

**THE EFFECTS OF AN INTERVENTION STRATEGY ON THE READING
COMPREHENSION OF PRIMARY 4 LEARNERS IN RURAL NIGERIA**

By

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I declare that the above thesis is my work and that all the sources used or cited have been duly indicated and acknowledged.



SIGNATURE

28 February 2021
DATE

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

- My dear husband, Pastor (Dr) George Osawaru (JP) for all your love and encouragement to complete this PhD degree.
- My lovely children, Abraham, Doris, David, Divine and Blessing.

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF AN INTERVENTION STRATEGY ON THE READING COMPREHENSION OF PRIMARY 4 LEARNERS IN RURAL NIGERIA

The performance of learners in rural schools in Nigeria revealed that reading achievement in rural schools is very low. Previous research revealed that problems of mass failure in various school subjects are indications of rural learners' low reading comprehension difficulties encountered when they read. The ways and manners language skills were taught, especially reading and reading comprehension skills, did not create opportunity for learners to have the desired competence in reading. The traditional methods of teaching reading did not support the learners to achieve the instructional objectives because the learners failed to demonstrate a reasonable understanding of the content they read. This study focused on improving the reading and reading comprehension abilities of Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria. The study aimed to test the effect of the read-aloud intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria. In addition, this study examined the differences in Primary 4 learners' reading and comprehension abilities when either the read-aloud intervention strategy or the explicit direct instruction (EDI) programme were used during reading lessons. A reading pre-test and a reading post-test were conducted using non-randomised groups of Primary 4 learners. Qualitative data were collected to strengthen the quantitative data and triangulation was used to verify information. Sixty-four learners from two selected schools in the Ovia North East Local Government, Edo State were identified. They formed four groups consisting of two control groups and two experimental groups in each school. Six Primary 4 teachers were selected for the study. Two were used for pilot study while the other four were used for the main research in the two schools. The control group received Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) and the experimental group received Read-aloud intervention for six weeks. In order to provide answers to the research questions of this study, reading

performance tests were administered at the pre-test and post-test levels of the research. These instruments were complemented with data from the classroom observation, teachers' interviews and questionnaires. At the end of the intervention period, a post test using the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) reading text was conducted with all the learners in both the experimental and control groups. Text scores were interpreted and analyzed using the t-test Wilcoxon and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Findings revealed that the read-aloud strategy greatly improved Primary 4 learners' reading abilities.

The following recommendation were made: All stake holders in education should be given opportunities to contribute their opinions on how school time tables and reading plans should be structured to ensure that all areas of reading and reading comprehension are provided for. The ministries of education at all levels should collaborate on how to provide adequate funding to the education sector. There is a need for regular in service training programmes for teachers at all levels of primary school education. The training should incorporate different strategies of teaching reading to address the reading needs of learners.

Key words: Reading and reading comprehension, reading problems, reading strategy, intervention, Read-aloud intervention, Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI), Primary 4 learners, Primary schools and rural area.

ABSTRAK

DIE EFFEK VAN 'N INGRYPINGSTRATEGIE OP DIE LEESBEGRIP VAN PRIMÊR 4-LEERDERS IN LANDELIKE NIGERIË

Die prestasie van leerders in landelike skole in Nigerië het getoon dat die leesprestasie in landelike skole baie laag is. Vorige navorsing het gewys dat die probleem van die massadruipsyfer in verskeie

skoolvakke 'n aanduiding is van landelike leerders se beperkte leesbegrip en die leesprobleme wat hulle ervaar. Die manier waarop taalvaardighede , veral lees en leesbegrip, onderrig is, het nie vir leerders die geleentheid geskep om die verlangde leesvaardighede te ontwikkel nie. Die tradisionele leesonderrigmetodes het nie die leerders ondersteun om die onderrigdoelwitte te bereik nie, aangesien die leerders nie 'n redelike begrip van die inhoud wat hulle lees kon demonstreer nie.

Hierdie studie was daarop gerig om die lees- en leesbegripvermoëns van Primêr 4-leerders in landelike Nigerië te verbeter, en om die uitwerking van 'n hardoplees/luidlees-ingrypingstrategie op die leesbegrip van hierdie leerders te toets. Daarbenewens het hierdie studie die verskille ondersoek in Primêr 4-leerders se lees- en begripvermoë wanneer óf die luidleesstrategie, óf die eksplisiete direkte onderrigprogram (EDO-program, of Engels: explicit direct instruction/EDI programme) tydens leeslesse aangewend word.

'n Voor- en ná-leestoets is uitgevoer op nie-verewekansigde groepe Primêr 4-leerders. Kwalitatiewe data is versamel om die kwantitatiewe data te ondersteun, en triangulasie is gebruik om die inligting te verifieer. Vier-en-sestig leerders uit twee geselekteerde skole onder die Ovia Noordoos Plaaslike Regering, in die staat Edo, is geïdentifiseer. Hulle het vier groepe gevorm, bestaande uit twee kontrolegroepe en twee eksperimentele groepe in elke skool. Ses Primêr 4-onderwysers is vir die studie geselekteer. Twee is vir die proefstudie gebruik, terwyl die ander vier vir die hoofnavorsing in die twee skole gebruik is.

Oor 'n tydperk van ses weke het die kontrolegroep EDO ontvang en die eksperimentele groep is aan 'n luidleesingryping onderwerp. Om antwoorde op die studie se navorsingsvrae te kry, is leesprestasietoetse op die vóórtoets- en nátoetsvlakke van die navorsing gedoen. Hierdie instrumente is aangevul met data voortspruitend uit klaskamerwaarneming, onderhoude met die onderwysers en vraelyste. Aan die einde van die ingrypingsperiode is 'n nátoets met behulp van die Universal Basic

Education Commission (UBEC) se leesteks aan al die leerders in sowel die eksperimentele en kontrolegroepe gegee. Die toetsuitslae is geïnterpreteer en aan die hand van die Wilcoxon t-toets en Variansieonleding (ANOVA) ontleed. Die bevindinge het getoon dat die hardopleesstrategie die Primêr 4-leerders se leesvermoëns aansienlik verbeter het.

Die volgende aanbevelings is gemaak: Geleenthede moet aan alle belanghebbendes in die onderwys gebied word om hul opinies te lug oor hoe skoolroosters en leesplanne gestruktureer moet wees om vir al die areas van lees en leesbegrip voorsiening te maak. Die ministeries van onderwys op alle vlakke moet saamwerk oor hoe om voldoende befondsing vir die onderwyssektor te verskaf. Daar is 'n behoefte aan gereelde indiensopleidingsprogramme vir onderwysers op alle vlakke van laerskoolonderrig. Die opleiding moet verskillende strategieë om lees te onderrig insluit, om in die leesbehoefte van leerders te voorsien.

Sleutelwoorde: Lees en leesbegrip, leesprobleme, leesstrategie, ingryping/intervensie, luidlees/hardopleesingryping, Ekspliciete Direkte Onderrig/EDO (Explicit Direct Instruction/EDI), Primêr 4-leerders, laerskole, landelike gebiede

SETSOPOLWA

SEABE SA LEANO LA TSENOGARE MABAPI LE GO BALA KA KWEŠIŠO GA BAIHUTI BA MPHATO WA 4 BA DIKOLO TŠA PHORAEMARI KA DINAGAMAGAENG TŠA KA NIGERIA

Go šoma ga baithuti ka dikolong tša dinagamagaeng ka Nigeria go utollotše gore phihlelelo ya bona ya mabapi le go bala ka dikolong tša dinagamagaeng e fase kudu. Dinyakišišo tše di fetilego di utollotše gore mathata a go palelwa ka bontši ga baithuti ka dithutong tša sekolo tša mehutahuta ke taetšo ya gore baithuti ba ka dinagamagaeng ba na le kelo ya fase ya go bala ka kwešišo le mathata ao ba kopanago le ona ge ba bala. Ka fao mabokgoni a polelo a rutwago ka gona, kudukudu go bala le

mabokgoni a go bala ka kwešišo, ga se gwa fa baithuti dibaka tša gore ba be le bokgoni bjo bo nyakegago bja go bala. Mekgwa ya kgale ya go ruta baithuti go bala ga se ya thuša baithuti go fihlelela maikemišetšo a thuto ka gobane baithuti ba paletšwe ke go laetša kwešišo ye e kwagalago ya sengwalwa seo ba balago ka sona. Dinyakišišo tše di nepišitše kudu go kaonafatša bokgoni bja go bala le bja go bala ka kwešišo go baithuti ba Mphato wa 4 ba ka sekolong sa Phoraemari ka dinagamagaeng tša ka Nigeria le go leaka seabe sa leano la tsenogare la go balela godimo mabapi le go bala ka kwešišo ga baithuti ba. Godimo ga fao, dinyakišišo tše di lekotše diphapano tša mabapi le go bala le go bala ka kwešišo ka go baithuti ba Mphato wa 4 ba ka sekolong sa Phoraemari ge go šomišwa leano la tsenogare ya go balela godimo goba lenaneo la go ruta thwii (EDI) ka nakong ya dithuto tša go bala. Teko ya peleng le ya ka morago ya mabapi le go bala di dirilwe ka go šomiša dihlopha tše di sego tša sewelo tša baithuti ba mphato wa 4 ba dikolo tša Phoraemari. Tshedimošo ya boleng e kgobokeditšwe ka nepo ya go maatlafatša tshedimošo ya boleng gomme tlhakano ya mekgwa ya dinyakišišo e šomišitšwe ka nepo ya go tiišetša tshedimošo. Baithuti ba masometshelanne go tšwa dikolong tše pedi tše di kgethilwego ka Mmušong wa Selegae wa Leboa Bohlabela bja Ovia, le ka Mmušong wa Edo ba hlathilwe. Ba ile ba hlama dihlopha tše nne tše di bopilwego ke dihlopha tša taolo tše pedi le dihlopha tše pedi tša tekolo ka sekolong se sengwe le se sengwe. Barutiši ba dikolo tša Phoraemari ba Mphato wa 4 ba ile ba kgethwa go kgatha tema ka dinyakišišong. Ba babedi ba ile ba šomišwa ka dinyakišišong tša teko ya kgonagalo mola ba bangwe ba bane ba ile ba šomišwa ka go dinyakišišo tše kgolo ka dikolong tše pedi. Sehlopha sa taolo se amogetše thuto ya EDI mola sehlopha sa tekodišišo sona se amogetše tsenogare ya go balela godimo mo dibekeng tše tshela. Go fana ka dikarabo go dipotšišo tša dinyakišišo, go ile gwa dirwa diteko tša mabapi le go bala ka kwešišo ka maemong a dinyakišišo a teko ya peleng le teko ya ka morago ga go bala. Ditlabelo tše di ile tša thušwa ke tshedimošo go tšwa ka tekodišišong ya ka phapošing ya thuto, ka dipoledišanong le barutiši le ka go dipotšišo tša dinyakišišo.

Mafelelong a nako ya tsenogare, teko ya ka morago ga go bala e dirilwe go šomišwa sengwalwa sa go bala sa Khomišene ya Thuto ya Motheo ya Mang le Mang (UBEC) fao e lego gore baithuti ka moka ka go bobedi dihlopha tša tekodišišo le tša taolo ba a šomišwa. Dintlha ka ga go bala sengwalwa se di ile tša hlathollwa ka go šomiša mokgwa wa *t-test Wilcoxon* le wa Tshekatsheko ya Phapano (ANOVA). Dikutollo di utollotše gore leano la go balela godimo le kaonafaditše bokgoni bja go bala bja baithuti ba Mphato wa 4 ba dikolo tša Phoraemari.

Ditšhišinyo tše di latelago di dirilwe: Bakgathatema ka moka ba ka thutong ba swanetše go fiwa dibaka tša go fana ka maikutlo a bona mabapi le ka fao dinako tša dikolong le maano a go bala a swanetšego go beakanywa ka gona ka nepo ya go thuša makala ka moka a go bala le a go bala la kwešišo. Dikgoro tša thuto ka magatong ka moka di swanetše go dirišana mabapi le ka fao di ka fanago ka thekgo ya ditšhelete ye e lekanego go lefapha la thuto. Go na le tlhokego ya mananeo a kgafetšakgafetša a go ruta baithuti ka magatong ka moka a thuto ya dikolo tša phoraemari. Tlhahlo ye e swanetše go akaretša maano ao a fapafapanego a go ruta go bala ka nepo ya go rarolla dinyakwa tša baithuti tša go bala.

Mantšu a bohlokwa: Go bala le go bala ka kwešišo, mathata a go bala, maano a go bala, tsenogare, tsenogare ya go balela godimo, Lenaneo la go Ruta Thwii (EDI), Baithuti ba Mphato wa 4 ba Phoraemari, dikolo tša phoraemari, mafelo a dinagamagae.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

B Ed	Bachelor of Education
B Sc	Bachelor of Science
CCWA	Curriculum Council of Western Australia
CLF	Concentrated Language Encounter
EDI	Explicit Direct Instruction
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
GLM-approach	General Linear Model approach
KG	Kindergarten
MLA	Monitoring the Learning Achievement
MT	Mother Tongue
NAEP	National Assessment of Education Progress
NCE	National Certificate of Education
NCNE	National Commission for Nomadic Education
NERDC	National Educational Research and Development Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMEC	National Commission for Mass Education
NPE	National Policy on Education
NPEC	National Primary Education Commission
NRARA	Nigeria Reading and Access Research Activity
NRP	National Reading Panel
NSWDEC	New South Wales Department of Education and Communities
RRSG	Rand Reading Study Group
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNCAE	Nigerian National Council for Adult Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Funds
UNIVA	University Village Association

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIMS

1.1 Introduction

In the world today, there is widespread concern about learners who are continuously exhibiting high rates of reading difficulty. The ability to read and comprehend effectively has been accepted globally as the basis of learning and as a crucial element in the development of countries and their citizens. Jennings, Caldwell, and Lerner (2006:3) and Horn (2009:1) state that there is a general awareness among experts working with school children about the educational development and societal implications associated with reading difficulties affecting many children in the world.

In Nigeria, proficiency in reading is of great concern to the government. Kolawole (2009:380) and Andzayi and Ikwen (2014:428) report that, in recognition of the vital role of education, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) expects that reading and other activities related to it should be developed steadily in its primary schools. The government believes that, right from independence in 1960, it has provided needed materials and qualified teachers to promote reading and eradicate the high dropout rate of dropout from schools as a result of illiteracy.

1.2 Illiteracy in Nigeria

Nwakaudo (2013:12) reports that, in 2012, former President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration worked out a comprehensive implementation programme to ensure that the nation would achieve the goal of eradication of illiteracy. The programme made provision for the Almajiri education programme, girl-child education, special education for boy traders, and the UNESCO trainer programme to facilitate the ability to read well.

The name of the Almajiri programme comes from the word "Almairi" – from the Arabic word

“Almuhajir” – which is pronounced “Almajiri” in the Hausa language (one of the major languages spoken in northern Nigeria) and means disciple. It refers to one who is subject to the study of the Qur’an (Abba & Kurfi 2012:46). Abba and Kurfi (2012), furthermore, state that “[t]he Almajiri is a boy who is born into a family. However he is detached from biological family care due to cultural abandonment and placed under the tutelage of an Islamic cleric, and a victim of religious tradition that has been passed down from generation, to impact into him the knowledge of the Qur’an through several years of Arabic lessons”, without ordinary general education as offered in a normal school setting. In Nigeria, the National Council for the Welfare of the Destitute (NCWD) puts the current Almajiri population at about seven to 10 million, which is roughly the highest in the world (Abdulquadir 2013:3).

The Almajiri programme is basically dominant in northern Nigeria. It is a programme meant to allow children to receive a little Western education side by side with Quranic education, which is a system of education that caters for the religious and moral development of Muslims. It has also been designed to take children off the streets by providing them with meals, bedding, books, and other essentials for which they would otherwise have to scout (Abdulquadir 2013:3).

The learners in the Almajiri programme struggle to cater for themselves and support the mallams (their cleric teachers), which takes up most of their time, instead of learning at school. In southern Nigeria, there are very few Almajiris, and their origin is usually traceable to northern Nigeria from which their migrant parents hail.

During his electoral campaign in 2011, Nigeria’s former president Ebele Jonathan committed himself to the age-long Almajiri problems confronting the north, posing a threat to the social life of the zone. The promise has been kept by building schools, increasing the school enrolment of less privileged school children, and providing learning materials.

In addition to the federal government's Almajiri programme, there is the American University of Nigeria's Feed and Read programme. It is a programme for the Almajiri designed by the university to assist them educationally. The children receive "one meal per day, while they feed and read" – a literacy component programme held every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 17:00. Aside from the one-quality-meal literacy programme, the children are also taught basic things such as personal hygiene (retrieved from [The Guardian.ng/Sunday](http://TheGuardian.ng/Sunday) 2015:10).

Another group similar to the Almajiris is the boy traders. Boy traders are male children from the southern region of Nigeria. They are children forced into trade at the early age of eight to 10 years by their parents as a result of poverty. According to Abdulquadir (2013:4), the boy trader education programme is designed to address the issues of the out-of-school children in the southern and south-eastern geopolitical region of Nigeria. It is targeted at educating boy children in some states where the dropout rate is high. The boys receive basic education at schools close to trading centres, while they also get to explore their talents in different trades.

A girl child is a biological female child from birth to age 18. It is an age before one becomes a young adult. This period ranges from crèche through secondary school (Jubrin 2019:1). A girl-child education "is an education that would make the girl child become aware of herself and her ability to exploit her surrounding and includes training in literacy and vocational skills that will assist her in becoming functional in the society" (Omede & Etumabo 2016:2).

In Nigeria, research has revealed a serious problem with reading difficulties at all levels of education (Fakeye 2014:281). It has, furthermore, been found that a large number of elementary school learners lack literacy skills, especially reading skills, which they require in formal and informal learning situations. A separate study carried out in 1990 and 1991 by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAEEA) (cited in Fakeye 2014:281)

on how students read found that Nigerian learners (aged 14) who participated in the study were low achievers. Scholars traced this problem to the weak foundation the learners had in reading at the primary school level. In addition, reports on progress in the international reading literacy study of 2001:16, 2006:22, 2011:30, and 2016: revealed that Nigeria had not participated in this programme meant to assess fourth-grade learners in reading assessment worldwide. Hence, the statement made by Asemota (2014:50) holds true that the rate of reading comprehension problems in Nigerian schools is high.

Despite government efforts to address literacy issues, a large number of Primary 4 learners still struggle with reading (Etuk 2005:153). According to Horney, Seaton, and Damelle (2014:132), reading comprehension difficulties have dire consequences if not tackled at an early stage. Learners could become at-risk learners. The future of at-risk learners is compromised, as reading failure restricts their chances to study further. It also limits the opportunities available for individuals to participate in the workforce and contribute to the growth of the nation in a technologically advanced world market.

Inko-Tariah (2014: 150) and Edem, Mbaba, Udosen, and Isioma (2011:17) state that the low level of reading and numeracy of Primary 4 learners in Nigeria is carried to junior secondary school, where these “illiterate” learners become a burden to the teachers, as some of them cannot even write their names. This could explain why some Nigerian graduates who go for their one-year compulsory National Youth Service cannot fill in forms and, therefore, cannot make any meaningful contribution to national development.

1.3 Motivation for the study

The researcher is a lecturer in Nigeria with over 20 years of teaching experience at the tertiary level of education. The researcher's experience as a lecturer and during the assessment of student teachers posted to rural areas for teaching practice has revealed that the number of rural learners experiencing reading difficulties is growing rapidly. The reading problem starts with the oral activities in the classroom. The researcher has noticed a high level of poor attitude and demonstration of learners' lack of confidence to express themselves in English. If learners cannot master speaking as a language skill, it usually influences the acquisition of reading and writing as language skills.

The International Reading Association (IRA) (2000, cited in Okebukola 2013:2) reports that teachers' knowledge makes a difference in learners' achievement. The teacher's role in the reading process is to create experiences and environments that introduce, nurture, and extend learners' ability to engage with text. Reading is an interaction between the teacher, the text, and the reader (McLaughlin 2012:432); thus, it is expected that every teacher should apply what is known about reading instruction, reading improvement, and remediation (Okebukola 2007:57).

To achieve this, teachers in primary schools should have a fair knowledge of reading skills and strategies that can be used to teach reading and reading comprehension skills. To this end, there is a need for a well-designed reading programme in Nigeria to prepare the teachers of reading with reading objectives, content, lessons, activities, and assessment techniques to help them inculcate appropriate reading comprehension skills or strategies in their learners (Andzayi & Ikwen 2014:428). Asemota (2014:52) asserts that "necessary teaching strategies and adequate materials in possession of committed and skillful instructor will help a disable child or even a moron to acquire basic reading skills".

From the discussion above, it is clear that there is a dire need for research on the reading problems experienced by Nigerian learners and, especially, about the reading difficulties of Primary 4 learners, as little research has been done about reading in Primary 4 classes. The researcher opines that there are various intervention strategies that can be used to address reading problems. In this study, the researcher's intention was to do research about the use of the read-aloud programme and to contrast it with the explicit direct instruction (EDI) to find out which reading programme would be suitable in addressing reading problems in Primary 4 classes. The researcher intended to determine whether the read-aloud intervention strategy would be more suitable to help Primary 4 learners with reading problems than the EDI programme, another reading programme. This will be the focus of the study.

1.4 Theoretical framework

The term "theoretical framework" can be described as the descriptive technique that allows the researcher to have full understanding of and also to explain the verbal and non-verbal synergy in a specific study (Okeke 2014:5). For Grant and Osanloo (2014:13), the theoretical framework is the "blueprint" for the whole research study. It serves as a guide on how to build or construct and aid a researcher's investigation as well as gives the structure or plan to define how a researcher will epistemologically and methodologically approach the entire study. According to Radhakrishna, Yader, and Ewing (2007:692), a theoretical framework serves as a conceptual style that shows how a researcher theorises and produces reasoning with regard to the connections between different elements that have been recognised as an issue. Based on the elements above, it can be stated that a theoretical framework is made up of a recognised theory or theories that form the researcher's conception and intention with regard to the research topic.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher felt that the theory of social constructivism best suited

her views (See Chapter 4, Section 4.4.) The read-aloud intervention strategy and explicit direct instruction (EDI) require interaction between the teacher and the learners. Therefore, theoretically speaking, read-aloud and explicit direct instruction (EDI) are aligned with the Vygotskian view that social interaction is an integral part of learning (Powel & Kalina, 2009:244). According to Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Maloch & Beutel 2009:25), human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into having the intellectual abilities that the people around them have. In this view, skills and understanding are appropriated through guided participation in cultural activities.

The read-aloud programme, which is an intervention strategy to improve learners' reading ability, is interactive in nature, and it includes scaffolding in order to support learners to read with comprehension. Gromley and Ruhl (2005:310) are of the opinion that the read-aloud programme is aligned with social constructionist views because teachers assist learners to scaffold their vocabulary knowledge before, during, and after reading. They learn from their teachers, their peers, and the text, as they are not only able to listen to the story, but they actively participate in the learning sessions as well as by asking questions and by providing answers to questions asked.

1.5 Aims of the study

The aim of this research was to investigate the use of the read-aloud programme rather than another reading programme as an intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria. Primary 4 learners who have problems with reading were, thus, the focus of the study.

Based on the main aim, the following sub-aims were investigated:

- a. To find out whether teachers understand the problems that Primary 4 learners who are at-risk readers have to face.

- b. To explore the strategies that Primary 4 teachers could use to support learners who are at-risk readers.
- c. To identify the various principles that could be used to present read-aloud activities, as well as EDI activities to a group of teachers on how learners can do independent reading.
- d. To conduct pre-tests and post-tests to ascertain if the read-aloud programme or explicit direct instruction would improve learners' reading abilities.
- e. To find out the reasons for the problems Primary 4 learners have with reading.
- f. To provide possible guidelines for teachers, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), the Federal Ministry of Education, and the training of teachers at colleges of education to support learners with reading problems, including Primary 4 learners

1.6 Research Questions

In this study, the problem to be investigated was how Primary 4 teachers could use the read-aloud strategy rather than another reading programme as an intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of Primary 4 rural learners with reading problems.

Main research question and sub-questions

How can Primary 4 teachers support learners who are at risk for reading and reading comprehension problems?

Based on the main research question, the following sub-questions could be asked:

- a. How do teachers understand the reading problems faced by Primary 4 learners?
- b. What strategies do Primary 4 teachers have to support learners with reading problems or who are at risk concerning reading?
- c. What principles can be used to introduce a group of teachers to read-aloud activities that will enable learners to read independently?

- d. What procedures can be used to conduct a pre-test and a post-test to determine whether read-aloud or explicit direct instruction will improve learners' reading abilities?
- e. What are the reasons for the reading problems experienced by Primary 4 learners?
- f. What guidelines can be provided for teachers and all stakeholders in education to support learners with reading problems, including Primary 4 learners?

1.7 Problem statement

Based on the research questions, the following problem statement was formulated:

The problem to be investigated is the effect of the read-aloud intervention strategy and another reading programme such as explicit direct instruction on the reading and reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners in a rural area in Nigeria.

According to Agbatogun (2013:25) it cannot be denied that the problem of mass failure in various school subjects is an indication of rural learners' low reading comprehension levels or reading difficulties encountered while reading to learn in English. Furthermore, the reports of Amadi (2014:2) and Andzayi and Ikwen (2014:428) reveal that the ways and manners in which teachers teach language skills, especially comprehension skills, do not create the opportunity for the learners to have the desired competence in reading. The researcher thus plans to do research about the use of the two reading programmes which could be used to train primary school teachers, especially Primary 4 teachers in rural areas, to teach reading properly so that their learners could improve their reading comprehension and be able to acquire the desired competence in reading

1.8 Research design and methodology

In this study, both qualitative research and quantitative research were conducted.

1.8.1 Two approaches to research – quantitative and qualitative

The researcher chose a qualitative and a quantitative approach for this research about learners' reading abilities in rural areas. The research employed the use of more than one method of data

collection, entailing a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative data was collected as part of the intervention programme. For this a pre-test and a post-test were conducted and the results were statistically interpreted. Triangulation was also used to verify the data obtained from the qualitative research and the quantitative data. According to Johnson and Christensen (2011:439), triangulation is a term given when the researcher seeks convergence and corroboration of results from different methods studying similar phenomena, while Altrichter, Feldman, Posch, and Somekh (2008:147) regard it as a powerful technique that paves the way for validation of data through cross-verification from two or more sources. They add that it is the application and combination of several research methods in a study of the same phenomenon.

1.8.2 A quantitative research perspective

A quantitative research approach can be defined as a systematic investigation into a social problem based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory hold true (Horn 2009:23). In this study, achievement tests consisting of a reading pre-test and a reading post-test were conducted in Primary 4 classrooms. The pre-test was conducted before the read-aloud intervention strategy or another reading programme such as explicit direct instruction commenced with a group of selected Primary 4 learners, and the post-test was conducted with the same groups of Primary 4 learners after completion of the reading intervention programmes.

1.8.3 A qualitative research perspective

A qualitative approach is a process in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with persons in the setting. It aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to daily life. In other words, it is an approach that is concerned with non-statistical

methods and small samples often purposively selected (Horn 2009:23).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:163), “a qualitative research design is a method of experimentation studying human behaviour and habits. Qualitative methods are used by researchers observing the world around them and give answers which explain what they saw”. A qualitative approach is very useful when a subject is too complex to give “Yes” or “No” answers to questions. Qualitative research involves the use and collection of a variety of empirical materials, case studies, personal experiences, interviews, observations, and historical, interactional, and visual texts. The qualitative research method makes it possible to obtain first-hand information (De Vos 2005:291). An interview is a means of information collection in qualitative research (De Vos 2005:205). The researcher conducted this research using one-on-one interviews with a group of teachers with the aid of a voice recorder, which enabled the researcher to transcribe the information. There are two types of interviews: semi-structured and open-ended interviews. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were used. Semi-structured interviews are defined as those organised around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and development. Semi-structured questions were asked in the interviews with the teachers. A few informal interviews were also conducted with the class teachers of the selected groups of Primary 4 learners in order to obtain first-hand information about the reading outcomes of the intervention programme and the reading ability of the Primary 4 learners.

1.8.4 Observation

The researcher conducted observations of the school environment of the two schools where the research was conducted. This was to ensure that the general situation at the schools was conducive to teaching and learning taking place. The researcher enquired about, and made observations regarding, the training and teaching experience of the Primary 4 teachers who participated in the

research on additional reading programmes. The researcher also observed reading lessons in the classrooms in order to enhance her understanding of the strategies employed by the teachers in teaching reading. These qualitative observations could provide detailed descriptions of the events, people, and actions in natural settings. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:40), observation entails a direct eye-witness account of daily social actions and settings in the form of field notes. The researcher used the observations to determine the extent of reading difficulties in the selected schools and to explore their possible causes and the strategies used by the Primary 4 teachers to teach reading.

1.8.5 Questionnaires

The researcher administered questionnaires to the teacher participants at the two selected schools as well as teachers at other schools in the area.

Bird (2009:1308) asserts that questionnaires are well-known tools for obtaining information on participants' social characteristics, present and past behaviours, and beliefs and reasons for action with respect to the subject being investigated.

The questionnaires could provide quantitative data, and the researcher used them to obtain information from all the teacher participants with regard to the reading problems of Primary 4 learners in rural areas.

1.8.6 Triangulation

Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. In other words, triangulation involves the comparison of information to ascertain whether or not there is corroboration. It is a search for convergence of the information on a common finding. To a great extent, "the triangulation process assesses the sufficiency of the data. If the data are inconsistent they are insufficient" (Wiersma & Jurs

2008:117). The researcher is then faced with difficulty regarding what to believe.

According to Kulkarni (2013:1), triangulation is a means through which more than one method is used to collect data on the same topic. It is a way of assuring the validity of research through the use of a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic, which involves different types of samples as well as methods of data collection.

In this study, triangulation was used to verify the quantitative data and the qualitative data.

1.8.7 Sampling

A sample is a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which the researcher is interested (De Vos 2005:199). In qualitative studies, purposive sampling can be used. It is meant to select respondents guided by a process that provides rich and detailed data on the problem of the study. In this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling in which Primary 4 level learners and four teachers teaching Primary 4 learners in two rural primary schools situated in the Ovia North-East local government area of Edo State, Nigeria, were used.

The researcher selected a group of Primary Level 4 learners based on the National Policy on Education in Nigeria and a reading pre-test that was conducted. Primary 4 level learners are supposed to have crossed from the state of learning to read (Primary 1 to 3 levels) to reading to learn; yet there are still many Primary 4 learners who are struggling with reading activities. This implies that they are lagging behind compared with their counterparts in urban Nigerian primary schools or their counterparts in the developed world such as the United States of America and Europe. The Primary 4 level was chosen because it is regarded as a transitional stage. “Any reading error not corrected at this level will automatically form a class of illiterate children who have attended school but who lacks the basic literacy and numeracy skills to function effectively” (Inko-Tariah, 2014:150).

For the purpose of this research, the researcher chose two rural schools and sought the necessary permission from the appropriate authorities such as the State Universal Basic Education Board

(SUBEB), headmasters and headmistresses, teachers, and parents to conduct the research.

The researcher also approached four Primary 4 teachers for interviews. The four teachers received training in the read-aloud programme and another reading programme such as explicit direct instruction, so that they could offer reading lessons using the reading programmes to selected groups of Primary 4 learners. The selection of groups of learners was done after the reading pre-test had been conducted and marked.

1.8.8 Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is an initial way of organising data into categories and identifying relationships among those categories (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:364). The data that was obtained for this research was analysed descriptively in order to reveal issues surrounding reading problems of Primary 4 learners. Qualitative data was analysed based on the data collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, questionnaires completed by Primary 4 teachers, and the researcher's personal classroom observation.

The quantitative data was presented in the form of tables and analysed descriptively using performance tests. Sets of raw scores were obtained for the study from a reading pre-test and a reading post-test.

1.9 Ethical considerations

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delpont (2011:120) state that ethical guidelines are a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual group and widely accepted. Ethics serve as a standard and the basis according to which each researcher conducts himself or herself. For the research part of this study, ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education at the University of South Africa. Permission to conduct the research was also obtained from the Ministry of Education in Nigeria, school principals, the Primary 4 classroom teachers, and the

parents of the Primary 4 learners.

1.10 Definition of terms and concepts

Reading: the ability to decipher meaning from print.

Reading problems: learning disorders characterised by the inability to process words meaningfully.

At risk: often used to describe learners or groups of learners who are considered to have a higher probability of failing or dropping out of school.

Strategy: a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim.

Intervention: the word “intervention” comes from the Latin *intervenire*, meaning “to come between, interrupt”. Often, an intervention is intended to make things better.

Comprehension: the ability to understand, reflect on, and learn from, a text.

Read-aloud programme: a strategy in which a teacher sets aside time on a consistent basis to read orally to learners from texts above their independent reading level, but at their listening level.

Explicit direct instruction: the use of straightforward, explicit teaching techniques to teach specific skills.

Primary 4: in this study, a Primary 4 learner is a child who is between the age of nine and 10 years. He or she is a child who receives education on a full-time basis in the Nigerian educational system as recommended by National Policy on Education (2004). Primary 4 is an entry level into the upper primary school. For the purposes of this study, a Primary 4 learner is any person who has completed education in the first three years of primary school.

Rural area: an area outside of cities and towns.

Motivation: factors that activate, direct, and sustain goal-oriented behaviour.

1.11 Delimitation of the study

This study was limited to the Ovia North-East province in Nigeria. In the quantitative part of the study, four groups of Primary 4 learners and four teachers were involved. (See Chapter 6 for more details.)

1.12 Plan of study

The thesis is presented in the following chapters:

Chapter 1: in this chapter, an introduction is presented. The motivation for the study, the conceptual framework, the research aims and research questions, the definition of terms, and the plan of study are discussed.

Chapter 2: this chapter discusses the background to the study, reading, the teaching of reading comprehension, reading with comprehension, and the importance of reading. It also includes the teaching of reading in the lower primary or foundation phase (Primary 1 to 3) and in Primary 4 in Nigeria, expected reading ability in Primary 4, as well as the present status in Nigerian rural schools, and factors contributing to reading difficulties.

Chapter 3: this chapter presents a discussion of the various definitions of reading theories used in this study, different views on reading approaches and methods of teaching reading, the reading process and goals of reading, as well as the concept of intervention, the importance of intervention, and a review of the read-aloud strategy and explicit direct instruction.

Chapter 4: in this chapter, the research design, methodology, theoretical framework, population, and sampling that were used in this study are presented. Data collection methods and procedures for analysis are explained.

Chapter 5: this chapter presents the analysis of data as well as the findings collected from classroom observations, interviews, questionnaires, and the reading pre-test and post-test.

Chapter 6: in this last chapter; the researcher provides a summary of the study and makes recommendations for further investigation of how the reading problems of rural Primary 4 learners can be improved.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the research and provided background on the reading problems of Primary 4 learners in Nigerian rural schools. The conceptual framework, the aim of the study, and the problem statement were also discussed. In addition, the research design and methodology used in the course of this study were presented. The next chapter consists of a discussion of the background to the study, a description of reading and its importance, reading comprehension, the teaching of reading in Primary 4 in Nigeria, the expected reading ability in Primary 4, the present status of reading in Primary 4, and factors that contribute to reading comprehension difficulties in the Nigerian rural education system.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPT OF READING, DEFINITION OF READING, IMPORTANCE OF READING, READING AND MOTIVATION AND READING STRATEGIES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the background to the study, a description of reading, the importance of reading, and reading comprehension, and the teaching of reading in Primary 1 to 3. The teaching of reading in Primary 4 in Nigeria will be discussed as well as the expected reading abilities in Primary 4, the present status of reading in Primary 4, and factors that contribute to reading comprehension difficulties in the Nigerian rural education system. The read-aloud reading strategy and explicit direct instruction when teaching reading will also be attended to.

2.2 Background to the study

The foundation for all forms of academic success that will steer children as learners towards making a significant contribution to the growth and development of a nation is usually laid at the primary level (Asiabaka & Mbakwen, n.d.). Studies have attributed low achievement of school-going children in school content to poor reading ability, as well as comprehension skills, and faulty reading strategies applied by teachers at the foundation stage (Akin 2007:100).

It was observed from research and the researcher's personal experience that studies in Nigeria with regard to reading ability had been about either beginning learners' reading (Primary 1 to 3) or reading in secondary schools (Onovughe 2009:28). In one of these research studies Obiyo (2010:163) investigated the relative effect of two instructional strategies (co-operative learning and the conventional teaching strategy) on primary school learners' learning outcomes in reading comprehension. Findings from that study revealed that learners taught through the co-operative strategies performed better or had a higher score and fared better than those trained using conventional strategies.

Omoriege (2012:102) conducted a study on the comparative effect of two co-operative instructional

methods on the reading performance of Primary Level 3 learners in the Edo State, Nigeria. The study revealed that the “think-pair-share” and “reciprocal” teaching methods had a significant impact on low-, average-, and high-performing learners with regard to reading. Also, the study established that the three levels of reading comprehension could be better influenced when learners were exposed to either the “think-pair-share” method or the use of the “reciprocal” teaching method to teach reading.

As mentioned, research studies have mostly been done with Primary Level 1 to Level 3 learners. Andzayi and Ikwen (2014), for instance, examined the effect of the concentrated language encounter (CLF) method in developing Level 1 learners’ reading level, oracy skills, English sight words levels, print awareness skills level, phono-phonemic awareness skills levels, letter recognition skills, and comprehension skills. The results indicated that the general reading and comprehension ability of the learners with reading problem needs was poor in all the skills during the pre-test. However, the experimental group had improved significantly in the acquisition of all the skills after the intervention. The population of learners in Nigeria that remains predominantly unattended to by researchers is the Primary 4 learner population, whose instructional needs with regard to the acquisition of reading skills are yet to be extensively researched. Consequently, Idogo (2011:5) reports that there are inadequate research studies in the area of reading comprehension and achievement of children at the Primary 4 level in Nigeria.

Previous research, as mentioned above, has been based on beginning readers or learners in junior or senior secondary schools. The researcher, thus, opines that research about the reading comprehension abilities of Primary 4 learners is, indeed, very necessary. It is at the Primary 4 stage that learners are expected to be independent readers who can read and comprehend any given text with ease. This is important, and it can enhance learners’ ability to study other subjects offered at the Primary 4 level.

It is necessary for good reading comprehension to be developed during the years spent in primary

school, as learners need to have well-developed reading comprehension skills in order to master and to study the various subjects in the curriculum. The adoption of English (regarded as a second language in Nigeria) as language for teaching can contribute to problems in acquiring good reading comprehension skills. Classrooms that create a conducive atmosphere for learners to respond to one another in an interactive session are necessary for oral language acquisition as well as reading development (Agbatogun 2013:32). The International Reading Association (2000, cited in Okebukola, Owolabi & Onafowokan 2013:2) states that what the teachers know, determines learners' performance at school. The teachers' responsibility in a teaching and learning situation is to bring about learning experiences for their learners. This is done by creating learning conditions that will prompt learners' interest in printed material. Teachers need to employ suitable instructional strategies in the classroom, so that the learning requirements of various categories of children in the classroom will be met. In such a manner, teachers can successfully promote learners' reading abilities and improve reading comprehension in the classroom. Bower (2005:100) states that comprehension and reading are so closely related that scholars are of the opinion that the words "reading" and "comprehension" are synonymous. This connotes that comprehension is a reflection of an individual's ability to read. A comprehension process cannot take place without learners being able to read well; nor is reading interesting or meaningful without understanding.

The current instructional strategies to teach reading used by most teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria include the following: the traditional "chalk and talk" method (Agbatogun 2013:24), the alphabetic method, the phonetic method, and the word and sentence method (Gbenedio & Ofuani 2013:19). These methods involve teachers talking to learners and writing notes on the chalkboard and are characterised by learners' low level of retention and passive learning. Comprehension is important during the reading process; otherwise, learners can simply "bark at the words" without understanding

what they read (Hfiz, Abudur, Asif, Ghazala & Anser 2013:28). Reading comprehension is vital when learners are required to read in order to study across the curriculum or content areas (Almutairi, 2018:20). The need for quality reading comprehension skills among Nigerian rural primary school learners is apparent, and as a result, studies and interventions should be conducted in order to determine the best ways for these interventions to happen.

It was the researcher's intention to determine what effect an intervention reading programme such as the read-aloud intervention programme or the explicit direct instruction programme would have on the reading comprehension skills of Primary Level 4 learners in rural Nigeria, including those who were at risk regarding their reading skills.

2.3 The concept of reading

The concept of reading has been described in many ways by different scholars. The general opinion is that reading is too broad to be captured in a single definition. This fact is visibly demonstrated in the various definitions of reading; see, for example, Grabe and Stoller (2010:80). Stoffelsma (2014:29) opines that there are too many processes and skills involved in the act of reading to be included in one definition. Several definitions were considered in this study to give a clear understanding of the various views of reading. Whichever view one takes, reading is a complex procedure involving three major aspects: the reader, the text, and the writer of the text (Julius 2014:15).

2.4 A review of definitions of reading

Sari (2017:15) describes reading as information acquired from the text, which could be better done if a picture, diagram or written text or a combination of all is added. She further states that it can also be regarded as a skill to know, see and comprehend the contents of what is read. Sandhu and Bakely (2021: 2) refer to reading as a cognitive procedure that entails decoding symbols to arrive at meaning. They state that reading involves an active means or process of constructing the meaning of words.

Joubert (2013:101) also stresses the importance of comprehension in reading, stating that reading without understanding is of no worth. The reader should be able to form a picture in his or her mind in order to attach meaning to the written concepts.

Jensen (2010:7) sees reading as a reciprocal active procedure that challenges an individual to apply several methods that will promote the acquisition of knowledge. Both Odwan (2012:138) and Mudzielwana (2014:22) independently arrive at the opinion that reading is a communicative procedure that involves interrelation of a mutually informative process. The interaction of these processes adds constantly to the learner's understanding and his or her thought processes about the information conveyed through text. Mudzielwana (2014) adds that reading is a life skill that combines or unites nine different aspects of the reading process that makes reading easy. These aspects include sensory, perceptual, sequential, experiential, and constructive abilities. He, furthermore, states that reading involves construction of meaning and that it is also geared towards resolving problems. The ability to attend to these aspects increases as the learner constantly engages in the practice of reading; it is a process by which children can decode facts from written materials and connect the information, so that the message of text will be made clear. Ganie, Deliana, and Rahmasdyah (2019:686) refer to reading as a process that is associated with an interaction between readers and texts, which is usually quiet, internal, and personal. This implies that numerous activities take place while reading.

The above definitions visibly make it clear that reading is not just a one-way affair; it is an interaction that requires the reader to employ his or her cognitive skills as he or she interacts with the author(s) and the materials presented for reading. This is vital because, for effective communication to occur between an author (text) and a reader, the message being passed on by the author must be thoroughly understood by the reader for the purpose of effective feedback (that is, the learner's ability to ask questions or express an opinion on a given passage or text). All the definitions that were discussed, refer to the

importance of the learners' ability to comprehend what is read. This is a key issue in this study which involves a group of Grade 4 learners' ability to improve their comprehension when reading.

From all the definitions examined in this study, it is clear that the various opinions and views on the definition of reading all point to the same process. The general consensus is that comprehension or understanding of written material is the essence of reading. The reader communicates with an author about whom he or she knows little or nothing. Readers are expected to apply their prior knowledge in the reading activity; in other words, the reader calls on his or her experiences, language, and pre-existing knowledge to anticipate and understand the writer's written intention.

As mentioned, this study investigated the effect of a reading intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners in rural areas. The researcher is of the view that the definition of reading given by Jensen (2010: 17) is best suited and will also guide the study. This definition enabled her to see reading as an activity that will require learners to be active participants in a reading lesson. It may also help to see learners move from being supported by their teachers or peers to become independent readers that can apply strategies for comprehending the actual meaning of written text. This also aligns with the theoretical framework on the study (See Section 1.4)

Based on the learners' specific reading problems and whether they were reading below their age level, two reading intervention strategies were used to motivate them and to hopefully improve their reading activities and their comprehension when reading. One of the strategies was the read-aloud strategy and the other was explicit direct instruction. The stories used when the study was done, reflected their rural life experiences and were thus related to their pre-existing knowledge and cultural background.

2.5 The importance of reading

There are countless reasons why individuals in our modern life should be able to read or possess good reading abilities. This makes it possible for an individual to discover the world, develop imagination and creativity, improve communication, learn a new concept and to improve their concentration (Adele 2021:2).

In day-to-day activities, reading ability is required directly and indirectly. The recognition of the role of reading is of great importance, and it should be encouraged in all situations for all people to process information. The inability to read a common instruction on a road sign, fill in an application form of any sort, or understand information on new products should be a source of shame for modern society. Somebody who, for instance, has just been prescribed a new drug to take to cure an ailment and who finds it difficult, if not impossible, to read the prescription could cause himself or herself a lot of harm. In the words of Ayodele (2012:49), “in a classroom situation, reading is very vital to achieving the goals of teaching and learning”. This means that classroom activities cannot take place without reading, and thus, all other content areas will be affected.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education of 1977 has been revised several times, the most recent revision being in 2015. The Federal Ministry of Education’s nine-year basic education curriculum in English Studies for Primary 4 to 6 stipulates the importance of teaching learners reading in their early education. The following is stated (Federal Ministry of Education 2015:11):

(1) Reading in the classroom at the lower primary level (1 to 3) helps to build and develop learners’ reading skills, especially in the area of oracy skill, English word sight level, print awareness skills, phono-phonemic awareness, letter recognition skills, and comprehension skills. It will help to develop, improve, and expand their vocabulary. This means that new words will be stored in their minds for future use.

(2) At the upper primary level (4 to 6), it will help to develop the learners' creative minds, since the basic foundation has been developed. When a reading activity is going on in class, the teacher stops once in a while to ask questions on learners' opinion on what they think will happen next. This gets them thinking about the story. At the end, they could be asked to give a better title and ending to the reading text or material. Finally, they could illustrate how to make up a different story through a project.

According to Kemizano (2007:10) and Kasabaru (2005:20), up to 90% of schoolwork in Nigerian classrooms from Primary 4 to 6 requires reading and writing. Kemizano (2007) comments that "Reading skills serve as the major avenue to learning about people, about history and social studies, the language art, science, mathematics, and the other subjects that must be mastered in school." By implication, reading skill serves as the major foundational skill for all school-based learning, and without it, the chances of academic and other occupational success are limited.

Reading ability is a fundamental skill for academic learning and is needed by all learners. It must be properly taught and learnt to promote proficiency in other content areas. Reading ability is important because it affords learners the opportunity to acquire new information, expand their knowledge, and advances their careers (Nampaktai, Kaewsombut, Akwaree Wongwayrote & Sameepet 2013:28). Magano and Ramnarain (2015:55) aptly comment that reading carries information of a "bewildering complex and wide-ranging nature. At every level in life we need to be able to read simple instruction, directions and basic information".

The above assertion reaffirms that reading is the cornerstone of academic success, since any individual who is able to read has the ability to succeed at school and also to participate fully in continuing with an educational pursuit. This is due to the fact that reading is the foundation of knowledge. It provides access to information, aspiration, and happenings both in the past and in the present.

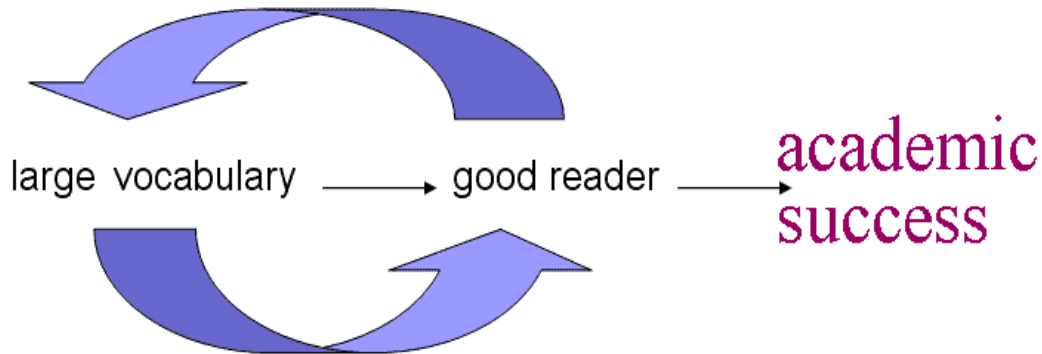
Idogo (2011:5) stresses that the main reason for teaching citizens to read and write is that a certain standard of literacy is required for one to function as an obedient citizen. According to her, democracy thrives on the free flow of information. Printed books, newspaper reports, and magazines still remain the major source of information for some people.

Studies have revealed that there is a connection between reading proficiency and academic achievement. Stoffelsma (2014:28) reports on this relationship between reading ability and academic achievement or the impact of reading ability on academic achievement of learners right from primary level through to tertiary institutions. Learners who engage in reading and are able to comprehend what is being read will excel at school. By implication, a learner who is exposed to reading and reads well will definitely perform better academically than those who are struggling readers or at-risk readers.

Commenting on the centrality of reading in education among Primary 4 learners, Cilliers and Bloch (2018:7) state that reading is one of the most vital academic skills that can be used as a means to determine learner's success in and out of school. Onovughe (2009:2) observes that the doors of the world are opened to people who can read and that it improves learners' spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension and makes classrooms more interesting. According to Asemota (2018:53), learners who possess knowledge of robust vocabulary are able to read perfectly well and will construct meanings from text without much assistance.

The figure below illustrates the interdependence of vocabulary, reading ability, and academic success.

Figure 2.1: The importance of reading



Source: Pretorius, E. (n.d.) Retrieved <http://esl.fis.edu/eltern/advice/read.htm> 02/08/2016

Furthermore, Onovughe (2009:2) points out that reading ability is essential for, and needed by, an individual to be actively involved in events in his or her environment and to make a contribution to developmental processes. Reading is vital to the attainment of literacy. Corroborating the above, Obika (2020:10) refers to reading as a key area for literacy development as it helps learners to have access to knowledge. This assertion echoes the view of Munger (2016:12), who purports that reading provides the “gate way to all learning.”

Okebukola (2012:95) is of the opinion that reading is a process by which an individual acquires the means of passing information from one generation to another. It gives individuals the opportunity to hear wise information from the past such as religious beliefs. It is the people’s major means of recalling the past, which is linked to the future, for fulfilled living. Therefore, learners need to be exposed to, and should engage in, sufficient reading activities to promote and develop them all round (Iheanachi 2007:20; Aina, Ogunbeni & Adigun 2011:1). There are thus many reasons why it is important for learners to acquire the skill, and it seems fair to assume that the acquisition of reading skills is a prime necessity in school.

2.6 Reading in English

The significance of reading in English at the Primary 4 level cannot be underestimated. The essence of reading, according to Akpojotor (20013:27), is that learners should be “literate and able to interact efficiently with others, years after primary education level”.

According to the training manual of the Teachers’ Training Programme by Distance Learning in Nigeria (2010:12), reading is one of the media through which a learner can expand his or her horizon and become more knowledgeable. Reading not only promotes the language used by learners, but it also enhances critical and analytical thinking.

Amadi (2014:5) believes that learners should read to improve their imaginative skill, to obtain the ability to explore the unknown, and to get the meaning of, and also knowledge about, a specified topic. Additionally, he states that learners should have the right attitude about written materials such as texts, novels, and magazines as well as a sense of well-being and invigorated thinking or reasoning that will enable them to acquire reading skills and develop into fluent readers and writers.

In the Nigerian educational system, reading in English begins at Primary Level 4 (Grade 4). At this stage, the learner is assumed to have passed through the first three years of primary education in which the medium of instruction was the local language or the language of the immediate environment (LIE) and was taught to read at school in the local language as stipulated in the National Policy on Education to be Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, or any language of the immediate environment (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Language provisions in the National Policy on Education

Level of education	Educational phase	Language provisions
Foundational education	Pre-primary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mother tongue (MT) or the language of the immediate community (LIC) has to be the medium of instruction. - The orthographic aspects of many Nigerian languages (NLs) are to be developed. - Textbooks in NLs must be produced.
	Primary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The language of the immediate environment (LIE) shall be the medium of instruction (first three years). - English is to be taught as a subject. - English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction.

Source: Federal Government of Nigeria (2014), National Policy on Education

In Primary 4, the learner enters a classroom that is new, and the centre of authority (namely, the teacher) is also new and strange. The way in which learning is structured is equally new, and the language of instruction (LOI) is totally different from what he or she was used to up to the end of Primary 3. Thus, reading to learn in a new language becomes difficult, posing a challenge to many young learners. If they have to read in English, the problem is exacerbated; as a result, the child's progress will be greatly affected.

Baba (2016:109) says that reading in English is a problem for Primary 4 learners, as they find it difficult to reconcile the linguistic features of their mother tongue, which is used both at home and in the lower primary school in Nigeria, with a totally new and foreign one, which is made more complicated by the need to learn the new language in all of its forms.

For rural learners, reading in English poses serious problems, especially as they have acquired their local language, MT or LIE, as their language, coupled with the country's official language, English, which is sometimes acquired in two different forms: pidgin or broken English.

On the one hand, in Nigeria, pidgin English is a form of language that is used to reflect the “contact” or “trade” language that arose or came about from the integration of a European language such as English and local languages.

In this grammatical blend, the vocabulary is mostly provided by the foreign language, while the language structure is provided by the local (indigenous) language. An example of Nigerian Pidgin English usage is the sentence “Wetinyudeyyan?” The Standard English equivalent of this expression would be “What are you saying?” In this context, “wetinyu” is a distortion of “what are you”, and “deyyan” is a corruption of “saying”. On the other hand, “broken English” is an undignified label that native users of English use to connote the contravention of the grammatical rules of English syntax by those for whom English is a second language. For example, the sentence “I am going to have fun” or “I am going to a party” may be spoken as “me wan go gbedu” in broken English. “I am travelling to see my father tomorrow” may be rendered as “Me dey go yunder go see parle” (Dikwa & Dikwa 2011:125). This means that the learners are faced with the problem of switching correctly from one language to the other. This affects learners’ interest, and it also results in inhibiting their ability to effectively read in English. This could result in poor performance and a high rate of school dropouts. Baba (2016:109) reports that teachers complain that learners’ interest in reading in English is very poor, that they are difficult to motivate, and that they struggle to read in English in most cases. He adds that, from the learners’ point of view, there is a feeling that reading in English is usually boring and that the teachers are too demanding.

Generally, the challenge of reading in English in a Primary 4 rural classroom could be as a result of inherent and extraneous factors. The inherent factors include learning attitude and auditory and visual perceptual problems that were not addressed in Primary 1 to 3, while the extraneous factors are the home and food insecurity (Baba 2016:110). Another factor that is capable of exacerbating problems

with reading in English is the teachers' training or preparation and strategies used in the classroom. In corroborating this, Amadi (2014:4) states that teachers need a broad base of conceptual knowledge that prepares them as to what and how to teach in a manner that will motivate and guide learning.

As mentioned, Primary 4 level rural learners are confronted with the problem of reading in English. One of the problems with the LOI is that it is quite different from the language spoken at home or that of the immediate environment. Learners who are taught in their local language or the language of their immediate environment in the first three years of their school life come to a new class (Primary 4) with a mindset of continuing with the same indigenous language as a means of learning; they are surprised to be confronted by a strange teacher in a new classroom with a language they are not used to. The learner finds this overwhelming, and switching from one language to the other becomes an uphill task. The problem of not being able to decode, interpret, and analyse information from any given text is eventually carried over, sometimes to higher levels and, then, to eventual dropout from school. Amadi (2014:4) argues that this change in focus results in a "lull" in learning to read in English. She adds that many learners are not reading in English not because they are uninterested in reading, but because they are not encouraged or motivated to read. As such, they end up being struggling readers.

Another problem faced by rural Primary 4 learners is a lack of English reading materials. During their campaigns, politicians promise free education at the primary level, the implication being that books and uniforms will be made available at this level once a group of politicians occupies a seat of power. As soon as the elections are over and the politicians have been sworn into power, these promises are forgotten. Parents hold onto this, and therefore, they do not provide the necessary reading learning materials for their children.

The researcher's classroom observation revealed that, in most rural schools, the only English studies textbooks found in the classroom were those of the teacher and a few other copies in a class of about

60 learners. The reason was that both parents and learners were waiting for the government's free books, which were never provided (See Section 5.8 and 5.9).

Teachers' lack of knowledge with regard to the vital role of reading in English is another major problem. Most teachers do not know or seem to appreciate the important role of reading for learners' overall achievement in school and in life generally (Asemota 2012:80). Corroborating this, Amadi (2014:4) believes that many primary school teachers posted to rural areas cannot identify the difference between oral reading and real reading. This results in wrongly teaching oral reading. They read to learners who have to repeat the words after them; thus, learners are memorising the words and sentences. The learners may seem to be reading, but when questions are put to them on the words read, they are unable to decode the actual meaning and, therefore, are unable to read. Comprehension of what is read is not developed. The learners are hardly given step-by-step guidance on reading. The researcher is of the opinion that this problem confronting Primary 4 rural learners can, to a large extent, be eradicated if the right intervention programme is applied, which could, for instance, be the read-aloud strategy.

2.7 Reading and motivation

Dakhi and Damanik (2018:82) refer to motivation as features of individuals, which include their aims, competence-related beliefs, and needs that influence their achievement and activities. They assert that learners desire to read because they are motivated and have inclination to read. Cambria and Guthrie (2010:16) add that motivation refers to the likely values, beliefs, and attitudes surrounding an individual who is reading or willing to read.

Motivation means "skill" and "will", which are linked together. "Skill" implies the reader's ability to listen, identify and recognise words, and exploit the smallest units of sounds that can present the meaning of words. "Will" refers to the motivation of the learner to read. A good reader is expected to

possess the skill and will to read. This explains the joy and excitement a reader can feel in relation to reading (Cambria & Guthrie 2010:17). Motivation is a means through which activities geared towards achieving goals are established and nurtured (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece 2008:4). This means that motivation is purposely targeted towards achieving a given task. Brophy (2010:50) describes learners' reading motivation as the level to which learners are ready to put in time, energy, and interest towards several tasks or activities, that is, the determination a learner gives or is ready to put into a task in order to ensure success. Thus, learners' motivation is a vital part of the teaching and learning process. In line with the above assertion, Jeriffe (2013:22) agrees that it plays a positive role in determining all the areas of learners' success, which implies that motivation can have a positive impact on learners' present learning with regard to the skills and strategies that they have already learnt.

While commenting on the importance of motivation in reading, Logan, Medford, and Hughes (2010:12) maintain that it is absolutely necessary to improve on and strengthen learners' motivation for reading and comprehension, since a learner's reading efficiency has been proven to be a basic factor for achievement in virtually all subject areas across the school curriculum. Hence, the extent of a learner's motivation will enhance comprehension, which will, in turn, have a positive impact on the subjects offered at school, and this will be carried over to higher learning. The authors, furthermore, submit that researchers have proven the vital role of motivation in reading. They believe that motivation occupies an important position for at-risk readers with lower cognitive abilities to help them to overcome some of their reading challenges.

Barbosa (2009:406) posits that there are two major factors of motivation that enhance reading comprehension among primary school learners: learners' level of self-efficacy for reading and their intrinsic motivation to read. Attention should be given to these two important aspects of motivation, which are positively related to the improvement of the skills required in reading for both efficient and struggling readers (McGeown, Norgate & Warhurst 2012:315).

2.7.1 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is the desire the reader or learner has towards a task for his or her own innate reward or own self-interest, which is necessary for learning. Houghton (2015:30) submits that an intrinsically motivated learner will be enthusiastic or highly elated towards reading and will read more, thereby demonstrating high levels of comprehension. This means that intrinsically motivated learners should engage in and finish a task out of personal satisfaction towards a goal. That is referred to as a joy that comes from within.

2.7.2 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy can be described as learners' assessment of their mental quality to positively carry out a specific task such as reading a text (which may be a novel, a storybook, or a magazine). This assessment is usually based on their previous experience with other similar tasks (Jeriffe 2013:23). It is learners' belief in their ability to complete the task of reading a book successfully. Brophy (2010:86) also describes self-efficacy as the learners' belief in their ability to perform a task willingly and sees it as forming the basis for all future achievement, since they have no assurance that their actions will yield the right result.

Aukerman and Schuldt (2015:140) assert that previous research has firmly established that learners with high reading self-efficacy beliefs perform better on reading comprehension test; and that low achievers with positive self-efficacy beliefs performs better in reading than low achievers who have negative self-efficacy beliefs.

Arising from this view is the fact that the various types of motivation work side by side and have an influence on one another. Therefore, it becomes imperative for teachers to make a deliberate effort to utilise the above-mentioned aspects of reading motivation to improve and sustain the interest of Primary 4 learners who are struggling with reading. Corroborating this statement, Logan et al. (2010:129) assert

that applying motivation is very important for at-risk learners who are struggling with reading. They, furthermore, state that learners' motivation is likely to play a major role in their reading achievement. According to Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, and Igo (2011:523), learners who are highly motivated to read will choose to read and continue to read regularly. As noted by Bryne (2007:110), teachers are influential in motivating and improving learners' positive attitude towards reading. Children need support from their teachers to steer them away from potential points of discouragement in reading to learn. One of the major ways of engaging learners to read is through the application of appropriate intervention strategies. Studies have shown that there are many intervention strategies in teaching reading. Among them is the read-aloud intervention strategy.

2.8 Reading strategies

Reading strategies can be defined as the methods used to determine meaning in a given text. Both readers and teachers can use several of the strategies to enhance what written material (text) is all about (Julius 2014:16). Learners who are reading below their age level must be assisted with a well-planned and well-developed reading strategy that will be useful to them. A reading strategy can become a reading programme if methodology is included in a reading lesson. This can be used before, during, and after reading to lay a solid foundation that will enable learners to read independently.

2.8.1 Predicting

Predicting is a strategy used by fluent readers to make guesses about events, ideas, and actions featured in a given text. This strategy can be used either before or during reading (Davis 2011:38). Learners can make predictions before a reading task commences based on their own experiences. This can be done, for instance, from books or the title of the story, cover page pictures, graphics, or other mind-capturing illustrations. Del Valle and Duffy (2009:132) see this process as something that involves monitoring, questioning, and re-predicting as the actual task of the comprehension process.

2.8.2 Visualising

This strategy requires the reader to use what is described in the written material to create a mental picture of the action in the text, the latter consisting of characters, the setting, or other parts of the text being read (Davis 2011:50). The creation of a mental picture requires learners to depend on the use of their pre-existing knowledge, their ability to predict, and all five of their senses. The ability to do this makes the reading task very interesting (Cameron 2009:65).

Del Valle and Duffy (2009:132) believe that readers' ability to visualise written material will help to motivate learners to see reading as fun and as a lifelong activity. This means that the visual image that readers develop before reading, during reading, or after reading supports their understanding of the text. Davis (2011:40) states that learners apply their background knowledge and clues from the text based on the title and pictures to create visual images about what is about to be read. As the reading task takes place, learners make use of the new information, as well as already existing information, to improve visual representation and acquired knowledge that can make the concept simpler, thereby creating a better comprehension of the passage or text.

2.8.3 Inferring

Inferring involves "reading between the lines". It requires the learner to rely on what is already known (based on pre-existing knowledge and experience) and the facts given in the text to guide him or her in extracting meaning from the information passed on by the author (Cameron 2009:69; Davis 2011:42). Davis (2011:45) warns that a good number of learners at both the lower and upper primary level will not be able to infer. As a result, they will need modelling or scaffolding instruction to assist or guide them to understand and make appropriate use of comprehension strategies. A well-trained teacher is expected to teach learners how to infer throughout the reading process.

2.8.4 Summarising

This is a strategy in which efficient readers sum up a text read in their own words. The ability to sum up or shorten the passage depends on the readers' ability to select the important aspects in the passages such as the words, phrases, ideas, and events and choose the relevant ideas from among the supporting details (Jeriffe 2013:19). Learners must be able to put these ideas into meaningful sentences or paragraphs, as the case may be, by applying their own words in constructing meaning from what is being read or has been read (Cameron 2009:72; Del Valle & Duffy 2009:125).

Summarising is usually more cumbersome than all the other strategies for learners to utilise (Del Valle & Duffy 2009:129). Cameron (2009:98) argues that this concept is much more challenging for learners to understand, as they are faced with serious problems in selecting the parts of the information that should be incorporated or removed to form the summary. He does, however, point out that making summaries is a relevant strategy that learners must learn, especially as they proceed into the upper levels of higher education.

In order for at-risk Primary 4 learners to learn, understand, and use the strategies mentioned effectively, they need well-planned, step-by-step instruction by a skilled teacher to motivate them to read independently. This can only be achieved through a well-structured intervention strategy to prevent problems of reading below the accepted level in Primary 4 classrooms.

2.9 A review of reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the stage in which understanding of a passage takes place (McNamara & Magliano 2009:299). It is an active procedure that requires a reader to construct meaning from a given text based on his or her prior knowledge connected to the information given by the author in the text. McNamara and Magliano (2009:302) state that this process entails extracting information or knowledge based on the reader's already existing experience (background knowledge) and ability to associate such

knowledge with the text, which will also reflect the reader's position in the event, that is, his or her own interpretation of the story in the passage.

The essence of reading is comprehension of what is being read from a book or text. In order for learners to be adjudged good readers, they should not only be capable of recognising words, but should also be able to interpret or decode their meaning effectively. In a situation where learners are assumed to be reading, but cannot recognise words and their meaning, no reading has taken place, but instead, they have only succeeded in "barking at the words" or memorising the text. The comprehension process involves a number of skills, which include recognising specific words of the text or books (Andrew & Lee, n.d.). McNamara and Maghano (2009:304) purport that "effective reading comprehension is an evidence of reader's proficiency in vocabulary, phonics, fluency and reading comprehension skills". It is, thus, a learner's ability to effectively demonstrate and decode the information as contained in the text. This shows that the author's message has been put across to the reader or audience. Reading comprehension is important in school, as learners spend lots of time reading textbooks to learn to interpret, analyse, and understand concepts (retrieved from [classroom synonym.com/examples reading](http://classroom.synonym.com/examples-reading)...Jan 2017).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, comprehension is a major factor in the reading process (Aina, Ogungbemi, Adigun, and Ogundipe 2011:28). A fluent and proficient reader has reading ability and is able to comprehend what he or she has read. Reading is synonymous with decoding and compression (Adetunji, Akinbiyi & Olagunju 2014:1). Reading comprehension includes deciphering the meaning of the context and comprehending the language, which can be achieved by decoding the hidden message. Reading and comprehension operate as a single unit due to the close relationship between the two concepts. Comprehension cannot take place without reading. In other words, the two concepts have the same implication and connotation. Braxton (2009:17) reports that comprehension is a functional

and difficult procedure that requires a dialogue between the reader and the text written by the author. Information acquired from the text and the knowledge readers have are required for the construction of meaning.

Comprehension simply means the ability to get meaning from the message or information put forward in a text. This is demonstrated by the reader's ability to react to questions or issues. Reading cannot be separated from comprehension (Adekola 2012:273). Corroborating the assertion, Ngwoke (2006-:56) regards reading and comprehension as "inseparable companions". He, furthermore, states that no individual ever understands what he or she has not read; nor does one take pleasure in reading what one does not derive meaning from. By implication, this means that:

- If reading materials are not properly planned and outlined to readers, comprehension will be hindered.
- Fluency occurs when there is enough understanding of the text.

Difficulty in reading is often associated with readers' inability to discover the underlying meaning of a written text. Therefore, it can be stated that identification of words and meaning construction, known as decoding, are vital for comprehension to take place. The comprehension process simply requires critical and analytical reasoning or high imagination and the ability to judge the writer's hidden intention. In addition, it entails the reconstruction of the message using one's own knowledge with regard to the difficult issues raised in the text. Learners benefit greatly from comprehending what they have read. The inability to answer comprehension questions indicates that a text is too difficult and that learners do not comprehend the material or the text being read.

Braxton (2009:17) reports that reading comprehension has many definitions and is viewed in different ways by various groups. Among the groups are the National Reading Panel (NRP) and the RAND Reading Study Group (RRSG).

The RAND Reading Study Group (RRSA) defines reading comprehension as a means of getting meaning while actively engaging with the text. To achieve this, the following must be considered: the audience (reader), the printed materials (text), and the reading purpose. The reader must possess the required experience (knowledge) that an individual is supposed to bring into the process. Braxton (2009:21) opines that reading comprehension is a procedure that demands that the reader decode meaning from printed material by applying already existing knowledge to explain the text. Readers are expected to have a clear picture of the information in the text and relate it to situations in order to acquire new knowledge. Although a challenging task, this comprehension process is reasoned to be an essential skill that must be learnt by all learners in the classroom situation (Braxton 2009:20). It is an activity that affects learners' progress throughout life positively.

Ta'amneh (2018:84) posits that reading comprehension needs the reader or learner to associate meaning with words, remember and retell a story or an action in an exact manner, and refer to and predict the outcomes of the actions in the text. This means that, for comprehension to occur, a reader should have the ability to recognise and link words in written material to their actual meaning and have the capacity to give details of the story when the need arises.

Reading comprehension is regarded as a reciprocal, active procedure that involves communication between the reader and the author as the reader's pre-existing knowledge is stirred up. This means that readers make meaning from a text by depending on already existing knowledge (background knowledge) to decode, support, or contrast with the author's view in a given text. Reading is an active action involving the learner and the text supplied by the author. In this connection, the reader makes meaning from the text based on a reservoir of knowledge in order to give an interpretation of the message not using the author's exact words (Rahmani & Sadeghi 2011:119).

All the definitions considered in this study reveal that reading comprehension, which is meaning

acquired from a text, occupies a vital role in a learner's success in life. Serious attention must be given to its teaching and learning among at-risk rural learners who are struggling with reading at the Primary 4 level. If these groups of learners are neglected by teachers and the government, the implication is that a large percentage of Nigeria's young people will drop out of school and will not be able to make any meaningful contribution to the development of the nation's economy.

2.10 The read-aloud strategy

The read-aloud strategy is not just a one-sided exercise in which the teacher reads and the learners listen. Teachers are expected to use read-aloud to demonstrate effective reading habits to learners (Gewertz 2015:5). Learners stand the chance of benefiting from this strategy when teachers establish clear daily routines and seriously plan for the read-aloud sessions. When employed as an on-the-spot activity (that is, without a careful plan or strategy for the reading session), learners will not profit from any of the positive effects that this strategy provides (Hanane, Rima & Mona 2008:142). Read-aloud strategies that teachers could use are as follows. Teachers should:

- choose a book or story that addresses the learners' reading level;
- give learners the chance to participate in choosing a text from many texts that will be of interest to them or from whose reading they will derive pleasure;
- introduce the chosen book; while doing this, the teacher should show the learners the front cover and sometimes the back cover;
- create a chance for learners to make predictions;
- preview the book and mark passages in the text that may work for "think-alouds";
- read aloud from various genres of fiction and non-fiction books, poetry, information text, and children's books;

- read aloud, but stop periodically to ask questions or to give prompts; the learners can talk in a particular or small group or share their thoughts with the whole class;
- choose a text that reflects the culture or language of the students or that facilitates a cross-cultural experience; the teacher can speak in both the local and English language; and
- reread the story (Crockton 2010:15-16).

The purpose of implementing the read-aloud strategy is to motivate and generate opportunities for learners to become more active in learning to read. When this strategy is used, the learners will be engaged in pair discussions, group discussions, and whole-class discussion activities. Therefore, it is hoped that the learners will have a much deeper understanding of the reading text during the read-aloud activity. Hence, read-aloud is a key strategy in improving literacy skills in a learner population that often struggles with reading (Burgos 2017:18).

Onovughe (2009:15) and Hurst, Wallace and Nixon (2013:382) write that the interactive classroom in which learners in small groups have the opportunity to talk back or share thoughts, ideas, or feelings with one another is an effective strategy for various reasons. There is the chance of an active dialogue, and their oral language can be efficiently expanded, which could enhance their ability to express themselves effectively. Thus, learners engage in the fun of sharing their experiences about the text in the group, thereby exhibiting a degree of self-reliance.

From the above, it is clear that the read-aloud strategy is a comprehensive method that will force teachers to plan the reading sessions well for Primary 4 learners who have problems with reading in rural schools in Nigeria. (See Section 5.25 for a further discussion of the read aloud strategy.)

2.11 Explicit direct instruction

Explicit direct instruction (EDI) is an instructional practice that involves the application of highly planned and sequenced steps to teach particular reading skills (Alphonse & Leblanc 2019:1). In the

EDI approach, the teacher's major aim is to teach learners with reading problems using different activities that include preparing the lesson and integrating the lesson taught (Gauthier, Bissonnette & Richard 2013:5).

When using EDI, teachers are to provide learners with “a reasonable task or challenge, create opportunity to take learners to an additional step in their zone of proximal development” (Newman 2007:17). Learners can benefit from this strategy when teachers create the opportunity for them to practise a learned strategy or skill with the support of the teacher. EDI is an approach that actively engages learners in the learning process, which can help them to eventually become independent readers.

Explicit direct instruction practices that teachers can use include the following (US Department of Education, 2019):

- Carefully select the text to use at the beginning to teach strategies
- Show learners how to apply the strategies they are learning to different texts, not just one text.
- Ensure that the text is appropriate for the reading level of the learners.
- Apply EDI for teaching learners how to use comprehension strategies.
- Give the necessary amount of time to guided practice based on the level of difficulty of the strategies that learners are learning.
- Ensure that learners understand that the goal is to comprehend the content of the text.

The reason for implementing the EDI strategy is to create a conducive learning situation that will support learners' autonomy when reading (Newman 2007:15). When this strategy is applied, it will make it possible for learners to pay attention to lessons, retain information, follow modelled steps, and be motivated to learn (Lencioni 2013:10). It will also encourage them to socialise with each other during pair-shares. The pair-share period is motivating because it gives learners time to interact with each

other.

The NRP (2000:14) report states that the reason for EDI in the classroom during reading and comprehension is to enable learners to make use of their cognitive strategies or to reason strategically when they are faced with problems of comprehending what is being read. (See Section 5.22 for a further discussion of the EDI strategy.)

2.12 Primary 4 learners

Primary 4 in the Nigerian education system is a transition from the lower primary level (1 to 3) to the upper primary classes (4 to 6). It is the entry point into the upper levels and the fourth year of study in any primary school in Nigeria. The group of learners who falls into this category is between the ages of nine and 12 years old. It is referred to as the middle childhood stage. School is of major interest at this stage. The Primary 4 learners are sensitive, industrious, curious, and serious about fairness and justice (Amadi 2014:26).

2.13 Developmental stages of Primary 4 learners

2.13.1 Physical development

Physical development connotes the transformation that takes place from childhood to adulthood. These changes can be seen in height, weight, and development of motor skills. The learners are full of physical energy. They are restless and always engaged in many activities such as running, jumping, skipping, dancing, and throwing and catching balls. They tend to be very noisy and sometimes troublesome in class, and most of the time, the teacher has to put in extra effort to control them in order for teaching and learning to take place. The learners' inability to be calm affects both their attention span and the teacher's lesson plan for the day (McDevitt & Ormrod 2010:30).

At this stage, the girls' maturity is greater than that of the boys. There is an improvement in their motor skills, which is reflected in their drawings and handwriting, which gradually becomes smaller and more

regular than what it was before this stage. Their interest in motor skills such as arts and crafts increases. It should be noted that not all learners within this stage perform at the same level, for there are some who experience certain challenges. This problem can be as a result of neurological conditions or a lack of opportunities to exercise fine motor skills (McDevitt & Ormrod 2010:32).

2.13.2 Cognitive development

Cognitive development is the development of an individual's mental ability to engage in critical thinking, reasoning, interpretation, understanding, knowledge acquisition, remembering, organising information, analysis, and problem solving (Mwanwenda 2013:29). It is also closely linked to physical, social, and emotional growth; for instance, being able to read is based on the physical development of the mouth and brain, and that again depends on whether the learners have trouble in expressing themselves verbally.

According to Piaget, children's cognitive development can be classified into four stages. This classification is illustrated in the Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: The various stages in a learner’s cognitive development

Stages	Age classification	Major achievement
Sensorimotor	Birth to about two years of age	Formation of the concept of object performance. There is gradual progression from reflexing behaviour to goal-directed behaviour.
Pre-operational	Two to seven years	Development of the ability to make use of symbols to represent objects in the world. Thinking remains ego-centric and self-centred.
Concrete operational	Seven to 11 years	Improvement in the ability to think logically. New abilities include the use of operations that are reversible. Thinking becomes decentred, and problem solving is less restricted by egocentrism; abstract thinking is not possible.
Formal operational	12 years to adulthood	Abstract and purely symbolic thinking. Possible problems can be solved through the use of systematic experimentation.

Source: Piaget (1936) and Slavin (2009:30), Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development

Based on Table 2.2, Primary 4 learners can be grouped into the concrete stage, where the following is manifested:

Logical thinking ability is gradually applied to objects.

They still experience challenges or problems with abstract thought.

They are able to think reversibly.

They see things in the context of meanings.

They have the ability to arrange things in logical order.

The various definitions of reading examined, especially that of Fresh (2008), Adetunji and Olagunju (2014), and the Curriculum Council of Western Australia (2008), emphasise that reading involves a cognitive process. Thus, Primary 4 learners’ cognitive development should be considered when teaching reading and choosing reading materials.

2.13.3 Social development of Primary 4 learners

The socialisation of the child is shaped by several important social factors as found among peers, significant others, and family (Littlefield & Cook 2005:5). The social development of Primary 4 learners is a stage in which the children are able to interact with people around them. As they develop and perceive their own individuality within their environment, they also acquire skills to interact with others and process their actions. A primary learner's social development is vital and must be considered when choosing reading materials and when teaching reading.

All the definitions considered in this study are aligned with the social development of the Primary 4 learner. Primary 4 is a stage where learners are expected to have the required reading abilities or skills to read and learn on their own and also engage in critical thinking, in organising ideas as they interact with information in the text as provided by the author. They are also able to apply their cognitive skills as they interact with others or with the text. They are able to ask questions, as well as to provide feedback, according to their own opinion and relate everything to their experience based on their prior knowledge. This is strongly aligned with the CCWA (2008) definition of reading. (See Section 2.4.)

2.13.4 Emotional development of a Primary 4 learner

Emotions are feelings that assist individuals to derive meaning from, or around them in, their environment (Meinke 2019:1). Emotions can either enhance learning or demoralise children when learning. Schools are necessary forces for promoting emotional health. Studies have shown that children are not given birth to with emotional health, that emotions are fostered by positive interaction with parents and teachers, and that these interactions create the opportunity for proper learning (McDevitt & Ormrod 2010:16), which allows children to have full control over their present lives and which functions as a motivational force for later aspiration to prepare them for the future (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2010).

Emotionally, Primary 4 learners are at a stage of “industry versus inferiority”, a stage where they are likely to develop feelings of inferiority (McDevit & Ormrod 2010). At this level, primary learners are expected to master new skills and know that each task accomplished attracts approval from teachers or parents, but that they could also be punished for a failed task. Thus, they need lots of motivation that will steer their “will and skill” to read. This is in alignment with Cambria and Guthrie’s (2010) definition of motivation (Section 2.7). A Primary 4 learner who is well motivated will have the right attitude towards, or place the right value on text. This means that Primary 4 learners need enough persuasion from the teacher and this could enable them to do what they ought to do and place the right value on reading.

2.14 The teaching of reading in Primary 1 to 3 in Nigeria

Teaching is an essential process through which education takes place. Every society wants its citizens to read effectively to an extent that will allow them to process policy information, so that they can take in written information and be effective citizens. This can only be achieved when reading is taught properly.

Primary 1 to 3, also called lower basic, is the base on which other classes in any educational system rests. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE 2004:14) states that Primary 1 to 3 is the “bed rock to success or failure of entire school or learning programme”. The teaching of reading at Levels 1 to 3 occupies a vital position in the policy (Amadin 2014:1). The major goal is to “inculcate everlasting knowledge and the ability to read and convey information effectively” (Amadi 2014:2). Teaching of reading has to be done for 45 minutes during every school day (Olajide 2010:659). The reading method employed to teach reading by primary Level 1 to 3 teachers follows a traditional approach (Asemota 2007:20; Agbatogun 2013:47). The traditional method is referred to as the “chalk and talk” method (Abatogun 2013:47) and involves the teacher talking to learners and, at the same time, writing on the

chalkboard. This method can also be referred to as the didactic method, which is based on rote learning. It is characterised by learners' low level of retention. In this method, learners listen to the teacher without making any contribution to the learning process (Amadi 2015:5).

Ekpo, Udosen, and Afangideh (2010:30) say that this process or method does not encourage learners' active participation in the classroom. In other words, learning is teacher-centred, not learner-centred. In a traditional reading classroom, Nigerian teachers tend to use the lecture method; as the activities are teacher-centred, learners are passive rather than being active participants.

The pre-reading activities in the curriculum are storytelling, recitation of rhymes, and word games. According to Amadi (2014:4), these pre-reading activities enable the learners to become aware that words consist of separate speech sounds. "They also provide the essential knowledge on which later reading acquisition is based" (Okonkwo 2005:37). The exercise begins with simple greetings, instructions, commands, and conversations (Amadi 2014:3). The aim is to provide learners with the necessary experiences in spoken language and to develop skills that support later reading. The learners are taught the actual reading of letters of the alphabet, words, and sentences towards the end of Primary 1. This is based on the assumption that reading and writing develop at the same time, since written language is a representation of spoken language. As the learners do this, they recognise the connection between written texts and understanding the message of the words and sentences through reading. All of these classroom activities are vital. They provide practical tasks through which learners are equipped with an extensive oral vocabulary, which they bring readily to real reading in Primary Levels 2 and 3 (Okonkwo 2005:37).

The actual classroom practice in Primary 1 to 3 classes in rural schools is hindered by various factors. Research indicates that one of these could be primary school teachers' lack of the necessary knowledge of the essentials of teaching reading, and this is worrisome (Olateju 2006:320), as reading is one of the

four language skills. Another possible factor is a lack of instructional materials in the classroom (Amadi 2014:4).

2.15 The teaching of reading in Primary 4

The objectives behind the teaching of reading at Primary Level 4 are informed by the English studies curriculum for Levels 4 to 6 in the Federal Ministry of Education's (FME) nine-year basic education curriculum as restructured by the nine-year National Educational Research and Development Council (2012:3-14). At this level, it is assumed that the basic foundation for reading has been laid. This means that the learners should have already become independent readers who can understand complex text. Therefore, in classroom practice, learners are expected to be able to read class-appropriate information texts;

- read descriptive passages with understanding;
- identify new words and the main ideas used for the description of people, animals, things, and places;
- answer factual and other questions based on a passage; and
- read class-appropriate stories and poems to:
 - identify words, similes, and metaphors; and
 - Explain the characters, setting, and plots in poems and stories (FME 2012:3-4).

In conventional Nigerian classroom practice at Primary Level 4, a text passage is presented to learners along with multiple-choice questions based on that passage. The learners are asked to read the passage, make reference to it as often as possible, and attempt to select the best answers to the questions presented in the text exercise. The questions are designed to find out whether the learners understand the passage. A study done by Idogo (2011:5) showed that, in most Level 4 classes, factual multiple-choice questions were asked in the classroom. By implication, learners were “tested” on their level of understanding of the passage or text rather than being taught “with the intention of producing

understanding learners”. Under this conventional method, learners often found themselves struggling to comprehend the passage in order to answer the questions.

In her years of experience visiting primary schools, the researcher has often observed that, in addition to the basic problem of learners being tested on, and not being taught, reading comprehension at Primary 4 level, the teachers usually make use of only the recommended textbook during reading comprehension lessons or activities. Asemota (2013:24) conducted a study in Edo State and discovered that 80% of Primary 4 level teachers who were surveyed carried out all their classroom activities using only the textbook. Musa (2008:26) conducted a similar study in Delta State, and the results showed that 96% of the language teachers sampled who participated and were interviewed by the researcher did not differ from those in Edo State in their presentation of reading material in the textbook or in their teaching approach. This meant that all the teachers used the same method of reading the text and of getting the learners to memorise reading texts in a language class.

Asemota (2013:25) posits that the teaching of reading at Primary 4 level is faulty and that the teachers need in-service training on the use of strategies to improve reading at Primary 4 levels.

. In corroboration of this, Cairney (1990), Okwilagwe (1998), Costello (2000), and Udosen (2001, cited in Idogo 2011:6) state that the instructional techniques used in teaching reading comprehension at Nigerian Primary 4 level reveal the following:

- (a) Reading comprehension skills are not taught.
- (b) Teachers adhere strictly to the prescribed textbooks and information on the chart displayed on the walls of classroom.
- (c) Questions are set to test understanding of the text instead of teaching learners to produce understanding of the text.

The situation with regard to the teaching of reading in some of the Primary 4 classrooms in Nigeria led

to the researcher's decision to undertake this study, which was based on the effect of an intervention strategy for at-risk Primary 4 learners in a Nigerian rural school.

This study calls for changes in teachers' attitude with regard to teaching of reading comprehension and instruction. Idogo (2011:5) also believes that teachers can do a better job of teaching reading by using various instructional strategies. Primary 4 teachers should also keep the development levels of their young custodians in mind.

It should be mentioned that, when the researcher conducted the actual research at two primary schools in Ovia North-East local government area of Edo State in Nigeria, the use of iPads with lessons had just been introduced. Thus, the teachers were using reading lessons designed by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) on their iPads (See Sections 5.8.2.2, 5.8.3.2, 5.9.1.2, and 5.9.2.2 for a discussion of the introduction and use of iPads in primary schools).

2.16 Expected reading ability in Primary 4

In the Nigerian primary educational system, Grade 4 learners are called Primary 4 learners. English is the medium of instruction from Primary 4 to 6 and also at the upper primary school level. In addition to being the medium of instruction, it is a compulsory subject. All class tests, school examinations, and state and national common entrance examinations are written in English, while credit in English is required for admission to tertiary institutions (Idogo 2011:2).

According to the National Policy on Education (2007:14), Primary Level 1 to 3 learners are involved in learning to read, while in Primary 4, they are expected to use reading to learn, with English as the language of instruction.

At this level, reading comprehension is no longer for factual information alone; it becomes an active process where the reader exhibits the ability to read for details, to grasp the main idea, and to select and evaluate the correct meaning of text (Mbah & Iduma 2016:23). Endorsing this, Idogo (2011:5) asserts

that Primary 4 is a “turning point” in the learner’s reading development. With the shift to expository reading, Primary 4 learners encounter textbooks that contain both abstract concepts and difficult vocabulary. They have to comprehend what they are reading in order to be in a position to study what they have read.

2.17 The present status of reading in Nigerian rural primary schools

Research and the researcher’s personal experience revealed that a large number of learners in Nigerian primary schools were either not reading at all or failed to read and comprehend. It was established that 50% to 70% of Nigerian primary school pupils in rural public schools did not read well enough to meet the requirements of school and society (Gould, cited in Idogo 2011:5). Some studies such as the World Bank Report (1990), UNESCO/UNICEF Nigeria Project (1997), and UBE Project (2002) support this assertion. Inko-Tariah (2014:151) adds that reading, writing, and numeracy skills that learners are expected to acquire at the primary school level are even disappearing, which has raised a lot of concern among stakeholders in education.

In spite of diversity in the methods currently in use to teach reading at the Primary 4 level nationally and, especially, in urban schools, the development of reading comprehension skills among rural primary learners in Nigeria has continued to decline (Amadi 2014:7). Learning materials and facilities are available in large numbers in schools in urban or semi-urban areas. Unfortunately, these materials and facilities are not found in rural schools. Where only a few copies of reading books are available, teachers do not usually make use of them. Rather, they use the rote and “repeat after me” method. Learners are made to memorise unfamiliar concepts and words without knowing what they mean (Amadi 2014:3).

The UNESCO- and UNICEF-sponsored national assessment of primary schools has been described as the “monitoring of learning achievement of Primary 4 learners in three key areas: literacy, numeracy

and life skills” (Idogo 2011:5). The literacy aspect of the study makes use of reading comprehension passages. The results from this national survey of the educational achievement of some Primary 4 learners in Nigeria confirmed the general lack of reading comprehension skills among Nigerian learners. According to the survey, the Primary 4 learners’ performance in reading and comprehension was the poorest. The survey indicated that the majority of Primary 4 learners could not read and understand simple instructions in written English (Idogo 2011:6).

Table 2.3: MLA results in Primary Grade 4 in 1996 and 2003

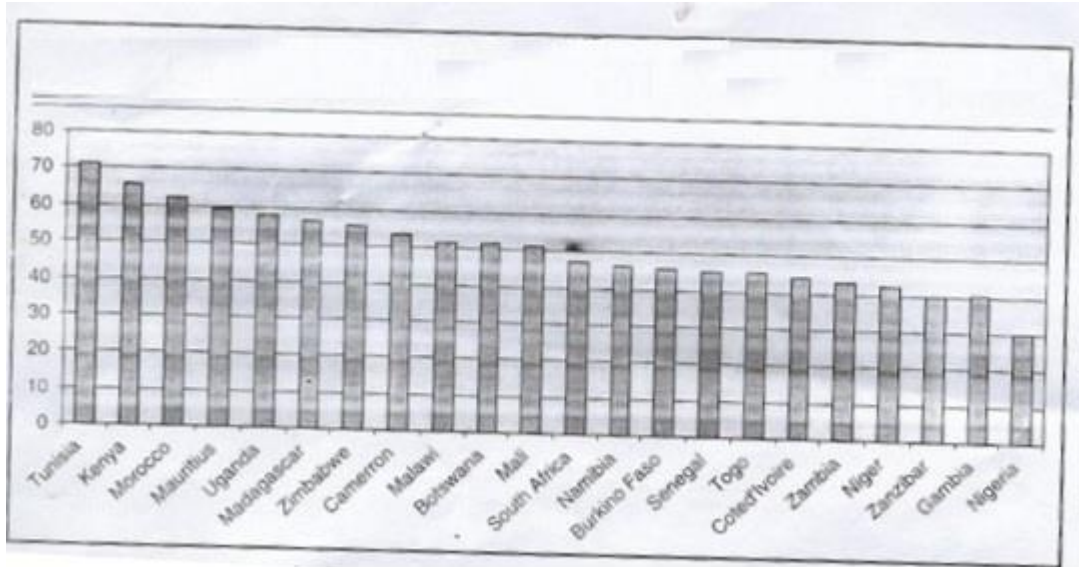
	1996 (MLA)	2003 (ESA/MLA)*
English language	25	35
Mathematics	32	34

in Nigeria’s primary schools were the lowest (see Figure 1) with national mean scores of 30 percent compared with 70 percent (the highest scores, Tunisia) and the median of 50.8 (Mali).

Source: FME and UBEC, *FME, MLA replication results.

Source: World Bank (2004), Nigeria Country Status Report

Figure 2.2: Monitoring Learning Achievement in Sub-Sahara and North African Countries in 1990



Source: World Bank (2004), Nigeria Country Status Report

Several years after the results from the data in **Table 2.3** and Adekola’s (2008) reports, Psadiarapoules’s (2015) report posited that primary school children in Nigeria performed worst out of the 22 sub-Saharan and North African countries that were assessed by monitoring their learning achievement (MLA) through Primary 4 results.

Moreover, it was reported that the learners’ inability to comprehend was transferred to other subjects. It was also noted that the learners could not attempt mathematical problems written in words, sometimes referred to as “word sums”. In effect, reading problems of learners had a substantial impact on their educational achievement.

In spite of the objectives of the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education’s curriculum for primary education as a guide for teachers to impart the necessary reading skills to learners, this curriculum is not followed. This may be connected to the fact that the teachers are non-specialists regarding the teaching of reading (Amadi 2014:4). Several studies have shown that the Nigerian education system

has not met its objectives (World Bank Policy Report, 1990; SAPA, 1993; UNICEF Project, 1997; UBE Project, 2003, cited in Idogo 2011:6). They have shown that schools have been inefficient in teaching core skills, which include reading and, especially, reading with comprehension, that form part of the curriculum.

2.18 Factors that contribute to reading comprehension difficulties in the Nigerian rural education system

Many Nigerian children in rural school settings are presently reading below the required standard of reading and writing (Idogo 2011:2). Various programmes have attempted to alleviate this problem. One of these was the 10-year (1982 to 1992) mass literacy programme set up on 8 September 1982, which was regarded as a literacy decade because of steps taken by the government to ensure that the programme saw the light of the day. In order to achieve this, special centres and units were established in various areas. State Ministries of Education employed several mass and print media to sensitise citizens regarding the need to attend evening adult literacy classes, which were offered as morning and evening sessions. The blueprint for the national mass literacy campaign is still relevant in Nigeria today. Furthermore, the National Primary Education Commission (NPEC) was set up in 1993 for the purpose of implementing basic literacy programmes in formal school settings.

Another attempt to exhibit the government's commitment to wiping out illiteracy among its citizens occurred in 1990 when Nigeria joined a wide allegiance with other nations, interested agencies, and organisations to sign the Jomtien Declaration. The Jomtien Declaration was accepted because its aim was the signing into law of a global agreement on the need to make basic education available to all through Education For All (EFA) (March, 1990). With this agreement, education became a right that all citizens around the globe had, regardless of their sex (male or female) or age (www.undoments-net/jomtiem.htm). Another laudable programme was "Each One Teach One" or "Fund the Teaching of One", inaugurated by a former Minister of Education (Inko-Tarah 2014:152).

The 2014 to 2015 literacy campaign in Nigeria was based on the 10-year UNESCO/Nigeria Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) programme. LIFE gives the basic framework to stamp out destitution and encourage means of tenable development in a democratic society in the quest for a steady economy. It lays the foundation for promoting the rights of all citizens to basic literacy development, resolving the clashing of interests among nations, eradicating food shortages, and meeting other general needs of individuals to live a good life (UNESCO Report 2017:17).

The activities highlighted in the programme include:

- a preparatory meeting with literacy stakeholders for a national stakeholder forum;
- a national stakeholder meeting to create awareness of LIFE;
- identification of fiscal policies and strategies for promoting literacy and literacy works in Nigeria;
- development of strategies for repositioning and redefining literacy and embedding lifelong learning;
- carrying out of a national needs assessment for literacy;
- consolidation of the draft LIFE action plan;
- scaling up of the LIFE flagship project; and
- Literacy by Radio, within the framework of international benchmarks

(Fasokun & Pwol 2008:6).

The government's efforts to implement this programme in Nigeria through its various agencies such as the National Commission for Mass Education (NMEC), the Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB), the State Agency for Mass Education, the Nigerian National Council for Adult Education (UNCAE), the University Village Association (UNIVA), the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE), and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have not been able to completely provide all that is needed for the growth and progress of a specific structure for literacy empowerment in Nigeria. Fafo (2015:20) reports that these efforts have been hampered by a lack of funds, poor

recruitment of teachers, insufficient literacy training for teachers, and teachers' ignorance on regarding the importance of literacy programmes. A reflection on these problems points to the fact that learners in rural schools need to be aided throughout their learning years in school to discover and develop their reading potential to a maximum level.

The following are factors that can influence primary school learners' acquisition of reading.

2.18.1 Learners' socio-economic background

A child's socio-economic background determines his or her success in life to a large extent. It is a fact that children who are from disadvantaged areas are less likely to achieve greatness in life and find it impossible to reach the highest level of education. Likewise, children's reading challenges will be influenced by various social factors (Joseph 2013:357; Okebukola 2012:98). Oduolowu and Leigh (2012:6) and Iyioke (2008:232) assert that the socio-economic status of a family determines the kind of life children born into that family will lead, the kind of food they will eat, and whether their parents will be able afford to buy the necessary learning aids for their education or not.

Iyioke (2008:233) maintains that a large number of learners in rural schools in Nigeria come from low socio-economic backgrounds and that many of the children are raised in poverty. Their parents' educational levels also indirectly have an effect on the children's progress at school and eventually on their reading ability. A child's reading ability is, among other factors, influenced by his or her parents' educational level, in the sense that children from homes where either or both parents are educated and thus they were introduced to literacy from an early age.

Simple interactions, such as reading to young children, may lead to a greater reading knowledge and skills. There is also a likelihood of being introduced to a variety of interesting and colourful picture books that will motivate children to read. The reading background provided at home can be a powerful factor in determining how much a child excels at school. Parents who show an interest in the reading

of their children at home build a strong foundation for the reading ability of their children (Iyioko 2008:12). A happy home and the presence of a variety of books for children enhance their chances of reading success in school.

2.18.2 Parenting style

At home, parents exert a great influence on a child's life and development. Oduolowu and Leigh (2012:3) point out that there is a relationship between parents' participation in the education of a child and whether the child can reach a high level of academic attainment. They add that such engagement is the secret for successful childhood education. According to McWayne (cited in Fakeye 2014:282), simple interaction, such as reading to young children, may lead to greater reading knowledge and skills. As a result of illiteracy, parents in rural areas neglect their children and expect teachers to do everything that can influence the reading and writing ability of their children. Their level of illiteracy and poverty makes it impossible for them to know the importance of education; hence, they do not see any reason why books and other learning materials should be provided for the learners. During yearly teaching practice supervision of National Certificate in Education (NCE) teachers' in-training programmes in rural schools in Edo State, Nigeria, the researcher found that most of the learners came to school without reading and writing materials.

2.18.3 Home environment

The home is the child's first immediate environment. A child's home environment contributes significantly to the development of cognitive skills. It can have a positive effect on his or her development and eventually on acquiring the basis of literacy skills (Burgess 2011:450).

In support of this view, Jennings and Caldwell (2010:25) say that there are learners who come from surroundings not conducive to learning. Such environments are filled with serious deprivation with regard to health and educational opportunities as well as disregard for the emotional needs of children. When children experience a serious lack of good meals, parental care, and good shelter, they are usually

not able to give the necessary attention to their schoolwork and stand the risk of failing and eventually dropping out of school. Their parents or guardians who are both educationally and economically handicapped lack the knowledge to help to develop their children's reading skills by reading to them or sharing experiences from books with them. Research abounds that children from poor and educationally disadvantaged homes do not have much interest in reading; they get little or no motivation from their parents (Kerr & Michalski 2007:88).

2.18.4 Medium of instruction

In rural areas, a large number of school children are raised in families whose primary language is not English, but their indigenous language, which serves as the only means of communication that the family members, including the children, know. It is usually the learner's first language. After the acquisition of this first language at home and at the lower primary school level, there is the possibility of interference in the language that the learner is trying to acquire at school at the upper primary level (Level 4), where the medium of instruction becomes English in line with the National Policy on Education.

In Nigeria, the practice of teaching English is characterised by allowing all languages, namely, English and the language of the immediate environment (LIE), to exist and to be used in school together as one of the key strategies to encourage the teaching and learning of English in schools (Baba 2016:109).

The status of language teaching policy in Nigeria as provided in the National Policy on Education (1977) has been revised several times, the most recent being in 2015 (2015:11). It contains several policy declarations on English and the LIE. The following appears in the policy:

“The Government will see to it that the language of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and, at a later stage English language” (National Policy on Education 2015:11).

The policy contains the following statements:

(i) In the lower primary (Primary 1 to 3) classes, all subjects offered at that level are taught in the LIE.

(ii) English language takes the position of an ordinary subject on the school timetable at this stage or level.

(iii) English becomes the medium of instruction in all subjects from Primary 4 up to senior secondary school and at higher education institutions.

According to this policy as illustrated in Table 2.1 in this chapter, it is advisable that all learners in Primary 1 to 3 learn through their indigenous language as used in the home or through the language of the immediate environment (LIE). The child is, furthermore, expected to be proficient in at least one additional official language, which, in this case, can be either English or a national language such as Yoruba, Ibo, or Hausa.

This policy is targeted at the promotion of Nigerian languages for the purpose of uniting the country as well as strengthening all basic language skills. Children, thus, learn to read in their mother tongue or in the LIE before proceeding to the higher classes where the knowledge will be acquired and the content will be learnt by reading in English across all content areas.

According to Okebukola (2012:98), literacy implementation reports indicate flagrant deviation from the policy statements, as many urban public and private primary schools adopt English as the LOI from the pre-primary classes. This is in line with parents' preferences. Perhaps most rural schools continue with local languages as LOI until the end of primary education because of the learners' poor background in English.

2.18.5 Lack of instructional materials

In Nigeria, among the myriad problems besetting schools is the lack of reading and learning materials capable of stimulating the child's cognitive development. Reading achievement in school children is positively affected by instructional exercises in classroom settings that will allow the acquisition of new words and enable children to express themselves effectively. These language skills could eventually enhance the acquisition of reading.

The acquisition of the ability to read and comprehend requires complicated intellectual skills, applying several visual and auditory learning styles and involving conscious mental or intellectual activities such as reasoning. This can only be achieved if qualified or specialist teachers are posted to rural areas, using specially designed reading schemes, and if the necessary materials for teaching reading are provided. Amadi (2014:5) says that most English teachers in rural schools are non-professionals in reading. They have no knowledge about teaching reading. She adds that the teachers believe that reading to learn in English is a natural and simple activity and not a grammar activity that requires training and experience. According to Croombs (cited in Isah 2009:86), this situation will impel institutions of learning to access or open up to various strategies available to teaching and learning. To achieve an excellent standard of efficiency and productivity in institutions of learning in rural areas, better learning materials and professionals are needed.

2.18.6 Poor nutrition

Poor nutrition is one of the factors interfering with rural learners' ability to learn at school. Thus, it also influences their potential to learn; actually, it influences the whole learning process. Many children in rural areas come to school hungry and unhappy. This was observed by the researcher during personal interaction with groups of children in rural areas. They revealed that their parents left home as early as 05:00 to go to markets or farms or to work without preparing meals for them. They also mentioned that they only had one meal a day, usually in the evenings. This meant that those children who were not well fed before going to school could not concentrate at school; they became weak and fell asleep in class, which could further impede their acquisition of reading and writing skills. Research has also revealed the effect of an insufficient or poor diet on learners' educational progress. In a study carried out by Okobia (2014:16) on children who did not have access to breakfast or did not eat before going to school, it was found that they often became inactive in classroom interaction. As a result of this, the

learners' learning capability was seriously affected. Chinyoka (2014:78) concurs that poor feeding in childhood is considered a factor that hinders mental development and that it can lead to structural damage of the brain. She, furthermore, posits that inadequate meals tend to confine or hold back the intellectual progress of the individual for his or her whole lifetime. Chinyoka and Naidu (2013:205) assert that a lack of meals or bad feeding of primary school children can make them inactive, weak, and withdrawn, and eventually they will have low self-esteem. In addition, they may often suffer from certain illnesses, have brain problems, and fall behind in physical growth and cognitive development. This means that primary school learners who are not properly fed will lag behind in their academic achievement.

The knowledge of what poor nutrition can cause in terms of learning should encourage parents to feed their wards properly in order for them to succeed at school. A good meal is vital for the academic performance of primary school learners, especially in Primary 4 where critical thinking and reasoning are required.

2.18.7 Poor school environment

Several reports have revealed that the condition of most public schools in Nigeria, especially rural schools, is disheartening. From an independent television news report by Best Mbeirie on 20 January 2014, it was clear that one would not wish one's enemy to attend such a school: most school structures or facilities were in bad shape, some buildings were without roofs, classrooms were without doors, windows, ceilings, electricity, chairs, and tables, and worse still, there was no water or good toilets.

Confirming the poor condition of school facilities and environments in Nigerian rural schools, Uche (2009:10) says that "a situation where sons and daughters of the Federal Republic of Nigeria learn under trees, in dilapidated buildings or learners have to study without functional libraries or laboratories, are unacceptable and unbefitting". She adds that these conditions will continue to affect learners' interests, feelings, and emotions towards learning. There is no doubt that if learners are to have

good results, they have to be achievement-oriented. A good environment in Nigerian rural schools can only be effective if well-planned educational programmes are implemented.

It is, therefore, evident that there are many factors responsible for the reading ability of Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria.

2.19 Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the background to the reading comprehension problems of Primary 4 learners in Nigerian rural schools. A review of the definition of reading and the importance of reading was provided, and the chapter, furthermore, gave an overview of reading and motivation, reading strategies, reading comprehension, the teaching of reading in Primary 1 to 3, the teaching of reading in Primary 4, expected reading ability in Primary 4, the present status of reading in Primary 4, and factors contributing to reading comprehension difficulties in the Nigerian rural education system. A discussion of reading strategies such as the read-aloud strategy and EDI was also included in the chapter.

In the next chapter, the following will be discussed: theories of reading, the various definitions of a theory, constructivism, the psycholinguistic theory, and behaviourism. A review of teaching methods, as well as the reading process and goals of reading, will be included. Also to be examined are the concept of intervention and its definition, the read-aloud strategy, and a review of the synthesis of empirical studies on read-aloud strategies. The concept of Explicit direct instruction will also be examined.

CHAPTER 3

READING THEORIES, READING METHODS, READING INTERVENTION OVERVIEW, READ-ALoud STRATEGY, READING PROCESS, AND GOALS OF READING

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the various definitions of a theory, the different views on reading theories, constructivism and reading, the psycholinguistic theory of reading, behaviourism and reading, and a review of the various methods or approaches to teach reading. Also to be examined are the concept of reading intervention and the origin of, and empirical studies on, the read-aloud programme.

3.2 Definition of theory

A theory is a body of principles meant to describe facts, especially those that have undergone a series of test or have been tested and universally accepted (American Heritage Dictionary 2007:1429).

According to Diane and Morrow (2012:3), theories are referred to as clarifications that are built on beliefs, often backed up by detailed studies based on well-organised data, and that are accepted globally.

Mertens (2010:8) posits that theories provide the basic structure for thought with regard to mutual relationships between constructs and are more limited in range than in patterns. In learning, there are several theories that explain life occurrences. In the same vein, Sadski and Paivio (2007:337) see a theory as a group of interconnected sets of concepts or thoughts and plans of action that offer an effective opinion on an event with the aim of foretelling and clarifying an occurrence.

Mergel (2011:2) asserts that theories make provision for the basic framework based on which natural surroundings are observed and interpreted and that they serve as a link or give a platform for a relationship between research and education. A theory entails serious thought, process judgement, or reflection. It is a design that should be tested to ascertain its logicity and to provide clarification of a certain phenomenon (Creswell 2014:120). Creswell explains that theories are just detailed descriptions of what both learners or educators expect to discover when conditions change in a learning context. He,

furthermore, gives examples of theories, including a theory about how students learn, a theory about how adults learn, a theory regarding leadership style, and a theory about personality.

Amirein-Beardisey and Haladyna (2012:18) believe that theories aid individuals to comprehend events and serve as learners' action, leading them into decisions with regard to making meaning of natural occurrences. In teaching and learning, theories aid teachers in comprehending teaching methods and content and show why certain intervention strategies are proper for some groups or certain learners (Schunk 2013:315). This implies that theories serve as a basic foundation on which things that occur in the natural environment are noticed and are interpreted, and this helps to create a relationship between a well-documented study and reporting on new knowledge on education.

This discussion of theories serves as an introduction to theories of reading, which are discussed in the next section.

3.3 Theories of reading

3.3.1 Psycholinguistic theory of reading

This theory clearly states that reading aims to understand a concept, which emphasises the need for readers to use their background knowledge of language and the environment in making meaning of what they read. Comprehension is at the heart of any reading because, should one read without understanding what is read, the reading process has no value (Joubert 2013:101). The importance of reading and comprehension will be addressed in Chapter 5 as part of the research as well. It is, furthermore, important to keep in mind that Primary 4 learners should understand what they are reading because they are in a school phase where they have to read and understand what they are reading in order to be able to study.

Psycholinguists posit that reading is universal and requires the reader to learn all the other components of language skills at the same time, allowing the reader to make meaning of a printed text. Collaborating this, Joubert (2013:104) contends that psycholinguistics see reading as a process that progressively

moves from the whole to the parts (known as the top-down model of reading). Psycholinguists regard reading as universal and maintain that all the language skills are employed by the learner simultaneously to give meaning to the written passage. This assertion is in line with the view expressed by O'Connor, Swanson, and Geraghty (2010:3). They argue that other elements of language skills are required to develop simultaneously alongside the reading level of the reader. Reading involves comprehension, and the reader is expected to bring experience to the passage to enable him or her to draw conclusions and also to be able to question a given text. Meaning making is vital, and it forms the basic structure for reading.

In a classroom where this theory of reading is applied, reading is viewed as a holistic process in which learners' intentions and desires determine what they read and how they read it. The process of reading is not broken down into units, but involves a meaningful whole connecting meaning to and comprehending the text. This determines the purpose of reading (Hlaithwa 2013:38). Corroborating this, Joubert (2013:107) states that, in this context, reading readiness is viewed as an immediate concept that requires early exposure of learners to printed materials or texts. Learners begin to have a positive attitude towards books and become aware that written passages have meaning. Sentences constructed by learners that are written down on the chalkboard or marker board by the instructor are usually of the first texts to which learners are introduced in addition to several other reading materials. Examples of other texts are stories, recipes, games, advertisements, jokes, and riddles. As previously mentioned, this theory is aligned with the top-down method of teaching reading.

3.3.2 Behaviourism and reading

The behaviourist theory focuses on changes that are noticeable in human behaviour and pays attention to human actions that are continuously displayed by people until these become automatic. It also pays attention to behaviour traits that can be observed and measured. The behaviourists view reading as a

process that progresses from the parts to the whole (known as a bottom-up model). According to this view, learners are able to separate letters and their features, and then they learn to understand the combination of vowel sounds or vowel letters and other letters units that represent sounds. Later on, they learn to read simple words, phrases, and sentences, and, lastly, the meaning of the text. The reader is expected to first master the rules of language in print before attention is given to comprehension. As soon as the learners have mastered these skills, reading becomes easy (Joubert 2013:104).

Teachers who use this theory with regard to reading believe that reading aloud is very important for learners who are beginning to read. They see reading as a complex skill that is comprised of other subskills and believe that reading readiness activities need to be put in place properly by the teacher before the learner can be allowed to read. The teacher uses different categories of reading materials to teach learners to read. This is done only when the teacher is sure that learners have mastered the sounds of words, can identify sight vocabulary words, and can then read aloud to both the teacher and other members of the class. Behaviourism is aligned with the bottom-up approach or the phonic method of teaching reading.

3.3.3 Constructivism and reading

Mergel (2011:8) states that constructivism is a theory of knowledge based on the fact that learners are able to create knowledge and derive meaning from an interaction between their prior knowledge and their ideas. He adds that learners have the potential to construct their own ideas with regard to their environment through individual experiences and knowledge.

From the constructivist point of view, reading – like learning – is regarded as a social practice or human interaction (Wilson & Lianrui 2007:52). The social context affects when one reads, what one reads, where one reads, with whom one reads, and why and how one reads (Wilson & Lianrui 2007:52). Interaction with the text involves exercises such as reading instructions, scanning a newspaper, or

reading a scholarly paper. In a study conducted in Indonesia about the use of social constructivism-based reading comprehension, students improved their reading comprehension abilities and mastery of vocabulary in English considerably. It was decided that social constructivism-based reading should be introduced at their institution of higher education (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti 2018:447). Thus, when designing a curriculum for reading in English classes, teachers or educators must consciously ask what the learners need to be able to do in terms of social practice. (See Section 4.4.1 for a discussion of social constructivism.)

The social constructivist view sees reading not only as a meaning making process, but also as social interaction in actual situations (Jubran 2016:311). Teachers who adopt this perspective believe that learners' reading levels can be enhanced by scaffolding (See Section 4.4.1). For this study, Vygotsky's sociocultural view would be adopted by the researcher as it is relevant in providing support to learners with reading problems. This theory will impact on the teachers' views, strategies and approach used in supporting learners having reading problems.

3.4 Reading methods and approaches

The terms "reading methods" and "reading approaches" are used by experts in the field of reading. Most authors use the terms interchangeably. Reading methods and approaches are styles or techniques that enable both teachers and learners to turn written or printed text into meaning.

Anggraini and Lianasari (2011:1) assert that reading approaches to reading are methods that teachers can use to teach reading. It is one major way in which to aid learners to resolve their reading challenges. They, furthermore, state that if reading approaches are appropriately applied by teachers, learners' knowledge will be enhanced, as they are required to read more and read independently at, for instance, Primary 4 level. Ofodu (2009:17) posits that "approach" is a term used in education based on assumed principles of knowledge and values of learning, which include philosophy, psychology, and sociology

and how these three concepts are interrelated. The kind of approach that is adopted will enable the teacher to choose what is best for a classroom learning situation. In searching for the best method of teaching reading, Shepherd (2013:718) asks the following question: “What is the best way to teach children to read, phonics instruction or whole language?”

This debate over the classroom instructional method or approach that can bring about efficient readers has been going on for decades, and the answer has still to be developed (Kennedy & Shiel 2010:374). Shepherd (2013:718) maintains that most of this controversy comes from the developed countries and that the quest is of more concern for low-income countries such as Nigeria that are still in search of the best approach or method to improve reading skills. Research has been designed or carried out in order to discover which phonics instruction will be effective in teaching learners at the primary level. Shepherd (2013:718) identifies the following approaches to teaching reading: the synthetic phonic approach, the analytic phonic approach, and the systematic phonic approach.

As mentioned at the start of this section, when referring to the teaching of reading, some authorities use the term “methods”, while others refer to “approaches” or “techniques”. In this study, the researcher will review the different views in one section, regardless of the terminology decided on. The concept of a method in, or an approach to, language teaching has been confusing to the neophyte (that is, those new to the reading profession) for many decades, and thus, this needs to be explained clearly for proper understanding. Lawal (2009:97) opines that methods are components of approaches. The type of method or approach decided on by the teacher will enable him or her to choose the method of instruction. Educators are of the opinion that, just as there is no single child in a learning context, there is also no perfect or defined method for the teaching of reading. Beeman-Rygalski (2013:1) maintains that, in searching for the best method of teaching reading, scholars in the reading profession believe that “there is not one perfect method” for teaching learners how to read. He adds that the solution to

the best practice is not in the method, but the teacher. Corroborating the above opinion, Darrel (2005:4) and (Norton 2007:5) posit that instruction needs to be in conformity with the learning needs of the learners. According to Russell and Santoro (2007:190), well-planned instruction is needed to assist learners at risk of academic failure to gain or to acquire grade-level reading abilities aligned with the expectations of their parents, the school, and the larger society.

The next section will examine different schools of thoughts or perspectives on reading methods or approaches.

3.4.1 The phonic method or top-down approach

Godman proposed this approach in the late 1960s. The main focus of the approach is that the reader is expected to come to the text with prior knowledge or experience already formed, and the act of reading is then stirred by this previous knowledge and experience in order to build meaning from the material (Brown 2007a:10). Brown (2007a:50) views the top-down approach as “drawing on an individual or learner’s intelligence and experience – the inferences made based on the knowledge acquired – to understand the text. The learner makes careful use of the knowledge acquired to understand the overall aim of the text, or make a guess on the writer’s line of thought, in order to make predictions in the next stage”. By implication, this enables the reader to predict the writer’s intention, the likely trend of the argument, and how to use this to interpret difficult parts of the passage or to draw conclusions. This approach or method can also be referred to as the phonic method, which involves the development of subskills such as letters.

The phonic method refers to the connection between sounds and their spelling in words. The aim of this instructional method is to teach learners the simple relationship that exists between sound and spelling, so that learners can sound out words on their own. This ability is vital in any reading strategy (Onovughe 2009:98). Joubert (2013:109) affirms this. The latter two authors posit that the phonic

method emphasises the sounds of letters and not the letters themselves; the phonic method is, thus, the study of speech formation and sound pronunciation. Pang (cited in Shepherd 2013:718) postulates that phonics instruction involves a gradual procedure in the teaching of sounds in relation to letters as well as sound and spelling patterns. The learner's knowledge of sound and letter relationships enables him or her to decipher and pronounce written words correctly.

Also in support of the phonic method of teaching reading, Ankrah, Nyanta, and Kwasi (2017:768) indicate that the phonic method of teaching reading is concerned with linking letters (graphemes) to sounds (phonemes) that they represent. To them, the phonic method is based on the premise that, once learners have learnt the relationships of the letters to sounds, they can pronounce printed words by blending the sounds together when using this method. Learners are taught that there is a similarity between the sound and the letter in a particular language. Joubert (2013:109) sees this method "as a synthetic method because parts (sounds) are connected to form the whole (words), where sounds are learned step by step and followed by digraphs and other multi-letters units before single words are read".

Synthetic phonics, which is also referred to as explicit phonics, is a process that involves teaching young learners how to combine the sounds in written form or words by blending every sound together. For instance, /c/a/t/ says cat. Johnson, McGeown, and Watson (2011:329) comment that many countries in Europe have adopted the synthetic phonics approach. This relates to a situation where learners are taught early on how to combine sounds in order to decode words that are strange or unknown. Shepherd (2013:722) sees synthetic phonics as an instructional approach that can be taught to learners who have problems with reading skills or have no reading skills. This approach takes place within a short period. Research reports have shown that phonics instruction is the best method for teaching early reading skills. Such research includes the recommendations of the Rose Report, which resulted from a seven-

year longitudinal study of the impact of synthetic phonics teaching on learners' reading skills, which had improved significantly through the use of "Jolly Phonics", a synthetic phonics programme (Shepherd 2013:721). Shepherd (2013:722) reported on a study on the effect of systematic phonics instruction compared to unsystematic or no phonics instruction and analysed 38 experiments that had been conducted across the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. The study revealed that phonics instruction had a positive impact on the reading development of learners and that the progress made remained with the learners throughout their primary level after the phonics instruction had ended.

Shepherd (2013:1) carried out research in the Cross River State of Nigeria. The study revealed a sudden improvement in the basic literacy skills of learners. The researcher concluded that the overall benefits of phonics instruction were far greater than the benefits arising from traditional Nigerian methods of literacy teaching. The researcher also agrees with an earlier study by Kemizano (2007:16), who maintains that phonics instruction is the best way of teaching reading to primary-grade learners, since it includes the acquisition of letter-sound relationships and their usage in reading and spelling. The main aim of phonics instruction is to assist beginner readers to comprehend how letters are linked to sounds (phonemes) in order to form letter-sound relationships and spelling patterns and to aid learners on how to apply this principle in reading for further purposes.

3.4.2 The whole-word and whole-language method or bottom-up approach

This approach or method is sometimes called the bottom-up approach, the whole-word and whole-language method, analytic phonics, or the look-and-say method or approach.

The starting point of this approach is the stimulus. The reader constructs a meaning from the written text and identifies letters and words; then he or she has to work out or construct the sentence structure as it is in print. The reader uses this process carefully. He or she relies totally on the meaning as used

in the context and does not need any prior knowledge, since the process is text driven. This approach is basically concerned with teaching learners letter-sound relations and then proceeds to sound and their saying the word. As it is text driven, the attention is basically on letters and sounds rather than the individual reading (Brown 2007b:15).

Shepherd (2013:720) indicates that this method is based on the constructivist theory. She also referred to it as the look-and-say method. In this method, considerable emphasis is placed on teaching children to read by identifying words as whole pieces of language. Experts of the whole-language ideology believe that language should not be broken down into letters and synthesis of letters, which are decoded; instead, they believe that language involves a complete system of making meaning, with words functioning in relation to one another in context.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics International (SIL) (cited in Mhoney 2015:15) states that this method or approach of teaching reading begins by:

- teaching learners how to acquire meaning from a larger portion of the text;
- teaching whole words by progressively moving from smaller units to a larger portion of the text;
- teaching parts of words and combining them into whole words; or
- teaching meaning, whole words, and parts of words from the initial stage.

Shepherd (2013:723) adds that this approach or method tends to be associated with whole words that involve sounds already linked or merged together. In this context, learners are able to identify words through their shape, their beginning and ending letters, and the manner in which they are used while making sentences. This approach is often assisted by the use of attractive pictures. This method does not encourage saying sounds in isolation, but rather identifying the sounds that the letters make, for instance, “c” as /c/ in cat. Watson and Johnson (cited in Shepherd 2013:723) explain analytic phonics as a process that breaks down the whole into parts, while synthetic phonics involves building up from the parts to a whole.

3.4.3 The analytic approach or method

An analytic method of reading is a process that begins with whole words (preferably nouns that can be illustrated easily), followed by breaking the words into smaller units through the use of words (meaning). Learners can clearly see the connection between reading and their own language (Wenjing, 2012:168)

3.4.4 The eclectic method

This method involves a combination of methods such as the global, analytic, and synthetic method to suit the reader's ability (Wenjing, 2012:169). The combination of these methods under the eclectic method gives teachers an opportunity to provide activities from several language teaching methodologies. They use more than one reading method, depending on the learners' specific needs in a reading situation. According to Joubert (2013:112), the eclectic method is a combination of both phonics and the look-and-say approach. It makes use of sentences and the word as a point of departure; thus, learners are made to understand that words are formed with letters, which have sounds.

3.4.5 The global reading method

The global reading method accentuates that a learner is able to read fluently when a reading activity begins with a natural and meaningful text to follow, to listen to, to look at, and to memorise by sight (Mhoney 2015:16). In this method, the instructor writes down on the chalkboard what the learner says and later reads it back to assist the learner to develop a concept of words as they appear in print. This method is usually taught through short stories from the learner's prior knowledge and experiences.

3.4.6 The syllable method (combination of the phonic and syllable methods)

According to the Summer Institute of Linguistics International (SIL) (cited in Mhoney 2015:17), this method of teaching reading inspires the learner to use syllables as the major or main word attack skill. By implication, its main feature is the use of the syllable as an essential building block, where learners learn syllables before the reading of words and text takes place.

3.4.7 The sight word method

This is a method that makes use of words as the basic language unit (Halvorson, cited in Asemota 2012:82). Unfamiliar words are learnt by sight (memory) as the learner sees them in print, with supporting pictures or visual cues (Mhoney 2015:18). Learners who understand the meaning of words by sight are able to read them aloud effectively without much trouble. This enables them to read fluently and to pay attention to making meaning out of the text, which improves their comprehension.

3.4.8 The systematic approach or method

This approach is a combination of synthetic and analytic phonics. The term “systematic” refers to the teaching of letters and sounds in specific sequences and not on a “when I need to know” basis (Shepherd 2013:125). It involves a complete literacy curriculum that includes all the language skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening experiences – while reading is ongoing. In addition, it emphasises the need for all the language skills to coexist and to be used by the reader in the reading context.

3.4.9 Conclusion on reading methods

Lawal (2009:7) and Asemota (2014:50) posit that the appropriate approach to be used in a reading class depends largely on the size of the text, the purpose of reading, and the time set aside for reading activities.

They, furthermore, point out the following:

- The amount of available information or the number of facts in the passage waiting to be discovered by the reader; this implies that not all words in the text are worth careful attention.
- The time available; by no means can all the passages worth giving due attention to be attended to because of the time available.
- The level of learners’ reading ability and the level of their responses are additional important factors.

- Lawal (2009:7) and Asemota (2014:50) also mention the interactive approach or method (referred to again in Section 3.5), which is a combination of the top-down and the bottom-up approaches. The proper combination of the two approaches is appropriate and necessary for an effective reading process. This means that the process of decoding print into meaning requires making use of prior knowledge and print (Asemota 2014:20).

3.4.10 Summary of reading methods

It is evident that teaching reading is not an easy task and that teachers who teach reading should be well informed about the various methods or approaches necessary for the teaching of reading during classroom instruction. The success achieved in teaching learners to read depends largely on the approach or method used by the teacher. Methods or approaches are the teacher's means of imparting or transferring knowledge to learners; the manner of the transfer relies on the learners' needs and the teacher's imaginative ability. Teachers are expected to use proper methods or approaches in order to attain the learning goals (Anggraini & Lianasari, 2011:1). Teachers must have the necessary knowledge and understanding of how the different methods or approaches can be applied to suit the learning needs of learners. Teachers lacking versatility in the use of different reading methods and approaches could be the reason why so many learners in the lower primary classes perform below expectation, which is eventually carried over to other levels of education. It should also be kept in mind that learners learn to read in the lower phase of primary school (Primary 1 to 3), and from Primary 4 upwards, they are expected to read independently and to read to study and learn.

The researcher realised that if learners had not succeeded in acquiring the necessary reading skills by the time they reached Primary 4, it influenced their progress at school. Therefore, she decided to undertake this research to show how a reading strategy such as the read-aloud intervention strategy could be used to help learners in Primary 4 in rural Nigeria who were at risk as far as reading was concerned.

3.5 The reading process and goals of reading

For a long time, there has been a strong argument among reading experts about what the reading process entails. Some schools of thought see reading as a meaning finding (decoding) process of identifying the visual signs in printed material. This implies that reading is a process of identifying written words, phrases, and sentences in a text (Lawal & Ohia 2015:20). Lawal and Ohia (2015:20) add that the proponents of this view see the reading process as a decoding process based on the fact that language is essentially speech and that writing is a mere graphic speech representation. The reading process is seen as discovering the connection between written symbols and speech sounds. This means that, while teaching reading, the major responsibility or duty of the teacher in the initial stage of teaching is to teach the learner how to identify the sound of each letter of the alphabet and the sounds of the combination of some letters (Onovughe 2009:42). Asemota (2014:50) indicates that another dimension of the reading process is that it is a cognitive process that requires the reader to bring meaning to written words or print. It requires searching for facts or information in reading material in order to predict phenomena before the reading activity and the ability to draw a non-definite conclusion based on information provided by the learner.

Stephenson and Harold (2009:14) mention that modern reading experts say that the reading process involves building meaning through three stages, namely:

- (1) the reader's prior knowledge;
- (2) the information provided by the printed text meant to be read; and
- (3) the situational context (this means that what the teacher reads is part of a larger situation) or extended text.

By implication, the reading process is an interaction between the reader and the printed text, where the reader depends on his or her background knowledge in order to decode the meaning of the text.

Onovughe (2015:165) observes that the “reading process is not more than a psycho-linguistic guessing exercise through which a reader makes continuous sets of ideas or hypothesis and making use of semantic, syntactic and graphic facts to establish these guesses or ideas”.

Stephenson and Harold (2009:14) posit that current research regards the reading process as a complex cognitive process based on communicative knowledge in combination with learners’ or readers’ social experiences. They go on to say that the reading process means much more than interpreting print into sound. It includes the cultural, social, and personal knowledge of learners and also the ability to put this experience into understanding of the written material.

Additionally, the reading process is perceived as a meaning construction activity. This view focuses on reading as a means of building meaning through an active interaction among the reader’s existing experience, the message provided by the written language, and the context of the reading situation (Ofodu & Lawal 2015:43). This involves the reader’s ability to have an active interaction with the passage and to obtain meaning from it. In this respect, reading is regarded as a communication process through which readers actively interact with the text using their background knowledge in order to get the full message in the written material (Ofodu & Lawal, 2015).

Corroborating the above definition, Farrel (2012:2) reports that the reading process is a “means of constructing meaning through unique interaction which includes readers’ existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language and the context of the reading situation or situational context”. This definition encourages teachers to use several methods of teaching reading: the top-down method, the bottom-up method, and interactive reading. The top-down model emphasises the need for readers to bring their background knowledge and experience to the print as reading progresses and their reading needs are met. The bottom-up model expects readers to read words and sentences and then look and say the words without giving attention to background knowledge or experience in meaning

construction. The interactive model is based on both the top-down and bottom-up models.

Lawal and Ohia (2015:30) see reading as a holistic entity, which is part of another holistic entity called language, through which individuals interact. This makes it possible for people in a community to share ideas. Onokaogu (2005:3) points out that reading is also a process of learning.

Given the various views regarding the reading process, the fact remains that all of the views are based on the assumption that the reading process is a successive process that requires the reader to bring his or her existing experience into the reading situation and to construct meaning from the information in a written text.

3.6 Elements involved in the reading process

3.6.1 Visual and non-visual elements

Onovughe (2009:86) mentions that there are two elements in the reading process: visual and non-visual elements. Visual elements are the letters that make up the words and the words that combine to form the grammatical units of the printed text, while non-visual elements are the readers' prior knowledge or experience and their motivation. The reading process comprises the readers' comprehension of the language through which the text communicates its message regarding the topic. This is what the written passage is all about, which refers to the ability to read (Onovughe 2009:25).

3.6.2 Essential steps in the reading process

There are some basic steps in the reading process that need to be followed and taught to learners, namely, pre-reading, guided reading, and post-reading activities. These activities play an important role in reading comprehension. They were also referred to in the research, which is discussed in Chapter 5.

Pre-reading: this is the initial stage of the reading process and involves the activities that must take place before the eye meets the written text. Some reading experts refer to this stage as the pre-reading processor activity. Hughes and Fredrick (2007:2) report that the activities in pre-reading include:

- activating background knowledge and experience;
- establishing the purpose of reading;
- making predictions and previewing a book;
- taking readers through pictures in a text (a picture walk); and
- questioning and making predictions about a short story.

Onovughe (2015:159) states that these activities are developed from a model of learning referred to as a theory. One of essences of the pre-reading process is to acknowledge the several contexts, experiences, and prior knowledge of learners that will prompt how they read and learn from a text. This provides teachers with a guide between given and unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts, providing the information needed in the process. Pre-reading activities enhance learners' engagement and interest by creating opportunities for them to review and foresee events in the text. Also included in these activities are brainstorming, small-group activities, and question-and-answer sessions (Onovughe 2009:56). Ofodu (2009:28) infers that the success of any reading process is, to a large extent, based on the activities that must occur before the reading exercise begins. Lawal (2010:18) asserts that, for this method to be successful, the teacher must have a good comprehension of the features of the text passage. The learners and teachers must be involved in the following:

- Selection of passages
- Organisation of the learners into small groups
- Activation of relevant schemata

Gbenedio (2009:26) states that these reading activities are meant to enhance the readers' experience and that this can be successfully achieved by taking the learners on field trips, examining objects, looking at pictures, listening to short stories, and drawing.

3.6.3 Guided reading

Guided reading is the second stage in the processing of a given passage by the reader (Onovughe 2009:57). The process begins with teachers first assessing learners' reading ability. The teacher needs to have access to the learners to group them appropriately (Heston 2010:11). The use of guided reading in the classroom provides teachers with an opportunity to carefully differentiate reading instruction, allowing them to meet the needs of their learners. Guided reading encourages small-group support and specific teaching to guide learners to grapple with more complex texts. "As they commence reading texts (passages) that are well planned and organized, learners increase their ability to meet the needs of more challenging texts. This is made evident through classroom discussion and interactions and further revealed through writing" (Fountas & Pinnell 2007:3).

3.6.4 Post-reading

This is the third stage of the reading process designed to appraise what the teacher taught during the guided reading process (Harvey & Goudvis 2007:64). Onukaogu (2009:28) and Onovughe (2009:57) describe this stage as "when the eye leaves the written page". It entails conveying the information obtained from the short-term memory to the long-term memory for future purposes, especially when learners have to study and write tests and examinations. During this stage, teachers ask learners questions to ascertain whether they found the text necessary or not. If the text is found to be relevant, the meaning and content may be fully stretched towards learners' known social situations, personal interest, and experience.

These stages are important in the reading process, especially when learners read with the aim of learning or studying. It is especially important from Primary 4 upwards when learners have to read to learn and study (See Section 2.25 where the reading stages are discussed and applied in the classroom situation).

3.7 Goals of Reading

The main goal of reading is constructing meaning in response to the text. It requires interactive use of graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic facts to build meaning. It involves using printed words as input and the meaning of the words as output. The reader equally provides input through his or her interaction with the text. It is selective in using just as little from the facts from the text as is necessary to construct meaning (Onovughe 2009:57). Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2010:68) reveal that the goals of reading are to enable learners to gain an understanding of the world and themselves, to develop appreciation and interest, and to find solutions to personal and group problems. The construction of meaning as a goal of reading is aligned with social constructivism, which will be discussed in Section 4.4.1.

Using Bloom’s model of taxonomy, Onovughe (2009:57) explains the process and goals of reading. The researcher knows that many teachers in Nigeria are acquainted with Bloom’s taxonomy, and therefore, the adaptation of Bloom’s taxonomy to explain the reading process and the goals of reading could be helpful to teachers. The process and goals of reading based on Bloom’s taxonomy is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The process and goals of reading

Level	Reading behaviour	Goals
Word and sentence recognition	Associating words and sentences of sound and possibly the prevalence of loud reading	Visual perception, attention, and basic vocabulary
Reading along the line	Reading for express or literal meaning	Improved speed of a wider variety of register and reading as a study tool
Reading between the lines	Reading for implied meaning	Improved speed of a wider variety of register and reading as a study tool
Reading across the lines	Reading for a creative reaction to the reading material	Improved speed, analytical ability, and advanced language imaginative thinking
Reading beyond the lines	Reading as a totality and a self-desired pleasurable activity	Lifelong for reading to be fully internalised as a habit and means of relaxation, enquiry, and learning

Source: Bloom’s taxonomy (1949 to 1953) and Onovughe (2009:57)

Table 3.1 reveals that the beginning of reading is the first essential stage of associating words with letters. For reading to be meaningful to the reader, the process has to be implemented step by step to a level where it becomes internalised and part of reading and is used as a tool for continuous self-improvement (Onovughe 2009:38). Obayan (2010:87) sees the process of reading as “interpreting the written language and translating it into words of sentences that convey thought and ideas”. This implies that the raw material for reading is written language. The process consists of interpreting and translating, while the end product is a combination of thoughts, ideas, and feelings. She adds that the goals of reading at the primary level include the following:

- Word perception (identification of a word and understanding of its meaning)
- Comprehension (including literal and implied meanings and the significance of the communication)
- Reaction to what is read (critical evaluative reading)
- Assimilation (linking of the new concepts and already existing concepts with knowledge and experience)

The goals of reading determine what and how much is learnt and what strategies readers employ while reading. Without goals, readers do not know what is expected of them and will have no plan of putting the resources available in the reading process to full use.

When one considers the many aspects involved in the reading process as discussed in Sections 3.3 to 3.7, it is clear that teaching reading is not an easy task. Teachers in all grades, especially in the early grades, should be well informed and well trained in order to construct an understanding of the reading process when teaching reading. The realisation that it could be a difficult task for teachers who did not have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach reading was one of the reasons why the researcher undertook this study.

3.8 Concept of Intervention

One of the basic goals of a primary school classroom teacher is to ensure that all learners become efficient readers. It is especially teachers in Primary 4 classes in rural schools who are challenged to assist learners who are not making progress in reading. It has always been suggested, but not put into practice, that these learners be given extra coaching classes, remedial instruction, and intervention to improve their reading abilities.

3.8.1 Overview of the definition of intervention

Cooper, Williams, Boschken, and Pistochini (n.d.:1) report that intervention is a process of coming into or in-between in order to prevent an action from happening if it has already started, such as averting reading failure. An intervention strategy is a gradual plan of action consciously adopted in order to address and limit the cause of poor academic performance during an educational programme (Cooper et al. n.d.).

Wright (2012:6) sees intervention as a strategy meant to teach new skills and to encourage a child as a learner to apply an existing skill or experience to a new situation. He adds that learners for whom intervention is meant are those who are at risk in the classroom as far as learning and reading are concerned and where their struggles to learn and read considerably affect their academic achievement. It should be noted that an intervention strategy is essentially for learners facing learning challenges in order to incorporate an appropriate reading programme or strategy that can support those who are at risk regarding learning and reading.

Wright (n.d.) asserts that learners who receive assistance or support from interventions are those who may struggle with several learning skills in the classroom. According to her, these struggles can prevent their academic attainment to a large extent, depending on the school and subject matter. Support or intervention can come in many ways. Several successful intervention strategies were successfully

implemented in the past (Wanzek, Stevens & Sargent 2018:5). “These programmes have been very effective in averting academic failure for learners at the beginning of their learning programmes” (Copper et al. n.d.). According to Copper et al. (n.d), an intervention strategy provides intensive, well-planned, and organised instruction that is presented daily to the learners side by side with learners’ regular classroom reading activities. This implies that Primary Level 4 learners in rural schools in Nigeria who are at risk regarding their reading skills need a well-structured and systematic intervention strategy such as the read-aloud strategy.

3.8.2 Elements of effective reading intervention instruction for primary learners

Two important elements must be included in an effective intervention strategy for primary school learners, including learners at the Primary 4 level:

- Suitable grade-level reading materials
- An instructional plan that quickly promotes positive learning outcomes (Mikul 2015:80)

During any reading intervention strategy for Primary 4 learners, the cognitive development of the learners should, however, always be kept in mind. (See Section 2.13.2 for a discussion of Primary 4 learners’ cognitive development.)

3.8.3 Appropriate reading materials

Books for Primary Level 4 intervention must be interesting and motivating. Myers (2015:33) provides the following suggestions. Books should:

- contain interesting subject matter that is applicable to a variety of curricular areas (this applies to any school level);
- provide a balance of narrative and expository reading experiences (Levels 5 and 6);
- go beyond grade-level texts used at the beginning of literacy development where the main attention is on establishing decoding strategies and fluency in word identification; and

- be developed gradually and range from simple to complex, which systematically permits learners to quickly improve their reading ability, with assistance given by a teacher or more experienced other (Myers 2015:33).

3.9 The Read-aloud Intervention Strategy

In this section, the read-aloud intervention strategy as a possible instructional plan to promote positive reading outcomes is discussed. After that, another reading intervention strategy, namely, explicit direct instruction, will be considered.

3.9.1 Definition of the Read-aloud Intervention Strategy

The read-aloud intervention strategy is an instructional application through which a teacher or more competent person reads a text out loud to learners or children (Mikul 2015:10). Meller, Richardson, and Hatch (2009:77) describe the read-aloud strategy as the intentionally structural structured reading of texts. In classroom practice of read-aloud, young learners listen to the story, building connections and constructing meaning from the story. Robert, Peggy, and Nicholas (2010:165) define read-aloud as a situation in which teachers take up the duty of reading to learners. When using read-aloud the teacher and learners get the opportunity develop certain forms of knowledge during reading lessons such as looking at textual features or to scaffold comprehension strategies (Wiseman 2011:432). The learners could also take part in interaction before, during and after the reading activity (Meller, Richardson & Hatch 2009:77). Greenawalt (2010:18) articulates that read-aloud includes interaction among readers and questioning before and after a reading activity. The interaction before reading enables learners to build experiences and to engage their prior knowledge to make connections with print. Read-aloud activities steer learners into the world of stories and books, take them on a captivating and memorable journey to faraway places, and motivate them to learn and explore the world of the unknown (Greenawalt 2010).

Experts in reading have adjudged the read-aloud strategy to be a major and one of the most exciting and engaging learning activities in modern times (Greenawalt 2010:19). Greenawalt (2010:19) adds that read-aloud is a period during school hours when learners are not feeling nervous and are able to become captivated by a story or reading adventure. Each moment a teacher takes up a book and begins to read becomes enchanting. This creates a kind of curiosity in the learner's mind about what events are likely to happen in the story. A well-planned read-aloud session can attract learners' interest and arrest their attention.

Read-alouds are not only excellent means through which learners can be occupied; they are also important elements of teaching reading at the Primary 4 level. Mikul (2015:1) posits that the read-aloud strategy is the most essential exercise for affecting knowledge and the most important skill that will be needed for reading. He is emphatic that read-alouds can be used to have a great positive impact on the learners' listening and speaking skills, can enhance vocabulary comprehension skills, and can also charm learners in a magical way that no other teaching-learning materials can.

3.9.2 Studies on the read-aloud strategy since 1990

The use of the read-aloud strategy to enhance the teaching of reading and to support learners' reading abilities has been around since 1990. Although it was done in the 1990s Warwick's report is for instance still of value as it was one of the first big scale research projects about the read-aloud programme. Warwick (1992:174) reports the findings of an in-depth study about the effect of teachers reading aloud on learners' reading achievement. The study was conducted between 1990 and 1991, and 32 countries took part in the study. The study determined the reading achievement of 210 000 learners between the ages of nine and 14. The results showed that, in terms of achievement scores, the top four nations of those that participated were the United States, France, Finland, and Sweden. Two major reasons for these high achievement scores throughout the learning period were teachers' regular and constant use

of reading aloud to learners and the frequent use of sustained silent reading.

As far back as 1994, Trelease (1994:30) discovered that learners whose teachers read out loud to them and who were later asked to perform some practical classroom exercise unguided performed significantly better than their peers who watched the movie version of the same story on screen. Learners who were read to used visual imagery and information to create scenes and characters from the story, while the others were able to repeat what they had seen on the television, whether it was an image created in their mind or not.

Vivas (1996:189-216) studied the effect of the systematic reading out loud of stories on language comprehension and language production of preschool and first-grade children. The study report showed that learners listening to stories read out loud to them by their teachers automatically developed the habit of listening, thus developing their listening skills, while simultaneously providing explicit training in comprehension by means of introducing them to interesting and relevant aspects of the stories.

Amer (1997:43-45) investigated the effect of the teacher's reading aloud on the reading comprehension of learners doing English as a foreign language (EFL) who were reading a story. Seventy-five learners took part in the study. The experimental group had a story read out loud to them by the teacher, whereas the control group read the story silently. Two dependent measures were employed: a multiple-choice test and a story frame test. The report revealed that the experimental group did better than the control group on both measures. By implication, the teacher's reading aloud had a significant positive effect on learners' reading comprehension.

Campbell's research (2001:80) stressed that reading a story out loud to learners produced lifelong changes of actively participating in classroom activities such as interaction, role plays, shared readings, group writing, arts and crafts, and songs. He showed that read-aloud activities provided several kinds of reading support for learners. Young children learnt about reading through an adult or teacher who

made a reading model available from a comprehension of how written language functioned and how it was applied in context. Reading aloud also developed an experience and comprehension of letters and how letter sounds were combined, how new sentences and discourse patterns were learnt, how stories and vocabulary were learnt, and how the right attitude towards text was developed. Moreover, he recommended using read-alouds as a stepping stone for future learning across content areas.

Queini, Bahous, and Nabhani (2008:140-154) carried out a 10-week study with 53 five- to six-year-old kindergarteners to examine the effect of read-aloud on learners' vocabulary development and comprehension skills. The read-aloud strategy was made up of two teachers reading storybooks out loud to learners and clarifying new vocabulary. The teachers engaged learners in an active interaction about the text, involving analytical reasoning. Data was collected through observations, conferences with learners, and their written samples. The results revealed that the learners' vocabulary and comprehension skills were positively affected. They were able to use the new vocabulary words and engage in analysis and synthesis as they participated in an interaction on the read-aloud stories.

Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2010:67-76) evaluated the impact of teachers' storytelling aloud on the reading comprehension of Saudi elementary-stage learners. The investigation compared the storytelling-aloud method with traditional methods. The results revealed that learners who were exposed to storytelling showed higher positive achievement than those who were taught through traditional methods.

Meyers (2015:46) carried out a qualitative study on the effect of interactive read-aloud on kindergarten learners' analytic dialogue. The analysis found that learners who were exposed to daily read-aloud sessions demonstrated a deepened comprehension of the targeted words read aloud by the teacher. Thus, the application of interactive read-aloud stories in a classroom had a positive impact on promoting learners' reading expressive vocabulary and reading comprehension.

After reviewing these studies on the effects of reading stories out loud, it was patently clear to the researcher that others researchers unanimously agreed that reading aloud to learners of all abilities and ages motivated them and had a positive impact on their reading ability or literacy learning. These studies, furthermore, convinced the researcher to undertake research on using a read-aloud programme for Primary 4 learners in an attempt to improve their reading abilities. It is important to make provision for a teaching and learning environment that supports and promotes the implementation of a read-aloud strategy and that offers teachers the opportunity to enhance learners' vocabulary, develop their comprehension, and motivate them to become lifelong readers.

3.9.3 Benefits of the read-aloud strategy

The many research studies that had been done on the read-aloud strategy revealed that this strategy had benefits. If used correctly, the read-aloud strategy could benefit learners to enhance their reading abilities and, especially, their reading comprehension skills.

The read-aloud strategy is, in the first place, a reading programme, and thus, one of its biggest benefits is that it develops young learners' reading abilities in their quest to become literate. In this regard, Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2010:69) state that reading aloud is a vital tool for literacy development. They further add that reading aloud shows the connection between the written word and meaning, which can lead the learners into a dialogue with the text. Reading aloud to learners constructs a solid foundation for literacy learning. Additionally, the more stories learners are introduced to during read-aloud sessions, the better the chances are that they will learn rich language, learn new words, understand storylines, and gradually develop a love for reading. They also posit that learners who are always exposed to read-aloud sessions acquire new skills that prepare them for reading throughout life. Furthermore, during read-aloud, learners pay more attention to lessons, are fully ready to learn, and can become highly focused. Read-aloud can be used for several genres of texts, followed by engagement

in interactive discussions on the books and the stories. Reading aloud establishes a mutual relationship between the teacher and the learners through reading the same stories and about the same characters and experiencing the same feelings towards the action in the text (Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman 2010:4). According to Trelease (2013:23), when properly planned and applied by teachers, a read-aloud strategy will nurture the urge for independent reading. She remarks that “it is like a television or radio advertisement for literature”. In a read-aloud classroom, learners can listen to language above their age level, so reading aloud makes difficult words easy to read and understand and also introduces them to word and language patterns that are not used in regular interaction. It, thus, aids learners’ comprehension of the structure of text when they read without any assistance (Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman 2010:6). “This shows the benefits of reading and builds the learners’ interest in text and the urge to become a competent and fluent reader. It is the most vital activity that contribute to reading success” (Al-Mansour & Al Shorman 2010:68).

The read-aloud strategy has other benefits, especially regarding the enhancement of reading comprehension. In the words of Routman (cited in Spencer & Slocum 2011:180), read-aloud not only enhances comprehension levels; it also boosts vocabulary and listening skills and affects the right attitude with regard to reading. Boyd and Devennie (2009:149) agree that vivacious read-aloud inspires positive feelings or behavioural changes about written print, presenting characters as well as opening up the entire globe – enriched with knowledge or new information without restrictions.

Wiseman (2011:433/:230) reports that read-aloud creates an opportunity for teachers to model and scaffold comprehension strategies that will gradually build understanding around open-ended responses. This strategy enables learners to be fully involved in discussions that build strength, expand already existing knowledge, and promote serious thinking. This implies that reading instruction based on read-aloud will enhance learners’ comprehension, fluency, vocabulary development, and other

language skills. Rasinski, Padak, and Fawcett (2010:78) demonstrate that reading aloud aids in developing or building “listening and comprehension skills, as well as vocabulary development”. They add that listening to a more competent person model reading out loud will steer learners to pay attention and experience fun in reading.

To read aloud to children has benefits for literacy skills and cognitive growth. It also contributes positively to growth with regard to phonological awareness, the development of children’s language and vocabulary, comprehension and print concepts. This will contribute positively to their reading achievement (Ledger & Merga 2018:125). Trelease (2013:23) opines that a regular read-aloud activity increases learners’ attitude towards reading, opens them up for active discussion, and enhances their ability to make predictions.

Queini, Bahous, and Nabhani (2008:141) report that reading aloud to children helps to motivate learners to read more challenging books as well as a greater variety. When teachers read to learners with excitement, this increases the chances of learners becoming lifelong readers, which will continue all through their educational pursuits. Worthy, Chamberlain, Peterson, Sharp, and Shih (2012:315) believe that a classroom that is comprised of rich literature discussions around books enables learners to actively practise language and creates opportunities for high-level thinking. It teaches learners to contribute opinions and feelings and to respect the opinions of others. A read-aloud strategy can also examine learners’ understanding of the features of a story in an interactive session (Van der Pol, 2012:100).

Wiseman (2012:26) states that read-aloud enhances the active involvement of learners in a reading activity. This has been discovered to increase academic achievement as well as self-confidence and motivation. Laminack and Wadsworth (2006:1) outdated comment that reading aloud to children helps to “fill the air and their ears with the sound of language”.

Researchers have studied evidence-based reading using teachers who read aloud in the classroom and have documented the benefits of read-aloud.

During read-aloud activities, learners process and construct meaning from text that would otherwise be too challenging to comprehend.

- Read-aloud activities promote language and literacy development by aiding interactions between and among learners and teachers regarding text.
- Teachers use read-aloud to enhance word choice, sentence structure, and story development in learners' writing. In classroom practice, when teachers used read-alouds with some learners, they constructed meaning from the discussions and acquired richer language. Learners' writing improved as well (Al-Mansour & Al-Shorman 2010:68; Adeyemo 2015:33).

Various researchers have focused on the importance of a read-aloud strategy for learners who are struggling with reading in the United States (Greenwalt, 2010; Yopp & Yopp 2012). The results indicated that read-aloud was effective, and it was, therefore, suggested that it was important for researchers to continue to do research about read-aloud for the effective teaching of reading. In corroborating the above, Tunnell, Jacobs, Young, and Bryan (2015:80) describe it as the "hallmark" of quality literacy. Gray (2012:221) refers to it as the "anchor" to literacy instruction.

Another reason for using the read-aloud process in the classroom is that it gives learners the opportunity to enjoy the advantages of understanding language structure to be modelled by their teachers. Learners can imitate the structure and the sounds they hear from their teachers. Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2010:70) report that, while the teacher is reading, he or she can introduce the rules of syntax, which include pitch, juncture, stress, and other cues such as tone of voice, facial expression, and actions. All of these aspects can assist the learner in constructing meaning from the passage. They also state that listening to words in a teaching and learning situation increases the number of vocabulary items and

their meaning that the learner has already acquired, and this allows him or her to interact fluently with both the teacher and peers.

Ness (2009:62) indicates that studies in the fourth through to sixth grades revealed that children who were read aloud to on a regular basis over a couple of months demonstrated significant gains in reading comprehension, decoding skills, and vocabulary. It was also shown that all learners benefited positively compared to the control groups in the studies, who were read to only occasionally or not at all. Asemota (2014:50) emphasises that teachers should read to their learners because, as the reading activity is taking place, the learners get a better feeling for the language and its structure. When teachers read to learners, it also enhances motivation; the reader's interest and the animated mood can be infectious.

Santoro, Chard, Haward, and Baker (2008:400) posit that, for a read-aloud session lasting 20 to 30 minutes, the book must not be more than 32 pages long. According to Dewitz and Jones (2013:395), all genres – prose, short stories, poetry, and drama – should be incorporated throughout the academic programme during read-alouds. This will motivate learners' interest in all kinds of text. Lane and Wright (2007:672) point out that, whether selecting fiction or non-fiction text, the stories chosen must incorporate well-structured plots and characters and should meet the teaching goals recapitulated by the teacher. They add that the text should be selected to ensure absolute participation of the learners throughout the read-aloud activity.

Furthermore, Al-Mansour and Al-Shorman (2010:72) comment that to bring about an expected level of comprehension, the teacher should make the learners experience real-life situations in which native speakers of English use language naturally to converse and communicate effectively without hindrance. They go on to say that teachers should have their learners listen to them read aloud short stories about life experience, family, and friends or even tales about current events. In doing so, the teacher exposes the learners to natural language with endless sets of structures, new words, and idiomatic expressions,

and this could add a lot of terms with meaningful cultural value.

In a read-aloud programme in a classroom situation, the teacher creates opportunities for learners to interact with peers or group members in a casual manner or tone in a systematically prepared environment (Santoro, Chard, Haward & Baker, 2008:398). At the point of interaction and useful activities, learners can be “flooded” with new words (Brabham, Buskist, Henderson, Paleologos & Baugh 2012:528). This connotes that learners’ regular involvement with an adult and peers through read-aloud can have a positive impact on them and can enhance and promote their ability to express themselves based on the new vocabulary acquired.

The benefits of the read-aloud strategy are clearly astonishing. The discussion in this section provided the reasons the researcher decided to use the read-aloud strategy as one of the reading strategies in her research. In doing her research, she hoped to find out whether the read-aloud strategy would benefit the reading abilities and, especially, the reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners more than another reading strategy.

3.9.4 Read-aloud instruction and lesson planning

There are several effective approaches to the presentation of read-aloud that teachers are expected to utilise. Among these is their highly valued time. They need to devote enough time in the curricula to effective, well-planned read-aloud sessions (Myers 2015:35). Most studies that have investigated the time element concur that an effective story book read-aloud needs 20 to 30 minutes of instructional planning compared to other content areas (Kindle 2009:208). Additionally, the learners’ diverse instructional needs must be taken into consideration (Lane & Wright 2007:670).

The procedures that correlate with effective read-aloud strategies have already been outlined. (See Section 2.10.) Additionally, Myers (2015:36) gives a detailed description of teachers’ guidelines in read-aloud programmes. These are as follows: book selection practice and preview of the book, the use

of animation and expression, a clearly defined purpose, a fluent reading model, planned conversations between learners and the teacher, and modelled and guided connection between reading and writing. Incorporation of these routines has shown their effectiveness in performing a successful read-aloud.

3.9.5 Book selection

Books selected or chosen for read-alouds with young learners should be above the group's average reading level most of the time. The purpose of this is for the learners to hear new vocabulary, which deepens throughout life (Myers 2015:36). Mikul (2015:22) agree that the text selected should include rich language, which should be interesting for the learners. It should also contain engaging characters and plots and possess different stages or degrees of meaning. The text should provide both enjoyment and learning opportunities for learners. McGree and Schickedanz (2007:746) concur that text selected to be used should include stories that provide opportunities for learners to make inferences and predictions and to identify relationships of cause and effect, that have strong character features, and that allow for robust vocabulary development.

Kindle (2009:205) posits that the intended text should be of a high standard, while Myers (2015:36) highlights the following conditions for choosing texts:

- (a) The books must be colourful or attractive and contain illustrations that aid storytelling.
- (b) The text should provide new words to the learners.
- (c) The text should not be too long.
- (d) Various genres (prose, poetry, or drama) of narrative text should be chosen.
- (e) It must be developmentally suitable according to the age level of the learners.

The use of picture text creates opportunities for learners to have a good understanding of books and can also develop vocabulary and aid learners' oral language proficiency; well-illustrated picture books, when effectively used, assist learners to pay attention to language in print, including the ability to

decode meaning (Dewitz & Jones 2013; Martens, Martens, Doyle, Loomis & Aghalarov 2012:288). Mikul (2015:22) states that a teacher should select texts that include lots of pictures and illustrations that will promote learners' opportunities to model thinking aloud about images and practising visualisation. Corroborating the above assertion, Boyd, and Galda (2011:20) comment that picture books assist the development of learners' oral language experiences. This can lead the learners to enter class interaction around the book by means of discussion and can also encourage entire-class discussions (Mikul 2015:18). Books with stories that learners could engage with should also be selected. Learners' interest in books is captured when the learners can make connections between situations and characters that relate to their own lives (Hazzard 2016:405).

3.10 Previewing the text

Text preview is another essential criterion that teachers use. It involves the teacher previewing and practising the story before the reading aloud takes place. This act helps the teacher to avoid pronouncing the words incorrectly and will enable learners to listen to well-articulated reading. It also helps the teacher to effectively plan for teaching of vocabulary by carefully using pictures to systematically motivate and help the learners towards meaning construction and equally engage them in analytical reasoning around the new words during an interactive section (McGee & Schuckedanz 2007:746). Mikul (2015:22) agrees with Miller and Moss (2013:18) and Delacruz (2013:24) that a teacher should read through the book several times; the teacher actually requires enough time to comprehend all the features of the story, which include the characteristics, structure of the book, storyline, language used, setting, and pictures.

3.11 Planning and implementing the read-aloud strategy

This stage requires the highest levels of performance on the part of the teacher while planning for the read-aloud strategy. A mere reading out loud of text is not adequate for the development of learners' literacy skills, as it is the method by means of which a read-aloud is applied that is vital (McGee & Schickedanz 2007:747). Meller et al. (2009:77) posit that the aim of learning needs to be clearly stated before the read-aloud session. Additionally, there should be teaching support in the form of a mini-lesson, as this can help to enhance skills in learners' reading performance (Cummins & Stallmeyer-Gerard 2011:397). Mini-lessons should be about 5-7 minutes long, presented by the teacher in order to introduce the learners to the reading strategy before the actual reading of the story. In other words, these are short instructions or lessons that come before the actual instructions. These can help the learners to relate small concepts of the skill to be learnt. At this stage, the teacher explains the plan of action and cites instances of assistance or guiding to enhance learners' prior knowledge of the plan.

The teacher also has to plan the exact spot to stop in the reading and to create an opportunity for learners to interact with what Fountas and Pinnell (2006:10) refer to as a "buzz partner". This helps to strengthen the ideas taught during the mini-lesson.

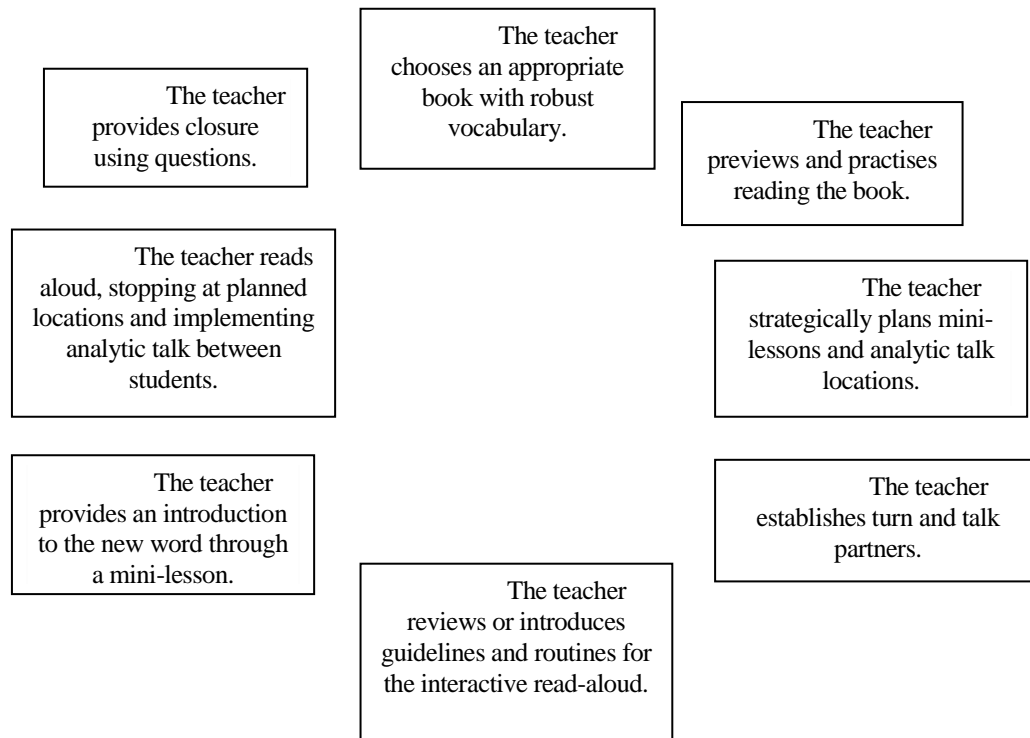
Before proceeding to the next stage, Fountas and Pinnell (2006:12) outline more criteria for planning. They are of the opinion that, during interactive read-aloud planning, the teacher should mark the page numbers and remind the learners of the exact part where they will pause and engage in an interaction with the book. Furthermore, Delaeruz (2013:24) indicates that the teachers should sometimes use "sticky notes" to show the actual place in the text where they need to remember to pause and ask questions or point out a given specific element in the text.

Meller, Richardson, and Hatch (2009:73) highlight six steps that teachers can use in planning and implementing effective read-aloud strategies. The steps are selecting a book, previewing the book,

developing thought-provoking questions and eliciting answers during the read-alouds, conducting a mini-lesson to activate children’s prior knowledge, taking a picture walk, and reading the story while stopping to discuss questions.

Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey (2004) corroborate the above, as can be seen from their demonstration of the read-aloud process in the figure shown below.

Figure 3.1: Read-aloud process



Source: Fisher, Flood, Lapp, and Frey (2004:15)

Trelense (2006:3) gives an outline of how the read-aloud programme should be planned.

Planning the read-aloud Programme

Texts suitable for learners’ learning goals should be selected.

Before reading it out loud to learners, the text should be previewed and practised.

Learners’ interaction should be planned before, during and after the reading aloud sessions.

The whole essence of reading to the learners should be conveyed to the learners.

Animation and facial expression should be used while reading to demonstrate or reflect the pleasure of reading.

A teacher should stop at vital or essential points, and ask strategic questions to attract learners' attention to vital concepts.

After the activity (read-aloud)

Opportunities for learners to react to the read-aloud through small group dialogue, drawing, and writing have to be created.

Learners have to be assisted to link science-related ideas with real life situations.

It is thus clear that any read-aloud classroom activity should be planned well by teachers before it can be presented in the classroom. Teachers should know what steps to follow when planning any read-aloud activity. As part of the research that was conducted during this study, teachers who acted as study participants were trained before they used the read-aloud strategy.

See Section 5.22.3 for further discussion of lesson planning when using the read-aloud programme.)

3.12 The explicit direct instruction (EDI) programme

The explicit direct instruction programme is another programme that can be used to support learners to improve their reading abilities. Explicit direct instruction (EDI) is a model or approach that is a form of systematic teaching, with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for learners' understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all learners (Marchand-Martella & Martella 2009:197). Rosenshine (2008:2) reports that gradual instruction is a fundamental of EDI. It means step-by-step teaching, which is used to reduce learners' reading difficulties and errors. For instance, teaching letter sounds in a particular order, such as separating the letters "b" and "d", and giving attention to high-utility sounds such as "a" and "s" among the ones initially taught are at the centre of good phonics instruction.

3.12.1 A discussion of the EDI programme

William, Timothy, and Nichols (2009:3) describe EDI as a means of teachers imparting new ideas and information to learners through meaningful teacher-learner interaction and guidance of learners' learning. EDI involves a teacher demonstrating, modelling, and giving adequate explanations of the particular strategy to learners, providing guided practice and feedback on the application of strategies, and enhancing independent practice in the use of strategies. Marchand Martella and Martella (2009:198) state that, during an explicit direct instruction lesson, teachers are fully in charge of learners' learning, but they systematically give up this responsibility to learners as the learners become more successful when reading. In EDI, learners are exposed to how to carry out a responsibility before they are asked to do it on their own. Archer and Hughes (2011:7) refer to this practice as "I do, we do, you do".

Martella et al. (2012) furthermore, indicate that EDI classroom activities or experiences move learners from little or no knowledge to a better level, where learners use reading strategies or skills at higher levels. Lencioni (2013:6) defines EDI as "a strategic collection of instructional practices combined together to design and deliver well-crafted lessons that explicitly teach content, especially grade level content, to all learners".

Reading experts concur that EDI is a model that can promote reading and comprehension ability for learners whose reading is at risk. According to Denton, Fletcher, Taylor, Barth and Vaughn (2014:270), learners with learning challenges will benefit from EDI in decoding strategies, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies when reading. In addition, whenever teachers give explicit direct instruction during reading lessons, they should demonstrate strategies clearly, give enough descriptions of new concepts, and provide clear examples. Learners do not necessarily infer what they are expected to learn. For example, a teacher who uses EDI with Primary 1 learners on how to sound out words will model

the procedures step by step and then give the opportunity for learners to practise the skills with the teacher's support. If the learners fail the task, the teacher demonstrates the process again or reteaches the process.

Hammond and Moore (2018:1) make the observation that the Australian reports of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (NSWDEC 2012:5) highlighted explicit direct instruction techniques as an attribute of perfect teachers, and these were regarded as the second of the seven evidence-based practices that promoted learners' performance. The report continued to say that EDI involved teachers teaching learners what to do and how to do it, instead of allowing learners to discover or construct new ideas for themselves (NSWDEC, 2015:8).

Rosenshine (2012:13) reports that, in an EDI classroom, the emphasis is on teachers' teaching behaviours that maximise learners' achievement instead of curriculum design. In corroborating this, Hattie (2009:206) purports that "it is the teacher's responsibility to decide the learning objectives and set the criteria for assessing learners' achievement. In order to achieve this, the teacher ensures that learning is made clear to learners by careful model or demonstration of concepts, stop at intervals to ask questions, this is to check for learners' comprehension of lessons. If concepts are not understood, the teacher will do a reteach".

According to Olagbaju (2019:63), explicit direct instruction is a highly structured and organised teacher-directed and task-oriented teaching approach. He describes EDI as an instructional procedure by which teachers pass on or communicate information to learners using steps or stages that are specific to the content and instruction. Care should be taken by teachers to make sure that during an EDI lesson they clearly show their learners how to apply EDI. Teaching EDI should also be done in a logical and orderly way (Witt 2018:7-8).

Olagbaju (2019:64) identifies the goal of EDI to move the learners through a set of tasks and adds that EDI allows for a partnership between teachers and learners during the instructional process. During EDI, teachers are required to model the steps and present the objectives of the lesson and demonstrate clarity and enthusiasm, while learners are actively engaged through guided reading sessions, independent practice sessions, and feedback.

Archer and Hughes (2011:7) also maintain that EDI is beneficial to learners and enhances the learning of new skills and contents, especially for learners who are struggling with reading. Furthermore, it has the potential to make a lesson very clear and can show and expose learners to how to begin and succeed in any given task (Archer & Hughes 2011:7).

Lencioni (2013:3) lists various steps that teachers are expected to apply in planning and implementing an EDI lesson:

- The teacher must teach first and then pose a specific question.
- Questions are to be asked every two to five minutes.
- The teaching should be done stage by stage. The teacher must upgrade his or her subject-specific knowledge and see EDI teaching as a duty.
- The teacher should ensure that learners listen to instructions silently without interruption and save questions until the end of the lesson.
- Teachers should apply a storytelling method that learners find interesting and easy to recall.
- They should involve learners in practice and rehearse reading.
- The learning should be aided with clear and neat chalkboard illustrations.

EDI classroom practice enables learners to imitate and practise the skills or strategies that were modelled by the teacher, which should enable them to provide the right answers as feedback. Newman (2007:16) agrees that the reason for EDI practice in the classroom is to provide time for learners to

practise a newly learnt strategy or skill under the supervision of the teacher. This helps or encourages them to become independent readers.

In this study, the teachers who acted as participants were trained to use the EDI strategy as part of the research project. (See Section 5.22.2 for a further discussion of lesson planning when using EDI.)

During training, the researcher acquainted the teachers with the many aspects involved in the EDI programme, so that they could form a good understanding of the programme.

3.12.2 Benefits of the EDI programme

The research conducted on EDI shows that this instructional technique has several benefits. The EDI programme is, most importantly, a reading programme that has benefits for learners at all levels. If applied effectively, the EDI programme can enable learners to improve their reading and comprehension abilities.

Kim Greene (n.d.:2) reports that EDI provides learners who are typically left out of enquiry-based learning with the ideas and skills they require to engage in learning. She adds that the enquiry procedure lends itself to demonstration, modelling, practice, and feedback.

When used effectively in the classroom, Hammond (2019:3) believes that EDI enables learners to observe teachers explain, demonstrate, and model every concept step by step from the blending together of sounds, to the decoding of words, to the writing of difficult sentences with figurative language.

She goes on to state that EDI enables learners to benefit from teachers' daily reviews of previously taught skills, so that the knowledge becomes automatic. Thus, learners can apply the skills to more difficult tasks, including reading and writing.

Explicit direct instruction has other benefits with regard to the improvement of reading comprehension in the area of guided practice. In EDI classroom practice, learners are given guided practice and provided with opportunities to respond to questions while being guided. This guided rehearsal enables

learners to fully participate in the learning process (Sabornie & DeBettencourt 2019:10).

EDI is a most effective and efficient process that can promote learners' comprehension because it enables learners to practise skills until they become fluent in the skill being learnt (Garqiulo & Metcalf 2010:30). Garqiulo and Metcalf (2010:30) point out that when learners are given the opportunity for repeated practice of skills on their own, quick responses occur; for example, learners may repeatedly read a story to improve their reading speed.

From the above, it is clear that the EDI programme has many benefits. Therefore, the researcher decided to use it as a possible intervention programme alongside the read-aloud intervention strategy in order to determine which could be more beneficial to Primary 4 learners, especially those Primary 4 learners with reading problems in rural Nigeria.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the definition of theory and theories of reading. Various views regarding methods and approaches in the teaching of reading were provided, and the reading process and goals of reading were also described. In addition, the concept of intervention, an overview of definitions of reading intervention, the concept of reading intervention, and the elements of effective intervention instruction for Primary 4 learners were presented.

The chapter gave a definition of the read-aloud strategy, a detailed review of literature on the read-aloud strategy, the presentation and planning of read-aloud instruction, and a synthesis of empirical studies on read-aloud strategies. Also discussed were the definition of EDI and a review of literature on EDI as additional reading support.

In the next chapter, the researcher will examine the research design and methodology. The chapter will focus on a description and discussion of the research design methodology that was used in collecting data in this research work. Among the concepts that will be looked at are the methodological paradigm,

research design, research site, population, and sampling procedure. A theoretical framework for the study will be provided. To be presented also are details of the data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, validity, and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters of this research pointed out that this study was conducted to investigate the effect of an intervention strategy on reading comprehension of Primary 4 school learners in rural Nigeria. This chapter provides a description of the methodological paradigm, research design, research site, population, and sampling procedure. A theoretical framework for the study is provided. Also to be presented are the research instruments that were applied by the researcher for data collection, the data analysis procedure, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, validity and reliability, and the limitations of the research work.

4.2 Research paradigm

In attempting to discuss the paradigmatic view of this research, it is necessary to give a clear explanation of a “paradigm” and what it constitutes as well as the point of view of some researchers with regard to paradigms. Nieuwenhuis (2016:52) sees a paradigm as an assumption and views it as the basis of reality and this leads to the perception that a person has or holds. From this, one can infer that each individual researcher approaches a study with an abundance of interrelated and mostly contradictory philosophical views.

Armitage (2007:2) sees a paradigm as an array of acceptable truths and an order that, for researchers in specific fields, affect what should be known, how studies should be carried out and how conclusions should be stated clearly. Neuman (2011:94) states that a paradigm is a complete method of thinking. In this sense, a paradigm can be related to an acceptable research convention in a specific field. Bryman (2012:55) opines that it is a “philosophical framework”. Taylor and Medina (2013:2) view the term “paradigm” as a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or prepositions that orient thinking and research or the philosophical aim of carrying out research (Mackenzie & Knipe 2006:3).

There are, thus, many definitions of a paradigm. For this study, the researcher was of the opinion that the definition of a paradigm given by Nieuwenhuis (2016:52) best suited the research design followed, as it enabled her to have a world view on the basis that reality is the construction of meaning in a natural situation with regard to reading and reading comprehension as these are related to rural Primary 4 learners' reading abilities. It also allowed for an investigation into how a reading intervention programme could assist in improving Primary 4 learners' reading abilities.

McCombes (2019:2) sees a research design as a plan which provides a set of questions. He further adds that it is a framework that involves the approaches and processes to collect, analyse, and interpret information or data. This means that the research design describes how the researcher will study or investigate the main problem of the research. Creswell and Creswell (2018:120) assert that a research design defines all other constituted parts of a study such as variables, hypothesis, experiments, methodology and statistical analysis. Mafuwane (2011:77) asserts that, in explaining a researcher's paradigmatic viewpoint, the link between ontological and epistemological standpoints, the research questions, and the conceptual framework (theoretical basic), the research methodology becomes noticeable.

4.3 Ontology and epistemology

A researcher's ontological assumptions concern the nature of what is real, which is probed into by means of the researcher's attempts to find answers to issues such as the following: what the nature of the world is; social issues; whether a real situation (reality) is lawful; the existence of natural social order; whether actuality is constant or always revolving and whether it is a whole or more than one; and whether reality can actually be produced can be produced by those who are part of a research team (Creswell 2007:15).

Fayolle, Kyro, and Uliyn (2005:136) posit that "looking at the concept of ontology and

epistemology, we can see that they are some kind of ‘rules of the game’ and we have different rules ... These rules are interconnected within each game. If we assume that knowledge is not one entity but many and it changes, it is reasonable to assume that we have different ways of studying it ...”

Based on the above assertion, Fayolle et al. (2005:137) and Guba (cited in Salma; retrieved from YouTube 2017) present the order in which knowledge can be studied and comprehended.

- In ontology the question is asked what reality is.
- Epistemology deals with how one knows what something is.
- In the methodology it is addressed how one should go about arriving at findings.

This is further demonstrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Paradigms and research

Source: Table adapted from various sources, including Crotty (n.d.) and Salma (retrieved from

Paradigm	Ontology What is reality?	Epistemology How can I know reality?	Theoretical perspectives Which approach do you use to know something?	Methodology How do you know about finding out?	Method What technique do you use to find out?
Positivism	There is a single reality or truth (more realist).	Reality can be measured, and hence, the focus is on reliable and valid tools to obtain that.	Positivism Post-positivism	Experimental research Survey research	Usually quantitative, but could include sampling, measurement, and scaling Statistical analysis Questionnaires Focus groups Interviews
Constructivism/interpretivism	There is no single reality or truth. Reality is created by individuals in groups (less realist).	Reality needs to be interpreted. It is used to discover the underlying meaning of events and activities.	Interpretivism (reality needs to be interpreted) Phenomenology Symbolic interaction Hermeneutics Critical enquiry Feminism	Ethnography-grounded theory Phenomenological research Heuristic enquiry Action research Discourse analysis Feminist standpoint research, etc.	Usually quantitative, but could include the following: Qualitative interviews Participant observation Non-participants Case studies Life history Narratives Theme identification, etc.
Pragmatism	Reality is constantly renegotiated, debated, and interpreted in light of its usefulness in new, unpredictable situations.	The best method is one that solves problems. Finding out is the means; change is the underlying aim.	Deweyan pragmatism Research through design	Mixed-methods research Design-based research Action research	A combination of any of the above and more, such as data mining expert review, usability testing, physical prototypes, etc.
Subjectivism	Reality is what we perceive to be real.	All knowledge is purely a matter of perspective.	Post-modernism Structuralism Post-structuralism	Discourse theory Archaeology Genealogy Deconstruction, etc.	Autoethnography Semiotics Literary analysis Pastiche Intersexuality, etc.
Critical realism	Realities are socially constructed entities that are under constant internal influence.	Reality and knowledge are both socially constructed and influenced by power relations from within society.	Marxism Queer theory Feminism	Critical discourse analysis Critical ethnography Action research Ideology critique	Ideological review Civil actions Open-ended interviews Focus groups Open-ended questionnaires Open-ended observations Journals

YouTube Nov. 2017)

The ontological and epistemological views of the social constructivism theory with regard to qualitative research has its own perspective. According to Cohen and Morrison (2018:288) ontology of qualitative research focuses on three main areas.

- Qualitative research sees people as anticipatory, and capable of making their own meaning or actively constructing meaning of situations in a real setting and act in it through such interpretation. (The constructivist or constructionist view.)

- Meaning used by participants to decode situations are culture and context based, and there are multiple realities. There is no specific truths in giving meaning to a situation. History and biography intersect and humans create their own future but not necessarily under their control or choice.

- There are multiple holistic realities, constructed by individuals, situations, objects and events are unique and have meaning conferred upon them instead of having their own intrinsic meaning. Knower and known are interactive and inseparable.

Epistemologically, social constructivists believe that meaning are subjective and knowledge is constructed based on experience and interaction among people. As a rule, individual learning occurs when learners make sense from an environment based on the foundational understanding they already have from experience or background knowledge (Bada & Olusegun, 2015:66-70). By implication, individuals construct and organise knowledge in their minds to handle new ideas and that the most essential thing that helps them to organise new ideas in their mind is their environment or natural situation and the culture surrounding them. This information, in turn, enables individuals to acquire knowledge or new ideas. Bertram and Christiansen (2016:26) assert that multiple interpretations are valid and that the result are constructed and not found.

From this theoretical viewpoint, this study focused on the constructivist paradigm. Constructivism recognises that persons' prior knowledge shape their interpretation. Based on this, they position

themselves in a study to acknowledge how their personal and cultural setting and historical experience shape their interpretation of reality (Creswell 2014: 8). Based on this fact, the researcher is of the opinion that teachers use their knowledge and experience in order to describe or explain how learners with reading and reading comprehension problems should be supported in Primary 4 rural schools. They might have diverse views on which methods and strategies to use when supporting learners with reading problems.

In this study various realities in Primary 4 classes with regard to the learners and the teachers will be considered. The researcher will have to construct the various realities when reading is taught and when the teachers use different reading methods in order to understand the meaning of the activities. This will necessitate the use of constructivism as a paradigm in the study. Qualitative research to be used to collect data in this study rests on social constructivism. In research, the words “social constructivism”, “constructivist interpretivism”, and “interpretivism” are similar and often used interchangeably or in exactly the same way. The social constructivist view asserts that learning takes place when an individual incorporates new knowledge into prior knowledge; this incorporation can occur when, for instance, the learner is actively involved in the learning process. In this study not only the learners will be actively involved in the learning process but also the teachers as they will learn and apply two reading methods namely the read-aloud approach and explicit direct instruction.

Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018:73) opine that Vygotsky’s social constructivism theory “provides educators or teachers with an alternate approach to knowledge construction”. Therefore, the best way for teachers to integrate new knowledge with prior knowledge is through active learning. In the same light, Donald, Lazaru, and Lolwana (2011:200) contend that, from the constructivist perspective, what humans know is not passive, but is actually acquired in a continuous process.

Both approaches aim to explain the world of human experience (Mackenzie & Knipe 2006:195). This implies that reality is socially constructed. Babones (2015:1) posits that the interpretative approach in quantitative research statistics is used to give clarity to unobservable data produced by processes that are formed by observed data. The major idea or belief of the interpretative approach is the triangulation of research findings by analysing data from combined sources. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2010:112) define triangulation as the application of multiple methods in gathering data about a specific phenomenon. According to Hartney (2011:85), triangulation is a method of enhancing the validity and reliability of a study. Hartney (2011:85) states that the application of triangulation fortifies research findings by using a mixed-methods approach. This implies the use of multiple sources of data. Neuman (2011:72) points out that the interpretative approach in qualitative research views social activities in their real or natural environment by means of straight and elaborate observation in order to give a clear picture of how individuals understand and construct meaning in their social settings.

The above assertions are in line with the study the researcher carried out. This is because questions were designed to collect data regarding the actions and attitudes of learners by interviewing teachers. This method enabled the researcher to collect data, to analyse the data, and to interpret the research findings. According to Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner 2007:115), this method usually enables the researcher to make findings and test hypotheses while depending on sets of appropriate clarifications to understand research findings. Creswell, Klassen, Clark, and Smith (2011:n.d.) hold that issues relating to research are more or less complicated in most cases, thus demanding that data be gathered from several aspects. As a result, the researcher needed to apply a combination of approaches in order to enhance her understanding of the issues she wanted to investigate.

The integration of the qualitative and quantitative approaches in her research helped the researcher to step up the quality of the research and reduced the frailness of either a qualitative or a quantitative approach in collecting data. The relevance of the combination of approaches in this study was to authenticate the findings in order for the results obtained to be used to enhance the perception achieved by the second method (Creswell, Klassen, Clark & Smith 2011:n.d.; Curry, Nembhard & Bradley 2009:144).

4.4 Paradigm used in the study

All research paradigms use one of the philosophical and theoretical assumptions of positivism, interpretivism or social constructivism, postmodernism or pragmatism. In conducting a research study, a theoretical framework or paradigm is essential because no research can be conducted in a theoretical vacuum. A theoretical framework is different from a theory, as it is regarded as a paradigm (Adom, Hussien & Agyem 2018:438) and affects the manner in which knowledge is measured and clarified. This study will use social constructivism as a theoretical paradigm (MacBlain, 2018:59). The social constructivist theoretical framework is also called an interpretive framework by many scholars, such as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Mateus (2010) (Creswell, 2013:20–21). A theoretical framework enables the dialogue between the literature review and the research conducted in the study (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2009:26). A theoretical framework directs a distinct conceptual framework, which can be explained as “an alignment of the key concepts of the study” (Henning et al., 2009:20).

Vygotsky (1978:5) first described social constructivism. He views reading not only as a process of decoding, but also as a social interaction in real-life situations. Vygotsky’s theory claims that learning occurs through dialogue. At the beginning, this dialogue takes place between the teacher and learner and then between learners or even between the text and reader (Ardiansyah & Ujihanti

2018:74). However, the learner makes sense of what is said (written) through internal or instrumental dialogue as already described by Vygotsky in 1978 (Vygotsky, 1978).

Powell and Kalina (2009:241) state that, in social constructivism, ideas are constructed through interaction with teachers and other students. From the social constructivist viewpoint, learning occurs when individuals integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge. The integration of new knowledge with existing knowledge can only occur when a learner is actively engaged in the learning process. Social constructivism focuses primarily on social interactions.

Research conducted in a social constructivist paradigm relies on participants' views, perceptions and experiences of a situation such as a school environment (Creswell, 2013:24),

For Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018:73), a social constructivist approach is aligned with the building of knowledge to place learners in conditions under the supervision and direction or guidance of their teachers. This theory is based on the view that learners build knowledge through dialogue and on the premise that knowledge is actually constructed by learners who are actively engaged in the learning process as well as on their ability to prove what is learnt. Singh and Rajput (2013:15) assert that learners take part in the teaching and learning process and accept responsibility for their learning, providing their own interpretation in their specific situations. Thus, social constructivism provides learners with opportunities for group learning.

McLeod (2019:4) reports that "social constructivism is a collaborative process and knowledge develops from individuals' interaction with their culture and society". Thus, learning is interactive in the sense that learners must play an active role in reconstructing knowledge in social settings as well as in the sense that they must take an active part in reconstructing ideas within their own minds.

For Snowman, McCown, and Biehler (2009:24) and Akpan and Beard (2016:394), in a social

constructivist classroom and learning environment, the teacher's responsibility is to prompt and facilitate discussion and further support learners by using modelling, scaffolding, and coaching (Fresh 2008:43; Mokotedi 2012:24). Scaffolding is an effective instructional teaching technique. Pinantoan (2013:2) describes scaffolding as a process that will enable a beginner to resolve difficulties and help him or her to perform well. Social constructivism and the scaffolding technique support learners' active participation or involvement in learning activities and reading and can aid learners' understanding of concepts. The theory encourages the learning process through modelling, scaffolding, and coaching and, thus, focuses on child-centred learning. This concept is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) theory that guided interaction with a more capable peer can assist children to develop at a higher level of cognitive operation.

In order to help learners to perform tasks, teachers need to give support that will make it possible for learners to do well at a new level. The read-aloud programme can be linked to, or can be rooted in, Vygotsky's learning theory of social constructivism, as this theory emphasises that children learn because they interact with others – teachers, peers, and parents (Tracy & Morrow 2006:108). In the researcher's opinion, the read-aloud programme embodies Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism through the interactive conversations that occur during read-aloud sessions.

As a teacher and for the purpose of this research, the researcher felt that social constructivism best suited her views in this study. Both the read-aloud intervention strategy and explicit direct instruction (EDI) require interaction between the teacher and the learners in a social context. Therefore, theoretically speaking, read-aloud is aligned with the Vygotskian view that social interaction is an integral part of learning (Powel & Kalina, 2009:243). According to Vygotsky (1978), human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into having intellectual abilities such as those the people around them have. In this view, skills and

understanding are appropriated through guided participation in cultural activities. As previously mentioned, the read-aloud programme, which is an intervention strategy to improve learners' reading abilities, is interactive in nature; it also includes scaffolding in order to support learners to read with comprehension.

Gromley and Ruhl (2005:310) regard the read-aloud programme as being aligned with social constructionist views because teachers assist learners to scaffold their vocabulary knowledge before, during, and after reading. Learners learn from their teachers, their peers, and the text, as they are not only able to listen to the story, but they also actively participate in the learning sessions by asking questions and by providing answers to questions asked.

Explicit direct instruction agrees with constructivist teaching in the sense that it allows learners to build their own understanding with the guidance of the teacher instead of it being transmitted by the teacher. It creates opportunities for learners to apply their own prior knowledge in building meaning that makes sense to them. The learning activity in social constructivist lessons is based on explicit explanations and feedback to questions, which is also in alignment with EDI principles. (See Section 5.22.2) The teacher assists learners to build knowledge by means of thorough interactions or discussions. In social constructivist lessons, learners are faced with questions, which are set out as the focal point for the lessons (Lucks 2015:4).

4.5 Research approach

4.5.1 A qualitative case study approach using an intervention programme

As this study focused on the effect of an intervention programme on the reading comprehension of primary school learners in Primary 4 in rural Nigeria, it is best suited for a qualitative case study approach using an intervention programme. A case study is a powerful method that can help a researcher to reach practical and theoretical outcomes. It is an empirical investigation of a

phenomenon in a real-life situation. In a case study various sources of evidence and information are used and triangulation is often included (Ebneyamini & Moghadam 2018:2). A qualitative case study helps to understand an occurrence within a specific context using various sources. The phenomenon is thus observed using a variety of lenses all of which contribute to an understanding of the phenomenon (Rachid, Rachid, Warraich, Sabir & Waseem 2019:5).

The context of this study was two primary schools in rural Nigeria and specifically the classrooms of Grade 4 learners when reading was taught. Various methods were used to gather information about the reading lessons and the way reading was taught. In an attempt to understand a phenomenon like the teaching of reading in the Grade 4 classes, the researcher thus used various sources. This part of the study necessitated qualitative research.

For the intervention part of the study, it was necessary to use quantitative research. The intervention part of the study consisted of a reading pre-test before the intervention started. Four groups of learners were selected to take part in a reading intervention programme which consisted of the read-aloud programme and the explicit direct instruction reading programme. Afterwards a post-test was conducted with the learners who took part in the intervention programme. This means that both quantitative research and qualitative research was conducted in this study.

4.6 Quantitative and qualitative research approaches

4.6.1 Introduction

As indicated, the purpose of this study was to examine the reading comprehension abilities and possible reading problems of Primary 4 learners in Nigeria and how they could be supported through a reading intervention programme such as the read-aloud intervention programme or explicit direct instruction (EDI) in reading lessons. The researcher took the characteristics of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches into consideration while conducting the study, which

took place in a real or natural setting at the selected schools. This setting was necessary, as issues such as the teaching of reading and learners' reading abilities required in-depth investigation in a natural or real setting and over a wider range in order to understand them in detail (Eyisi 2016:93). The researcher conducted a pre-test and a post-test, as well as face-to-face interviews, with the subjects or participants. These methods enabled her to gain first-hand information regarding their views about the issue studied, namely, the effect of an interventional reading strategy such as the read-aloud programme or the EDI programme in two primary schools in rural Nigeria. The Primary 4 learners who were the research subjects were also observed during the read-aloud programme. In order to probe this topic, the researcher conducted this research as a case study using both a qualitative and a quantitative approach for the collection of data. The quantitative data formed part of the intervention programme and helped to find out whether the reading intervention programmes were successful.

Creswell (2013:56) claims that "case studies are method of investigation which enables a researcher to probe or examine an issue, event, program or one or more individuals". The researcher had identified a need to probe "how" Primary 4 level learners were taught reading in order to understand "why" some were at risk for reading problems or were reading below their age level. Descriptive statistics were used to provide information and to organise observations in the study. This was used to determine the success of the intervention programme. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:163) indicate that "descriptive statistics transform a set of numbers or observation into indices that describe or characterize the data".

Eyisi (2016:94) contends that research on quantitative approaches reveals the overall usefulness of a teaching strategy, while studies on qualitative approaches give a detailed explanation of the methods towards a professional practice. The aim of quantitative research is to predict, explain,

and generalise the findings of research, while the aim of qualitative research is to contextualise, interpret, and understand the perspectives of the researchers.

4.6.2 Quantitative research approach

A quantitative approach is concerned with observational measures and the numerical analysis of data by using polls, questionnaires, and surveys and by manipulating already existing statistical data by applying computational techniques. Onwuegbuzie and Hitchcock (2015:277) see a quantitative research approach as an organised enquiry into a social phenomenon, which emphasises testing a theory that consists of variables, measured with numbers and analysed statistically in order to discover whether predictive generalisation of the theory is authentic. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:19) point out that data is gathered and analysed statistically in a quantitative approach.

Mafuwane (2011:73) comments that quantitative research is targeted at “trying out theories, variables and outcomes establishing truths, and exhibiting the link amid or between”. According to Apuke (2017:40) quantitative research is the collection of data in order to provide information that can be quantified and subjected to statistical treatment so that it can aid or refute alternative knowledge claims. He further reports that quantitative research begins with a problem statement, generating research questions, reviewing related literature and a quantitative analysis of data.

The main aim of a researcher in a quantitative study is to discover the connection between one thing (an independent variable) and another (referred to as a dependent variable) within a group or a population. A quantitative approach or design can be classified as either descriptive, where subjects are usually measured just once, or experimental, which involves measuring subjects before and after a given treatment (Robert 2016:1). As the aim of quantitative research is to predict, explain, and the findings of the research, it starts with hypotheses and theories, using formal

instruments such as questionnaires. It also breaks down the data into numerical indices.

With its emphasis on objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data, quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalising the data across groups of people or using it to explain a particular phenomenon (Babbie, 2010:76).

In a quantitative study, the researcher is seen as an alien to the main research, and the findings are required to be replicable, regardless of who is involved in the study. A quantitative approach was used because the current research involved the exploration of a problem (Clark & Creswell 2011:65).

In this study, the researcher's aim was to obtain data from the results of testing classroom action research. The data was collected through administering a pre-test and a post-test at two primary schools. This was done to see whether the intervention programme was successful. All the learners in Primary 4 classrooms in the schools where the research was conducted took part in the pre-tests, whereas the post-tests were conducted with the four groups of learners in the actual research project. Taking the results of the pre-test into consideration, two groups of learners in each of the two schools were included in the study. There were, thus, two experimental groups and two control groups of learners in the research. The experimental groups received reading lessons in the read-aloud programme, while the control groups received additional reading support in the form of explicit direct instruction. The four groups of learners took part in the reading intervention programmes.

4.6.2.1 Characteristics of a quantitative research approach

Robert (cited in Trefryn n.d.) identifies the various characteristics of quantitative research. The data is usually gathered by applying research instruments. The findings are based on a large sample size that represents the population. The research can usually be repeated because of its high reliability.

The researcher should design well-defined questions which are used to search for objective answers. Every section of the research is carefully designed before data is collected. Data consisting of numbers and statistics are usually presented in, tables, charts, figures, or non-textual forms. Research works can be used to extend or generalise ideas to a large extent. Quantitative researchers make use of questionnaires to gather numerical data.

See the table below for a further discussion of the characteristics of a quantitative approach.

Table 4.2: Characteristics of a quantitative approach to research

Quantitative approach
<p>Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective reality of social facts • Primacy of method • Variables as identifiable and relationships as measurable • Etic (outsider’s point of view)
<p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalisability • Prediction • Causal explanations
<p>Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypotheses and theories as starting point • Manipulation and control • Use of formal instruments • Experimentation • Deduction • Component analysis • Consensus seeking, the norms • Reduction of data to numerical indices • Abstract language in write-up
<p>Researcher role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detachment and impartiality • Objective portrayal

Source: Adapted from Glesene and Peshkin (1992)

4.6.3 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is a field of constructivist research (McMillan & Schumacher 2014:344). According to Lichtman (2010:12) “qualitative research attempts to provide a thorough understanding of the human experience, through using data collection approach which gives room for flexibility”. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:10) define qualitative research as an activity sited in a particular place that situates the researcher or observer in that world. It entails an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. By implication, qualitative investigators examine issues in their real situations, giving and explaining phenomena in terms of the interpretation participants bring to them. A qualitative research approach is able to reveal information that is specific to a particular situation. It gives the researcher the opportunity to investigate a situation holistically, taking a number of variables into consideration (Lichtman 2010:12). This is aligned with the view held by Asper and Corte (2019:142), who assert that qualitative research occurs in natural situations attempting to make sense of or interpret events in terms of the meaning individual bring to them. This feature makes it an appropriate approach or procedure to apply in an educational context where respondents or participants can be observed in their natural environment and where their behaviour will not be affected by the experience. In this study, the researcher was a non-participant observer in the classrooms.

Qualitative research is a means of understanding and investigating the meaning that an individual or groups of people attach to a social or human problem (Creswell 2014:4). The research discussed in this study used qualitative research as one of the guiding approaches, as the researcher did fieldwork in two schools in order to collect rich data from participants, with the aim of obtaining a clear understanding of how Primary 4 teachers attended to the reading and reading comprehension problems of at-risk Primary 4 learners and the effect the read-aloud programme and the EDI programme could have on their reading and reading comprehension abilities.

4.6.3.1 Characteristics of qualitative research

Table 4.3: Characteristics of a qualitative approach to research

Qualitative approach
<p style="text-align: center;">Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality as socially constructed • Primacy of subject matter • Variables as complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure • Emic (insider’s point of view of reality). This is one of the principal concepts guiding qualitative research. An emic perspective or point of view is fundamental to understanding how people perceive the world around them.
<p style="text-align: center;">Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualisation • Interpretation • Understanding of participants’ perspectives
<p style="text-align: center;">Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypotheses and ground theory as possible end point • Emergence and portrayal of phenomenon • Researcher as instrument • Naturalistic • Inductive • Search for patterns • Seeking pluralism, complexity • Minor use of numerical indices • Descriptive write-up
<p style="text-align: center;">Researcher role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal involvement and impartiality • Empathic understanding

Source: Adapted from Glesne and Peshkin (1992:)

4.7 Research design

Bhandari (2020:1) posits that qualitative research includes the gathering and analysing of non – numerical data such as text, video or audio, in order to understand concepts, views, or experiences. He adds that it can be used to collect in-depth insights into a problem or to generate new ideas for research.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:29), a research design stipulates the overall plan of action for how the research is structured, what occurs among the subjects, and the method used in collecting data.

Corroborating this, Agbatogun (2013:131) claims that the essence of a research design is to provide a structure that will aid the researcher to give answers to articulated research questions or hypotheses in an exact and authentic manner. He adds that the choice of a research design is determined by the type and the stage of the information the researcher wants to acquire. All the definitions reveal that researchers will approach their studies applying certain beliefs about life and the society and a certain set of views that will direct their study (Delpont, Fouche and Schriuk 2011:298). This study focused on understanding actual human activities; hence, the researcher interviewed Primary 4 teachers, as well as observed Primary 4 learners' having reading problems and how learners responded to the teachers' methods and strategies so as to explore how they apply their knowledge and experiences to construct meaning of reading support to learners. Taking this into consideration, the social constructivist paradigm was adopted by the researcher as a means for interpreting the issue under study.

4.8 Population and sampling

4.8.1 Population

A population can be defined as a considerable range of individuals from whom a researcher intends to generalise the test or sample result, while a sample is a body of elements taken from a sizable population (Johnson & Christensen 2011:218). Best and Khan (cited in Manson 2012:84) are of the opinion that any number of people who possess common features with regard to the same interest to the research can be considered a population.

The population of this study were learners at Primary 4 level ranging from nine to 11 years old in rural primary schools in the Ovia North-East local government area of Edo State in Nigeria as well as their teachers. Edo State was chosen for this research for the sake of convenience, as it is the researcher's home state. Thus, activities with regard to the research in each location could be easily co-ordinated and supervised.

4.8.2 Sample

Mertens (2010:10) sees sampling as a procedure that involves choosing units from a target group in order to study them and to generalise the conclusions back to the group from which they were selected. Leedy and Ormrod (2019:152) opine that a sample is possibly a subset chosen for an immediate observation, while Manson (2012:84) points out that quantitative research findings are acquired from samples and are then made general to the population.

Purposeful sampling was used by the researcher to choose Primary 4 teachers as respondents because the purpose was to obtain rich information from them on their perspectives about the problem to be investigated in the study. Purposeful sampling is a procedure that includes whomever can give adequate information required with regard to the purpose of the study. Sampling is determined by the researcher's decision on who can provide rich information. As mentioned before, in this study, Primary 4 teachers were selected from two separate rural schools chosen for the study in the Ovia North-East local government area, Edo State, Nigeria. These teachers acted as participants in completing a questionnaire on reading. (See Appendix J). These four teachers were also interviewed.

The researcher also used six classroom teachers, from whom two from two different schools were selected to take part in the pilot study, while the other four teachers from the two selected schools were used for the main study. The respondents, all Primary 4 teachers, were chosen based on their teaching experience, information richness, and how skilful they were in using their teaching experience in the teaching of reading comprehension. It was, furthermore, necessary to ensure that the four Primary 4 teachers who would be participants during the practical application of the read-aloud programme and the EDI programme in the classrooms would also be willing to take part in the research.

The sample of learners in this study were all learners from the two selected rural schools in Ovia North-East local government area, Edo State, Nigeria. As previously stated, the researcher's decision to do research with Primary 4 learners stemmed from the fact that Primary 4 is very important in the Nigerian educational programme because it is the level at which reading to learn in all school subject areas begins and, in addition, reading in English becomes compulsory at this stage. Reading difficulty at this level can, thus, hamper the learner's educational progress.

4.8.3 Pilot study

Agbatogun (2013:139) defines a pilot study as an attainable study performed by researchers to determine the logistics of the research and also to gather adequate information required to improve the effectiveness of the main experiment. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2011:331) believe that involvement in a pilot study is important before the actual interviews can be administered, as a decision has to be made whether the appropriate data can be obtained from the population. In most cases, it is necessary to carry out a pilot study on research instruments to ascertain any feasible errors. This will help to perfect the intended design, research instruments, and the methodology (Agbatogun 2013:139). Furthermore, pilot studies are done to identify difficulties the researcher is likely to come across that may influence the research procedure (Thabane, Ma, Chu, Cheng, Ismaila, Rois & Goldsmith, 2010:6). In qualitative research, a pilot study is conventionally irregular, and a handful of the respondents who have similar features to those in the main study can be asked to participate in the investigation.

In this research, before data collection, the researcher did a pilot study on the research questions used in the questionnaire with two experienced Primary 4 teachers who had knowledge regarding Primary 4 and the teaching of reading. The purpose was to ascertain whether the teachers understood the questions in the questionnaire in order to prepare the researcher for what to expect

from the actual participants and to know whether the same questions could be used or whether they had to be improved to make them clearer. The reading pre-test was also given to Primary 4 learners at this school to determine their reading comprehension level and to ascertain whether the pre-test could be used in the actual testing situation. In addition, the researcher did a few sessions of classroom observation to acquaint herself with the reading methods that teachers used in Primary 4 classrooms in the region and to observe the general discipline in the classrooms.

The researcher purposefully chose the participants for the pilot study from another school to ensure that they had the same training as the teachers who would form part of the study. The learners who were part of the pilot study were all Primary 4 learners, as this helped the researcher to make certain that the respondents in the actual research would understand the questions posed in the questionnaires and that the reading pre-test actually tested what it was supposed to test.

4.8.4 Research site

Based on the reason for, and goal of, this study, the location that could offer the necessary information was the Ovia North-East local government area in Nigeria where the chosen schools are sited. The two primary schools chosen are located in rural settings, and the languages used in the schools are English and Edo, the local indigenous language. This meant that there was a likelihood that the researcher could interact or converse with the respondents in a language they would all understand. Respondents would be able to understand the questions that the researcher posed, and the researcher could use the local language if something were to not be clear in English. As a matter of procedure, the research site was chosen based on accessibility in terms of transport and the schools being government-aided primary schools implementing Universal Basic Education, hence working towards the eradication of illiteracy at the primary level.

4.9 General data collection procedure

Data collection is a tool by means of which researchers gather information that will provide answers to questions raised in a particular study and provide a concrete defence for the conclusions and recommendations with regard to the final results of the investigation (Mertens 2012:806).

In this study, the primary data were gathered from the data sources through the tools or research instruments discussed earlier. All the instruments were used for triangulation purposes, triangulation usually being a design or methods for enhancing the validity and reliability of an investigation or evaluation of results (Hartney 2011:63). Hartney (2011:63) supports the utilisation of triangulation, as it makes a study in which methods are combined stronger.

The quantitative and qualitative data in this research were collected in two successive phases. The general procedure was as follows: the researcher conducted an achievement or performance test consisting of a pre-test and a post-test with all the Primary 4 learners in their classrooms. The pre-test was administered before the intervention programme with the target groups, and the post-test was carried out with the same Primary 4 learners after the read-aloud intervention programme and the EDI programme had been offered to the groups of learners. Quantitative data was also collected through the administration of structured structural questionnaires that were completed by all the teachers of the Primary 4 learners.

In addition, the researcher utilised classroom observation and face-to-face interviews with teachers using a voice or audio recorder, which enabled her to transcribe the information. A semi-structured interview schedule was used, since semi-structured interviews would allow the researcher as interviewer to gain an in-depth understanding by providing her with the opportunity to probe and expand the responses of the interviewees (Rubin & Rubin 2012:50). (See Annexure H for the interview schedule.)

Before commencing with the study, the researcher had hoped that the results of the sample chosen to take part in the quantitative survey could be useful to be used in other schools in the chosen Nigerian local government area and would either confirm or refute whether the read-aloud intervention strategy or the EDI programme could be a programme that would improve the reading comprehension of Primary 4 rural learners and, especially, the reading abilities of Primary 4 learners who had reading problems.

The data collected through the different procedures were presented separately for analysis, and the findings were corroborated to substantiate the answer to the research question, showing that a read-aloud intervention strategy could improve the reading comprehension ability of at-risk Primary 4 learners in a rural area in Nigeria.

4.10 Methodology

4.10.1 Quantitative and qualitative research

The researcher employed the use of more than one method of data collection, entailing a combination of the quantitative and qualitative research methods. The quantitative data was collected as part of the intervention programme. For this a pre-test and a post-test were conducted and the results were statistically interpreted. For the qualitative research, data were collected by means of questionnaires, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and the researcher's personal classroom observation during reading lessons.

4.10.2 The qualitative research

For the collection of qualitative data questionnaires, interviews and observation were used.

According to Manson (2012:95), a questionnaire is “an instrument comprising of a series of questions that are filled in by respondents themselves”. It is usually meant to collect information with regard to facts, belief, opinions, views and intentions”. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:195)

indicate that “questionnaires can use statement or questions, but in all cases, the subject is responding to something written for specific purposes”.

Questionnaires can either be structured according to a closed-ended format, which requires chosen responses, or a semi-structured or open form, which permits the respondent to provide responses he or she likes (Manson 2012:80). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) purport that there is a wide range of questionnaires: the greater the size of the sample, the more structured, closed, and numerical the questionnaire is; the smaller the sample size, the less structured, more open, and more word-based the questionnaire is likely to be (See Annexure H).

Questionnaires prepared by the researcher and based on a literature review were used as a tool to obtain qualitative data with regard to the reading problems of at-risk Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria. The purpose of the questionnaires was to gather the necessary information from a population consisting of Grade 4 teachers with the intention of acquiring a wide view of the effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of learners. Questionnaires were administered to the two Primary 4 teachers who participated in the pilot study, the Primary 4 teachers who acted as participants in the research project, the other Primary 4 teachers in the two schools where the research was conducted, and teachers in other schools in this rural area who taught Primary 4 to 6 English Language as a subject.

With regard to interviews, Berger (2015:222) posits that an interview is “the conversation between a researcher and an informant”. The researcher had such interactions with the Primary 4 teachers in the two schools that were studied to collect the information needed for the study. An interview is one of the major means of collecting data in research, as it evokes an individual’s experiences, meanings, definitions of events, and interpretation of reality (Manson 2012:87). Greeff (2015:351) points out that interviews are used by researchers with the aim of getting a detailed picture or

clarification of participants' views or perceptions on a particular phenomenon and to allow both participants and researcher to be more flexible. In order to allow this to happen, the researcher therefore prepared her interview questions in advance. Interviews can be used to provide a researcher with an opinion regarding the typical behaviour exhibited within a society.

Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were considered necessary due to the fact that the researcher was interested in understanding the experience of Primary 4 teachers regarding the reading comprehension problems of at-risk Primary 4 readers. The interviews were done on a one-on-one basis and were conducted with the respondents after normal school contact hours in order not to disrupt teaching hours. The interviews were approximately 45 minutes. (See Annexure G for the interview schedule.)

Classroom observation was also used as part of the qualitative research. Classroom observation provides the researcher with an opportunity to see and hear what normally takes place at the research site. Marshall and Rossman (2011:139) describe observation as an orderly observing and recording of happenings and objects in real settings. "This phenomenon is a naturally occurring situation over an extended time, coupled with writing extensive field notes to describe what happened" (McMillan & Schumacher 2014:376).

In this study, the researcher observed the participants and their behaviour in their normal classroom setting in order to gain an understanding of the way reading is taught in the Grade 4 classrooms and the learners' reading abilities. Observation was chosen, as it would enable the researcher to obtain first-hand information on the issue being studied. Her aim was to observe how the learners could possibly react to teaching and learning with regard to the read-aloud programme and the use of explicit direct instruction as additional reading support, as well as the teachers' methods of teaching reading.

There are two types of observation: participatory and non-participatory observation (Leedy & Ormrod 2019:154). Participatory observation is concerned with studying natural situations and daily events in a certain environment or locality, while non-participatory observation provides the opportunity for the researcher to see the subject from a distance without communicating with the participants. For the purpose of this study, non-participant observation was chosen because the researcher would not be involved in the classroom group activities, but would be a passive observer watching the events and listening to the activities in order to gather data from the observation without influencing either the teachers or the learners.

4.10.3 The quantitative research: using a reading tests

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:37) indicate that a reading test is structured to examine the level of knowledge an individual possesses in a specific area. The term “test” is commonly used to explain a systematic process for obtaining a sample of learners’ behaviour (Hartney 2011:88). McMillan and Schumacher (2014:37) also opine that a formalised test gives coherent procedures for administration and scoring. Similar questions are asked whenever a test is administered, with some instructions given that state the way the test should be administered.

In schools, performance tests are applied to classify learners into appropriate reading levels and reading skills as well as to examine the efficiency of the teachers when teaching reading (Gay et al., 2009). The essence of any reading test is to know the kind of knowledge the learners possess.

As part of the quantitative research a pre-test and a post-test for reading were used in this research.

The pre-test was designed by the Basic Education Department in the Edo State Ministry of Education. Administration of the test was planned for the beginning of the second term. At this level, learners with general reading problems and also reading in English ought to have been identified by their teachers. If possible, they would have been sent to a remedial or an intervention

programme for an adequate learning support programme.

Using the results of the pre-test four groups of learners (two from each of the two selected schools) were chosen to receive the reading intervention programmes. One group from each of the two schools (School A and school B) received additional reading lessons during which time the read-aloud intervention programme was used and one group from each of the two schools (School A and school B) received additional reading lessons during which time the explicit direct instruction was used. The selection of experimental and the control groups of learners were based on the entire reading skills levels of all the learners which were obtained from the results of the pre-test. This is to make sure that the entire spectrum of the learners' reading skills was included in the study. The groups of learners received instruction in either the read-aloud programme or in explicit direct instruction. A post-test was also administered to the four selected groups of learners after six weeks of using the same instrument as used for the pre-test. The post-test scores were then compared with the pre-test scores with the assistance of a statistician.

4.10.4 Training of teachers to use a specific reading strategy

As part of the intervention programme, Grade 4 teachers had to be trained to understand and apply the read-aloud strategy and explicit direct instruction when teaching reading. The researcher trained the four selected Grade 4 teacher participants on how they could implement explicit direct instruction and the read-aloud strategy effectively. All the Primary 4 learners in the two schools received good reading lessons during normal school hours. EDI and read-aloud were not offered to all the learners, only to the four groups that formed part of the research. The researcher's plan was for the reading activities to be done with four different groups of learners to find out whether the four groups of selected Primary 4 learners' reading and reading comprehension ability would improve with the use of the read-aloud strategy or the EDI programme.

The training of the four teacher participants lasted four days, with an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. After that, the teachers were given the opportunity to practise what they had learnt during EDI and read-aloud training for about 30 minutes. (See Sections 5.22.2 and 5.22.3 in Chapter 5 for a discussion of the training of the teachers to use the read-aloud strategy and the EDI strategy.)

4.11 Data analysis procedures

According to Manson (2012:91), data analysis entails scrutinising what the researcher has collected in surveys and forming opinions. It involves disclosing essential structures, obtaining essential variables, discovering any errors, and testing underlying assumptions. Somekh and Lewin (2012:20) contend that data analysis demands a design that assists the researcher to begin planning and thinking about how he or she will provide responses to the research questions for which data is being collected.

Based on the analysis strategy chosen, the researcher was ready to work through the data and gather information. In order to appraise the effectiveness of the study using a qualitative case study and an intervention programme, the qualitative data was analysed descriptively using an in-depth semi-structured interview guide for teachers and the researcher's personal classroom observation (which included keeping a reflexive journal) regarding classroom activities. A reflexive journal is a diary or "daybook" that is used daily for recording various types of information (Malakoff 2012:5). Malakoff (2012:5) sees it as useful in both methods because it provides information that can be reflected on during research at any point at any time. The reason it was used in this study was that it fitted in with the researcher's own beliefs and thoughts, as well as information regarding methods decided on, and it provided information on the chosen methods, instruments, and data analysis of the research. The analysis of the qualitative data helped to prove the degree of reading progress

made by at-risk readers.

The quantitative data were selected as part of the intervention programme. The quantitative data was presented and descriptively analysed through performance tests. A performance test involves determining learners' knowledge concerning mental activities by carefully watching how they perform and act, usually in a real situation (McMillan & Schumacher 2014:209). Three types of scores were presented in the quantitative research. The scores included scores showing all the primary learners' prior reading abilities. In each of the two schools, two groups of learners were then selected. One group constituted the experimental group and the other group the control group. The researcher selected the learners for the experimental and control groups, and only learners with below-average scores, average scores, and above-average scores were included in the four groups. The scores of the learners in the control groups and in the experimental groups were then presented in another table. After the two groups in the experimental groups had received the read-aloud strategy and the control groups had received the explicit direct instruction programme, a post-reading test was conducted, and a table was compiled to show the post-test results.

Statistics used was a t-test Wilcoxon and Analysis of variance (ANOVA). These were used to determine whether the two experimental groups or the two control groups showed the greatest improvement in their reading abilities and their reading comprehension.

The analysis of data, furthermore, included triangulation, since different methods of collecting data in the qualitative research, as well as quantitative research, were used in this study.

4.11.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is designed to address the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of a study (Gay, Mills & Airaian, 2006:403). Lincoln and Guba (n.d.) regard trustworthiness as the credibility of the research findings and the extent to which answers are

provided to a question such as the following: “To what extent can we have confidence in the outcome of the study?”

The approaches used by quantitative and qualitative researchers to prove trustworthiness vary in several ways. In order to demonstrate the trustworthiness of a study, the quantitative researcher uses internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. For qualitative research, the methods to obtain trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Malakoff 2012:1). In order to guarantee the trustworthiness of the data, the researcher conducted this study in an ethical and honest manner when collecting the data in an actual situation to obtain information about the real problems confronting Primary Level 4 learners and teachers when addressing reading and reading comprehension problems.

4.11.2 Validity

It is the duty of the researcher to guarantee the validity and reliability of this study. According to Mufuwane (2011:91), validity is the level at which explanations and generalisations possess common meanings between respondents and the researcher. Creswell (2008:649) states that validity is a process of ensuring that meaningful and justifiable inferences can be made from data obtained from the original text sample. “Validity is viewed as location-specific insight. It is determined based on the purpose population and environmental features in which the measurement occurs. It is seen as the truth about the findings of a study” (Manson 2012:92).

4.12 Ethical considerations

Babbie (2010:75) states the following: “Ethics are usually linked with morality which deals with right and wrong.” He emphasises that the concept of ethics refers to conformity with standards of a specific field or specialisation. Throughout this study, which consisted of observation, interviews, data collection from questionnaires, and administering of reading tests, confidentiality was

observed by the researcher. The fundamental rules for an ethical approach entail consideration of fairness, honesty, openness of intent, disclosure of the approach to be applied, and a regard for the integrity of the individual participant. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the individual privacy and willingness of the subjects or respondents to participate in the research process (Manson 2012:90).

Informed consent is the best way to obtain credible and reliable information from participants. In this study, participants were adequately assured that there would not be any form of force, intimidation, or physical or psychological mishandling. This was also included in the consent letters sent to the principals, teachers and parents and also discussed with the participants (See Annexures C, D and F) Ethical clearance was also obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education at the University of South Africa. (See Annexure A.)

4.12.1 Permission for the study

In order to carry out this research work, the researcher obtained permission from the State Ministry of Education through the Basic Education Primary Board, the various school principals, the Primary 4 classroom teachers, and the parents of the Primary 4 learners (See Annexures B, C, D, and E.) The learners also had to complete a consent form (See Annexure F and G.)

4.13 Limitations of the research

This study was conducted in two primary schools in the Ovia North-East local government area of Edo State, Nigeria. At the time of this study, the local government had 50 primary schools with Primary 4 level learners. This investigation was limited to only two schools and to only Primary 4 learners. It was hoped that the data to be collected and the findings made could be generalised to represent a larger group of learners and teachers.

4.14 Conclusion

The chapter provided a description of the methodological paradigm, research design, research site, population, and sampling procedure of this study. It made reference to the conceptual or theoretical framework and mentioned the research instruments that were applied to collect data. Qualitative and quantitative research and the use of triangulation were discussed. Data analysis procedures, trustworthiness, validity, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study were also included. The next chapter will deal with the presentation of the data and data analysis.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 contextualises the processes employed in this study and discusses the results of the research fieldwork. The researcher will also present the quantitative data of the study through the use of a descriptive statistics technique to summarise and arrange it. The quantitative data was obtained from the learners' reading tests. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 163), "statistics are means of organizing, analysing and understanding quantitative data".

With regard to the qualitative research, the findings from the teachers' questionnaires, the observations made of classroom activities, and the information acquired through semi-structured interviews with the major respondents will be discussed. Major patterns, themes, or trends will be presented. Results from the questionnaires will be set out according to the teachers' understanding and knowledge of the interventions to provide support to learners with reading problems. The researcher's classroom observation will also be included as part of the findings.

The research process consisted of a pilot study, a discussion of the two schools where the actual research was conducted, classroom observation of the four Primary 4 teachers who were the participants, interviews with the four Primary 4 teachers, questionnaires completed by a group of Primary 4 teachers, training in general reading methods for all the Primary 4 teachers at the two schools where the research was conducted, training in the read-aloud programme and explicit direct instruction for the four participating Primary 4 teachers, a reading pre-test and a reading post-test, and statistical analysis of the pre-test and the post-test.

At the schools where the pilot study was conducted, there was little discipline during the reading lessons, and the researcher also noticed that the teachers did not use any method to teach reading. The

researcher realised that the Primary 4 learners at these schools could benefit from any form of reading method used in the reading lessons and that it would, therefore, not be possible to find out whether the read-aloud programme would benefit the learners more than another method such as explicit direct instruction.

Thus, she decided that it was necessary to train all the Primary 4 teachers in general reading methods at the two schools selected for the actual research. This would mean that, during school hours and during normal reading lessons, the teachers would use reading methods to teach reading. Therefore, all the Primary 4 learners would be receiving good reading lessons during their normal school periods. The researcher was also satisfied that there was good discipline at the two selected schools during the reading lessons. This levelled the playing field for the research to be conducted, and it provided the opportunity to see whether the groups of learners who would receive either the read-aloud programme or explicit direct instruction additionally would obtain better scores in the reading post-test. The four teachers who eventually participated in the research were then trained to use the read-aloud programme and explicit direct instruction in the additional reading lessons offered to the selected groups of learners.

5.2 The pilot study

In qualitative and quantitative research, a pilot study has to be conducted, and the participants should have the same features as those in the actual investigation. The purpose is to discover certain tendencies or trends and also to decide whether the relevant data can be acquired from participants (De Vos et al 2011:394). If there is any ambiguity with regard to the questions that will be used, the questions should be changed and adapted to make sure that the participants clearly understand what is being asked.

A pilot study was conducted in this study in order to test the reliability of the proposed instruments, as well as to gather information that would be useful in enhancing the quality of the instruments, and to make sure that the questions to be used in the research project were clear to the participants.

Two different primary schools in the Ovia North-East local government area in rural Nigeria were used for the pilot study. Two Primary 4 English teachers, one from each of the schools, were selected for the pilot study, and neither the teachers nor the schools in the pilot study were used for the main study.

The researcher visited the pilot schools in the first week of October 2018, and arrangements were made for the instruments to be pilot-tested during lessons on a convenient date. On the dates fixed, the researcher went to the schools to determine the reliability of the intended instruments to be used (only in the actual research), which were interviews, questionnaires, and a reading comprehension test. The pre-test was administered to all the Primary 4 learners at the pilot schools. The pilot schools were identified as school Y and school Z, while the teachers were named ET1 and ET2.

5.2.1 School Y

Teacher ET1 was a female teacher with 17 years of teaching experience. She had a teaching qualification as a basic teacher. She held a National Certificate in Education (NCE) and had taught Primary 4 for 10 years and various other levels and subjects for seven years. The teacher was, thus, in a position to provide feedback on how suitable and clear the questions to be used in the questionnaire and in the interview were.

5.2.2 Reading tests

A pre-test was conducted, and the scripts were marked; scores were kept by the researcher. Some learners performed well, and others were average, while the majority of the learners did poorly. The plan was to use the pre-test at a later stage in the actual research project. The researcher requested that the learners do the pre-test to see whether the pre-test was suitable and whether the test perhaps had to be changed or adapted. The test used by the researcher had been developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) for the Primary 4 curriculum and was, thus, supposed to be at a Primary 4 level. Due to the fact that it was a pilot study, not much could be done.

The researcher also administered the planned interview schedule and questionnaire to each participant at the selected schools.

5.2.3 Questionnaire

The researcher interviewed pilot teacher ET1 and discovered that three questions in the interview schedule were not clear to the participant. The questions that posed difficulty were questions 3, 4, and 13. The questions were as follows:

QUESTION 3. In your years of experience, how would you describe a Primary 4 learner?

QUESTION 4. Can you explain the stages of development of the learners in your class? Is it in line with the cognitive, physical, and emotional development expected from Primary 4 learners?

QUESTION 13. The National Policy on Education states that learners in Primary 4 are supposed to be independent readers who are able to read to learn their school subjects. What do you understand by this statement?

To overcome the problems related to understanding the questions mentioned above, the researcher rephrased them as follows:

QUESTION 3. In your years of teaching experience, how best can you describe learners in Primary 4 class?

QUESTION 4. What kind of transformation do you usually observe among learners in Primary 4 with regard to the changes in their physical, mental and emotional growth?

QUESTION 13. The National Policy on Education states that learners in Primary 4 are supposed to be learners who can read to learn across subject areas without being assisted. Does this happen in rural schools?

Pilot participant ET1 stated that the rephrased questions were clear to her, and she was able to provide relevant responses. The pilot participant also said that the questionnaire was understandable and clear to her.

5.2.4 School Z

Participant ET2 was a female teacher with 12 years of teaching experience. She had a teaching qualification to teach Primary 4. She held a Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) and was the head of the English department at her school. Her years of experience were important, as it was clear that she could provide the researcher with valuable information.

5.2.5 Reading tests

The same pre-test was administered to the learners at the end of the three days. The scripts were then collected and marked by the researcher. The scores that the learners obtained were kept by the researcher. It seemed as if a group of learners had experienced difficulty with some of the sections to be read and the questions, but nothing could be done about it, as the reading test had been designed by the NERDC.

5.2.6 Questionnaire

Interviews were done and questionnaires were administered after school hours. As was the case with participant ET1, participant ET2 could not answer questions 3, 4, and 13 in the interview schedule; hence, the questions were rephrased. The rephrased questions used during the interview at school Y were then used.

5.3 Data analysis during the actual research

The method of data analysis included putting together what the researcher had observed, read, or heard in order to decide what had been learnt and observed. Owan and Bassey (2019:1256) assert that the analysis process is an “intellectual struggle” with raw data gathered.

During the actual research, the process of data collection was carefully documented. The researcher tried to keep a record of relevant opinions and actions in the process of fieldwork as much as possible. Important decisions and practices during the data collection process involved the following: dates when

the researcher started the fieldwork, dates for the reading performance test, teachers' interviews, the administration of the questionnaires, and the teachers' training. Planned dates for observation in the classroom were adhered to strictly. Considerable detail of the observation during classroom activities and the semi-structured interviews was taken down in order to capture these procedures of data collection.

During the analysis part of the study, the fieldwork that had been done helped in the analysis and interpretation of both qualitative and quantitative data. According to Mouton (2012:108), data analysis includes "breaking up the data into manageable themes and patterns". The purpose of the analysis in this study was to have a clear understanding of the various parts of the data by examining the relationships between concepts or ideas arising from the research and to decide whether there was any pattern that could bring about or establish themes in the data.

The first step of analysis in this study was to put considerable data into a few workable units, which made organising the information easier and also made it possible for the researcher to make sense of the information collected. The first plan for arranging the data or information resulted from the research instruments. Various research instruments were used during the process of collecting qualitative data. These different research instruments, as well as the use of quantitative data meant that various sources were used. The researcher constructed the qualitative data based on the information taken from the observations, interviews, questionnaires, and reading tests, which made transcription easier. By using a constructivist approach, the Primary 4 teachers' experience of teaching reading to their learners or, as Mackenzie and Kanipe (2006:5) say, "the world of human experience" could be captured by the researcher.

At the end, the researcher also used triangulation to verify information obtained using one data collection instrument with the data from the other data collection instruments. Triangulation implies

applying more than one data collection approach in looking for information on the same topic (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2010:112); in other words, it is a process aimed at ensuring the validity of the study by applying the use of various methods to gather information on the same topic. It entails diverse types of sample and data collection methods.

Once the data had been collected, it was prepared for transcription. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:33), coding or organising data is “done by identifying segments of text that is understandable by itself and contains one idea, or piece of relevant information”. They, furthermore, state that a code is a name that is used to give meaning to sections, which can be events, relationships, processes, or activities. The researcher read and reread the sets of data, and this provided her with the opportunity to acquire complete knowledge of the data. The data coming from the reading tests and questionnaires, which formed the quantitative research, was also analysed.

Matching codes were then grouped or arranged to form patterns and themes for analysis. The researcher studied the data in order to discover these themes or patterns and the relationships or connections between categories or groups. The data arising from the quantitative research and the qualitative research was, thus, coded and analysed.

The coding process began with the research questions, the research instrument and literature, as well as the researcher’s personal knowledge and experience. The researcher organized or coded the qualitative data into categories by using the kind of data gathered during interviews, observation and questionnaires. Data were then prepared using notes that were taken during observation and interviews, Similar codes were grouped to form themes. Similar themes represented major ideas based on the meaning of coded data.

The management of data was by electronic means to retrieve data and to bring coded data together in a particular place. The quantitative data was captured in computerised format in a frequency table (See Annexure O).

In this study, the quantitative data depended or relied on numbers when presenting the results.

The technique used in the quantitative data was descriptive statistics. As mentioned earlier, McMillan and Schumacher (2014:398) state that “statistics are means of organizing, analyzing and understanding quantitative data”. The research questions raised were translated into hypotheses and tested with inferential statistics. This will be discussed in Section 5.30.

5.4 Discussion of the schools used in the actual research project

The two schools used in this study were both public primary schools located in the Ovia North-East part of a local council in rural Nigeria. They were located in villages with small populations and some distance from the city centre. The two schools were far apart and attended by learners in their environs, whose parents were mostly illiterate farmers, petty traders, and minor labourers who worked on the palm oil farms or in the mills. Hence, the parents or guardians could not send their children or wards to schools in urban areas. The chosen schools were far from the cities and did not have the kind of infrastructure most schools in the urban or semi-urban centres had.

The schools were over 60 years old, with single dilapidated blocks of classroom structures. In each of the schools, two teachers were usually assigned to a class consisting of classes A and B. Observation revealed that when teachers were posted to these schools from the cities, most of them sought redeployment almost immediately because of the distance from the city, the lack of social amenities, and the poor infrastructure. As a result of this, the rural schools lacked teachers, and the few available were overworked.

The schools were not fenced, and the infrastructure was below acceptable standards. The environment of school A was fairly conducive to learning in terms of the availability of chairs and desks. School B was in very bad condition. The walls were cracked, the floors were broken, and some parts were overgrown with weeds. The non-conducive environment did not encourage effective teaching and learning.

5.4.1 School A

5.4.2 School location

School A was a state public school located in rural Nigeria with learners from low-income homes and with high rates of unemployment. The school served the communities in the area and was located about 20 km from the Local Education Board office, which was known as the Local Education Board Authority of the Local Government Council.

5.4.3 Infrastructure

School A was a primary school that had three sections or phases. The first section was the kindergarten (also referred to as KG), which consisted of KG1 to KG3. The second phase, lower basic, was made up of Primary 1 to 3. The third section was upper basic, which comprised Basic 4 to 6. The school had only one block with eight classrooms (one for each primary level) and one additional office for the headmaster. The headmaster's office was in the middle of the block and separated the primary section from the kindergarten classes. The school environment was neat, with a large playground for the learners, but was not fenced.

There was no library or staffroom. Each classroom had a tiny storeroom for storing the few available learning materials. The building was very old, but well maintained, and the walls had been repainted. The classrooms were neat, with their walls decorated with colour pictures of plants, animals, the parts of the body, and the weather. The learners were arranged in an ordered way, as they sat in threes and fours at a desk, and there were five rows. In the researcher's opinion, school A was well managed, and the surroundings were conducive to teaching and learning. This reflected proper administration with regard to the management of the school and the infrastructure.

5.4.4 Human resources

School A had a headmaster, an assistant headmaster, and a head for each section (kindergarten, lower basic, and upper basic). The school had 18 teachers (12 females and six males). There was no trained remedial teacher to support learners with reading problems or other learning problems.

The school had an enrolment of 320 learners, of whom 47 made up two Primary 4 classes, A and B, put together in one room as a result of insufficient classrooms. The Primary 4 learners were the focus of this study. In the researcher's opinion, the classroom situation at school A was conducive to learning in terms of the seating arrangement, class management, and school environment. The one problem, however, was the teacher-learner ratio. The teacher-learner ratio in school A was 1:47. There was supposed to be a ratio of 1:23 and 1:24 in each class, but due to inadequate classroom space, all 47 learners from Primary 4A and 4B were in a single room, making it a ratio of 1:47. The teachers took turns teaching reading and other subjects.

The Primary 4 class consisted of learners who read at different levels with regard to reading comprehension. Thus, there were good, average, and at-risk readers.

From the researcher's observations, with two classes put together in one room, the school lacked enough classrooms. It also had an insufficient number of teachers and no reading specialist.

5.4.5 The teaching and learning environment

The school opened at 07:30, and teachers were expected to be at school 30 minutes before this time. Morning devotion started at 07:45 and lasted 15 minutes. All learners, regardless of their grade level, assembled in front of the headmaster's office at the ringing of a bell by the school's Head boy.

Learners sang choruses, followed by prayers and the singing of hymns and the national anthem, and concluding with announcements. Afterwards, they moved to their classes in single file while singing. The teachers went to the headmaster's office to collect their iPads and were connected to the day's

lessons prepared by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). Teaching and learning activities began at 08:15 with talking or checking of class attendance, which was programmed into the iPad.

The medium of instruction for teaching and learning in Primary 4 was English, as recommended in the language provisions of the National Policy on Education. (See Table 2.1 in Chapter 2.) Unfortunately, most of the learners found it difficult to learn and communicate effectively in this language due to their local language and Nigerian Pidgin English being used at home, while Standard English was used as means of instruction at school. Teaching and learning ended at 13:45. Observation showed that, by this time, teachers ought to have completed their work, as the iPads they used indicated that it was time to go home at 13:45.

5.4.6 Teacher and learner reading material

The teachers' and learners' learning materials were provided by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). There was too little teaching material considering the number of learners in a class. The reading materials in Primary 4 were at a ratio of either three learners to one textbook (3:1) or four learners to one textbook (4:1).

There was no library or reading corner. Recommended reading material, as well as supplementary reading support material, was insufficient. In the researcher's opinion, this created an opportunity for ineffective teaching and learning, since the teaching of reading could not occur in a vacuum. This situation made it impossible for teachers to give "take-home" assignments to learners or to do classroom practice. By implication, learning was only done at school; hence, learners could not be given any kind of learning support at home by their guardians.

5.5 School B

5.5.1 Location

The school was in a rural area located in the north-eastern part of the Local Government Council, made up of a few rural dwellers who were mostly farmers and petty traders, with a few workers at the palm oil mills. School B was situated about 45 km from the Local Education Authority office of the Local Government Council.

5.5.2 Infrastructure

School B was a primary school with three phases: the kindergarten, which included the nursery section, referred to as KG1 to KG3; the lower basic, made up of Basic 1 to 3; and the upper basic, which comprised Primary (Grade) 4 to 6. The school had one old classroom block of buildings with five classrooms, including the headmistress's office. At the lower levels, two classes, KG1 and Primary 1, had been merged into one class. This situation applied to all the lower basic classes at the school, and learners were taught by different teachers.

In the upper class, two classes (A and B) had been put together in one room due to a lack of space. The school had no administrative block, no secretary's office, no staffroom, no library, and no storeroom. The few learning materials were kept in the headmistress's office. There was another new block of about eight classrooms at the school – completely built, but not in use. The building had been locked up for over three years for political reasons. The lack of infrastructure was a serious problem at the school and was of great inconvenience to both the teachers and learners. The building was very old without windows and doors, except for the headmistress's office, which was well secured with iron doors and windows because of the few materials stored there. The Primary 4 learners' arrangement was three to four learners at a table, with five rows in the classroom.

The school environment was very dirty and dusty, with some parts being overgrown with grass. There

were no toilets for the learners. The only toilet facilities at the school were the two pit toilets for the headmistress and teachers. There was a large field that served as a playground, but it was without a fence. The situation at school B was not conducive to teaching and learning. This showed a lack of concern on the part of the school administration and the Local Education Authority.

5.5.3 Human resources

School B had a headmistress, no assistant headmistress, and no secretary, but had 10 teachers (all female). The learner enrolment of the school was 200. Out of this number, 39 learners made up Primary 4A and 4B at the school. There was no specialised or trained teacher to give learning support to learners with educational problems.

From the researcher's observation, the school environment was not in any way as conducive to teaching and learning as that at school A.

5.5.4 The teaching and learning environment

The school started at 07:30, and teachers were at school 30 minutes before school commenced to prepare the classrooms for the learners. The school assembly opened with morning devotion on the assembly grounds in the large field opposite the classroom block. It began with opening prayers by the teachers on duty. This was followed by the singing of songs, the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and then the singing of the national anthem. At the end of this devotion, the learners marched to their classrooms with a song, while the teachers moved to the headmistress's office for the collection of their iPads in order to be connected to the day's lessons.

All the learners' names were registered on the teachers' iPads, and attendance was taken before and after lessons each day. Teaching and learning began at 08:15 and ended at 13:45, with the teacher again taking attendance of the learners at the end of the day.

There were 39 learners in the Primary 4 class, made up of classes A and B, with two teachers assigned

to the class, and they took turns teaching both reading and other subjects offered at that level. They had been put together in one room due to a lack of classrooms. From the register, each teacher had a ratio of 1:19 in class A and 1:20 in class B. The medium of instruction in Primary 4 was English, which most learners did not fully understand due to multiple languages being spoken in their environment. These languages included the language of the immediate environment, their mother tongue, and Nigerian Pidgin English.

5.5.5 The teacher and learner reading material

In the classrooms, teaching and learning materials were displayed on the walls in the Primary 4 class and all other classes. Teachers displayed charts of various types, all about plants, animals, and colours and, for reading purposes, with an emphasis on the alphabet at the two schools. The materials were removed at the end of each day because of the lack of security at the school. Learners had to share the few available reading texts provided by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). There was no reading corner, storeroom, or library at the school. The few available textbooks were kept in the headmistress's outer office. The learners were not allowed to take the few textbooks home; hence, take-home assignments were never given to learners.

5.5.6 Comparison of the two schools

From the observation of the two schools, the researcher noticed that, at school A, there were 47 learners in one class made up of two classes (4A and 4B), while school B had 39 learners put together in one classroom consisting of Primary 4A and 4B and had two teachers assigned to the class. The classes were the same with regard to reading ability; in other words, the learners faced the same problems with learner reading comprehension. The schools used the same curriculum prepared by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), which prompted the selection of the schools in the area for this research. This meant that the questions for the research could be answered by teachers who were

currently teaching Primary 4 rural learners. During discussions, it was clear that the four teachers had more or less the same problems or experiences with learners who were at risk regarding their reading abilities. At both schools, the classroom environment was fairly conducive to learning, although conditions were better at school A than at school B. At school A, learners had good chairs and tables to themselves and were comfortably seated, while at school B, most of the chairs and tables were broken, and learners had to improvise chairs and desks for themselves.

There were, however, no additional or supplementary reading materials and books to read at either of the schools. Another issue observed was the two teachers assigned to one class and their taking turns to teach reading comprehension and other subjects, regardless of their area of specialisation.

Based on her observation at both schools, the researcher was of the view that the learning situation at school A was more conducive to teaching and learning in terms of the seating arrangement and number of chairs and desks in class and teachers taking turns to teach. Each learner was comfortably seated.

The problems observed were the lack of readers to read from and additional reading materials.

In accordance with the regulations of the National Policy on Education, there should be a ratio of one teacher to 20 learners per class. The idea of all 47 learners at school A and all 39 learners at school B being put together in one class, thus, did not create room for effective teaching and monitoring of the learning process, especially when most learners had reading problems or were at risk for reading difficulties.

Learning conditions at school B were less conducive to teaching and learning than at school A. Some learners sat on broken chairs at broken tables, while other sat on blocks or even on the bare floor. During writing tasks, some placed their notes on their school bags, and those who sat on the floor placed their notes on the floor. This is a very sad situation for learners who are supposed to learn in an environment where teaching and learning can take place properly.

5.6 Discussion of the classroom teachers who acted as participants

This discussion of the teachers who acted as participants is given to provide adequate information about their level of education and the various classes they had taught during their years of teaching experience. The National Policy on Education of the Ministry of Education states that all teachers in basic education must teach all content areas, regardless of their area of specialisation. Thus, the participating teachers taught all subjects.

Participant QT1 was a female teacher at school A. She held a National Certificate in Education (NCE). She had 19 years' teaching experience and had taught at various levels of basic education.

Participant QT2 was a male teacher teaching at school A. He had a National Certificate in Education (NCE) as well as a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree. Like participant QT1, he had taught at different levels of basic primary education at various times. During his initial training, he had not been trained to teach learners English, but due to a lack of English teachers at the school, as well as government policy that all teachers at primary school level had to teach all content areas, he taught English alongside other subjects.

Participant QT3 was a female teacher at school B. She had qualified as a basic teacher by obtaining a National Certificate in Education (NCE). She had 18 years of teaching experience and had taught different classes. She was very passionate about learners' reading problems because she had a child who had been a reader at risk for reading problems and knew the difficulty she had gone through in getting appropriate-age reading materials that had pulled him through as far as his schoolwork was concerned. She, thus, had no desire to let any child in her class go through the same problems that her child had had with reading.

Participant QT4 was a female teacher at school B. She had a National Certificate in Education (NCE), and at the time of this study, she was doing a part-time degree programme in Education. She was the

most senior English teacher as well as head of the English department at the school. She had taught English for 21 years at different levels of the primary classes.

The information obtained from the participants revealed to the researcher that they had taught English at various levels and classes at a primary school level. They had the basic qualification required to teach primary school learners as recommended by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), which is the supervisory body regulating the employment and promotion of primary teachers. As far as their highest qualification was concerned, two held National Certificates in Education (NCEs), one had a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree, and another was in the process of pursuing a first degree on a part-time basis. All four teachers had qualified as primary school teachers and had accumulated experience in primary classes, with their years of experience ranging between 12 and 21 years. With these years of experience, it could be accepted that they understood the learning needs of Primary 4 learners and how to teach learners to read in English. Of the four teachers interviewed, three were female, with only one male. The female teachers used in the study were more than the male teachers. This showed that teaching at the primary level was dominated by females.

Table 5.1: Background information on teacher participants

School	Participants	Qualifications	Gender	Work profile
A	QT1	National Certificate in Education (NCE)	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 years' teaching experience • Taught Primary 4 for 10 years • Taught various levels and subjects for nine years
A	QT2	National Certificate in Education (NCE) and Bachelor of Science (BSc)	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 years' teaching experience • Taught Primary 1 to 3 for four years • Taught English at Primary 4 level for eight years
B	QT3	National Certificate in Education (NCE)	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 years' teaching experience at Primary 1 to 3 level • Taught Primary 5 Christian Religious Knowledge and English for two years • Taught Primary 4 English for 10 years • Head of English at upper basic level
B	QT4	National Certificate in Education (NCE)	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 years' teaching experience at lower basic level • 13 years at various levels • Eight years teaching Primary 4 • Most senior teacher and head of English

5.7 Data collection procedures

Before embarking on the fieldwork for the actual research, the researcher obtained an approval certificate from the Research Ethics Review Committee in the College of Education at UNISA. (See Annexure A.) The researcher visited the chosen schools with approval forms. (See Annexure D.) She officially introduced herself to the authorities at the schools, as well as the Primary 4 classroom teachers and learners, and the purpose of the visit was made known to them. The visit afforded her the opportunity to become acquainted with participants, which helped her to build a relationship between her and the participants. They were assured that the research was not meant to evaluate their teaching performance. The approval forms were completed and signed by the four participating teachers. (See Annexure E.)

During this period, the researcher obtained information about lesson plans and the reading materials

used by teachers and learners at both schools A and B in rural Nigeria. She also informed the school authorities of her intention to have training sessions with the teachers and to introduce them to the read-aloud intervention strategy, as well as the use of explicit direct instruction (EDI), as additional reading support while the teachers continued to use the traditional “repeat after me” method and chorus reading of teaching reading comprehension during class lessons. The four teachers who acted as participants were identified as QT1, QT2, QT3, and QT4. After that, the participants were given their letters of participation in the research (see Annexure D), and a date for observation was agreed on by both the researcher and the school authorities.

The data collection process began in the second week of February 2019. The researcher assumed the position of non-participant observer in the four Primary 4 classrooms where reading comprehension was taught to all learners. Creswell and Plan-Clark (2011:36) describe non-participant observation as “observation from a distance”; in other words, it is the researcher’s distanced observation of activities with regard to the topic of interest.

5.8 Classroom observation

5.8.1 Classroom observation at school A

5.8.2 Participant QT1

The researcher sat at the back of the classroom as discreetly as possible and gathered information in the Primary 4 classroom during reading lessons and reading activities. The observation took place over three days, and each observation was 45 minutes long. The English Language lesson was divided into several parts, and reading was allotted 30 minutes in the new Edo BEST teaching programme, which involved the use of iPads by teachers. The use of iPads that provided the teachers with the lesson plans for each day was part of a new programme that had been introduced by the state government.

5.8.2.1 Classroom environment

The classroom environment was large, neat, and orderly, with some pictures on the walls, which included charts on colours, plants, animals, the parts of the body, the weather, and clothing. There were 47 learners made up of two classes, namely, Primary 4A and 4B, and the learners sat three at a desk in five rows. The learners had been put together in one room because of insufficient classroom space, and each class had two teachers who taught different subjects. There were 22 females and 25 males with their ages ranging from nine to 11 years, with the exception of nine who were between 12 and 14 years old.

There were enough chairs and tables in this class, although no reading corner. It was observed that a few copies of *Modular English Course for Primary Schools Book 4* were the only texts learners could read from, and observation also showed that learners' individual reading needs were not given much attention by the teacher.

5.8.2.2 Lesson observation

The lesson duration was 45 minutes with research participant QT1. The teacher switched on her iPad, which served as her lesson manual because the contents of lessons were programmed into the iPad, and wrote the topic "Reading comprehension" on the chalkboard. She mentioned the title of the story, "First Place", while the whole class opened the readers to the page mentioned. It was observed that, as soon as the teacher mentioned reading time, some learners, especially those without reading texts, were not too excited about the reading.

Learners shared the few available readers with desk mates and were asked by the teacher to read the comprehension passage silently. While this activity was going on, she moved around and monitored the silent reading. Those found reading were encouraged with the words "Good job, you" or "Good job there". This was a kind of motivation for the learners.

After learners' silent reading, QT1 proceeded to read aloud to the whole class and asked them to repeat the words after her. At the end, she explained the story and asked questions based on the listed comprehension questions. I noticed that the learners' responses were not encouraging. The teacher reread the passage before the whole class was requested to answer the questions a second time. A few volunteers responded positively, while the responses of some learners were incorrect. QT1 then wrote the correct answers on the board and asked the class to copy them into their notebooks. These activities lasted about 25 minutes. The teacher went around to check the written work of a few learners, and scores were awarded to those who had copied the answers correctly, while nothing was said about learners who had not copied them correctly. There was insufficient time for her to check all the class work. Those not attended to were asked to submit their notebooks for marking at the end of the lesson. Also, learners were asked to give themselves what she called a "mosquito cheer", and the whole class recited it.

"Mosquito, mosquito, mosquito, mosquito

First I catch it, and I shake it, and I smash it"

This was used to cheer up learners before moving on to the next lesson. The teacher was also observed during the English lesson on the second day, and her teaching routine was the same.

5.8.3 Participant QT2

5.8.3.1 Classroom environment

Observation of this teacher participant took place in the afternoon after school hours. Learners were encouraged to stay behind after school hours because of the research having been approved by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and the parents' and learners' consent letters, which informed them about the research. (See Annexures B, F and G.) Teacher QT2 used the same classroom and the same group of learners as QT1: 47 learners, 22 females and 25 males between nine and 11 years

old, except for nine who were between 12 and 14. The learners also used the same seating arrangement of three at a desk seated in five rows.

5.8.3.2 Lesson observation

The lesson duration was 45 minutes. Teacher QT2 presented his lesson on reading comprehension by singing a song in a local dialect. It was a technique used by the teacher to draw the attention of learners to the lesson. After that, he switched on his iPad and introduced the reading topic as well as the title, “Akin the Drummer Boy”. He wrote the goal of the lesson, “Read a story”, on the chalkboard and then activated learners’ prior knowledge by asking them to spell some words that he wrote on the board. The words were taken from the previously learnt lesson, and the learners had to make sentences with the words. This took about 12 minutes. The day’s reading passage was presented with five or six unfamiliar words written on the board before he proceeded to the actual reading. The learners listened attentively as QT2 read out the passage, while learners repeated the words after him. Questions were asked, and the majority of the learners could not provide answers to the questions. The teacher reread the passage and then asked some volunteers to read. Questions were asked again, and when responses were not satisfactory, the teacher provided the correct answers and wrote them on the board, while the learners were asked to copy what was on the board into their notebooks. Some of the learners could not complete the copying activity within the time frame given by the teacher. The iPad had been programmed, and the teacher was logged out when the 30 minutes allocated to the reading lesson expired. He used the subsequent 15 minutes meant for another section of English to monitor what the learners had copied into their notebooks.

There was no change in his teaching strategy when QT2 was observed the next day, except that he did not use his singing technique. He needed to make up for the lost minutes of the previous day in going through the vocabulary and had to attend to what the learners had written in their notebooks during the

previous lesson. At the end of the two days' observation, the teachers were interviewed, the questionnaires were administered, and the learners were pre-tested.

5.9 Classroom observation at school B

5.9.1 Participant QT3

The researcher took on the role of a non-participant observer to collect data at two Primary 4 reading classes at another school. The observation was also for two days, and during this period, the researcher's major focus was as follows.

5.9.1.1 Classroom environment

The class was large, and there were posters on the walls that displayed pictures, charts about colours, the parts of the body, clothing, and the weather. The class lacked resource materials, and there were only a few readers. The teacher handed these out to be shared at a ratio of one book for three learners during the reading period, after which they were collected and kept in the headmaster's office. The learners sat three at a desk, and there were five rows in a large classroom. There were 39 learners (20 female and 19 male learners) in classes A and B, with their ages ranging from nine to 11. There were a few exceptions. They had been put together in one classroom, and two teachers had been assigned to teach different subjects in the Primary 4 class. While one was teaching, the other was busy marking learners' notebooks. Most of the desks and chairs were broken, and learners had to improvise using planks and blocks as desks. This made them a bit uncomfortable. There was no provision for a reading corner; hence, materials were kept in the headmaster's and headmistress's office. The only reading material was a few copies of the Primary 4 *Modular English Course for Primary Schools Book 4*.

The lesson duration was 45 minutes.

5.9.1.2 Lesson observation

The teacher presented the lesson for the day from her iPad. The title, “The Old Man’s Mango Tree”, was written on the board. The goal was to read a story, as stated on the teacher’s iPad.

The teacher participant clapped her hands loudly, while the learners repeated the action after her. This action was repeated twice. This, the researcher learnt, helped the teacher to arrest the attention of the learners before the reading commenced. She read the story out loud while the whole class repeated it after her. After that, the whole class read in chorus. They were taken through the reading activity row by row and were instructed to follow the passage or text line by line with their fingers. The teacher stopped at intervals to ensure that the learners were all engaged in the reading activities. After row-by-row chorus reading, the learners were given an opportunity to say what they liked about the main characters in the story. When this reading activity was over, the comprehension questions were posed to learners again. The questions include: what are the names of the boys who went to the old man’s mango tree? Who among the boys climbed the mango tree? Some provided the correct responses, but the majority answered incorrectly. She scolded those who gave incorrect answers, and they were told to be more attentive during the lesson the next time.

She was again observed on the second day, and the same teaching routine was adopted. This time, however, she wrote the answers on the board for the learners to copy into their notebooks.

5.9.2 Participant QT4

The teacher was observed in the afternoon. This was made possible by the consent letters given to learners and parents informing them about the research. Hence, they were asked by their headmaster to stay behind after school hours for the observation.

5.9.2.1 Classroom observation

Teacher QT4 used the same classroom as teacher QT3, and there were the same number of learners: 20 females and 19 males, totalling 39. The learners were between nine and 11 years old.

5.9.2.2 Lesson observation

The teacher switched on her iPad, introduced the lesson for the period, and wrote the title of the reading comprehension passage, “Inua, the Spoilt Child”, on the board. Learners were instructed to share the few readers in the class with their desk mates. She read the first two paragraphs out loud and paused to ask questions. An insignificant number of learners responded. This prompted a rereading of the passage. Then, the teacher wrote some passages on the board. Observation revealed that this question time made some learners uncomfortable. The teacher requested a good reader to read what was on the board out loud to the entire class and asked others with readers to follow the storyline with their fingers. Those learners without readers focused on the board. After this activity, questions were asked based on the passage read, and very few volunteers responded. The correct answers were written on the board for the learners to copy for about 10 minutes. After that, the teacher wrote the unfamiliar words on the board for class practice, which involved repeating the words after the teacher. At the end of the class, the readers were collected and taken to the headmaster’s storeroom.

The teacher was also observed for a second time, and her approach to teach reading was not varied. The pre-test was administered to the whole class of 39 learners, and scores were kept by the researcher. Both teachers QT3 and QT4 were interviewed by the researcher using the same question patterns used with participants QT1 and QT2.

5.10 Discussion of observations at schools A and B

Apart from the semi-structured interview for teacher participants, observation of lessons was carried out in the classrooms of four teachers at the two selected schools, A and B. Observation of each teacher

was thrice weekly for a period of six weeks, and the lesson duration was 45 minutes. It was meticulously observed how teachers handled reading comprehension problems and what learners' attitude was during reading activities.

During observation, it became clear that some features characterised the entire teaching process.

5.10.1 Discipline

At both schools, there was good classroom management. While the first teacher was teaching, the second teacher went around and reprimanded those not paying attention to the lesson. The researcher realised that this was important for proper teaching and learning to take place. This good discipline was in contrast to what happened in a class during the pilot study.

5.10.2 Non-availability of reading materials

Non-availability of reading materials was observed at the two schools in every lesson. The teachers taught reading and comprehension without learners having the recommended readers or any kind of reading support material. The few books available in class were at a ratio of one book to three or four learners. Thus, some of the learners had no connection with books or text, either at home and at school. In all the lessons of the four teachers, many learners had no experience of holding a book and reading from it. Learners were not allowed to circle unfamiliar words or fill in some information for practice as instructed in the readers; nor were they allowed to take the readers home for after-school practice. This denied them the chance of practising reading or doing any kind of reading assignment after school hours. Teaching and learning cannot occur without reading materials. In the opinion of the researcher, learners not having learning materials impedes effective teaching and learning. Teachers were not able to help learners with unfamiliar words due to inadequate learning materials. It was also noticed that teachers relied on the use of the chalkboard and the few copies of texts in class. There were no flash cards or other forms of instructional material. The only charts displayed on the walls of each of the

classrooms were about clothing, the parts of the body, and the parts of animal and had no relevance to reading comprehension. Looking at the information on the charts, they might be more appropriate in Primary 1 to 3 classrooms. Asemota (2013:24) conducted a study in the Edo state and discovered that 80% of Primary 4 level teachers who were surveyed, carried out all their classroom activities using the text book and information on the charts displayed on the walls of their classrooms (See Section 2.15) The researcher, furthermore, noticed that, at the schools that formed part of her research, the teachers were copying the passages that would be used for reading on the board. According to the teachers, the copying was done to enable learners to practise reading at home, since the learners were not allowed to take the few textbooks home after school. Teachers writing on the board wasted a lot of their time, thereby reducing instruction time. It was clear that this situation was stressful to both teachers and learners. The researcher realised that this issue had to be addressed during the actual research project.

5.10.3 Time allocation

The researcher noted that the time allocated to reading comprehension was inadequate and that learners did not receive any guided reading. The English lessons as set out on the iPads were divided into different stages such as reading routine, learning the alphabet, verbal reasoning, and English studies. The English lessons were also segmented into different parts with allotted time frames, and reading comprehension was allotted only 30 minutes. There was no time for any additional or individual reading support. English studies time was basically for reading different stories from the class reader that reflected the learners' environment and culture.

5.10.4 Absence of reading methods

Observation at both schools additionally revealed that, although the teachers had a wealth of teaching experience and were eager to teach the learners, they lacked the strategy or skills to impart good reading instruction to the learners; in other words, there was an absence of proper teaching methods with regard

to the teaching of reading. They simply practised the chorus reading “repeat after me” (See Section 2.16) method, which encouraged the memorisation of passages, including unfamiliar concepts.

Teachers wrote new words on the board, pronounced the words, and asked learners to repeat the words after them twice. The meaning of the words or their synonyms was not explained, and the words were not used to make sentences. The researcher is of the opinion that this method encourages the learners to memorise passages, “barking” at print, without full comprehension of the given passage, as revealed during the question-and-answer time when most of the learners could not respond to the questions. It was observed that reference was never made to previously learnt topics. The teachers also never engaged learners in pre-reading activities before a lesson began. Learners were not taught how to do predicting or visualising of the events in a passage or story read. Only QT2 at school A attempted to motivate learners with a song before the reading lesson began. Questioning was the only observed strategy, but was used incorrectly. Predicting, inferencing, summarising, visualising, and forming mental images were not applied, which could negate the joy of a reading comprehension activity that was supposed to be dynamic. Teaching was teacher-centred, and group work and peer discussions were not encouraged. This meant that the testing of learners’ comprehension of a passage was their ability to provide “Yes” and “No” responses to questions. Thought-provoking questions were absent from the four teachers’ teaching style.

During observation and interviews, it was noticed that the teachers felt that their methods or teaching strategies were good enough to produce good readers, since they alleged that it was the method they had used over the years. The reading approaches that the four teachers used were not sufficiently appropriate to develop the skills required in a Primary 4 class where learners were supposed to be exposed to expository texts.

According to Amadi (2014:5), learners at this stage cannot be said to be reading and comprehending if

all that teachers make them do in class is repeat passages after them and reproduce what they have memorised without understanding what they have read. Anggraini and Lianasari (2011:1) assert that approaches are methods that teachers can use to teach reading. It is one major way which can aid learners to resolve their reading challenges. They furthermore state that if reading approaches are appropriately applied by teachers, learners' knowledge will be enhanced, as they are required to read more and read independently at, for instance, Primary 4 level. The teachers at the two schools assessed learners based on their correct responses to multiple-choice questions, thus controlling the classroom interactions. Idogo (2011:5) says that reading at Primary 4 level is not only for getting information, but should become an active process that requires the learner to show the ability to read for main ideas and details and decode a text or make a meaningful judgement from a text. Thus, learners should be exposed to several reading instructional strategies such as activation of prior knowledge, predicting, visualising, questioning, identifying main ideas, and summarising. This could make them good and skilled readers. During classroom observation, it was noticed that most of the learners could neither provide the meaning of some words presented to them written on the board, nor could they answer most of the questions from the short passages. From the classroom scenario, it can be said that the teachers fitted in with the "repeat after me" and the choral or chorus method of teaching reading, which is like a chorus of singers, involving both teachers and learners reading the same story or passage together and at the same time (Vrikki, Wheatley, Howe & Hennessy 2018:2).

During observation of teachers in the language lessons, it was also discovered that all four teachers used an adapted the read-aloud method, reading stories to learners while the learners listened to the story the first time before applying "repeat after me". Although the teachers used the read-aloud method, they did not use it correctly. These activities were remarkably displayed all through the lesson sessions observed. One positive aspect of this method was that individual learners' attention, retention, and

recognition ability could be stimulated using this method. Regardless of the strategy applied by the four teachers in this research, it was obvious that there were factors that posed problems for teachers in teaching reading and reading comprehension in a Primary 4 rural class.

In the opinion of the researcher, the teachers were not trained well to teach reading and reading comprehension skills to Primary 4 learners. This observation addressed the one sub-aim of the research, which was to enquire whether the teachers were trained to teach reading and whether they understood the importance of reading comprehension well. These observations encouraged the researcher to make sure that, for the purposes of the research, the teachers would be well trained to use various reading methods and to be able to apply the reading methods correctly during reading lessons.

5.10.5 Absence of guided reading

At both schools, teachers were not giving learners guided reading or modelling of reading strategies. Discussion or interactive sessions between teachers and learners were absent. This was because teachers lacked the required knowledge to teach reading. This was another issue that had to be addressed during the research project.

5.10.6 Reading programme

With regard to the reading comprehension programme, school A and school B used similar reading programmes. One major observation was that, between the time of the pilot study and the main research, teachers had started to do e-teaching using an iPad as teaching device. This was recommended by the state government after an eight-week in-service training programme for all primary-level teachers as part of the Edo State Basic Education Sector Transformation (Edo BEST).

5.10.7 The use of iPads by the teachers

It was noted that lesson plans and notes were no longer prepared by the teachers, but by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). Instructions were programmed into teachers' iPads. Each

morning, teachers went to the headmaster's/headmistress's office to have their iPads activated for the day's lesson. The teachers followed the same guidelines, as outlined on their devices. By implication, teachers were not aware of lesson contents until they switched on their e-learning iPads each morning, when they would find out the lessons planned for each period. The researcher noticed that this did not give teachers an opportunity to prepare themselves for the lesson ahead of time. There was also no opportunity for addressing the individual reading needs of learners.

Teachers complained that this method of using an iPad was cumbersome and too advanced for rural learners and did not address the realities of reading problems. On the part of the teachers, it did not create the opportunity for them to effectively prepare ahead for the following day's lesson, since the content of the lesson was posted to them every morning. Another problem was their inability to monitor learners' learning problems, since the teachers' attention was always on the device, waiting for step-by-step instructions. Also, teachers struggled to engage learners during reading activity, although this could not be as a result of the iPad.

5.10.8 Learners' lack of motivation to read

There was no motivation for learners with regard to reading. The teachers did not engage the learners in any activities that could motivate them to read, such as before reading, during reading, and after reading activities. Co-operative or interactive learning was never encouraged, and learners' prior knowledge was not activated. Teacher-centred learning was the common practice, and learners were passive in both schools and were encouraged to practise memorisation of unfamiliar words and passages. Although the teachers asked questions to test learners' comprehension, no real teaching of comprehension occurred.

Classroom observation showed that the teaching and learning of vocabulary development were done poorly. The teachers merely copied the unfamiliar words on the board, said the words out loud, and

asked learners to repeat the words after them. This was followed by the learners copying the words in their notebooks. The meaning of such words was never taught, and learners were not encouraged to practise the new words. It was observed that the teachers did not have the right knowledge and attitude towards learners' needs, hence learners' poor attitude towards reading. Brophy (2010:50) describes learners' reading motivation as the level at which learners are ready to put in time, energy, and interest towards several tasks or activities. It boils down to the determination a learner gives or is ready to put into a task in order to ensure success. Thus, learners' motivation is a vital part of the teaching and learning process.

5.10.9 Language of instruction

Observation revealed that the medium of instruction was a factor that affected the teaching of reading and reading comprehension in reading activities. During classroom observations, the researcher discovered that the learners were faced with three major problems with regard to which language to speak and use – Nigerian Pidgin English, their mother tongue (MT), or English – and that all three were used.

The learners made use of the first two at home, and they were instructed in English as an official language at school. It became clear that this created problems for the learners while trying to switch from either pidgin English or MT to the accepted language; they were forbidden to communicate in pidgin English and MT at school. Many of them could not understand why they were not allowed to use either their mother tongue or pidgin English to learn and at school. They found it difficult to reconcile the linguistic features of the languages. According to Baba (2016:109), reading in English is a problem for Primary 4 learners, as they find it difficult to reconcile the linguistic features of their mother tongue, which is used both at home and in lower primary school in Nigeria, with those of a totally new and foreign language, a process that is made more complicated by the need to learn the new

language in all of its forms.

From the classroom observations, it was clear that when learners were asked questions in Nigerian Pidgin English and MT, they responded favourably.

These findings were affirmed during observation when some of the teachers translated instructions into a local dialect during the reading intervention that was offered as part of the research study. The learners were excited and responded well to the instructions. Therefore, Primary 4 rural teachers need to know that most of the learners reading below level need time to adapt to the medium of instruction and should be supported in class.

5.10.10 Lack of explicit instruction

There was, thus, an absence of explicit instruction during the teaching of reading comprehension. Learners were not given step-by-step instructions that could prevent them from becoming at-risk readers; nor was reading support provided. The teachers' instruction did not encourage learners to self-regulate their comprehension during classroom activities. QT1, QT2, and QT4 did not differ much in their presentation of reading lessons. They used the same method of reading and encouraged learners to memorise while reading the text. It was observed that only QT3 stopped at intervals to ask learners questions about their opinions on the story read.

It was clear that, even with the use of the new device (iPad), learners' background knowledge was not activated. Pre-reading activities and during-reading activities were not encouraged. Once a teacher had been timed out by the device, the teacher could also no longer review the previous lesson.

5.10.11 Use of below-age resource materials

Observation also showed that below-age resource materials were displayed on the walls of each classroom, which gave the impression that the class could be a lower Primary 1 to 3 class. In the course of the observation, it was discovered that English Studies were divided into different sections and that

the time given to reading was just 30 minutes, which the teachers complained was not enough to effectively teach what they were supposed to teach.

5.10.12 General observation and decision

The researcher realised that there were problems with the way in which reading was taught at the two schools that had been selected. It was, however, decided to continue to do the research at these schools because the classroom situation was fairly conducive to the teaching of reading and reading comprehension compared to the reading instruction that took place at the schools where the pilot study had been done. There was also good discipline in the classes that were observed. The researcher was, furthermore, pleased that she could work with teachers who had many years of teaching experience and who knew and understood Primary 4 learners well. Moreover, the teachers were enthusiastic and motivated to learn more about the teaching of reading.

As mentioned, the researcher observed that the teachers used iPads into which lessons to be taught had been programmed. The teachers had reading lessons, but the time allocated to these was too short to complete the reading activities, and the teachers did not have time to attend to learners' individual reading needs.

Thus, the researcher decided to plan a four-day training programme for the four teachers at the selected schools. (See Section 5.21.) This was done to ensure that the learners received good reading instruction and support during normal English lessons in the schools. If this were to not be done, the researcher believed that any form of reading support would help the learners with their abilities and with reading comprehension. It would, thus, not be possible to investigate whether the read-aloud programme or another reading programme would benefit the learners' reading abilities the best. As part of the research, the researcher wanted to particularly determine whether the read-aloud programme or the explicit direct reading programme would benefit the learners the most.

5.11 Summary of classroom observation

The two schools had good classroom management and discipline, but lacked reading materials and time allocated to reading. Time to attend to especially reading comprehension was limited. Teachers also had no specific reading methods and lacked modelling of reading strategies to learners. In addition, the schools had started to use reading programmes that were available on iPads, which had recently been introduced. Only the teachers had iPads. The teachers faced many problems created by the use of the reading programmes on the iPads. Problems raised by the teachers were that they did not know the content of lessons until the iPad could be opened in the morning. There was no possibility of providing individual attention to learners' specific reading needs. The teachers also found the reading lessons cumbersome and too advanced for learners in rural areas.

Therefore it was clear that the learners had little motivation to read, the language of instruction was problematic and it was evident that there was a lack of explicit instruction to help learners with reading comprehension, as no step-by-step instruction was provided. The resource materials displayed on the walls were below age and not appropriate for Primary 4 learners. It was evident that the use of iPads was a good idea, since all the reading lessons were planned or programmed, although the use of the iPads did not give enough time for reading and opportunities to support learners with reading problems. When one considers the issues arising from the classroom observation, it is clear that there were many problems with the teaching of reading in the Primary 4 classes that were observed. Apart from the lack of enough time and proper reading methods, one of the main problems was the fact that the learners did not comprehend what they read. They could not use their prior knowledge to build on the new knowledge that was introduced in the reading lessons. According to social constructivism, the learners themselves have to play an active role in reconstructing knowledge and that the learners must play an active part in reconstructing new ideas and knowledge in their minds (McLeod 2019:4). In a reading

class where learners do not understand what is read, they cannot construct knowledge.

5.12 Discussion of interview results with teacher participants at schools A and B

The four Primary 4 teachers who acted as research participants were interviewed to probe their experiences and beliefs with regard to the teaching of reading with reference to learners who were at risk for reading problems in Primary 4. An interview schedule with semi-structured questions was used. (See Annexure H.) In the course of the interviews, the researcher sometimes had to probe further by asking more questions in order to get more information and a better understanding of participants' views. In addition, some responses to questions were merged because of the teachers' similar responses to such questions. The four teachers responded positively to questions posed. Each gave enough information, which will be clarified in this discussion.

5.12.1 Question 1: How long have you been teaching English?

The four teachers interviewed had various years of experience in teaching English. Their years of teaching experience ranged between 12 and 21 years. They were all qualified to teach at Primary 4 level. They were dedicated and confident and seemed to love their jobs. All the teachers responded alike that they had always taught English across all primary levels, regardless of their areas of specialisation.

Participants QT1, QT3, and QT4 had studied English in combination with other courses such as Social Studies, Music, and French, while QT2 had a qualification in Science, but was teaching English, and had 12 years' teaching experience. All the teachers had the prerequisite qualifications needed to teach primary-level reading in English, except for QT2, who held a BSc degree, but was compelled to teach English because of a lack of teachers at his school, as government policy made it compulsory for teachers to teach all subjects, including English, regardless of their area of specialisation. It was observed that the teachers had enough experience to teach at Primary 4 level, even if they were not reading specialists.

5.12.2 Question 2: Have you always taught Primary 4 learners?

All the teachers responded that they had not always taught Primary 4 classes. They had usually moved from one level of lower primary to another, but had spent more years in a Primary 4 class than at any other level. This movement was to enable them to gather experience with learners at various levels. QT1 said: “When teachers are posted to Primary schools after obtaining the National Certificate in Education, they begin with Primary 1, the foundation level, where they spend some time or years experiencing what it takes to handle beginning learners.” QT2 confirmed this by saying that “every beginning teacher must start teaching experience with first lower basic class that is Primary one. There, we are made to spend some time to acquire enough experience before moving to next level. This makes it possible for us to experience learners’ learning needs and how to handle them as we move further to upper levels. The experience initially is not easy, but gradually, we get used to them”. At school B, the responses of QT3 and QT4 were more or less the same. Teacher QT3 confirmed the statements made at school A that all teachers moved from one lower basic level to another. Their experience with learners at various primary levels assisted them in dealing with their learning challenges at the upper basic level. It was clear that, once at the upper basic level beginning from Primary 4, a teacher could also be posted to Primary 5 or 6, depending on the school authority. QT4 stated that “most teachers in Primary 4 have spent reasonable number of years at Primary 4, having taught at various levels in the past”. By implication, these teachers had a wealth of experience with regard to learners in both lower and upper primary as well as their learning needs. They were also in a position to understand child development in the various grades well. It was clear that every primary school teacher had to experience learners at various levels.

5.12.3 Question 3: In your years of teaching experience, how would you describe a learner in a Primary 4 classroom?

The teachers explained that a Primary 4 learner was a child whose age ranged between nine and 11, depending on how early the child entered or began his or her primary education. Teacher QT3 confirmed this by describing Primary 4 learners as “children who are between the ages of 9-11. Sometimes, there is the 12-14 years old range in Primary 4”. She attributed this to their home background, that is, those who were not encouraged by their parents to begin school early. The teachers at both schools stated that these learners were supposed to have successfully gone through the first three years of lower basic education and were assumed to be ready for the learning challenges at the upper basic level beginning with Primary 4.

According to the teachers, Primary 4 learners were learners who were in their middle childhood and were excited about school, sometimes restless in class, and inquisitive and sensitive. They added that learners at this age and stage of schooling were assumed to be able to read in English and to obtain meaning from any written material with which they were presented. All the teachers at both schools described Primary 4 learners as learners who had proceeded from the foundation level of the school age into a class with new learning challenges.

When asked the question of who a Primary 4 learner was, teacher QT3 said: “A Primary 4 learner is a child who has spent first three years of his school life in lower basic level and is excited to be in a new class without the full knowledge of the learning challenges ahead.” Teacher QT4 responded that “they are learners who are expected to read to learn in English without ‘galloping’ since the basic foundation skills for reading is assumed to have been laid”. The above statement is in consonance with the English Studies curriculum for Levels 4 to 6 in the nine-year basic education curriculum of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME). (See Section 2.14.) It, thus, means that Primary 4 learners are assumed to be

learners who have received the basic foundation skills for reading at the lower primary level and should have become independent readers who can read and comprehend complex materials and, therefore, are expected to read class-appropriate information text. (See Section 2.14.) It was clear that the four participants understood Primary 4 learners well.

5.12.4 Question 4: What kind of transformation do you usually observe among learners in Primary 4 concerning their changes in their physical, mental and emotional growth?

During the interviews, it became obvious that the four participants at the two schools had the same view with regard to the developmental or transformational stages of Primary 4 learners with regard to their physical, cognitive, and emotional development. They responded that, at this stage, the learners were usually between the ages of nine and 11, except in some cases where one found the range of 12 to 14 years in the classroom. The changes were visible in their height, sometimes their weight as well, and the transformation of their motor skills. The girls grew faster than the boys and showed interest in motor skills such as drawing, painting, knitting, and the weaving of baskets. This corroborates the view held by McDevitt and Ormrod (2010:29) that, at this stage, the girls' maturity is greater than that of the boys. Improvement was visible in the learners' motor skills, which was revealed in their drawings and handwriting. (See Section 2.13.1.)

QT2 said: "At this stage, these learners are full of energy and interested in doing so many activities both in and out of the classroom, though all of them do not perform at the same level." This was confirmed by teacher QT1: "Oh, these children are so restless and noisy. They like jumping, playing football and throwing things at each other. In fact they want to be everywhere at the same time with [the] exception of a minority who are quiet all the time."

The teacher participants asserted that, emotionally, some Primary 4 learners were at their middle childhood stage and understood bonds in relationships with family members or classmates. They were

aware that these friendships were supposed to remain constant despite their occasional disagreement. They explained that a breach of this bond usually elicited aggression, anger, and withdrawal. They also described Primary 4 learners as those who were conscious of their academic achievements and their popularity among their peers. One of the participants, QT3, commented that a “Primary 4 learner knows the tasks that they are good at and those in which they are very poor”.

From observation and discussion with all the teachers with regard to the emotional development of learners at this stage, it was clear that the girls paid more attention to their individual appearance now than when they had been in the lower grades, while the boys were more interested in physical aggression and superiority.

With regard to the Primary 4 learners’ cognitive development, the interviewed teachers showed that they had enough insight about the cognitive development of the learners. The four teachers explained that, at this stage, a learner was supposed to be able to reason logically and think about several aspects of a problem. They also explained that Primary 4 learners ought to have acquired essential skills in reading and writing by this stage as well as have the ability to explain their way of reasoning. They ought to be able to classify objects in several ways and at various levels with ease.

Teacher QT4, in particular, said: “A Primary 4 learner is supposed to be proficient in some new skills and know that each time they get things right, they get approval from their teachers for work well done either in sports, crafts or academic work, making some of them to strive to attract teachers’ commendations.” All the teachers interviewed in the two selected schools showed that they had a good understanding of the type of learners in Primary 4, both with regard to their age and their expected level of transformation physically, mentally, and emotionally. Therefore, they ought to be able to handle the challenges associated with learning at this level and also with the learners’ abilities to read well and with comprehension.

The comments made by the respondents showed alignment of the grouping of Primary 4 learners with the concrete preoperational stage identified by Piaget (in Slavin 2009:3), where learners are expected to exhibit the following:

- logical thinking ability is gradually applied to objects,
- have problems or trouble with abstract thought,
- are able to think reversibly,
- see things in the context of meanings, and
- have the ability to arrange in logical order.

When one considers the views of the four participating teachers, as well as the opinions of Piaget (1936) and Slavin (2009), it is clear that, in terms of the developmental stage of Primary 4 learners, they are at a good developmental stage to be part of research about the improvement of their reading abilities.

5.12.5 Question 5: What is reading?

5.12.6 Question 6: What is reading comprehension?

The interview responses to Questions 5 and 6 were merged because the teachers saw the two questions as the same in responding to them.

When the above questions were asked, all the teachers said that reading and reading comprehension were the ability of learners to read any kind of text provided and make something meaningful out of it. Participants said that reading and reading comprehension functioned as one because of the close connection between the two. QT1, in particular, said: “They are two sides of a coin.” She explained that reading required “learners’ ability to identify words from a text, make meanings out of the passage in order to answer the question(s) provided”. QT3 added that the “ability of learners to read a text and answer the questions that follow accurately shows that the learners are able to read and understand a given text”.

QT4 from school B, who had the same views about reading and reading comprehension, responded in this way: “Reading comprehension is an act of reading and the ability to understand. The learners or reader who reads should understand the written material. Above all, the learner or reader must be able to note unfamiliar words and make meaning from the passage based on what is read, the learner should give answers to questions which are linked to the passage.”

The interviews and observation of the teachers confirmed the assertion of Adetunji, Akinbiyi, and Olagunju (2014:1) that reading and comprehension operate as a single unit. (See Section 2:9.) Also corroborating the above view is Bouwer (2005:100), who states that comprehension and reading are so closely linked or related that scholars or educators are of the view that the words “reading” and “comprehension” are synonymous (See Section 2.2). The teachers’ classroom activities and discussions with them revealed their beliefs and views that reading could not be said to have taken place without the learners having a clear understanding of what they had read in order to answer given questions.

The sub-aim dealing with teachers’ understanding of reading comprehension was addressed in the responses to questions 5 and 6. The problem was, however, that the teachers did not address this type of reading problem. The researcher opines that the teacher participants did not really understand the reading problems that the Primary 4 learners were facing; thus, the sub-aim regarding the teachers’ understanding of the reading problems was addressed.

As was the case with questions 5 and 6, the responses to questions 7 and 8 during interviews were merged because the teachers did not see any difference between the two questions.

5.12.7 Question 7: Do you enjoy teaching reading at Primary 4 level? Please explain your answer.

5.12.8 Question 8: Is it important to teach reading in Primary 4?

In providing responses to the above questions (question 7 and 8), the four teacher participants saw them as being the same. The participants said that they enjoyed teaching learners at Primary 4 level because it gave them the chance to face new learning challenges, since it was the middle school stage with learners who were assumed to have good foundation skills required for reading to learn expository texts and other challenging materials. They added that it afforded them the opportunity to impart new information and expand the knowledge of this group of learners from the lower basic grades. With regard to the importance of teaching Primary 4 learners reading, all the teachers said that it was very important because it was at this level that learners were in serious need of cognitive skills. Teacher QT2 said: “Teaching learners to read and comprehend is the first responsibility of any school.” He added that no child ought to proceed further to the next level of primary education without enough reading ability, as the school might be the child’s only hope to acquire the skill to read and understand. The participants also specified the benefits of reading, not just as an essential instrument for learning at school, but also as a prerequisite to access information in all areas of life.

Participants, furthermore, responded that it was important to teach reading at Primary 4 level because it was where the ability to read and comprehend was no longer for actual formation alone, but was also a functional process where the learner showed the ability to get major ideas and make a judgement on the correct meaning of passages or text. The teacher participants regarded it as important to teach reading at all levels of primary school because a specific level of literacy was required for any individual to live as a law-abiding citizen of a nation. The participants’ comments are aligned with the World Bank Policy Report of 1990 (cited in Idogo 2011:5), which stresses that “democracy thrives on free flow of information”.

From the interviews, it was clear that the four participants assumed that learners at this level of their education ought to possess the required skills to be independent readers who read to learn in English. The reason was that reading and comprehension ability were connected to many areas of academic pursuit at school level and also after school. This echoes Nampktai, Akwaree, Wongwayrote, and Sameepets' (2013:28) statement that reading and comprehension must be properly or effectively taught and learnt to promote proficiency in other content areas. They add that reading ability is important because it affords learners the opportunity to acquire new information, expand their knowledge, and progress their careers (See Section 2.5.). This also aligns with the social constructivist view according to which learning takes place when learners can acquire new knowledge and integrate it with existing knowledge (Powell & Kalina 2009:241). In this way learners are actively involved to construct their own knowledge.

5.12.9 Question 9: During your training as a teacher, were you taught how to teach reading?

Participants QT1, QT3, and QT4 indicated that they had not been trained to teach reading comprehension as a subject, but that reading was subsumed under English courses, where some skills were mentioned, although not taught in-depth by their lecturers during their teacher training programmes. They said that they were not fully prepared and oriented to teach reading and comprehension skills. They agreed that, although they were not reading specialists, they still managed to teach reading. QT2 said that he had never had any training in the teaching of reading comprehension because he had majored in a science-related course. The above comments from the respondents are aligned with the observation made by Amadi (2014:4) that another factor that is capable of exacerbating reading problems in English is the teachers' training and strategies used in the classroom. (See Section 2.6). This once again answered the first sub-aim, showing that they had not been trained to teach reading.

5.12.10 Question 10: Which reading or reading comprehension approaches do you know?

On the question on reading and reading comprehension approaches used in a Primary 4 classroom for learners who had just proceeded from lower primary, the following responses were given. Teacher QT1 said that she alternated her reading approach. Sometimes, she asked learners to do silent reading first, and then she proceeded to read aloud to the whole class while they repeated the words after her before explaining the story to them. QT2 stressed that, because of learners' poor attitude towards reading in Primary 4, he used songs to motivate learners and draw their attention to the day's reading lesson. Afterwards, he would either do a "repeat after me" or do a reread while the learners listened attentively before asking questions based on the passage. QT4 responded in this way: "I don't know what reading approaches or strategies are. They are not in the text prepared by SUBEB neither are they indicated in the current iPad [w]e are using. The only one [we] seem to know is read and re-read while learners repeat after us, ask questions and provide feedback and give assignments where necessary or in most cases, if time permits we do practice on unfamiliar words."

Participants' use of approaches in teaching reading at the Primary 4 level is depended on their own decision. They applied reading stories aloud, "repeat after me" chorus reading, or rereading of text. Based on the data collected, it was noticed that, among the participants, the approaches commonly used by the teachers belonged under "repeat after me" chorus reading. It was also discovered that participants used these approaches as it suited them to attract learners' attention before reading began. The above is aligned with Onovyghe's (2009:97) explanation that the type of method or approach decided on by teachers will enable them to choose the method of instruction. Educators are of the view that, just as there is no single child in a learning context, there is no perfect method for the teaching of reading (See Section 3.4.) This implies that there is no recommended approach for teachers to teach reading. The researcher probed further to try and find out how often reading was scheduled or planned for. The

teachers responded that, before the use of lessons provided on iPads, reading and reading comprehension were done once weekly every Wednesday morning, whereas with the e-learning system, the reading session was planned for 30 minutes daily. The e-learning reading plan, according to which teaching of reading took place daily, is in line with the assertions of Olajide (2010:659) that the teaching of reading has to be for 45 minutes on every school day (See Section 2.14.)

5.12.11 Question 11: Have you ever gone for training programmes since graduation?

Regarding training, all the teachers said that, since being employed, they had only gone for the trainee programme twice. According to them, the new in-service training programme they had attended recently was the government e-learning training (Edo BEST) programme, although the emphasis was on the use of iPads as an instructional device during training, not on the teaching of reading comprehension strategies. Amadi (2014:4) asserts that teachers require a broad base of conceptual knowledge that prepares them in terms of what and how to teach in a manner that will motivate and guide learners' learning. (See Section 2.16.)

5.12.12 Question 12: Are all the learners in your class reading with comprehension?

When the teachers were asked if all the learners in their classes were reading with comprehension, teacher QT4 said that “a very good number of learners who are supposed to have passed through foundation level where the basic skills were assumed to have been laid, are having problems with reading and comprehending, though a handful are good readers”. At this level, they are supposed to be reading to learn, not learning to read. The above statement from QT4 is in alignment with the National Policy on Education, as stated by Idogo (2011:4): “From Primary 1-3, learners are involved in learning to read. In Primary 4, they have moved over from learning to read to reading to learn with English as medium of instruction. By implication at this level, reading comprehension is not just for seeking factual information in a text only but an active procedure in which learners (readers) show the ability to read

for specific points, get the main idea, choose and evaluate the right meaning in a text.”

All the respondents were of the opinion that a lot of factors could be responsible for the reading problems associated with some Primary 4 learners. The main factors were foundation-level teachers’ inability to train the learners on how to do line-by-line and above-the-line reading and the language of instruction, which the teachers believed was different from the language spoken at home. QT1 commented: “Not that these learners have mental or emotional problems or have language breakdown, they cannot perform or carry out instructions effectively due to language problems. They are faced with using mother tongue (MT) and ‘Nigerian Pidgin’ English at home and in school are faced with standardized English. This creates a lot of confusion in the learners. Hence they keep mute in class.” She added that “at this stage at their ages and the fact that they are not exposed like children in the cities, learning in a foreign language becomes a big challenge to them. The learners find separating mother tongue features and English language features difficult”.

Another reason they gave for learners not reading and comprehending text was their lack of exposure to several levels of reading texts. Further factors included a lack of reading materials in rural schools and lesson duration. During observation, the researcher noticed that reading materials were in short supply, and parents’ inability to provide their children with the learning materials exacerbated the situation.

Based on what all the interviewees said, at this level, all Primary 4 learners should be able to integrate the three basic levels of reading comprehension, namely, factual, inferential, and evaluation(See Section 2.15). By implication, reading at Primary 4 becomes an active procedure where the reader is supposed to possess the reading skills that will enable him or her to use major ideas in the written text to acquire the right meaning.

From the respondents’ comments, the majority of learners in Primary 4 did not read at the level expected

of a Primary 4 learner; in other words, they had reading and comprehension problems at a level where they were assumed to be reading to learn in English, but were hindered by certain factors, which the respondents outlined as being a poor reading foundation because of the teaching done by lower basic teachers and as learners not being exposed to various age-level texts. Lack of reading materials, insufficient time for reading lessons, as well as the language of instruction were also mentioned. The above corresponds to Baba's (2016:110) statement that the challenges of reading in English in a rural classroom could be as a result of inherent factors such as attitude, auditory, and visual perceptual problems. There are also out-of-school factors, which include the home and food insecurity. (See Section 2.6.)

The respondents' answers clearly showed that they were aware why the Primary 4 learners had reading problems, as they mentioned many reasons. Thus, the sub-aim regarding reasons for Primary 4 learners' reading problems was dealt with. It could not, however, be deduced that the participants understood the actual reading problems as indicated in the second sub-aim.

5.12.13 Question 13: The National Policy on Education states that learners in Primary 4 are supposed to be learners who can read to learn in all subjects without being assisted, how far is this policy in practice in rural schools?

All the participants believed that, although the policy statement was correct, it was not totally possible to apply it in rural schools where teaching and learning were very bad. QT2 said: "It could only be practiced in urban private schools where learning materials are made available because it is compulsory for parents to provide reading and learning materials, as well as that parents have to give reading support to their children at home either by themselves or to engage private home teachers for the children. And the learners learn in a 'normal situation'." When asked what a "normal situation" was, she said that it was a situation where learning took place in a conducive atmosphere, classroom walls were decorated

with motivating pictures, learners were exposed to various texts, which should be available in a ratio of 1:1, and they sat on good chairs and at tables.

Teachers QT1, QT3, and QT4 said that, based on this policy, government expected that learners would be reading on their own without much difficulty because it was assumed that the right foundation had been given between the lower Primary 1 and 3 levels. They explained that the policy of the government on the reading level expected from primary learners could not be met in rural areas due to numerous factors such as the poor learning environment, class size, lack of textbooks, lack of qualified reading teachers, learners' poor attitude, and lack of parental support.

Teacher QT4, for example, explained: "Lack of teaching and learning facilities mostly in rural areas makes the implementation of the policy on teaching reading practically impossible." All the participants stated that the policy would continue to fail the education system as long as the authorities that put the policy in place were not ready to address the problems. Thus, learners in rural schools were likely to continue to experience reading difficulties or to struggle with reading and eventually drop out of school. In the selected schools, there were, however, common problems such as the seating arrangements (where three or four learners were seated at a table or desk, and they sat in rows of four or five), a lack of teaching and learning materials, learners coming to schools without learning materials, and learners not being given homework due to the non-availability of reading texts. Reading texts had a ratio of one to three or four learners. By implication, the policy could not be effective if important facilities continued to be in short supply.

Based on what she learned from the participants, the researcher is of the view that the participants' opinions are in line with what Croombs says. According to him to achieve an excellent standard in efficiency and productivity in rural areas, better learning materials are needed (Isah 2009:86). (See Section 2.18.5.)

5.12.14 Question 14: How do you address the reading problems of learners in your class who are at risk in reading or what is your attitude towards them?

With regard to this question, the participants' views differed. Teacher participant QT3 from school B said that she felt extremely bad about reading problems experienced by most Primary 4 learners. According to her, some of these children were reading below level not because they were not interested in learning, but due to various factors beyond their control. When asked what the problems were, she said: "Language factor, in other words, medium of instruction used in school is quite different from the language used at home." Other factors, she said, were a lack of reading and writing materials and a poor foundation in reading. She, furthermore, stated that, in assisting learners in their reading, she had been recycling old storybooks and picture books and sometimes used learners' mother tongue to explain concepts to the learners during remedial classes, which usually took place after school hours for learners who were willing to attend them. During classroom observation, a bag was noticed in the corner where she sat; it contained old magazines, picture books, and storybooks. This showed her concern about, and commitment to her learners.

QT2 said that he used to spend time giving extra reading classes to his learners, but that he had stopped because their parents were not appreciative. The participant added that these parents exhibited a very poor attitude towards their children by not seeing the provision of essential reading, writing, and other learning materials as important. This was confirmed by QT1, who remarked: "I give reading support sometimes, when time allows me, by asking learners to stay behind during break hour to be taught by a good reader, using the few reading texts available." She went on to say that "most teachers are not too concerned with reading problems at that level, because of too much work load for the teachers. Moreover, they are not trained on how to support learners with reading problems". She stated: "Even if they (the teachers) are willing to give reading support, non-availability of reading materials and parents' refusal to provide reading materials for their children because government had promised free

education will not permit such.” QT4 observed: “Some parents would not even provide a common writing pen, some of the learners used old notebooks used at previous levels to write in class.” The teachers indicated that there were times, especially during farming season, when the parents would withdraw their children from school for days to assist them with farm work. When the learners eventually returned to school, they were not able to catch up to their classmates who had been attending school regularly. In QT1’s opinion, if the parents were not concerned about their children learning at school, who would be?

The researcher noticed that, throughout the six weeks of observation, the learners attended school regularly because it was not farming season, and the recent policy put in place by the government in which attendance was taken through the iPad device both in the morning and in the afternoon after lessons compelled learners to attend school regularly, except in extreme cases. The researcher also observed that most of the teachers did not encourage the learners to read in class; it was up to the learners whether they read and understood or not.

QT1, QT3, and QT4 were willing to help, but there were factors that impeded them. Such factors included non-availability of texts, insufficient time allocated to reading, and the absence of guided reading or reading support. The role played by parents was another factor. The parents’ level of poverty made it impossible for them to provide needed learning materials and to provide for the other needs of their children or wards. This is in line with David Berliner’s (2018) comment: “Our educational problems have their roots in families where food, insecurity or hunger is a regular occurrence.” Also corroborating the respondents’ comments is the view of Amadi (2014:14), who reports that an additional problem faced by rural Primary 4 learners is a lack of reading material, the reason being that politicians promise free education at the primary level of education during their campaigns, but as soon as the elections are over and they have been sworn into power, these promises are forgotten. Parents

hold onto what the politicians promised. Thus, they do not provide the required reading materials for their children (See Section 2.6.)

In Question 14, the sub-aim regarding Primary 4 teachers' plans to have intervention reading plans to support learners was attended to. Three of the teacher participants had a plan to offer additional reading lessons in the afternoon, but as it had cost and other implications, it had not been implemented.

5.12.15 Question 15: Do you know of any intervention strategies that can assist learners who are reading below the age level?

When this Question was asked, the answers given by the teacher respondents revealed their similar opinions. They said that, although they had not been trained on how to give interventions, the only intervention or reading programmes of which they made use, in addition to the normal classroom practice for those at risk for reading problems, were remedial programmes or remedial reading instructions that were usually given to learners whose parents would allow them to stay behind at the end of school hours for the extra lessons. The researcher probed further by asking whether they were aware of the difference between a remedial and an intervention programme, which they were not.

When asked to explain the type of remedial instruction provided to learners, the responses were also the same. The interviewees said that, during the extra lessons, frequent rereading of texts, passages, or short stories was used. This was done repeatedly until learners got used to the concept they were expected to learn. They claimed that this method had helped in the past. The materials used were provided from the money paid by the parents of interested learners who were in the programme. They suggested that those with serious reading problems who found word recognition difficult were usually separated from the others and were given the assistance needed. QT3 said: "During the programme, we try to make them master letters of the alphabet, after that we teach how to read words and sentences. We sometimes encourage reading competition among them, until the teachers are satisfied that the remedial instruction has helped the learners in developing reading skills." The comments made by

participants QT1, QT2, and QT4 were in agreement with the above statement.

From the teachers' comments, it was apparent that, if the learners did not pay for these remedial classes, no teacher was willing to give any additional reading support to learners who were reading below their age level or were at risk for reading problems in their classes. Responses from teacher participants revealed that the kind of reading support given to those learners who could afford remedial instruction consisted of detailed explanations or instructions, which began with the identifications of letters of the alphabet, word recognition, construction of sentences, and reading using below-age-level reading materials. This support was repeated until learners were able to read independently. In the researcher's opinion, the teachers first of all used below-age reading materials beginning from Primary 1 to 3 to give guided reading or support before the introduction of the materials they were supposed to be reading in Primary 4. Responses from the respondents agreed with Bryne's (2007:110) opinion: "Children need support by their teachers to steer them away from potential points of discouragement in reading to learn" (Section 2.7.2).

The information provided by the participants also addressed the sub-aim regarding Primary 4 teachers' plans to have intervention reading plans to support learners' reading problems. For the four participants, remedial reading classes were like additional reading classes, and while they had not been trained to offer such additional reading classes, these classes were also not offered because the parents could not afford it.

5.12.16 Question 16: Have you ever heard of the read-aloud programme before?

With regard to the read-aloud programme, the participants responded in a similar manner. They indicated that they had heard of reading stories aloud to children in a classroom situation, but had never attached much importance to it as an intervention for reading problems. QT2 said: "I never knew that it can be used as an intervention programme for learners who are having problems with reading and

comprehension.”

QT3 responded in the same manner: “Ah, I am not aware that it is a kind of intervention programme because I have always read stories to learners as a way of keeping them busy when I am tired and want to rest. I will ask good readers to read stories aloud to the whole class when I am stressed up. I never knew that read-aloud is a useful intervention programme that can be used to prevent reading failure from taking place or putting an end to it if it has already started.” QT3 saw this as a potentially useful programme, as they had Primary 4 learners who were struggling with reading comprehension.

When asked whether they thought a read-aloud intervention could assist those who were reading below level, the teachers’ responses were positive. They said that if it had been used elsewhere in the world, they were ready to use it in addition to their regular classroom practice. The teachers’ positive attitude aligns with social constructivism because if the teachers were trained in the read-aloud programme they could scaffold their learners’ knowledge of vocabulary before, during and after reading (Gromley & Ruhl 2005:310). This would eventually help the learners to construct a better understanding of what they read.

They added that adequate reading materials had to be provided and that the reading classroom had to be made conducive to learning, with rich materials that could assist learners. They suggested that workbooks be made available, if possible, to enable learners to get enough practice on reading both at school and at home. The participants’ responses corroborate the position held by Worthy, Chamberlain, Peterson, Sharp, and Shih (2012:105), who believe that a classroom comprised of rich literature discussions around books enables learners to actively practise language, creates an opportunity for high-level thinking, allows them to contribute opinions and feelings, and teaches them respect for the opinions of others. (See Section 3.9.3.) Based on the feedback from the participants, the researcher’s plan in the research project to train the teacher participants to use the read-aloud programme could be valuable.

5.12.17 Question 17: Do you know the effect that their inability to read will have on the learners?

When asked to comment on the effect of their inability to read on learners, the responses of participants did not differ. They saw the ability to read and comprehend as the most essential factor for any learner to succeed in and out of school, especially as information was passed on in written form. They suggested that the problem for any learner or individual not being able to read could be very big. According to all the participants, the result of the inability to read was that the learner would be ill-equipped to face academic challenges at a higher level of education and that this inability would also affect the learner's future endeavours. A learner who was unable to read would perform badly in all content areas at school. One interviewee, QT4, responded that any individual who was unable to read and write was seen as an illiterate person, regardless of the level of commendable experience such an individual might have.

The general view was that any learner who was unable to read at any level of primary school, especially the upper basic level, was also likely to struggle with reading throughout life. The ability of learners to read strongly predicted their educational accomplishment later in life. Any learner who was not reading at all or who struggled with reading stood the risk of pulling out of school. The participants' opinions corroborate those of Idogo (2011:2) and Aina, Ogunbeni, Adigun, and Ogundipe (2011:12) that children with reading problems receive poor grades at school, get frustrated, and face the risk of dropping out of school (See Section 2.14.).

5.13 Summary of the results of interviews with participants

The four participants were interviewed, and the information was analysed. The researcher tried to be careful not to work outside the scope of the research questions. The main findings obtained from the interviews with the four participants can be summarised as follows:

- A poor learning environment
- The lack of a proper reading foundation in Primary 1 to 3

- Inadequate reading materials
- The language of instruction
- A lack of additional reading support by teachers
- The absence of trained reading teachers
- The lack of support from parents or guardians
- Parents' socio-economic situation

5.14 Discussion of the interviews with the participants

Based on the discussion the researcher had with the teachers, she noticed that, although they were not reading specialists, they had years of experience needed to teach upper basic learners (Primary 4). The teacher participants assumed that the learners would be ready for the challenges of reading to learn. It could be accepted that the Primary 4 learners in this research study were not too old for their class and that the required reading skills that they needed would have been taught in Primary 1 to 3. It was also observed that the teachers had taught at the various levels of primary school and, therefore, had knowledge of learning problems at its different levels.

All the learners in the study were within the required age range of between nine and 11 years, with a few exceptions of learners who were between 12 and 14 and in their middle childhood. The physical, cognitive, and emotional development stages were more or less the same. It was apparent that the teachers saw teaching reading and reading comprehension as the same, as it involved the ability of learners to read and comprehend a given text. The teachers were of the opinion that reading ought to have been properly taught by this stage of primary school, since this was the stage where learners were supposed to be reading to learn in order to be independent readers.

During the interviews, it was obvious that none of the teacher respondents had been specifically trained to or had not been well trained to teach language with reference to English and reading with comprehension; hence, they lacked knowledge about the right methods and strategies of teaching

reading and reading comprehension. They, therefore, did not know how to teach the basic reading skills or strategies required at that level where learners were at the “turning point” in their reading development (See Section 2.16.) Other factors that influenced their learners’ reading ability included a lack of reading materials and other resource materials. One respondent, however, had some supplementary reading material consisting of magazines and additional books. On the issue of reading intervention, the support given to learners was remedial reading instruction, which was offered sometimes, but parents had to pay extra for this. Thus, parents’ socio-economic situation could influence the possibility of their children getting additional reading support. The learners’ socio-economic situation at home could, thus, also influence their progress at school.

As far as further training was concerned, the teachers revealed that they had only gone for in-service training offered by the state government twice. The first time was 10 years before, while the second was the 2018 Edo BEST e-learning training programme for all primary school teachers. This training was offered to enable teachers to use the iPads with lessons developed by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and did not deal with the teaching of reading.

Discussion during the interviews revealed that an insignificant number of learners in Primary 4 were reading with comprehension, while others were at risk for reading problems. The participants attributed this to factors such as learners’ lack of exposure to proper or additional reading texts and a lack of reading materials, among others. The participants also opined that the learners had not been taught well to read in the lower grades, and when in Primary 4, where the learners were expected to read to understand and study, they could not read with comprehension. Some learners could not even read fluently. On the issue of learners’ inability to read, it was revealed that this inability would make it impossible for them to face the challenges associated with learning or school programmes, and hence, they were likely to struggle with reading throughout their lives.

It became clear that the requirements of the National Policy on Education for Primary 4 learners were not practicable in rural schools because of certain learning challenges such as a poor learning environment, a lack of parental support, inadequate learning materials, and language problems.

The language of instruction as used in schools was a major challenge to Primary 4 learners, as this differed from the languages used at home. The learners were unable to reconcile the linguistic features of these languages and found it difficult to follow classroom reading instructions. These challenges made it impossible for teachers to address reading problems confronting learners in Primary 4 classrooms. The only form of reading support noticed by the researcher was the after-school remedial programme meant for only those who could afford it.

5.15 Structured questionnaires

A questionnaire was composed and given to Primary 4 teachers in the two schools where the research was conducted as well as to teachers in other schools in the area of the study (See Annexure J). The researcher ensured that ambiguous questions and terms that would lead to double-barrelled questions were avoided. This could be done as a result of the pilot study that had been done. Careful attention was given to the transparent and logical arrangement of questions, and the length of the questionnaire was also considered. Adequate care was taken to ensure that the questions were relevant. This method involved the collection of a structured questionnaire that essentially entailed both closed questions and rankings as well as open-ended questions. Scaled questions were also included, followed by possible or potential responses. Also used was a Likert-type scale, allowing the researcher to get a participant's view on an issue by choosing options such as a, b, c, d, and e as well as Agree (A), Strongly agree (AS), Disagree (D), Strongly disagree (SD), and Undecided (UN). The characteristic features or descriptors on this scale could change based on the nature of the questions or statements, thus providing high flexibility (McMillan & Schumacher 2014:109) (See Annexure J). The questionnaire was initially piloted with two teachers in the chosen pilot schools to test its reliability (See Section 5.2.6).

The questionnaire was completed by teachers in the two selected schools and teachers in other schools in the same rural area. The sample was, thus, all the Primary 4 teachers of the two selected schools as well as Primary 4 teachers of other primary schools in the area. The researcher distributed 38 questionnaires to 38 teachers, and all the questionnaires were completed by the teachers and collected by the researcher.

The questionnaire investigated how Primary 4 to 6 teachers in rural Nigeria were coping with learners who were at risk for reading problems and who had comprehension problems when reading. Primary 4 to 6 learners are at the upper basic level of the school programme, and the reading skills that they are required to have mastered are the same. The researcher wanted to obtain information about the seriousness of a group of teachers about the impact that a problem concerning reading with comprehension could have on the Primary 4 learners. Her study and, therefore, the questionnaire also explored teachers' knowledge of comprehension when reading and related issues such as read-aloud, reading at-risk, and the seriousness of this problem for learners who were faced with reading challenges. The researcher, furthermore, wished to get information about the teachers' understanding and knowledge regarding the existence of possible reading intervention programmes (See Annexure J for the questionnaire).

5.16 Results from the teachers' questionnaire

5.16.1 Introduction

At school A, there were 20 teachers. Two out of this number were Primary 4 teachers. Primary 5 and 6 had four teachers, while the rest taught the other levels. Questionnaires were given to Primary 5 and 6 teachers as well, the reason being that all six teachers at the upper basic level in schools A and B were teaching learners who were assumed to be reading to learn and for whom English was the language of instruction. Therefore, the teachers ought to be aware of the consequences the inability to read at the

upper level could have for such a group of learners. Six teachers out of the 20 at school A completed the questionnaire. School B had 18 teachers: two in Primary 4 and two each in Primary 5 and 6. A total of six teachers at school B filled in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was also given to teachers from four other schools in the area where the study was conducted. The total number of teachers from the other schools ranged between 24 and 30 because the school population in all the other schools was larger than that in schools A and B. Twenty-three upper basic teachers (Primary 4 to 6) also completed the questionnaire. In total, 35 teachers, thus, completed the questionnaire.

The responses of the teachers who acted as respondents to the questionnaire used in this study will be discussed under the headings related to the questions. The teachers who completed the questionnaire were given codes starting with a Q; thus, codes with numbers between Q1 and Q38 will be used in the discussion.

5.16.2 Teaching qualifications

Table 5.2: Teaching qualifications

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid NCE	28	73.7	73.7	73.7
First degree in Education	10	26.3	26.3	100.0
Total	38	100.0	100.0	

From Table 5.2, it can be seen that the majority of the teachers in the selected schools who acted as respondents had a Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), while a few had a Bachelor of Arts in Education (BEd) as their highest level of education. All the teachers were certified to teach at the primary level, having duly completed the three-year national training programme at colleges of education for basic teachers.

5.16.3 Training to teach school subjects

Table 5.3: Training to teach school subjects

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid Edo	1	2.6	2.6	2.6
English	32	84.2	84.2	86.8
	1	2.6	2.6	89.5
Mathematics	4	10.5	10.5	100.0
Social Studies	38	100.0	100.0	
Total				

With regard to their training as teachers, Table 5.3 shows that the majority of the teachers studied English in combination with other subjects, such English/Social Studies, English/French, English/Religious Knowledge, and English as a double major, entailing language, literature, reading skills, and reading theory. The majority of the respondents were, thus, in a position to teach English as a language and also to teach reading, depending on the type of initial training that they had received. It can be accepted that the teachers' years of experience should not have influenced the opinions that they gave in the questionnaires negatively.

5.16.4 Teaching experience

Table 5.4: Teaching experience

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid less than 5 years	3	7.9	7.9	7.9
5 to 10 years	2	5.3	60.5	68.4
10 to 15 years	7	18.4	18.4	86.8
15 to 20 years	2	5.3	5.3	92.1
20 to 25 years	23	60.5	5.3	97.4
More than 25 years	1	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	38	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.4 reveals that most of the teacher respondents in the two schools and the other teachers in the area had teaching experience that ranged between 20 and 25 years. Only two had between 5 and 10 years of teaching experience. All the teachers involved in the study taught English as a subject at the

time of the study.

From the above, it is clear that the majority of the teachers in the selected schools and schools in the area had more than 10 years' teaching experience. Therefore, they had spent a long time teaching, which could enhance the use of their experience or knowledge on intervention strategies with regard to reading problems. Moreover, they had taught Primary 4 classes and other levels at one time or another and ought to know the reading problems that occurred at a particular school stage.

5.16.5 In-service training

All 38 teachers responded that, in their 10 to 25 years of teaching experience, they had only attended in-service training twice. They were of the opinion that in-service development workshops or seminars could enhance their teaching strategies.

5.16.6 Reading skills

The 38 teachers who completed the questionnaire described reading comprehension as the ability to decode meaning from a text while reading, which also entailed the ability of a learner to connect prior knowledge with what was being learnt. This could make it possible for learners to understand what they read and to apply critical thinking to what was read. With regard to the expected skills required from primary learners, the responses obtained from the completed questionnaires were that a Primary 4 learner had to be able to visualise, make inferences and connections between ideas, and summarise a text when reading. The respondents indicated that the majority of the learners in Primary 4 to 6 did not have reading comprehension skills.

QT4, for example, commented that “most learners at this stage of learning are supposed to have predicting, visualizing and other skills. The problem is that they do not have reading materials to practice these skills”. QT2 made a similar remark: “These children are not dull, their major challenge is a language problem, poor foundation and lack of reading materials. If these issues are solved and the

learners are well taught using the [reading] skills it will not be a problem to them.” The responses of teachers from the other schools were in alignment with the views of the teachers in the main study. QT9, in particular, emphasised that most of these learners were not totally bad regarding reading and that, if given the necessary support, they would do well in their reading skills. The teachers’ responsibility in a teaching and learning situation is to bring about learning experiences for their learners. This is done by creating learning conditions that will prompt learners’ interest in printed material. Teachers need to employ suitable instructional strategies and methods in the classroom, so that the learning requirements of various categories of children in the classroom will be met (Okebukola, Owolabi & Onafowokan 2013:32)

5.16.7 Identification of reading at-risk learners

Teachers had different opinions on this issue. Fifteen teachers – QT2, QT3, QT8, QT10, QT11, QT12, QT14, QT19, QT20, QT21, QT24, QT25, QT26, QT27, and QT28 – in school A and school B, as well as some from the other schools, stated that readers at risk for reading problems were identified at the beginning of the academic session, while 13 indicated that it was done during regular classroom assessment. QT29, QT30, QT31, QT33, QT34, and QT36 said that it happened during regular classroom reading assessment, which determined how prepared the learners were for the learning challenges of their new grade. A group of the respondents from the other schools revealed that some learners at risk for reading problems were identified as soon as learning commenced in the new class. QT32 stated: “I am able to know those who cannot read on their own within the first to second week of resumption. They are not able to identify words in text or written on the board.”

The respondents who completed the questionnaire, thus, had mixed opinions about the identification of Primary 4 learners reading at-risk.

5.16.8 The term “at risk”

Two teacher respondents, QT5 and QT13, explained the term “at risk” as a situation where something unpleasant might happen. Eleven teachers responded that it was a situation where learners were considered to have a higher probability of dropping out of school. Two participants, QT9 and QT14, described it as a situation where learners could face situations that could hamper their ability to finish school. The majority (16 respondents) indicated the options provided in the questionnaire; the options were c, d, and e (See Section B, item 5 of the questionnaire)

5.16.9 Learners at risk for reading problems

Sixteen teachers opined that, if they had learners who were at risk for reading problems in their classrooms, they would spend more time working on such learners. QT3 said: “What I [we] usually do is to make some poor readers sit on [at] the same table with good readers and encourage the good ones to assist them in their area of difficulty during free period.” QT1, QT2, QT4, QT8, QT9, QT12, QT13, QT14, QT20, QT21, QT23, QT24, QT26, QT29, QT32, and QT38 indicated that they spent more time working with learners who were at risk for reading problems. QT27 said: “I want to see if their performance will improve with time.”

5.16.10 Learners’ attitude towards reading comprehension

Respondents QT1 to QT7, QT9, QT10, QT11, QT13, QT14, QT15, and QT18 to QT35 stated that the majority of learners’ attitude towards reading comprehension was negative. They, furthermore, indicated that teachers were responsible for learners’ poor attitude towards reading. QT3 said: “Most times we teachers contribute to these learners’ reading problems by not showing interest in their reading problems. We don’t encourage them enough, we laid poor foundation at lower levels hence the poor attitude.” QT8, QT12, QT16, and QT17 remarked that a few learners had a positive attitude.

It was clear that, as far as learners’ attitude to reading and their motivation to read were concerned, the

respondents felt that teachers were responsible for learners' poor attitude towards reading, since they did not give adequate attention to learners with reading problems. Barbosa (2009:406) posits that there are two major factors of motivation that enhance reading comprehension among primary school learners: learners' level of self-efficacy for reading and their intrinsic motivation to read. Attention should be given to these two important aspects of motivation, which are positively related to the improvement of the skills required in reading for both efficient and struggling readers (McGeown, Norgate & Warhurst 2012:315).

5.16.11 Intervention programme

A total of 36 teachers who completed the questionnaire, with the exception of QT10 and QT14, indicated that a well-implemented intervention programme could change the attitude of learners towards reading. Teacher QT1, in particular, commented that if an intervention programme were well planned and put in place for all teachers and if they were given enough training with all the learning materials provided, this could help learners do well in all school subjects.

It was obvious from the responses of the respondents that they were very interested and keen to learn about a reading intervention programme that could help their learners to overcome and minimise their reading problems. This was evidence of the teachers' positive attitude to help their learners.

5.16.12 Support programme

A total of 28 teacher respondents expressed the opinion that there was no support programme for learners with poor reading abilities. Q25 indicated that "there is hardly any school in the state where learners are given free learning support". QT7, QT8, QT9, QT10, QT12, QT15, QT17, QT18, QT20, and QT27 commented that the only remedial or learning support that could be offered at most schools was in the form of after-school remedial classes.

5.16.13 Intervention teachers

Thirteen respondents described intervention as an essential strategy for closing the reading gap that learners might have as well as a means of increasing learners' reading speed. QT1, in particular, said: "I believe that intervention could be a means of increasing learners reading speed which can benefit them." Other respondents who completed the questionnaires were also of the view that intervention could be a means of increasing learners' reading speed by teaching them to read faster. QT22, QT33, QT34, QT35, QT36, QT37, QT38, QT2, and QT3, agreed with all the options raised in the questionnaire.

5.16.14 Read-aloud programme

Seven of the teachers who completed the questionnaire knew what read-aloud was all about and that it could allow learners to become active participants in the classroom activity, while the rest of the respondents (31) had no knowledge about what the read-aloud programme was.

5.16.15 Read-aloud as intervention

All of the 38 teachers who completed the questionnaire stated that, if they had knowledge of read-aloud as an intervention strategy, they would love to apply it in teaching reading and reading comprehension. Hence, all of them indicated an interest in being trained on how the read-aloud programme could be used as an intervention strategy.

5.16.16 Read-aloud as support programme

In total, 37 teachers believed that the read-aloud intervention strategy could be used to support learners to become independent, fluent readers. They indicated that they would like to apply it in their various classroom reading activities if given the opportunity, since it would enable them to enhance their teaching strategies. It could also help to make the classes interactive and, thus, motivate and change

learners' attitudes towards reading. It was only QT15 who indicated that she would not want to implement read-aloud as a support programme.

5.16.17 Benefits of read-aloud

From the teachers' responses in the questionnaires, it was evident that almost all participants (37 respondents), with the exception of QT23, agreed with the idea that reading stories out loud to readers ought to be applied as a teaching strategy in every class, especially in classes that had learners who were struggling with reading. Teachers QT8, QT11, QT15, QT27, QT29, and QT30 to QT38 specifically indicated this option: "Yes, I [we] will use it in order for my at-risk learners to improve their reading comprehension skill." Another respondent, QT3, suggested that "though reading aloud different stories and texts at least 20 minutes daily may be demanding on the teachers and learners, it would have positive effect on learners' attitude towards reading". All the teachers in schools A and B and the other schools, except QT23, strongly agreed that read-aloud could allow learners to become more familiar with the way one ought to read and to understand what was read.

All the teacher respondents (QT1 to QT38) mentioned that their lessons were planned in the same way, regardless of whether they had learners at risk in terms of reading in their classes or not. Teachers QT1, QT2, QT3, QT4, and QT26 agreed that "Learners whose reading abilities are at risk should be accommodated in a separate or special classes", whereas QT5 to QT25 strongly disagreed with this view. All the respondents (QT1 to QT38) agreed that they had not been trained to use the read-aloud strategy. Asemota (2013:25) posits that the teaching of reading at Primary 4 level is faulty and that the teachers need in-service training about the use of strategies to improve reading at Primary 4 level.

5.16.18 Aim of the intervention programme

All the teachers who completed the questionnaire agreed that an intervention programme had to be used to support the teaching and learning of reading comprehension of learners who were at risk for reading

problems; they were also of the opinion that intervention would enable the teachers to plan clear daily routines for read-aloud sessions. As could be seen from the responses to the previous question, the teacher respondents had not been trained to offer an intervention reading programme.

All the teachers who completed the questionnaire were of the view that merely reading stories out loud while learners listened would not make learners better readers. They felt that success could be achieved through a good selection of books and the implementation of strategies to be used while reading. QT4, QT5, QT6, QT7, and QT38, with the exception of QT15, said that the aim of an intervention programme was to support learners who were at risk for reading problems or had difficulty with reading and comprehending.

QT2, QT18, QT23, and QT25 chose this option on the questionnaire: "I feel that if read-aloud activities could be planned for 20 minutes daily, it would impact significantly on learners' reading performance, and thus bring about positive effect on learners' attitude to reading and reading comprehension and improve their reading abilities. It could also increase their test scores." Other teachers, QT1, QT3, QT4, QT13, QT26, and QT18 said that learners who were read aloud to regularly were able to summarise or retell the events as these occurred in the stories. They added that it could increase learners' reading levels.

5.16.19 Regular read-aloud

The respondents agreed that learners who were read aloud to on a regular basis stood a chance of improving their reading abilities, and thus, a reading intervention strategy ought to be incorporated in a teaching plan. All 38 respondents believed that school authorities had to encourage and provide teachers with all that was needed for the implementation of reading intervention programmes in class. The 38 teacher respondents strongly agreed that reading intervention as a programme had to be offered in addition to the already existing literacy curriculum. This could help to increase the percentage of learners who did not have reading problems in school.

5.17 Summary of the results of the questionnaires

- Participants were all qualified to teach in upper primary.
- Participants had many years of teaching experience.
- Most participants opined that in-service training, workshops, and seminars could boost their reading strategies.
- Participants were of the opinion that Primary 4 learners had to be able to apply strategies when reading, but this was made impossible by certain factors such as a lack of reading materials, language problems, a poor foundation at the lower level, and a lack of necessary reading support at different stages.
- Participants had mixed opinions on the identification of learners who were at risk for reading problems.
- Participants were willing to support learners at risk for reading problems, but one issue that emerged was that parents had to pay towards additional reading lessons.
- Participants were of the view that teachers were responsible for learners' poor attitude towards reading.
- Participants were interested in having the knowledge needed on intervention programmes that could reduce learners' reading problems.
- Participants were of the opinion that read-aloud could help to support learners in becoming independent readers.

5.18 Discussion of the results from the questionnaire

An analysis of the questionnaire revealed that 28 respondents had Nigeria Certificates in Education, while 10 had a Bachelor of Arts in Education. This information showed that the teachers were qualified to teach. Moreover, 32 teacher respondents had had training in English, while six had been trained in other subject areas. With regard to teaching experience, 23 teachers had 20 to 25 years of teaching

experience, which meant that the majority of them had spent significant time teaching reading in Primary 4 as well as other levels of upper primary. During this long period of teaching, all the respondents had only attended in-service training twice. The last in-service training session had, however, dealt with the use of iPads for lesson plans.

The teacher respondents agreed that a Primary 4 learner ought to or was expected to possess the right reading comprehension strategies that would enhance reading and reading comprehension, but that most of the learners unfortunately lacked reading skills. According to the respondents, the reasons for this were a lack of reading materials, a faulty foundation in reading at a lower level, and a lack of reading support, among others(See Section 5.24.) All of these factors were responsible for learners becoming at-risk readers. The teacher respondents were able to identify learners who were at risk for reading problems at different stages: some at the beginning of a new academic year and others during classroom reading activities. Other teachers agreed that at-risk readers were identified in assessment tasks during the first week of the school year.

With regard to learners at risk for reading problems, respondents were of the opinion that these learners were in danger of failing and dropping out of school. All the teachers who completed the questionnaires maintained that if the necessary learning materials were provided, they would create time to assist such learners. The teachers agreed that learners' attitude towards reading was poor. They attributed learners' negative attitude to teachers who did not show concern towards learners' learning needs.

With regard to an intervention programme, the respondents agreed that they had no knowledge of read-aloud as an intervention programme; they felt that if they were trained in the programme, they could apply it to support learners at risk for reading problems in their regular classroom. The problem was that the majority of the learners could not afford the after-school remedial instruction.

As far as the benefits of the read-aloud programme were concerned, the respondents were of the view

that read-aloud could be beneficial to at-risk learners if it was well planned for and applied in every class where learners were struggling with reading.

5.19 Presentation of themes that emerged in the study

Table 5.5 provides a summary of all the themes that arose from the three data collection methods, namely, classroom observation, interviews, and questionnaires. It was necessary to collect this data to see and understand the teaching of reading to Primary 4 learners in the selected schools. The researcher had to make sure that reading was taught well and properly before a group of learners could be used in the research project to find out whether the read-aloud intervention programme or another reading programme such as explicit direct instruction (EDI) would benefit the learners' acquisition of reading skills best.

Table 5.5: Summary of themes from the three data collection instruments

Classroom observation	Interviewing	Questionnaires
<p style="text-align: center;">School factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor learning environment • Lack of reading materials • Language of instruction • Lack of regular in-service teacher training <p style="text-align: center;">Teacher factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial teacher training • Teachers' awareness of the importance of reading and reading comprehension in Primary 4 rural classrooms • Teachers' understanding of strategies in teaching reading comprehension • Poor initial foundation with regard to reading in Primary 1 to 3 • Absence of reading support for learners • Lack of motivation • Planning of reading lessons <p style="text-align: center;">Learner factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners not reading with comprehension • Learners' home background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor school environment • Lack of proper reading foundation in Primary 1 to 3 • Inadequate reading materials • Language of instruction • Lack of additional reading support by teachers • Absence of trained reading teachers • Lack of support from parents or guardians • Parents' socio-economic situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' good qualifications • Many years of teaching experience. • Training and workshops are necessary. • Need for learners to have reading strategies • Teacher responsible for learners' poor reading attitudes • Different opinions on at risk learners • Necessary reading support not provided • Read-aloud programme necessary

Triangulation was used to confirm the information from one data collection method with the data from the other methods, and thus, a more complete picture about reading in Primary 4 in the specific area in Nigeria could be constructed. The themes that emerged from the data were grouped under three major

themes arising from the school, the teachers and the learners. Subthemes arising within each theme were also identified and will be discussed.

5.19.1 School factors

In order to have a clearer understanding of the theme of school factors, four subthemes were identified; these will be explained in this section.

- Poor learning environment
- Lack of reading materials
- Language of instruction
- Lack of regular in-service teacher training

A detailed discussion of the subthemes follows.

5.19.1.1 Poor School environment

As indicated in Chapter 2, Section 2.18.7, reports have shown that most public schools, especially in rural areas, are in very bad condition, and most school structures are in bad shape. The poor condition of the learning environment can affect learners' attitude towards learning. According to Uche (2009:54), "this poor condition will continue to affect learners' interests, feelings and emotions towards learning".

This situation was confirmed during the researcher's visit to the schools that participated in the study. It was noticed that most learners at the one school sat on broken chairs and tables, while others sat on the floor, and a few sat on blocks and used their school bags as desks. The above statement was confirmed by all the teachers. QT3 and QT4, in particular, commented: "It is a very sad situation. Look around the classroom and see for yourself, see children sitting on the floor to write. Is this how learning condition is supposed to be? There are no windows, no doors, broken floors, no electricity supply, no toilet in this school."

During observation, the researcher could see that these conditions could not be conducive to the teaching-learning situation in the classroom and could not contribute to motivating the young learners to read and to absorb new information. This aligns with what Uche (2009:10) said about the school environment: It is “a situation where sons and daughters of the Federal Republic of Nigeria learn under trees, in dilapidated buildings or learners have to study without functional libraries or laboratories, is unacceptable and unbefitting.” She adds that these conditions will continue to affect learners’ interests, feelings, and emotions towards learning.

5.19.1.2 Lack of reading materials

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Section 2.18.5, Amadi (2014:4) reports that one of the major factors that hinders the teaching of reading is a lack of instructional materials in the classroom, as this can have a significant impact on a child’s cognitive development.

Observations at the schools where the respondents taught revealed that there was a serious problem with inadequate reading materials at all the schools. The teachers who acted as respondents spoke about their displeasure and frustration with regard to the short supply of textbooks at the schools despite government’s promise of free textbooks to learners, on which most parents had capitalised by refusing to buy learning materials for their children. This was despite teachers’ appeal that government provision could not cater for all learners in all the schools.

The teacher respondents were of the opinion that, if government provided readers and other learning materials as promised, they would cope and try to provide support to meet the reading needs of learners during free periods or break time. In the interviews, respondents were clear about the problem of inadequate materials. QT2, for instance, responded: “It is frustrating for us teachers, where we have to teach these learners without reading and writing materials.”

Classroom observation also revealed that teachers faced serious difficulty as a result of the lack of

enough textbooks. In a class of 47 learners at school A, for example, there were no more than 15 copies of the readers, which meant that three or four learners had to share a reader during a reading lesson. The books were returned to the headmistress's office after each lesson. Further implications of this were that teachers could not give learners home assignments and that learners could not circle or mark difficult concepts in passages that they had to read. One of the problems found in schools is the lack of reading and learning materials. Without reading and learning materials it is difficult to stimulate a child's cognitive development. (Section 2.18.5)

5.19.1.3 Language of instruction

Data collected in the study revealed that another reason given by teachers with regard to learners' inability to read with comprehension was the language of instruction. They had a strong belief that learners in Primary 4 were taught in a language of instruction quite different from what was spoken at home (their mother tongue (MT)) and different from Nigerian Pidgin English. Hence, they found it difficult to follow instructions (See Section 2.6.). During the interviews, most teachers reported that a major problem they had in teaching Primary 4 rural learners was the language of instruction. This was also confirmed during classroom observation. The researcher discovered that teachers found it difficult to communicate effectively in English with learners while teaching. Most teachers could speak the learners' MT, and they ended up using it to explain concepts to the learners.

5.19.1.4 In-service teacher training

The teacher participants in the study agreed that they had only received in-service teacher training twice through workshops from the state. This had happened over a long period in time. It was obvious from the findings that most respondents still required training and support. The support they needed was either from the local authority or the state government. All four teacher participants (QT1, QT2, QT3, and QT4) whom the researcher interviewed, as well as questionnaire responses from the other

respondents (QT5 to QT38), gave proof that teachers needed regular in-service training workshops, which had to be mainly on how to give support to learners at risk for reading problems. QT1 and QT4 commented that the training had to involve the organisers or facilitators providing practical demonstrations or illustrations on lessons in classroom situations, and QT3 stated the following: “Since we were employed, we had only gone for training twice. The most recent being the 2018 Edo Best training programme which prepared teachers on how to implement the use of iPads in teaching and learning.” Strangely enough, the training did not emphasise step-by-step approaches to how to teach reading and how to handle learners’ reading problems. The respondents indicated that they required intensive training on different reading comprehension strategies and how these could be implemented in the classroom across subject areas as well as on how learners’ individual reading problems could be identified and addressed considering the various factors confronting rural learners’ progress at school. That the teachers had to be trained to use various reading methods and on how to enhance learners’ reading comprehension abilities was also evident during classroom observation. The four teachers who were observed used different approaches such as silent teaching, read-aloud while learners repeated the words after them, or “repeat after me”.

The teachers said that they would want to provide support to these learners, but did not know how to do it. As pointed out in Chapter 2 (Section 2.6), teachers needed a broad conceptual knowledge that prepared them for what and how to teach in a manner that would motivate learners to read and would guide them in their reading, a view confirmed by Amadi (2014:4). According to social constructivism, learners can construct their knowledge for instance in the ability to read with comprehension on the condition that it happens under the supervision and guidance of their teachers (Ardiansyah & Ujuhanti 2018:73). (See Section 4.4) If teachers were, however not trained to teach the learners how to read with comprehension, it cannot happen.

5.19.2 Teacher factors

The sub themes are;

- Initial teacher training
- Teachers' awareness of the importance of reading and reading comprehension in Primary 4 rural classrooms
- Teachers' understanding of strategies in teaching reading comprehension
- Poor initial foundation with regard to reading in Primary 1 to 3
- Absence of reading support for learners
- Lack of motivation

5.19.2.1 Initial teacher training

The teacher respondents stated that they had had an initial compulsory three years of training as Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) holders or four years of training as Bachelor of Education (BEd) or Bachelor of Arts (BA) holders, which qualified them to teach at the primary level, regardless of area of specialisation, according to government policy.

From the respondents' point of view, the initial training received was not specifically based on how to teach reading and comprehension, but on enabling them to function as basic teachers who could teach all content areas at the primary level. In the researcher's opinion, the teachers' initial training either at NCE level or university (BEd or BA) level was not targeted at preparing them to become reading specialists, but at producing teachers who were trained to teach all content areas at the primary level. For instance, QT2 pointed out that he had never had any training in the teaching of reading and reading comprehension because he had majored in a science-related course. QT1, QT3, and QT4 commented that they had not been trained to teach reading comprehension as a subject, but that reading was subsumed under English courses, where some skills were mentioned, although not taught in-depth by their lecturers during their teacher training programmes. The teacher respondents said that they were not fully prepared and oriented to teach reading and comprehension skills. They agreed that they still

managed to teach reading, even though they were not reading specialists.

QT18 to QT38's comments in the questionnaire also helped to substantiate this claim. QT18 said: "I have never received any special training on how to teach reading, but I still try my best to teach reading and comprehension at that level."

From the discussion, it was clear that teachers needed to be provided with in-service training that would enable them to teach reading and comprehension skills. This was the only way in which the reading problems that so many Primary 4 learners had could be addressed.

This theme addressed the sub-aim related to the teachers' training to teach reading.

5.19.2.2 Teachers' awareness of the importance of reading and reading comprehension in Primary 4 rural classrooms

Section 2.5 in Chapter 2 makes reference to Idogo (2011:5), who asserts that reading and comprehension are considered to be a vital tool in the lives of learners and that the main reason for teaching citizens to read and write is that a certain standard of literacy is required for one to function as an obedient citizen. The four interview participants and the other respondents who completed the questionnaire appeared to have a good understanding of the vital roles of reading and reading comprehension in the lives of their learners at school and outside of school that showed agreement with Idogo's viewpoint despite the fact that they expressed their opinions differently. Each of the participants stressed the importance of teaching learners reading and comprehension at the upper basic school level, but additionally felt that this had to already begin at kindergarten level.

From the data collected on the importance of teaching reading and reading comprehension, QT2 made the following statement: "As far as I am concerned, teaching of reading and reading comprehension is very necessary because it will assist the learners to build upon their reading abilities and increase their understanding. As a result, learners will know why they are reading, retell stories, complete assignment on any classroom activity and also discuss what they have been reading with others and apply it in other

subject areas.”

Based on the opinions and responses from the interviews with the teachers who acted as respondents, as well as the responses to the questionnaire, all the participants expressed the importance of reading and reading comprehension. They emphasised the need for learners to be able to read and understand what they read in order to be able to decode meaning and connect the acquired information to other areas of life. The participants understood that reading comprehension was the foundation for academic success and that it created opportunities for learners to be lifelong readers and have the ability to understand the world surrounding them. This is aligned with the statement made by Nampaktai et al. (2013:28) mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 2, Section 2.5) that reading ability is the foundational skill for academic learning and is needed by all learners. Reading ability is important because it affords learners the opportunity to acquire new information, expand their knowledge, and advance their career (Nampktai, Kaewsombut, Akware, Wongwayrote & Sameepet 2018:28).

5.19.2.3 Poor initial foundation with regard to reading in Primary 1 to 3

As mentioned in Section 2.13 of Chapter 2, Amadi (2014:2) asserts that Primary 1 to 3 (lower basic) is the foundation for other classes in any educational system. In the Nigerian National Policy on Education (NPE 2004:14), it is stated that Primary 1 to 3 is the “bed rock to success or failure of entire school or learning programme”. The teaching of reading at Levels 1 to 3 occupies a vital position in the Nigerian Policy on Education. The major goal is to inculcate everlasting knowledge and the ability to read and convey information effectively.

Despite the importance of the teaching of reading at this level, studies have revealed that reading is not properly taught. Asemota (2007:20) states that the traditional method of teaching reading (chalk and talk, repeat after me, or chorus reading) at the foundation level is faulty. Based on research, Asemota (2007:20) and Agbatogun (2013:47) point out the following about the teaching of reading at Primary 1

to 3 level:

(a) Reading comprehension skills are not taught.

(b) Teachers adhere strictly to the prescribed textbooks.

(c) Questions are set to test understanding of the text instead of teaching to produce understanding of the text.

The four respondents taking part in the interview sessions agreed with the above assertion and suggested that the reason most Primary 4 rural learners were reading below their age level or were at risk for reading problems was what teachers from Primary 1 to 3 did. There was a lack of proper teaching in reading these classes. According to them, most learners who advanced to Primary 4 still found word recognition difficult. So, Primary 4 teachers had to spend time during the first term in Primary 4 teaching letter sounds and word recognition before addressing what learners were supposed to be learning at that level. The respondents were of the view that most teachers teaching Primary 1, 2, and 3 had not been trained as language teachers. A lack of teachers in their various schools made it compulsory for them to teach any subject, regardless of their area of specialisation. Hence, reading was not properly taught at that level.

QT2, in particular, said that “Unfortunately, most teachers in lower Primary lack the knowledge and experience that nurture and extend learners’ abilities”.

This statement corroborates Jaiyeoba’s (2011:10) assertion that the appropriate or basic skills that lower primary level learners are required to learn and utilise are not being taught by teachers; thus, government and other interest groups are not satisfied with the reading development of learners.

In this theme, the sub-aim related to the reasons for Primary 4 learners’ reading problems was attended to.

5.19.2.4 Teachers' understanding of strategies in teaching reading and reading comprehension

In Chapter 2, reference is made to authors such as Julius (2014:16), who define reading strategies as the methods used to determine meaning from written material, while Section 3.3 in Chapter 3 refers to Anggraini and Lianaser's (2011:1) assertion that a reading approach or approaches to reading are methods that teachers can use. This is one major way to aid learners in resolving their reading challenges. In this context, both readers and teachers can use several strategies to enhance the meaning of a text. The researchers Davis (2011:50) and Del Valle and Duffy (2009:26) mention several such strategies that can potentially enhance reading comprehension (Chapter 2, Section 2.8). The strategies include predicting, inferring, visualising, and summarising.

The teachers who were observed and interviewed and those from other schools who completed the questionnaire contended that they knew the importance of reading comprehension for learners, but did not understand what reading comprehension strategies, approaches, and skills were. QT4 from school A said: "I don't understand what strategies, approaches and skills are." She added: "When I teach reading comprehension, I begin by reading the stories to them; and I ask them to do silent reading. Thereafter, I read while they repeat after me and then I explain. If they don't understand, I reread again that is what I consider to be a method."

By implication, the teachers did not understand what reading comprehension strategies were. To them, strategies meant reading a text while learners repeated it after them. Sometimes, an explanation of the story was given, and if learners still did not understand it, they did a reread and encouraged learners to memorise the entire passage.

That teachers actually read comprehension passages to the learners, but did not teach the strategies required to comprehend the text, was revealed during classroom observations, interviews, and discussions on items in the questionnaire. This is in line with Chapter 2, Section 2.2, where reference

is made to Ekpo, Udosen, and Afanaideh (2010:17) and Obanya (2006:52), who state that many teachers lack creative teaching abilities to improve learners' reading skills and, especially, their comprehension skills during reading. The most common practice that the researcher observed was asking the learners to provide answers to comprehension questions after reading. Learners were not guided during reading, group interactions were absent, and learners were not encouraged to do a picture walk of the story, which would have motivated them to read.

From classroom observations, it was clear that the participants did not have lesson plans for reading and comprehension. At best, what they had was a lesson note, in which they had clearly written out the note on the comprehension passage, which was to be written on the board for learners to copy, as well as the take-home assignment. In effect, the teachers did not have a lesson plan, which ought to be an indication of what was expected from teachers and learners in a classroom situation in order to achieve effective teaching and learning.

From the collected data, it was evident that the Primary 4 teachers did not understand or perhaps did not know any strategies or methods to teach reading comprehension. This also addressed the sub-aim of the study related to teachers' training to teach reading in Primary 4.

5.19.2.5 Lack of reading support for learners

In a research study conducted by Idogo (2011:5) about teachers' attitudes to reading problems in upper or basic primary schools, the findings showed that teachers were not concerned about learners who were at risk for reading problems in their classrooms. Their reasons ranged from claiming that they worked in harsh circumstances to there being too big a workload for one teacher in a large classroom. The current study revealed that problems in the class to teach and, especially, to teach reading were inadequate teaching materials and readers, large classes, language problems, and learners not being at school regularly. In addition, a lack of teachers, especially in the rural schools, made matters worse.

Moreover, most of the teachers who formed part of this research failed to understand that the main essence or reason for teaching reading to learners was for them to have sufficient literacy skills to make a success of their academic life in school and to function in society.

QT1 affirmed the statements about the problems identified: “Most teachers do not have time for reading or learning support for learners because of so many [much] work load that is one teacher teaching so many subjects. Also, is the fact that non-availability of readers in class makes it impossible to support those reading below levels; they cannot be taught in a vacuum, we were not trained on how to provide reading support.”

Observation revealed a lack of concern for learners whose reading skills were at risk and who had been identified as needing additional reading support in the classes observed at school A and school B. The teachers admitted that, although there were some Primary 4 learners who read above average, the majority of learners still struggled with reading.

From the researcher’s observation, interviews, and participants’ comments in the questionnaires, this lack of concern displayed by some of the teachers about learners’ reading problems meant that learners were not given any meaningful reading support by the teachers. The only sign of support, according to the respondents, was the remedial classes organised after school hours, which were not free. Learners had to pay for the extra classes, and those who could not afford it did not participate. Further probing by the researcher revealed that those learners who had attended these remedial classes in the past had improved their reading ability.

These issues were related to the sub-aim about intervention reading programmes for Primary 4 learners.

5.19.2.6 Lack of motivation to learn to read

Studies have revealed that “motivation is at the heart of many of the serious problems we face in teaching young children to read” (Okebukola, Owolabi & Onofowokan 2013:2). Learners who are

effectively motivated can become readers who will be self-determining and stand the chance of creating their own reading opportunities. They will read and decide to read for many reasons and for a long time. Teachers are the major instruments in motivating and promoting readers' attitude towards reading. Learners need motivation from their teachers, which will help to avoid learners becoming discouraged from reading to learn.

The findings from the study revealed that the teachers did not motivate learners to read, hence the learners' poor attitude towards reading. During classroom observations, the researcher discovered that learners exhibited poor attitudes towards reading due to a lack of motivation by their teachers (See Sections 5.10.4 and 5.10.8). With regard to poor attitude, QT2 commented that learners in Primary 4 had a poor attitude towards reading; hence, he used songs to motivate and draw learners' attention to reading lessons(See interview Question 10). This was also revealed in the questionnaire (See Section 5.15.9.) QT3 said: "Most times we teachers contribute to these learners' reading problems by not showing interest in their reading problems. We don't encourage them enough, we laid poor foundation at lower levels hence the poor attitude."

5.19.3 Learner factors

The sub themes are:

- Learners not reading with comprehension
- Learners' home background

The two themes in this section are related to factors involving the learners.

5.19.3.1 Learners not reading with comprehension

All the respondents revealed that most of their learners were not reading with comprehension.

The results showed that the majority of the learners had trouble providing the right answers to the questions posed by the teachers. The findings from the teachers' comments in the questionnaires

revealed that most of the teachers were dissatisfied with the type of learners they had. According to them, working with such learners was stressful and frustrating. The reasons for teachers' problems with regard to teaching reading and comprehension were learners' attitude (Baba, 2016:10), the poor learning environment, a lack of support from parents, the non-availability of reading texts and writing materials, and a poor reading foundation at the lower level (Amadi, 2014:4).

5.19.3.2 Learners' home background

The respondents believed that rural learners' socio-economic background influenced their ability to read properly and to comprehend what they read. They were strongly of the view that these learners' poor background, among other factors, was responsible for their reading problems. In most cases, some of the learners' essential needs such as good meals, a good learning environment, reading and writing materials, and regular class attendance were not provided for, and this influenced their classroom performance. Respondents also phrased factors resulting from the learners' poor background as being poor nutrition, a poor school environment, and learners skipping school in order to assist their parents on farms and in the markets. Such irregularity at school made it impossible for learners to cope with learning.

The above corroborates Oduolowu and Leigh's (2012:8) assertion that the socio-economic status of a family determines the kind of life children born in that family will lead, the kind of food they will eat, and whether their parents can afford to buy the necessary aids they need at school or not. Other findings have revealed that children from poor and educationally disadvantaged homes do not have much interest in reading, as they get little or no motivation from their parents (Kerr & Michalski 2007:88).

QT3 expressed her views in the following way: "These learners are from poor homes where feeding is a problem. Before midday, some are already weak and tired because of hunger [early in the school day]. Sometimes, we buy them meals." This is aligned with Okobia's (2014:78) observation that children

who do not have access to breakfast or do not eat before coming to school often become inactive in class interaction. As a result of this, learners' learning capability is seriously affected.

The above claim is confirmed by Jennings, Caldwell and Lerner (2010:25), who state that “when children are in serious lack of good meals, parental care and good shelter, they are usually not able to give the necessary attention to their school work and stand the risk of failing and eventual dropout of school”.

QT4 commented: “They [the children] are from disadvantaged homes where their parents can't even provide them with common writing materials. Most times, teachers buy writing pens and notebooks for some learners. Most of the learners come to school with torn uniforms and without recommended school sandals.” This is similar to what Jennings and Caldwell (2010:25) report, namely, that “most learners are from environments filled with serious deprivation with regard to health and educational opportunities” (See Section 2.18.3 in Chapter 2). During classroom observations, the researcher noted that most learners came to school unkempt and without reading and writing materials.

It was clear from the above that socio-economic factors could be a problem to learners, a problem that was exacerbated when the headmasters and headmistresses, as well as the teachers, had no idea how to meet these needs.

Jennings, Caldwell and Lerner (2010:15) point out that many learners who are from a poor domestic environment that is not conducive to learning stand the risk of failing and eventually dropping out of school. Such an environment can cause serious deprivation with regard to health and educational opportunities for school-going learners. Research has shown that, when learners lack parental care, good shelter, and good meals, they are normally not able to give serious attention to their academic work.

From the discussion, it was evident that there were many factors in the schools that made teaching and

learning difficult and led to learners having problems with reading and reading comprehension. This theme addressed one of the reasons for reading problems in Primary 4 classes that was also one of the sub-aims of the study.

The researcher realised that there were many factors affecting the teaching and learning of reading and reading comprehension at Primary 4 level. She decided to take the research further by conducting a reading test that would be used as the pre-test in the quantitative part of the study. In the next section (Section 5.20), the pre-test (which was a reading performance test) is discussed.

The researcher was, however, concerned that the Primary 4 learners in the two schools were not receiving quality reading instruction and that this might mean that their reading abilities would improve when they received any form of additional reading instruction. This could jeopardise the actual outcome of the main aim of the study, which was to find out whether learners could benefit more from either the read-aloud programme or the explicit direct instruction programme. The researcher, thus, decided that all the Primary 4 teachers were in need of training to teach reading. In Section 5.21, the training of all the Primary 4 teachers in schools A and B is discussed.

In Section 5.22, the training of the four teachers who acted as participants to teach the read-aloud programme and the explicit direct instruction programme for the teaching of reading will be discussed.

After the participants had been trained to use the reading programmes, they had to use these programmes for six weeks. A reading test (which was the post-test) was then conducted.

5.20 The reading performance test

A pre-test was administered to all the learners in the Primary 4 classes in the two schools after two days of classroom observations. The pre-test had been designed by the researcher following the new Universal Basic Education Curriculum for Primary 4 as authorised by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The pre-test was meant to ascertain learners' level of

proficiency in reading and reading comprehension in a Primary 4 rural class(See Annexure K). The pre-test was administered to all Primary 4 learners in the two schools where the research was conducted in the second term of the school year during February 2019. It was done two weeks before the training in the teaching of reading offered to all the Primary 4 teachers, and this formed part of the actual study. It was assumed that, by Primary 4 level, learners would have acquired some level of proficiency in reading in Primary 1 to 3 that would enable them to read a comprehension passage and to answer the questions independently. The test is usually administered in the first two weeks of moving from Primary 3 to Primary 4 (See Annexure K). The researcher scheduled the pre-test date and time with the authorities of the two selected schools and the Primary 4 teachers. The pre-test was divided into four sections (A to D), and each section had its own marks. Apart from the instructions in the comprehension passage, learners were also instructed to write down their names, age, sex, and class. The pre-test was invigilated by the researcher and her assistant. Learners were properly spaced in the classrooms where the pre-test was conducted. The scripts were collected, scored, and kept by the researcher. The pre-test comprehension passage is attached as Annexure K. The results of the pre-test will be discussed in the quantitative section of this study (See Section 5.29).

5.21 Teacher training to use good reading lesson plans

The need for good reading lesson plans for Primary 4 teachers was considered by the researcher based on her findings from the pilot study and her observation at the two schools where the research was conducted as well as the data arising from the interviews and questionnaires. The researcher noticed that learners in the classes that were included in the research project were not given well-planned reading instructions that would help them overcome their reading problems. Hence, the researcher thought it wise to provide good reading lesson plans for all Primary 4 teachers at the two schools to enable them to give proper reading instructions to the learners. This was done to level the playing field

for all the learners before a group of them were paired to receive additional reading programmes for six weeks. The researcher planned to use the read-aloud programme and explicit direct instruction (EDI) as additional reading programmes to see which reading programme helped the learners more. Otherwise, the learners could benefit from any type of reading support, and it would not be possible to see whether the EDI programme or the read-aloud programme was more beneficial to the Primary 4 learners.

The reading lessons involved the researcher training all the Primary 4 teachers at the two schools on the proper use of good reading lesson plans. The plans entailed detailed explanations of the important skills that teachers needed to know about reading and how they could apply these strategies that would help learners comprehend some major elements of the reading process. The reading lessons were given before the intervention programme began, and the instruction was for an hour every morning for three days between 08:45 and 09:45 at school A and between 10:45 and 11:45 at school B (20 minutes of reading, 30 minutes of practice, and 10 minutes of reviewing learners' work).

Teachers were given the opportunity to demonstrate the good reading lessons with learners for about 45 minutes each day. Learners were also individually provided with reading materials that enabled them to practise reading with the teachers' guidance. The instruction helped the Primary 4 teachers to be more learner-centred when teaching reading. The teachers started to use modelling, adequate chalkboard illustrations with detailed explanations, and questioning when using the reading strategies. The teachers activated learners' prior knowledge through the use of pre-reading activities, which they were also supposed to use during the research project.

In the reading lesson instruction, the teachers were shown how to include the following in any reading lesson

Review and check learners' previous work.

- Note areas of difficulty, and provide feedback before introducing the new topic.
- Present photocopies of the reading materials.
- Encourage learners to circle difficult words for discussion.
- Demonstrate strategies step by step with passages, short stories, and texts.
- Train learners on how to apply talk-aloud, think-aloud, and book-talk.
- Actively engage learners in the practice of reading strategies.
- Put learners into groups to work as teams, and then later let them split up to do practice and rehearse reading independently.

In the researcher's opinion, this could help the learners in connecting with text in the reading process and create an opportunity for them to learn the use of think-aloud as demonstrated by the teachers, which would help learners to "get inside the author's mind" (Rupley, Blair & Nichols 2009:29).

Once the researcher felt that all the Primary 4 teachers were providing good reading lessons at the two selected schools, she selected the learners by pairing them into two programmes, namely, the read-aloud and the EDI. There were a control group and an experimental group at each school. She paired the learners based on their scores in the pre-test (See Annexure L). There would, for example, be a learner who obtained 15 in the control group and a learner who got 15 in the experimental group.

The control group at school A was called C1, and the experimental group was called E1. At school B, the control group was C2 and the experimental group E2.

5.22 Discussion of the training of four Primary 4 teachers to use the read-aloud programme and the explicit direct instruction (EDI) programme

5.22.1 Introduction

The training began after the observation, interviews, and pre-tests had been conducted and the questionnaires administered. Its main aim was to instruct teacher participants on how they could

effectively implement explicit direct instruction (EDI) and the read-aloud programme with a group of learners who had been separated to receive either EDI or the read-aloud programme. The training also addressed certain reading problems such as additional or new reading methods, well-planned lessons, and reading materials for learners that would be based on their social, cultural, and cognitive resources. The emphasis would be on fewer learners (or a smaller class size), group work, learner-centred teaching, and the need for teachers to attend to learners' individual problems. The training stressed the importance of motivation of learners in reading. All the learners received good reading lessons during normal school hours after the training of teachers on how to present a good reading lesson (See Section 5.21).

EDI and read-aloud were not offered to all the learners, but only those (the four groups C1, C2, E1, and E2) who were part of the research. The eventual aim was for these two reading activities to be done with separate groups of learners and also to determine whether a group of Primary 4 learners' reading abilities and reading comprehension would improve more when using the read-aloud strategy.

The researcher displayed two lesson plan bulletins on the board: one on *explicit direct instruction* and the other on *read-aloud*. The strategies were listed and explained step by step to show how teachers could effectively teach comprehension using explicit instruction strategies or read-aloud intervention during the intervention reading sessions as part of the research project. (See Annexures M and N.) The training was for an hour in the morning and for an hour after school in the afternoon for a period of four days.

After that, the four teachers from the two schools who had been interviewed and who would be the participants in this part of the research were given the opportunity to practise either the EDI programme or the read-aloud programme with the different learners in their separate groups with support from the researcher. The teachers taught and demonstrated the two programmes for 30 minutes each. This

continued until the researcher was satisfied that they could implement the intervention teaching consisting of the EDI and read-aloud programmes based on the lesson plans and training received.

5.22.2 Training in explicit direct instruction (EDI)

The researcher began the training by addressing some reasons for the reading problems. This was done based on the data collected. The problems occurred around new reading methods, well-planned lessons, and the need for adequate reading materials that would focus on learners' social development and interest, their culture, and their cognitive development. This was aligned with the CCWA's (2008) definition of reading (in Section 2.4) for learners. Other problems also addressed were the necessity of having a smaller number of learners, the need for learner group or co-operative work or group discussions, learner-centred teaching, and the need for teachers to attend to learners' individual problems. The researcher emphasised that teachers had to give attention to the above-mentioned problems if reading abilities of learners were to improve because reading was an active and complex process involving:

- understanding written text;
- developing and interpreting meaning; and
- using meaning that was appropriate to the text, purpose, and situation (NAEP 2019) (See Section 2.4).

Regarding the EDI programme, the researcher began the training with the aim of the lesson, meaning, benefits, principles of EDI, strategies, and how they could be applied in classroom reading activities. She selected text to be read and activated the teachers' background knowledge using title pages, pictures, and the story method. The researcher read the story first, stopped every two to five minutes to ask teachers questions, and then continued reading as the teachers listened attentively. More questions were posed during the reading activity. The opportunity was provided for practising and rehearsing the

EDI reading programme. Many illustrations were provided on the chalkboard as well as strategies using classroom readers and other fiction and non-fiction texts. The teachers were individually engaged in thinking and discussion about questions before sharing their opinion with their partners.

The researcher displayed the lesson plan on EDI (see Annexure M) and explained explicit direct instructions as “a systematic teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for learners’ understanding and achieving active and successful participation by all learners” (Marchand, Martella & Martella, 2009:197).

The researcher began the training by stating the learning objectives of EDI and its benefits. The objectives included the following: the lesson had to commence with the end in mind; this meant that teachers had to be aware of where they wanted the learners to end up before instruction began. They had to ask themselves “what do we ultimately want our learners to do and this should be precisely linked to state standards” (Marchand, Martella & Martella 2009:2).

The benefits of EDI were also made known to the teachers and included aspects such as its being helpful to all learners learning new skills and contents, and it could be essential for struggling learners. Another benefit was that it could make a lesson very clear and could show learners how to start and succeed in a given task (Archer & Hughes 2011:7).

The training additionally involved instructing teachers on the principles of EDI, which are as follows:

- The teaching should be done stage by stage. The teacher must upgrade his or her subject-specific knowledge and see EDI teaching as a duty.
- The teacher should ensure that learners listen to instructions silently without interruption and save questions until the end of the lesson.
- Teachers should apply a storytelling method that learners find interesting and easy to recall.
- They should involve learners in practice and rehearse reading.

- The learning should be aided with clear and neat chalkboard illustrations (<https://bennewmark.wordpress.com> 2019).

The researcher, furthermore, emphasised that EDI instruction was teacher-centred; thus, to begin a lesson, teachers had to motivate learners. Motivation means “skill and will”. “Skill” implies the reader’s ability to listen, identify and recognise words, and exploit the smallest units of sounds that can present the meaning of words. “Will” refers to motivation of the learner to read. A good reader is expected to possess the skill and will to read, which explains a reader’s joy and excitement towards reading (Cambria & Guthrie 2010:17). This agrees with the CCWA definition of reading provided in Section 2.4. Also, the teacher had to teach first and pose a specific question directly related to what was being presented, and questioning had to occur about every two to five minutes. Teachers were to scaffold learning, which provided learners with support that could extend their learning ability. Additionally, teachers had to provide think time whenever a question was asked to enable learners to think about the questions critically.

As learners were thinking about the answers, they might be asked to share their answers with their peers next to them before a learner was asked to provide an answer. Thereafter, the teacher would pick two to three learners to answer similar questions. Based on the learners’ responses, the teacher could explain or elaborate (Lencioni 2013:3).

The teachers were also instructed to use short passages to illustrate strategies using the above principles. It was emphasised that if learners were able to apply strategies as they practised and rehearsed reading, the length of the text could be increased.

With regard to text selection, teachers were told to do the selection of texts based on their social, cultural, and cognitive resources aligned with the cognitive development of their learners as well as their perceptions of their learners’ oral reading fluency. The essence of the EDI strategy was to help teachers give step-by-step additional reading support to learners reading below level in a conventional

or traditional “chalk and talk” classroom instead of using “repeat after me” or “chorus reading”, which hardly promoted comprehension.

The researcher used a text entitled “Queen Amina of Zazzau” (Wale Ogunyemi; 1999) and the classroom reader as an example to demonstrate to the teachers how to activate learners’ background knowledge. The need for pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities was emphasised.

The teachers were informed that, during the pre-reading activity, they had to do a pre-lesson activity with the learners by reviewing previous lessons, by working through completed take-home assignments, and by checking on the prerequisite skills needed for the new lesson or do a reteach, if necessary.

During reading activities, the teacher had to stop or pause at intervals (every two to five minutes) to ask questions and note areas of difficulty. Questions such as the following could be asked:

- Can you recreate the story in your mind?
- Can you tell what is going to happen in the story?
- Can you retell the story?
- What is the name of the main character in the story?
- What is the location (setting) of the story?

After-reading activity had to involve asking questions, and if it was discovered that the learners were not on track, teachers had to do a reteach of the entire lesson.

5.22.3 Training in read-aloud

In training the teachers to use the read-aloud programme, the researcher highlighted the reasons for learners’ reading problems, which included a lack of reading materials, large classes, a lack of group or co-operative work, a lack of learner-centred learning, and teachers’ inability to attend to individual learners’ problems.

Regarding the read-aloud programme, the researcher taught the meaning, benefits, and principles of this reading strategy. The teachers were informed that it was important for them to preview or pre-read the text before sharing it with the class. Prior knowledge was activated by directing the teachers' attention to the titles, cover pages, and pictures. This was used to motivate the teachers (motivation was explained in Section 5.22.2), and they were told that it had to be applied in the classroom situation.

The researcher then demonstrated the read-aloud programme. She stopped at intervals and initiated discussions between the teachers and her. The research also mentioned the need for group discussion and how these could help to extend reading proficiency among learners. Questions about the text were asked, and the teachers were encouraged to read and practise predicting what was to going to happen in the text as groups. In addition, teachers were taught how to connect with text and do the think-aloud process to get the meaning the author was trying to convey. The researcher modelled all the read-aloud strategies using different texts, stories, characters, and pictures. The researcher also emphasised the need for scaffolding of learning. Scaffolding is the support that is provided by the teacher, parents, or peers.

The researcher displayed the read-aloud lesson plan as well as the strategies that could be used in the read-aloud programme to enhance reading comprehension for learners struggling with reading. Next, the researcher explained what read-aloud was and its benefits such as building comprehension, enabling understanding of the story structure, promoting engagement, and encouraging oral language (Mikul 2015:17). After that, the researcher introduced the various read-aloud activities, which included the following

- The teachers must pre-read a text to be shared with the learners.
- Both teachers and learners select books that are of an appropriate age level.
- The teacher activates learners' background knowledge by directing their attention to pictures,

titles, authors, or any other vital information on the text (pre-reading activity).

- The teacher reads aloud first and stops to pose a question during the reading activity.
- The teacher must allow learners to make predictions about what is likely to happen in the text and give their opinion and should encourage group discussions. Learners read aloud, verbalise internal dialogue (think aloud), interact, and identify with characters. Also, learners must be allowed to make a connection with the text (Hazzard 2016:27).

The teachers were taught that, when using the read-aloud strategy, they had to read first, discuss what had been read, and encourage learners to do group read-aloud. This was to be for 20 to 30 minutes and had to be done three times weekly.

The teachers were helped to understand the importance of pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities. During the read-aloud process, they had to make “stops” in order to verbalise internal dialogue (think aloud) – explaining what was going on in the teacher’s head – and also to engage learners in interactions or group discussions about the text, as group discussions and interactions helped learners to know the story elements that they would not have noticed otherwise.

The teachers were additionally instructed that the read-aloud programme created room for “meaning making”, thus enabling learners to interact with the text and to build on existing knowledge. It also gave learners the opportunity to be actively engaged in their learning. With regard to text selection, the teacher participants were instructed to involve the learners in choosing appropriate information texts, storybooks, picture books, fiction and non-fiction, poems, and magazines that were within the learners’ appropriate-age reading level, that focused on learners’ social, cultural, and cognitive resources, and that were aligned with learners’ cognitive development. Sometimes, they could choose a text below the learners’ age level if it was discovered that learners were still struggling with text chosen for their level. The researcher used a text titled “Queen Amina of Zazzau” (Wale Ogunyemi, 1999) to illustrate how

prior knowledge could be activated. In doing this, the pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading phases were incorporated. Pre-reading was done to remind learners of what they already knew and also to activate their thinking process. The researcher emphasised that, during the pre-reading process, the teachers had to introduce some main words or pictures and illustrations to model and stimulate a discussion.

Questions such as “What made you think that the character is this or that?” and “If you were the character, what would you have done?” were used.

In addition, teachers were also trained on how to assist learners in linking or making connections between the text under discussion and learners’ personal experiences. Teachers were instructed that “stops” ought to not be too frequent in order not to disrupt learners’ comprehension of the text. The researcher also instructed teachers on how to link paragraphs and ask questions on the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *how* regarding the action that occurred in a story. This could be done by, for instance, asking the following questions:

- Who is the story or paragraph about?
- What just happened? Is it predicting, visualising, connecting, questioning, presenting the main idea, or summarising?
- When did an event happen?
- Why did it happen?
- To whom did it happen?
- How did it happen?

Next were the after-reading activities. This process involved teachers initiating questions that would involve thought-provoking responses. By implication, “Yes” and “No” questions had to be discouraged, since these did not encourage learners to apply deep or critical thinking before responses

were provided. During the training, the importance of scaffolding and of follow-up questions to enable teachers to assess whether learning had taken place or not was emphasised.

It should be noted that there were similarities and differences in the implementation of the EDI and the read-aloud programmes. The similarities included that instructions in both groups were applied to meet learners' needs, strategies were practised either individually or co-operatively by the learners, the opportunity for think-aloud and talk-aloud sessions was incorporated, and the learners had enough reading and writing materials(See Table 5.6 for more information on similarities and differences).

In EDI, learners were read to, while they listened. During this process, it was easier for learners to be distracted while the teacher was reading because they were not involved in doing anything other than just listening, while during read-aloud activities, learners were actively engaged in the reading process. (See Section 5.26). The chance was thus better that they would attend to the content of what was being read. In the opinion of the researcher, this is one of the valuable attributes of the read-aloud programme.

5.23 Data collection when the read-aloud and EDI lessons were offered

In the course of six weeks during the second term of the primary-level academic session of 2019, the researcher observed 60 minutes of additional reading instruction, during which time the four selected teachers used either explicit direct instruction or read-aloud as reading methods. The aim of the observation was to see whether the reading level of Primary 4 learners selected to be part of the research would improve when teacher participants used explicit direct instruction and the read-aloud intervention programme. Observation was necessary to ensure that the teacher participants used the read-aloud and EDI methods correctly throughout the six weeks during which the selected learners received additional reading support. This was also done to ensure that, when the learners had completed the reading post-test, it would be reflected in their reading progress because they had received additional reading lessons based on either the read-aloud principles or the EDI principles. Thus, it could be ensured that the research would be trustworthy and that the credibility of the research would not be jeopardised.

There were two classes grouped into control group C1 at school A and C2 at school B and an experimental group E1 at school A and E2 at school B. The learners were paired into four groups, resulting in two groups from each of the two schools. These learners were to receive either the read-aloud programme or the EDI programme. (See Annexure M and N on the pairing of the learners at school A and at school B). This was done after a pre-test and a good reading lesson had been given to all learners in their normal classrooms, regardless of their reading levels. (See Section 5.21 for a discussion of the good reading lesson.) There were four teacher participants, each assigned to a different group in the research project, and they were observed for a total of 1 080 minutes, divided into 60 minutes thrice weekly.

The observations of the control group and the experimental group took place both during and after school hours. The first sessions, which took place during school hours, were for the control groups, C1 and C2, at the two schools. Groups C1 and C2 received the EDI programme as an additional reading lesson separately in a different class for 60 minutes and, after that, joined their peers who were not part of the research for the normal English lesson. The researcher was thankful that this arrangement could be made, as it would have been impossible for her to attend the lessons of the control group and the experimental group in the afternoon. The second lessons occurred after school hours and were for the experimental groups, E1 and E2, at the two schools. The experimental groups received the read-aloud intervention programme as a group. By implication, their normal learning activities were not interrupted. While lessons were being done in the control groups in the mornings, the experimental groups and the other learners who were not part of the research were in another classroom and were engaged in other classroom activities. This was done in order to prevent the learners in the experimental groups from interfering in class activities in the control groups.

Before the actual study commenced, teachers and learners were informed that the researcher would be

a non-participant observer in the classroom and would have no interaction with them. The teacher participants were requested to adhere strictly to the lesson plans regarding the two reading strategies that they had been trained to use.

5.24 Lesson observation in control groups where EDI principles were applied

The control groups, C1 and C2, at both schools received explicit direct instruction (EDI) as an additional reading support. They attended their normal English and reading lessons with the rest of the class during normal school hours all through the research period. Each strategy in the EDI programme was taught to group C1 and group C2 each week, with teachers modelling various strategies and learners doing practice and rehearsing reading activities. The two teacher participants, CT1 and CT2, were observed thrice weekly for 60 minutes and for a period of six weeks. The researcher was satisfied that the strategies of the EDI programme were taught and practised well.

Class size: At school A, there were 18 learners, and school B had 15 learners; they were reading at different reading levels. The learners were selected based on their pre-tests.

Classroom environment: Learners were seated three or four at a desk, and there were rows. This seating arrangement made learners comfortable, and they were able to read and write well. Also, the classrooms were rich with visual materials and prints with charts on the walls, such as charts on colours, charts on letters of the alphabet, and drawings showing a person and his environment.

The teachers began each of the lessons of the week by stating the instructional objective of EDI, entailing the skills teachers expected learners to have acquired by the end of each additional reading lesson to make learners successful readers in line with the state's standard in the nine-year Universal Basic Education Curriculum. This curriculum states that a Primary 4 learner is expected to read and write well and with comprehension. In order to achieve the learning objectives, the teachers followed a good lesson plan, which involved reading content-specific materials, identifying main ideas, summarising, explaining the events in the text, and then allowing learners to read independently as well

as to connect with the characters in the text. The teacher participants displayed the various strategies on different-coloured pieces of cardboard, and these were placed on the classroom walls. The teacher participants informed the learners that, during the reading lessons, they would practise and rehearse reading different texts and passages from their class readers.

The teachers commenced the lessons by selecting content-specific materials and by doing pre-reading activities, which involved storytelling on “Why tortoise is regarded as a wise animal”. Afterwards, the teacher participants introduced the topic for the day and read from a passage entitled “How tortoise became bald”, which was linked to the story told earlier. The teachers then asked questions to check whether the learners were on track and could link the pre-reading activity with the new topic.

It was clear that this aroused learners’ interest and motivated them for the day’s lesson. Teachers modelled strategies with title pages, pictures, and events. They then read the stories again, while all the learners paid attention. The teachers applied and demonstrated think-aloud and talk-aloud strategies and also stopped at intervals to ask learners questions on what was being read. This was to check learners’ comprehension of the texts that were being read. After the teachers had read the texts, learners were given an opportunity to repeat what the teachers did. While this was being done, the teachers moved around to supervise each learner’s practice and engagement in the class activities. Teachers instructed learners to note or circle main ideas and areas of difficulty, and then the teachers gave a step-by-step explanation or retaught the lesson line by line and sentence by sentence, often using the local dialect where it became necessary to explain the meaning of words. The teachers again checked comprehension regularly by using questions. After this, learners were asked to spell the unfamiliar words as circled, while the teachers wrote the words on the board. The learners repeated difficult concepts several times until they had mastered them. The difficult concepts in the passages or text were broken down into their simplest forms using their synonyms. This made reading and comprehension

easier.

The teachers ended each lesson with after-reading activities that involved questioning and summarising in order to appraise what had been taught during the reading process. The researcher was satisfied that the teachers followed the implementation of the EDI strategies and that lesson plans were based on the EDI principles.

5.25 Discussion of general observation in control groups where EDI principles were applied

During observations in the control groups, it became clear that the teachers taught different strategies in each of the six weeks. The first week involved predicting and inferring and the second visualising and mental images. The third week saw a repeat or reteach of the previous strategies. Then, during the fourth week, it was the use of questioning, and the fifth week was for the use of all the strategies. In the sixth week, the use of summarising and the retelling of stories were covered.

Chalkboard illustration: The teachers used clear chalkboard illustrations. This enabled them to share their thoughts with the class, and they gave reasons for their opinions. The learners were given opportunities to practise and rehearse reading independently, which is in line with EDI principles.

Adequate reading materials: Classroom observations showed that they were enough reading materials, which included below-age picture books that were used to arouse learners' interest before they were introduced to appropriate-age reading texts and class readers.

Text selection: The two participants selected all the reading materials for each of the lessons during the six weeks, and learners were given their individual copies. It was observed that the text had bold front pages, lots of pictures, and drawings.

Lesson duration: It became clear that the 60 minutes allocated to reading activities were adequate for the teachers to review previous lessons or to do a prerequisite check on the learners' skills, to review learners' homework, and to provide feedback.

Activation of prior knowledge: It was observed that the two teacher participants began each reading

instruction with storytelling as a pre-reading activity. This was used to activate learners' prior knowledge. The storytelling method was evident all through the lessons and was used satisfactorily. This is in alignment with the EDI principle that teachers should apply storytelling that children find interesting and easy to retell.

Modelling of strategies: During observations, it was noticed that teacher participants used the pictures and illustrations to model and demonstrate the various EDI strategies explicitly. This they did by applying think-aloud and talk-aloud activities. It became clear that this aroused learners' interest, and they were able to practise and apply the strategies for decoding meaning and for connecting with the text individually.

Learning support: In the lessons where the EDI principles were used, it was evident that the teachers read several texts, stopped every two to five minutes, asked questions to check comprehension, and guided learners by posing questions such as "Can you get the film in your mind as I just did?" or "Do you feel as if you are watching a movie?". They did this to predict events in the text, and it was done with title pages and cover pictures. To ensure that learners followed instructions, they were asked to write down their various opinions on what was taught. Learners' activities were checked and reviewed, and feedback was provided.

The teacher participants further supported learners' comprehension by creating vocabulary flash cards with the meaning of the words; after that, when necessary, they used the local dialect to translate and explain difficult words. The learners were then actively engaged in independent practice on strategies. The teachers moved around learners to do a check on their work, and they did a reteach where learners were still struggling with concepts. They also used a variety of texts, used clean and clear illustrations, asked questions during reading activities, provided think time, and allowed learners to share ideas with peers. Homework was given and checked the next day.

Based on observations of the two groups, the researcher was satisfied that both teachers CT1 and CT2 applied the EDI principles as an additional reading support.

5.26 Themes based on observation when the EDI programme was used

- Activation of prior knowledge using stories
- Individual engagement of learners to practise reading
- Clear illustrations on the board
- Learners' adequate attention to classroom instructions
- Teachers' effective utilisation of questioning
- Adequate learner support
- Use of local dialect for vocabulary development to support language learning
- Opportunity for thinking time and sharing answers with peers

5.27 Lesson observation in experimental groups where the read-aloud principles were used

The teacher participants in the experimental groups, E1 and E2, provided the read-aloud programme at the two schools, school A and school B, three times weekly for six weeks, and each read-aloud sessions lasted 60 minutes.

Before the lessons began, the two teachers, ET1 and ET2, established and discussed the goals of the read-aloud intervention programme.

Class size: At school A, there were 17 the learners, while there were 14 at school B.

Class environment: The classrooms were well furnished with pictures and charts. Learners sat in groups in a circle format and were three in a group.

Reading corners: The classrooms had reading corners where all the texts selected for the lessons were displayed.

Strategy: The teachers began the read-aloud intervention programme with a well-planned lesson

(Annexure N) and organised teaching activities that were presented to learners three times weekly. The teachers incorporated better-planned and better-organised read-aloud instructional procedures for implementing read-aloud that were in conformity with the opinions of Myers (2015:36) and Crockton (2010:15-16), who point out that well-planned read-aloud programmes will motivate and create opportunities for learners to become more active in reading(See Section 2.9).

The teachers indicated the various strategies that would be taught and learnt during the research period on the chalkboard and flash cards. The strategies included the following:

- Predicting (determining future events before they appear or occur)
- Making inferences or inferring (reading between the lines)
- Visualising (making a picture in the mind)
- Questioning (asking oneself questions)
- Summarising (retelling the story read) (Davis, 2015)

The two teacher participants followed the read-aloud principles and plans, which stated that a read-aloud class had to begin with choosing a book that addressed learners' reading level (Crockton 2010:15-16). Learners were given opportunities to pick texts and stories of their choice from among the various texts, such as fiction and non-fiction novels, that the teachers displayed on the table at the front of the classrooms. Thus, both teachers and learners had input into the choice of text to be read.

It became clear that involving learners in choosing texts or stories to be read got them interested in reading. During the lessons for the control group where the EDI programme was used, learners could not choose the stories to be read.

The teacher participants distributed photocopies of the previewed text passages and stories to be read to all learners. This was done during the six weeks of the read-aloud sessions.

Then, the teacher participants introduced the strategies to be learnt. While this was being done, the

teachers showed the learners the front and back covers and the title page. It was observed that this was used to activate their prior knowledge model and demonstrate strategies using questioning or predicting as pre-reading activities with the text entitled “The Orphan” (Adeliyi 2010).

The teachers next did read-aloud sessions, during which time they initiated discussion and demonstrated good reading habits. The learners repeated the demonstrated reading habits in their various groups, imitating the teachers’ use of language structures. The teachers alternated pre-reading activities in every lesson during the six weeks. In some lessons, they used picture walks in the text and, at other times, questioning, making predictions, or establishing the purpose of reading. This was done in line with Crockton’s (2010:15-16) guidelines on read-aloud. This could motivate the learners in the opinion of the researcher.

Learners were given opportunities to practise predicting and other strategies in the groups with a learner from the average-level reading group (based on the reading pre-test) as a leader in discussions or interactive sessions about the characters, events, authors, in-text illustrations, and authors’ comments. Learners were instructed to write down their opinions to be used during the whole-class discussions. After this, the teachers instructed the learners to sit in circles and write down difficult words in the text for a think-aloud session and for further discussions to take place. This could assist learners to practise and apply strategies effectively and could motivate learners as well.

During each read-aloud session, the teacher participants first read, then stopped at intervals to incorporate the use of questions and discussions with learners during reading activities, followed by asking learners to read in groups and discuss what was read. This was to ensure that learners were on track with reading. The teacher participants moved around each group periodically to share each group’s thoughts with the whole class, and support was given to those who were found lacking understanding in the reading and comprehension lessons. This was done with more read-aloud sessions,

explanations, discussions, and demonstrations of the pronunciation of words. This helped struggling readers to shift their concentration from meaning making to comprehension of the concepts in the text. The teachers, thus, applied the principles of read-aloud in the intervention class based on the work of Myers (2015:36) and Crockton (2010:15-16).

5.27.1 Discussion of classroom observation in the experimental group

The participants, ET1 and ET2, commenced the read-aloud sessions each week with pre-reading activities such as establishing the purpose of reading, taking learners through a picture walk in the text, and sometimes making predictions and asking questions about the text.

Activation of prior knowledge: During classroom observations, the teachers used different methods to activate learners' background knowledge, depending on the method that aroused their interest the most.

Availability of reading text: During observation in the experimental group, teachers and learners selected grade-level reading materials that were suitable to learners' interest and that could enhance positive learning outcomes. This is aligned with Mikul's (2015:80) guidelines of reading intervention instruction for Primary 4 learners. Mikul reports that two important elements must be included in an effective intervention programme for Primary 4: suitable grade-level reading materials and an instructional plan that quickly promotes positive learning outcomes (See Section 3.8.2.).

Reading corners: The teacher participants created reading corners in the classes with different texts, including fiction, non-fiction, traditional narratives, and picture books with bold print. It was observed that the books contained interesting subject matter that ranged from simple to complex. This allowed the learners to quickly connect with the text, and so they gradually improved their reading ability with the teacher participants' assistance. This is again in line with Myers's recommendations (2015:33). (See Section 3.8.3.). Based on Myers's work, learners were allowed to vote for their preferred text in each

of the reading lessons during the six weeks. In other words, the learners had enough reading and writing materials that they chose themselves.

Co-operative learning: It was noticed that learners were put in small groups of three in a circle and that they were involved in small-group read-aloud and talk-back sessions, discussions, and whole-class interactive activities in all the read-aloud sessions. Onovughe (2019:15) and Hurst, Wallace and Nixon (2013:379) (See Section 2.10) report that interactive classrooms in which learners in small groups have the opportunity to talk back or share thoughts, ideas, or feelings with one another are an effective reading strategy. During these sessions, it was noticed that the learners tried to imitate the structure and sounds they heard from their teachers. Teachers and learners again did read-aloud sessions with the stories, passages, and poems several times. This fits in with the read-aloud principles based on Crockton (2010:15-16). These activities enabled them to build connections with the text and engaged them in critical thinking about the text in order to construct meaning. Further group activities were encouraged, and learners worked on their own and provided answers to questions written on the board. This was followed by the teachers taking the time to have discussions with each group. More predicting, visualising, connecting, questioning, retelling of stories, and discussions were done by teachers and learners. This was to strengthen learners' use of strategies in the reading passages or texts.

An example of learner practice on visualising was on texts entitled "One Good Turn" (Chinelo, 2009) and "The Leper and the Princess" (Tahiru Mahoma, 2018).

Modelling: The teacher participants modelled strategies using think-aloud with titles of texts, cover page pictures, and in-text illustrations. They also modelled and demonstrated effective reading habits through the use of animation to reflect the pleasure of reading. During read-aloud sessions, the teachers introduced the rules of syntax such as stress, tone of voice, and facial expressions as well. It was observed that the teachers' use of text titles, pictures, drawings, actions, or events in the text to model

strategies was a common feature throughout the read-aloud programme.

A teacher participant's modelling of predicting with a passage from the story "Orphan" (Adeliyi, 2010) is provided below. Predicting was modelled in the following way:

- "Based on the title of the story and the cover page picture, I predict that the title and illustrations on the cover page, tells who an orphan is."
- "In the next few paragraphs, I think I will also discover how one can become an orphan."
- "I think this could be as a result of one losing both parents or being abandoned on the street."

Here is an example of learners' activity using predicting in school A from a text entitled "Gonto the Stubborn Goat" (Agogo, 2014).

- "I predict that Gonto's goat will get itself into a serious trouble for disobeying its mother."
- "I can also predict that from Gonto's swollen tummy, and the way saliva is dripping from its mouth it must have eaten something bad."

ET1 modelled visualising from a text entitled "Chike and the River" (Chinua Achebe's abridged version 2011):

- "What do you think about this story?"
- "Why is the boy standing in front of the river watching boats sail by?"
- "Where do you think this event took place? In the city or village?"
- "Can you give reasons for your position or opinion?"

ET2 demonstrated visualising using the same text. She said:

- "What can you say about the boy on the cover page?"
- "Do you think the boy is afraid of the river?"
- "Can you make a short sentence about the picture?"
- "Have you ever seen or have you been to the river side?"

Learning support: ET1 and ET2 supported the learners by reading aloud below-age-level (Primary 2 and 3) reading texts. This was done during the six weeks before introducing their appropriate-age-level text and improved their phonemic awareness. The learners were, for instance, able to recognise phonemes such as /b/+/oa/+/t/=boat, /s/+/u/+/n/=sun, and /d/+/o/+/g/=dog. This corroborates Trelease’s observation (in Hazzard 2016:3) that “children who were read to at least three times a week had significantly higher phonemic awareness when they entered school than did children who were read to less often”. The teachers did several read-aloud sessions from different materials first, while the groups listened attentively and were encouraged to think aloud, discuss, and attempt meaning making with unfamiliar words and ask questions after each read-aloud session. The teacher participants moved around the circles of learners, noting areas of difficulty, giving detailed explanation where needed, and directing learners’ attention to pictures and the author’s comments in order to clear up difficult areas. If any reader was struggling to read, the teacher participants would begin all over again by building the learner’s vocabulary, doing line-by-line reading and sentence-by-sentence reading before a paragraph was read, and later encouraging the learner to practise reading using any of the strategies. In other words, it became clear that the teachers applied read-aloud principles logically and systematically. It was observed that learners were able to follow the teachers based on their responses in all the thought-provoking question sessions. The questions were asked by the teachers in order to test the learners’ ability to read and comprehend given passages and texts.

Strategy: During the intervention programme using the read-aloud programme, it was evident that the teachers’ main pedagogical focus was on making learners decode meaning from text or written materials. They did this by effectively identifying and clarifying difficult concepts and giving attention to vocabulary building. Five to eight words were written on the teachers’ sentences strips. Words such as the following were, for instance, used: “abandoned”, “adoption”, “deceased”, “good Samaritan”,

“grieved”, “handpicked”, “fateful”, and “detached”. The words were picked from the passage read. The teacher participants gave the meaning of the words in English in its simplest form, and then the teachers asked each group to make a sentence with each word.

5.27.2 Themes from observation when the read-aloud programme was used

- Use of applied read-aloud guidelines
- Modelling and demonstration of reading strategies
- Teachers’ application of read-aloud strategies that enhanced meaning making
- Teachers’ modelling of effective reading habits
- Teachers’ effective utilisation of reading activities
- Learner engagement in groups to practise reading

5.28 Summary of observation in the EDI and read-aloud groups

As the researcher, I was satisfied that the principles of the read-aloud programme and the EDI programme were applied and used well during the additional reading lessons. The themes that were identified during the read-aloud and EDI sessions provided the researcher with the opportunity to search for and to identify the similarities and the differences that arose looking at the way in which the participating teachers presented the reading lessons.

Table 5.6: Similarities and differences between the two groups

	Similarities	Differences	
1.	Instructions in both groups were applied and met learners' reading needs.	Groups C1 and C2 received the EDI programme.	Groups E1 and E2 received the read-aloud programme.
2.	Strategies were practised either individually or co-operatively by the learners.	Learning materials consisted of classroom readers, fiction, and non-fiction texts.	Learning materials consisted of fiction, non-fiction, traditional narratives, and picture books with bold print.
3.	The opportunity for think-aloud and talk-aloud sessions was incorporated.	Lessons were teacher-centred.	Lessons were learner-centred.
4.	The learners had enough reading and writing materials.	Learners were passive.	Learners were active.
5.	Reading support was given to both groups.	A whole-class instruction format was followed.	There was no whole-class instruction; it only happened in groups.
6.	Modelling and practice enhanced learning.	Text selection was done by teachers alone.	Text selection was done by both teachers and learners.
7.	Feedback was provided.	Instruction was non-interactive.	Instruction was interactive.
8.	Shared guided reading took place.	There was no group leader.	There was a group leader of an average reading level.

As can be seen from the table, there were quite a number of similarities between the EDI and read-aloud lessons. When one looks at the differences between the two programmes, it is clear that they also differed in many ways. Fewer learning materials were used in EDI than in read-aloud. Instruction in EDI was teacher-centred, while read-aloud emphasised learner-centred instruction. While learners were passive in the EDI classroom, those in the read-aloud programme were actively engaged during teaching and learning. The read-aloud groups had group leaders of an average reading level, but there was no group leader in the EDI lessons, and learners worked independently.

Below is a table showing the researcher's observations of the instruction provided by the teacher participants during EDI and read-aloud lessons.

Explicit direct instruction (EDI)	Read-aloud
Clear chalkboard illustrations	Clear illustration of lesson with pictures and authors' comments
Adequate reading materials	Availability of a variety of reading texts
Individual learning	Co-operative learning
Text selection by the teachers	Text selection by both teachers and learners
Activation of prior knowledge	Activation of prior knowledge
Modelling of strategies	Modelling of strategies
Learner support	Learner support

Table 5.7: Researcher's observations of EDI and read-aloud lessons

From the discussion, the researcher noticed that there was good classroom practice that enhanced teaching and learning in both the EDI and read-aloud programmes. The class size was proper at a ratio of one teacher to 18 and one teacher to 15 learners. The seating arrangement was good, and learners were comfortable. The classrooms were rich with visual learning materials. The teachers clearly stated the learning objectives, followed a good lesson plan, and had good chalkboard illustrations as well. By implication, the teachers had the skills in mind that they wanted learners to have acquired by the end of the lesson. The learners were given opportunities for independent practice and co-operative learning. The teachers also made use of pre-activation of prior knowledge.

In Sections 5.22 to 5.27, the training of a group of Primary 4 teachers and the implementation of the read-aloud programme and the EDI programme were discussed in detail. The sub-aims of the study to introduce a group of teachers to the read-aloud programme and another reading programme such as explicit direct instruction and to train the teachers to implement the programmes were, thus, addressed.

5.29 Quantitative data: selected sample and reading test data

The main aim of the study was to find out whether the read-aloud programme rather than another reading programme such as explicit direct instruction would support Primary 4 learners to enhance their

reading and reading comprehension abilities. In order to do this, a pre-test and a post-test were conducted with groups of selected learners. The quantitative data is discussed in this section of the study.

The research methodology for the quantitative and qualitative components of the research was outlined in Chapter 4. The methodology discussion in Chapter 4 indicated how Level 4 primary school learners would be sampled to participate in the quantitative component of the study and, furthermore, described the quantitative measuring instrument (See Section 4). Section 5.29 takes the methodology discussion further by:

- i. explaining how sampling was implemented and presenting the learner sample selected;
- ii. providing details of the measuring instrument, namely, the reading tests; and
- iii. presenting the data of the administered pre- and post-intervention reading test results.

The section that follows that, Section 5.30, which is the analysis section, describes how the data was analysed using the results of the collected reading tests. These results will be used to answer the question of whether the read-aloud intervention benefitted the groups of primary school learners more than using the EDI programme.

5.29.1 The sampling process and presentation of the sample

In the research methodology chapter, Chapter 4, it was indicated that Level 4 primary school learners were selected from two classes in two schools (A and B) identified in the Ovia North-East local government area, Edo State, Nigeria. The identified schools were of such a nature that learners received the same quality of education and the same curriculum content – with the same reading material – to ensure that external research conditions were similar with respect to the teaching of reading.

The methodology section indicated that the class of learners from each school (A and B) would be selected representatively with respect to reading ability - with one group receiving the read-aloud

intervention and the other group explicit direct instruction. Selection of intervention (experimental) and EDI (control) groups would be randomly decided. It was important to include the entire spectrum of reading skills levels representative with respect to reading level (from the poor reader to the excellent reader) in each group from either school A or B (four in total), since the focus of the research was on determining the effect of the read-aloud intervention programme on reading skills (over the entire range of reading ability) of learners.

To be able to representatively allocate learners to the experimental and control group of each school, a reading test, labelled the pre-test, was done (See Section 5.29.2 for a description of the reading test) on all the learners before the read-aloud intervention commenced. Learners' performance on this test was used to select learners from each class into two groups (control or experimental) in such a way that the entire spectrum of reading skills was representatively reflected in the reading performance of both groups (Learners' identification numbers per class were arranged according to reading performance marks, and pairs of equally performing learners were selected to allocate one of each group to the two groups of each class). Once the two groups per class had been formed, the one group was randomly designated to be the control group and the other the experimental group. Selection of learners per group was, therefore, purposive, but the selection of random or control group was random.

The two tables indicate the experimental and control groups selected per class, per school, and per pre-test performance. In these tables, groups C1 and C2 indicate the control groups and E1 and E2 the experimental groups in both schools. The one group (control group) would receive explicit direct instruction, and the other group (the experimental) would receive the intervention programme (read-aloud) for six weeks.

Tables 5.8 and 5.9 list the learners sampled by sampling label (column 2) and display their age (column 3), gender (column 4), and pre-test reading mark (column 5). The pre-test marks were used to assign

learners with same-level reading skills to each of the two groups in each of schools A and B.

SCHOOL A: CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (PRE-TEST)

Table 5.8: List of Level 4 primary school learners and their pre-test scores (school A)

Control group					Experimental group				
No	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre-test scores	No.	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre-test scores
1	L13	1		15	1	L19	0		20
2	L15	2		15	2	L14	0		15
3	L18	2		15	3	L16	1		15
4	L45	0		7	4	L17	0		10
5	L27	1		5	5	L25	8		5
6	L38	0		5	6	L32	3		5
7	L44	1		5	7	L41	1		5
8	L20	0		00	8	L47	9		5
9	L22	2		00	9	L21	1		00
10	L24	2		00	10	L23	0		00
11	L28	0		00	11	L26	0		00
12	L30	0		00	12	L29	1		00
13	L33	1		00	13	L31	2		00
14	L35	3		00	14	L34	4		00
15	L37	1		00	15	L36	1		00
16	L40	9		00	16	L39	0		00
17	L43	3		00	17	L42	1		00
18	L46	0		00					
Total = 18					Total = 17				

SCHOOL B: CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (PRE-TEST)

Table 5.9: List of Level 4 primary school learners and their pre-test scores (school B)

Control group					Experimental group				
No	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre-test scores	No	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre-test scores
1	L11	0		15		L16	1		15
2	L17	1		15		L21	2		15
3	L12	1		10		L13	0		10
4	L14	3		10		L15	1		10
5	L20	1		5		L22	2		5
6	L24	3		5		L30	0		5
7	L31	1		5		L32	2		5
8	L39	2		5		L18	4		00
9	L19	1		00		L23	4		00
10	L25	0		00		L26	0		00
11	L27	0		00		L28	1		00
12	L29	1		00		L33	0		00
13	L34	0		00		L35	1		00
14	L36	3		00		L37	0		00
15	L38	0		00					
Total = 15					Total = 14				

5.29.2 The measuring instrument: the NERDC reading test

The reading and reading comprehension test of the NERDC (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council) was used to assess the reading skills of Level 4 primary school learners. The reading test was based on the recommendations of the new Universal Basic Education Curriculum of the NERDC. It consisted of a comprehension passage, which required four specific actions from learners:

Section A: this section consisted of 10 questions in which learners were required to fill in the missing information; in other words, 10 exact, “correct” or “incorrect” responses were required.

Section B: this section listed five questions that learners had to answer objectively in their own words (their comprehension of the passage).

Section C: this section required learners to describe the characters in the passage.

Section D: this section requested learners to match specific words in the passage with their opposite meaning. (See Annexure J Section D for the test.)

The range of the pre-test marks varied between zero and 40, and test scores were interpreted as follows:

Scores 00 to 14: poor readers

Scores 15 to 24: average readers

Scores 21 to 25: average readers

Scores 26 to 40: above-average readers

As mentioned in Section 5.29.1 on sampling, the reading test was administered before the read-aloud and the EDI intervention commenced. The marks of this pre-test were used to allocate learners to the two groups in each school (A and B) in such a way that all levels of reading skills were well represented in each group. The same reading test was administered a second time to all learners once the six-week read-aloud and EDI intervention sessions had been completed. The second test assessed reading skills

after the read-aloud intervention and the EDI intervention sessions. Both pre- and post-test sessions were administered in the classroom by the researcher. This procedure was agreed on beforehand with the headmasters/headmistresses and with the permission of State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Edo State, Nigeria.

The next section (Section 5.30) will explain how the researcher planned to analyse the data collected through the pre- and post-tests. The statistical tests the research planned to use would not only determine (i) whether any statistically significant reading improvement was indeed reported for the research, but also (ii) whether reading improvement of the read-aloud group (experimental group) was significantly higher/better than that of conventional reading group (control group), or (iii) whether reported improvement was only due to the maturation of Level 4 primary school learners.

5.30 Analysis strategy: planning how the data should be analysed

This section briefly explains and motivates the analysis techniques the researcher had planned to use to analyse the collected data. The selection of specific statistical techniques had to be done in such a way that the results from these analyses would inform and answer the research question of the study.

The researcher was aware of the possibility of maturation of learners' reading skills over a six-week period, which would be reflected in some level of increase in reading performance between the pre-test and post-test, in other words, an effect not solely attributed to read-aloud or the EDI programme.

5.30.1 The analysis variable: pre-/post-test differences

A first step in planning the analysis was to define the data variables to be analysed. For this study, the difference between each learner's initial reading skill assessment (pre-test score) and his or her post-intervention reading assessment, which represented the improvement in reading ability of the learner over the six-week intervention period, was identified as the analysable data variable. The reason for this choice was that this pre-test/post-test difference variable took into account that the initial reading skills

levels of learners varied – and the varying outset value had to be taken into consideration when evaluating the final reading skill. The difference variable measured the proportionate increase between the onset and final reading skills levels, that is, the improvement. In this way, both onset assessment and final assessment of reading skills were incorporated in a single variable: improvement or pre-/post-test difference.

5.30.2 Issues to consider when selecting statistical tests

Analysis techniques that the researcher had planned to use to analyse the reading data would be appropriate if results of such analyses addressed certain aspects that were linked to the research question of the study. Crucial matters linked to the question of whether read-aloud intervention benefitted Level 4 primary school learners' reading skills included these:

(i) Issue: the question arose whether a positive improvement in reading skills performance (for example, $\text{post-test score} - \text{pre-test score} = \text{difference in scores}$) before and after the read-aloud intervention had been implemented could be verified for the entire sample. In other words, was a statistically significant improvement reported for the study?

(ii) Issue: if a statistically significant improvement between pre- and post-test reading skills were to be identified in (i), could this improvement be attributed to the read-aloud intervention? In other words, was there a statistically significant difference between the improvement of the experimental and control groups, or did general improvement have be attributed to other factors such as maturation, age, school, and gender?

(iii) Issue: if the improvement of the experimental group were to be found to be significantly greater than that of the control group, could the nature of the difference be described in more detail?

The sections below (5.30.2.1 to 5.30.2.3) list these issues and motivate how appropriate techniques such as a parametric paired t-test, a one-way parametric analysis of variance, and nonparametric trend tests

– all conducted on the improvement variable (pre-/post-test difference scores) – succeeded in addressing the issues mentioned below and, thus, contributed to answering the research question.

In the discussions below, an alternative technique for each test is mentioned (Sections 5.30.2.1 and 5.30.2.2). This is done because the more powerful parametric tests have to satisfy specific analysis assumptions to provide reliable results. If these assumptions cannot be met, a slightly less powerful, but nevertheless reliable, nonparametric alternative test is suggested and was conducted in this study. If t-test and ANOVA assumptions were met, the alternative nonparametric tests were not conducted and are not discussed in this research.

5.30.2.1 Issue 1: Was a statistically significant improvement in reading skills reported for all learners? In other words, did pre- and post-test performance scores differ statistically significantly over all respondents?

The parametric paired t-test and/or the nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test were considered appropriate analysis techniques to address the matter of whether statistically significant improvement was recorded for all learners (post-test – pre-test = difference = improvement).

In other words, the null hypothesis to address the first issues or matter is as follows:

Hypothesis of relevance in this case

$$H_0: \mu_{(\text{diff})} = 0$$

$$H_a: \mu_{(\text{diff})} \neq 0$$

where

“diff” indicates the difference between the pre- and post-test marks

and “ $\mu_{(\text{diff})}$ ” indicates the mean difference for the population.

(a) Parametric paired t-test

The argument for the paired t-test was made that if, in practice, two sets of paired observations did not differ (their pre-test and post-test scores), the calculated mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores would, approximately, be zero.

Therefore, a test that tested the null hypothesis that the average difference between pre- and post-test marks over all respondents was zero would be appropriate to answer to issue 1. The results of a paired t-test would be reliable if the t-test assumption of normally distributed pre-test/post-test differences was satisfied. (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests can be used to test normality.)

(b) Wilcoxon’s signed-rank test

If normally distributed pre-test/post-test differences could not be verified, the Wilcoxon nonparametric alternative test was conducted to answer to the first issue.

5.30.2.2 Issue 2: Could the statistically significant reading improvement (pre-/post-test differences) established in Section 5.30.2.1 be attributed to the read-aloud intervention?

This matter could also be worded to ask whether the reading improvement of the experimental group was statistically significantly higher than that of the control group.

The hypothesis of relevance in this case would be the following:

$$H_0: \mu_{(\text{diff, exp})} = \mu_{(\text{diff, cont})}$$

$$H_a: \mu_{(\text{diff, exp})} > \mu_{(\text{diff, cont})}$$

where

“diff, exp” and “diff, cont” refer to the differences between the pre- and post-test marks for the experimental and control groups

and “ $\mu_{(\text{diff, exp})}$ ” and “ $\mu_{(\text{diff, cont})}$ ” refer to the mean difference for the experimental and control groups of the population.

A parametric one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) or an alternative, nonparametric Kruskal-

Wallis test was an applicable test to address this matter (considering the underlying assumptions of the ANOVA test).

(a) Parametric one-factor analysis of variance (general linear model approach)

A one-factor analysis of variance (using the general linear model (GLM) approach) was an appropriate technique to investigate whether improvement for the experimental group was statistically significantly higher than that of the control group. In this instance, research argued that a statistically significantly greater mean improvement score (pre-/post-test difference) for the experimental group would imply that the read-aloud intervention improved reading skills statistically significantly. If mean improvement (pre-/post-test differences) for the two groups (experimental and control) did, however, not differ statistically significantly, it implied that the identified significant improvement for all respondents (See Section 2.4.1) could only be attributed to other random factors – such as maturation or gender or age, etc. – regardless of the read-aloud intervention.

Therefore, the null hypothesis of concern, in this instance, asked whether the mean reading-improvement score (mean pre-/post-test difference score) of the experimental group was equal to the mean reading skills improvement of the control group, the alternative hypothesis being that the mean improvement score (mean pre-/post-test difference score) of the experimental group was greater than that of the control group.

The results of a parametric one-way analysis of variance test (the GLM approach) would be reliable if ANOVA assumptions of normally distributed improvement scores (pre-/post-test difference scores) were to be satisfied as well as the requirement that group variances of the improvement variable (pre-/post-test difference variable) be homogeneous. The GLM approach would also accommodate unequal group sizes ($n_1 = 33$ and $n_2 = 31$). For this reason, analysis of variance (ANOVA) using the GLM approach was selected. Shapiro-Wilk tests, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, and Levene's tests could be run to verify/refute normality and homogeneity assumptions. If ANOVA assumptions could not be met,

the nonparametric Wilcoxon rank-sum (two-sample) test would be applicable to prove or disprove the stated null hypothesis.

(b) Nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test

As just mentioned, if the ANOVA assumptions of normality and homogeneity of the improvement (difference) variable could not be met, the nonparametric Wilcoxon rank-sum (two-sample) test could be used to prove or disprove the null hypothesis stated in Section 5.30.2.2.1. In other words, the Kruskal-Wallis test could be used to provide an answer to the question of whether a statistically significantly greater reading skill improvement for the experimental than the control group was reported.

5.30.2.3 Issue 3: Was there a statistically significant difference in improvement trend (pre-/post-test differences) between the control and experimental groups?

If the reading improvement of the experimental group were to be verified as significantly greater than that of the control group (Section 5.30.2.2), learners' improvement scores (pre-/post-test differences) would then be classified into improvement categories of scores of zero to 10, 11 to 20, 21 to 30, or 31 to 40. The research would be interested in whether the experimental group reported proportionately more "small improvements" or proportionately more "large improvements" in reading skills than the control group. (Please refer to Table 5.12 in Section 5.29.41.) The nonparametric Cochran-Armitage trend test discussed below was used to investigate this matter.

(a) The nonparametric Cochran-Armitage trend test

For this approach, the improvement difference (pre-/post-test difference) of each learner was classified into one of four improvement categories: zero to 10, 11 to 20, 21 to 30, or 31 to 40. The frequency of improvement differences that fell into each of these categories was then calculated.

The Cochran-Armitage trend test was appropriate to determine whether the improvement trends of the experimental and control groups differed statistically significantly over the categories of improvement

levels. If significance were to be established, trend differences in this case could, for example, indicate that the proportion of learners in the control group who reported a “substantial” improvement (21 to 30 and 31 to 40 marks) was significantly lower than the corresponding proportion for the experimental group.

(b) Bar graph

These trends could then be displayed in a bar graph per group (experimental/control) and reading improvement category (zero to 10, 11 to 20, ... 31 to 40).

The SAS (Statistical Analysis System) statistical package, Version 9.2, was used to conduct all analyses described in Section 5.31.

5.31 Results of statistical data analysis

This section is structured to report on the results of the various statistical tests described in the analysis strategy section. The various statistical analyses were conducted on the reading-improvement variable (pre-/post-test difference variable) defined in that section.

This section, firstly, highlights the context and background of the study by means of one-way frequency tables of the biographical properties of learners, accompanied by a few summary statistics of these variables. After that, the results of the various analyses are presented in the same sequence in which the statistical techniques/tests were discussed in the analysis strategy subsection.

- i. The results of a paired t-test and a Wilcoxon signed-rank test are presented to address the matter of whether a statistically significant improvement in reading skills could be reported for the entire sample.
- ii. This is followed by one-way analysis of variance test(s) and Wilcoxon two-sample tests to establish whether a statistically greater improvement in the reading skills of the experimental group over the control group could be established (the second matter in the analysis strategy

section).

- iii. The results of the last analysis discussed are those of Wilcoxon rank-sum tests to determine whether the trend of improvement for the experimental group – over categories of improvement – was significantly different from/better than that of the control group.

5.31.1 The reading test data and the research context of the study

Table 5.10 below presents the pre-test and post-test marks/scores (columns 5 and 6 as well as 12 and 13), the difference between the pre- and post-test marks in columns 7 and 14 (the improvement in reading skills or pre-/post-test difference), gender (columns 4 and 11), age (columns 3 and 10), school, and group (experimental or control) reported for each learner. The various analyses discussed in the analysis strategy section (Section 5.30) were performed on this dataset and, specifically, on the pre-/post-test difference variable.

Table 5.10
Pre- and post-test scores and difference scores (post-test scores – pre-test scores) of
learners of the control and experimental groups in schools A and B

School A, control							School A, experimental						
No.	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre	Post	Diff	No.	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre	Post	Diff
1	L13	11	F	15	27	20	1	L19	10	F	20	45	25
2	L15	12	F	15	25	10	2	L14	10	F	15	30	15
3	L18	12	M	15	41	26	3	L16	11	F	15	25	10
4	L45	10	M	07	10	30	4	L17	10	F	10	30	20
5	L27	11	M	05	15	10	5	L25	08	F	05	10	5
6	L38	10	F	05	25	20	6	L32	13	M	05	45	40
7	L44	11	M	05	15	10	7	L41	11	F	05	25	20
8	L20	10	M	00	10	10	8	L47	09	M	05	15	10
9	L22	12	M	00	06	6	9	L21	11	M	00	10	10
10	L24	12	M	00	25	25	10	L23	10	M	00	12	12
11	L28	10	F	00	05	5	11	L26	10	F	00	30	30
12	L30	10	M	00	05	5	12	L29	11	F	00	28	28
13	L33	11	F	00	35	35	13	L31	12	M	00	05	25
14	L35	13	F	00	15	15	14	L34	14	M	00	27	27
15	L37	11	M	00	20	20	15	L36	11	F	00	39	39
16	L40	09	F	00	05	25	16	L39	10	M	00	15	15
17	L43	13	M	00	25	5	17	L42	11	M	00	10	10
18	L46	10	M	00									
School B, control							School B, experimental						
1	L11	10	F	15	20	5	1	L16	11	F	15	45	30
2	L17	11	M	15	15	0	2	L21	12	M	15	18	3
3	L12	11	M	10	30	20	3	L13	10	F	10	35	25
4	L14	13	M	10	25	15	4	L15	11	F	10	28	18
5	L20	11	M	5	30	25	5	L22	12	F	5	20	15
6	L24	13	M	5	12	7	6	L30	10	F	5	20	15
7	L31	11	M	5	15	10	7	L32	12	F	5	15	10
8	L39	12	M	5	10	5	8	L18	14	M	00	00	0
9	L19	11	M	00	15	15	9	L23	14	M	00	20	20
10	L25	10	F	00	23	23	10	L26	10	M	00	35	35
11	L27	10	F	00	20	20	11	L28	11	M	00	25	25
12	L29	11	M	00	23	2	12	L33	10	M	00	25	25
13	L34	10	M	00	05	5	13	L35	11	M	00	12	12
14	L36	13	M	00	15	15	14	L37	10	M	00	17	17
15	L38	10	F	00	15	15							

In Table 5.11 below, one-way frequency tables on learner attributes of school, group, gender, and age are included. These figures reflect that the selected sample was well represented with respect to all categories of these attributes.

Table 5.11				
One-way frequency distributions of the biographical attributes of learners				
	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative percentage
School				
School A	35	54.69	35	54.69
School B	29	45.31	64	100.00
Control/experimental group				
Control	33	51.56	33	51.56
Experimental	31	48.44	64	100.00
Age				
8-10 years	25	39.06	25	39.06
11 years	21	32.81	46	71.88
12-14 years	18	28.13	64	100.00
Gender				
Male	38	59.38	38	59.38
Female	26	40.63	64	100.00

5.31.2 Descriptive statistics for the variables of the dataset

The descriptive statistics in Table 5.12 below provide an overview of pre- and post-test marks as well as reading improvement that occurred between the pre-test and post-test periods (the difference variable of the dataset). For the entire sample, the first row, column 3, indicates that 64, 63, and 63 observations were used to calculate the descriptive statistics for the pre-test, post-test, and difference variables, respectively, whereas 33 and 31 observations were used for similar statistics for the control and experimental groups, respectively.

The pre-test, post-test, and difference means are reported in column 4, standard deviations in column 5, minimum and maximum values of test variables in columns 6 and 7, and indicators of how pre- and post-test scores were distributed over the zero to 40 test-score range in columns 8 and 9.

Variable	Factor control/ experimental		Mean	Std dev	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pre		4	41	.75	0.00	20.00	1.08	-0.11
Post	-	63	20.60	10.70	0.00	45.00	0.43	-0.23
Diff		63	16.13	9.66	0.00	40.00	0.48	-0.35
Pre			4.15	5.53	0.00	15.00	1.08	-0.21
Post	Control	3	18.19	9.18	5.00	41.00	0.41	-0.19
Diff			13.91	8.54	0.00	35.00	0.46	-0.51
Pre			4.68	6.05	0.00	20.00	1.10	0.04
Post	Experimental	31	23.10	11.70	0.00	45.00	0.23	-0.44
Diff			18.42	10.33	0.00	40.00	0.34	-0.48

5.31.3 Deductions derived from the descriptive statistics table

The descriptive statistics in Table 5.12 above report pre- and post-test mean scores of 4.41 and 20.60,0 respectively, for the entire sample (with corresponding figures of 4.15 and 18.19 as well as 4.68 and 23.10, for the control and experimental group, respectively), with a mean reading improvement (mean pre-/post-test difference) of 16.13 for the entire sample (and 13.91 and 18.42 for the control and experimental group, respectively). These figures provide a first indication of reading improvement performance over the pre- and post-test marks. These mean values suggest improvement in reading skills at the end of the intervention period.

The statistical significance of such a suggestion was further investigated by means of a parametric paired t-test (and nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test) and a parametric analysis of variance (and nonparametric Wilcoxon rank-sum test) as indicated in the analysis results sections that follow.

5.31.4 Analysis results to establish whether statistically significant reading improvement (pre-/post-test difference) was reported
Results of the parametric paired t-test

To establish whether reading performance (the post-/pre-test score differences) improved statistically significantly from the pre-test to the post-test period, a paired t-test (and nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test) was conducted to test the null hypothesis that the average difference between pre- and post-test scores was zero (that average improvement was zero). The formal statement of the null hypothesis is included in the corresponding section of the analysis strategy.

The results of the t-test are presented in Table 5.13 below. The mean of the differences (improvement) between the pre- and post-test marks is reported in column 4, the 95% confidence limits of the mean difference (improvement) in columns 3 and 5, and the standard deviation of differences in column 6. The second row of the table reports the t-statistic for the test and the probability associated with such a statistic if the null hypothesis of zero mean difference (improvement) is true.

Table 5.13					
Paired test results of pre-/post-test marks					
Difference		Lower CL	Mean	Upper CL	Std dev
Pre-test – post-test	3	13.70	16.13	18.56	9.66
t-statistic (t-probability)	t = 1.26 (< 0.0001) ***				
The probability that the calculated t-statistic will assume a value of -3.66 under the null hypothesis of the mean differences being zero is 0.0006 (which is < 0.001). This probability indicates statistical significance at the 0.1% level.					
Normality tests for the distribution of the <i>difference</i> values: Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test: D = 0.12, associated probability: 0.03. Shapiro-Wilk normality test: W= 0.96, associated probability: 0.04. At the 1% level of significance, a normally distributed difference variable can be assumed.					

5.31.5 Deduction derived from the paired t-test results

Table 5.13 above indicates the calculated t-statistic to be 13.26, with an associated probability of < 0.0001 . Since this probability is highly significant at the 0.1% significance level, the null hypothesis of zero mean difference (mean improvement) is rejected.

This implies that, all respondents considered, their post-test scores differed statistically significantly from their pre-test scores. In other words, statistically significant improvement (pre-/post-test difference) did occur over the six-week period for all learners.

The normality tests at the bottom of the above table indicate that the distribution of the difference variable deviated somewhat from normality at the 5% level, but not at the 1% level. Although the paired t-test is robust to non-normality, the alternative (when the assumption of normally distributed pre-/post-test difference values cannot be met) nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test is reported below – to play it safe – and to verify the results of the paired t-test.

5.31.6 Results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test on paired differences

Table 5.14 below reports the S-statistic of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, which is the appropriate nonparametric test to test the hypothesis that the mean reading-improvement (mean pre-/post-test difference) score is zero. (The formal statement of the null hypothesis was included in the corresponding section of the analysis strategy.)

Table 5.14 Wilcoxon signed-rank test: calculated S-statistic and associated probability		
Tests for location: $\mu_0 = 0$		
Test	Statistic	p-value
Wilcoxon signed-rank	45.5	$P < 0.0001^{***}$
Significance legend: ***: statistical significance is indicated at the 0.1% level of significance. **: statistical significance is indicated at the 1% level of significance. *: statistical significance is indicated at the 5% level of significance.		

5.31.7 Deduction from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test results

Table 5.14 indicates that a probability of < 0.0001 was associated with the S-statistic of 945.5 under the null hypothesis of a zero difference mean. The probability indicated statistical significance at the 0.1% level – highly significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis of zero mean pre-/post-test difference (improvement) was rejected. This result agreed with the parametric paired t-test and, thus, verified the t-test results: a significant reading improvement over the intervention period could be reported.

To summarise, both the parametric paired t-test and the nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test, thus, indicated that a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test results (reading improvement) could be reported over all learners; thus, in general, statistically significant reading improvement was established. In other words, the mean reading improvement (the mean difference between the pre- and post-test scores) was statistically significantly different from zero.

However, as mentioned in the analysis strategy, the question of whether this significant improvement (pre-/post-test difference) could be attributed to the read-aloud intervention or whether other factors (such as maturation, age, school, gender, or other random factors) contributed to the significant improvement needed to be answered, as presented in the next section.

5.31.8 Analysis results to establish whether the reading improvement (pre-/post-test difference) of the experimental group was statistically significantly greater than that of the control group

One-way analysis of variance (general linear model (GLM) approach)

The effect of the experimental and control groups on reading improvement was investigated by means of one-way analysis of variance, which was conducted on the reading-improvement variable (pre-/post-test score differences). The general linear approach to analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used, since the number of respondents in the *experimental* (31) and *control* groups (33) differed, and the GLM approach accommodates unequal group sizes.

In this analysis, the improvement variable (pre-/post-test difference) was regarded as the dependent variable and the experimental/control classification (labelled ContlExp) as the independent variable. The null hypothesis of this analysis states that the mean difference of the *experimental group* is equal to the mean difference of the *control group*. The formal statement of these particular null and alternative hypotheses is included in the corresponding section of the analysis strategy.

The parametric analysis of variance technique assumes that the improvement (pre-/post-test difference) variable is normally distributed and that group variances are equal (experimental/control groups).

Table 5.15 below reports the degrees of freedom, sum of squares, mean squares, F-statistic, and probability (in columns 1 to 5) associated with the F-statistic for the entire model (first row) and that for the classification effect, ContlExp (control or experimental group classification), in the second row, respectively. The probabilities mentioned indicate the statistical significance of the model and the classification effect, respectively. (The F-statistics for the model and classification effect are calculated as $MS(\text{model})/MS(\text{error})$ and $MS(\text{ContlExp})/MS(\text{error})$, respectively).

Levene's test was conducted to verify the ANOVA assumptions of equal group variances (*experimental, control*). Levene's F-statistic proved to be 1.50, with associated probability of 0.23 under the null hypothesis of equal variances. Since the test was not significant (probability > 0.05), the null hypothesis of Levene's test of equal variances was not rejected; group variances were, therefore, equal. The ANOVA assumption of homogeneous group variances for the pre-/post-difference variable (improvement variable) for the experimental and control groups was, thus, verified. However, as proven for the paired t-test, assuming a normal distribution for the difference variable (a second ANOVA assumption) might be risky, even though ANOVA is robust to non-normality. For this reason, the researcher decided to report the findings deduced from the ANOVA analysis and then verify the findings with a similar nonparametric test (the Wilcoxon rank-sum test).

Comment: in a four-factor analysis of variance (GLM approach), the effects of gender, age, and school were also initially entered into the ANOVA model to investigate whether these effects statistically significantly affected improvement. These effects all proved to be non-significant.)

Table 5.15					
One-way analysis of variance results on pre-/post-test difference values (diff) to determine the statistical significance of the effect of the experimental/control group classification (in other words, to determine the effect of the read-aloud intervention on improvement)					
Source	F	Sum of squares (SS)	Mean square (MS)	F-value	Pr > F
Model	1	320.716990	320.716990	3.58	0.0631
ContExp		320.7169899	320.7169899	3.58	0.0631
Error	1	5 460.267137	89.512576		
Corrected total	62	5 780.984127		R-square = 0.06	
Significance legend: ***: statistical significance is indicated at the 0.1% level of significance. **: statistical significance is indicated at the 1% level of significance. *: statistical significance is indicated at the 5% level of significance.					

Deduction

Table 5.15 indicates that the probability associated with the *experimental/control* classification effect was 0.06, which was not statistically significant at either the 0.1%, or the 1%, or the 5% level of significance – the acknowledged significance levels reported in the literature. Adhering to these levels in the case of this study strictly speaking would imply that the null hypothesis of no statistically significant difference between the mean improvement score (mean pre-/post-test difference) of the *experimental group* and the *control group* could not be rejected.

However, the probability of 0.06 shown in Table 5.15 did indicate that, at the 6% level of significance, the null hypothesis of no statistically significant differences between the mean difference of the experimental and control groups could be rejected.

The definition of a significance level should be considered along with the statement made in the

previous sentence. According to Frost (2019), a significance level is a measure of the strength of the evidence that must be present in a sample before a specific null hypothesis can be rejected and an alternative hypothesis accepted, in the case of this study, the alternative hypothesis of a significant experimental/control group effect. According to Frost (2019), a significance level is the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is, in fact, true – also referred to as a Type II error in statistics. For example, a significance level of 0.05 indicates a 5% risk of concluding that a difference exists (between experimental and control group differences, for example) when there is no actual difference. Lower significance levels indicate that one requires stronger evidence before one will reject the null hypothesis. Higher levels, again, will require weaker evidence. In this study, a significance level of 6% indicated a 6% risk of concluding that a difference between the mean differences of the experimental and control groups existed when there was, in fact, no actual difference.

From the parametric analysis of variance results above, the research, therefore, concluded that, at the 6% level of significance (not usually an acknowledged significance level in the literature), the statistical significance of the read-aloud intervention was verified.

It would be safe to conclude that the ANOVA results suggested that the read-aloud intervention affected the reading improvement of the group of Primary 4 learners positively.

The results of a nonparametric Wilcoxon rank-sum test are reported below to verify or refute the statistical significance of the results of the analysis of variance (GLM approach) of this section.

5.31.9 Nonparametric Wilcoxon two-sample (rank-sum) test

As mentioned in the previous section, to be on the safe side, the nonparametric Wilcoxon rank-sum test was also conducted to test the null hypothesis of experimental and control group mean improvement scores (mean pre-/post-test differences) being equal. This was done because of the possible (but slight) non-normality of the pre-/post-test difference variable indicated in Table 5.13 and also mentioned in

Section 5.9. (The formal statements of these particular null and alternative hypotheses are included in the corresponding section of the analysis strategy.)

The Wilcoxon rank-sum test was used to calculate a statistic based on ranking the improvement scores (pre-/post-test differences (diff)). Ranking was done separately per group, and a statistic was calculated based on these rankings. Table 5.16 below reports the summed ranks, the expected sum-of-ranks if the null hypothesis of equal mean differences for the experimental and control groups is assumed, the standard deviation, and the mean sum ranks in columns 3 to 6 for the two groups. The Wilcoxon test statistic is reported in the second part of the table (statistic = 1 120.00). Several probabilities are listed that can be associated with the Wilcoxon statistic. The exact one-sided probability was the most appropriate for this study, since the sample size was relatively small.

contExp	N	Sum of scores	Expected under H0	Std dev under H0	Mean score
Control	32	896.0	1 024.0	72.307983	28.000000
Experimental	31	1 120.0	992.0	72.307983	36.129032
Average scores were used for ties.					

Statistic	1 120.0000
Normal approximation:	
Z	1.7633
One-sided Pr > Z	0.0389
Two-sided Pr > Z	0.0779
t approximation:	
One-sided Pr > Z	0.0414
Two-sided Pr > Z	0.0828
Monte Carlo estimate for exact test	
Estimate one-sided Pr \geq S	0.0391*
99% lower conf limit, one-sided Pr \geq S	0.0341
99% upper conf limit, one-sided Pr \geq S	0.0441
Z includes a continuity correction of 0.5.	

Deduction derived from Table 5.16

The exact one-sided probability for the test was 0.039 (0.04), which would be statistically significant at the 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis that the mean improvement scores (pre-/post-test differences) of the *experimental* and *control* groups are equal could, therefore, be rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that the mean difference of the experimental group is significantly larger than that of the control group.

This then verified the statistical significance of the suggestion of the analysis of variance results: reading skills improvement (the difference) for the *experimental* group was statistically significantly greater than that of the *control* group.

5.31.10 Results of analysis to establish whether the trend of improvement for the experimental group was significantly different from/better than that of the control group over improvement categories (four)

Cochran-Armitage trend test results

The results of the parametric analysis of variance test strongly suggested that the reading improvement of the experimental groups was substantially greater than that of the control groups. The above was proven by the nonparametric Wilcoxon rank-sum test. Therefore, the statistical significance of the read-aloud intervention was established.

To illustrate the nature of the effect of the read-aloud programme on the reading skills improvement of the experimental group, compared to the control group (who did the EDI programme), the reading improvement scores (pre-/post-test differences) for the experimental and control groups were classified into four categories according to improvement magnitude (zero to 10, 11 to 20, 21 to 30, and 31 to 40 improvement scores).

A Cochran-Armitage trend test was subsequently performed on the frequencies of improvement scores

that fell into each improvement category per experimental or control group. (See Table 5.17.) The first entry in every cell of Columns 2 and 3 represents the number of improvement values (frequency) that fell into each improvement category. The second entry in every cell reports the row percentage of the specific frequency. The last row of the table reports the Cochran-Armitage test statistic and associated probability.

Table 5.17			
Frequency distribution of reading skill improvement (differences) for control (no read-aloud intervention) and experimental (read-aloud intervention) over difference categories			
Difference category	Read-aloud groups		Total
Frequency Row pct	Control (no read-aloud)	Experimental (read-aloud)	
0-10	15 62.50	9 37.50	24
11-20	10 47.62	11 52.38	21
21-30	6 42.86	8 57.14	14
31-40	1 25.00	3 75.00	4
Total	32	31	63
Frequency missing = 1			
The probability associated with the Cochran-Armitage test statistic of $Z = -1.64$ is 0.05. This indicates statistical significance at the 5% level.			

The Cochran-Armitage test determined whether the distribution patterns of the control and experimental groups exhibited statistically significantly different response trends over improvement categories (in other words, column-wise comparison of frequencies). Figure 5.1 is a bar graph of the frequency distribution patterns of improvement (pre-/post-test differences) for the control and experimental groups.

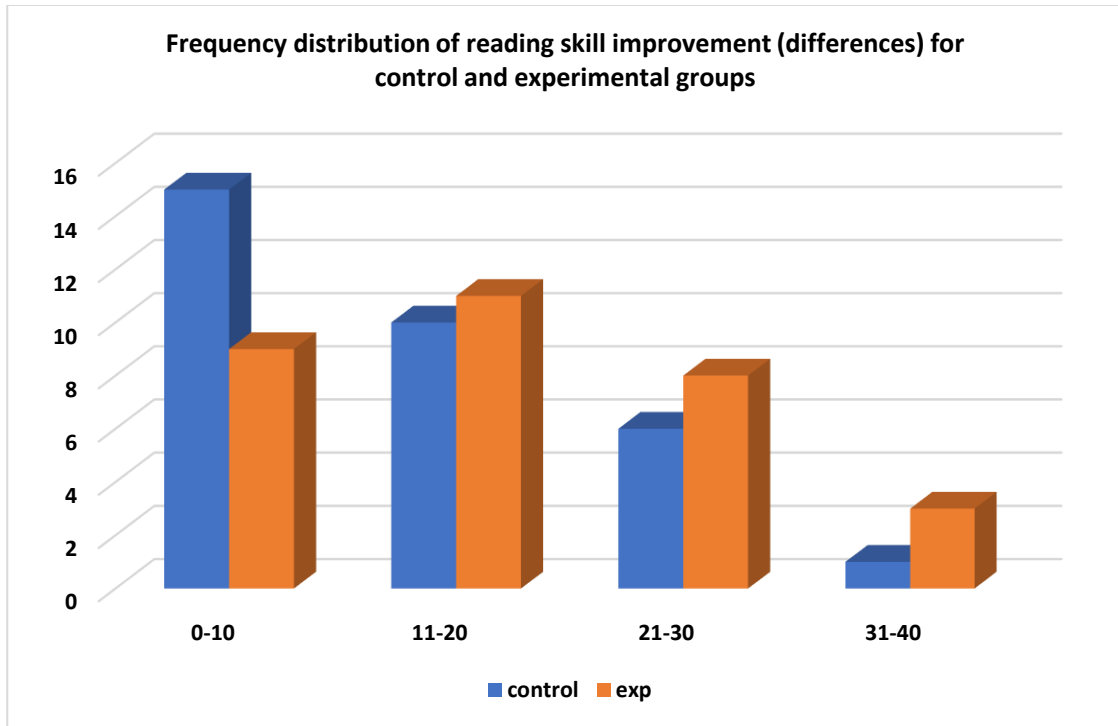


Figure 5.1: Bar graph of frequency distributions of reading improvement of experimental and control groups over difference categories

Deductions derived from Table 5.17

The Cochran-Armitage trend statistic, Z , of -1.64 was statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. This confirmed that the reading improvement trend for the experimental group differed from that of the control group. Figure 5.1 displays the difference in improvement trends virtually: on the one hand, for the control group, most readers showed a small improvement in their reading skills (an improvement between zero and 10 in reading test score). This trend gradually decreased for the control group as the magnitude of improvement increased, up to the point where a 31 to 40 category reading improvement was only indicated for one control-group reader.

On the other hand, the proportion of readers who fell into the 11 to 20, 21 to 30, and 31 to 40 improvement-magnitude categories for the experimental-group readers was significantly greater than that of the control group (52.38% compared to 47.62%, 57.14% compared to 42.86%, and 75% compared 25.0%): proportionately more experimental-group readers reported larger reading

improvement that the control group.

In summary, the following could be said based on the findings of the analysis:

- A statistically significant improvement in reading skills could be reported for all readers.
- A statistically greater reading improvement for the readers exposed to the read-aloud programme could be reported.
- The learners who did the read-aloud intervention programme reported a greater proportion of readers who improved by more than 10 reading-test marks (11 to 20, 21 to 30, and 31 to 40 score points).

5.32 Findings from test results

From the above table, the researcher learnt that the scores of learners before the intervention began were almost the same, judging from the scores obtained from the pre-test. This showed that the learners were at the same reading level when one considers the mean of 4.68 for the experimental and 4.15 for the control group. It suggests that the learners in both groups needed intervention.

The findings based on Table 5.7 revealed that there was a positive increase in the learners' reading scores from the pre-test to the post-test in both groups who did either the explicit direct instruction programme or the read-aloud intervention programme. This meant that applying the read-aloud intervention programme aided the learners' improvement in reading and reading comprehension more as proved by the positive increase in the post-test scores.

The experimental group's mean of 22.45 in the post-test showed that most of the learners were reading above average, which indicated that the read-aloud programme had a positive impact on the reading comprehension of at-risk Primary 4 learners who were participants in the project.

The learners who took part in this intervention programme improved in their comprehension and active participation in interactions, discussion, and shared reading while the read-aloud sessions were being implemented.

In the researcher's opinion, the control group also benefited from explicit instructions provided during the study because their post-test scores improved as well when compared to their pre-test scores.

The research results showed that the difference in learners' test performance scores could be ascribed to the use of the read-aloud intervention strategy.

In comparing the results obtained from the pre-test and post-test, it could be concluded that the better improvement was the result of the read-aloud programme. This answered the main aim of the research, which was to find out whether the read-aloud programme would benefit Primary 4 learners' reading abilities more than another reading programme such as the EDI programme.

In sections 5.31 and 5.32, the sub-aim related to the use of a pre-test and a post-test to find out whether the read-aloud programme or explicit direct instruction could support Primary 4 learners' reading problems was discussed.

5.33 Conclusion

This chapter provided discussions, presentations, and an analysis of the qualitative data collected through observations, interviews, questionnaires, and reading tests as well as an analysis of the quantitative data. The qualitative data collected was transcribed, which made coding possible. Moreover, it made analysis of thematic presentations and discussions easy. The qualitative and quantitative data was analysed, interpreted, and discussed. The data gathered from the qualitative research led to a better understanding of the problems of reading and reading comprehension experienced by a group of Primary 4 learners in a rural part of Nigeria. The researcher was in a position to construct the life experiences during reading lessons of the groups of Primary 4 learners and their teachers. Using the data collected from the interviews and the questionnaires, it was possible to construct themes about various aspects regarding the teaching of reading in Primary 4 classes. The quantitative data provided an answer to the main aim of the study.

The next chapter will present a summary of the findings of the research as well as recommendations on how the reading and reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners who are at risk regarding their reading abilities can be improved.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The focus of this study was on the effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of Primary 4 school learners who were at-risk readers in rural Nigeria. By the end of the study, the researcher had discovered that most of the Primary 4 learners who participated in the research were at risk for reading problems and that their teachers had difficulty providing the reading support needed and intervention required at that level. She had, furthermore, discovered that the teachers were willing to provide the additional reading support to learners if the needed teaching and learning materials were adequately made available by all the stakeholders. The researcher had also found that the Primary 4 teachers needed to be trained in reading methods such as the read-aloud programme.

In the preceding chapter, the data that was collected through a mixed-methods approach involving both the qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry was discussed and the information from the data aligned with the main research question: “How can Primary 4 teachers support learners who are at risk for reading and reading comprehension problems?” In order to provide answers to the research questions, four research data collection methods, namely, classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and reading tests, were used by the researcher.

The primary aim of the study was to investigate the use of the read-aloud programme rather than another reading programme as an intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria.

Based on the primary aim, the sub-aims of the study were as follows:

- To find out whether teachers understand the problems that Primary 4 learners who are at-risk readers have to face

- To explore whether a group of Primary 4 teachers have knowledge about an intervention programme to support learners who are at-risk readers
- To introduce a group of teachers to the read-aloud activities and how these can help learners who are at risk in terms of reading and reading comprehension and who struggle to be independent readers
- To train a group of teachers to develop the reading abilities of a group of selected Primary 4 learners by using the read-aloud programme or another programme such as the explicit direct instruction programme
- To use a pre-test and a post-test to find out whether the read-aloud programme or another reading programme such as explicit direct instruction will support Primary 4 learners to improve their reading abilities
- To search for possible reasons why Primary 4 learners experience reading problems
- To provide possible guidelines for teachers, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), the Federal Ministry of Education, and the training of teachers at colleges of education to support learners with reading problems, including Primary 4 learners

6.2 Summary of the review of literature from the theoretical framework and findings from comparative quasi-experimental research

This segment presents a summary of the study and provides direction to the section in which recommendations are discussed.

6.2.1 Summary of Chapter 1

Chapter 1 presented an introduction to, and background on, the study. The research problem and motivation for carrying out the study were discussed. In addition, the theoretical framework, the aim of the research, and a description of the research design and methodology to be used in the study were

briefly discussed. Also defined were the key terms and concepts used in the study. Finally, the plan of study of the thesis was presented.

6.2.2 Summary of Chapter 2

The researcher did a review of the literature in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 to acquaint herself with the existing literature with regard to reading and reading comprehension and the effect an intervention or additional reading support would have on learners at risk in terms of reading at the selected schools.

The first section of the literature review was captured in Chapter 2 and began with the unfolding of the background to the study, which focused on the relevance of laying the right academic foundation at the early primary stage in order to enable learners to contribute their quota to the development of the nation. From the literature, it was noted that learners' low or poor achievement at school could be attributed to their poor reading and reading comprehension ability and the poor reading methods or strategies used by teachers in rural Nigeria where the study was carried out. The literature showed that not many research studies had been conducted with regard to the reading ability of Primary 4 learners and that the emphasis had been on Primary 1 to 3 learners' reading ability for a long time (See Section 2.2). It also showed that the educational standard in Nigeria was falling below standard and that this was evident in many learners not reading, comprehending, and writing well, hence the mass failure in the national entrance examination. In Nigeria and other countries around the globe, the ability of citizens to acquire knowledge is considered very important for both the economic and political growth of the nation. By implication, if the reading problems confronting learners are not tackled, they will continue to fall below standard in their reading and comprehension level. The literature revealed that learners' reading and reading comprehension problems were as a result of teachers' poor application and use of the wrong reading methods such as the traditional "chalk and talk" method or the alphabetic method. This was because teachers' knowledge determined learners' achievement at school. Other problems

were a lack of co-operative or interactive teaching and learning strategies, a lack of instructional resources, and learners' diverse needs not being met by teachers.

When considering the concept of reading, giving a single definition of reading was not possible (Grabe & Stoller, 2010:80) (See Section 2.3). The literature review revealed that, in Nigeria where the study was conducted and all over the world, there were many definitions of reading. The various definitions considered in this study were all relevant and revealed that they saw reading as the same procedure, whose purpose was the ability to comprehend written material. In reading, the reader communicates with an unknown author. While doing this, he or she is expected to apply his or her background knowledge to the reading activity. All the definitions given in the literature review were important in the study, but the researcher adopted the definition provided by the Curriculum Council of Western Australia as the most suitable for the study (See Section 2.4). The definition implies that a reader's ability to decode meaning from an author's written materials is based on pre-existing knowledge acquired through his or her experience with regard to his or her sociocultural and cognitive factors as well as the reader's interest, motivation, and schema.

The literature review on the importance of reading had implication for the study. It gave the researcher an in-depth understanding of the importance of reading. It was discovered that researchers recognised the importance of reading in formal education. In Section 2.5, the discussion showed that reading was required in day-to-day activities, either directly or indirectly, and that it had to be encouraged in all situations. One vital aspect emerging from the discussions of the various views was that reading is an individual's major means of remembering or recalling the past, which is connected to the future for fulfilled living. Thus, learners need to be exposed to, and should be actively or sufficiently engaged in, reading activities to develop and promote them in all aspects of life (See Section 2.5).

The study revealed that discussion by various researchers saw it as of great significance for learners to

read in English, as learners had to be able to interact fluently with peers or anybody else after their primary education. It was found that reading in English in the Nigerian educational system started at the Primary 4 level, as stated in the language provisions in Nigeria's National Policy on Education, but unfortunately most Primary 4 level learners found reading in English a major problem. Learners' reading problems were extensively discussed in Section 2.6. This issue was aligned with the fifth research question highlighted in Chapter 1. (See Section 1.6).

The literature also discussed the relevance of motivation in reading. Motivation is a stimulation that drives an individual towards carrying out a given task. Learners who are given enough support or who are motivated to read will have the right attitude or will place the right value on any reading material. Motivation by parents, teachers, and other stakeholders underpins the reading ability of learners; thus, the lack of such motivation will also affect learners. It was evident in the findings of this study from the interviews and classroom observations that Primary 4 learners were not in any way given any form of motivation or support from their parents, their teachers, or the school authorities. By implication, they had failed to realise the importance of learners' motivation or support in reading and reading comprehension (See Section 2.7.2). The literature showed that learners needed motivation and support from their teachers to prevent any form of disappointment in reading to learn. This could be achieved through intervention strategies such as read-aloud or additional reading support.

The major duty of teachers was to ensure that at-risk learners were motivated and supported in reading through a reading strategy that would be beneficial to them. Reading strategies involved predicting, visualising, inferring, and summarising. The study made reference to the views of several reading specialists on what the strategies were (See Sections 2.8.1 to 2.8.4). From the study, the concept of read-aloud, read-aloud strategies that teachers could use, the purpose of implementation, and explicit direct instruction (EDI) were discussed (See Sections 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11). This section of the study also

reviewed who Primary 4 learners were in the Nigerian educational system. The discussion showed that Primary 4 was the entry point into the learners' fourth year of study and that their age range was usually between nine and 12 years.

Two aspects of Primary 4 learners' developmental stages that had received attention from researchers were physical development and cognitive development. The discussion in this study emphasised the different developmental changes that took place in a Primary 4 learner, both mentally and physically (See Sections 2.13.1 and 2.13.2). Thus, it was found that it was vital for teachers to know what these changes were in order to understand and know how to cope with learning challenges.

The study also included a review of literature regarding the views of reading specialists on reading comprehension. All the discussions of reading comprehension showed that comprehension played an important role in a learner's achievement in life. Teachers must have adequate knowledge of what reading comprehension is all about. Thus, serious attention must be given to its teaching and learning among learners at risk in terms of reading problems at Primary 4 level.

From the study, the place of reading at lower-level Primary 1 to 3 in Nigeria was discussed. The discussions drew attention to the fact that Primary 1 to 3 lower basic was the bedrock for any educational programme to succeed; hence, the teaching of reading occupied an important place in the National Policy on Education. The major goal of teaching reading at this level was to instil knowledge and the skill to read successfully (See Section 2.14). A teaching method that was found to be common at this level was the traditional approach referred to as the "chalk and talk" method. The method involves the teacher talking to the learners and, at the same time, writing on the chalkboard. The literature study revealed that this method did not enhance learners' active commitment during lessons. The literature revealed that Primary 3 pre-reading activities in the curriculum were storytelling, recitation of hymns, and word games. These activities helped learners to know that words were made

up of separate speech sounds. Despite this, the literature showed that actual classroom practice at rural schools was obstructed by certain factors, which included primary school teachers' lack of knowledge about the importance of teaching and learning. Another factor was a lack of instructional materials in the classroom (See Section 2.14).

The literature study, furthermore, found that the objectives of teaching reading in Primary 4 were informed by the English Studies curriculum for Levels 4 to 6 in the Federal Ministry of Education's (FME) nine-year basic education curriculum (See Section 2.15). According to this policy, by Primary 4, a learner ought to have become an independent reader who could comprehend difficult aspects of text. Other expectations from a Primary 4 learner were highlighted in Sections 2.15 and 2.16. The discussion indicated that the presentation and teaching of reading by teachers in Primary 4 were faulty. The instructional method used in teaching reading and reading comprehension in Nigeria at Primary 4 level revealed the following: reading comprehension skills were not taught, teachers adhered strictly to the prescribed textbooks, and questions were set to test understanding of the text instead of teaching to enhance understanding of text. By implication, teachers did not use any strategy to support learners' reading. This evidence suggested that there had to be a change in teachers' teaching methods with regard to the teaching of reading and reading comprehension instruction. This finding was associated with the second research sub-question in Chapter 1, Section 1.6: "What strategies do Primary 4 teachers have to support learners with reading problems or who are at risk concerning reading?"

Literature on the present status of reading in Nigerian rural primary schools indicated that the majority of learners in Nigerian primary schools failed to read and comprehend and did not meet either school or societal requirements (See Section 2.17); hence, government had put some literacy programmes in place to curb these problems. This was elaborately discussed in section 2.18. The first part of the literature review ended with the factors that were found to be responsible for reading problems faced

by Primary 4 learners as suggested by numerous researchers. These were extensively discussed in Sections 2.18.1 to 2.18.7 and included learners' socio-economic background, their parents' parenting style, learners' home environment, the medium of instruction, a lack of instructional materials, poor nutrition, and a poor school environment. The discussion suggested that both government and teachers had to understand the reading problems with which rural learners were faced and that if learners continued to experience the above conditions, their interests, feelings, and emotions towards learning would be affected. This discussion assisted the researcher in answering the first sub-question indicated in Chapter 1 (See Section 1.6): "How do teachers understand the reading problems faced by Primary 4 learners?"

6.2.3 Summary of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 reviewed literature on various definitions of the concept "theory" as well as different views on reading theories. The review was classified into three sections: the psycholinguistic theory of reading, constructivist theory and reading, and behaviourism and reading. The different views on reading helped to give an in-depth comprehension of how different authorities viewed reading. The reading methods and approaches were discussed in detail in Section 3.3. The different schools of thought on reading methods or approaches were identified and examined equally. They included the phonic method or the top-down approach, the whole-word and the whole-language method or bottom-up approach, the analytic approach, the eclectic method, the global reading method, the syllable method, the sight method, synthetic phonics, and the systematic method (See Sections 3.4.1 to 3.4.9). This discussion helped to broaden the researcher's understanding of the various methods or approaches that are important for the effective teaching of reading in the classroom. One major fact that became apparent in the discussion was that learners learnt differently. Having discussed the various reading methods or approaches, the researcher gave a description of the age-long controversies around the

reading process. (See Sections 3.4 and 3.5.)

In section 3.6, Onovughe's view that reading is a process of meaning construction was addressed. In addition to the reading process, the researcher discussed elements of the reading process, which included visual and non-visual elements. The visual elements are the letters that make up the words and the words that combine to form grammatical units of the printed text (Onovughe), while the non-visual elements are the readers' prior knowledge and motivation (See Section 3.6.1). The literature in Section 3.6.2 described some basic stages in the reading process that needed to be taught to learners. The stages included pre-reading, guided reading, and post-reading. Hence, applying the different stages in the classroom could enhance the learners' reading abilities. Furthermore, the literature reviewed the goals of reading and its process. The raw material for reading was identified as the written language. The process consisted of interpreting and translating, while the end product was a combination of thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Onovughe used Bloom's model of taxonomy to describe the process and goals of reading. (See Section 3.7, Table 3.1.) The discussion showed that, without goals, readers did not know what was expected of them.

From the researcher's study of the literature, the concept of intervention, an overview of definitions of intervention, elements of effective reading intervention instruction for Primary 4 learners, and appropriate reading materials were discussed (See Sections 3.8, 3.8.1, 3.8.2, and 3.8.3). The literature review also included a definition of the read-aloud intervention programme, which Myers (2015:32) defines as a situation in which teachers take up the duty of reading to learners. It includes interaction among readers and questioning before and after the reading activities. The literature review, furthermore, looked at the views of several reading experts on read-aloud. The discussions emphasised the importance of read-aloud activities for the learner. The most important fact that emerged from all of the discussions was that read-aloud provided learners with the opportunity to enjoy the advantages

of comprehending the structure of language to be modelled by the teacher; hence, learners could listen to teachers and imitate the language structure and the sounds they heard from teachers in classroom reading activities. A synthesis of empirical studies on read-aloud strategies between 1992 and 2008 was reviewed in the literature (See Section 3.9.2). The findings of the various studies showed that researchers were in agreement that reading aloud to learners of all ages would have a positive impact on their reading ability. This was in alignment with one of the findings of this study that learners who were exposed to the read-aloud intervention performed better than learners who received additional reading support in explicit direct instruction (EDI). The effective approaches to the presentation of read-aloud that teachers ought to follow were discussed in Section 3.11. The literature review in Chapter 3 ended with a discussion of the presentation of read-aloud instruction. It highlighted the effective procedures that teachers had to use in a read-aloud classroom, which included the time teachers had to give to each read-aloud session. Other effective procedures were outlined in Chapter 2, section 2.10. Procedures in read-aloud included book selection, practice and preview of the book, and planning and conducting the read-aloud sessions (See Sections 3.9.5 to 3.11). This discussion helped to address the third and sixth research sub-questions in Chapter 1 (See Section 1.6).

The review of literature in Chapters 2 and 3 gave an in-depth understanding of the research regarding the concept of reading and reading comprehension, reading motivation, and reading intervention (read-aloud and explicit direct instruction).

6.2.4 Summary of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 described the research paradigm. This refers to the belief that aided the researcher's investigation (See Section 4.2). The various definitions of a research paradigm were addressed first. The different opinions on what a research paradigm was enabled the researcher to adopt the definition of Nieuwenhuis (2016), which best suited the research design (See Section 4.2). The review focused

on the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the study. It also presented the order in which knowledge could be studied and understood (See Section 4.3).

The discussions of paradigms enabled the researcher to consider the use of two research methods, qualitative and quantitative, which resulted in a mixed-methods approach for the study. The researcher used this mixed-methods research approach to understand how teachers were handling reading problems of learners who were at-risk readers.

The researcher also discussed the theoretical framework that was relevant to the study. This study was based on Vygotsky's social constructivism (See Section 1.4). Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, on which the study was centred, helped reveal the important role of the sociocultural environment of the learner and how learners constructed knowledge or learning in an active manner under the guidance of their teachers. It also showed the importance of "scaffolding" of learning in helping learners who had reading problems. Scaffolding could be linked to what Vygotsky refers to as learners' zone of proximal development (ZPD). In considering the above, the major consideration that emerged was that giving support to learners with reading and reading comprehension problems had to be seen as a combined effort. This implied that all the stakeholders, teachers, schools, parents, and the government had to collaborate in providing learners at risk for reading and reading comprehension problems with the conducive learning environment that was needed to help learners to construct meaning or knowledge in a cultural setting. This kind of approach would create the right classroom atmosphere for teachers and learners to interact and also to enable teachers to guide individual learners or provide the support needed to address individual learners' reading needs. This discussion assisted in providing an answer to the sixth research question in Chapter 1 (See Section 1.6): "What guidelines can be provided for teachers and all stakeholders in education to support learners with reading problems, including Primary 4 learners?"

In Section 4.5, the various views on a research approach were discussed. The aims of a researcher in a quantitative approach were also explained in detail with regard to how a researcher could identify the relationship between independent and dependent variables in a group (See Section 4.6.2). There was, furthermore, an explanation that a quantitative method was used because it helped the researcher to explore the reading problems of at-risk Primary 4 learners. The study then highlighted the characteristics of the quantitative research approach (See Section 4.6.2.1) and made reference to the literature by discussing the opinions of some authors on qualitative research (See Section 4.6.3). The literature assisted the researcher to understand that qualitative research was a process of investigating the meaning that a group of people attached to human problems. The literature, thus, made it clear that qualitative research had to be one of the approaches used as a guide in this study because it enabled the researcher to effectively carry out fieldwork at two schools. This, in turn, eventually enabled the researcher to get robust data on how Primary 4 teachers attended to reading and reading comprehension problems of at-risk Primary 4 learners and the effect the read-aloud programme had on learners' reading and reading comprehension abilities. The study also presented the characteristics of qualitative research. The researcher then discussed the population and sample (See Section 4.8), the pilot study, and the research sites (See Sections 4.8.3 and Section 4.8.4). In addition, the study gave an account of the general data collection process (See Section 4.10).

The researcher explained that the study involved individual interviews with four Primary 4 teachers from the two selected schools. It also entailed classroom observations of the four teachers at the two schools. The classroom observations were done in rural classrooms where Primary 4 learners were at risk in terms of reading and reading comprehension as a result of various factors. (See Section 5.10.) Furthermore, the study consisted of the use of questionnaires that were administered to the four teachers as well as teachers at the other schools in the area. Reading tests in the form of a pre-test and a post-test

were administered only to a group of learners who were found to be at risk regarding reading and reading comprehension based on the results of the pre-test.

6.2.5 Summary of Chapter 5

This section of the study summarises the findings from the data presented in Chapter 5 in relation to the research sub-questions raised in Chapter 1 (See Section 1.6). As stated in Chapter 4, the mixed-methods research design (the comparative experimental design) was used. Classroom observations, interviews, questionnaires, and reading tests were conducted. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher triangulated the collected data to verify the results.

The classroom observations of the four teachers at the selected schools, A and B, took place thrice weekly for each teacher and for a period of six weeks; the lessons lasted 45 minutes. The researcher carefully observed how teachers handled reading comprehension problems and learners' attitude during reading lessons. It was obvious that certain factors featured in the entire teaching procedure. (See Sections 5.10.1 to 5.10.12.). After the observations, Primary 4 teachers were trained for three days on how to provide good lesson plans. This was to enable them to provide proper reading lessons to the learners. See Section 5.21 for a discussion.

The training on EDI and read-aloud was done in order to instruct the teacher participants on how they could properly implement explicit direct instruction and the read-aloud programme with groups of learners who had been separated to receive EDI or the read-aloud programme. The training also addressed certain reading problems through the introduction of additional or new reading methods, well-planned lessons, reading materials for learners that would focus on their social, cultural, and cognitive resources, fewer learners or a smaller class size, group work, learner-centred teaching, and making teachers aware of the need for them to attend to learners' individual problems. The training emphasised the importance of motivation in learners' reading.

Classrooms observation during EDI and read-aloud lessons was applied, and it revealed that the principles of EDI and read-alouds were used effectively. From the observations, good classroom practice that strengthened and enhanced teaching and learning was used in both the EDI and read-aloud programmes. The class size was proper at a ratio of one teacher to 18 and one teacher to 15 learners. The seating arrangement was good, and learners were comfortable. The classrooms were rich with visual learning materials. The teachers clearly stated the learning objectives, followed a good lesson plan, and had good chalkboard illustrations as well. By implication, the teachers had the skills in mind that they wanted learners to have acquired by the end of the lesson. The learners were given opportunities for independent practice and co-operative learning. The teachers also made use of pre-activation of prior knowledge.

The quantitative data for this study, whose aim was to find out whether the read-aloud programme rather than another reading programme such as explicit direct instruction would support Primary 4 learners to enhance their reading and reading comprehension abilities, was collected through a pre-test and post-test conducted with groups of selected learners at the two schools used in the study. The quantitative data was analysed in Sections 5.29 to 5.31.10. The findings from the results revealed that there was a positive increase in the learners' reading scores from the pre-test to the post-test in both groups who did either the explicit direct instruction programme or the read-aloud intervention programme. This meant that applying the read-aloud intervention programme aided the learners' improvement in reading and reading comprehension more as proved by the positive increase in the post-test scores.

The research results showed that the difference in learners' test performance scores could be ascribed to the use of the read-aloud intervention strategy.

In comparing the results obtained from the pre-test and post-test, it could be concluded that the better

improvement was the result of the read-aloud programme.

The experimental group's mean of 22.45 in the post-test showed that most of the learners were reading above average, which indicated that the read-aloud programme had a positive impact on the reading comprehension of at-risk Primary 4 learners who were participants in the project. The learners who took part in this intervention programme improved in their comprehension and active participation in interactions, discussions, and shared reading while the read-aloud sessions were being implemented.

In the researcher's opinion, the control group also benefited from explicit instructions provided during the study because their post-test scores improved as well when compared to their pre-test scores.

The data indicated how Primary 4 teachers were handling learners who were at risk in terms of reading and reading comprehension in rural Primary 4 in Nigeria. There were three major themes that emerged and were discussed in the study, and these three main themes were broken down into 12 subthemes.

6.2.5.1 School factors

- a. Poor learning environment
- b. Lack of reading materials
- c. Language of instruction
- d. Lack of in-service teacher training

6.2.5.2 Teacher factors

- a. Initial teacher training
- b. Teachers' awareness of the importance of reading and reading comprehension in Primary 4 rural classrooms
- c. Poor foundation in Primary 1 to 3 with regard to reading
- d. Teachers' understanding of teaching strategies when teaching reading and reading comprehension
- e. Absence of reading support

f. Lack of motivation to learn to read

6.2.5.3 Learner factors

a. Learners not reading with comprehension

b. Learners' home background

From the discussions of the themes, it was clear that the factors listed above made teaching and learning difficult. (See Sections 5.19 to 5.19.3.2 for a discussion of the themes.) These contributed to the problems learners had with reading comprehension.

6.3 The main research question

“How can Primary 4 teachers support learners who are at risk for reading and reading comprehension problems?”

This question was answered based on the outcomes of the various sub-questions. Thus, the main aim of the study, which was to investigate the use of the read-aloud programme rather than another reading programme as an intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria, was achieved.

The following sub-questions helped to answer the main research question.

6.3.1 Research sub-question 1

“How do teachers understand the reading problems faced by Primary 4 learners?”

The themes emerging from this study revealed that Primary 4 learners in rural classrooms were confronted with various reading problems and that most teachers were not too concerned about learners' reading problems in the classroom (Section 1.3).

This question was answered in the discussion of one of the subthemes in Section 5.19.2.1. In this section, it was explained that the initial training received by teachers was not on how to teach reading and comprehension, but to assist them to function as basic-level teachers who could teach all content

areas at the primary level. This was affirmed by teacher participants' comments as well as comments from questionnaires.

This agrees with the comment made by Okebukola et al. 2013 in Section 2.2 that what teachers know determines learners' performance at school. Many teachers lacked creative teaching abilities to understand learners' reading problems and how to improve learners' reading skills and, especially, their comprehension skills (Ekpo et al. 2007:17; Obayan 2006:52; Section 2.2). This sub-question was, thus, answered.

6.3.2 Research sub-question 2

“What strategies do Primary 4 teachers have to support learners with reading problems or who are at risk concerning reading?”

The important emerging subtheme that gave credence to the second research sub-question and helped to answer it was discussed in Section 5.19.2.5. Teachers were not concerned about the reading problems of learners. The findings of this study affirmed that most of the teachers did not have knowledge regarding how to provide reading support. They were not willing to support learners with reading problems because of the reasons raised in Section 5.19.2.5: they had to work in a harsh environment, and their workload was excessive. Other factors included inadequate teaching materials, large classes, and insufficient reading time, all of which exacerbated teachers' lack of knowledge on reading and reading comprehension strategies.

This was also made evident in Section 2.2 where it was pointed out that the teaching and learning of language in Nigeria was disappointing because instructional materials or resources to support learners were inadequate (Agbatogun 2013:32).

Sub-question 2 was, thus, attended to in the study.

6.3.3 Research sub-question 3

“What principles can be used to introduce a group of teachers to read-aloud activities that will enable learners to read independently?”

This research sub-question was answered in Section 5.19.2. The theme arising from the research culminated in subthemes, which addressed the likely principles that could be used to introduce teachers to read-aloud activities. This helped the researcher answer research sub-question 3.

6.3.4 Research sub-question 4

“What procedures can be used to conduct a pre-test and a post-test to determine whether read-aloud or explicit direct instruction will improve learners’ reading abilities?”

Research sub-question 4 was answered in Sections 5.20 and 5.29.2. The various steps taken by the researcher in conducting a pre-test and a post-test test were explained in detail.

6.3.5 Research sub-question 5

“What are the reasons for the reading problems experienced by Primary 4 learners?”

When reflecting on the findings, the emerging themes in Sections 5.19.2.3, 5.19.2.4, 5.19.2.6, and 5.19.3 Did you check this? helped the researcher to answer the above research sub-question. In these sections, the following reasons for the reading problems experienced by Primary 4 learners were discussed: a lack of motivation to learn, learners’ home background, a poor learning environment, a lack of support from parents, a poor reading foundation, and non-availability of reading and writing text.

This is in alignment with the literature review in, for instance, Section 2.6, where Baba (2016:109) states that reading in English is a problem for Primary 4 learners, as they find it difficult to reconcile the linguistic features of their mother tongue, which is used both at home and in lower primary school in Nigeria, with those of a totally new and foreign language, which is made more complicated by the

need to learn the new language in all of its forms.

6.3.6 Research sub-question 6

“What guidelines can be provided for teachers and all stakeholders in education to support learners with reading problems, including Primary 4 learners?”

The emerging themes (See Section 5.19.2) and subthemes (See Sections 5.19.2.1 to 5.19.2.6) helped in answering research sub-question 6. They included initial teacher training, teachers’ awareness of the importance of reading and reading comprehension in the Primary 4 rural classroom, teachers’ understanding of strategies in teaching reading comprehension, a poor initial foundation with regard to reading in Primary 1 to 3, the absence of reading support for learners, and a lack of motivation. The discussion of the theme and subthemes proved that sub-question 6 was also answered.

6.4 Limitations of the study

The study had some limitations. There are 11 wards in the Ovia North-East Local Government Council. The study drew data from only one ward of this council. This study was conducted in only two schools out of 50 schools in the Ovia North-East Council area. While the study strongly indicated that the aims and objectives of the research were realised, it is difficult to generalise the findings to all rural schools in the particular local government council area or to all rural schools in all other local government council areas in Nigeria.

Although all four participants at the schools had been trained as basic teachers, they had not specifically been trained to teach reading and on how to handle the challenges of reading and reading comprehension. As a result if this, care must be taken when it comes to generalising the findings with regard to the teachers’ professional training. The findings from the study can, however, give broad recommendations to the Ministry of Education regarding additional reading support, such as the read-aloud intervention programme, to Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria.

6.5 Recommendations

The various findings of this research suggest different courses of action for further practice.

g. Recommendations to the government

It is recommended that government, through the Ministry of Education, provide schools with enough teaching and learning materials with regard to the teaching of reading and reading comprehension.

h. Recommendations to the Ministry of Education

It was also obvious from the findings that reading and reading comprehension lessons were not properly taught in the classrooms. This is a matter that requires attention from the Ministry of Education, right from the Local Education Authority Board, to the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), to the State and Federal Ministries of Education. In addressing such issues, all the stakeholders should be provided with opportunities to make contributions on how to structure school timetables and reading or lesson plans in schools to ensure that all areas of reading and reading comprehension and learners' reading needs are attended to. Teachers of reading and, specifically, teachers in Primary 4 classrooms should vary their teaching methods based on learners' needs.

In view of the findings of this research, the Ministries of Education in Nigeria, both at state and federal level, should work together to appeal to federal government on the need to make adequate funding available to particularly rural schools for more buildings, other infrastructure, and reading materials. They should also collaborate to solicit help from members of the community at home and abroad to provide a good learning environment, as well as network providers such as MTN, Glo, and Airtel, since most of them have installations in rural areas.

i. Recommendations to local education authorities

The Local Education Authority should approach the Ministry of Education to organise a regular in-service training programme for teachers, especially at the foundation level, where all the skills and strategies on how to teach reading and reading comprehension will be highlighted.

j. Recommendations to colleges of education and universities

It is recommended that the initial teacher training curriculum at colleges of education and universities provide a broad base of conceptual knowledge that will prepare teachers of English in terms of how to teach reading and handle reading problems. This will assist teachers to avoid laying a poor foundation right from Primary 1.

k. Recommendations to in-service teacher training programmes

The researcher recommends that universities, colleges of education, and other teacher training institutes plan for a compulsory curriculum for all intending teachers on how learners' reading problems and the various learners' reading needs can be addressed. Also, the curriculum for teachers in training should be planned in such a way that it will motivate them to come up with new strategies that will help to solve reading problems at all levels.

It is recommended that a regular in-service training programme be put in place by government for teachers, ranging from the foundation level to the upper basic teacher. Such training should incorporate procedures and guidelines on how teachers are to meet the various learners' learning needs and how to provide support to learners at the various levels of primary school.

l. Recommendations to schools

The schools should use the English language as medium of instruction from the word go from Primary 1 to 3, since the mother tongue is spoken at home. The use of English as medium of communication right from the foundation level will enable learners to know the major concepts in

the use of English at all levels. Teachers should be encouraged not to mix English with other languages.

It is also recommended that rural schools corroborate with good private schools in urban areas, so that teachers can share ideas on best practices for the teaching of reading and reading comprehension.

m. Recommendations to headmasters/headmistresses and community leaders

It is recommended that headmasters/headmistresses and community heads engage the services of National Youth Corps members posted to rural areas and non-governmental organisations to put in place weekend reading programmes for learners at risk for reading problems.

n. Recommendations to teachers

Primary 4 teachers must know that there are many factors in the learners' environment, both at home and at school, that could hinder proper teaching and learning of reading; hence, different teaching methods and strategies should be used to meet learners' needs. The research aptly contributes to the improvement of the teaching and learning of reading and reading comprehension to Primary 4 learners.

It is recommended that learners be encouraged by their teachers to bring old and used resource materials such as magazines, newspapers, and storybooks to school in order to support them in reading during break time or free periods. This will assist learners in enhancing their vocabulary and their ability to know and identify words.

Teachers at all levels in Basic 1 to 6 should be exposed to different methods or strategies of teaching reading in order to address the reading needs of learners. Teachers should encourage and motivate learners in group read-aloud and interactive sessions to enhance learners' reading ability. The school timetables should allow enough time for reading practice.

It is also recommended that teachers be encouraged to develop reading lesson tasks and make use of different teaching strategies that will help meet different learners' needs. It is, furthermore, advised that teachers provide extra time for learners who are at risk for reading and comprehension problems. Teachers must begin their reading lessons with easy tasks before moving on to difficult tasks. This will enable the learners to feel that both their reading needs and prior knowledge are taken into consideration. Teachers should work with community leaders to create learner school readiness.

o. Recommendations to parents

Parents should be encouraged to use both their mother tongue (MT) and the English language at home. This will enable the children to hear the right use of English at home and in school.

Parents and members of the community could be encouraged to provide schools with used newspapers. The headmasters/headmistresses and teachers should collaborate with schools in urban areas for used books.

Parents should be advised to enrol their children and wards in after-school lessons where teachers can give additional reading support to learners.

Finally, parents should be advised to motivate and support learners to read independently by creating an enabling environment at home.

p. Recommendations for a feeding programme

A critical look at the two schools used in this study revealed that some of the learners came to school hungry, which the researcher noticed was responsible for poor attention in class.

Therefore, the researcher recommends that schools identify learners from poor homes who come to school without having had any form of meal, so that government can make provision for a once-a-day meal programme for them before the day's lessons commence.

6.6 Suggestions for further research

From the findings of this study on the effect of an intervention strategy on reading comprehension of at-risk primary school learners in rural Nigeria, the following possible suggestions for future research can be made:

- An investigation into the effect of additional reading support for all learners at primary level and especially at Primary 4 level
- An investigation of how teachers can be trained to handle the diverse reading needs of learners
- Further research on the effect of teachers' teaching methods on learners' reading performance at primary level
- A further investigation into how colleges and universities can enhance the teaching of reading and reading comprehension in training teachers
- A further investigation of the effect of teachers' regular in-service training workshops on primary learners' reading level

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a summary of the findings of the research and made recommendations to all stakeholders on how best the reading and reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners who were at risk regarding their reading abilities could be enhanced.

It is the researcher's hope that the findings from this study will be of assistance to Primary 4 teachers in how they can provide additional reading support or reading intervention to learners at risk for problems with reading and reading comprehension.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: UNISA ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/08/15

Ref: 2018/08/15/57511357/32/MC

Dear Mrs Osawaru

Name: Mrs NF Osawaru

Student: 57511357

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2018/08/15 to 2023/08/15

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs NF Osawaru
E-mail address: ngozlosawaru@gmail.com
Telephone: +234 80 551 35711

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof AJ Hugo
E-mail address: annajohugo@gmail.com
Telephone: +27 82 738 5299

Title of research:

The effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of at risk primary school learners in rural Nigeria

Qualification: D. Ed in Curriculum and Instructional Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/08/15 to 2023/08/15.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/08/15 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*



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The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2023/08/15**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 2018/08/15/57511357/32/MC should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za



Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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APPENDIX B: STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD (SUBEB) RESEARCH



OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD
(SUBEB)

2nd January, 2019

Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture,
College of Education,
University of South Africa.

Attention: Osawaru Ngozi Florence

**RE:REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT OWINA
PRIMARY SCHOOL, IDUNMWOWINA AND ADOLOR PRIMARY SCHOOL,
EKIADOLOR IN OVIA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.**

With reference to your letter dated 11th October 2018 of one Mrs Osawaru Ngozi requesting for the use of Owina primary school, Idunmwowina and Adolor primary school, Ekiadolor in Ovia North Local Government Area for investigation on the effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of at risk primary school learners in rural Nigeria.

I am directed to inform you that your request has been graciously granted by the Board.

However, the Board requests a copy of your research report.

Agbakagba Ame Peace,
Textbooks/Instructional Material Officer.

Block D, Secretariat Building, Sapele Road, Benin City, Edo State.

Hotline: 0809 184 9777 edo subeb www.subeb.edostate.gov.ng

APPENDIX C: HEADMASTER’S/HEADMISTRESS’S APPROVAL



REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT ADOLOR

PRIMARY SCHOOL, EKIADOLOR, BENIN.

SCHOOL A

Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture
College of Education,
University of South Africa.

27th January, 2019.

Name: _____ Headmaster/Headmistress of
_____ Primary School, _____

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Osawaru Ngozi Florence, am doing research under the supervision of AJ Hugo, a Professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture towards a DEd at the University of South Africa. Her email address is annajohugo@gmail.com. My contact details are: ngoziawaru@gmail.com and 08055135711. I have funding from Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) for higher degrees.

I am seeking permission to carry out a research project in your school. The title of my research is: The effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of at risk primary school learners in rural Nigeria.

The aim of the study is to investigate the use of the read-aloud programme as an intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria. Primary 4 learners who are having reading problems or who are at risk with reading comprehension will be the focus of the research.

It is envisaged by the researcher that the reading abilities of at risk Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria could be improved by introducing them to participate in read-aloud activities. Such activities will be aimed at teaching them the joy of reading and by improving their reading comprehension through captivating story books that will motivate them to read and build their interest to read. Such activities will expose and demonstrate to the learners the relationship between the printed word and meaning and will invite the learners into a conversation with the author. It will also make complex ideas in the text more accessible and expose learners to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of everyday speech. This, in turn can help them to understand the structure of books when they read

independently. It is envisaged that the read-aloud activities will increase the learners' fluency in reading, their reading comprehension and also develop their vocabulary and will enable them to read larger semantic units, rather than focusing on graphic cues. Semantic units are crucial for learners having problems with reading.

Through this study I also aim to investigate:

- The reading comprehension skills that are required in primary 4
- The use of read-aloud intervention strategies in classroom situations in Primary 4
- q. The practice of read-aloud activities and how it can help learners with their reading comprehension and to become independent readers.
- The final aim is to bring about a positive attitude towards reading through read-aloud activities.

I have chosen your school namely the Adolor Primary School in Ekiadolor because it is one of the schools in rural area, which has been identified by researchers as one of the schools where the learners in primary 4 are likely to be having reading comprehension problems. This study will entail the integration of two approaches namely qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The data will be collected through face to face-semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, document analysis, reading tests, as well as a questionnaire on how reading comprehension is taught and how the read-aloud intervention strategy will be used to support at risk learners. Learners in primary 4 in your school who will be identified by the reading test as at risk readers, will receive additional reading sessions where the read aloud programme will be used. These reading sessions will be offered by experienced teachers at the schools. I will supervise the additional reading sessions. Permission for their children to take part in the additional reading sessions will be obtained from parents and also from the learners themselves.

Teachers will be trained by me, and this will involve an extra hour after the normal teaching time. A pre-test will be administered to learners in the target classes before the study and they will equally be post-tested to see the effect of the intervention. Information from interviews will be transcribed. A copy of the transcription will be brought back to participants to ensure that there is no misinterpretation. Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be ensured at all times in the research project. It should be noted by all concerned that participation in the study is voluntary.

I strongly believe that the result of this study will be beneficial to all education stakeholders in the state and for that matter the country.

Thank you in advance



.....
Osawaru N.F (Mrs.)
Mobile number: 08055135711

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT OWINA PRIMARY
SCHOOL, IDUNMWOWINA**

SCHOOL B

Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture
College of Education,
University of South Africa.
27th January, 2019.

Name: _____ Headmaster/Headmistress of
_____ Primary School, _____

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Osawaru Ngozi Florence, am doing research under the supervision of AJ Hugo, a Professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture towards a DEd at the University of South Africa. Her email address is annajohugo@gmail.com. My contact details are: ngoziawaru@gmail.com. I have funding from Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) for higher degrees.

I am seeking permission to carry out a research project in your school. The title of my research is: The effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of at risk primary school learners in rural Nigeria.

The aim of the study is to investigate the use of the read-aloud programme as an intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria. Primary 4 learners who are having reading problems or who are at risk with reading comprehension will be the focus of the research.

It is envisaged by the researcher that the reading abilities of at risk Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria could be improved by introducing them to participate in read-aloud activities. Such activities will be aimed at teaching them the joy of reading and by improving their reading comprehension

through captivating story books that will motivate them to read and build their interest to read. Such activities will expose and demonstrate to the learners the relationship between the printed word and meaning and will invite the learners into a conversation with the author. It will also make complex ideas in the text more accessible and expose learners to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of everyday speech. This, in turn can help them to understand the structure of books when they read independently. It is envisaged that the read-aloud activities will increase the learners' fluency in reading, their reading comprehension and also develop their vocabulary and will enable them to read larger semantic units, rather than focusing on graphic cues. Semantic units are crucial for learners having problems with reading. Through this study I also aim to investigate:

- The reading comprehension skills that are required in primary 4
- The use of read-aloud intervention strategies in classroom situations in Primary 4
- r. The practice of read-aloud activities and how it can help learners with their reading comprehension and to become independent readers.
- The final aim is to bring about a positive attitude towards reading through read-aloud activities.

I have chosen your school namely the Owina Primary School in Idunmwowina because it is one of the schools in rural area, which has been identified by researchers as one of the schools where the learners in primary 4 are likely to be having reading comprehension problems. This study will entail the integration of two approaches namely qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The data will be collected through face to face-semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, document analysis, reading tests, as well as a questionnaire on how reading comprehension is taught and how the read-aloud intervention strategy will be used to support at risk learners. Learners in primary 4 in your school who will be identified by the reading test as at risk readers, will receive additional reading sessions where the read aloud programme will be used. These reading sessions will be offered by experienced teachers at the schools. I will supervise the additional reading sessions. Permission for their children to take part in the additional reading sessions will be obtained from parents and also from the learners themselves. Teachers will be trained by me, and this will involve an extra hour after the normal teaching time. A pre-test will be administered to learners in the target classes before the study and they will equally be post-tested to see the effect of the intervention. Information from interviews will be transcribed. A copy of the transcription will be brought back to participants to ensure that there is no misinterpretation. Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be ensured at all times in the research project. Participation in this study for teachers and learners is voluntary.

I strongly believe that the result of this study will be beneficial to all education stakeholders in the state and for that matter the country.

Thank you in advance

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Osawaru N.F.', is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

.....

Osawaru N.F (Mrs.)

Mobile number: 08055135711

APPENDIX D: TEACHER'S LETTER FORM



TEACHER PARTICIPANTS (ALL THE PARTICIPANTS WILL HAVE A SIMILAR LETTER)

Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture
College of Education,
University of South Africa.

27th January, 2019.

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Osawaru Ngozi Florence and I am doing research under the supervision of AJ Hugo, a Professor in the Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture towards a DEd at the University of South Africa. I have funding from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled:- The effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of at risk primary school learners in rural Nigeria.

This study is expected to collect important information that could assist primary 4 teachers of English to curb their professional challenges with regard to the teaching of primary 4 learners who are at risk in reading and how this group of learners can be supported.

It is also envisaged by the researcher that it will improve the reading ability of at risk primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria by introducing them to participate in read-aloud activities. Such activities will be aimed at teaching them the joy of reading and will also be aimed at improving their reading comprehension through captivating story books that will motivate them to read and build their interest to read. Such activities will expose and demonstrate to the learners the relationship between the printed word and meaning and will invite the learners into a conversation with the author. It will also make complex ideas in the text more accessible and expose learners to vocabulary and language patterns that are not part of their everyday speech. This, in turn can help them to understand the structure of books when they read independently. It is envisaged that the read-aloud activities will increase the learners' fluency in reading and reading comprehension and will expand their vocabulary and will enable them to read larger semantic units, rather than focusing on graphic cues.

You are invited because you have been selected by your headmistress as one of the experienced

English teachers at primary 4 levels. I obtained your contact details from your headmistress. I have chosen three primary 4 teachers from your school for this study. As an experienced teacher, you will be interviewed by me, the researcher, on how you have been teaching reading comprehension and the intervention if any, that you are providing to assist those learners who are at risk in reading.

The study will include classroom observations, recording of semi-structured interviews, reading tests and the administration of questionnaires. You will be trained by me in the first week of the study, on how to implement the read-aloud intervention strategy. The programme will be for six weeks during the first term and it will be for an hour thrice weekly at the close of school. The interviews will be conducted individually and will take place after school hours. I will try not take up too much of your time and the interviews will be for approximately forty five minutes. The teachers' questionnaires will be completed by English teachers in the area, as well as by teacher respondents.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are not under any obligation to consent to participate in this research. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be required to sign a written consent form. Because experienced primary 4 teachers are not many in your school, and you have been selected by your headmistress, withdrawal from the study could jeopardize this study.

Your participation in this study will provide you with information on how to implement a reading intervention strategy as a support for learners who are at risk with regard to their reading abilities including comprehension when reading.

It is envisaged that this study will also be an eye opener to policy makers to enable them to come up with appropriate recommendations to provide support for learners who are at risk readers. School principals and teachers of reading should be able to use the findings of the study to develop opportunities to support learners struggling with reading. This could prevent them from dropping out of school. Apart from adding ways in which reading comprehension can be taught and supported, this research study will hopefully provide insight into the feasible areas for further research in other aspects of language skills.

There will not be any consequences for you in participation in this research. Possible problems that you might encounter, are:

1. The only possible discomfort will be the extra time you will be required to put in after school hours

2. There could be possible talking by your fellow teachers, who may not know the benefit of this study to both the participants and the society at large.
3. Difficulty in trying to convince the learners to stay behind after school for the intervention programme.
4. Problems that could arise to make at risk readers believe that the programme will enable them to become independent readers.

The information you will provide in this study will be kept confidentially by the researcher and your name will not be mentioned. Your answer sheet will be given a pseudonym. You will be provided with a copy of your transcribed interview to make sure that it is correct and that there is no misinterpretation. Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be ensured at all times.

The data will be kept safe by the researcher for a five years period of time, as agreed by the headmistress and the researcher and can only be destroyed after five years.

The hard copies of the answers provided will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cabinet or cupboard in her study.

This study has received written approval from Research Ethic Committee in the College of Education at the University of South Africa. A copy of the approval certificate can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

You will be informed by me, the researcher, through a written letter about the outcome of the research findings. You can contact the researcher, Osawaru Ngozi Florence on phone number 08055135711 or email address: ngozi.osawaru@gmail.com. If you have any concern about the way in which the research will be conducted, you may contact Prof AJ Hugo, Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture, University of South Africa and email address: annajohugo@gmail.com

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and willingness to participate in this study.



Osawaru N.F (Mrs.)

APPENDIX F: PARENTS' CONSENT FORMS



LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT

Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture
College of Education,
University of South Africa.
27th January, 2019.

Dear Parent,

Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled: The effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of at risk learners in rural Nigeria.

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of read-aloud activities as an intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria. Primary 4 learners who are having problems with reading will be the focus of the research.

The possible benefit of the study is the improvement of your child's reading comprehension ability. I am asking permission to include your child and you should be informed that the learners who take part in this project will be spending an extra one hour after school to receive additional reading support. If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him or to take part in the pre-test and the post-test in which the learners' reading comprehension will be tested. This will be done to test the reading abilities of all the learners. Your child will also be observed in class during read aloud classroom activities. The study will be conducted three times a week for six weeks. Your child's reading test will be audio taped.

Any information that is obtained in this study will remain confidential and will not be linked to your child's name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. The report based on the findings of the study will be used for research purposes only.

The only serious foreseeable risks to children in participating in this study, is the inconvenience of having their normal time table being interrupted and also the possible likelihood of being jeered by their school mates as those with reading problems. Your child will receive no

direct benefit from participating in the study. However, a possible benefit is the improvement of in his or her reading comprehension abilities. This could also help your child to become an independent reader, and to improve his or her ability to read in other subject areas. This could prevent him or her from becoming a school dropout and could provide him or her the opportunity to proceed to secondary school and in this way contribute meaningfully to the society. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or withdraw from this study at any time. Refusal to participate will not affect him or her in any way.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent forms which accompany this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely in a locked space in my office for five years after the study. Thereafter records will be discarded.

If you have questions about this study, please ask me or my supervisor, Prof AJ Hugo, Department of Language Education, Arts & Culture, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 08055135711 and my e-mail is ngozi@sawaru@gmail.com. The e-mail of my supervisor is annajohugo@gmail.com. Permission for the study has already been given by the Commissioner of Education, Principals of the two schools which are taking part in the research and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education at UNISA.

You are requested to make a decision about allowing your child to participant in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participant in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of Child:

Parent/guardian's name (Print) Parent/guardian's signature Date



27th January, 2019

Osawaru Ngozi Florence _____
Researcher's name (print) Researcher's signature

Date

APPENDIX G: LEARNER'S LETTER FORM



A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture
College of Education,
University of South Africa.
27th January, 2019.

Dear Learner,

My name is Teacher Ngozi Osawaru and I would like to ask you if I can come and listen to how you read with your teacher and how you respond to questions during reading lessons. I am trying to learn more about how children do reading with their teachers, as well as how they interact with friends when reading in a group.

If you say YES to do this, I will come and watch you when you are with your teacher doing read aloud activities. We will do a fun game where you have to answer some questions for me. I will also ask you to do some activities with me. I will not ask to you to do anything that may hurt you or that you don't want to do.



I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to take part, it will also be fine with me. Remember, you can say yes or you can say no and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to mommy or daddy about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Thank you

Regards

Teacher Osawaru

Your Name	Yes, I will take part	No, I don't want to take part
		
Name of the researcher Osawaru, Ngozi Florence		
Date 27 th January, 2019.		
Witness		

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHER RESPONDENTS

Semi-Structured Interview questions intended for teachers.

1. For how long have you been teaching English?
2. Have you always taught primary 4 learners?
3. In your years of experience how would you explain a primary 4 learner?
4. Can you explain the stages of development of the learners in your class? Is it in line with the cognitive, physical and emotional development expected from a primary 4 learner?
5. What is reading?
6. What is reading comprehension?
7. Do you enjoy teaching reading at primary 4 level? Please explain your answer.
8. Is it important to teach reading at the primary 4 level? Please explain your answer.
9. During your training as a teacher, were you taught on how to teach reading comprehension?
10. How often do you teach reading comprehension?
11. How often do you plan for reading in your teaching schedule?
12. Are all the learners in your class reading with comprehension?
13. Have you ever gone for a training programme since graduation? If yes, what type of training?
14. Which reading and reading comprehension approaches do you know?
15. Which of the approaches do you use when teaching reading comprehension in primary 4?
16. The National policy on education states that learners in primary 4 are supposed to be independent readers who are able to read to learn in their school subjects? What do you understand by this statement?
17. How do you address the reading problems of learners in your class who are at risk in reading?
18. Why do you think some learners at primary 4 level have reading problems?
19. Do you know of any reading comprehension skills required at this level?
20. Do you know of any intervention strategies that can assist learners who are reading below age level?
21. Have you ever heard of the read-aloud programme?
22. If yes, do you think read-aloud strategy can help to support primary 4 learners who are at risk with their reading abilities?
23. Is there any aspect that I have not asked that you feel I should know about primary 4 learners' reading abilities?

ADDITION TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- **WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNERS READING BELOW AGE LEVEL?**
- **DO YOU KNOW OF THE EFFECT OF INABILITY TO READ WILL HAVE ON THE LEARNERS IN PRIMARY 4**
- **WHAT EFFORT DO YOU PUT IN PLACE TO HELP THESE LEARNERS OVERCOME THEIR READING PROBLEMS?**
- **WHAT KIND OF READING SUPPORT DO YOU HAVE IN PLACE FOR LEARNERS.**
- **IN THE COURSE OF TEACHING READING ACTIVITIES, DO YOU EVER PAUSE TO ASK LEARNERS TO MAKE INFERENCES PREDICTIONS IN THE PASSAGE BEING READ?**

APPENDIX I: LETTER ACCOMPANYING THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

TITLE: PRIMARY 4 TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Teacher,

This questionnaire forms part of my doctoral study for the degree DEd at the University of South Africa. You have been selected by a sampling strategy from the population of about 20 teachers in rural schools in Ovia North East Local Government Area. Hence, I invite you to take part in this survey.

The aim of this study is to investigate the use of read-aloud activities as an intervention strategy to improve the reading comprehension of primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria. The findings of the study may have the following benefits:

1. It will afford the teachers opportunity to know the reading problems of at risk learners and how it can be remedied.
2. It will also provide them the opportunity to exploit other ways of supporting learners who have reading problems.
3. There is also the possibility that the participating teachers will be in a position to teach their colleagues about the intervention strategies which could assist in bringing down the high rate of drop out of school by at risk readers.
4. The primary 4 learners who will take part in this research could be helped to overcome their reading problems and thus they could have a better opportunity to make a success at school.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising six sections, A to F, honestly and frankly and according to your personal views and experience. No foreseeable risks are associated with the completion of the questionnaire which is for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

You are not required to indicate your name or organisation and your anonymity will be ensured; however, indication of your age, gender, occupation position will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only and will remain confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you have the right to omit any question if so desired, or to withdraw from answering this survey without penalty at any stage. After the completion of the study, an electronic summary of the findings of the research will be made available to you on request.

Permission to undertake this survey has been granted by the Ethics Committee of the College of

Education, at UNISA. If you have any research-related enquiries, they can be addressed directly to me or my supervisor. My contact details are: ngoziosawaru@gmail.com, phone 08055135711. My supervisor can be reached at the Department of Language Education, Arts and Culture, College of Education, UNISA and her e-mail address is: annajohugo@gmail.com.

By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research. Please return the completed questionnaire to the researcher before the end of the day.

Thank you for your help

Ngozi Osawaru

APPENDIX J: QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to elicit from you the factors responsible for learners being at risk with reading and reading comprehension in your class. I wish to learn why some primary 4 learners are reading below age level and also the various approaches that you use to teach reading comprehension at this level. I request you to be as honest as possible when providing answers to the questions that follow. No aspect of the information you give, will be used against you as you are completing this questionnaire anonymously.

Instructions

- Please respond to all the questions in black ink.
- Please provide information on a separate page if space provided is not enough
- Mark options a, b, c, d, e, or if applicable all of them in the column provided.

Section A

Biographical Data

1. Gender		Indicate your answer in section A-E in this column by writing the applicable letter for example a, b, c, d or e.	Office Use
Male			<input type="text"/>
Female			
2. Subjects			
a. Edo b. English c. Mathematics d. Social Studies e. Civic Education			<input type="text"/>
3. Teaching Qualification			
What is the highest level of education you have completed? a. National Certificate of Education (NCE) b. First degree in Education c. Master's in Education d. PhD			<input type="text"/>
4. Are you certified to teach?			
a. Yes			<input type="text"/>

b. No			
5. As part of your formal education, did you study the following?			
a. Language b. Literature c. Teaching reading comprehension d. Reading theory e. Language and literature			<input type="text"/>
In-service training			
6. In the last five years, how many times have you attended in-service/professional development workshops or seminars that deals with teaching reading?			<input type="text"/>
a. Once b. Twice c. Thrice d. None			<input type="text"/>
7. Do you think in-service development workshops or seminars are necessary?			
a. Yes			<input type="text"/>
b. No			
SECTION B			
Teaching experience			
1. By the end of this term, for how many years will you have been teaching?			
a. Less than 5 years b. 5-10 years c. 10-15 years d. 15-20 years e. 20-25 years f. More than 25 years			<input type="text"/>
2. By the end of the year, how many years will you have been teaching primary 4 rural learners.			
a. 5-10 years b. 10-15 years c. 15-20 years			<input type="text"/>
3 How many learners are in your primary 4 class?			
a. 25-30			

b. 30-35 c. 35-40 d. 40-45		
SECTION C		
Skills		
1. Which option best explain reading comprehension skills		
a. Reading comprehension skills is an acquired ability to decode when learners read. b. Make connections between what learners read and what they already know. c. Think deeply about what they have read. d. All of the above		<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you know any of the following reading comprehension skills that learners in primary 4 are expected to have? You can choose more than one		
a. Visualization b. Summarization c. Making inference d. Making connections e. All of the above		<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do all the learners in your class have these skills?		
a. Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>
b. No		
4. When did you identify at risk readers in your class?		
a. At the beginning of the academic b. After the first term examination c. During regular classroom assessment d. Observation in classroom e. Other, please explain.....		<input type="checkbox"/>
5. How would you describe the term "at-risk"?		
a. To be in a situation where something unpleasant might happen b. It is used to describe learners or groups of learners who are considered to have higher probability of dropping out of school or failing academically in school.		<input type="checkbox"/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. It is a term that may be applied to learners who face circumstances that could hamper their ability to complete school. d. It refers to categories of learners or individual about whom teachers have raised concerns about their specific behaviour over a period of time. e. All of the above 			
6. What will you do if you have learners who you think are reading at risk?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. I will wait to see if their performance will improve over time b. I will spend more time working on reading with the learners who are reading at risk c. I will have other readers work on reading with learners who are reading at risk d. Have the learners work on an in an intervention programme in the classroom with the help of a specialist 			<input type="checkbox"/>
SECTION D			
1. What is the attitude of learners in your class towards reading comprehension?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Positive b. Negative 			<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you think that an intervention programme, if well implemented could change the attitude of learners towards reading?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No 			<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have any programme in place to support learners who have a poor attitude towards reading?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No 			<input type="checkbox"/>
SECTION E			
1. Which statement best describe “intervention”?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It is key in helping learners become good readers or at least reasonable ones. b. It is described as a “proven and essential strategy for closing a reading gap “that learners might have. c. It is a means increasing learners’ reading speed, which can benefit them by teaching them to read faster. d. All of the above 			<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What statement describe the term read-aloud?		
a. Read aloud is when children listen to an adult reading different types of text or genres to them. b. Read aloud establishes a good relationship between the teacher and the learners by for instance experiencing common reactions to events in the stories. c. Read aloud allows learners to become active participants in the text. d. All of the above		<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know anything about the read-aloud intervention strategy?		
a. Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>
b. No		
if "No" would you want to be trained in its uses?		
a. Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>
b. No		
3. If you know the read aloud intervention strategy do you think it can be used to support at risk learners to become independent fluent readers?		
a. Yes		<input type="checkbox"/>
b. No		
If the above answer is "yes" would you like to apply it in your class if given the opportunity? Please provide reasons for your answer here:		<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION F

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the statements below by marking the appropriate box with an X

Agree = A, Strongly Agree = SA, Disagree =D, Strongly Disagree =SD, undecided =UN

S/N	QUESTIONS	A	SA	D	SD	UN	Office Use
1	I am used to reading stories loud to readers based on prior experience						
2	Read-aloud time is justifiable time spent in classroom, despite the many other demands on learners' and teacher's time						
3	Read-aloud should be used as a teaching strategy in every class, especially in classes which have learners with reading problems						
4	Read-aloud is a strategy that allows learners to become more familiar with literacy						
5	Class size would not allow effective use of a read aloud strategy in my classroom						
6	I plan all my lessons in the same way, irrespective of whether I have a learner who at risk with reading						
7	I rather prefer not to have at risk readers in my class.						
8	Learners whose reading abilities are at risk should be accommodated in separate or special classes						
9	I feel am not trained enough to use the read aloud strategy						
10	Reading problems are difficult to overcome irrespective of the methods or strategies used by teachers.						

The following statements deal with the aim of an intervention programme:-

Agree = A, Strongly Agree = SA, Disagree =D, Strongly Disagree =SD, undecided =UN

SS/N	QUESTIONS	A	SA	D	SD	UN	Office Use
1	A reading intervention programme is used to support the teaching and learning of reading comprehension of those learners who are reading at risk						
2	To enable teachers to establish clear and daily						

	routines and plan for read aloud sessions seriously.						
3	Read aloud story books would not turn learners into readers by simply listening to stories, success would be determined by a good selection of books and methods used in reading.						
4	Read aloud to learners each day for 20 minutes can impact significantly on learners' reading test scores.						
5	Reading aloud has positive effects on learners' attitude towards reading and reading comprehension						
6	Some learners may benefit more than others from a reading intervention programme because they entered school lacking the necessary tools for literacy, and they may be at risk in developing their reading and writing skills.						
7	Learners who are read aloud to regularly, are able to retell stories by sequencing events using details, and the vocabulary of the stories.						
8	A reading intervention strategy should be incorporated into a teaching plan.						
9	Schools should encourage teachers with all that is needed in implementing a reading intervention programme in class.						
10	Reading intervention is a programme in an addition to an existing literacy curriculum, meant to increase learners' reading levels.						
11	Reading intervention is noticing learners who find reading difficult, and helping them either on their own or in small group with their reading problems.						
13	Intervention has been described as a "proven and essential strategy for closing the reading gap"						

APPENDIX K: READING COMPREHENSION TEST AND QUESTION



Reading Test in English for primary 4

2017/2018 session

Time: 1 hour.

Instruction: Read the passage carefully and follow the instructions.

The questions are in four sections:

Section A: There are ten questions in which you are required to fill in the missing information.

Ability to provide the right answers will attract 5 marks for each question. Total marks 50.

Section B: This section contains five objective questions each questions will attract 2marks.

Total mark 10.

Section C: This section will require you to describe the characters in the passage.

Each character description will attract 5 marks. Total 15 marks.

Section D: Matching of words with their opposite in meaning 5 marks.

Reading

Work is worship

A very long time ago, there lived a king named Aresa. He was a man who valued hard work and sincerity highly. King Aresa's favourite proverb was 'Work is worship.'

One day King Aresa decided to find out if his people liked what he valued or not. So he called some of his servants to go and find out what jobs the people had undertaken and whether they were performing their duties sincerely or not. 'Find the person who knows the secret of hard work and bring him to me,' he told his servants.



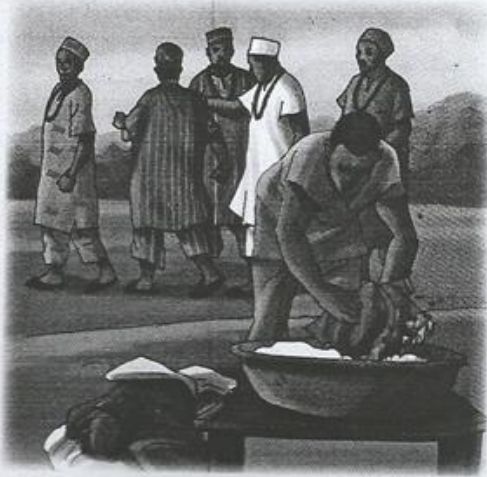
First, the servants saw a woodcutter who was felling trees with a big axe.

'O woodcutter, do you like your job?' they asked him. The woodcutter flung his axe aside and said with sadness, 'Not at all! I do it because this work was passed to me by my ancestors.'

The servants left him. After some kilometres, they came upon a washerman.

'Hello dear Mr Washerman, do you enjoy your

work?' they asked him. The washerman became angry and began to beat the clothes harder. 'Is this work enjoyable?' he asked, 'It's a punishment for me. When I was child, I did not show much interest in studying. I never listened to my parents and never worked hard. So



I could not qualify for a good job. Now my family is dependent on me, and I have to do this job to feed them.'

The servants left him. A few kilometres further, they saw a young man studying. 'What are you doing, young man?' the servants asked him.

'I am a teacher. I am reading this book so that I can teach my students tomorrow,' replied the young man. 'It gives me great joy to impart knowledge.'

'Do you know the secret of hard work?' the servants asked him, 'Yes, work is worship,' replied the teacher.

The servants took the teacher to King Aresa. The King was very happy and he built a big school for his students.



SECTION A:

Read the passage and fill in the blank spaces.

1. The king was a man who valued _____
2. What was the king's favourite proverb? _____
3. One day the king decided to find out if his people liked what? _____
4. The servants were asked to find the person who _____ and bring him

5. Who did his servants see first? _____
6. What was the woodcutter doing? _____
7. Why was the woodcutter sad?
8. Why was the washerman angry? _____
9. What did the washerman do when he was young?
10. Why was the teacher happy?
11. How did king Aresa reward the teacher? _____
12. Why was the teacher reading his book? _____
13. In a sentence, explain why it is good to be hardworking

-
14. What should one do to qualify for a good job?
 15. What do we call family members who lived long before us?

SECTION B: Write down all the words that you did not know or did not understand in the passage.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION B: write the correct answers in the space provided.

1. What did the Washerman do when he was young?.....
.....

2. Why was the woodcutter sad?
.....

3. Why was the teacher happy?
.....
.....

4. What should one do to qualify for a good job?.....
.....

5. What do we call family members who lived long before us?.....
.....

SECTION C

Describe the following characters in the passage.

- (i) Woodcutter and Washerman

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- (ii) Describe what you like about the teacher and king Arasa.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

SECTION D

Vocabulary

Match column A words with their opposites in column B.

AB

Favouritereward

Built master

Servant independent

Punishment destroyed

Dependent dislike

APPENDIX L: PAIRING TABLE OF LEARNERS IN SCHOOL A

No	Group A Control				S/N	Group B Experimental			Pretest score
	Learner	Age	Sex	Pretest scores		Learner	Age	Sex	
1.	L 13	11	F	15	1.	L 19	10	F	20
2.	L 15	12	F	15	2.	L 14	10	F	15
3.	L 18	12	M	15	3.	L 16	11	F	15
4.	L 45	10	M	7	4.	L 17	10	F	10
5.	L 27	11	M	5	5.	L 25	08	F	5
6.	L 38	10	F	5	6.	L 32	13	M	5
7.	L 44	11	M	5	7.	L 41	11	F	5
8.	L 20	10	M	00	8.	L 47	09	M	5
9.	L 22	12	M	00	9.	L 21	11	M	00
10.	L 24	12	M	00	10.	L 23	10	M	00
11.	L 28	10	F	00	11.	L 26	10	F	00
12.	L 30	10	M	00	12.	L 29	11	F	00
13.	L 33	11	F	00	13.	L 31	12	M	00
14.	L 35	13	F	00	14.	L 34	14	M	00
15.	L 37	11	M	00	15.	L 36	11	F	00
16.	L 40	09	F	00	16.	L 39	10	M	00
17.	L 43	13	M	00	17.	L 42	11	M	00
18.	L 46	10	M	00					
	Total = 18								Total = 17

SCHOOL A
SUMMARY AS REPRESENTATED ABOVE
Group A (C1)Group B (E1)
No learner scored201 learner scored20
3 learners scored 152 learners scored 15
1 learner scored71 learner scored10
3 learners scored54 learners scored5
10 learners scored0010 learners scored00
Total = 18 learnersTotal = 17 learners

TABLE 3: PAIRING TABLE OF LEARNERS IN SCHOOL B

		Group A Control			S/N	Group B Experimental			
	Learner	Age	Sex	Pretest Scores		Learner	Age	Sex	Pretest Score
1.	L 11	10	F	15	1.	L 16	11	F	15
2.	L 17	11	M	15	2.	L 21	12	M	15
3.	L 12	11	M	10	3.	L 13	10	F	10
4.	L 14	13	M	10	4.	L 15	11	F	10
5.	L 20	11	M	5	5.	L 22	12	F	5
6.	L 24	13	M	5	6.	L 30	10	F	5
7.	L 31	11	M	5	7.	L 32	12	F	5
8.	L 39	12	M	5	8.	L 18	14	M	00
9.	L 19	11	M	00	9.	L 23	14	M	00
10.	L 25	10	F	00	10.	L 26	10	M	00
11.	L 27	10	F	00	11.	L 28	11	M	00
12.	L 29	11	M	00	12.	L 33	10	M	00
13.	L 34	10	M	00	13.	L 35	11	M	00
14.	L 36	13	M	00	14.	L 37	10	M	00
15.	L 38	10	F	00	15.				
	Total =								Total = 14
	15								

SCHOOL B

SUMMARY AS REPRESENTATED ABOVE

Group A (C1)Group B (E1)

2 learners scored 152 learners scored 15

2 learners scored102 learners scored10

4 learners scored53 learners scored5

7 learners scored007 learners scored00

Total = 15 learnersTotal = 14 learners

APPENDIX M: EXPLICIT LESSON PLAN

EXPLICIT TEACHING OF READING COMPREHENSION LESSON PLAN

Before the lesson plan, the researcher explained that explicit teaching involves teacher explaining and clarifying a skill, strategy directly and systematically as well as teaching it in contexts of meaningful use. It also involves teaching comprehension strategies one at a time, permitting learners to practice and apply (or put into practice the strategy as teacher provide or give explicit feedback and reviews, and create opportunity for independent practice.

The researcher also informed the teachers that this approach is interactive in nature, teacher to model skills and guide practice and provide independent practice.

STEP 1

- Prepare a text on the board or provide a reading material.

STEP 2

- Show learners the title, picture, first line or first paragraph.
- Teacher introduces the strategy and its purpose and how it can be used.
- Learners predict/infer what the text is about or what is going to happen in the narrative.
- Teacher models the strategy by doing a think-aloud.
- Teacher can apply questioning method such as “what do you think this text will be about?

Why did the event take place? can you give reason for your opinion? This will encourage learners’ thinking and involvement in the reading process.

- Write learners comment on the board. Then reveal the next section to either accept or reject learners responses

STEP 3

- Teacher repeat step 2

STEP 4

- Sharing: teacher pair learners up to work in groups. This allows them to make mistake in less threatening situation
- Individual work: Teacher breaks the group up and encourage learners to work independently.

STEP 5

- Sharing: Teacher ask learners to either demonstrate the strategy (e.g questions raised or the summary). This allows the teacher to check if learners are doing the right thing.

STEP 6

Reflection: Teacher will either tell learners to reflect on the usefulness of specific strategy learnt and share with the class orally or the teacher will do it. This will vary from lesson to lesson.

APPNDIX N: READ-ALOUD LESSON PLAN

READ ALOUD LESSION PLAN

Teacher's Name:

Focus of Lesson: Prediction and inference

Level: primary 4

Objectives:

The learners will identify front cover, title page of the book. The teacher established comprehension focus: visualization connections main idea and retails.

The learners will use prediction and references to predict what the text is about using the title. The learner will use prediction and inferences to reach conclusion or opinion. This will involve the learner taking a risk in giving their opinion.

Materials

Teacher material: selection of fiction and non-fiction materials.

Procedures

1. Opening (pre-reading) Teacher have a class discussion on previous lesson to activate prior knowledge, example vocabulary building or any other concept /skills to be taught and link it up with the new vocabulary words should be 2-4 words that will and learners to understand big ideas.
 - Have partners share ideas on the new topic together, introduce the new title, author and illustrator of the book (if any) to the class.
 - Encourage the learners to make predictions by looking /glancing at the cover and title pick new words in the passage and asked them to discuss it give or make examples with them.

- Take a picture walk through the book with the learners allowing them to point out events where the “vocabulary word” were used in the text/passage
 - Before reading the book ask learners to listen mark unfamiliar words.
2. Body-During reading: The teacher will make frequent stops/pause/points to engage the learners with reading.
- Ask learners to think of any other words to replace the new words (i.e synonyms)

Questions like why was the word used in that passage can be asked

- They should be encouraged to link the first paragraph with the next
- Teachers should model these skills before asking learners to do same
- Teacher introduces SW’s and 1H which means WHO? WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, why and how?

As learners get more confident using these questions, they developed the habit of stopping, as they read to themselves to ask these questions.

- Who is this story or paragraph and chapter about. While reading interactive read alouds, teacher should ensure they tactic introduce or incorporate and model important comprehension strategies.
- What just happened predicting visualizing, connecting, questioning, main idea, summarizing. Although this can difficult.
- Why did that just happen?

3. After reading (closing). The teacher will ask learners questions about the story, for instance, who are the main characters? What are the things the main characters did in the story.

How those the story affect them.

- Teacher should ensure that questions are not answered with simple YES and NO

- Teacher should make questions throughout provoking on purpose. This will stimulate discussion and force learners to ask even more questions.
 - Encourage circling of words or using coloured pencils to circle ideas or new words.
 - Model how to watch out for cause and effect words like cause, effect if, then, as a result, therefore and because.
4. Follow up-activity, teacher will explain in the story there were many new words. The teacher will put the words on a graphic organizer, sticky note to plan stops thereafter the teacher will ask each group to work on the new words from the story, derive their own words from the new words.

Other will be to encourage learners to retell the stories and summarize individual paragraphs and then learn to construct summarizing

- Encourage learners to have a mental image of what the story is all about in their minds. As the story is being read aloud, learners should be motivated to create pictures of what print suggest, that is making movies in their head.

How to check for learners reading comprehension

Teacher should prepare a cause-and –effect graphic organizer for learner’s to complete.

- Cause effect (why something happened is happening)
- Effect what is happening what ends up happening.
- Ask them to circle or colour areas or where main ideas are in the text.

Lesson plan for explicit direct instruction (EDI) for teaching reading comprehension

Teachers Name

Lesson focus: Reading comprehension strategies

Objectives: learners should be able to retell key details from the passage or story

Material: Basal readers.

Procedure

Step 1

Opening: Teacher build on background knowledge of learners by asking questions previously learnt topics.

- Make a list of skills to be learnt at a time with learners and create an order for teaching the reading skills and cognitive strategies.

Teachers should note that primary 4 learners are into cognitive strategies should be taught alongside

This will involve teaching learners to;-

Recognize sequential development of stories, facts versus opinion, main ideas. This requires more of teachers attention

1. Cognitive strategies, making predictions and inferences visualizing, questioning, summarizing and mental images, as well as reading critically to what is read. Teacher set aside 4 instructional days to teach or introduce learners to each of the strategies.

APPENDIX O: QUANTITATIVE DATA

Table 5.8: List of Level 4 primary school learners and their pre-test scores (school A)

Control group					Experimental group				
No	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre-test scores	No.	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre-test scores
19	L13	11	F	15	18	L19	10	F	20
20	L15	12	F	15	19	L14	10	F	15
21	L18	12	M	15	20	L16	11	F	15
22	L45	10	M	7	21	L17	10	F	10
23	L27	11	M	5	22	L25	08	F	5
24	L38	10	F	5	23	L32	13	M	5
25	L44	11	M	5	24	L41	11	F	5
26	L20	10	M	00	25	L47	09	M	5
27	L22	12	M	00	26	L21	11	M	00
28	L24	12	M	00	27	L23	10	M	00
29	L28	10	F	00	28	L26	10	F	00
30	L30	10	M	00	29	L29	11	F	00
31	L33	11	F	00	30	L31	12	M	00
32	L35	13	F	00	31	L34	14	M	00
33	L37	11	M	00	32	L36	11	F	00
34	L40	09	F	00	33	L39	10	M	00
35	L43	13	M	00	34	L42	11	M	00
36	L46	10	M	00					
Total = 18					Total = 17				

SCHOOL B: CONTROL AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (PRE-TEST)

Table 5.9: List of Level 4 primary school learners and their pre-test scores (school B)

Control group					Experimental group				
No	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre-test scores	No	Learner	Age	Sex	Pre-test scores
16	L11	10	F	15		L16	11		15
17	L17	11	M	15		L21	12		15
18	L12	11	M	10		L13	10		10
19	L14	13	M	10		L15	11		10
20	L20	11	M	5		L22	12		5
21	L24	13	M	5		L30	10		5
22	L31	11	M	5		L32	12		5
23	L39	12	M	5		L18	14		00
24	L19	11	M	00		L23	14		00
25	L25	10	F	00		L26	10		00
26	L27	10	F	00		L28	11		00
27	L29	11	M	00		L33	10		00
28	L34	10	M	00		L35	11		00
29	L36	13	M	00		L37	10		00
30	L38	10	F	00					
Total = 15					Total = 14				

APPENDIX P: EDITOR'S NOTE

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To whom it may concern

I hereby declare that I language-edited Florence Ngozi Osawaru's DEd thesis in Curriculum Studies with the title "The effect of an intervention strategy on the reading comprehension of Primary 4 learners in rural Nigeria". Note that my work was purely language editing and did not include any content, structural, technical, or referencing aspects. I am an accredited editor with the South African Translators' Institute (SATI Member No.: 1000193).

Yours sincerely



Hendia Baker

APTrans (SATI)

APEd (SATI)