



Teachers' Perspectives on Learning Strategies Utilised by Standard Five ESL Learners in Reading for Comprehension Across the Curriculum in Primary Schools in Botswana.

Rosinah Thando Mokotediⁱ
Department of Primary Education
University of Botswana
mokotedir@mopipi.ub.bw

Mavis B. Mhlauliⁱⁱ
Department of Primary Education
University of Botswana
mhlaulim@mopipi.ub.bw

Abstract

Over the past few years, there has been growing awareness that comprehension instruction is inadequate in preparing learners as they are faced with pressure of reading different texts at standard five level of education. To date, there has been little research into language learning strategies utilised for reading in English as a second language (ESL) particularly in the Botswana context. Therefore, this study comes in the wake of such concerns by investigating learning strategies used by standard five learners in reading across the curriculum. The study employs the mixed methods approach to research. For its design, the study used the concurrent triangulation design (Creswell, 2013). Interviews and a questionnaire were used to collect data from teachers and students respectively. The study utilised qualitative approach in which data was collected through interviews and quantitative in which data was collected through a questionnaire. The results of the study reveal that cognitive, metacognitive and compensation strategies are frequently utilised by standard five learners. Therefore, the study recommends that teachers need to undergo professional development in the area of language learning strategies in order to enable their learners to develop good reading skills.

Keywords: Reading comprehension, Language learning strategies, metacognition strategy.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Mokotedi, R. T., & Mhlauli, M. B. (2017). Teachers' perspectives on learning strategies utilised by standard five ESL learners in reading for comprehension across the curriculum in Primary Schools in Botswana. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 10(5), 505-519. Retrieved [DATE] from <http://www.ij sre.com>.

INTRODUCTION

The government of Botswana's intention in the National Development Plan 8 (NDP 8) is to raise the quality of education in primary schools because within the overall system of formal education, it provides the foundation upon which other levels of education rest. The official languages in Botswana are Setswana and English. For some learners, Setswana is their mother tongue (L1) and for some it is their second language (L2) while English is either their L2 or (L3) third language. In 1994 English was officially introduced as the language of instruction from standard two onwards in Botswana education system (Republic of Botswana, 1994). English has special status as an official language, language of government, and business, regional, national and international communication. For this reason, some of the learners are motivated to read as they understand that for them to proceed for further education; they need to be able to read all the subjects in English except Setswana in order for them to pass Primary School Leaving Examination (PLSE) written at the end of standard seven. Therefore, the pressure for reading is a major challenge for teachers because they are accountable for the success or failure of their learners.

The focus of Botswana's education system is in reading to learn as a tool for successful progression and completion of each standard done by learners. Therefore, learners find themselves in a situation where teaching and learning rely heavily on reading books. This put them under a lot of pressure as their reading culture does not match with what they have to do to read for all the subjects across the curriculum (Alfassi, 2004).

The study is in line with the recommendation of the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE, 1994) which emphasized that culture of reading amongst Botswana should be promoted in order to develop the habit of reading for lifelong functional and leisure purposes as well as to cultivate any readers' analytic and critical thinking. Therefore, finding out teachers' perspectives on learning strategies in reading utilised by standard five learners is important as it would provide the researcher with the information on the language learning strategies utilised by learners in reading texts written in their L2. Furthermore, finding out if the methods of teaching aim at equipping learners with all the sub-skills of reading which would make their reading across the curriculum much easier. This could be only addressed if teachers understand and know the language learning strategies utilised by standard five learners when reading for comprehension across the curriculum. The researcher's hypothesis is that in most cases, teachers are not aware of the extent to which the standard five learners utilise learning strategies as they are faced with pressure of reading extensively. Moreover, strategies used to direct one's attention to specific details of reading materials as well as compensatory reading strategies are not encouraged by the teachers in order for the learners to complement the requirements of the different subjects in standard five classes. Growing research on explaining teachers' subject matter, knowledge in teaching and beliefs about learning and pedagogy helps in reflecting the reality of their teaching and performance of the learners (Mokotedi, 2012; 2013). Studies on strategy training revealed that when strategies are modelled for learners and they have the opportunity to practice them; their reading comprehension improves (Song, 2003).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is specifically to achieve the following objectives:

- To investigate the learning strategies used by learners in standard 5 in reading across the curriculum.
- To explore the teachers' perspectives on reading strategies used by their learners.

- To find out from the teachers on the challenges they are faced with in the teaching of learning strategies used by learners in reading for comprehension across the curriculum.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

- Which learning strategies do the standard five learners of Botswana mostly use in their reading for comprehension across the curriculum?
- What are the teachers' perspectives on the learning strategies used by standard five learners of Botswana in their reading for comprehension across the curriculum?
- What are the challenges faced by teachers in teaching/ learning strategies to standard five learners in reading for comprehension across the curriculum.

Theoretical framework

Constructivism focuses on how people learn and it is of the view that learners must ask questions, explore and assess what they know. Collectively, they emphasize the importance of looking at what the learner brings to a new experience and what the prior experience contains. Fresch (2008) is of the opinion that “constructivism helped professionals realize the importance of using background knowledge and strategy deployment when constructing ... word knowledge” (p. 43). In the classroom, the constructivist view of learning can point towards a number of different teaching/learning practices. Therefore, learners must constantly assess how their reading strategies are helping them to gain understanding (Fresch, 2008). In the most general sense, it usually means encouraging students to use active reading strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature addresses major areas of ESL teaching and learning in primary schools.

The Reading Process

Reading is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information and consequently, involves the interrelatedness of the five components of reading, namely, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (Kern, 2000). Therefore, it is an interactive process in which learners construct and extend meaning from life's experiences, language, print and non- print materials. Learners read for literacy experiences, to gain information and perform tasks and “any product of the reader's comprehension will depend on the reader's grasp of the constituent system, a coherent pattern of textual concepts” (Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991, p. 21). There are variables contributing to the declining abilities in reading such as text characteristics which do not portray the learners cultural setting (Stott, 2001), the differences in the reading strategies, other reading tasks such as, topic interest, text length, text structure, readability and purpose of reading influence the reading ability (Swaffar, Arens & Byrnes, 1991). Therefore, the reader forms the meaning of the text through interaction of a variety of mental processes in order to work at different levels such as using the bottom-up process to identify the meaning and grammatical category of word, sentence syntax, and text details (Swaffar et al., 1991). Furthermore, Kern (2000) has argued that “the reader, in turn, must reconstruct a context of

interpretation based not only on the cues provided in the writer's text, but also on the reader's own experience and knowledge" (p. 109).

The main challenge for learners in Botswana is that they read materials written in English language for all the curriculum subjects except only the Setswana subject. ESL and English as foreign language (EFL) learners usually employ a number of language learning strategies during their reading process. Research studies on second language reading have consistently confirmed the significance of reading strategies on developing language learners' reading comprehension skills (Zare & Nooreen, 2011; Brantmeier, 2002; Slataci & Akyel, 2002).

Language Learning Strategies

A strategy is an activity used to help learners increase reading abilities. Once the teachers have diagnosed the problems and challenges that the individual learners are having, it would be essential for them "to incorporate language learning strategies into their teaching methods and approaches" (Zare & Othman, 2013, p. 192) to enable the learners to become proficient readers (Konishi, 2003). In other words, what the teacher will do in the classroom to meet the needs of all levels of readers might be a challenging task especially in Botswana primary schools situation where the teachers have large classes of about thirty five to forty-five learners per class (Mokotedi, 2012). Therefore, a general definition of language learning strategies is "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8).

Language learning strategies play an important role in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and this has been highlighted by numerous studies (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford, 2004). While there is little doubt concerning the role language learning strategies play in SLA, the effectiveness of teaching specific strategies has been questioned (Posen, (2006), especially on whether learners are aware of the strategies they use. However, research by Oxford (2004) has demonstrated that when strategy instruction is tailored to suit specific contexts and individual learners' needs, it can be an effective method for speeding up the process of learning a second language for ESL learners. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to "train the students to use the appropriate strategy for a specific purpose or a specific skill area, and encourage them to use the strategies as frequently as possible" (Zare & Othman, 2013, p. 192).

Oxford's (1990) has categorized six sets of learning strategies which are: memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. The categories are essential for this study because in a recent study by Hsiao & Oxford, (2002) this system was shown to provide a more effective account of learning strategies than O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) categories. Furthermore, and perhaps most relevant to this study, it has also been applied successfully in academic contexts of Asian cultures and the efficiency of this categorization in a range of cultures might be useful for African cultures.

Research in language learning strategies has found that there are individual differences on the use of cognitive reading strategies (Song 2003). Furthermore, some research has been conducted in examining the strategies used in reading by bilingual students while reading in their second language (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2004). Padron and Waxman (1986) found that bilingual students use fewer strategies and different types of reading strategies than English monolingual students. Little research, however, has been conducted that examine the effects of cognitive strategy instruction on the strategies that bilingual students use in reading text that is written in their second language. Of particular relevance to

this study, in placing the strategies in an Asian academic context, Song, (2003) used these strategies in reading research on strategy training with students in Korea. The results of the study indicated that these reading strategies could enhance the reading development of second/foreign language students. Furthermore, Upton (1997) identified interesting reading strategies for ESL Japanese learners, which corresponded with Oxford's (1990) six sets of learning strategies.

Language Learning Strategies Utilised by ESL Learners in Comprehending Texts

Readers use reading strategies to make their reading successful and "...apparently all readers, including L2 students, connect language and meaning on the basis of their focal attention, instruction should follow suit" (Swaffar et al., 1991, p. 51). Therefore, reading strategies are considered an essential aspect of teaching English as a foreign or second language and the ESL textbooks focus is on strategy instruction in reading (Oczkus, 2003). Some of the reading strategies include: making guesses, prediction, making inferences, underlining words or phrases, and making notes as well as using the dictionary to find meanings of difficult words while reading (Oczkus, 2003; Stott, 2001; Hoyt, 1999). The reader's striving and persistence to seek solutions that are needed become more rewarding when the efforts go hand in hand with having adequate resources to use with the above mentioned alternative reading strategies.

Reading researchers and practitioners in education have for a long time, advocated guessing as a strategy for successful reading even though for learners, it is important to guide them on when to guess (Stott, 2001). According to Hideo & Hiroyuki (2004) we cannot refute the fact "that the ability to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words from context demands the other learning strategies, which suggests that learning strategies training has the feasibility of the learners' English proficiency development" (p. 81). Usually for these, guessing is not seen as the unstructured process but is conceived in terms of predicting. Therefore, an L2 reader with a limited language repertoire, the contextual clue itself may become an additional barrier.

It appears that a reader may achieve his goal of comprehending by first utilising a strategy of identifying problems which prevent him from achieving his goal. These problems may arise from one's own constraints, such as low reading proficiency, lack of interest; constraints presented by the material especially difficult words or writing style. In order to solve these problems, the reader adapts his behaviour by applying problem solving strategies (Oczkus, 2003). In everyday life, learners are able to adjust their reading strategies and rates according to the requirements of the task before them if they are well trained. According to (Ozmen, 2012, p. 156), "students are not always aware of the power of using strategies, yet skilled teachers help their students develop an awareness of learning strategies and enable them to use appropriate strategies".

Several instructional strategies logically follow from schema theory. The most important implication of schema theory is the role of processing prior knowledge in learning. In order for learners to effectively process information, their existing schemas related to the new content need to be activated (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2004, Stott, 2001). Therefore, by asking questions of the text, a reader is actively responding with the material to incorporate the new material into his or her schema (Jensen, 2010, pp. 11-12). Correspondingly, the results of the research carried in Botswana (Mokotedi, 2012) found that teachers of reading have established that activating learners' schemas enable them to process and understand information that they are reading much better. Therefore, many advocate teaching learners metacognitive strategies designed to activate one's schema before reading, such as reading the heading and title, discussing new vocabulary with the learners, looking at visuals in the

text, and making predictions based on the title and pictures (Mokotedi, 2012; Jensen, 2010; Chamot, 2005; (Mokhtari and Reichard, 2004; Stott, 2001).

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Teaching Learning Strategies to Standard Five Learners in Reading for Comprehension Across the Curriculum.

Teachers of reading recently have been urged to motivate learners by valuing them as individuals and by so doing they would feel that their needs are valued and understood. This can only happen if the reading materials match with the children's needs to an extent that they broaden or interest them thus, making them to likely accept reading as a worth-while venture (Zare & Othman, 2013) throughout the curriculum especially if English is used as a medium of instruction as in the case of Botswana.

A review of literature on second language learning emphasizes motivation as an important affective variable. Other causes for incomprehension besides poor motivation are lack of experience, inadequate prior knowledge and a limited or subjective view of what is being read (Williams and Burden, 1997). Students experience low motivation in reading when they are unable to use the language in meaningful situations (Konishi, 2003). Only widespread involvement in language can solve the problem of poor motivation. Commitment to invest interest in reading is crucial in order for instruction in learning strategies to be effective in reading. Therefore, preparation before reading is important because it can make the students' reading more efficient and enjoyable.

METHODS

Research design

The study employed a mixed method approach to research and uses the concurrent triangulation design. This design requires that both the qualitative and quantitative data are collected concurrently in one phase (Creswell, 2013). The data is usually analysed separately in order to compare or combine them (Creswell, 2013). This design is suitable in that it allows the researcher to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate the findings. It is often meant to overcome weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another method (Creswell, 2013; Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). So this design was found to be suitable for this study since the focus was on teachers and pupils hence the use of a questionnaire and an interviews.

Population

The target population of the study comprises of standard five teachers and learners in Molepolole and Gaborone Primary Schools in Botswana. The standard is chosen because it is the emersion stage and the researcher's assumption is that at the standard five level of education, reading is at a crucial stage as the learners have to read almost all the subjects that they are doing in English except the Setswana subject. Therefore, the researcher's assumption is that they should be aware of the language learning and reading strategies that they utilise when reading for comprehension and can also respond to the questionnaire. On the other hand, the standard five teachers should also be aware of the reading strategies that are utilised by their learners because they have been assisting them with instructional reading activities.

Sample

The sample was drawn from two Primary Schools in Botswana. Teachers who participated in the study were from School A in Molepolole and school B in Gaborone. Three teachers were selected by the head teachers from each school. Fifteen learners whose age ranges between 10 and 11 participated in the study from each school.

Research Instruments

The research instruments used in the study are a questionnaire for learners and interview for teachers. The questionnaire was used because it is easy and shows anonymity to the participants thus making them free to express themselves (Wellington, 2000). The questionnaire for learners consisted of twenty questions of language learning reading strategies. The Reading Strategy Questionnaire (RSQ) (Waxman & Padron, 1987) was adapted for the five point Likert scale questionnaire. Some statements were modified by the researcher while very few were added to suite the standard five learners in Botswana. Participants were required to mark their answers by ticking the appropriate box for the option that best expressed their personal language learning strategies utilised when reading for comprehension across the curriculum (Wellington, 2000). Out of thirty questionnaires sent out, a total of twenty six were returned representing a high rate of 92%. Learners indicated the extent to which they use the described strategy by responding either (a) always (b) sometimes, (c) never (d) little (e) not sure. Some Strategies included in the RSQ are to enhance learners' reading achievement.

The semi-structured interview was used to gather information from the six teachers. An interview technique is commonly used in data collection because it helps both the interviewer and interviewee to read voice, which may reveal how strongly the interviewee feels about the questions asked (Creswell, 2003; Grix, 2004). This is a very big advantage that the interview has over the questionnaire (Wellington, 2000). Therefore, it can produce better results compared to a questionnaire, because in an interview a response can be developed by seeking clarification. During the interview session, each interviewee was told to feel free to respond to the questions because the information gathered from the interview is confidential and their names remain anonymous.

Data Analysis

The study employed the descriptive and statistical techniques for this study. The interview sessions were tape recorded and the recordings were transcribed for closer analysis into field notes and the descriptive method was used. The frequency in which the response for each question ticked was recorded in the form of tally marks. The tally marks for each response were added together and converted to percentages.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS (QUESTIONNAIRE)

In the results section, the researcher focused on the mostly used reading strategies from the learners' questionnaire. The statements are grouped into learning strategies categorised as metacognitive, cognitive and compensation. Furthermore, the statements are presented in table 1 below that is more easily interpreted for better reading, clarity and understanding.

Table 1: The most frequently used reading strategies.

s/n	Reading strategy always used by learners	Category	Percentage
1	Checking through what you are reading to see if you remember all of it.	Metacognitive	52%
2	Re reads to understand more.	Cognitive	46%
3	Guessing the meaning of words while reading.	Compensation	45%
4	Translating a word or phrase in Setswana.	Cognitive	45%
5	Use vocabulary that you already know to understand what you are reading.	Cognitive	44%
6	Asking questions on what you do not understand after reading.	Compensation	43%
7	Ask yourself questions as you read.	Metacognitive	38%
8	Imaging or picturing what you are reading in your mind.	Metacognitive	35%
9	Looking up words that you do not understand in the dictionary.	Metacognitive	34%

The above table reveals that the learners use reasonable positive reading strategies which are considered helpful because they contribute directly or indirectly to ESL reading for comprehension. Furthermore, as learners become more skilled at using cognitive, metacognitive and compensation strategies, they gain confidence and become more independent as learners.

Metacognitive, Compensation and Cognitive Strategies Utilised by Standard Five Learners in Botswana when Reading Across the Curriculum

The results of the study revealed that the learners mostly use cognitive, compensation and metacognitive strategies together because they complement each other, thus having a positive impact in their reading. Therefore, it might be concluded that learners with positive reading attributes tend to be willing to read, enjoy reading, become proficient and lifelong readers (Griffiths, 2003; Oxford, 2004; Zare, & Othman, 2013). Moreover, a learner's attitude towards reading may have a profound impact upon his or her overall academic progress.

The findings revealed that although second language learners often use strategies to solve their problems in reading, they do not always select appropriate strategies for reading texts or tasks across the curriculum (Oxford, 2004). Translating what they read in Setswana (Refer to the above table) is time consuming as well as more difficult and might be confusing especially for ESL learners at Primary School level whose reading skills are not fully developed to read across the curriculum.

The result of the study revealed that reading a text in detail, often helps if the reader highlights, underlines and annotates while reading. This is helpful because it emphasizes information in their mind and also helps them to review important points later. Furthermore, it also helps to keep their mind focused on the material read and stops it from wandering. Monitoring one's developing understanding of text, preparing in advance how to read and selectively attending to text are clearly relevant to reading. Paraphrasing what one has understood in order to see whether it fits into meaning of the text read in order to clarify the author's intention might prove to be effective metacognitive strategies if the purpose is to overcome comprehension difficulties.

Cognitive strategies are used by a reasonable number of standard five learners to help them to achieve their reading goal so that the text read is comprehended. Metacognitive strategies are used to control cognitive activities and also to ensure that understanding a text read has been met. When used by the learner, the strategy helps to regulate and oversee how they read. Therefore, when reading a paragraph in a text, the learner may question herself about the concepts discussed in the paragraph. This is an indication that the standard five learners use positive strategy because learners who pose questions to themselves as they read

raise questions that new learning can possibly address. Moreover, they can also make an image of what they are reading. Therefore, rather than learning to receive information, readers who raise their own questions are personally interacting with new ideas and using questions to try to make sense of what they are reading. Their cognitive goal is to understand the text.

Self-questioning is a common metacognitive comprehension monitoring strategy. If the learner finds that she cannot answer her own questions, or that she does not understand the material read, she might then determine what needs to be done to ensure that she meets the cognitive goal of understanding the text read. Furthermore, she may decide to go back and re-read the paragraph with the goal of being able to answer the questions she had generated. If, after re-reading through the text, she can now answer the questions, she may conclude that she understands the material. An expert learner would re-read the text until the main concept is understood, or flag a difficult passage to ask for clarification from the teacher or peers later.

The findings revealed that standard five learners use prediction strategies which are frequently held to be important to reading across the curriculum. As they engage their background knowledge and are encouraged to monitor their expectations as the text unfolds, they also activate useful schemata in reading. This is an indication that when learners are involved in reading, they add to or adjust their schemas influence and aid their comprehension of what they read. This can further be achieved by using the dictionary to find the meaning of words. Therefore, when learners use their existing schemas, they make predictions and inferences about what they read (Park & Osborne, 2006).

Results of the Interviews

The results are presented according to the themes generated from the research questions as follows:

Theme 1: Learning Strategies mostly Used by Standard Five Learners in Reading for Comprehension Across the Curriculum

The findings revealed that teachers are familiar with the reading strategies utilised by the standard five learners because the strategies they provided correspond with the questionnaire strategies. Moreover, the reading strategies mostly used by learners are in the categories of cognitive and metacognitive strategies which are considered to enhance and enrich the learners' reading competency. They also help them to develop appropriate reading skills in a meaningful context. Therefore, in placing the strategies used by standard five learners in Botswana with those in an Asian academic context, the researcher feels that there is relevance as they also correspond with some of (Oxford, 1990) learning strategies.

Theme 2: Teachers Perspectives on Learning Strategies Used by Standard Five Learners in Reading for Comprehension Across the Curriculum

The interviewees' identified different school of thought when defining reading strategy. The definitions show that they understand what reading strategies are and in a way, it might affect how they approach, teach and develop the learners' reading strategies.

The results of the study revealed that the interviewees are aware of the reading strategies used by their learners even though the findings from the questionnaire revealed that learners' use of 'contextual cues, summarizing and visualizing beyond the text read' are not in the list of strong strategies used by the learners. Therefore, teachers need to work on increasing their

learners' understandings of the strategies they feel are not fully developed to make comprehension easier (Alffasi, 2004).

The interviewees' further mentioned that the learners' use different reading strategies as their reading abilities are not the same and sometimes need individualised attention. Therefore, the reading resources also play an important part in developing the reading strategies because if there is shortage of reading material for large classes then it will hinder teachers work (Mokotedi, 2012). Furthermore, some of the interviewees' felt that they are not professionally developed in handling reading strategies. Their belief is that if learners are helped with difficult words and pronunciation, which is also a problem for teachers in Botswana due to geographical dialects, then learners' will have confidence in using reading strategies. On the other hand, if learners do not cope with the reading demands in lower classes, where they are prepared for upper classes, then it is difficult for teachers to assist learners for both phases.

Theme 3: The Relationship between the Teachers and Learners' Perspectives on Learning Strategies Used by Standard Five Learners

The findings of the study revealed that the teachers were able to provide responses which complement the reading strategies mostly used by learners. This is an indication that some teachers acknowledge, cultivate, exploit and enhance the cognitive and metacognitive capabilities of their learners. They also monitor their learners' progress as they read; help them to make changes so that they can adapt their strategies if they perceive they are not doing so well in their reading in order to comprehend. However, teachers must work hard in developing learners on how to use the dictionary because the strategy is used by only 34% of learners which is ranked as the last strategy on Table 1. Furthermore, the works of Prichard, (2008); Swaffar et al. (1991) advocated for the use of the reading strategies of guessing, underlining words and training in using the dictionary as an essential tool for successful reading.

Theme 4: The Challenges Faced by Teachers in Teaching Learning Strategies to Standard Five Learners in Reading for Comprehension Across the Curriculum

The results of the study revealed that the learners use reasonable reading strategies which are used by learners who are over 34%. The reading strategies used by learners are helpful in reading across the curriculum because they improve learners' reading and aid comprehension. Therefore, teachers should plan their reading lessons very carefully because for them to encourage the development of the reading strategies, it is important to understand what is actually taking place when the learners read. To develop a wide range of reading strategies as well as knowledge and understanding about reading across the curriculum, then learners will be able to take part more effectively in reading with comprehension.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that the learners utilise some of the positive strategies because learners who demonstrate a reasonable range of cognitive and metacognitive strategies are considered to perform better on examinations and complete work more efficiently when reading. The teachers are also aware of the critical role they play in the development and shaping of their learners' reading attitude. Fortunately, the most often reported strategies by bilingual learners are positive strategies; while those that are reported being used less are often weak strategies (Zare & Othman, 2013). This view is important

because the results from a previous study indicated that ESL learners' perceptions of cognitive strategies that they use have predictive validity with learners' reading comprehension (Cubukcu, 2008). In this study, learners in standard five which is considered an upper grade are using reasonable strong strategies at their level. However, teachers indicated that they help learners with the phonic or pronunciation skills in their reading of which is a good intervention as it is useful in developing successful reading (Strickland, Ganske & Monroe, 2002).

The study also revealed that learners use the dictionary to find meaning of new vocabulary. Many ESL readers encounter vocabulary problems and therefore, their constant source which is the dictionary helps them to improve their understanding of individual words. However, other studies have revealed that using the dictionary while reading makes fluency difficult (Oczkus, 2003). Therefore, the use of contextual clues, vocabulary puzzles, mnemonic techniques and the teaching of spelling rules help readers to effectively guess the meaning of the unfamiliar vocabulary. However, standard five teachers believe that learners should use the dictionary to look up for the meanings of difficult words as it is one of the objectives in Botswana Primary School Syllabus.

There is evidence of the relationship between the standard five learners and teachers perspectives on the reading strategies because of the common understanding of the strategies employed when reading across the curriculum. Therefore, one can say that reading strategies applied by the learners are confirmed by their teachers in reading to attain comprehension.

The results of the study indicate that 'guessing from the context' employed by the learners is an essential skill because the psycholinguistic theory of reading in which the development of the ability to guess meaning from the context is seen as the key to successful reading (Strickland et al., 2002).

Hence, bringing out learners guessing strategies out into the open, leads to greater comprehension, and also faster reading speed as the time needed to decode each word is reduced and reading is more efficient. This helps the readers to be more independent in their reading and to gain greater confidence in seeking information from the different texts across the curriculum. They will not be afraid of unfamiliar or difficult words and use effective reading strategies to unravel the meaning of the texts (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2004). The importance of the dictionary is harder to explain from the questionnaire alone but data from the interview by teachers revealed that it is used to generate necessary meaning of the difficult words.

ESL teachers are much concerned with helping learners to acquire communicative competence in reading L2 texts. This led to much focus on standard forms of linguistic expressions rather than developing their reading strategies and focusing on their reading problems. Unfortunately, teachers feel uncomfortable when learners read for pleasure and their perception attribute to their traditional reliance on text books and direct instruction as their aim is to cover content for final examination (Nyati-Ramahobo, 1999; Fuller, Hua & Snyder Jr. 1994; Mokotedi, 2012). The demand to use reading strategies is crucial at this stage and learning and comprehension becomes a problem for most of the learners as in most cases some of them lag behind and need remedial tutorials. Moreover, they are being prepared for writing their final Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) in standard seven. Therefore, there is need for teachers to sensitize learners with reading strategies as individuals to enable them to comprehend with understanding. Spencer, Carter, Boon, & Simpson-Garcia (2008) concluded that research findings have proven the great significance of explicit strategy instruction in developing reading skills. Additionally, Park and Osborne (2006) have cited "numerous studies showing that instruction using reading strategies is the most effective means of increasing student comprehension and developing skilled readers" (p. 11).

Some of the interviewees' felt that they are not professionally developed in dealing with reading strategies hence; the English teacher should be skilled and knowledgeable enough to select those strategies most appropriate to the needs of the learners. This is because ESL learners need to efficiently recognise and understand the meaning of the words automatically in order for them to comprehend (Hong, 2007). Learners rely on their prior and world knowledge to make sense of what they read. They need to be exposed to content to give them the context for understanding what they have to read. Therefore, they use background information to activate useful schemata (Stott, 2001). The results of the study shows that the standard five teachers activate their learners' prior knowledge by doing pre reading activities and discussing new vocabulary with them before reading so that they get more involved. This shows that confident learners are more likely to take risks in guessing word meanings and anticipating text content. Therefore, motivated readers become better strategy users in reading (Song, 2003).

The study revealed that learners use vocabulary they know if they encounter breakdowns in their comprehension especially with difficult words, or references to unfamiliar information, they pause to determine how to make sense of the unclear passage. They know that reading means understanding what is read and therefore, vocabulary plays a crucial role in reading. Difficult words are considered a pre-requisite to the comprehension of the overall meaning of a text. Therefore, teaching vocabulary is one of the sub skills indicated by the standard five teachers in preparing the learners for reading extensively across the curriculum.

Furthermore, learners' use of their imagination to picture in their minds what an author represents in texts corresponds to the study of Asian academic context carried out by Upton (1997) and Song (2003). The results of the studies indicated that visualizing enhance the reading development of ESL learners. Moreover, learners who struggle with reading of words on the page may forget to visualize, and as a result have trouble relating to what the author portrays. Instructional activities that stimulate learners' imaginations and remind readers to 'see' as well as 'read' words have significant impact on understanding. Furthermore, learners also link clues form an author's language with personal experiences while proficient readers infer what an author is seeing and generate their own versions of scenes and events.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The findings of the study revealed that teachers spend very little time actively teaching reading strategies whereas the goal is to improve readers' ability to comprehend. That is, teachers should be mostly concerned about the extent to which learners comprehend another subject without teachers' assistance. The distinction between improving comprehension of the instructional text and improving ability to comprehend texts in general using reading strategies is crucial in this paper. The techniques readers use to make their reading successful include; how to conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how readers make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand (Çubukcu, 2008; Alfassi, (2004).

A possible explanation for differences in the academic achievement of strategy use between high and low achieving learners as stated by the teachers may be that lower level learners are often being denied the opportunity to learn higher level reading strategies. Therefore, the lack of exposure may be due to the assumption that they must demonstrate the ability to learn the basic knowledge before they can be taught higher level reading strategies. This explanation may account for the reason why standard five learners have been found not to use the same type of reading strategies in their learning.

Research has provided a great deal of information about how to teach strategies. There are, however, several considerations that could be addressed in planning how to develop reading strategy instructions. This could be through choosing the sequence of strategies and assessing the motivational levels of learners. Strategy instruction must also match learners' ability levels and provide them with an understanding of how and when to use the strategy. This type of strategy instruction reduces dependence on teacher provided cues for strategy use.

The results of this study have effective implications especially for teachers, learners, and educators in education. Therefore, it is a wakeup call for standard five teachers in Botswana to teach learners how "to use language learning strategies to improve their language skills" (Zare & Othman, 2013, p. 192). Moreover, further investigation would be needed to establish if the findings of the study could be generalised to standard five learners in Botswana.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- Ministry Of Basic Education to create awareness amongst teachers on how to assist learners develop learning strategies in reading.
- Colleges of Education should train pre service teachers in alternative strategies for reading comprehension.
- Teachers should engage in action research in order to address some of the problems related to strategies for reading comprehension.

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ⁱ Dr Rosinah Thando Mokotedi is a lecturer in the Department of Primary Education, University of Botswana. She specializes in language Education. Rosinah holds the following qualifications: Ed.D. TESOL (University of Exeter), M.Ed. TESOL (Newcastle UPON Tyne, UK) and B.Ed. Languages (University of Botswana). Her research interests are in approaches to language teaching and learning, children's literature, language acquisition, academic literacy and teaching reading in a Second Language. She can be reached via Email: mokotedir@mopipi.ub.bw

ⁱⁱ Dr Mavis B. Mhlauli is a Senior lecturer in the Department of Primary Education, University of Botswana. She holds a PhD in Social Studies and Global Education. Her areas of research interest are in global citizenship education, multicultural education, global education, post-colonial scholarship and critical pedagogy. She can be reached at mhlaulim@mopipi.ub.bw.