CREATING A READING RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT IN ZIMBABWE: POSSIBILITIES FOR ENGLISH (L2) LANGUAGE

Stephen Kanyimo and Emmanuel Chinamasa
Makonde District EducationHead, [2]Chinhoyi University of Technology
\

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find possible ways of creating a reading environment for English (L2) language in a rural primary school in Zimbabwe. This report is a second part of the rural primary school clusters Action research. It was motivated by the observation that, there are limited English reading materials for primary school children in Zimbabwe's rural primary schools. A pragmatist philosophy facilitated the exploring of the possible solutions to finding what works. Data were gathered through a questionnaire responded to by a purposive sample of 47 primary school teachers and three (3)teacher focus group discussions. Visits to five rural primary schools in Makonde district facilitated observations of school environment and their classrooms. The study found that, the exterior of the classrooms were starved of labelling. Classrooms had nature corner with several collections, shop corner, agriculture corner with a collection of crops and tools. Very few of these were labelled. None of the classes had a library corner. Classrooms were neither print-rich nor literacy-rich. They are devoid of reading materials and labels. Focus group discussions, surveys and interviews with teachers recommended a possible creation of a reading rural primary school environment by: labelling in different colours; all buildings, doors, chairs, roads, playgrounds, items in the nature, shop and agriculture corner. These labels need to be changed weekly to maintain interest. Pupils can rotate the task of issuing out exercise-books in class to promote name reading. Teachers can be trained to create picture books using pictures from old news-papers and magazines. Children's drawings and compositions are good sources. Pictures of school events such as sports and prize giving days can be accompanied by words and sentences used for reading. Mobile phone can be used for reading. Children can write words describing the events. Establishing a news and book clubs promote both reading and writing.

Key Words: Reading, rural, primary, school, Zimbabwe

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is the decoding of meaning from words, symbols and pictures. Pardede (2017) consider reading as the processing of textual information. In today's world, reading is an indispensable capability. Information on toilets, food items, public transport, in churches all require a citizen's ability to read.

In fact the education system in Zimbabwe and other countries, prioritised development of reading skills by making literacy, socialisation and numeracy the primary schools' mandate (Ndamba, 2010).Primary school ages are a time of tremendous literacy growth which teachers

and parents must capitalise. In Zimbabwe, most of the public information is written in English, this magnifies rural primary school children's inability to read English to a problem deserving an Action research, by teachers and for teachers.

Nature has it that, children are born with the inert ability to read. If they can see, they can identify symbols and their mind tries to attach meaning. Actually, infants are known to be good at reading facial expressions. They smile at friendly faces and cry at the sight of fearful faces. Machakanja (1999; 3) noted that most children begin the process of learning to read in their family environments.The direct implication of this observation is that, children from rural backgrounds in which English is not the mother language are disadvantaged and require teachers'help more than others.

The home environment contributes a lot to primary school children's ability to read. Studies by Hess (1982) emphasise home factors such as: the amount of exposure to print and encouragement by interested adults as promoting the child's ability to read at school. Lambert and Sidot (1990) added that, the level of parent-child and sibling-child interaction in the home contributes positively to the development of the child's reading skills. Then the existence of reading material in print or non-print in the home also develops the child's personal hunger for wanting to read something.

One can assume that, parents in rural areas have more children to promote language development by increasing interactions hence a positive for the rural primary school child's reading. A strong negative to the child's reading of English, which cannot be ignored, is the fact that, there are no reading materials in English in most Zimbabwe's rural homes. Hence the primary school guided by education policy is the first institution to formalise the reading process.

In Zimbabwean primary schools, reading English was influenced by the second language policy which has been changing over the years. According to Ndamba (2010;243), in Rhodesia (pre-independence Zimbabwe), Shona and Ndebele were used as the media of instruction in sub-standard A and B. The implication is that, children were required to develop reading skills in Shona and Ndebele. English (L2) language settled for the second priority. It had no utility value in a Shona and Ndebele community.

The Judges Commission of 1962 recommended that, children should learn to read and write in English from the first day of grade one. Implementation of this policy recommendation meant that, rural primary school children had their second language (English) from grade one. For Zimbabweans, the primary school then, is seen as another world where another language different from the one spoken at home is used. Reading English, for those children whose homes do not speak it demands careful school structuring and teaching.

Alderson (2000) warned that, incomplete first language skills make learning second language difficult. This was supported by Kuda (2004) who found a high positive correlation between children's ability to read in mother tongue and their subsequent reading achievement in the second language. One can justify the pre-independent curriculum for developing the mother language in sub A and B, before the second language was introduced.

A critical folly within the Zimbabwean education system was that, teachers did not assess children's levels of (L1) before exposing them to (L2) as a policy requirement. The time-tables separate the two languages which makes it difficult for the teacher and child to link the languages development skills. A political projection portrays The Judges Commission recommendation as a strategy to diminish the status of the African languages. Anyway, the English medium of instruction was maintained up to 1980 when Zimbabwe got independence.

The Education Act of 1987 ushered in a new language policy which required that the medium of instruction from grade one to three be children's first or mother language. English was to be the medium of instruction from grade four onwards. While the Act pronounced medium of instruction, it did not say English reading was not to be taught from grade one. In 2006, the language policy registers that prior to form one indigenous language may be used as a medium of instruction. Ndamba (2010; 243) suggests that, Zimbabwe sought to enhance the status of local languages for the reason that, children learn more easily and faster in their mother languages. Cognitive knowledge is shared by domains of reading and writing. Alderson (2000; 39) sums up this by saying both (L1) language reading and proficiency are critical for (L2) language reading predictors. The inference is that, those children who are able to speak and read their mother language are expected to read English better than those spluttering and stammering in their mother language.

Although the need for a strong (L1) language development is loud and clear, Shumba and Manyati (2000) revealed that, infant teachers use the first language (L1) only when children show failure to understand concepts taught in English (L2).An insinuation for this is that, teachers by preference are using English (L2) which may promote it and its' reading.

Statement of the Research Problem
Makonde rural district schools' environments do not support the reading of English language (L2). The omission negatively affects rural pupils' performance in all national examinations in which English is used as the medium of instruction, continues assessment and national examinations. The schools' pass rate is lowed and teachers' effectiveness doubted. Parents bear its ripple effects by paying extra primary school tuition fees when their children repeat a grade. Ministry of Education and Culture (1993; 6) allocated two (2) periods to reading for grades 1 and 2, then 3 periods to grades 3 to 7. It did not specify reading what language. Rationality can compel the head or class teacher to divide the reading time between the two languages L1 and L2. In Zimbabwe, the majority of primary school teachers are not English language (L2) speakers. There are some who studied English language (L2) as a major at their teacher training colleges, but these are not many for a lucky rural school to have one. Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture (2010; 22) assigned the mobilisation of school text books to the School Development Committee (SDC). Ministry of Education and Culture (1993; 34) point (4.7.9) requires the school Head to, encourage all pupils to develop a habit of reading. It **did not say how**to encourage them or **what**to read?One can assume that, it is the duty of the school Head and class teachers to find ways of answering the **how**, and **what** questions depending on the school, nature of pupils and its' locality.

Research Questions

The study's task is to answer the following pertinent questions:

1. How is English language (L2) reading being promoted in Makonde rural primary schools?
2. What factors influence English language (L2) reading in rural primary schools?
3. How can rural primary schools promote English language (L2) reading environments?

Research Objectives

The study intended to:

1. Identify methods being used to promote English language (L2) reading in Makonde rural primary schools.
2. Establish factors influencing English language (L2) reading in Makonde rural primary schools.
3. Suggest strategies for developing a rural primary school reading environment in Makonde district.

Significance of the Study

This study's purpose is duel. It contributes to better rural primary schools management and the promotion of teaching English language (L2) reading. The paper contributes to the improvement of primary school education in many ways. Teachers find it useful to implement the recommendations. Awareness of possibilities for improving reading of English language (L2) was raised for the participants. Study provides content for teachers' staff development initiatives. Better schools program can use the findings in other districts. The paper contributes literature and insights on the improvement of primary schools' management and teaching.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories of Teaching-Learning Reading

Since children's actions are rooted in their culture, Vygotsky's (1896-1934) socio-cultural theory of learning is affair spring board. It points out that social interaction proceeds consciousness and cognition. Entailing that, learning reading is specifically an end product of socialisation. This observation places emphasis on the home where socialisation in the context of culture takes place. For rural school children in Zimbabwe, home socialisation is devoid of English (L2) reading facilities. Vygosky's theory asserts four major themes which the teacher of English reading must understand. These are:-

First Social interaction, secondthe role of the more knowledgeable other (MKO), third is the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and last but critical is scaffolding. We need to examine the implication of each of these for teaching English (L2) reading.

According to Vygotsky (1896-1934) social development plays a fundamental role in reading cognitive development.Reading requires a developed language which is acquired through social interaction.So a child who has limited reading skills due to a lack of an elaborate socially accepted language for communicationencounters reading problems. Such children may face reading for the first time through the assistance of the teacher (The more knowledgeable Other

[MKO]). Inappropriately, teachers may focus more on the reading skills for English words that children are devoid of from their vocabularies.

At this first encounter with reading, a solid foundation for teaching reading in English as a second language must be laid firmly by the teachers. They can devote initial lessons to oral simple story telling and descriptions of the classroom environment to develop the English language and vocabulary. These activities are followed by teachers and senior learners reading in public for children to identify with them and reading. By seeing significant others read, children consider reading as a normal necessity. In fact, the hidden curriculum motivates children to imitate them, thereby driving them to want to read. The emphasis is on being exemplary in pronunciation, eye movements and stops. This technique is effective when the teacher or another child is reading child story books and each child has his or her book to follow the reading.

A behaviourist perception suggested by Pardede (2017) regards reading as a word recognition response to textualstimuli. This perception emphasises comprehension more than the mare sounds. Its comprehension depends on previous of knowledge. Mosha (2014: 16)emphasises the role of early learning teachers by declaring that:"if early years at the schoolfail to provide the right foundation for reading, then no amount of special provision at later stages will be able to achieve the full potential of the child."

One can infer that, teachingreading methods arecritical prerequisitesfor teachers as the MKO. Experience with young children denotes that learning of new skills like reading and writing can be achieved easily with the assistance of more knowledgeable and pedagogically skilled teachers. Moyo and Maseko (2016: 20) reiterate the importance of skilled teachers when they called for The Zimbabwe Ministry of Education in conjunction with the schools staff develop teachers' skills in reading instruction. Actually, they demanded that such programmes be mandatory as a strategy to improve L2 reading.

Vygotsky (1896-1934) noted that there are two levels of a learner's ability to learn new concepts from reading.To start with, a learner has an innate ability to read, learn and solve problems independently or under the guidance of the More Knowledgeable Other, the teacher. The social distance between these two Vygotsky termed the "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)." It is in the ZPD where classroom learning occurs. The hint is that primary school teachers and their children should reduce the social distance between them in terms of reading. Teachers are requested to read next to children, readers that have content at the level of the children. Reading aloud to them promotes acquisition of word pronunciation and fluency. Learners have the ability too, to do lip reading from Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. The purpose of the ZPD is also to provide supportive feedback. So, children can be asked to read back to the teacher or others for re-enforcement. Categorically, the learner has to be afforded adequate exposure to L2 and ample opportunities to practice English reading.
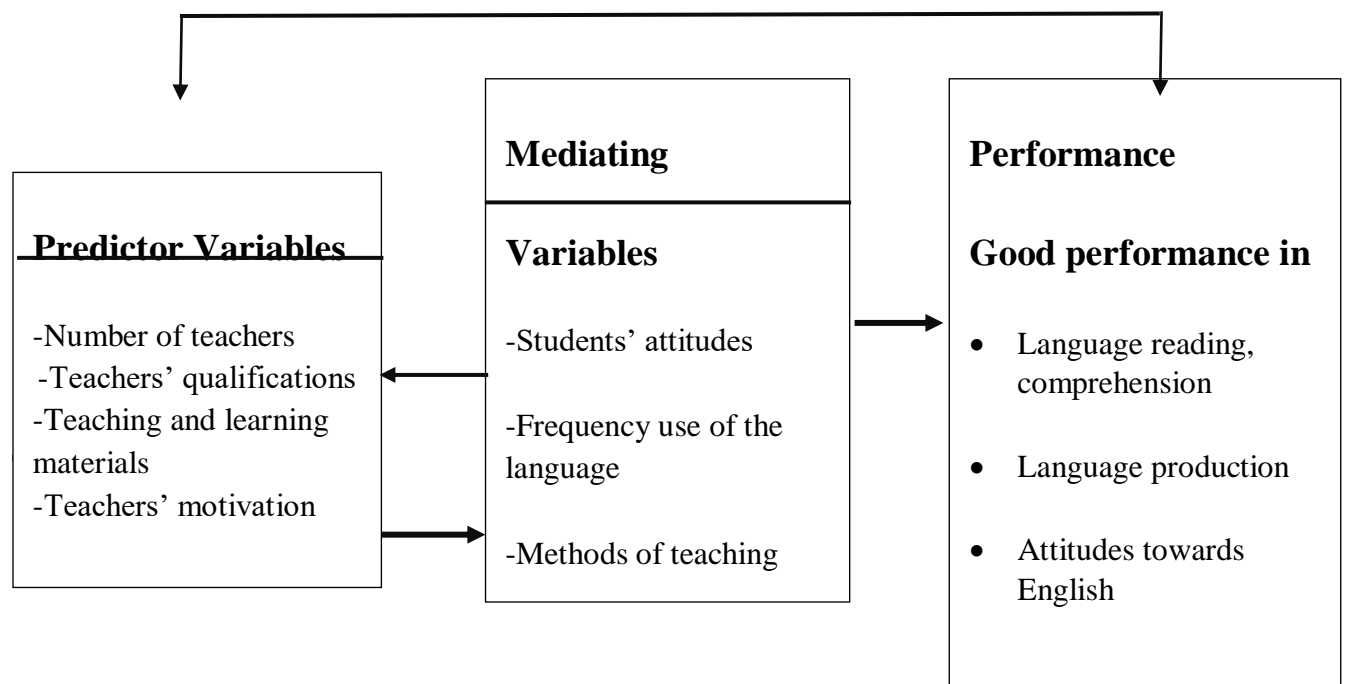
Marzan and Wu Hsueh (2009) laments that children in rural primary schools do not get adequate exposure in L2 because child-adult interaction was mediated in the mother language. In this case, the Zone of Proximal Development and knowledgeable others do not provide the prerequisite

language on which reading is to be founded. It is imperative that the MKO is equipped with the learning materials, proficiency and pedagogical skills to teach the rural learners English reading.

World Education Report (1998) cited in UNESCO (2000, 97) suggested that rural schools in many countries, operate under difficult conditions relating to physical states of the school, the scant availability of teaching and learning materials, class size or the changing characteristics of the student population. It is the purpose of this study then, to find how physical structures can be used to promote the provision of reading materials.

According to Cox (2020) a well-rounded approach to literacy development must be anchored on listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills can develop in class where children are tasked to write their short stories, read them to the class and answer questions about them. Listening to others reading their stories motivates others. Those students who are able to write and read can be models for others to emulate.

Bloom's (1982) evaluation model in Mosha (2014: p 67) shows the variables which influence reading performance. Figure 1, summarises the possible relationships of the variables in a school system.

Predictor Variables	Mediating Variables	Performance / Good performance in
-Number of teachers -Teachers' qualifications -Teaching and learning materials -Teachers' motivation	-Students' attitudes -Frequency use of the language -Methods of teaching	• Language reading, comprehension • Language production • Attitudes towards English

An observation from this model is the fact that, a school head has limited control over predictor variables. The number of teachers per school is determined by Ministry of Education policy. Current situation in Zimbabwe primary schools is that, the teacher: pupil ratio is 1:40 for infant classes and 1:25 for the other primary school classes (ministry of Education and Culture, 1993).

The school Headcan influence teaching and learning materials and teacher motivation. This study's lenses are beamed on teaching and learning materials for English reading.

The school Head's supervisory role enables him/her to manipulate mediating variables. The head can increase the frequency of use of English language by instituting and enforcing a policy. Say every child who gets to his office should speak in English. Staff development workshops on teaching reading techniques can be held at school level to improve teacher competences. Students' attitudes are a social variable they can improve by environmental immersion. The emphasis of this study is to create a rural primary school English reading provoking environment.

The term "scaffolding" explains the methods, actions and discussions the MKO uses to hasten the rate of knowledge acquisition in children. Vygotsky posit that in scaffolding the MKO must determine accurately the assumed knowledge of the learner then expands that knowledge by introducing higher order tasks that he/she intends the learner to master. Bruner (1975) and Savers (2000) as cited by Marzan and Wu Hsueh (2018: 33) concur that scaffolding can be exploited in second language learning. Instructional scaffolding in reading should be carried out by the MKO who can implement strategies by supporting learners to read unfamiliar words and solve complex communication problems.

Schema Theory

Pappas (2014) tells us that, the schema theory was propounded by Fredrick Bartlett in 1932. It describes the way knowledge is acquired, processed and organised in the human cerebral cavity. According to Bartlett (1932) the mind stores knowledge in small chunks fitting into each other like a jigsaw puzzle. An under-developed child's vocabulary has gaps in the jigsaw puzzle. These gaps demand words to describe the environment. When new words are encountered during reading, they either fit in some part of the schema or do not. Reading words which are already in the child's vocabulary schema facilitates both reading fluency and comprehension.

Shuying (2013) identifies four dimensions. First is the formal schema. This records the background knowledge of the formal, rhetorical structures of the story. A story whose background is very different from the child's formal schema is difficult for the child to read. Second is the content schema. This records the content being read. Strange content becomes difficult for the child to read. Cultural schema is the third dimension. It decodes the culture of the story. Characters' beliefs and practices of a particular community can be familiar or strange. Reading material with local content promotes reading. Linguistic schema is the fourth. Linguistic schema records knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. It is a strong basis of the phonic reading. It benefits much from listening to others read.

The schema theory has four important elements:
1. An individual's memorization is an unconscious recall from an old schema. This calls for the introduction of learning content material in sequence. Reading can start with letter recognition, sounds, words, sentences, paragraphs and stories.

2. A schema stabilizes after confirmation by significant others and it being found to apply whenever it is required. In reading, childrenstabilize sound schema when teachers and other children approve the sound (pronunciation) and its tone.
3. The human mind uses schema to organize by classification, encode and store chunks of important information for retrieval when required.
4. Schemata are accumulated over time and adjusted over time through different experiences. No schema is fixed, they always accommodate new structures.

These schema elements inform the teacher that first, the child is ready to learn reading new words. The teacher can facilitate reading by sequencing the content in all subjects, specifically reading of English (L2) in Zimbabwe. There is need for teaches to buttress by praising children for correct words reading.

Factors influencing second language reading
Grabiec (2010; 1) postulates thatchildren are better at learning languages than adults. This difference can be accounted for by the fact that adults' language schema are almost full and stable. Their reading is mainly done for instrumental purposes hence English (L2) language reading is limited in Zimbabwe's rural areas. This fact is a plus for teachers of English (L2) reading. It advocates that young children are ready and have the affinity for language (L2) learning. Oyama (1976) in Grabiec (2010;17) support the claim that learners who start learning a foreign language as children acquire a more native-like accent than those who start learning the languages as adolescents or adults.

Neufeld (1978)in Grabiec (2010) identifies two levels of language learning, namely
primary and secondary levels. At the primary level, children learn vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar rules by copying and imitation. Adults especially teachers, must be exemplary in their speech and reading.

Secondary level develops the child's ability to handle complex grammatical structures and different language styles. Grabiec (2020;1) proposes that, all people have an inborn ability to acquire primary levels but children are more likely to acquire secondary levels and be more successful in learning a foreign language. Although adults learn faster, children are more motivated because they want to be accepted by peers. Primary school teachers can capitalise on these attributes by making use of peer groups for reading.
The child's needs to satisfy the social-ego (desire to be accepted) can promote or destroy the child's reading and language development. For example, when a child who is good at reading is sanctioned at school by friends who cannot read, that child will deliberately not develop more reading skills to be accepted by the group. To that end, teachers are advised to sit children according to reading abilities. A seemingly stronger mitigation is to apply a whole school reading improvement intervention.

Motivation and Attitudes
Bloom's (1982) variables include motivation. In the primary school, most children need external motivation. It is also the responsibility of the teachers to maintain in their learners a certain

degree of motivation for reading English (L2). Their main tasks include nurturing positive attitudes so that a high degree of learning takes place in the classroom Grabiec (2010;3) places motivation as one of the most important factors in second language acquisition. The study accepts that learners who are motivated to read are likely to achieve more than those who do not.

Gardner and Lamoert (1972) distinguish two types of motivation which they categorize as,

(i) Integrative motivation which occurs when learners strive to learn a second language because they admire and have an interest in the culture of the targeted languages' people. This is a social-ego. It is an uphill task for rural school environments. Their teachers are not English speakers neither do they successfully imitate them. They may need to exhibit an English language speaking culture to be admired by children. Otherwise, they cannot exploit integrative culture.

(ii) Instrumental motivation arises when learners' goals of reading the second language are mainly functional. They learn the targeted language in order to function in a group. A school or class in which all communication is done in second language, exploit learners' instrumental motive. Although primary school learners are not serious about employment, learning English for employment is their remote instrumental motive. Asking learners to read labels of agriculture chemicalsused in their homes and talk of the danger warning instructions promote a direct need for instrumental motivation to read. Instrumental motivation is mainly extrinsic.

Cox (2020) recommended the following strategies for motivating children to read. First, teachers are tasked to help students see the importance of reading by being seen reading and apparently enjoying what they are reading. They can be reading to the class or to themselves before the class. Second, they introduce children to a book series and e-books. This strategy works well in a technologically developed world. In Zimbabwe's rural areas, cell phones are still scarce. So, teachers can encourage students to read what ever they get. Be they old papers, plastic packs, grain bags and more important other students' names on exercise books. The fourth strategy is to teach students reading strategies which make them understand and enjoy reading.

Below is a diagrammatic summary of factors influencing language reading proficiency.
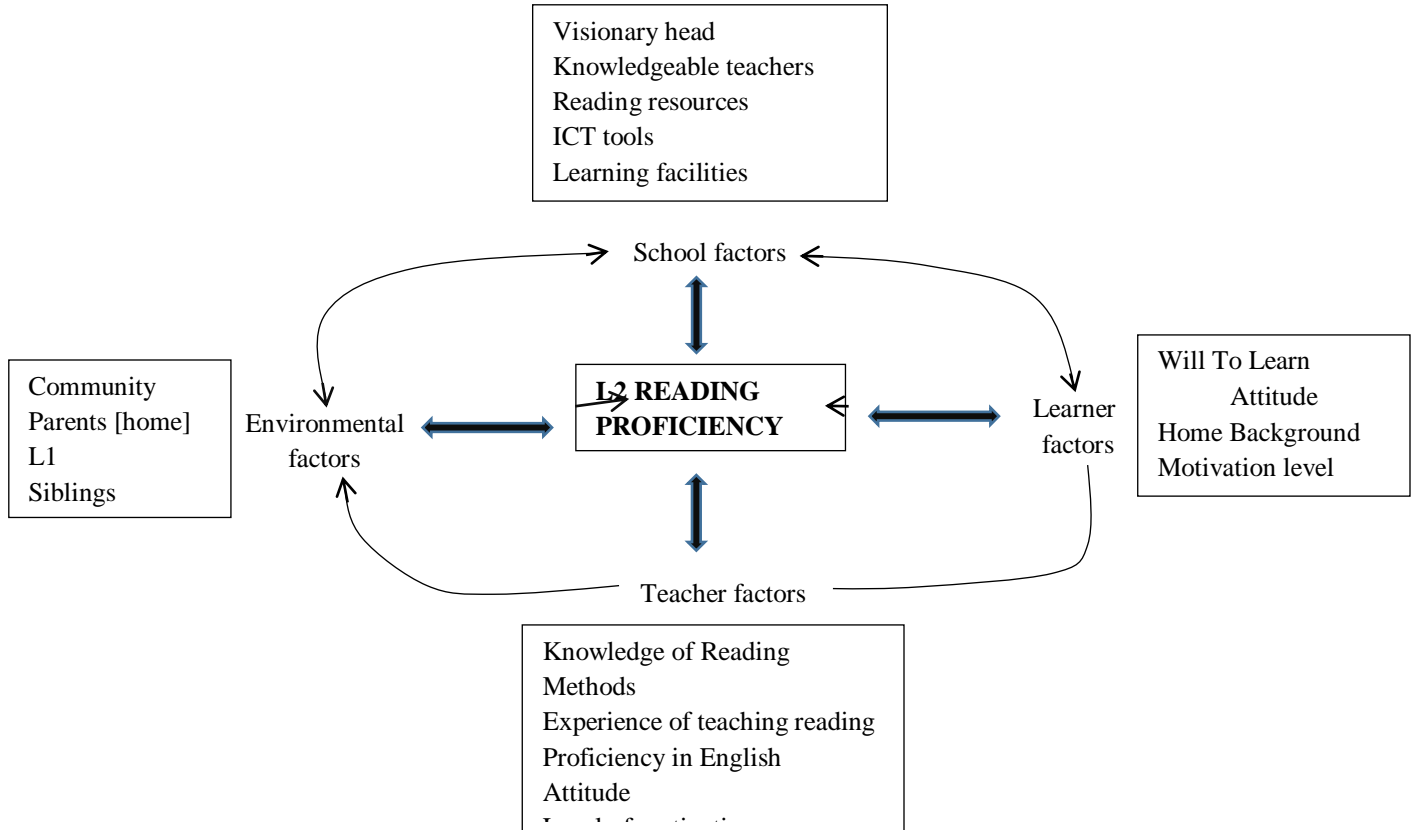
This summary provides a set of variables to investigate in focus group discussions, questionnaire, observations and interviews during data collection. A school Head in a rural primary school in Zimbabwe, has no control over the quality and number of teachers for the school. Teacher recruitment is the responsibility of public service commission. The school Head has to make do with the teachers deployed to the school. The implication is that for improvement of school environment, the study's lenses must be beamed on the school environment as the physical delimitation.
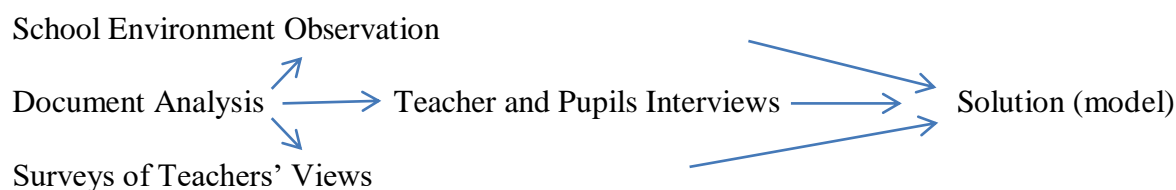
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Research Philosophy
This Action Research study's mainpurpose (gaining insight and planning action solution) calls for guidance from pragmatism philosophy. Pragmatism facilitates the application of whatever ethical method works to gather data and solution. To that end a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches is critical in this study of how English language (L2) reading is being done and can be improved. Robson (2002) suggests that action research is focuses on working towards practical outcomes and solutions. Koshy (2006;9) regards action research as a

constructive inquiry in which the researcher understands the situation and generates new knowledge.

Research Design

The study applied a combination of document analysis tracked by a parallel observation, survey and interviews. Document analysis was carried out to develop a theoretical standard for measuring field work. Observations of schools and teacher interviews were done simultaneously to save time and travel costs. Findings converge to common solutions for implementation by primary school clusters in Makonde rural district. Diagrammatically the study design is shown below.

School Environment Observation

Document Analysis → Teacher and Pupils Interviews → Solution (model)

Surveys of Teachers' Views

Population and Sampling

Action research deals with individuals or groups of people with a common purpose of improving practice (improving reading English language). It is participatory the researchers are part of the active population researching and being researched on. In this study the human population comprises of researchers being part of the researching teachers in Makonde rural primary schools. The non-human population consists of rural primary schools' infrastructure.

Purposive sampling of 47 (forty teachers and seven school heads) rural primary school teachers teaching in seven primary schools provided the data for the study. Their inclusion criterion was based on them being rich sources (teaching reading experience in a rural primary school). Teachers, schools and pupils were available for focus group discussions, interviews and willing to contribute in the study. Published Action research and English language (L2) teaching methods books provided the theory. Since only academic published works were consulted, there was no need for rigorous validation of such sources.

Instruments

Document analysis guides drew second language teaching and action research methods from published sources. Observation guides focused researchers to ways in which non-human school sources promoted reading of English (L2) language. Although Interviews sought understanding and explanations to issues arising from surveys and observations, they also probed for insights. The questionnaire captured teachers' demographic data, reading methods they used, factors influencing reading of English (L2) language in their schools and strategies which can be used to promote reading of English (L2) language.

Data Collection and Presentation

Data collection was initiated by marketing the study for lobbing and teacher co-ownership. This is critical for action studies. This was followed by seeking permission from Education district

officers as an important ethical issue for support and resources allocation. Researchers constructed the instruments for the study. Researchers did document analysis during desk research stage. This facilitated instruments structuring.

Focus group discussions were organised by cluster chair persons. They facilitate the grouping and reporting while researchers took down notes on common points and points of divergence. Groups were asked to explain outlier views. During observation visits to schools, the Head of each school lead researchers around, from playground, toilets, classrooms and Head's office. Researchers took the opportunity to administer questionnaires and interview teachers and pupils. These were done so that the study does as little disturbance as possible to the smooth running of the school.

Data presentation was determined by the nature of the data. Teachers' rural primary school teaching experience is a continuous variable. It is presented on a histogram. Teachers' subject areas of specialisation are discrete variables and presented on bar graph. English reading teaching methods are presented in frequency tables and percentages used for comparison. Open ended interview responses are presented as direct quotations to allow readers to deduce their own additional conclusions from the findings.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Response Rate
Data for this study was collected from forty-seven teachers (n = 47). This is statistically a large sample for the variable to be normally distributed and findings generalised for rural primary schools in a similar situation.All respondents were qualified teachers with teaching diplomas whilst only 5 (10.64%) had Education Management degrees.

Teachers' Experiences by Age n = 47
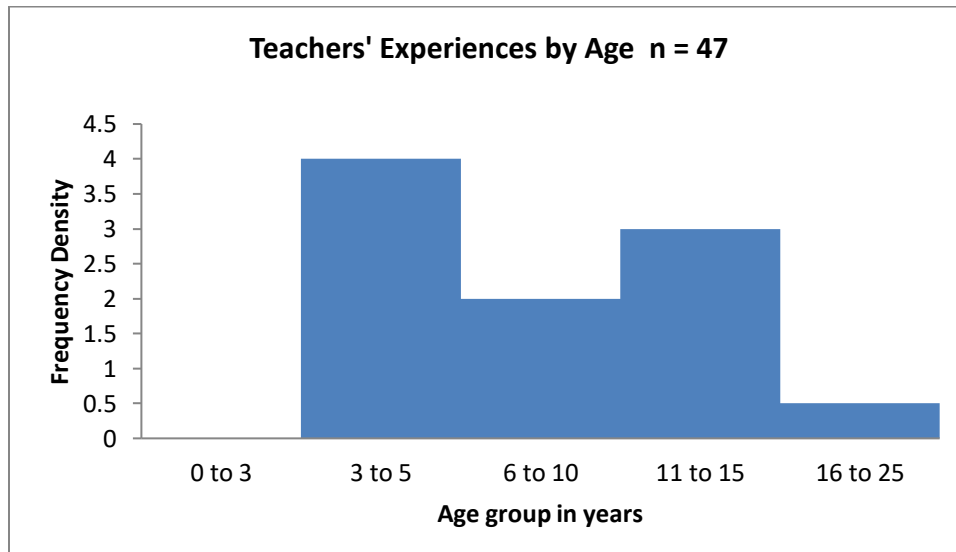
The histogram shows that the majority of rural primary school teachers are still fresh from college (3 to 5years). These are expected to be bubbling with theories of education and teaching

methods to try. They can be rich sources for innovative methods for promoting reading. The distribution is positively skewed.

Subject specialization in Primary School
It is mandatory (in Zimbabwe) for every trainee at a Teachers' College for primary school teachers to specialise in one teaching subject. The majority of teachers (36%) specialised in Shona, the mother language. Interviews with teachers revealed that, while they are in college student teachers are determined to pass and complete the teacher education course. They choose Shona because they think it is easier to pass than English (L2). Fear of failing can be supported by only (4%) who went for Mathematics. English has the second lowest (15%) choice. The implication of these results is that, there are limited primary school teachers with an interest in English (L2) language. Let alone being interested in teaching it to primary school children. We inferred that, a limited number of teachers interested in the teaching of English (L2) language is a constraint to the teaching of English (L2) language reading. The cluster has only (15%) resource teachers for English (L2) language teaching. The pie-chart below shows teacher subject specialisation distribution.

Teacher Subject Specialisation n = 47
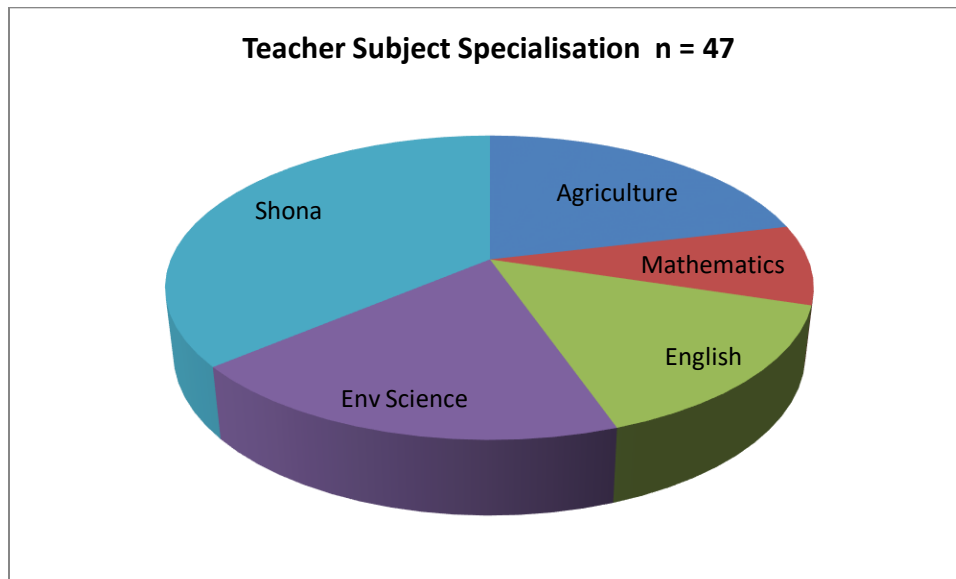
English being the medium of instruction for all the subjects offered at primary schools except the indigenous languages makes it imperative that every teacher in the primary school has to be proficient in English. Deplorably this is not the case.

Methods of promoting English (L2) language reading
In this study six of the respondents were heads of schools and forty were primary school teachers. These respondents were asked to list the methods of promoting English (L2) reading they use in their schools. Thirteen respondents (28.5%) managed to list three methods of teaching English (L2) reading. 27 (57%) were able to give just one method. 20 (42.8%) were completely ignorant of the methods of teaching English reading, yet, they are the frontline

instructional practitioners in the classrooms on a day to day basis. Of the six respondents who were heads of schools, 3 (50%) could not identify even a single method for promoting English (L2) reading. One is then left wondering how those heads supervise English reading in their stations.

Twenty (42.8%) of the total respondents could not state even a single correct method of teaching English reading. Ironically, each of them had less than twenty years of experience and could still be employed in the teaching service for the next fifteen years before retirement. That means more years of incompetent instruction in English reading is likely to prevail in the rural primary schools if corrective measures are not taken.

Methods for Promoting English Reading n = 47
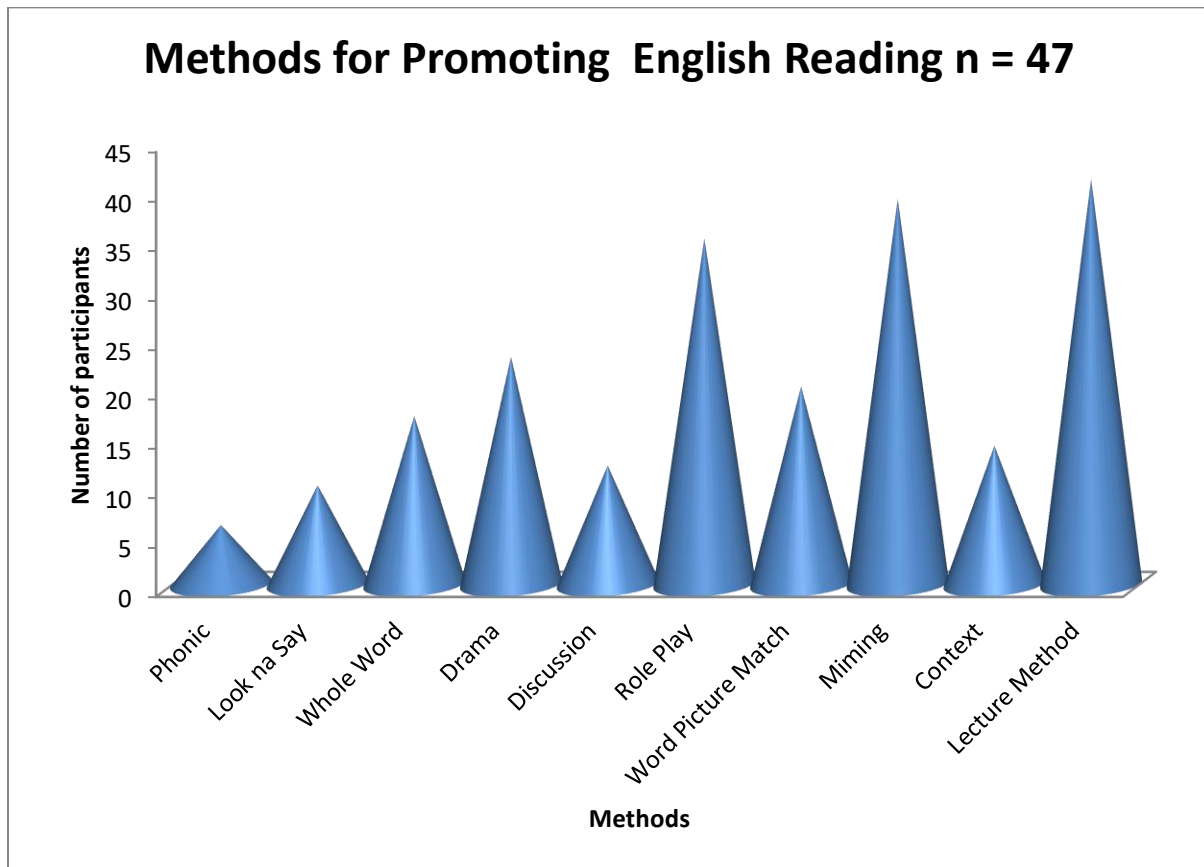
Lecture method, miming, role play and drama were among the common methods. These promote more of language development through hear, echo and practice rather than oblige pupils to read. For instance, miming is expressing self or tell a story through action. Actual reading methods such as phonic, look and say, whole word and context methods were not popular.

Factors that affect reading opportunities for learners

The study also investigated the factors that affected the English (L2) language reading opportunities of the children in Makonde rural primary schools cluster. The following factors were raised from focus group discussions:

1. Limited exposure to English (L2) language both at school and home resulted in children's lack of practice and ideal to copy. There was limited instrumental motivation.
2. Schools have high teacher : pupil ratio prevalence (mean of 1: 65) in composite classes. That ratio reduced teacher to pupil conduct and increased the Zone of Proximal Development. Teachers are unable to know children as individuals and their reading difficulties.
3. Pupils' homes and schools are devoid of reading provoking materials.
4. Pupils, teachers and parents have negative attitudes towards the second language. They consider using English (L2) as perpetuation of colonization in Zimbabwe.
5. Incompetent teachers who were not knowledgeable about English reading approaches.
6. Teachers have low motivation which discourages them from creating reading materials for children.
7. Use of the mother tongue, Shona in teaching English (L2) by teachers reduces the importance of English as a functional tool.
8. Children's lack of confidence in the use of English (L2) language limitsEnglish language development and subsequently its reading.

Strategies for Creating a Reading rural school environment

An analysis of school observations, teachers' responses from questionnaires and focus group discussions revealed that, a rural school environment which provokes children to read can be created by:

1. Organizing schools reading competitions say every Friday afternoon, within the class, inter class and inter schools. Reading clubs can be formed in schools. Critical element is that for both clubs and competitions, children choose what they want to read. They can be assessed on errors, pronunciation or speed and fluency.*Note: this has no cost implications. Children bring their own sources. Hopefully they will have practiced reading as part of the competition preparations.*
2. Teachers can increase children's reading time by using the first ten minutes of each lesson for reading content for that subject. This increases the instrumental function of reading English (L2).
3. School should be labeled in bright colors. This consists of labeling class doors say Miss. M. Moyo, GRADE TWO. Paths and streets, chairs must have children's names so that children read to identify their chairs. Everything on the nature, store and agriculture corner must be labeled. These labels must be changed regularly to keep on capturing children's attention.
4. Issuing out exercise books in class must be rotated, so that children read names.A volunteer teacher can start a NEWS club. Club members will be accorded time to read news during every assembly. This promotes writing, reading and public speaking.

REFERENCES

Alderson, C. N. (2000) *Assessing Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Arshad, M. and Chen, H. (2009). *Vygotsky's Social-cultural of literacy theory of learning*. Wacana. 11(2), 23- 39

Cox, J. (2020). How to motivate students to love reading. [o] http://teachhub.com/how-motivate-love-reading. Accessed 12/02/2020.

Etsey, K. (2005) *Causes of Low Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in the Shama*. Sub Metro of Shama Alanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) in Ghana.Cape Coast: University of Cape Coast.

Gardner, R.C. and Lambent, W.R. (1972) *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning*, Rouley, Mass: Newbury House

Grabiec, S. (2010) *Learner Factors Influencing Second Language Learning: https://www.semanticscholar.org.* Corpus ID 1466137

Gray, N. (1969) *The Teaching of Reading and Writing. Unesco*, Scott Foresman and Company Educational Books Illinois.

Hess, R.D. et al (1982). *Families as Learning environments for children*. New York: Plenum press.

Koda, K. (2005*). Insights into second language reading: A cross-linguistic approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.

Koshy, V. (2006). *Action Research for Improving Practice*. London: Chapman.

Lambert, T and Sidot, A. (1990). *Bilingualism situations and Consequences*. Reading Teacher.12 (1), 152- 154.

Machakanja, P. (1999). *Parental involvement in children's early reading in English: A case study of two schools in Mutare district, Zimbabwe. Harare: HRRC*.

Ministry of Education and Culture (1993). *Handbook on School Administration for Heads.* Harare: Public Service Commission.

Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, (2010). Manual for Training of School Development Committees (SDC). Harare: UNICEF.

Mosha, M.A. (2014).Factors Affecting Students' performance in English Language in Zanzibar Secondary Schools. *Journal of education and Practice.* 5(35), 64-76.

Moyo, W. and Maseko, T. (2016).Factors influencing Poor Performance of Learners in the Grade Seven Examination : A case of Umguza District.*International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* .5(1), 236-243.

Mupa, P. and Chinooneka T.I. (2015).Factors contributing to ineffective teaching and learning in primary schools. Why are schools in decadence? *Journal of Education and Practice.* 6(19), 125-133.

Ndamba, G. T. (2010). The official language in education policy and its implementation at infant school in Zimbabwe. *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research. 22(3),* 242-260.

Pappas, C. (2014). Instructional Design Models and Theories: Schema theory. [o]elearningindustry.com/schema-theory. Accessed 17/03/2020.

Pardede, P. (2017) *A review on Reading theories and its implications to the teaching of Reading, universitas Kristen*. Indonesia.

UNESCO (2000) *Quality of Education and improvement of school achievement* (Online) Available: http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog.bronchure/019.html (6/8/ 2019).

Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Shumba, O. and Manyati, M. (2000). Language and communicative action in Zimbabwe School environment. *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research.* 12(1),43-74.

Shuying, A. (2013). Schema Theory in Reading. Theory and Practice in Language Studies. 3(1), 130-134.