don't allocate as much of a concern to these activities as would have been desired.

The findings revealed that reading sessions carried on from what had been previously learnt and the teachers relied on this strategy to assess comprehension as well as desired development. When new knowledge is presented, the teacher would model it out for the pupils, dependable to the study made by Kregler, Walker and Martin (2005), who found that teachers' modelling strategy is not always a part of the classroom

culture, because more often than not, teachers are just explaining an activity or a concept and learners are left to independently complete the tasks henceforth pupils referring to their teachers as examples to pick from making modelling a vital approach to improving fluency as stated by Rasinski (2014).

For the case of lack of confidence that pupils sometimes display when called to read out on their own, the teacher would use either a repeat reading strategy or assisted reading practice as derived from the findings. Similarly, Ransinski (2017) revealed that repeat reading is essential for those who may have difficulty in fluency. On the same note, Meeks and Austine (2003) noted that while practising assisted reading, the reader gets an opportunity to read text while at the same time listening simultaneously to a fluent reading of the same text, which proves beneficial for the reader as well as the rest of the pupils in the classroom, explaining the reason why pupils reported to prefer in-group reading exercises.

Correspondingly, the findings revealed that the pupils would be initiated into reading and reading fluently through both watching and copying their peers and how their teachers would express themselves. This discovery is backed by the Behaviorism theory, which works in hand with the act of informing another who is at the learning end where it is essential to provide sufficient opportunities to repeatedly do until perfect with reinforcing feedback from the teacher or peers (Ransinski, 2014).

Moreover, the practices and strategies used in reading exercises are meant to include all pupils and are not used according to the individual natural strengths or weaknesses of pupils. The activity of reading as well as being fluent consists of several sub-skills that have to be coordinated automatically at the pace of fluent reading as claimed by Coffield,

Moseley, Hall, and Ecclestone (2004). Therefore, if pupils are not naturally skilled at reading and exhibit evidence of struggle, this can be countered effectively by mastery in the coordinating reading practices or strategies as well as more time to groom the pupil's fluency.

4.2 How Instructional Materials are Identified by Teachers as Relevant to Pupils

The findings of this study revealed that the teachers in this aspect rely heavily on the curriculum as well as the syllabus outline to dictate the desired teaching materials and appropriate level books in the form of textbooks to teach the pupils. It showed further that teachers preferred textbooks and storybooks in this category and it is from these that they structured what they would teach, hence deeming them relevant.

The findings showed that it was also required for the teacher to be keen and prepare early on before having the pupils interact with the reading materials. The teacher would get familiarity with the content to teach, thereby equipping the teacher's fluency as well. This, however, would prove burdensome, especially in cases of a large classroom with an attendance beyond the maximum. The reason is that classroom-based studies that have been done showed African classrooms focus on the whole class of pupils rather than an individual learner and rather than on understanding as reported by Spaul and Hoadly (2017).

In addition, this brings attention upon the teachers to take care regarding meeting the reading needs of all learners effectively, paying close attention to planning and also researching deeper about the teaching materials and books they schedule to use in teaching, to aim at a wholesome teaching experience (Spaul & Hoadly, 2017) serves as a point of reference to the teachers of language subjects.

The researcher observed that the teachers also included the use of other teaching aids besides textbooks and story books like vocabulary trees and word puzzles. The use of these items came in handy when the pupils were met with new vocabularies, the process would then culminate into a choral reading practice orchestrated by the teachers with their preferred instruments of instruction. This is supported by the findings of Raddi (2018), which state in agreement that the activity of choral reading as executed after the use of reading materials provides a model of fluency through improving sight word recognition and allowing practice and support skills of fluency.

Upon further observation, the researcher discovered that the teachers used creative ways to visually stimulate the pupils by use of illustrations and wall charts which appealed to the pupils' interest, attracting them to engage their reading fluency, reflecting the ideas expressed by the information processing model theory which is based on how language is built and developed in a learner's brain when they see pictures or potential words, sending the information through the phases of sensory memory, short term memory and finally the desired long term memory.

4.3 Other Strategies that can be used to Improve Fluency in Pupils

The findings revealed different views reported by participants on the ways of improving reading fluency in children. It elaborated that reading fluency is an important aspect of the pupils that is essential in learning and can be observed within a classroom setting, nurtured by different activities, strategies and practices. Indeed, reading fluency in pupils is a gradual developmental process and it can be deterred or encouraged whereby the latter exhibits desired impactful results in a pupil's learning and language development. Studies about reading fluency reveal that

concern should be given with an aim of developing a pupil's reading fluency because a pupil's reading ability serves various purposes, varying in cognitive processes and knowledge. The decline of it thereof can threaten the overall status of a nation (Grabe & Stoller, 2018).

The findings from the interviews revealed that teachers recommended having the pupils exercise reading even outside the school setting, the suggestions envisioning continuous development of reading habits, drawing pupils to love reading altogether as they practice. This is further supported by Boardman et al. (2008), who echoed the discussed suggestion that it becomes mandatory, that reading fluency is an important reading skill that is fundamental for learners at all levels to equip them with and continually practice.

The information processing model theory asserts that readers forget information quickly if they do not encode it by rehearsing as observed by Slavin (2002). However, if rehearsing is done, for example by engaging the pupil's senses and reading aloud with them many times, the information they learn will move to the long-term memory section of their brain causing an actual impact, therefore, literacy teachers have a role to help learners improve their memories through creative ways that engage all the receptive senses of the pupils.

With the above point, the researcher discovered that teachers believe that the use of different teaching aids to develop fluency is essential in dealing with familiarity that may result in monotony and breed contempt in the pupils. The novelty of different teaching aids intrigued pupils' interests drawing them to be fluent at the pace the teaching aids bring along, requiring a teacher to be highly creative and industrious to deal with the monotony that may cause a setback.

In addition, it was revealed that the teachers' qualifications and training in this matter were necessary for teaching pupils reading fluency since it is clear that it is the teacher who guides the pupils and the pupils, in turn, look up to them. A fluent teacher therefore would have a lasting impact on the fluency skills of a pupil.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Many of the teaching strategies and practices were familiar to teachers and embedded actively in the sessions whenever they engaged pupils to read. As evident from the findings of this study, teachers have a special responsibility to be aware of how their instructional strategies and practices affect the pupils' fluency in reading. The findings also indicated that teachers were guided by the curriculum in place, as well as the syllabus, in determining the appropriate instructional materials for the students. Teachers argued that it is key to prepare early on and familiarize with the content in line with the reading sessions before having the pupils interact with the reading materials.

It was reported that pupils can be encouraged to further read outside the usual daily school settings, by helping them to practice reading habits which entice pupils to have interest to be engaged in reading. In addition, the teachers' qualifications and training in this matter are necessary for teaching pupils reading fluency, since it is clear that the teachers guide the pupils, and the pupils look up to the teachers. Hence, a fluent teacher has a lasting impact on the fluency skills of a pupil. For the sake of further study in this particular area of study, other researchers can examine the causes of poor fluency in pupils, in both speech and reading. It is intrinsic to understand the ins and outs of linguistics in

pupils, especially in the lower levels of primary education or even kindergarten.

Other researchers could explore other ways to make reading entertaining and attractive to younger learners and how it can be made into a daily routine that pupils at school and away can enjoy. Finally, researchers can investigate how teachers can be trained to deliver ideal guidance in the development of pupils reading abilities and skills as well as how parents and guardians can play a role in engaging their pupils in issues that concern their academic goals.

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