INVESTIGATING TEACHING METHODS USED BY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN OTJIHERERO AT A COMBINED SCHOOL IN OKAHANDJA CIRCUIT, NAMIBIA

A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION (LITERACY AND LEARNING)

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

By

Hazel E. Zeripi

Student number: 200212656

August 2017

Main Supervisor: Dr. Kazuvire Veii

Co-supervisor: Mr. Job Hengari

APPROVAL PAGE

This research has been examined and is approved as meeting required standards for partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Education**.**

_____   _____

Internal Examiner   Date

_____   _____

Dean of Education Faculty   Date

_____   _____

External Examiner   Date

DECLARATION

I, Hazel Elizabeth Zeripi, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and this work, or part thereof have not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher learning.

No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or means (example, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without prior permission of the author, or the University of Namibia in that behalf.

I, Hazel Elizabeth Zeripi, hereby grant the University of Namibia the right to reproduce this thesis in whole or in part.

…………………………..   ……………………

Hazel Elizabeth Zeripi   Date

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother, Meriam Tjikuaza Zeripi, who passed away while I was studying towards this qualification. She did not get to see my achievement. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the kinds of teaching methods primary school teachers use in teaching reading in Otjiherero at a school in the Okahandja circuit in order to determine their appropriateness in teaching reading. Two teachers were interviewed on the reading instructional methods which they used and were observed during reading instruction sessions. In addition, the study also tested the Otjiherero reading ability of 50 Grade 1 learners in the second term of the academic year 2016. This testing included an investigation of the learners phonological processing skills to determine their level of preparedness for learning to read in Otjiherero. Another aim of the study was an analysis of how much learners benefited from the reading instructional methods as employed by teachers. The study used a mixed-method research design whereby the quantitative part used explanatory correlational design while the qualitative part used a triangulation design. Data were analysed using the interpretive analysis and descriptive statistics. Results indicate that teachers did not use those reading instructional methods such as analogy phonics, embedded phonics and phonics through spelling that would accelerate the learners reading development. This resulted in the learners being unable to learn to read. Furthermore, results showed that learners lacked some phonological processing skills. These results suggest that the learners inability to learn to read are attributable to poor teaching. A significant correlation was noticed between learners' ability to decode words and letter knowledge, and their phonological processing skills. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that teacher training institutions should ensure that teachers are trained in the different types of reading instructional methods, especially in exposing teachers to various methods of teaching phonics.

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

SACMEQ: Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality.

NIED: National Institute for Educational Development

MOE: Ministry of Education

BETD: Basic Education Teacher Diploma

MBEC: Ministry of Basic Education and Culture

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

This chapter provides the background to the study and reflects on the research in the field of reading instructional methods/strategies teachers use when teaching reading in Otjiherero as a first language (L1), and in the area of learners preparedness and readiness to benefit from teachers reading instructional methods. For learners, learning to read is the key that cracks nearly every other domain of education. Therefore, reading instructional methods/strategies used by teachers in teaching learners reading skills play a significant role in producing different kinds of readers in Namibian schools.

1.1. Orientation of the study

According to the National Policy Guide on the lower primary phase of education by the Ministry of Education and the National Institute for Educational Development (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 15), "the lower primary phase is arguably the most important school phase since it is at the foundation of all future learning". The lower primary school phase of formal education in Namibia covers the first four years of primary education where the language policy states that the language of instruction in Grade 1-3 will be either through the mother tongue or through a predominant local language in the community where the school is situated (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 2003).

According to the Language Policy for schools in Namibia (MBESC, 2003), Grade 4 is a transitional year where the change to English as a medium of instruction can take place. The purpose of these first four years is to establish a solid foundation for learning throughout the formal education system, especially in reading, which in turn will prepare the learners for full participation in society as young adults, and in further training, studies, and work. As noted by Imene and van Graan (1998), effective teaching of reading in the Namibian educational

system is lacking. Imene and van Graan found that learners are taught how to understand the meaning of words instead of how to decode words.

This is done mechanically and through reading aloud. Such instruction from teachers results in a lack of mastering of basic competencies in reading by the time learners complete the first phase of primary education, namely grades one to three. The nature of lower primary teaching of reading requires specific approaches such as directional orientation (e.g. teaching that reading proceeds from left to right and from top to bottom); teaching of the alphabet to create letter knowledge in learners; teaching of the sounds of the alphabet and the relationship between letters and sounds (e.g. phonics), and rhymes. If these approaches are absent, learners are likely to struggle with learning to read and may continue to have problems with reading in the future. Therefore, phonological awareness during the early years of learning to read can have a positive impact on learners' reading development throughout the rest of their lives (Booker, 2013).

Research carried out by Imene and van Graan (1998) investigated reading competency at different levels in the primary phase, as well as identify problems in reading and to find out if the teaching methods and materials, particularly at lower primary level, are appropriate. The reason for conducting the study was that the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBEC) had expressed a concern about learners being sent to special schools, whereas their problem seemed to be a reading problem. Their research included the former four colleges of education, to establish whether the product of the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (hereinafter known as BETD) programme (Specialist lower primary teachers); have the potential to develop into lower primary teachers who could support young learners in literacy development. The study revealed that although teachers use specific methods or approaches to teaching reading and writing, what was found missing in the teachers' approaches was a holistic approach on decoding.

According to Eldredge (2003), a holistic approach to reading entails logographic, phonological awareness, phonemic and whole word method. He further explains that a holistic approach is more child-centred as it takes into account the interrelatedness of reading, writing, speaking and listening. This approach organizes literacy instruction around themes or units of study relevant to learners.

Imene and van Graan (1998) also state that most learners in Namibian schools seem to have difficulty in reading. It is in fact a reflection of the education system in Namibia; the problems of the schools show a high growth of poverty, loss of values and morals, high school dropouts and many more problems that are all associated with poor reading. There is evidence from the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (hereinafter known as SACMEQ) results that reading ability in Namibian schools is low (Makuwa, 2004).

On numerous occasions, while on class visits as a subject head for languages to the Otjiherero lessons, the researcher noticed that learners confuse the plosive voiceless velar /k/ with the nasal plosive velar /ng/ in words like "*kara*" (stay) and "*ongara*" (flower/yellow), also confusion between the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ and the nasal voiced bilabial /mb/ in words like "*pepa*" (smoke) and "*ombamba*" (together/link) as well as between the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ and the nasal voiced alveolar plosive /nd/ in words like "*tanda*" (challenge) and "*ondando*" (intend) when reading. As a result, learners often substitute one or more phonemes in words with other phoneme(s). This results in the learners misreading the words and ultimately mispronouncing them. For this reason, it is this researcher's view that the teaching of sounds in particular, and reading in general, is not properly done at the beginning phases of pre-primary education. Similarly, it appears as though no proper foundation is established in the lower primary school phase in Otjiherero reading/literacy skills classrooms.

Based on the assertions of the above-referenced researchers, and on observations by the researcher, this study investigated the reading instructional methods teachers appear to employ in teaching reading in Otjiherero. The impact these instructional methods have on the Otjiherero reading skills of Grade 1 learners are investigated. The school where the study took place is the only school in the Okahandja circuit which offers Otjiherero as a First Language and as the medium of instruction, in line with the Namibian language policy. It is also the only feeding school for the local secondary school for Grade 8 learners who take Otjiherero First Language as a subject.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

A study by Junius (2009) reveals that the teaching of reading in Namibia does not seem to be conducted effectively. According to this study, deficient teaching methodologies, lack of capacity, in both vernacular and the second languages, affect negatively the teaching of reading. Furthermore, the study also shows that poor phonemic awareness results in reading problems, often resulting in learners not mastering the basic competencies in reading by the time they complete the first phase of primary education and before moving on to the second phase.

This researcher observed, during regular class visits of Otjiherero lessons, that learners in Grade 8 confuse the plosive voiceless velar /k/ with the nasal plosive velar /ng/, which is a digraph, in words like kara (stay/live) and *ongara* (flower/yellow); *kuru* (old) and *onguru* (old). The same confusion was also observed between the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ and the nasal voiced bilabial plosive /mb/ which is a digraph, in words like *pepa* (smoke) and *ombamba* (together/ link); *pupa* (flow/plane) and *ombupu* (easy) as well as between the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ and the nasal voiced alveolar plosive /nd/ in words like *tanda*

4

(challenge) and *ondando* (intend), *tutu* (foam) and *ondundu* (mountain/heap). In the Otjiherero language the sound /s/ is a voiceless interdental fricative as in words like "*sisa* (winnow), *sasaneka* (compare), *sera* (bless)". This sound was observed to be often confused with the sound /z/ which is a voiced interdental fricative as in words like "*zara*" (wear/tolerate), *zunga* (stir), *zezera* (tremble/shiver)" (Ministry of Education, 2012).

Against this background, the researcher started to question whether the kind of reading instructional methods that Grade 1 Otjiherero teachers use, lay a solid foundation for teaching reading and, whether the learners enter Grade 1 with strong phonological awareness to benefit from the reading instructional methods employed by teachers.

Therefore, the study investigated the kinds of reading instructional methods used by Grade 1 teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero L1. The focus was on the effectiveness of these methods as implemented by the teachers. The effectiveness of the teaching methods, or the lack thereof, were expected to be reflected in how well or how poorly the learners learn to read at Grade 1 by using their knowledge of the alphabet as well as their knowledge of the phoneme-grapheme relationship.

Reading ability in Otjiherero was also investigated to see whether any reading difficulties experienced were as a result of the manner in which the teachers use the teaching methods, or perhaps inherent in the learners themselves. Furthermore, the study considered the prerequisite skills needed, such as the phonological awareness that learners bring to the Grade 1 classroom from preschool to help determine whether the learners come to school ready to learn to read.

Namibia's Ministry of Education [MoE] (2005a) states that learners have to acquire their first language before they start school; that learners have acquired nearly the entire grammatical system of the language, but some will still be making errors as they try out their intuitive

ideas of how the language works. The MoE states that the learners ought to possess the necessary prerequisite skills (phonological awareness) to learn how to read properly in mother tongue. Despite these skills, if learners still fail to learn to read, then the explanation for their poor reading skills will have to be elsewhere, perhaps in how reading is taught by the teachers. It appears, that no research has been done in Namibia on reading methods used when teaching reading in Otjiherero, in combination with the prerequisite skills learners bring to the classroom as emergent readers in the Otjiherero language.

1.3 Research Questions

In the absence of research in the teaching methodologies adopted by Otjiherero language teachers, this study addressed the following five research questions:

1.   What are the reading teaching methods used by Otjiherero language teachers?

2.   How effective are these reading teaching methods in enabling learners to learn to read in Otjiherero?

3.   What difficulties are encountered by teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero?

4.   What errors do learners make when reading in Otjiherero and what do teachers do about these errors?

5.   What prerequisite skills (i.e. phonological awareness) for learning to read do learners bring to Grade1?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Few of the studies that focused on reading acquisition in Namibia were at Grade 3 and 4 level (Junius, 2009; Hartney, 2011 and Mule, 2014). The present study however, sought to understand how reading in Otjiherero as a First Language was taught in Grade 1. Research done by Junius (2009) considered the factors that affect the teaching of English reading skills in a second language of Grade 3 learners while Hartney (2011) investigated reading difficulties in English second language of Grade 3 learners whereas Mule (2014) looked at types and causes of reading difficulties affecting the reading of English language of Grade 4 learners.

The present study however, sought to understand how methods of teaching reading are used to teach reading in Otjiherero as a First Language. Unlike previous studies, this study also considered the reading prerequisite skills learners bring to the Grade 1 classroom. This study aimed at finding out how reading in Otjiherero (L1) is taught in order for best practices to be documented as well as to point out practices that are not so effective and thus leading to reading failures. As a small study, this may pave the way for bigger studies on best practices in literacy teaching and learning through indigenous languages in Namibia.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

There was only one school that met the criteria of the study amongst the primary schools in the Okahandja circuit. It could have been more helpful if there were more schools to be included in the sample. Therefore, the findings of this study are specific to the participating school and are not necessarily intended to provide statistical generalisations. The applicability of the findings of this research depends on the extent to which the context and setting of this study is similar or different to those where generalisation is possible. The study would have used a multiple regression analyses in its research design if it had a bigger sample of teachers

to determine to what degree a relationship will exist between teachers' variables and learners' variables such as phonological processing skills.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

Due to reading problems encountered by Grade 8 Otjiherero learners at a particular secondary school in Okahandja circuit; this study focused on Otjiherero teachers teaching reading at primary school level as well as on the learners' readiness to learn to read when entering Grade 1. The study was limited to a certain primary school in Okahandja circuit.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Mother Tongue - Refers to home language, which was acquired at home and a language that the learner feels most comfortable using (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, 2003).

Reading Instructional methods- Is a set of teaching and learning material and or activities often given a label, such as phonics method, literature based method, or language experience method (Au, Baker, Edwards, Hoffman, Klein, Larson, Logan, Morrow and Shanahan, 1999).

Phonological Awareness - Refers to an individual's understanding of the sound structure of spoken words. It involves the detection and manipulation of sounds and involves activities such as rhyming, syllabification, onsets and rimes and recognition of phonemes. Phonological awareness relates only to speech sounds, not to written alphabet letters or phonics and it is an important and reliable predictor of later reading success (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Grade 1 learner - Learners in Grade 1 between the ages of six and seven years old in the Lower Primary school phase in Namibian schools.

1.8 Structure of the Study

In the first chapter, the orientation of the study is discussed, including the statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, and clarifications of concepts and terms. The second chapter covers the "Literature review and Conceptual Framework". The third chapter discusses the "Research Methodology". The "Research Findings and Discussion" are presented in the fourth chapter. Lastly, the "Summary, Conclusion and the Recommendations" are presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Conceptual framework

This study will be informed by Gough's Model, which puts forward that reading is based on an information processing perspective. According to Tracey and Morrow (2006), Gough's Model is one of the many cognitive processing perspectives applied in the field of reading. Tracey and Morrow (2006) explain that the Gough's Model focus on explaining unobservable, underlying cognitive processes involved in the reading process. It is also an information processing theory in that it puts emphasis on a stage-by-stage conceptual orientation to the processing and storage of text.

According to Tracey and Morrow (2006) the reading process begins when the eye captures the input of each letter from the printed text. This iconic image, the letter, is held briefly as the scanner begins to examine the image, searching for patterns of lines and curves in an attempt to identify the image or the letter. The iconic image is then identified and briefly stored as a letter in the character register. After the image is identified as a letter, decoding begins.

At this stage, a codebook is used to attach the correct phonemes to each letter (this entails the child's orthographic and phonological processing skills). The phoneme is then recorded as a sound in the phonemic tape and, allows the reader to blend the sounds of the letters in the library, where the search for word meaning occurs. The library attaches the meaning to the word and then sentences are constructed in the primary memory (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). The final meaning of sentences are construed, using the resources of the syntactic and semantic rules processor and finally the sentences are shipped to where they are understood TPWSGWTAU, "the place where sentences go when they are understood" (Tracey & Morrow, 2006, p. 134).

Since Gough's Model, among other things, states that the reader identifies letters or graphemes in the words and maps them onto the appropriate sounds or phonemes representing those graphemes, the reader, in essence, is applying the phoneme-grapheme correspondence rule to decode the word made up of the letters he or she is identifying. Thus, this model informs this study in that the study investigated whether teachers, when teaching reading, use reading instructional methods that exploit the Grade 1 learners' phonological processing skills when learning to read. At the same time, the assumptions of the model were also used to assess whether the learners themselves, being emergent readers, do possess the necessary phonological processing skills that the instructional methods teachers use can take advantage of when instruction takes place.

2.2 Reading and reading development

To define what reading is, one has to first look at how the human brain processes orthographic information (visual, printed text) during the reading process. Tracey and Morrow (2006) looked at orthographic processing perspective where they articulated the way in which the brain process orthographic information (visual, printed text) during the reading

process. Tracey and Morrow (2006) identified the way in which orthographic forms (words) are captured in the memory. They explained that "this written unit is thought to be incorporated not as a memorized geometric figure by rote, but rather as a sequence of letters bearing systematic relationships to phonological properties of the word" (p. 151). Tracey and Morrow (2006) further explain that the process through which readers see a printed word and connect it to its pronunciation stored in memory is called "recoding". They alluded to the fact that during recoding, printed letters are connected to their pronunciation through the use of letter-sound rules, which are decoding and sounding out.

On the other hand, Keung and Ho (2008) define reading as a complex process involving different mental operations in which reading related cognitive skills play an important role in these operations. These cognitive skills involve phonological awareness, orthographic skills and rapid automatized naming. Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007) state that phonological awareness includes blending, segmentation and manipulating, but with larger word parts such as syllables and onset rimes.

They further explain that words can be divided into onset and rime, which are one-syllable words (onset consist of consonant or consonants before the vowel and the rime is the vowel and every sound after the vowel). For example, in the word can /c/ is the onset /an/ is the rime; scratch /scr/ is the onset /atch/ is the rime. In addition, the following are hierarchy of phonological awareness skills: detecting rhyming sounds, identifying words with the same initial sounds, isolating the initial sounds, categorising onsets and rimes, isolating middle and ending sounds, blending sounds into words, segmenting or dividing sounds, adding phonemes, deleting phonemes and substituting phonemes (Linan-Thompson and Vaughn, 2007).

Orthographic skills are defined as not simply a visually similar sequence of letters but the identity of the letters in the sentence and their systematic relationship to sounds. Rapid automatized naming, on the other hand, involves both processing speed and the integration of an ensemble of lower level visual perceptual processes and higher-level cognitive and linguistic sub-processes (Keung & Ho, 2008).

According to Freeman and Freeman (2004), the teaching of reading involves helping learners to develop the necessary skills to make a connection between black marks on the page and words in their oral vocabulary; for example, learners might learn to sound out letters and then blend the sounds to pronounce and identify words. Once the learners decode printed words, they recognise them as words in their oral language, after which they combine the meaning of individual words to make sense of what they are reading (Freeman & Freeman, 2004).

The ability to perceive and manipulate sounds to make up words in oral language is known as phonemic awareness, which is a type of phonological awareness. Ehri and Nunes, as cited in (Morrow and Gambrell, 2011) note that phonemic awareness is one of the best predictors of success in learning to read. Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007) suggest that instruction in phonemic awareness help learners to develop a range of skills to identify, segment, blend and manipulate phonemes (sounds). Freeman and Freeman (2004) indicate that learners with phonemic awareness become good readers, and those who lack phonemic awareness struggle with reading. In addition, Stanovich (2000) argues that learners who begin school with little phonological awareness have trouble acquiring alphabetic principle and thus have difficulty recognizing words.

A Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to read in United States of America public school, as cited in (Serry and Oberklaid, 2014) pointed out that the core components for effective classroom reading instructions are phonemic awareness, synthetic

phonics, reading fluency, language building, and repeated opportunities for practice. Serry and Oberklaid (2014) also looked at reading intervention programs which they suggested should include phonemic awareness and synthetic phonics in order to build decoding and word identification skills, text reading to build reading fluency and rapid recognition of written words, and grammatical and semantic language building to assist with written text comprehension.

Mckenna and Stahl (2012) looked at stages of reading development in assessing learners. They noted that reading development progresses through six stages as the learner moves from emergent literacy, or the initial period of becoming aware of print, to advanced literacy activity such as that which is needed to assimilate material in a graduate course. The following are the stages of reading development they have identified:

Stage 0: Birth to Grade 1- emergent literacy

In this stage, what the learner is learning is to function with written language alphabet and phonemic awareness. Typical activities include story reading, pseudo reading, alphabet activities, rhyming, nursery rhymes, and invented spelling. Material comprise of books including predictable stories, letters and writing materials such as Sesame Street.

Stage 1: Beginning Grade 1-decoding

At this stage, what the learner is learning is letter-sound correspondences. Typical activities are teacher-directed reading instruction and phonics instruction. Material includes pre-primers and primers, phonics material, writing materials, and trade books.

Stage 2: End of Grade 1 to end of Grade 3- confirmation and fluency

What the learner is learning at Stage 2 is automatic word recognition (to recognize written words individually). Typical activities are reading narratives, generally about known topics. Materials comprise of basal readers, trade books, workbooks.

Stage 3: Grade 4 to 8-learning the new single viewpoint

At Stage 3, what the learner is learning is how to learn from text, vocabulary knowledge, and strategies. Typical activities are reading and studying content-area materials, use of encyclopaedias and textbooks in content areas.

Stage 4: High school and early college-multiple viewpoints

At Stage 4, the reader learns about reconciling different views. Typical activities involve critical reading, discourse synthesis, and report writing. Materials comprises of texts containing multiple views, encyclopaedias and other reference material, magazines and journals as well as non-fiction books.

Stage 5: Late college and graduate school -A worldview

What the reader is learning is developing a well-rounded view of the world. Typical activities include learning what not to read as well as what to read. Materials comprise professional materials.

Once more, Mckenna and Stahl (2012) looked at a model of growth of word recognition. They describe the growth of learners' knowledge of words as progressing through four qualitatively different stages and these are as follows:

- *Visual cue reading*
  At first, children recognize words through distinctive visual features such as the "tail" on a monkey or the two "eyes" in a look.

- *Phonemic cue reading/ partial alphabetic coding*

  As children learn more and more words, a purely visual system of identification becomes unwieldy. After learners develop rudimentary phonemic awareness, they begin to use individual letters, usually the first but sometimes the last, to identify words. At this stage, the learner needs to have an alphabetic insight or the realisation that letters correspond to sounds in words. This requires both rudimentary phonological awareness as well as some letter-sound knowledge.

- *Full alphabet coding*

  In the full alphabet coding stage, the learner examines each letter in the word. As the learner's written vocabulary increases, they need to analyse words further, examining more parts of an unfamiliar word to identify it. This ability may come as the result of receiving instructions in decoding, or learners can develop it on their own.

- *Consolidated word recognition*

  Consolidated word recognition is the letter-by-letter decoding in which a reader uses groups of letters, either as chunks or through analogies, to recognise words automatically, as proficient readers do.

2.3 Reading instructional methods

According to Morrow (2011), there are certain key skills that facilitate the learning of reading by the learners in pre-school or first grade; namely, phonemic awareness (blending and segmenting) and rhyme. Thus, this study investigated the teaching methods of reading used by Otjiherero teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero in the Grade 1 classroom and how effectively these teaching methods of reading enable learners to read. The teaching of reading, when using the phonics method, takes advantage of the learners' phonological awareness and knowledge of the alphabetic principle (Morrow, 2011). The alphabetic principle is defined as the understanding that words are made up of letters and letters

represent sounds. Hence, one good way of teaching reading to pre-school learners and Grade 1 learners is to start with basic letters and their sounds. This method is known as phonics method.

The teachers begin on ear training with learners, with oral blending and word segmentation. By this, learners learn the names of the letters and the sounds they make. Once they have learnt the letter-sounds correspondence they will begin to blend two sounds together to make simple words then three letters, then four and so forth (Morrow, 2011). He further states that learning the sounds and their blends requires learners to learn the meaning of the words. Therefore, teachers should explain the meaning or expand on the words to keep interest and enthusiasm for learning. When the teachers introduce the alphabet, they teach one letter a day or one letter a week, to ensure that learners have mastered one letter at a time and that they do not lose the plot halfway through.

Ponitz and Rimm-Kaufman (2010) concur with Morrow (2011), who says that the important point about a phonics approach to teaching reading is that it teaches the beginner reader an analytic approach to words, one that is designed to exploit the learners' mastery of the alphabetic principle. Ponitz and Rimm-Kaufman (2010) explain that the phonics approach starts with a limited set of letters, which can be built into many different kinds of words, more letters are added, and then the learners are given consonant blends. As some words keep recurring, the learner also develops a sight vocabulary during these early stages. Sight vocabulary is a store of words that a learner can identify automatically or by sight without a need to decode (University of Virginia, 2010).

Morrow and Gambrell (2011) identified several instructional approaches when teaching phonics such as synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, embedded phonics, analogy phonics,

onset-rime phonics and phonics through spelling. Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui and Tarver (2014) explain these phonics approaches as follows: synthetic phonics teaches the phonemes (sounds) associated with the graphemes (letters). The sounds are taught in isolation then blended together (synthesised) all through the word. For example, learners might be taught a short vowel sounds /a/ in addition to some consonant sounds /s/,/t/, /p/. Then learners are taught words with these sounds e.g. sat, pat, tap, at. They are taught to pronounce each phoneme in a word then blend the phonemes together to form the word e.g. /s/, /a/, /t/; 'sat'.

The analytic phonics teaches learners to identify (analyse) the common phoneme in a set of words in which each word contains the phoneme under study to avoid pronouncing sounds in isolation. For example, teacher and learners discuss how the following words are alike; *pat*, *park*, *push* and *pen*. Learners may realise that the initial phoneme in /p i g/ is the same as that in /p ae t/, /p a k/, / p u f/ and / p e n/. Embedded phonics teach learners phonics skill by embedding phonics instruction in text reading, a more implicit approach that relies to some extent on incidental learning; for example, learners learn the sounds made by *bake*, *cake, make*, *rake*, *shake* as '*–ake'* (Carnine et al., 2014).

Analogy phonics teach learners unfamiliar words through an analogy to know words, for example, recognising that the rime segment of an unfamiliar word is identical to that of a familiar word and then blending the known with the new word onset such as reading the word *brick* by recognising that *–ick* is contained in the known word *kick* or reading *stump* by analogy to *jump*. Onset-rime phonics teach learners to learn to identify the sounds of the letter or letters before the first vowel (the onset) in a one-syllable word and the sounds of the remaining part of the word (the rime). Phonics through spelling the teacher teach learners to transform sounds into letters to write words (Carnine et al., 2014).

Furthermore, Morrow (2011) notes another method used in teaching reading, as the whole word method, which is also known as the 'look and say' method. Morrow (2011) explains that through this method, learners are taught to recognize whole words or sentences rather than individual sounds. Through the whole word method, learners look at a word which the teacher utters, and in turn repeats the word. Morrow (2011) further explains that teachers use flashcards with individual words written on them, which are accompanied by a related picture. In addition, teachers write a short sentence representing the picture displayed and say the sentence and ask the learners to repeat it while pointing and looking at each individual word and the pupils repeat what the teacher will have said.

This study therefore investigated the teaching methods used by Otjiherero teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero to Grade 1 learners and how effective these teaching methods of reading are in enabling leaners to read. Reading in Otjiherero is a sequential aspect of printed material and alphabet language just like English. Therefore, an Otjiherero orthographic system is similar to English and the use of phonics method and whole word methods will help in the development of reading for beginners. However, Otjiherero is characterized by a much more transparent and regular orthography than English, where the phonemes map directly onto the graphemes they represent. For example, the grapheme "u" in Otjiherero is always represented by the phoneme /u/, unlike in English where the same grapheme can be represented by several different phonemes. For example, in words like umbrella, underwear and unhappy the phoneme /u/ is represented by the phoneme /a/. As such, teaching reading in Otjiherero via the phonics method would expedite the development of reading compared to using the whole word method (see Veii, 2003a; Veii and Everatt, 2005). The whole word method, in contrast, would work better with teaching reading English irregular words that do not lend themselves to the use of the phonics method.

The whole language approach is also another important method of teaching reading. Richard and Schmidt (2002) define it as an approach to first language reading and instruction that has its roots in the elementary school level. On the other hand, Chatry-Komarek (2003) refers to the whole language approach as the basal reading approach, because both methods and content have a common philosophy.

In addition, Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky and Seidenberg (2001) state that the whole language approach focuses on the language experience of the learner. Thus, the learner dictates short stories and is taught to read the words he or she has dictated. Rayner et al. (2001) further explain that learners are encouraged to guess words that are presented in the context of short stories, and the primary motivation of the method is to make reading fun for the learner.

Griggs (2000) emphasise that language experience approach is another method in teaching reading as it supports learners' concept development and vocabulary growth while offering many opportunities for meaningful reading and writing activities through the use of personal experiences and oral language. This method uses learners own words to help them read, for example, the learners may draw a picture of dad in the car and the teacher would then write underneath the drawing – "Dad is in the car".

According to Weinbrenner (2006), the language experience approach is more applicable and adaptable for group activities among learners whose reading capacity is at the grade level. Weinbrenner (2006) further explains that in this approach the teacher can use the words to teach letter sound recognition, build vocabulary and teach meaning where the teacher can use flash cards with words on one side and the definition on the other side.

Levy (2002) points out that the content support methods is a vital method in teaching reading as it is particularly good to use in combination with phonics with beginner readers. Levy

(2002) explains that the content support method uses the associative connection between pictures and words to attract and hold the attention of the learner. He also points out that interest and attention can be difficult to hold in younger learners and therefore choosing books or topics that interest and draw their attention may help them to learn to read. Griggs (2000) also stresses that when learners are just learning to read, it is important to choose books that really interest them. For example, if boys like cars, choose books with pictures and simple words about cars as this will arouse their interest and they will enjoy learning to read. On the other hand, if girls like dolls, obtain books with pictures of, and simple words about dolls. Again, this will encourage enthusiasm because learners usually look at something they can relate to.

2.4 Teaching reading effectively

Rayner et al. (2001) indicate that the teaching of letters and sounds (phoneme), alphabetic principle and whole language should be the central and initial focus of instruction to beginners. These scholars reviewed the findings of two reports on how to best teach reading skills, namely National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) and National Research Council (NRC) called Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children. According to Rayner et al. (2001), the National Research Council's (NRC) report revealed that in teaching reading skills, the emphasis should be on promoting knowledge and practice in decoding, where kindergarten and first grade instruction is designed to provide practice with the sounds structure of words, the recognition and production of letters, knowledge about print concepts, and familiarity with the basic purpose and mechanism of reading and writing. The report added that research shows that beginning readers depend critically on mapping the letters and the spelling of words onto the sounds and speech unit that they represent. The report concluded that failure to master word recognition impedes text comprehension.

On the other hand, the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000)'s report showed that systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for students in kindergarten through sixth grade and for students with reading disabilities. It also showed that the impact of phonics is strongest in the kindergarten and Grade 1 and phonics should be integrated with instruction in phonological awareness, fluency and comprehension. The report noted that a strong empirical base supports the importance of instruction in phonological awareness, in conjunction with phonics instruction, for the beginning stage of reading instruction (Rayner et al., 2001).

Oktay and Aktan (2002) conducted a study on the relations between learners' phonological awareness developed at the pre-reading stage and their reading skills and the influences of the features of various language system and orthographies upon learners' phonological awareness and subsequent reading abilities to kindergartners and first graders of Turkish learners and American learners. They tested the learners on letter recognition task (upper case and lower-case letter identification), letter usage task, decoding task and four phonological awareness tasks (syllable tapping, phoneme tapping, initial-phoneme deletion and final-phoneme deletion). Their findings revealed that in letter recognition and letter usage task both the Turkish learners and American learners scored high although the Turkish learners started with a lower level of letter recognition. In the decoding task, Turkish learners scored higher compared to American learners. Similarly, on phonological awareness task, Turkish learners scored higher than American learners. These results point to how the spoken language affects the development of phonological awareness and the contribution of this ability to learning to read in alphabetic writing systems (Oktay & Aktan, 2002).

Oktay and Aktan's (2002) research results indicated that a high level of phonological awareness enables learners to understand how the written language represents the spoken language and as learners become literate, their phonological awareness levels increase as well. A similar approach was adopted by this study. The researcher tested Grade 1 learners on

seven phonological awareness tasks (letter knowledge upper case, letter knowledge lower case, letter sound knowledge, beginning phoneme, ending phoneme, syllable clapping and phoneme segmentation). This was done in an attempt to determine the phonological awareness of the learners (study participants) and their readiness for learning to read in relation to the reading instructional methods which the teachers use when teaching reading in Otjiherero.

Booker (2013) identifies four strategies of teaching reading namely, say-it-and-move-it, sound boxes, word boxes and beginning-middle-end, which enable learners to understand the units of sounds as well as learn to blend and segment the words. The say-it-and-move-it is the first strategy, and can be used in instructions to help teach phonemic awareness. Say-it-and-move-it has one prerequisite skill; learners must be able to understand one disk (letter) and represent one sound (Blachman, Ball, Black and Tangel, as cited in Booker, 2013). This strategy involves saying the sound of a letter, which is on a disk and moving that disk to the bottom of the page. First, teachers start with just letter sounds, then as the lesson moves on it becomes more complex and learners begin to use letters and sounds to form words. The focus of this practice is to get the learners to say the sound and see if the letter corresponds with the sound (Booker, 2013).

The second strategy is the sound boxes strategy; sound boxes have a picture at the top of the page with boxes underneath for the number of sounds in the word (picture) (Booker, 2013). Underneath the boxes, the teacher places a coin or token for the learners to push as they say the sound of each letter. The learners are learning to stretch the words. When using this strategy, there are three things to remember: only one syllable words are used, choose words familiar to the learners and make sure the words are phonemically regular (Booker, 2013).

The word boxes strategy is the third method and is very similar to the idea of sound boxes. The word boxes typically do not have pictures. Word boxes first start with a marker of some sort, as sound boxes then they change to the actual letter. For example, if a teacher was teaching the word cat, first the learner would use counters for the sounds /c/, /a/, /t/, then the learner would use the letters c, a, t, and push using the letters while saying the sound. Once the learner has pushed the word using counter and letters then the learner must write the letter in the box (Booker, 2013). According to Booker (2013), an advantage of word boxes is that the learner can build on skills and then these skills can be transferred to word sorts using the words taught with word boxes.

Beginning-middle-end is the fourth strategy and it is used to teach the learners to think about and find where the sounds are located in the word. This strategy helps develop phonemic segmentation (Booker, 2013). The teacher places a three to four letter word in a pocket chart or just facing down on the table. The teacher tells the learner what the word is then they sing a song. An example of the song if the word was "man" "Beginning, middle, end; beginning, middle, end/ Where is the sound? Where is the sound? / Where is the *mmm* in man? Where is the *mmm* in man? / Let's find out. Let's find out" (Manyak, as cited in Booker, 2013). One of the learner then points to the card where the *mmm* sound should be. The teacher can then do the other letter sounds for middle and end. As learners learn these skills, the teacher can begin asking for letter sounds out of order. Instead of asking for *mmm* sound first ask for *aaa* sound or *nnn* sound. By using the beginning-middle-end strategy, learners are able to have a concrete manipulative edge as well as focus on the sounds they hear in the words (Booker, 2013).

2.5 The difficulty in teaching reading

Teaching reading to beginners requires various approaches, which must include a variety of activities in order to give learners a positive attitude toward reading as well as the knowledge strategies and skills they need to become successful readers. However, if there are hindrances in teaching beginners to read, future academic success may be negatively affected.

Imene and van Graan (1998) reveals that in some Namibian languages, lower primary Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) student teachers at the former colleges of education as well as mother tongue teachers, are not all fully proficient in their languages. This is so in the sense that the standard orthographies are not known and used consistently by all. Perhaps, that is why most learners face difficulty in reading in their mother tongue, including Otjiherero as observed by the researcher.

Imene and van Graan (1998) also discovered that one reading approach namely; structures instructional materials (SIMs) that promotes phonics in the context of a word and a story is favoured by many teachers. The approach is consistently used in literacy classes. Mwanamukubi (2013) points out that it is very common in a classroom situation to find both slow and fast learners, where some are good in reading while others are poor readers and, therefore, it all depends on the teacher on whether to use those methods of teaching reading that will help the poor readers. Mwanamukubi (2013) adds by indicating that teachers use the same method of teaching for all learners in a classroom despite some learners being good readers and others poor readers. This will not help improve the skills of poor readers as long as the teacher, who is the key person in this whole process, is not competent enough to help the poor readers (Kalindi, as cited in Mwanamukua, 2013).

Chihana and Banda (2013) report that the difficulty teachers face when teaching initial literacy is that learners are not always of the same language background. This has brought pedagogical challenges to numerous teachers. Chihana and Banda (2013) also point out that

teachers do not have all the necessary materials for teaching the way they were trained; instead, the materials that are available and are used by the teachers are text books, posters and flip charts which are not enough to effectively assist in teaching all the necessary skills. A teacher may have the required skills in teaching but teaching effectively can be a challenge if the necessary teaching and learning materials are not in place (Mwanamukua, 2013).

Teaching literacy in overcrowded classrooms makes it difficult for teachers to provide individual support, constructive feedback and to employ necessary literacy skills when teaching (Chihana & Banda, 2013). Poor staffing, especially, in remote areas also makes it a challenge for teachers who teach reading. This means that teachers have to attend to more than one class; hence, being overburdened. In turn, teachers will not be able to pay particular attention to those learners who have difficulties in reading (Mwanamukua, 2013).

2.6 Difficulties experienced by beginning readers

Serry and Oberklaid (2014) note that reading involves the ability to decode and recognise printed words and make sense of the written text. Serry and Oberklaid (2014) also opined that teaching learners to read requires explicit and systematic teaching of phoneme-grapheme correspondence in order to gain mastery of the alphabetic principle. On the other hand, Freeman and Freeman (2004) stress that learners who lack phonemic awareness, struggle with reading. Terepocki, Kruk, and Willows (2002) concur with Serry and Oberklaid that learners who have trouble with phonological aspects of spoken language typically do not acquire the alphabetic principle, a prerequisite for learning to read that fosters an analytic approach to visual language. Terepocki et al. (2002) also stress that poor readers have little difficulty perceiving and reproducing letters and words, but often reverse letters when pronouncing and spelling words.

Gough, Juel and Griffith (1992) (as cited in Mckenna & Stahl, 2012) conducted a study on a group of pre-readers who learned words presented on a series of flashcards, one of which had a thumbprint in the corner. When shown the card again, this time the thumbprint on a different card, learners tended to misread the thumb-printed card as the word in the first set, suggesting that they were attending to the thumbprint rather than to the letter. Therefore, distinctive visual features in words are important to beginners.

 According to Mckenna and Stahl (2012), learners analyse words further, they may use the names of letters to represent sound; for example, they might spell girl as GRL or ten as TN. They also mentioned that early difficulties in phonological awareness underlie later reading problems. For example, in their research they asked a learner to say "meat" without the /m/ and the learner said "chicken", again they asked the learner to say "coat" without the /k/ the learner said "Jacket". Based on the scenario above they revealed that learners tend to view words as semantic in order to understand them in speech and reading. A lack of alphabetic insight results in learners not moving forward in reading.

Furthermore, Mckenna and Stahl (2012) also looked at what concept of print including left-to-right direction that a learner has. In the research, the scholars asked a Grade 1 learner to slide two cards together to show a word. The learner slid them together to reveal one letter, when asked to show two words, the learner showed two letters. When asked to show one letter, the learner was puzzled, thinking that he had already done that. Thus, revealing that if learners lack the knowledge that a word is a collection of letters separated by space, they will have difficulties in understanding how print works and will be confused in lessons that deal with identifying the first letter in words (Mckenna & Stahl, 2012).

Gagen (2007: 2-6) identifies the following actual errors made by beginner readers:

- **Whole-word errors**- Gagen explains that these types of errors occur when the learner is attempting to 'see' or 'visually recognize' the entire words as a unit instead of processing the print by sound. The learner tries to recognise the overall visual appearance of the word. Often the words 'look similar' to words the learner has already learned as 'sight' words. Words usually contain some visually similar letters or structure. Gagen further explains that frequent 'whole word' type errors indicate that the learner is not processing print phonetically. Moreover, Gagen gave the following examples of 'whole word' type errors: exit-next, value-volume, cork-clock, every-very, van-have and years-yours.

- **Word guessing" errors**: Gagen explains that frequent 'word guessing' errors are somewhat similar to 'whole word' errors because the learner is not processing print phonetically. According to Gagen in 'word guessing', the learner often only looks at the first letter and then guesses a word. Sometimes a recently used word will be used or a word will be guessed from an illustration. Sometimes the learner will look at you (instead of the print) and in quick succession chant several options. Gagen further explains that word substitutions are considered 'word guessing' errors as the learner is not reading the print but instead guessing own words from context. According to Gagen, these types of word guessing errors are closely associated with learners who do not process print phonetically and instead are relying on 'whole word' visual recognition techniques. Gagen also avers that there is usually an overlap between 'whole word' errors and 'word guessing' errors. She gives the following examples of 'word guessing': penal-pear, graft-giraffe, spoil-special, gentle-great/giant, vitamin-vacuum and detest-dentist.

- **Tracking errors:** According to Gagen, these errors can sometimes appear similar to 'whole word' errors. The distinction is that the learner appears to be attempting to sound out words. However, they are not properly tracking left-to-right. The words uttered by the learner often contain the same sounds but are out of order. Gagen further explains that these tracking errors are closely related to 'whole word' processing. If the learner looks at the word as a 'whole' instead of processing correctly in an orderly left to right manner, the sounds are frequently 'mixed up' within the word. Hence, improper tracking is a symptom of whole word processing. Gagen also explains that learners can make tracking errors if they are 'hopping' around looking for familiar bits and pieces that they 'recognise'. According to Gagen, these types of errors indicate the learners need to develop proper left to right directional tracking. The following are examples of tracking errors: was-saw, no-on, lots-lost, last-salt, slip-spill and form-from (Gagen, 2007).

- **Lack of code knowledge/difficulty with complexities**: Gagen explains that when the learners make frequent errors or have difficulty with words that contain vowel combination and r-controlled vowel combinations, it often indicates a lack of knowledge of the complete phonemic code. According to Gagen if the learner did not know the complexities in isolation and has difficulty reading words that contain these sounds, often what the learner needs, is some direct instruction and practice in these sounds. She also explains that these learners sometimes read correctly and accurately with the basic sounds and are attempting to sound out words but lack the complete code knowledge therefore struggle with the complexities. Henceforth, she gave the following examples of difficulty with code knowledge: reading "that" as /t/ /h/ /a/ /t/ or the as /t/ /h/ /e/ or mispronunciations where the sounds of vowel combinations are sounded out separately such as sound - /s//o/ /u/ /n//d/ , tease as /t/ /ee/ /a/ /z/ ,

'compete' as /k//o//m//p//e//t/ /ee/. Also, difficulty with words that contain complexities when simple code is read accurately and easily. Hence, lack of knowledge of the alternate sounds, for example every time the learner comes across 'ow' they use the /ow/ sound and do not know and apply the /oa/ sound. Therefore, a learner will start sounding out the word and then 'word guess' because they don't have knowledge to sound out correctly.

- **Attention to detail errors:** Gagen explains that these types of errors are when the learner does not pay close attention to detail, carefully processing all the letters in order. According to Gagen, attention to detail is closely associated with proper tracking and correct phonologic processing. Gagen also describes that 'attention to detail errors are when the learner misses bits and parts of the word. In addition, Gagen explains that consonant cluster errors are a type of attention to detail error. Sometimes the learner will be sounding out the words correctly but miss some parts. Henceforth, the 'fast and sloppy' readers often make frequent errors with the details. Gagen gives the following examples of attention to detail errors: Father-farther, explain-exclaim, must-most, invent-invert, son-soon and explore-explode.

- **Slow processing:** Slow processing is explained as a situation when the learner is 'sounding out' words but the phonetic decoding is slow and difficult, it may be that the reader is relying on indirect processing to phonologically process the print (Gagen, 2007). For efficient reading to take place, the learner needs to automatically convert print to the correct sound. It is further explained that if the learner must first recall another word that contains the sound, extract the correct sound and then apply it to the new word, it involves slow indirect 'long way' processing pathways. While the learner is able to extract the necessary sound knowledge, it takes an incredible amount of effort. In this case the learner needs to practice the direct print sound relationship

so that the print can be processed rapidly and efficiently. It is further described that once correct phonologic processing is established; it still takes repeated practice of each word to develop fluency. Remember fluency is built word by word and requires repeated phonologic processing. Henceforth, Gagen recommends that practice is necessary to build this 'fast' fluent reading.

- **Blending difficulty**: Gagen explains that difficulty blending is evident by the 'choppy' or 'segmented' sounding out. Gagen describes that the sounds are said broken apart instead of being blended smoothly together. Gagen indicated that the 'choppy' sounding out is usually very noticeable. Furthermore, Gagen explains that sometimes the learner says all individual sounds correctly but because they are segmented, they are not able to combine them back together. In addition, Gagen suggests that the learner needs to learn to smooth that blended sound. Have them take a deep breath before starting and if necessary sing the word as well as directly teach smooth blending.

- **'Fast and Sloppy'**: Gagen explains that this is where learners appear to be rushing through the reading, moving so fast and careless that they miss entire words and sections. When learners slow down their accuracy and reading improves dramatically. The learner appears to have necessary skills but are in too much of a hurry to apply them. In addition, these types of 'going too fast' errors often correspond with the personality of certain learners. They are simply in too much of a hurry to be careful. Gagen recommends that these types of learners simply need training in careful reading. Furthermore, Gagen alludes to the fact that these learners have the necessary skills, but they simply have to slow down and apply their skills. Henceforth, Gagen suggests that guided reading, where you stop the learners at every error, is the best way to help these learners develop careful reading skills. Furthermore, Gagen adds by

stating that impatient individuals usually do not like to stop, so forcing them to stop and go back usually motivates them to improve their accuracy.

- **Letter confusion:** Gagen explains that letter confusion is commonly encountered with the visually similar letters b - d - and p. For example; big-dig, drag-brag, brown-drown. Letter confusion with other letters can also be created by certain writing styles, for example, loopy cursive crossover print can create confusion with additional letters. The loopy cursive writing can create confusion between *i-j-l* and when curves and loops are added, *i-j-l*, these letters, which are distinct under normal block print also become visually similar. Gagen adds by stating that loopy writing of *k & h* as k-h and can create confusion not just between *k-h* but also with *ch-ck*. As a result, some learners who learn these loopy cursive crossover styles will make errors such as: ask - ash, much – muck, mash - mask, racket – ratchet,   basket–bashert, hill – kill and joint – loint. Gagen recommends that remediation, for these letter confusion errors, is to have the learner repeatedly print the letters with proper formation in normal block style print. While print or font style is usually irrelevant for skilled readers, it can create additional difficulty in learners who are learning the printed language.

- **Difficulty with multi-syllable words:** Gagen explains that these types of errors occur when the learner appears to sound out and accurately read the shorter words without any problems and yet struggles with multi-syllable words. According to Gagen, if fundamental reading skills are established (processed phonologically, knows sounds, tracks correctly) then often the learner simply needs instruction in handling these more complex multi-syllable words. Gagen adds by stating that errors with multi-syllable words tend to include missing or changing parts of the word, dropping or adding sounds inappropriately, difficulty putting the words together and general trouble in handling the longer words. Gagen gives the following examples of multi-

syllable errors: *inconsistent-inconstant, opportunity-oppority, eliminate–elimate, committed-committitated, determine-deterimmine, objective-objectactive, representative-repsetive, fundamental-funmental and encountering – encounting*.

2.7 Importance of prerequisite skills

Serry and Oberklaid (2014) discovered that many learners enter school without the prerequisite skills to support learning to read. Hoover (2002) also notes that for the learner with difficulty acquiring phonemic awareness, the prognosis is not good. Serry and Oberklaid (2014) further explain that the stronger the prerequisite skills such as knowledge of the letters, phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle, the greater the opportunity for the learner to pair printed and spoken words, and therefore, the greater the opportunity to learn the relationship between letters and phonemes. The learner who lacks these prerequisites cannot take advantage of such opportunities, and print exposure is no longer efficacious for learning to read (Hoover, 2002). On the other hand, Mckenna and Stahl (2012) stress that knowledge of basic print concepts including the left-to-right directionality of English, the fact that spaces are word boundaries are fundamental to an appreciation of how print works and they are the foundation on which decoding skills develop.

Booker (2013) indicates that phonemic awareness is important at an early age for learners to help avoid reading difficulties later on in their lives. He stresses that phonemic awareness can help decrease the problems learners have with reading and spelling. Making learners aware of phonemes at an early stage in learning, enables them to overcome weaknesses and succeed in reading as well as spelling. Yaeger (2014) concurs with Booker that teaching phonemic awareness, particularly how to segment words into phonemes, helps learners. The explanation for this may be that learners who are aware of phonemes understand that sounds and letters are related in a predictable way. Thus, they are able to relate the sounds to letters as they spell words (Yaeger, 2014). Therefore, phonemic awareness helps learners understand the letter-

sound relationship, which can help them decode as they progress as learners (Booker, 2013). Mckenna and Stahl (2012) note that phonological awareness of sounds in spoken words is a prerequisite for learners to learn to decode.

Furthermore, Yaeger (2014) concurs that phonemic awareness instruction assist learners to notice, think about manipulate, and sounds in spoken language. Yaeger (2014) also points out that phonemic awareness instruction improves learners' ability to read words and reading comprehension primarily through its influence on word reading.

Kotva (2007) conducted a study on 101 participants to examine the ability of the scores on Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (hereinafter known as DIBELS). Those DIBELS skills are; initial sound fluency, letter naming fluency, phoneme segmentation fluency, oral reading fluency, retell fluency, nonsense word fluency and word use fluency. Kotva (2007) explains that the DIBELS is seven brief, standardized, individually administered tests originally designed for kindergarten through Grade 3 learners. The DIBELS are meant to measure basic early literacy skills, which are predictive of early reading development. According to Kotva (2007) the DIBELS measure both accuracy and fluency, where scores are provided in three risk categories; Establish or Low Risk have an 80% or better score, Emergent and Some Risk are learners who have between 20% to 80% score and Deficit or At Risk have less than a 20% score Good and Kaminski (as cited in Kotva, 2007).

Kotva's (2007) findings reveal that there is a strong correlation between oral reading fluency in Grade 2 with the oral reading fluency in Grade 3 at .882. In addition, the findings reveal that there is moderate correlation between the nonsense word fluency score in Grade 2 and all oral reading fluency score in Grade 3 and moderately weak correlation between retell fluency score in Grade 2 and oral reading fluency scores in Grade 3.

2.8 Namibian language policy

2.8.1 Namibian languages

Maho (1998) states that during South African rule, both English and Afrikaans were recognised as official languages. After independence March 1990, the new Namibian government formulated a language policy establishing only English as the official language. However, Afrikaans is still widely spoken and functions as the *lingua franc*a in many Namibian communities. Hence, more than 11 languages are indigenous to Namibia but with its cosmopolitan society, languages from around the world are also spoken (Government of Namibian, n.d.). According to the 2011 census figures, as shown in the Namibian population and housing census indicators, the main indigenous languages are:

- Oshiwambo spoken by 49% of households

- Nama/Damara spoken by 11% of households

- Afrikaans spoken by 10% of households

- Kavango (Rukwangali) spoken by 9% of households; and

- Otjiherero spoken by 9% of households.

This indicates that Namibia has a diversity of cultures and the various communities speak different languages. Therefore, the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (2003) stressed that all languages should be treated equally and more emphasis be given to the mother tongues, which can be taken as first language subjects from Grade 1 through to Grade 12. It is against this background that it was deemed necessary to investigate teaching methods used by Grade 1 teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero L1.

2.8.2 Implementation of the language policy

After independence, the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (2003) published a new language policy for schools in a document titled "The Language policy for schools in Namibia." In this new language policy document it stated that the mother tongue would be the medium of instruction in the formative years of schooling from Grade 1-3 and Grade 4 a gradual switch to English as medium of instruction. The mother tongue will then be offered as a subject. The reason for the implementation of a new language policy was that the previous language policy contained in a document called "The Language Policy for Schools: 1992-1996 and Beyond", did not explicitly outline how national languages (mother tongues) should be used in schools.

In addition, there were discrepancies in the implementation of the language policy from one region to another. Some policy implementers misinterpreted and manipulated the process preferring to teach through English rather than through the mother tongue. Hence, formerly disadvantaged learners were marginalised further in this process, as non-English speaking teachers were expected to teach through the English medium (MBESC, 2003).

As a result the new language policy aimed at strengthening mother tongue instruction in Grade 1-3 through materials development and teacher pre-and in-service training. In addition, more emphasis was put on the need for mother tongue instruction to be taken as first language subject from Grade 1 through to Grade 12. In addition, schools that wished to offer English as medium of instruction from Grade 1 were now supposed to obtain ministerial approval prior to implementing this approach (MBESC, 2003).

However, there are some schools in Namibia that prefer to teach English rather than the mother tongue from Grade 1-3 even when the majority of the learners in most classes are from a particular ethnic group. In addition, some schools in Namibia prefer to teach English

rather than the mother tongue from Grade 1-3 due to the parents' preference that their children be taught in English.

Ministry of Education (2009) states that to start education through mother tongue enables:

- The beginners to be at ease and comfortable in such an environment
- The learners to adapt easily to the school environment
- The learners to participate and express themselves spontaneously
- The learners to communicate and socialise with their peers with more ease
- Learners to understand and respond to instructions
- The learners to work alone and take part in discussions
- The learners to form concepts correctly and easily
- The learners to develop cognitively with less stress
- Pre-knowledge to be utilised better
- Cultural activities to be part of teaching such as songs and games
- Parents to support the learners
- Teachers to teach better because they use their mother tongue
- On-going cultural background reinforcement

2.8.3 An overview of the first language syllabus

This part discusses how Grade 1 learners in Namibian schools are prepared in acquiring reading skills.

Learning to read is an extraordinary and effortful task, a long and thorny process that can last for years. Green, Terry and Gallagher (2014) stress the fact that pre-schoolers who exhibit well-developed emergent literacy skills typically have better success in all academic areas

from elementary through high school. On the other hand, learners who lack appropriate early literacy skills are more likely to have difficulties acquiring reading skills; they read less and receive less practice than proficient readers. Therefore, it was imperative for the researcher to explore the scope and sequence of competency of lower primary phase syllabus for first language to see how Grade 1 learners are prepared in acquiring reading skills.

The Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture, Lower Primary Phase Syllabus (2005 b) for Grade 1 – 4 points out that reading skills require preparatory tasks, eye muscle development, eye focus, development of understanding of conventions of print, from pretend and emergent reading to actual reading in Grade 1. Also, reading skills require incidental, informal and formal reading, reading for understanding, dictionary use to look up unknown words, use own spelling, reading for enjoyment, recognise letters and words/letters with pictures and sight words. Other aims of the syllabus are to develop language structure, syntax, and style, deep uses and understanding of punctuation, vocabulary development as well as reading for information. These competencies in the first language are important because they contain the basis for attaining irreversible literacy (Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture, 2005b).

2.9 Summary of research on reading and reading difficulties in Namibia
Veii (2003 a) looked at literacy difficulties in two languages Otjiherero and English. In the study, learners were tested on word reading, decoding, phonological awareness, verbal and spatial memory, rapid naming, semantic fluency, sound discrimination, listening comprehension, and non-verbal reasoning. The findings showed that those learners with defective cognitive and linguistic processing skills were more than likely to experience literacy difficulties in both Otjiherero and English. Hence, literacy difficulties were more likely to be more severe in English, the less transparent orthography, than in Otjiherero,

which has a highly transparent orthography. The key areas the learners had deficiencies in, were phonological awareness, verbal and spatial memory, rapid naming and repetition.

Junius (2009) conducted a study on factors affecting the teaching of English reading skills in a second language of Grade 3 and found that teachers' perceptions showed that learners do not know how to read. It was also found that the learners do not learn English because of the influence of the mother tongue. Learners experienced problems in letter sounds, letter names, consonant and vowels or pronunciations and this results in reading difficulties among learners. In addition, teachers also revealed that they encountered problems of insufficient reading books and inadequate teachers' workshops on reading skills development in their school. Furthermore, the approaches used by teachers in teaching English reading skills were inadequate and ineffective, since teachers concentrated only on word decoding (Junius, 2009). Imene and van Graan (1998) also assert that approaches observed in a majority of classrooms were whole word, phonics, or a combination' of the two. From this evidence, it is fair to conclude that the teaching of reading skills is not conducted effectively.

Likewise, a study was conducted on types and causes of reading difficulties affecting the reading of English language among Grade 4 in Ogongo circuit of Namibia. This finding support the findings from Junius' study, that learners' reading difficulties in English could be attributed to lack of English reading materials in school. Possible causes of reading difficulties are blamed on lack of language development and inappropriate teaching methods used by teachers. In addition, findings of this study showed that decoding skills and word recognition abilities, phonemic awareness and lack of comprehension skills were some of the types of reading difficulties experienced by learners under study.

Another study conducted on Grade 3 learners in one primary school in the Khomas Education region of Namibia showed that learners' reading difficulties were associated with their

inability to process information, health and emotional problems such as living in difficult environments as well as history of reading disability in one's family (Hartney, 2011). Hartney's study also revealed that some learners had limited proficiency in English as they entered school not speaking English, the official language, and many learners were not taught through their primary language when they entered school and for these reasons, English language became a barrier in some instances, as learners do not have sufficient exposure to this language.

Furthermore, unstable home environments contribute to reading difficulties in children, were a child is exposed to frequent fights and quarrels within the home. Hence, learners with reading difficulties were not practicing enough reading on their own to improve their reading abilities. The study also revealed that teachers can contribute to reading difficulties of learners by the way they teach as they do not give reading homework to their learners and therefore learners are not given opportunities to practice reading on their own.

In addition, learners' disabilities such as difficulties in speaking and shyness because the child is afraid to be laughed at by others, cause reading difficulties. Teachers' instructional methods could be attributed to a learners attitude towards reading, for instance when, material selected in teaching reading were not at the learner's level. Furthermore, automatic promotion of learners to the next grade is also a contributing factor to reading difficulties as learners are sent to the next grade without the mastery of basic reading skills. Moreover, learners who have not attended kindergarten before entering primary school experience reading difficulties as they had little or no exposure to reading in the English (Hartney, 2011).

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the relevant literature to the research topic on teaching methods used by primary school teachers in Otjiherero. The review presented necessary research, regarding

methods for teaching reading used by Otjiherero primary school teachers. The chapter also evaluated the effectiveness of these methods of teaching reading and the difficulties encountered by teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero. The review of literature will be continued in chapter 5 as the research findings will be evaluated and discussed in comparison of extant related literature. The next chapter outlines the methodology and relevant methods used in the research.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the kinds of reading instructional methods used by Grade 1 Otjiherero language teachers. This research specifically looked at reading instructional methods, the effectiveness of reading instructional methods, errors learners make when reading in Otjiherero, the difficulties encountered by Otjiherero teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero and some prerequisite skills such as phonological awareness that learners bring to the Grade 1 classroom in preparation for reading instruction. This section discusses the research design, population, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a mixed methods research design. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) define a mixed methods research design as a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods by including both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. The qualitative part of the study used open-ended focus group interviews and observational checklist. The open-ended focus group interview was used to obtain data on the teachers' use of reading instructional methods while the observational checklists were used to obtain data on how the teachers applied the kinds of instructional methods of reading when teaching reading in Otjiherero.

The quantitative part of the study used a questionnaire and some tests. The questionnaire was used to obtain the biographical data of teachers, including their academic and professional

qualifications, and the use of reading instructional methods. Whereas, the reading test tested learners decoding abilities while the letter knowledge test and phonological processing skill test tested learners' prerequisite skills (e.g. phonological awareness). The qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously for the purpose of this study. The use of this mixed methods allowed for data triangulation during data analysis.

3.3 Population

The population of this study consisted of only one school in the whole Okahandja circuit that offered Otjiherero (L1) as a medium of instruction in the lower primary school phase. This school had two Grade 1 classes, one teacher for each class group. Grade 1A had 42 learners and Grade 1B had 32 learners that made 74 learners.

3.4 Sample and sampling procedures

Since the study was a school case study, the two Grade 1 teachers teaching Otjiherero (L1) at this particular school were selected for the sample that participated in the study. The sample consisted of the two teachers that teach Grade 1 at this school and 50 Grade 1 learners from the two Grade 1 classes in this school. The 50 Grade 1 learners were selected randomly out of 74 Grade 1 learners. The researcher used a simple random sampling technique to select the 50 learners. For both Grade 1A and 1B learners' names were cut out from the class list and were put into a bowl. After shaking the bowl the researcher took out 26 learners from Grade 1A and 24 learners from Grade 1B, bringing the total to 50 selected learners. The method ensured that each learner in each class had the probability of being selected (Gay et al., 2009). The researcher thought working with 50 participants was sufficient for the purpose of the study.

3.5 Research instruments

A questionnaire is a written collection of self-report questions to be answered by selected group of research participants. This allows the researcher to collect large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time (Gay et al., 2009).The researcher administered quantitative questionnaires to the two teachers to obtain their biographical data, academic and professional qualifications and instructional methods of reading which they use. The information collected through the questionnaires were used to generate follow-up interview questions and observational checklist, that was used for direct observation of the teaching of reading as it unfolded in the classroom.

The qualitative observational checklist on which the direct observation was based, was used to see whether or not teachers used the reading instructional methods they had indicated on the quantitative questionnaire as being familiar with and having used to teach reading. Gay et al.(2009) explains that by observing classes the researcher will obtain much more information that can be compared to the self-reports of the research participants. Thus, the observation checklist allowed the researcher to obtain objective information on instructional methods of reading that were used by teachers. This allowed for triangulation with responses obtained from the questionnaire. By qualitatively and, directly observing the actual teaching in the classroom setting, the researcher was able to note how the various teaching methods of reading were used in practice. A total number of five reading lessons were observed from each of the two Otjiherero teachers.

A focus group interview can be used to collect shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people (Creswell, 2008). The two teachers constituted the qualitative focus group discussion. The focus group interviews were used to obtain shared information and views from the teachers' use and application of reading instructional

43

methods when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1). This was done with a specific intention to see whether or not there would be inconsistences between the observations of the teachers when applying the instructional methods of reading and what they reported in the interview about their application of these methods.

The quantitative single word reading test was used to obtain data on learners' reading ability. The varying degrees of performance on this test were used as a means of discriminating between good and poor readers (Veii, 2003 b). At the same time, the kind of errors the learners made while reading single words were also qualitatively observed and determined.

Letter knowledge and phonological awareness tests were used to obtain data on the prerequisite skills for learning to read which learners brought to Grade 1, as these skills play a leading role in the development of literacy (Veii, 2003b; Veii & Everatt, 2005).

3.6 Pilot study

Before collecting data, the researcher piloted the research instruments in order to assess whether the tests items were clear and unambiguous. The pilot was also carried out to ensure that the participants understood the questions in the interview and in the questionnaires and were able to read the words from the tests without difficulties. This gave the researcher an indication as to whether the same items could be used or adjusted.

When doing research, it is highly recommended that the researcher pilot the interview schedule before using it to interview the participants (Mclean, 1994). The researcher selected a primary school in the Otjozondjupa Region for the pilot study. The researcher ensured that the participants that took part in the pilot study were Grade 1 teachers teaching reading in Otjiherero and Grade 1 learners. The single word reading tests, letter knowledge test and phonological processing skills test were carried out in Otjiherero (L1). In the pilot study, the

participants did not encounter major problems with the interviews, questionnaires and the tests. This confirmed that all items were clear and there was no need for adjustment.

3.7 Data collection procedure

Firstly, permission from the Ministry of Education to collect data was sought and obtained (see Appendix A). After approval from the Ministry of Education the researcher approached the school and obtained approval from both the principal and teachers. The questionnaire was the first instrument handed out to the teachers and teachers were given a chance to ask questions if they were not clear with any part of the questionnaire. The researcher requested the questionnaire to be returned the following day (see Appendix E). This was followed by classroom observations, using observation checklist to observed teachers during the reading lessons on how they applied or did not apply the reading instructional methods in Otjiherero (L1) (see Appendix N). This was followed by an open-ended focus group interview which was conducted with the two Grade 1 teachers during their free time (see Appendix O).

Lastly, the researcher administered the tests, which tested the learners individually. The first test administered was the Otjiherero single word reading test which consisted of 31 words (see Appendix F). The Otjiherero single word reading test, the words were arranged in a left-to-right and top-to-bottom configuration and the learner had to read the words in that configuration whereby a right tick was given if the learner read the words correctly. During the Otjiherero single word reading test, the discontinuation rule applied. That is, if a learner got ten consecutive words wrong, the test was discontinued.

This was followed by letter knowledge test, which consisted of upper cases and lower cases alphabet letters (see Appendix G & H). The letter sound knowledge test was the fourth test that was administered (see Appendix I), it was followed by Otjiherero beginning phoneme test and Otjiherero ending phoneme test (see Appendix J and K). Syllable clap was also

administered (see Appendix L) and lastly the phoneme segmentation test (see Appendix M). The researcher gave breaks to learners to avoid fatigue and it took about 45 minutes per learner to complete all tests. A maximum of four learners completed a test per day.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis in a mixed method design attempt to analyse quantitative and qualitative data concurrently (Gay et al. 2009). To ensure concurrent analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher firstly transcribed the tape recorded interview data. After this process, the researcher read through the data several times to identify potential themes. These themes were merged with those from questionnaires and used to write up the research findings.

The reading test, letter knowledge test and phonological processing skills test were analysed using descriptive statistics, which mainly measure the central tendency (e.g. mean, mode and standard deviation). Pearson correlations were also used to assess the degrees of correlation between learners' reading ability and their phonological processing skills. The researcher arranged the quantitative data into tables to indicate key findings of this study.

3.9 Ethical consideration

Research is built on trust between the researcher and the participants as such researchers have a responsibility to behave in a trustworthy manner (e.g. by providing responses that can be trusted) (Gay et al., 2009). The researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the Directorate of Postgraduate Research Publications at the University of Namibia in order to carry out this research. In line with this ethical code, the researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Education to conduct the research at the identified school. The then researcher visited the school with a written permission obtained from the Ministry of Education. The

researcher obtained consent from all her participants and explained to them the aim and purpose of the research. The researcher explained that their participation in this research was on a voluntary basis and that they had a right to participate or refuse to participate should they decided not to do so at any time. The researcher assured the participants of confidentiality on her part committing never to divulge the names of the participants to anyone as well protecting the information obtained from the participants in this study. Participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential. The participants were also promised that data collected would be used for the purpose of this study only and would not be used for any other purpose. In addition, an undertaking was made by the researcher to keep data collected for this study for a limited time for the specific intention to serve as reference should the study or part thereof require data scrutiny before the information could be destroyed.

3.10 Conclusion

The mixed method of research guided this study. The chosen methods of interviews, questionnaires, observational checklist and tests allowed the researcher to gain valuable insight and understanding regarding the Otjiherero reading teaching methods. This Chapter (3) explained the choice of methodology and methods used. The chapter also discussed ethical issues pertaining to consent and anonymity. The next chapter presents the research findings.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the methodology and research techniques used in collecting and analysing data. This chapter presents the study findings, in accordance with the research questions. This chapter first presents the demographic profiles of teachers. This is followed by a brief background of the classroom environment of the participating schools and then the teaching methods that teachers were using in teaching reading. The researcher than presents the reading test results. This is followed by the impact of teaching methods on reading acquisition that this researcher observed. This is followed by the challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the prerequisite skills the learners had acquired as the basis on which to build further learning.

4.2 Demographic profiles of teachers

Demographic profiles of teachers that were collected in the questionnaire shed light on the academic and professional qualification of the teachers teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1) to

Grade 1 learners, as well as their years of teaching experience. This information was also collected with a specific intention to check whether the teachers were qualified to teach reading in Otjiherero (L1).

In terms of academic qualifications, both Teacher A and Teacher B indicated that they completed Grade 12. Regarding professional qualifications, only Teacher A obtained a BETD. It is important to note that the level of education of an individual has a bearing on the knowledge and practice of that person in his or her field of operation. Be that as it may, by virtue of his or her qualification this individual was expected to have knowledge in different methods of teaching reading because different teaching methods had been integrated into the curricula of former teacher training colleges (BETD) (Imene and van Graan, 1998).

However, Teacher B indicated that she was not professionally qualified as a teacher nor to teach Otjiherero (L1). Both Teacher A and Teacher B indicated that they had years of experience teaching Otjiherero (L1) to Grade 1 learners. Teacher B indicated that she had 32 years experience and Teacher A had 19 years of experience. Teacher B indicated that she was not professionally qualified to teach reading in Otjiherero (L1).

4.3 Classroom Environment

The research sites that were of interest to the study were two classrooms. A brief overview of each setting is presented below in order to provide the context in which literacy learning happened. The two classrooms were at the same school. The first classroom, Grade 1 A had 24 learners and one teacher. The learners come from low-income families. The learners worked in groups and reading was integrated throughout the day and across the subjects. The second classroom, Grade 1 B had 26 learners and one teacher. The general classroom environment for both classes were appealing as teachers made colourful posters of the alphabet charts (Upper case letters and lower case letters), number charts, calendar chart,

labels on objects and posters of sight words in both Otjiherero and in English. The general classroom environment for both classes was appealing. According to the National Policy Guide for Junior Primary Subjects Grade 1-3 (MoE, 2009), a well-managed classroom is a productive learning environment, one in which there is order and learning is interesting and fun.

4.4 Teaching methods used by teachers

Learning to read happens through different approaches. The study revealed that the following methods were used by the teachers: whole word/look-and-say, language experience, content support and phonics methods such as synthetic and analytical phonics. These were also the main methods that were used during the teaching of reading in Otjiherero. Each method is discussed extensively below.

4.4.1 Phonics Method

Of the two teachers observed, one had Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) while the other one had no professional teacher qualification. Both Teachers A and B reported that they used phonics and whole word/look-and-say-method when they teach reading to Grade 1 learners. When using phonics method, the two teachers had the following to say:

Teacher A explained that: (when teaching phonics) first the learners are drilled on the vowel sounds and then she combine the vowel sound with consonant sounds.

> Teacher A said: *When I teach phonics I bring all the learners in front of the chalkboard were I display the vowel sound first, and then I combine the vowel sound with consonant sounds for example: (a, e, i, o, u)- ma-me-mi-mo-mu, tja-tje-tji-tjo-tju, nga-nge-ngi-ngo-ngu, ndja-ndje-ndji-ndjo-ndju and I tell the learners to look at the sounds and say them repeatedly after me.*

From what Teacher A reported, it appears that she taught learners vowel and consonant grapheme-phoneme correspondences where learners were made aware that letters are made of sounds. In support of this, Dickinson and Neuman (2006) state that decoding skills emerge from teaching vowel and consonant grapheme-phonemes and helps children to read unfamiliar words.

On the other hand, Teacher B reported that when teaching phonics she teaches learners to link individual letters with their appropriate sounds and blend the sounds to form words.

> Teacher B said: *When I teach phonics I display words for example:*
> */o/m/i/t̞/i/r/i/ (Teacher), /o/m/u/h/o/ng/e/ (Priest), /o/m/u/r/a/nd/i/s/e/ (Sales*
> *Person), /o/m/u/p/o/r/i/s/e/ (Policeman), /o/n/e/s/a/ (Nurse) and I say the*
> *sounds and ask the learners to repeat the sounds after me.*

Furthermore, from what Teacher B reported, it seems that she informs the learners that words are made out of sounds and that sounds can be segmented and blended together to form a word. Dickinson and Neuman (2006) reveal that learning to segment words into phonemes is important for reading all the sounds in words and for forming grapheme-phoneme connections to remember the spelling of words and to read words by sight. Learning to blend phonemes is important for decoding new words.

During the observation of lessons for both Teacher A and B, it was observed that the only phonics method used was the synthetic phonics and analytical phonics. Synthetic phonics teach the phonemes (sounds) associated with the graphemes (letters), where the sounds are taught in isolation then blended together (synthesised) all through the word. Analytical phonics teach learners to identify the common phoneme (sounds) in a set of words in which each word contains the phoneme (sounds).

Surprisingly, other important phonics method such as, analogy phonics, embedded phonics and phonics through spelling were not used by both teachers during the observation visits. Carnine et al. (2014) explain that analogy phonics, embedded phonics and phonics through spelling lead to greater improvement in phonological awareness, for example, embedded phonics teach learners phonics skills by embedding phonics instruction in text reading a more implicit approach that relies to some extent on incidental learning. Whereas analogy phonics teaches learners unfamiliar words by analogy to know words, for example recognising that the rime segment of an unfamiliar word is identical to that of a familiar word and then blending the known with the new word onset. While phonics through spelling teach learners to transform sounds into letters to write words (Carnine et al., 2014).

In conclusion, teaching phonics using synthetic methods teach learners the grapheme-phoneme relation and analytical phonics teach learners to avoid pronouncing sounds in isolation. However, teaching reading using a combination of phonics methods might increase phonological awareness among these Grade 1 learners, which may improve word recognition when reading.

4.4.2 Whole word/look-and-say Method

Another method that the teachers in this study used was whole word/look-and-say-method. Both teachers reported that they display words on the card and teach the learners to recognize whole words or sentences rather than individual sounds.

Teacher A said:

> *I display cards with individual words on the chalkboard and ask learners to repeat the words after me.*

Whereas Teacher B said*:*

When I use the whole word method I display words on the chalkboard with pictures underneath them for the learners to remember the words when they read in the text.

It was also evident from the observation of lessons that both teachers taught learners to sight read the words so that they would be able to pronounce the whole word as a single entity rather than letter sounds as in phonics. In line with this, Morrow (2011) explains that teaching reading through whole word-method supports children to recognise whole words or sentences rather than individual sounds.

4.4.3 The language experience method

The language experience method was also used by Teacher B. From lesson observation of Teacher B, it was observed that the method tapped on the learners' experiential background information by building on learners' prior knowledge and experience. In terms of the context in which the method was used, Teacher B asked the learners for their parents' occupations and most of the learners had ideas of what their parents were doing for a living and they gave the following examples: *Omukangure* (someone who irons clothes), *Omuhinge* (A driver), *Omukohe* (someone who does laundry), *Omuzike* (A chef), *Omitiri* (A teacher).

Teacher B wrote these words for the different occupations on the chalkboard, then she took out pictures, and then asked the learners to identify the picture, and link it to each occupation. It was observed that most learners were able to link the occupations with the correct picture as they were familiar with most of the words and could relate to their own personal knowledge. As pointed out by Griggs (2000), this way of teaching reading supported the learner's concept development and vocabulary growth while offering many opportunities for meaningful reading and writing activities by personal experiences and oral language.

4.4.4 Content support Method

Another method that Teacher A used was the content support method. Learners were placed in a reading circle where the teacher shared the reading with the learners. The teacher chose a book with pictures and asked learners what they saw in the pictures. Learners were then asked to retell the story looking at the pictures. It was noticed that most learners could retell the story. However, it was also observed that most learners were not pointing from left to right. They were hopping around looking for familiar parts in the picture book that they recognised as they pretended to read the picture book. Morrow and Gambrell (2011) note that it is important to recognise the emergent reading behaviours such as reading from left to right need to be taught because learners do not possess these skills naturally. Morrow and Gambrell explain further that learners will begin to point out some words learned from repeating the book so often and notice that letters in their names are in some of the words in the book.

The current study found that the teacher used the whole word/look-and-say, language experience, content support and synthetic and analytic phonics approaches when teaching reading in their classrooms. Drawn from the findings, teachers, in the use of reading instructional method placed more emphasis on whole-word method, language experience method and content support method rather than phonics methods, such as embedded phonics, analogy phonics and phonics through spelling. As stipulated by Carnine et al. (2014) embedded phonics, analogy phonics and phonics through spelling lead to greater improvement in phonological awareness.

Morrow (2011) suggests that reading instructional methods that include phonics methods, take advantage of the learner's phonological awareness and knowledge of the alphabetic principle. Although both teachers used the recommended instructional methods of reading as per curriculum such as phonics methods- reading awareness that begin with recognising sound-symbol relationship, whole-word methods, where the teacher gives flashcards with

individual words and learners are taught to read the words and context support methods-shared reading of connected text (Ministry of Education, 2005a).

It was observed that teachers used two phonics methods, namely; synthetic phonics, which teaches learners the phonemes–associated with the graphemes and analytic phonics, which teaches learners to identify phoneme in a set of words in spite of being a good or poor reader. Be that as it may, it is this researcher's view that participating teachers could have used a combination of other phonics methods such as embedded phonics, analogy phonics and phonics through spelling to assist learners who are struggling with reading. In addition, it is this researcher's view that instructional methods of reading, in particular, phonics methods, should be applied according to the individual needs of learners in the reading process otherwise the phonics methods used by the teachers may not benefit all learners in the future.

4.5 Reading test results

The descriptive statistics as shown in Table 4.1 below depicts the performance of the learners on single word reading and the prerequisite skills necessary for learning to read. The prerequisite measures were the following: letter knowledge (upper case and lower case), letter sound knowledge and phonological processing skills (beginning phoneme, ending phoneme, syllable clapping and phoneme segmentation).

Variable	Mean ± SD	Mode
Percentage of correct Single Word read	15.29 ± 24.05	13.05
Percentage of Correct Upper Case letters read	47.68±26.53	57.9
Percentage of Correct Lower Case letters read	58.11±28.55	89.5
Percentage of Correct Letter Sound Knowledge read	60.20±32.31	20.00
Percentage of Correct Beginning Phoneme	41.60±15.43	50.00
Percentage of Correct Ending Phoneme	37.40±12.58	30.00

Percentage of Correct Syllable Clapping	32.00±27.10	12.50
Percentage of Correct Phonemic Segmentation	2.20±10.00	0.0

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of learner performance on single word reading, letter knowledge and phonological processing skills

Gay et al. (2009) suggest that the mean indicates the average performance of a group on a measure of some variable, and the standard deviation indicates the spread of a set of scores around the mean; that is, whether the scores are relatively close together and clustered around the mean or widely spread out around the mean. The mode is the score that is attained by more subjects than any other score.

In the study, the mean correct for single word reading was 15.29 with ±24.05 standard deviation, with the mode of 13.05. The mean 15.29 displays a poor performance in the single word read. In relation to the mean 15.29, the mode 13.05 indicates the most occurring score of 13.05. This finding agrees with that of the Ministry of Education (2009), which notes that an average percentage range between 0-39% means that the learner has not been able to reach a minimum level of competency by the end of each semester of the first year of school. The learner will be seriously in need of learning support (Ministry of Education, 2009).

On letter knowledge skills and phonological awareness, the Ministry of Education have not stipulated any minimum competency requirement. Therefore, the performance of learners on the above mentioned phonological processing skills were interpreted by means of percentage points. Therefore, the mean/average of 0-30% indicates a poor performance, the mean/average of 40-49% indicates an average performance, and mean (average) of 50-59% indicates a good performance whereas mean/average of 60-69% indicates a very good performance.

Learners' performance on letter knowledge such as the upper case letters have the mean correct of 47.68 with ±26.53 standard deviation, with the mode of 57.9. The mean 47.68

displays a poor performance in the upper case letter knowledge, and the most occurring score or the mode is 57. 9.

Furthermore, the mean correct for lower case letter read was 58.11 with ±28.55 standard deviation, with the mode of 89.5. The mean 58.11 shows a good performance in the lower case letter knowledge with the most occurring score or the mode of (89.5).

Letter sound knowledge have the mean correct of 60.20 with ±32.31 standard deviation, with the mode of 20.00. The mean 60.20 shows a good performance in the letter sound knowledge and the most occurring score or the mode is 20.00.

Learners' performance on phonological processing skills such as beginning phoneme the mean correct read was 41.60 with ±15.43 standard deviation, with the mode of 50.00. The mean 41.60 indicates a poor performance in the beginning phoneme, with the most occurring score or the mode of 50.00.

Furthermore, the mean correct for ending phoneme read was 37.40 with ±12.58 standard deviation, with the mode of 30.00. The mean 37.40 shows a poor performance in the ending phoneme with the most occurring score or mode of 30.00.

The mean correct for syllable clapping read was 32.00 with ±27.10 standard deviation, with the mode of 12.50. The mean of 32.00 shows a poor performance in the syllable clapping with the most occurring score or the mode of 12.50.

The mean correct for phonemic segmentation read was 2.20 with ±10.00 standard deviation, with the mode of 0.0. The mean 2.20 displays a poor performance in the phonemic segmentation read with the most occurring mode of 0.0.

The study appears to show that learners possess knowledge of lower case letters and letter sounds. Besides possessing these skills, learners could still not recognise words during the single word-reading test, which resulted in them not reading the majority of single words

correctly. It is this researcher's view that the low performance of learners in the single word-reading test could be attributed to the teaching methods of reading used by the teachers, particularly the phonics methods. As observed by this researcher, the teachers mainly used only two phonics synthetic phonics and analytical phonics, which may not be sufficient in teaching learners how to read. Perhaps teachers could use a combination of phonics methods such as embedded, analogy and phonics through spelling that would accelerate the learners reading development. Another contributing factor on poor reading performance could be attributed to the noted poor phonemic awareness; beginning phoneme, ending phoneme, syllable clapping and phonemic segmentation.

Morrow and Gambrell (2011) stress that a combination of phonics approach, such as synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, embedded phonics, analogy phonics, onset-rime phonics and phonics through spelling teaches correspondence between letters and the sounds they represent. In line with this, Ponitz and Rimm-Kaufman (2010) point out that the important point about phonics approaches to teaching reading is that it teaches the beginner reader an analytic approach to words, one that is designed to exploit the learner's mastery of the alphabetic principle. As expounded by Booker (2013) phonemic awareness is important at an early age for learners to help avoid reading difficulties at a later stage in life.

4.5.1 Analysis of reading errors

It was observed that the following reading errors committed by Grade 1 learners during the single word reading test were prevalent.

- Learners were omitting initial letters and sounds; therefore, they could not read words accurately, for example: the word *embo* (book) learners read *mbo* omitting [*e*], *ekopi* (cup) learners read *kopi* omitting [*e*], *ombopi* (doll) learners read *mbopi* omitting [*o*]. This finding agrees with Gagen (2007) who points out that when words are omitted, it

may mean weaker visual tracking or may be the result of not focusing or reading too fast.

- Faulty word reading was due to substitution of letters in words; for example, *rara* (sleep) - learners read *kara* (stay), *embo* (book) learners read *ombe* (new).

- Gagen (2007) explains that visually similar is when learners see or visually recognize entire words as a unit instead of processing the print by sound. Learners read words incorrectly by substituting the initial or ending sound with a word that is similar in visual to the one actually presented to them. For example: *ekori* (hat) - learners read *ekopi* (cup), *ohaki* (hanger) learners read *okapi* (rabbit), *oiri* (watch) learners read *oina* (it's mother). The learner tries to recognize the overall visual appearance of the word and often the words 'look similar' to words the learner has already learned as 'sight' words. Frequent 'whole word' type errors indicate that the learner is not processing print phonetically (Gagen, 2007).

- Difficulties in segmenting and blending sounds in words were noticed. For example, instead of segmenting a word into its individual sounds, learners would take two or more sounds together and treat them as though they were cluster sounds. For example: */e/yu/ru/* (heaven) instead of */e/y/u/r/u/,* */te/re/ka/* (cook) instead of */t/e/r/e/k/a/,* *e/pu/ku/* (mouse) instead of */e/p/u/k/u/* and */o/ha/ki/* (hanger) instead of */o/h/a/k/i/.* Therefore, they would end up blending these two or more cluster sounds and still manage to form the correct word out of these cluster sounds. Although, in Otjiherero orthography segmenting sounds as though they were cluster sounds does not necessary result in building a faulty word, learners are still expected to know that individual sounds still differ from cluster sounds. Therefore, the potential remains that

they could end up forming a wrong word out of sounds that are not supposed to be cluster sounds.

- Word guessing-learners would look at the first letter and then guess their own words from context or they would look at the tester instead of the print. For example: *embo* (book) learners guessed *okakara* (donkey cart), *rara* (sleep) learners guessed *otjihauto* (car), *ekori* (hat) learners guessed *opena* (a pen), *ohaki* (hanger) Learners guessed *otjihavero* (chair), *ombete* (bed) learners guessed *rora* (taste). To Gagen (2007) these types of word guessing errors are closely associated with learners who do not process print phonetically, instead they rely on 'whole word' visual recognition techniques.

- Finger pointing- Learners were pointing at a word with their fingers and as they pretended to read the fingers were moving across the word without sounding individual sounds to form the word. This finding concurs with Lerner (2000) who notes that finger pointing inhibits fluent reading and speed. However, Gagen (2007) emphasises that effectiveness and efficiency in teaching finger pointing skill is helpful in directing and focusing the child on individual sounds within the word. It helps them 'keep their place' and 'notice all the sounds'.

- Unsuccessful sound attempt- Learners appeared to be attempting to sound out individual letters but what appeared were the lips moving without any sound coming out.

- Refusal- Learners said meaningless jumble of sounds in place of the word and suddenly the learners came to a halt and said, "I don't know what it is".

4.6 The impact of teaching methods on reading acquisition

Both teachers showed confidence in teaching reading through the various reading instructional methods. Teacher A pointed out that teaching phonics through the drilling strategy helps learners recognise sounds. These findings agree with the view of Tracy and

Morrow (2006) who postulate that repeated reading has been linked with improvements in word recognition, speed, accuracy, and fluency.

During the observation of Teacher B on teaching phonics, it was observed that she used mouth movement to demonstrate the production of different sounds in the mouth to learners. According to Dickinson and Neuman (2006), phonemes are ephemeral and disappear as soon as they are spoken. Therefore, they are hard for learners to hold onto and manipulate. Be that as it may, instruction that provides concrete markers for phonemes like mouth movement has proven helpful in teaching learners how to manipulate phonemes in speech.

During the use of content support method, Teacher A chose a book that interested learner's. This encouraged the enthusiasm of learners to read as they related the content to the picture. These finding agree with the view of Levy (2002) who points out that interest and attention can be difficult to hold in younger learners and therefore choosing books or topics that interest and draw their attention may help them to learn to read. In addition, both teachers assisted poor readers by giving them remedial classes and putting them in shared and guided reading groups.

4.7 Challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading

The study identified several challenges faced by teachers during the teaching of reading in Otjiherero. Such challenges include:

Letter sound confusion: (confuse letter sounds). Teacher A pointed out that,

> *Learners confuse letter sound for example /p/* they sound */mb/, /s/* they sound */z/, /t/* they sound */nd/ and /k/* they sound */ng/.*

This finding agrees with the view of the Ministry of Education (2012), which indicate that sounds like /s/ which are a voiceless interdental fricative are often confused with the sound

/z/ which are an example of a voiced interdental fricative. When asked how they demonstrate these difficulties which they encounter when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1), Teacher A was quick to point out that they (the teachers) give remedial classes after school to those learners who confuse letter sounds when reading, whereby they recap on letter sounds and blending of sounds. It is this researcher's view that during remedial classes the teacher could use other phonics methods such as phonics through spelling were learners are taught to segment words into phoneme (sounds) and select letters for those phoneme (sounds) to form single words. Morrow and Gambrell (2011) note that explicit phonics instruction that include a combination of systematic letter-sound instruction with onset rime, analogy instruction and spelling improves reading.

In terms of the recognition of the shape of alphabet letters: Teacher B points out that,

> *When learners are reading in Otjiherero (L1) they tend to stumble on words and have difficulty in recognising the shape of alphabet letters for example [b,d], [i,j], [m,n], [v,w], [s,z].*

According to Dickinson and Neuman (2006) different letters having similar shapes are frequently confused by learners for example, those in the following sets: b-d-q-g, h-n-r, m-w, u-v-y, s-z, i-j, L-I-l-i.

In terms of the lack of literacy learning materials: (textbooks of learners). Teacher A points out that,

> *To give homework to each individual learners is a challenge as textbooks are not enough.*

According to Mule (2014), learners' reading difficulties could be attributed to lack of reading materials in schools.

4.8 Learners' prerequisite skills for learning to read Otjiherero

Reading abilities that had started to emerge before the learners entered Grade 1 will arguably influence how the teacher approach teaching reading in Grade 1, that is such knowledge will influence the method teachers would use when teaching reading. Furthermore, the necessity of research question five lies in the fact that, focusing on the reading methods alone without looking at the learner's readiness to learn to read would not have been sufficient because if the learners read poorly, teaching methods, were going to be blamed on one or the other way. When in fact the problem would be because the learners are the ones who did not have the prerequisite skills to learn to read. Conversely, if the teaching of reading failed learners to learn to read despite the instruction by the teachers, the learners would be blamed when in fact; the problem was the manner in which the teachers taught them how to read (e.g. using the reading methods inefficiently or efficiently).

In determining this background information, the research used both qualitative and quantitative instruments to determine the mixed abilities in reading in Otjiherero acquired by learners under this study as they enter Grade 1. Both Teacher A and B reported that they had learners with varying skills - those who attended pre-primary school and those who did not attend pre-primary school.

According to both teachers, those learners who attended pre-primary school start Grade one with some prerequisite skills such as the alphabet knowledge, the ability to count from 1 up to 10, being able to write their own names and the knowledge of the names of shapes, colours and sounds. Both teachers claim that those who did not attend pre-primary school, start Grade 1 without any substantial prerequisite skills and have a lot of challenges such as beginning to read, write from right to left, and that they do not write between the lines in their books and do not know how to write their names. Furthermore, both teachers observed that learners who

had the prerequisite skills gain the reading skills of Otjiherero very easily compared to those without some prerequisite skills.

Descriptive statistics shown in Table 4.1 above show the performance of the learners on single word reading, letter knowledge and the prerequisite for learning to read. The findings reveal that learners demonstrated some reasonable possession of some prerequisite skills for learning to read which are letter knowledge such as lower case letters with the mean of 58.11 and letter sound knowledge with the mean of 60.20. Morrow (2011) points out that one good way of teaching reading to pre-school learners and first Grade one learners is to start with basic letters and sounds.

However, learners' performance on phonological processing skills appeared weaker. For example, statistics show that the beginning phoneme has 41.60 mean, while the ending phoneme has a 37.40 mean, syllable clapping 32.00 and phonemic segmentation 2.20. The learners' performance on the various prerequisite skills seemed mixed. While learners performed relatively well in some, they performed poorly in others. The mixed results may have implications on different aspects of learning to read, such that the deficient phonological processing skills may affect those aspects of reading depending on the deficient skills. Perhaps teachers should be exposed to the different phonological awareness skills for effective ways for preparing learners to learn to read.

4.9 Single word reading, letter knowledge and phonological processing skills

A Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine correlation between single word reading on one hand and letter knowledge - upper case letters, lower case letters, letter sound knowledge and phonological processing skills - beginning phoneme, ending phoneme, syllable clapping and phoneme segmentation on the other hand.

Table 4.2 Correlations between Single word reading, letter knowledge and the phonological awareness

		Single Word Reading	Upper Case letters	Lower Case letters	Letter Sound knowledge	Beginning Phoneme	Ending Phoneme	Syllable Clapping	Phonemic Segmentation
SINGLE WORD READING	Pearson Correlation	1	.609**	.602**	.530**	.209	.097	.383**	.383**
			.000	.000	.000	.144	.503	.006	.006
		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
UPPER CASE	Pearson Correlation	.609**	1	.930**	.788**	.172	-.174	.294	.244

LETTERS		.000		.000	.000	.233	.226	.038	.088
		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
LOWER CASE LETTERS	Pearson Correlation	.602**	.930**	1	.838**	.143	-.112	.283*	.194
		.000	.000		.000	.322	.439	.047	.177
		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
LETTER SOUND KNOWLEDGE	Pearson Correlation	.530**	.788**	.838**	1	.149	-.102	.296*	.134
		.000	.000	.000		.303	.483	.037	.352
		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
BEGINNING PHONEME	Pearson Correlation	.209	.172	.143	.149	1	-.262	.113	.082
		.144	.233	.322	.303		.066	.435	.569
		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
ENDING PONEME	Pearson Correlation	.097	-.174	-.112	-.102	-.262	1	-.133	.451**
		.503	.226	.439	.483	.066		.359	.001
		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
SYLLABLE CLAPPING	Pearson Correlation	.383**	.294*	.283*	.296*	.113	-.133	1	.328*
		.006	.038	.047	.037	.435	.359		.020
		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
PHONEMIC SEGMENTATION	Pearson Correlation	.383**	.244	.194	.134	.082	.451**	.328*	1
		.006	.088	.177	.352	.569	.001	.020	
		5	50	50	50	50	50	50	50

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2 above shows that there is a significant strong correlation between single word reading and letter knowledge: upper case letters (r= 0.609 with a p-value of 0.00 <0.05), single word reading and lower case letter (r=0.602 with a p-value of 0.00 <0.05), between single word reading and letter sound knowledge (r=0.530 with a p-value of 0.00 <0.05). This indicates that single word reading is related to learners letter knowledge such as upper case letters, lower case letters and letter sound knowledge. This suggest that knowing the upper case letter, lower case letters and letter sound knowledge helps in learning how to read.

However, a weak correlation was found between single word and beginning phoneme (r=0.209) with the p-value of 0.00<0.05, single word reading and syllable clapping (r=0.383 with a p-value of 0.00 <0.05), and between single word reading and phonemic segmentation

(r=0.383 with a p-value 0.00 <0.05). No correlation was found between single word reading and ending phoneme (r=0.097 with a p-value of 0.00<0.05). This indicates that beginning phoneme, ending phoneme, syllable clapping and phonemic segmentation do not have an influence on single word reading.

4.10 Conclusion

The major findings about the teaching methods used by lower primary school phase teachers in Otjiherero, in Okahandja circuit were as follows:

a) Teachers seem to use mainly two phonic methods namely the synthetic and analytical phonics rather than using a combination of phonic methods that include analogy phonics, embedded phonics and phonics through spelling. According to Ponitz and Rimm-Kaufman (2010), the important point about phonic approach to teaching reading is that it teaches the beginning reader an analytic approach to words, one that is designed to exploit the learner's mastery of the alphabetic principle.

b) The reading instructional methods used by the participating teachers, in particular phonic methods are not effective as learners are not able to read Grade 1 level single words presented out of context.

c) The results also indicate that learners have the following prerequisite skills brought to Grade 1, lower case letters and letter sound knowledge.

   • A strong correlation was found between learners' reading ability and letter knowledge such as upper case letters, lower case letters and letter sound knowledge The next chapter summarises, draws a conclusion and gives recommendations on the basis of the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented and discussed the results of the study. This chapter presents a summary, conclusion, drawn from the research findings; outline of the contribution of the study, its limitations and proffers recommendations for further study as well as concluding remarks of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY

The research questions and brief answers are listed below in a form of summary to this study. This study was conducted in order to investigate the teaching methods used by primary school teachers in Otjiherero at a school in Okahandja circuit. Teachers used the whole-word method, language experience method, content support method and synthetic phonics and analytical phonics. However it is crucial to highlight that other important phonic methods, such as analogy phonics, embedded phonics and phonics through spelling were not used by both teachers during lesson observations.

In addition, the study also looked at how effective the teaching methods are in enabling learners to read in Otjiherero. The reading instructional methods used by these particular teachers were not effective in the fact that leaners were not able to read Grade one single words presented out of context. The results of correct single word reading test show a mean of 15.29, which is poor. This could be attributed to the fact that teachers did not use those reading instructional methods in particular, or a combination of phonics methods that would accelerate the learners' reading development.

Furthermore, the study also looked at difficulties encountered by teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero, especially how teachers responded to these difficulties. The difficulties faced by the teachers seem to be mainly letter sound confusion by learners, stumbling on words due to difficulties in recognising the shape of letters and a lack of literacy learning material. As result, teachers responded to these difficulties by providing remedial classes, drilling strategy to teach sounds as well as mouth movement to demonstrate the production of different sounds.

Moreover, the study also evaluated the reading errors learners make when reading in Otjiherero; and what teachers do about these errors. This study revealed the following reading

errors committed by the learners; learners were omitting initial letters and sounds, faulty word reading due to substitution of letters in words, visually recognise entire words as a unit instead of processing the print by sound, difficulties in segmenting and blending sounds in words, word guessing, finger pointing, unsuccessful sound attempt and refusal. Teachers dealt with the errors by guided reading groups, remedial classes, displaying similar alphabet letters on the chalkboard and teaching learners to look at how the letters are shaped.

In addition, the study considered what prerequisite skills (e.g. phonological awareness) for learning to read learners brought to Grade one. Qualitative findings revealed that those learners who attended pre-primary school have some prerequisite skills, such as the alphabet knowledge; the ability to count from one to ten; being able to write own names and the knowledge of the names of shapes, colours and letter sounds. Those who did not attend pre-primary school seem to lack substantial prerequisite skills needed to read and write from left to right. The same group does not write between the lines in their books and do not know how to write their names.

Furthermore, findings show that learners possess letter knowledge, such as lower case letters with the mean of 58.11 and letter sound knowledge with the mean/average of 60.20. However, learners' performance on some letter knowledge and phonological processing skills appeared weaker, such as upper case letters with the mean/average of 47.68, beginning phoneme with the mean of 41.60, ending phoneme with the mean of 37.40, syllable clapping with the mean of 32.00 and phonemic segmentation with the mean of 2.20 which are necessary for learning to read. This may suggest that the above mentioned letter knowledge and phonological processing skill may have an implication on learners' learning to read.

The study also looked at the correlation between learners' reading ability, letter knowledge and their phonological processing skills. A significant correlation was established between

single words and letter knowledge such as upper case letters, lower case letters and letter sound knowledge. This means that knowing the upper case letter, lower case letters and letter sound knowledge helps in learning how to read.

However, no significant correlation was found between single word and the phonological processing skills such as beginning phoneme, ending phoneme, syllable clapping and phoneme segmentation. This suggests that the ending phoneme, syllable clapping and phonemic segmentation do not have an influence on single word reading.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the teaching methods used by lower primary school teachers in Otjiherero a school in Okahandja circuit. The study concluded that teachers used a variety of reading instructional methods. However, less emphasis was placed on a combination of phonics methods that would accelerate the learners' reading development, as learners were not able to map sounds or phonemes on to the graphemes, blending the sound and ultimately sounding out the words and reading them correctly.

For that reason, teachers should use more skill-based explicit instruction when teaching reading. Research evidence from the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000) show that systemic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for learners in kindergarten through sixth grade and therefore phonics must be integrated with instruction in phonological awareness, fluency and comprehension. The study also concludes that poor phonemic awareness such as beginning phoneme, ending phoneme, syllable clapping and phonemic segmentation may contribute to poor reading performance.

The study also concluded that teachers face challenges such as letter sound confusion by learners, learners stumble on words and have a lack of literacy learning material. Another conclusion, was that learners did not demonstrate adequate reading skills as learners

committed the following reading errors; omitting initial letters and sound, faulty word recognition, visually recognition of entire words instead of sound, difficulties in segmenting and blending sounds in words, word guessing, finger pointing, unsuccessful sound attempt and refusal. Gagen (2007) suggests that guided reading, where teachers stop the learners at every error is the best way to help learners develop careful reading skills.

The study also concluded that learners have some prerequisite skills that they bring to Grade one. However, learners also lack other prerequisite skills necessary in learning to read. A strong correlation was established between learners' ability to decode words, letter knowledge as well as phonological processing skills. This means that knowing letter knowledge such as the upper case letter, lower case letters and letter sound knowledge help in learning how to read.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings of this research, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Intensive in-service training should be provided frequently to assist mother tongue teachers to gain adequate skills and knowledge needed to teach reading.

2. Advisory teachers should train and support mother tongue teachers with relevant materials to enrich reading skills.

3. Schools should be provided with the necessary support and guidance to address the challenges they face when teaching reading.

5. Teacher training institutions should ensure that teachers are well skilled in the different types of reading instructional methods, especially in exposing teachers to various phonics methods.

6   Teachers should also be trained on how to deal with various reading errors committed by learners.

7   Teachers should ensure that they are teaching the learners how to read effectively and using the reading instructional methods correctly through constant monitoring by advisory teachers.

8   Based on the Namibian language policy, learners should be taught in their home language from Grade1-3 and switch to English as a medium of instruction in Grade 4. The present study has found that some learners may have difficulties in learning to read in their mother tongue. If this problem is not addressed before the end of Grade 3, the learners are likely to have bigger problems to transfer to learning to read in English as a second language, which they have little or no exposure to during the lower primary school phase. The study recommends early identification of reading difficulties, assessment and early intervention to ensure that learners have a good command in reading and writing by the end of their lower primary school phase. Otherwise, their transition to the English medium of instruction will be fraught with some difficulties.

In terms of the findings and discussion on instructional methods of reading identified in this study, the following recommendations for further research can be made:

a) A similar study can be conducted in a different local languages to find out if similar problems are experienced.

b) An investigation into how upper primary school teachers assist learners who come with reading problems in Otjiherero is also necessary.

REFERENCES

Au, K. H., Baker, B. M., Edwards, P. A., Hoffman, J. V., Klein, A. F., Larson, D. L., Logan, J. W., Morrow, L. M., & Shanahan, T. (1999). *Using multiple methods of beginning*

reading instruction. A position statement of the International Reading Association [Brochure]. USA:

Booker, B. (2013). *Phonemic awareness*: *An important piece of the reading puzzle*. Lynchburg College. Retrieved from http://www.lynchburg.edu/

Carnine, D. W., Silbert, J., Kame'enui, E. J., & Tarver, G. (2014). *Direct instruction reading*. Pearson Allyn Bacon: Prentice Hall.

Chatry-Komarek, M. (2003). *Literacy at stake*: *Teaching reading and writing in African schools*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan (Pty).

Chihana, V., & Banda, D. (2013, July 27). The nature of challenges teachers face in using the Malawi breakthrough to literacy (MBTL) course to teach initial literacy to standard one learners in Mzuzu, Malawi. Educational Resource and informational site. Retrieved from https://sitwe.wordpress.com/2013/07/27/the-nature-challenge-literacy-to-standard-one-learners-in-mzuzu-malawi/

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Dickinson, D. K., & Neuman, S. B. (Ed.). (2006). *Handbook of early literacy research.* New York, London: The Guilford Press.

Eldredge, J.L. (2003). *Teaching decoding in holistic classroom*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Freeman, D. E. & Freeman, Y. S. (2004). *Essential linguistics*: *What you need to know to teach reading, ESL, spelling, phonics, and grammar*. United State of America: Heinemann.

Gagen, M. R. (2007, March 14). *Actual Reading Errors Made by Struggling Readers: What These Errors May Indicate: How to Evaluate Reading Errors to Identify Deficiencies and Target Instruction to Build Necessary Skills.* Retrieved from http://www.righttrackreading.com

Gay, L.R., Mills G.E. & Airasian, P. (2009). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications.* (9th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson.

Green, K.B., Terry, N. P., & Gallagher, P. A. (2014). *Progress in language and literacy skills among children with disabilities in early reading first classrooms: Topics in early*

childhood special education. *Hammil Institute on Disabilities*, 33 (4), 249-259. doi: 10.1177/0271121413477498.

Griggs, I. (2000). *Four main methods learning to read*. Retrieved March 13, 2015, from http://www.teachingtreasures.com.au/homeschool/reading-methods/htm

Hartney, R. N. (2011). *Investigating reading difficulties in English second language of grade 3 learner in one primary school in the Khomas Education Region of Namibia*. Master of Thesis: University of Namibia.

Hoover, W. A. (2002). *The importance of phonemic awareness in learning to read: Putting reading first*. SEDL Letter, xiv (3), 14-18. Retrieved from http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/v14n03/3.htm/

Imene, S., & van Graan, M. (1998). *Issues around reading approaches and languages in the development of lower primary teachers*. Okahandja: NIED.

Junius, R. (2009). *Factors Affecting the teaching of English reading skills in a second language of grade 3 learners*. Master Thesis: University of Namibia.

Keung, Y.-C., & Ho, S.-H. (2008). Transfer of reading-related cognitive skills in learning to read Chinese (L1) and English (L2) among Chinese elementary school children. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*,34,103-112. Retrieved from http://www.elsevier.com/locate/cedpsych

Kotva, H. J. (2007). *Using the dynamic indicators for basic early literacy skills to predict success on State wide achievement test*. Doctor of Philosophy, Indiana State University.

Lerner, J. (2000). *Learning disabilities*: T*heory, diagnosis and teaching strategies*. (8th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company

Levy, B. A. (2002). *Formative assessment strategies*. Retrieved April 18, 2015, from http://www.levy.k12.fl.us/instruction/instructional.../60formativeassessment.pd...

Linan-Thompson, S., & Vaughn, S. (2007). *Research-based methods of reading instruction for English language learners grade K-4*. Alexandra, Virginia USA: ASCD

Maho, J. F. (1998). *Few people, many tongues: The languages of Namibia*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan

Makuwa, D. K. (2004). *The SACMEQ 11 report: A study of the conditions of schooling and the quality of primary education in Namibia.* Directorate of Planning and Development.

Mckenna, M. C., & Stahl, K. A. D. (2012). *Assessment for reading instruction: Solving problems in the teaching of literacy* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Mclean, S. (1994). *Questionnaire design: A practical introduction.* Newtown Abbey: University of Ulster Press.

Ministry of Education (2014). *Junior primary phase: syllabus section 2 English first language.* Okahandja: NIED.

Ministry of Education, National Institute for Educational Development. (2012). *Otjiherero orthography number 4.* Windhoek: Namibia Publishing House.

Ministry of Education. (2009). *National policy guide for junior primary subjects grade 1-3.* Okahandja: NIED.

Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture. (2005 /a/). *Curriculum for lower primary phase.* Okahandja: NIED.

Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture. (2005/b/). *First language syllabus grade 1 – 3.* Okahandja: NIED.

Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture. (2003). *The language policy for schools in Namibia: Discussion document.* Okahandja: NIED.

Morrow, L.M. (2011). *Best practices in literacy instruction.* (4th ed.). New York: The Guildford Press.

Morrow, L.M., & Gambrell, L.B. (Ed.). (2011). *Best practices in literacy instruction* (4th ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.

Mule, K. (2014). *Types and cause of reading difficulties affecting the reading of English language: A case of Grade 4 learners in selected schools in Ogong circuit of Namibia.* Master Thesis: University of Namibia

Mwanamukubi, L. (2013). *Reading difficulties in Grade six learners and challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading*: *A Case Study of Chadiza and Chipata District.* Master Dissertation: University of Zambia.

Namibia Population and Housing Census Indicator (2011). Retrieved from http://cms.my.na/assets/documents/p19dmlj9sm1rs138h7vb5c2aa9l.pdf

Oktay, A., & Aktan, E. (2002). A cross-linguistic comparison of phonological awareness and word recognition in Turkish and English. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 1 (10), 38-48.

Ponitz, C. C., & Rimm-Kaufman, S. E. (2010). Context of reading instruction: implications for literacy skills and kindergarteners' behavioural engagement. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 26 (2), 157-168.doi: 10.1016/j.ecresq.2010.10.002

Rayner, K., Foorman, B. R., Perfetti, C. A., Pesetsky, D., & Seidenberg, M. S. (2001). *How psychological science informs the teaching of reading*. *American Psychological Society*, 2 (2), 31-74.

Richard, C., & Schmidt, R. (2002). Longman *dictionary of language*: *Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (3rd ed.). Edinburg, England: Pearson Education Limited.

Serry, T. A., & Oberklaid, F. (2014). Children with reading problems: Missed opportunities to make a difference. *Australian Journal of Education*, 59 (1), 22-34. doi: 101177/0004944114555584

Stanovich, K. E. (2000). Progress in understanding reading: *Scientific foundation and new frontiers*. New York: Guilford Press.

Terepocki, M., Kruk, R. S., & Willows, D. M. (2002). The incidence and nature of letter orientation errors in reading disability. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 35(3), 214-233. Retrieved from http://www.Idx.sagepub.com

Tracey, D.H., & Morrow, L.M. (2006). *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*. London: The Guilford Press.

University of Virginia (2010). *Reading first in Virginia: Professional development.* Retrieved April18,2015.Fromhttp://www.readingfirst.virginia.edu/prof_dev/phonics/iadswv.html.)

Veii, R. H. (2003 a). *Innovations and development in psychology and education: do literacy difficulties in Namibia Herero-English bilingual school children occur in one or both languages?* In: TRANS. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften. No16/2005. Retrieved from http://www.inst.at/trans/16Nr/08_3/veii16.htm

Veii, K. R. H. (2003 b). *Cognitive and linguistic predictors of literacy in Namibia Herero-English bilingual school children.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Guilford, Surrey: University of Surrey.

Veii, K., & Everatt, J. (2005). Predictor of reading among Herero-English bilingual Namibian school children. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 8 (3), 239-254. doi: 10.1017/S1366728905002282

Weinbrenner, S. (2006). *Teaching kids with learning difficulties in the regular classroom: Ways to challenge and motivate struggling students to achieve proficiency with required standard.* Washington D. C: Green Press.

Yaeger, J. A. (2014). *Foundation of reading study guide*. Retrieved from http://www.uwgb,edu/education/files/pdf/WI-foundation-of-Rdg-July-2014.pdf

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

Private Bag 13301, 340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pionerspark, Windhoek, Namibia

The School of Postgraduate Studies
P.Bag13301
Windhoek, Namibia
Tel: 2063523

E-mail: eshaimemanya@unam.na

Date: _FEB. 17, 2014_

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

1. This letter serves to inform that student: _HAZEL ZERIPI_ (Student number:-- _200212656_ -) is a registered student in the Department of _Edu. Psy. + Incl. Edu._ ---- at the University of Namibia. His/her research proposal was reviewed and successfully met the University of Namibia requirements.
2. The purpose of this letter is to kindly notify you that the student has been granted permission to carry out postgraduate studies research. The School of Post-graduate Studies has approved the research to be carried out by the student for purposes of fulfilling the requirements of the degree being pursued.
3. The proposal adheres to ethical principles.

Thank you so much in advance and many regards.

Yours truly,

Karuvizo R.H Veii

Name of Main Supervisor: -------------------------------

Signed:-------------------------------

Dr. C. N.S. Shaimemanya

Signed: ------------------ 12/03/2014

Director: School of Postgraduate Studies

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

1 April 2014

The Regional Education Director

Mrs. F. Caley

Ministry of Education, Otjozondjupa Region

Private Bag 2618

Otjiwarongo

DEAR MRS. GALEY

Request for permission to conduct research with Grade 1 Otjiherero teachers teaching reading in the Otjiherero (L1) and Grade 1 learner who are toughed in Otjiherero (L1) as a medium of instruction.

I hereby, would like to request permission to conduct research with Grade 1 Otjiherero teachers teaching reading in the Otjiherero (L1) and Grade 1 learners who are toughed in Otjiherero (L1) as a medium of instruction at a combined school in the Okahandja circuit. The research is in part fulfilment of my Master of Education: Literacy and Learning degree at the University of Namibia.

The purpose of the study is to investigate Otjiherero reading teaching methods used by teachers when teaching reading in Otjiherero lessons. Data will be collected during the month of June if permission is granted. Grade 1 Otjiherero teachers teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1) will be interviewed. A reading tests as well as tests on phonological awareness to twenty-five Grade 1 learners from each class will be administered.

Minister of Education David Namwandi has recently prescribed the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction from pre-primary to Grade Five as from next year. This is essential to the study I would like to carry as it will shed some light on the reading approaches teachers use when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1) and also offer an in-depth understanding of these reading approaches. Hence, the purpose of being toughed in the mother tongue is to lay a solid foundation for learning throughout the formal education especially in reading.

Therefore, your kind consideration of my request will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

……………….. ……………………

Ms Hazel E. Zeripi (M. Ed Student)   Dr. R. K. Veii (Main Supervisor)

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE DIRECTOR OF OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
OTJOZONDJUPA
REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

Tel no: 264 67 308000/04
Fax no: 264 67 304871

Private Bag 2618
Otjiwarongo
NAMIBIA

Ref no: 11/4/8

To: Ms. Hazel E. Zeripi
Private Bag 2033
Okahandja

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH GRADE 1 OTJIHERERO TEACHERS THE OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

Your letter dated 1 April 2014, bears reference. The Director does not have any objection towards your intention.

Therefore permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research with grade 1 Otjiherero Teachers in the Otjozondjupa Region. We will appreciate it to share your findings and recommendations of your study to improve the provision of quality education in our country.

Ensure that your activities do not interfere with the normal schools programmes preferably to be done in the afternoon.

We wish you fruitful time during your operations.

Yours sincerely

Caley 14/08/2014

Ms. Faustina N. Caley
Director

> OTJOZONDJUPA REGIONAL COUNCIL
> DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION
> 2014 -08- 1 4
> OFFICE OF DIRECTOR
> TEL: 067-308000   PRIVATE BAG 2618
> FAX: 067-304871   OTJIWARONGO
> OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

APPENDIX E : TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE
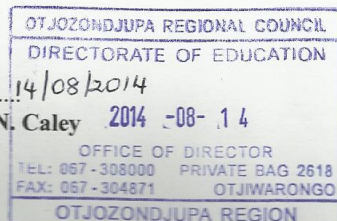
SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Gender? (Please tick [√] in the appropriate box).

Female ☐

Male ☐

2. How old are you? (Please tick [√] in the appropriate box).

20-30 y ears ☐

31-40 years ☐

41-50 years ☐

51-60 years ☐

3. What is your highest academic qualification? Please tick [√] the qualification that applies to you below.

Grade 12 ☐

B.A. ☐
Major subject (e.g. English, Otjiherero, Social Studies, etc.)

B. Sc. ☐
Major subject (e.g. Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math, etc.)

B.ED ☐

Honours ☐

Masters ☐

Others ☐ Specify_____

4. What is your highest professional qualification?

HED (Higher Educational Diploma) ☐

PGDE (Post Graduate Diploma in Education) ☐

BETD (Basic Education Teachers Diploma) ☐

B. Ed (Lower Primary Education) ☐

B. Ed (Upper Primary Education) ☐

5. Are you professionally qualified to teach Otjiherero (L1)?

Yes ☐

No ☐

6. If yes, what is your highest professional qualification? (Please tick [√] the qualification that applies to you below?

HED (Higher Educational Diploma) ☐

PGDE (Post Graduate Diploma in Education) ☐

BETD (Basic Education Teachers Diploma) ☐

B. Ed (Lower Primary Education) ☐

B. Ed (Upper Primary Education) ☐

7. How long have you been teaching Otjiherero (L1) to grade 1 learner? (Please tick [√] the appropriate number of years you have taught.

1-2 years ☐

3-4 years ☐

5-6 years ☐

7-8 years ☐

9-10 years ☐

Others ☐   Specify_____

8. Of the following methods of teaching reading, which one (s) are you familiar with? (Please tick [√] the methods you are familiar with below.

PHONICS METHOD ☐

WHOLE WORD/LOOK-AND-SAY-METHOD ☐

WHOLE LANGUAGE METHOD ☐

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE METHOD ☐

CONTEXT SUPPORT METHOD ☐

COMBINATION OF METHODS (SPECIFY WHICH
ONES)_____

ALL OF THEM

NONE OF THESE METHODS

9. If you are familiar with one or more of these methods of teaching reading, which one(s) do you use when teaching otjiherero reading?

PHONICS METHOD

WHOLE WORD/LOOK-AND-SAY-METHOD

WHOLE LANGUAGE METHOD

LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE METHOD

CONTEXT SUPPORT METHOD

COMBINATION OF METHODS (SPECIFY WHICH
ONES)_____

ALL OF THEM

NONE OF THESE METHODS

10. If you use one or more of the methods of teaching reading, do you use it /them because: (Please tick [√]

 Your training informs you that they are the best methods for teaching reading

Your own opinion informs you,
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

The Ministry of Education prescribes the use of this/those methods

10. For the method (s) that you use to teach reading Otjiherero (L1), briefly describe how you use this methods to teach Otjiherero (L1) reading
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE!!!!!!

APPENDIX F: HERERO SINGLEWORD READING TESTS.

Omarakiza: Mekupe oleisa yo mambo nga nu resa okuza komamuho nga komanene nokuza kombanda nga kehi.

Instruction: The above words will be arranged in a left-to-right and top-to-bottom configuration and the child will have to read the words in that configuration. (Right tick if the child reads the word correctly).

WORDS	CHILD'S RESPONDS	
	×	√
embo		
rara		
ekopi		
oiri		
ombopi		
onyungu		
ombete		
oheva		
ekori		
ohaki		
ondiri		
onyoka		
onguti		
eyuru		
tereka		
epuku		
sesura		
orutuwo		
otjiyaha		
otjimbere		
okambihi		
oureke		
ovivava		

otjihavero		
otjihauto		
oroviungura		
okahorokweva		
otjiputuputu		
okanyandisiwa		
okananamikoka		
oviyaporosine		

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correction	
Total Items	
% Correction	

APPENDIX G: LETTER KNOWLEDGE TEST ON NAME UPPER ALPHABET LETTERS

Omarakiza: Mekuraisire ozoreţera nda nderi mbo kakarata nga mbo retera mbumeurike ove tamuna ena zoretera ndjo.

Instruction: The researcher will point with a finger to the letters and ask the child to name the uppercase alphabet letters.

CHILD'S RESPONDS											
	X	√		**X**	√		**X**	√		**X**	√
J			**O**			**T**			**Z**		
E			**I**			**H**			**Y**		
K			**M**			**N**					
P			**R**			**S**					
U			**V**			**W**					
A			**G**								

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correction	
Total Items	
% Correction	

APPENDIX H: LETTER KNOWLEDGE TEST ON LOWERCASE ALPHABET LETTERS

Omarakiza: Mekuraisire ozoreţera nda nderi mbo kakarata nga mbo retera mbumeurike nomunwe ove tamuna ena zoretera inḍa ozondiţi zoalfabeta.

Instruction: The researcher will point with a finger to the letters and ask the child to name the lower alphabet letters.

CHILD'S RESPONDS												
	X	√		X	√		X	√		X	√	
j			o			t			y			
e			h			n						
k			m			z						
p			r			s						
u			v			w						
a			g			i						

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correction	
Total Items	
% Correction	

APPENDIX I: LETTER SOUND KNOWLEDGE TEST.

Omarakiza: Mekuraisire ozoretera nomunwe nu mbo retera ndjimbaurike ove tamuna ombosiro ndjimai kuramenepo oretera ndjo. Otjikanena: L /l/ po Q /q/

 Instruction: The researcher will point with a finger to the letters and ask the child to say the sound each letter represents for example L /l/ or Q /q/

LETTER	SOUND OF LETTER	CHILD'S RESP.	
		×	√
m	/m/		
r	/r/		
a	/a/		
k	/k/		
w	/w/		
u	/u/		
h	/h/		
i	/i/		
t	/t/		
e	/e/		
g	/g/		
n	/n/		
o	/o/		
p	/p/		
v	/v/		
s	/s/		
z	/z/		
y	/y/		
ṋ	/ṋ/		
ṱ	/ṱ/		

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correction	
Total Items	
% Correction	

APPENDIX J: HERERO BEGINING PHONEME TEST:

SCORE IS THE TOTAL OF CORRECT ANSWERS. IF THE WORDS ARE REPEATED, SCORE HALF A POINT FOR EACH SET.

Omarakiza:Mekutamunine omambo yetatu omambo yevari mbuinga yetatu nga majejanda nozombosiro ndumazembose tjimue mbomautiro womambo. Embo rimue mariutu nombosiro ndjihina kumbosa tjimuna ozombosiro zomambo nga yarue yevari. Ove nambano ndji raera embo ndi ndino'mbosiro ndjihina okuposa tijmuna ozombosiro zo mambo nga warue jevari pomautiro uo mambo ngo.

OTJIKANENA: RAERA, RARA, NANA po TONA, TEJA, RARA,

Instruction: Children have to recognise sounds in different words for example the researcher will read the words to the child and she will ask the child to recognise the words with the same sounds at the beginning and the words with different sounds at the beginning.

WORDS	WORDS W/SAME SOUND AT BEG.	WORD W/DIF. SOUND AT BEG.	CHILD'S RESP.	**x**	√	REPEATED SCORE
onyuṇe onyungu endjando	*onyuṇe Onyungu*	*endjando*				
tona teja vera	*tona teja*	*vera*				
kora kara ryanga	*kora kara*	*ryanga*				
raera rya eyo	*raera rya*	*eyo*				
ewe eho	*ewe eho*	*onde*				

onde			94			
zapo *meya* *zepa*	*zapo* *zepa*	*meya*				
tuka *eta* *twara*	*tuka* *twara*	*eta*				
kara *rora* *kuna*	*kara* *kuna*	*rora*				
eke *ipa* *ekori*	*eke* *ekori*	*ipa*				
vandara *hinda* *viruka*	*vandara* *viruka*	*hinda*				

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correction	
Total Items	
% Correction	

APPENDIX K: HERERO ENDING PHONEME TEST:

SCORE IS THE TOTAL OF CORRECT ANSWERS.IF THE WORDS ARE REPETED,
SCORE HALF A POINT FOR EACH SET.

Omarakiza:Mekutamunine omambo yetatu omambo yevari mbuinga yetatu nga mejejanda nozombosiro ndumazembose tjimue komandero womambo. Embo rimue marijanda nombosiro ndjihina kumbosa tjimuna ozombosiro zomambo nga yarue yevari. Ove nambano ndji raera embo ndi ndino'mbosiro ndjihina okuposa tijmuna ozombosiro zo mambo nga warue jevari ngomadero uo mambo ngo.

OTJIKANENA: TJANGA, TANGA, OTJITI, ONDUDU, OMBUNDU, OMBANDA

Instruction: Children have to recognise sounds in different words for example the researcher will read the words to the child and she will ask the child to recognise the words with the same sounds at the end and the words with different sounds at the end.

WORDS	WORDS W/SAME SOUND AT END.	WORD W/DIFF. SOUND AT END.	CHILD'S RESP.	X	√	REAPET SCORE
ongandu onganda onḏonḏu	*ongandu onḏonḏu*	*onganda*				
omuti omutwe omuṯiṯi	*omuti omuṯiṯi*	*omutwe*				
embo ombandi ondjuo	*embo ondjuo*	*ombandi*				
epya epyu epupu	*epyu epupu*	*epya*				
onḏe onḏeu onḏenḏu	*onḏeu onḏenḏu*	*onḏe*				
ohwa ohonga eho	ohwa ohonga	eho				
honga hena	*honga hena*	*Ohungu*				

Ohungu						
ondjupa *ondjambi* *ondjenda*	*ondjupa* *ondjenda*	*ondjambi*	96			
onḓiro *onḓengu* *onḓu*	*onḓengu* *onḓu*	*onḓiro*				
omutjiwe *omuatje* *omuhongwa*	*omutjiwe* *omuatje*	*omuhongwa*				

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correction	
Total Items	
% Correction	

APPENDIX L: SYLLABLE CLAP READING TEST

Omarakiza: Meku tamunine ombambo hamboumue pekepeke. Omambonga yene ozosyllable ove nambano mburatena kosyllable aihe ndjimozu membo arihe ndimetamuna ove tona omake otja mbo tjivarero tjozosyllabla ndumozu membo ndi.

OTJIKANENA: EKORI, OMURONGO, OKASINO, ORUHERE

Instruction: The researcher will demonstrate to children by reading a word and clap as she says each syllable in the word example: *ekori e* **(clap)** *ko* **(clap)** *ri* **(clap) ekori has three syllables. Children have to clap their hands for each syllable in the words given to them by the researcher.**

Words	Syllable Clap	Child's Resp.	
		x	**√**
omundjivatere	*o-mu-ndji-va-te-re*		
ovendjisuvere	*o-ve-ndji-su-ve-re*		
ovihamunika	*o-vi-ha-mu-ni-ka*		
omuvetone	*o-mu-ve-to-ne*		
okukaranda	*o-ku-ka-ra-nda*		
okukendjimuna	*o-ku-ke-ndji-mu-na*		
omurivatere	*o-mu-ri-va-te-re*		
ozendjihupise	*o-ze-ndji-hu-pi-se*		

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correction	
Total Items	
% Correction	

APPENDIX M: PHONEMIC SEGMENTATION TEST

Omarakiza: Mekutamunine omambo pekepeke. Omabo nga jeno ozomboziro muwo. Nambano ove hana ozombosiro zembo arihe ndime tamuna.

Omarakiza: Tjimuna embo ndi ekopi /e/k/o/p/i/, rara /r/a/r/a/, embuku /e/m/b/u/k/u/

Instruction: The researcher read the words to the child and asks the child to break the words into its component sounds example: the word *rara* component sound r/a/r/a/

Words	Sound/Segmentation	Child's Resp.	
		x	**√**
ovivava	/o/v/i/v/a/v/a/		
ombo	/o/m/b/o/		
ondera	/o/n/d/e/r/a/		
oradio	/o/r/a/d/i/o/		
tupuka	/t/u/p/u/k/a/		
ravaera	/r/a/v/a/e/r/a		
ondondu	/o/n/d/o/n/d/u/		
okapi	/o/k/a/p/i/		
oskole	/o/s/k/o/l/e/		
oureke	/o/u/r/e/k/e/		
tara	/t/a/r/a/		
lesa	/l/e/s/a/		
omaze	/o/m/a/z/e/		
ombwa	/o/m/b/w/a/		
otjikuki	/o/tji/k/u/k/i/		
ohasema	/o/h/a/s/e/m/a		
otjivapa	/o/tji/v/a/p/a/		
otjikutu	/o/tji/k/u/t/u/		
omeva	/o/m/e/v/a/		
oiri	/o/i/r/i/		

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correction	
Total Items	
% Correction	

APPENDIX N: TEACHERS' OBSERVATION CHECKLIST ON READING METHODS

Student Name ....

Student Number ....

Reading Methods	Yes	No
Phonics Method		
➢ **Synthetic phonics**- Children are taught to link an individual letter or letter combination with its appropriate sound and then blend the sounds to form words e.g. */k/æ/t/* blend together to form the word *cat*		
➢ **Analytical phonics-** Children are taught to identify (analyse) the common phoneme (sounds) in a set of words in which each word contains the phoneme (sounds) under study, e.g. teacher and children discuss how the following words are like; *pat, park, push and pen.*		
➢ **Analogy phonics-** Teacher teach children unfamiliar words by analogy to know words, e.g. recognising that the rime segment of an unfamiliar word is identical to that of a familiar word, and then blending the known rime with the new word onset, such as reading brick by recognising that *–ick* is contained in the known word *kick* or reading *stump* by analogy to *jump* or *–ake* in *cake*, *bake* or *make*.		
➢ **Embedded phonics**- Teacher teaches phonics which involve children in learning phonics skills by reading authentic texts.		
➢ **Phonics through spelling-** Teacher teach children to segment words into phoneme (sounds) and to select letters for those phoneme (sounds), e.g. teaching children to spell words phonemically.		
Whole Language Method		
➢ Teacher give an opportunity to children to read whole words either independently, with other children in small guided reading groups, or the teacher read aloud to the children. The children learn these words by reading and should be able to recognise them in texts.		
Language Experience Method		
➢ Teacher uses children's own words to help them read, e.g. children may draw a picture of Dad in the car and teacher write underneath the drawing Dad is in the car. Teacher collects drawings that the children made and use them to write short sentence underneath each drawing.		

Whole-Word Method ➢ Children are taught to recognise whole words or sentences in a text rather than individual sounds. Children look at a word which the teacher sound and in turn will repeat the sound (the word). Flashcards with individual words written on them are used often accompanied with a related picture.		
Content Support Methods ➢ Teacher chooses books with pictures and simple words that interest the children. Teacher reads longer sentences and children read single words or two to three words.		

APPENDIX O: FOCUS GROUP TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

1. What teaching methods do you use when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

----

2. How effective are the teaching methods in enabling learners learning how to read in Otjiherero (L1)?

----

3. What difficulties do you encounter when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

----

4. How do you demonstrate these difficulties you encounter when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

----

5. What errors do children make when reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

----

6. What do you do about these errors?

----

7. What prerequisite skills (e.g. phonological awareness) for learning to read do learners bring to grade 1?

THANK YOU!!!!!!!

APPENDIX P: TRANSCRIPTION OF THE FOCUS GROUP TEACHERS INTERVIEW

Interviewer: What teaching methods do you use when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

Interviewee 1: [Cell phone vibrating] "When we are teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1) we use phonics, whole word method/ look-and-say method as well as model reading, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading, one week we use model reading the other week we use shared reading, the followed week we use guided reading and the week thereof we use independent reading." "We basically change methods we do not only focus on one method. For instance week one we read a story to the children, week two we read [coughing] sentences to them, week three we help those who are struggling with reading and week four we allow them to read on their own."

Interviewer: How effective are the teaching methods in enabling learners learning how to read in Otjiherero (L1)?

Interviewee 1: Mmmm

Interviewee 2: Explain what you mean by effective.

Interviewer: The methods you mentioned earlier how do they proved to work well when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

Interviewee 2: Yes! "It depends from child to child, one child is able to grasp something faster and others are weak in grasping something when taught how to read. Some learners do well and others do weak in their reading."

Interviewee 1: Yes! "Some learners do well for instance when you read to them, they are able to listen carefully and are able to answer well." "When we read together aloud some learners read things out of nowhere because of their mind not fully developed and they read for the

sake of reading." "When it comes to answer questions you will find one or two learners who are able to give correct answers."

[Coughing] "When learners have to read on their own, those who knows the letter sounds are able to read the letter sounds and blend the letter sounds to form a word."

Interviewer: What difficulties do you encounter when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

Interviewee 1: "The difficulties we experience are when learners confuse sounds."

Interviewee 2: Yes!

Interviewee 1: "For instance when learners have to sound /i/ they sound /e/ or /z/ they sound /s/ it is where they get confuse". "Another difficulty we experience is when learners have to read words, they have problem blending the letter sounds to form words for example: the word Omurandise is blent like this O/mu/ra/ndi/se/ but the learners blend it like this Omu/ra/ndise/, the word Omukohe- /O/mu/ko/he/ learners blend it like this Omu/kohe/, the word Omukombe- O/mu/ko/mbe/ learners blend it like this Omu/kombe/ and the word Omuṱuta- /O/mu/ṱu/ta/ learners blend it like this Omu/ṱu/ta/."

Interviewee 2: Yes! Blending.

Interviewee 1: "Some learners know the letter sounds but when you give them words to read, they struggle to blend the sounds in order for them to read and that is also one of the problem we face."

Interviewee 2: "Another challenge we face is the prescribed textbook we use for teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1), it has long words which Grade 1 learners find difficult to read."

Interviewer: How do you demonstrate these difficulties you encounter when teaching reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

105

Interviewee 2: "At times we ask those learners that are weak to come back after school so that we try to recap the lessons done earlier and to see whether there are some that are able to remember what we have done earlier." " We also try to write this letter sounds for them to go study them at home." "The next day we ask them to read the letter sounds and we correct them where they are wrong."

Interviewer: This letter sounds are they written on a paper or on the chalkboard?

Interviewee 2: Yes! On a piece of paper and we give to each learner to go study at home.

Interviewer: Ok!

Interviewee1: Yes! "we write them on a piece of paper for them to go study at home. After school when we call them back for revision and try to explain to them, that every time they are reading sounds they should try to look at the alphabet letters ,how the letters are positioned so that they are able to identify which alphabet letter it is and the sound it represent for example: alphabet letters [b, d] and the sounds /b/ and /d/, [i, j] and the sounds /i/ and /j/, [s, z] and the sounds /s/ and /z/, [m, n] and the sounds /m/ and /n/ and [v,w] and the sounds /v and /w/. Because these alphabet letters [b, d], [i, j], [s, z] , [m, n] and [v,w] more or less look the same and therefore it is important for them to look carefully at the alphabet letters before sounding them out. That is how we try to help them. And another thing we try to explain to the learners is that all letters have different sounds and they should be able to differentiate them. So, we write the letter sounds on the chalkboard and learners should be able to listen to themselves when they are sounding out the letter and know exactly where the sound is coming from in the mouth. Is the sound coming out between the teeth? Or is it between the tongue and palate? And so on…."

Interviewee 2: "There is this confusion between letter sounds /v/ and /z/, /k/ and /ng/."

Interviewee 1: Yes! "That is why we try to explain to them to listen to the sound whether it is sounding in front of the mouth, in the middle of the mouth or is the sound deep in the mouth." [coughing]

Interviewer: What errors do children make when reading in Otjiherero (L1)?

Interviewee 1: "The problem we face is when learners confuse letter sounds when reading for instance the child may read /i/ instead of /e/ in a word like Oheva the child will read Ohiva; /k/ instead of /ng/ in a word like Honga the child will read Hoka; /v/ instead of /w/ in a word like Owo the child will read Ovo and /s/ instead of /z/ in a word like Zuva the child will read Suva." "We correct them by telling them the correct letter sounds but that confusion is always there."

Interviewee 2: Yes! "They really get confused."

Interviewee 1: "But is not all the learners that get confuse only few of them." "Another problem is that they forget the letter sounds whether this was /s/ or /z/? Or /v/ or /w/ and instead of giving letter sounds they give the name of the alphabet letter for example /l/ and [L], /s/ and [S]."

Interviewer: What do you do about these errors?

Interviewee 2: "We try to let the learners listen to different sounds of things. For instance we tell them to be quiet and ask them what sound they can hear outside the classroom whether is a bird sound? Or a car sound? Or people making noise? So, we try to let them listen to different sounds and whether they are able to differentiate the sounds. By doing so it gives us an idea whether they are able to distinguish sounds or not. And if they are able to, we ask them to relate the different sounds to the alphabet letters they have learned in class." [Mmmm] "So we at least try that maybe they will be able to remember the letter sounds. We

also try to demonstrate using the mouth and mouth picture that /a/ and /o/ are different sounds and when you sound /o/ the mouth will form an O shape and /a/ the mouth is wide open and does not form an O shape and when you sound /u/ the mouth also form an O shape but the lips are pushed out and /m/ the lips are close together and you can feel vibration in the throat and /n/ the lips are a bit open and the tongue is touching the palate. By doing so we are able to explain to them that sounds are formed differently in the mouth. That's how we try to help them."

Interviewee 1: " We also write words on a card that starts with the same letter sounds for example /k/ kara (stay), ketu (ours),korui (water well) kura (grow), or words that's starts with /ng/ ngatuṇue (lets drink), ongero (last born), ongava (rhinoceros), ongora (whip) and ask them what sound each word begin with. So that they know that this word kara begins with /k/ and this word ngero begins with /ng/, these help them to differentiate the different letter sounds too."

Interviewer: What prerequisite skills (e.g. phonological awareness) for learning to read do learners bring to Grade 1?

Interviewee 1: [Mmmm] " Just as we have mentioned earlier we test learners through hearing sounds outside the classroom to see whether they have any knowledge of sounds that they have learned in pre-school. We make learners listen to sounds outside the classroom whether they can hear a cow Moo, a bird Chirps or a car Voo Voo and so on….. We make them sit in silence and listen whether there is any sound they can hear or not. We also look at whether they know the letter sound that begin with their own names by putting letters on the chalkboard and ask them to identify the letter sound and say whose name start with that letter sound. Even if they don't know the letter sound at least if they are able to see the letter and remember it through their peers names that helps a lot."

Interviewer: When they come to Grade 1 do they have any idea of the alphabet A, B, C or if they know how to read or write?

Interviewee 2: Ae! Yes!" They know but…"

Interviewee 1: "Only few learners know the alphabet letters and those are the ones that went to pre-primary school but most of them can't read or write."

Interviewee 2: "Some learners know that there are words and they can be written down in a book but the problem is whether this words are written between lines or outside the lines in the book,   they have no idea. Even to start to write from left to the right they also have no idea of that. They just start to write anywhere in the book up or down, right to left as long as they are writing."

Interviewee 1: "So we try to tell learners that when writing they must start from left to right and write between the lines in their books and not outside the lines. And when they are reading they should start from top to bottom and not bottom to top. So we use the directions of an arrows pointing up, down, left and right to guide them. Also to ask them to look at the letters how they are positioned for example letter b face to the right and letter d face to the left and so on….."

Interviewer: Anything you want to add interviewee 2?

Interviewee 2: No

Interviewer: I thank both of you for availing your time and assistance in answering my questions.

Interviewee1: Thank you.

Interviewee 2: Thank you