

**LITERACY DIFFICULTIES IN FOURTH GRADERS TRANSITIONING TO
ENGLISH LANGUAGE FROM OTJIHERERO IN THE OTJOZONDJUPA
REGION**

**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the specific literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders who previously received instruction in the mother tongue (Otjiherero) at the lower primary phase and at the time of the study, had transitioned to the upper primary phase where they receive instruction in English. The mixed method design was used to collect data. Teachers' data were collected through open-ended questionnaires, establishing the kinds of reading instructional methods they are familiar with, which ones they use when teaching literacy, and their experience teaching children transitioning from mother tongue instruction to the English medium of instruction at the upper primary phase. The learners' decoding, reading, spelling, and comprehension abilities were assessed to determine the level of literacy and comprehension skills acquired at the lower primary phase in preparation for the upper primary phase of schooling.

Results showed that most of the learners experience difficulty with decoding, reading, spelling, listening, and reading comprehension skills at the upper primary phase. Furthermore, the results showed that teachers were familiar with three different kinds of reading instructional methods, all of which they used in literacy instruction. The teachers viewed teaching transitioning learners as a challenge in that these learners lacked the English alphabet knowledge and English letter sound knowledge, resulting in always having to revisit the lower primary phase English curriculum in order to bring these learners up to standard.

The study concluded that the literacy difficulties the learners experience stem from a lack of thorough grounding in the basics of literacy learning at the preprimary and lower primary phases of schooling.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BETD	Basic Education Teachers Diploma
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALPS	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
ELS	Educational Library Services
MBESC	Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture
MOE	Ministry of Education
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
SACMEQ	Southern & Eastern Africa Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my sons Tjaru Kaputu and Uandje-Mahongora Kavihuha, to know that with perseverance one achieves his/her goal. Therefore, they should not fear to take up new challenges in life, regardless of the turbulences along the way.

DECLARATION

I, Tjara Kaputu, declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Date

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the study

1.1.1 Language in schools in Namibia

The 1993 language policy states that home language (the child's mother tongue) should be used as the medium of instruction from grade 1 through to grade 3. English as medium of instruction starts in grade 4 to 12 and in grade 4 the mother tongue becomes the second language. The policy states that English is a compulsory subject, starting from grade 1, continuing throughout the school system (MBESC, 2003). Furthermore, all learners must study two languages as subjects from Grade 1 onwards, one of which must be English. Where there are sufficient learners from the same language group to form a class, provision must be made for them to learn in their own mother tongue up to grade 12. The only exception to this two-language minimum is for expatriate learners who may be permitted to opt for a one –language curriculum. Nothing in the policy will prevent a learner taking English, a foreign language and a Namibian language, as long as one of the languages is taken on either first or second language level (MBESC, 2003). The language options available are: First-language level Afrikaans, English, German, Khoekhoegowab, Oshindonga, Rukwangali, Setswana, Thimbukushu, Otjiherero, Oshikwanyama, Silozi, Ju|'hoansi, Rumanyo and (Portugues). Second-language level Afrikaans and English (other second languages will be developed according to demans). All these languages have the same weighting for promotional purposes. The policy only makes provision that the language of the majority group in that community could be selected as the

medium of instruction for the first three school years (MBESC, 2003). Hence, not all learners are taught in their mother tongue.

In the Namibian schools, Grades 1-4 are considered as the lower Primary phase, with Grade 4 being a transitional year before the learner starts with the upper Primary phase, Grade 5-7 where they are taught through the medium of English in all subjects. During the Grade 4, year mother tongue plays a supportive role in the teaching, as the learners are introduced to learning through the medium of English in preparation for the upper primary phase. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the teaching of lower primary learners through the medium of Otjiherero (mother tongue) in Namibia contributes to literacy difficulties in English at Grade4 level. Deriving from personal experience as an educator, majority of the learners see the transition as a challenge, as they fail to display literacy competencies (reading and writing) expected from them when they reach Grade4.

1.1.2. Literacy skills

According to Stanovich and Siegel (1994), the capacity to read and write is related to children age related developmental timetables. This implies that, at a certain age learners are expected to have developed various literacy skills as per the developmental timetable. This is also expected from the learners in Namibia, specifically learners in Grade 4. At Grade 4 level learners should be able to recognize signs, letters, shapes within their environment and write simple sentences, read single words and spell.

Even though there is no clear agreement on the precise chronological or mental age; or on a particular developmental level should that children reach before they are ready to learn to read and write. It is still imperative that a grade 4 learner has developed his/her reading ability. Without reading skills, learners cannot understand the contents of their textbooks. This is the main reason why Namibian learners fail to progress satisfactorily in school (Educational Library Services (ELS), 2003). Reading difficulties among primary learners is an issue of concern in any society (Snow, Burns and Griffin, 1998) because reading is considered to be a basic need in the modern world of science and technology. This is supported by Lerner (2000), who states “that a learner who misses a chance of learning to read in the first three years of schooling is likely to be poor in reading throughout school.”

Poor reading skills contribute to a lot of challenges in life. Some learners drop out prior to the acquisition of reading skills and “others read without understanding” (Kuutondokwa, 2003, p.8). Children relates to their peers better through reading. They also become more self-reliant and are able to prepare for career and social responsibilities. As a result, those providing learners reading pathways should not take it for granted but give it the attention it requires. The above sentiments reveal a serious challenge for learners in literacy that requires a study in the specific literacy difficulties experienced by learners, including the target population of this study.

In addition, Dechant and Smith (as cited in Hartney, 2011) believes that, as culture becomes more complex, reading plays an increasingly greater role in satisfying personal needs and in promoting social awareness and growth.

It is through reading that one acquires many of his/her standards of behavior and morality, broadens his/her interests, tastes and understanding of others. In contemporary education systems, effective reading is essential for successful learning. Based on Dechant and Smith (as cited in Hartney, 2011) believes and the findings on drop outs by Kuutondokwa (2003) the link between reading and successful education is brought to light. Therefore, educational success requires good reading and writing. These justify the Namibian curriculum for Primary Phase which expects learners to acquire specific reading and writing skills before entering Grade 4, the transitional year.

As according to the basic competencies on reading in the Curriculum for lower Primary Phase Grades 1-3 (NIED, 2005; MBESO, 2005), at the end of Grade 3, the learner should be able to:

- Read prepared and unprepared texts of about 50 words from fictional and factual texts.
- Correctly answer comprehension questions on the texts and talk freely about them.
- Find basic information from factual texts.
- Demonstrate good reading habits through eagerness to read.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The language policy suggests that learners should be taught through the mother tongue (Otjiherero) from Grade 1 up to Grade 3 and have English as a subject (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) 2003). As a result, some of the learners could possibly experience difficulties in reading and writing in English when they enter the transitional phase (Grade 4). This observation aroused the researcher's interest in exploring the causes of literacy difficulties experienced in English, particularly by the Grade 4 learners who are taught in Otjiherero first language at lower primary school phase. An empirical study aimed at uncovering the underlying factors hindering these learners' acquisition of English (literacy) skills would help to understand why and how they experience difficulty when they use English as a medium of instruction in the upper primary phase and beyond.

Even though the language policy makes provision teaching in mother tongue at lower primary phase (MBESC, 2003), with the good intention that the child develop basic competencies in mother tongue the unintended outcome is negative and somehow yields unwanted results.

The Southern Africa Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality report (SACMEQ, 2010) shows that Namibia is among the three SACMEQ countries with low levels of reading as can be seen in two studies that were conducted in 2000 and 2007 among Grade 6 pupils. Namibia's average reading score was 496.9 in SACMEQ III report (2010), for Grade 6 learners, and those results falls below the norm set of 500 (Mukuwa, 2010).

In addition, the SACMEQ III report (2010) highlights that Namibia showed progress on their reading results compared to the other two reports, i.e. SACMEQ I that had a

score of 460 and SACMEQ II with a score of 449, this was an indication of serious action to be taken in order to improve literacy skills in a foreign language at the primary level. Even though, the SACMEQ report focused on Grade 6 learners and not the actual target group of this research it provides evidence that even the Grade 4 may fall under the same trend.

Many empirical research evidence based studies have shown that there are various literacy difficulties experienced by learners at the upper primary phase. Mule (2014); cite reasons such as teaching methods, lack of pre-primary education and multilingualism as affecting learners' literacy skills in a foreign language at the upper primary school phase and beyond. There seems to be no specific study that has investigated literacy difficulties experienced in English language by fourth graders taught in Otjiherero at the lower primary phase in Otjozondjupa Region, hence the necessity of this research.

Furthermore, this study bridges the gap in the literature by providing new empirical knowledge about the literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders taught in Otjiherero L1 at the lower primary phase and transit to English L2 medium of instruction, more especially at upper primary level.

1.3. Research Questions

In order to discover the literacy difficulties in English experienced by fourth graders taught in Otjiherero 1st language at lower primary phase the following basic research questions were answered:

1. What are the literacy difficulties experienced in English by Grade four learners taught in Otjiherero 1st language at the lower primary phase?
2. How do the fourth grade learners perform in the English literacy tasks such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, spelling, single word reading, and pseudo word reading?
3. What are these teachers' experiences of teaching literacy to learners coming from an Otjiherero medium of instruction?

1.4. Significance of the study

This study adds to the body of knowledge in the field of literacy difficulties experienced during the transitional phase, in Namibia. Therefore, the study sheds some light and offers an in-depth understanding of the literacy difficulties that might arise from the use of mother tongue (Otjiherero) by the target group as a medium of instruction from Grade 1-3. The study suggests ways in which these literacy issues could be addressed for an ultimate improved learner performance in English second language as a whole at primary level.

1.5. Limitations of the study

The study was carried out in the Otjozondjupa Education Region in Namibia and the area of interest was the Okakarara constituency. The Okakarara constituency is one of the constituencies in the Otjozondjupa region with schools that offer mother tongue (Otjiherero) as a medium of instruction at lower primary phase and later on switch to English as a medium of instruction in grade four and beyond. The results

of the study may be generalized to the whole Otjozondjupa region or other regions in Namibia, as the focus and significant lessons can be drawn from this study, and be contextualised to similar situations.

1.6. Definition of keywords

The following terms were used frequently and they needed to be defined in the context of this research, as various definitions or ways of understanding them may exist.

Reading and writing difficulties: According to Hamilton (2012) reading and writing as defined from a normative perspective is how a child performs in reading and writing compared to peers or educational expectations.

Snow et al., (1998) define reading difficulties as the lower tail of a normal distribution of reading ability in the population. In other words individuals with reading difficulties are those whose achievement levels are lower than those of the rest of the people in the distribution.

Mother Tongue or First Language (L1): “One’s home language; the first language learned by children and that is usually passed on from one generation to the next” (Cook, 2000, p.10). In the context of the study mother tongue or first language refers to Otjiherero.

English as a Second Language (ESL): “refers to the use of English by speakers of different native languages. It is a language other than ones’ mother tongue, used for the purpose of communication in public institutions, for example, education or government (MBESC, 2003).

Literacy: refers to the ability to read and write (Baker, 2006)

Regardless of differences in definitions, there seems to be general agreement that literacy (for both adults and school-age children) involves the ability to use written symbols and conventions to communicate ideas about the world and to extract meaning from the written text, i.e., the ability to read and write (Wells, 1987).

Medium of instruction: refers to the language teachers use to teach learners. It is a means of conveying information to learners, such as the official language of the country or the native mother tongue of the learners (MBESC, 2003)

1.7. Structure of the study

The first chapter provides the introduction, discussed the orientation of the study, the statement of the problem, the basic research questions of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study and the clarification of basic concepts and terms.

In the second chapter the focus is on the theoretical framework and the literature review. The third chapter discussed the research methodology. In addition, the research findings are presented, interpreted and analysed in the fourth chapter. Finally, the conclusion and the recommendations were presented in the fifth chapter.

1.8. Summary

This chapter shows what the study is all about, in terms of its rationale, statement of the problem, limitations of the study, research questions, clarification of basic concepts and significance. The objective of the thesis is to explore literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders transitioning to English from Otjiherero medium of instruction. The study forms a basis for further studies in literacy at

primary level. The main research question was given, which focuses on the literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders that were taught in the Otjiherero medium of instruction from grade one to three. With specific focus on how the learners performed in the five tests administered and what difficulties were prevalent from their tests results. The chapter ends with the structure of the study. While the next chapter presents the theoretical framework and the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the various Stage Models of Reading as the theoretical framework that forms the basis of the study. This is followed by a review of evidence and research-based findings relating to reading and writing literature on important aspects such as: Stages of reading development, the views on Lower primary school curriculum English version, Transitional bilingualism, Bilingualism and the Role of learners' communication in the second language. As well as aspects of literacy within English that learners experience difficulties with, causes of reading and writing difficulties, Skills required for proficient reading, Reading risk indicators, Teaching instruction with regard to learners with literacy difficulties and lastly teaching methods of teaching reading and writing are discussed.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Various stage models of reading inform how reading development in children unfolds. This study was informed by these integrated models of reading by different scholars (Marsch, Friedman, Welsch, & Desberg, 1981); Frith (1985), Ellis (1993) and Snowling (2000). This is because these scholars all focus on reading development in children that goes from the simplest to the most advanced reading skills. Therefore, proponents of stage models of reading believe that “literacy development is progressive, and is a process that begins with basic levels of literacy development and ends in more advanced literacy skills” Marsch et al., (1981); Frith (1985).

As learners are being taught during each of these stages; word recognition, fluency and comprehension should happen in order for the learners to become fluent readers.

Marsh et al., (as cited in Kuutondokwa, 2003) argue that children go through a series of developmental stages in the acquisition of skilled, adult-like reading and writing. The first stage they go through is known as the Linguistic Guessing stage. Similarly, Ellis (1993), states that during this stage children experience challenges to decode words unknown to them, particularly if those words are not used within a context. As a result, they merely guess the words. Consequently, children's reading is now dependent on the visual aspects of words and/or the content within which a word is placed.

The second stage is the Discrimination net-learning stage, or Sophisticated Guessing stage. In this stage Snowling (2000) agrees with Ellis (1993) that children depend on sight vocabulary they have developed for purposes of reading. Children, at this stage, are still unable to use grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules. The children's phonics skills are undeveloped. Furthermore, Snowling, (2000) informs us that in the third stage, the Sequential Decoding stage, children develop skills of decoding, which enables them to apply grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules to decode unknown words. Decoding at this stage involves segmenting and then blending letters in words. Thus, children become gradually more independent at reading words. In the fourth stage, the decoding skills become more sophisticated such that children are able to read words by analogy. The efficiency and scope of their literacy skills continue to be refined (Snowling, 2000). Likewise, Frith's (1985) reading model also proposes an initial stage in reading and spelling that is depended on gross or highly salient visual features of the word; for example, the initial letter, its length or shape or some non-letter cue such as colours. In Frith's second stage, children advance to the alphabetic stage when they are able to apply letter-sound

correspondence rules. Thus, when reading, children sound out letters of the word and then blend them to form the target word.

At the same time, their spelling becomes semi-phonetic because their knowledge of the alphabetic system remains rather rudimentary. Arbitrary extra letters, incomplete spelling, and/or lack of vowels characterize semi-phonetic spelling (Frith, 1985). In the third and final stage, the orthographic stage, children are now able to read unfamiliar words more efficiently by analogy with words they already know. This is because they can now segment words into constituent phonemes and they have knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules, which allow them to take full advantage of the alphabetic system. Later during this stage, children transfer their reading skills to spelling and use their orthographic skills to spell words conventionally. The theory relates to the current study in the sense that learners are expected to have gone through reading development stages in order to make the upper primary phase reading easy. Given the literacy difficulties learners in transition to the upper primary phase are thought to experience, it could be hypothesized that these learners may be stuck at the early stages of reading development as postulated by these models of reading. Thus, these models helped understand at what stage or stages of the developmental reading process these learners could be stagnated.

Although the stage models proved to be popular, they were characterized by certain shortcomings. For example, they suggested that literacy was universal and developed in a particular sequence, with each stage building on the previous one. However, this assertion was challenged by other research findings that showed that not all children progress through the stages as these models proposed (Stewart & Coltheart, 1988). Similarly, these stage theories were mainly derived from studies of monolingual English-speaking children studies. Children acquiring literacy in regular, transparent

orthographies provide strong evidence against a universal sequence. In German, a more transparent orthography than English, Wimmer (1996) showed that the logographic stage is generally bypassed. Similarly, Snowling (2000) argue that there is also evidence to suggest that developmental dyslexic children proceed straight to the orthographic stage without passing through the alphabetic stage. Such evidence suggests that there are individual differences in attaining literacy that do not necessarily conform to the stage models and that individuals can take different routes to attaining the ultimate phase of literacy.

Clearly, the stage models need to be revised if they lead to the strange argument that dyslexics attain the highest stage of literacy in easier stages than those experienced by non-dyslexics. Further weaknesses of the Marsh et al's model include limitations in its attempt to account for the process of literacy development in children based on Piagetian stages Piaget (as cited in Vei 2003). Instead of demonstrating how the children's reading performance relates to their underlying cognitive competencies, it merely illustrates those words that children can read and spell at the various stages. Furthermore, the model fails to distinguish between the different strategies children use when attempting to decode unknown words on the one hand, and familiar words on the other (Snowling, 2000). Given that Frith (1985) model was based on that of Marsh et al, similar criticism have been made of both models.

Despite their limitations, the stage theories remain useful in tracing children's literacy development and in providing a framework against which to assess literacy acquisition across language domains. This is in relation to the focus of the current research on the literacy difficulties in fourth graders transitioning to English language from Otjiherere in Otjozondjupa region.

2.3. Stages of reading development

A number of studies in the area of reading, for example, those conducted by Chall (1987), Dickinson and Neuman (2006), and Lerner (2000) point out difficulties learning to read in English when not a first language. Although these studies were conducted outside Namibia they have a direct bearing on the teaching and learning to read and write English in Namibia too. This is because the Namibia education system uses English as medium of instruction for speakers of English as an alternative language. Thus, these studies relate to Namibia's context, as Namibia is no exemption to the world in issues of reading difficulties, specifically with regard to the issue of literacy difficulties in transitioning learners which remains under investigated.

Chall (1987) identified six stages of reading development, from pre-reading, an early stage known as 'logographic reading', which is the earliest stage in which young children begin to recognise limited vocabulary of whole words, using incidental cues such as a logo, a picture, a colour or a shape, through early literacy to mature fluent reading. The instructional method the teachers use should be compatible with the emerging competence of the reader. The Institute of Reading Development (2011) presents the following four stages.

Stage 1: Learning to read

This stage begins when children are four to five years old and beginning to learn letters. The central focus is on decoding words meaning, learning the alphabet and the sounds that letters make, learning to distinguish sounds in speech, and learning to sound out words. At this stage children establish a foundation for a lifelong

relationship with books. However, researchers such as Lerner (2000), and Dickinson and Neuman (2006), maintain that children who are exposed to books in their early years learn to read more easily.

Stage 2: Developing independent reading

This stage begins when children achieve fluency in beginners' reader books, usually during Grade 2. The focus during this stage is on a large amount of reading in books at the appropriate level of difficulty. Moat (1994) argued that children need knowledge of sound-symbol associations and abundant practice to contribute to fluency in word recognition. At this stage, reading practice and skill development are both primarily focused on fluency development as learners start to decode words of three or more syllables.

Stage 3: Reading with absorption

This stage begins when children achieve fluency in children's novels, usually in Grades 3 or 4 (Chall, 1987). The focus is on reading development about reading of children's novels at gradually increasing levels of difficulty. This process enables them to develop a certain level of fluency and comprehension, and automaticity in reading as a basis for more than just the habit of reading for pleasure. When children gain fluency, it lays the basis for all subsequent reading development.

Stage 4: Critical reading

At this stage, children undergo transformation, physical, emotional, and cognitive changes starting in middle school and continuing throughout high school and into adulthood. These changes bring, in their wake, a new cognitive capability that first

appears in the middle school and continues to grow throughout the secondary and post-secondary years. According to Lipson and Wixon (1997), when a child who has achieved the goal of stage 3 of reading development enters stage 4, the opportunity exists for a much more effective reading process to develop. A child with a strong reading background who reads with a solid level of fluency and comprehension will experience relatively automatic and accurate fluency of understanding while reading. However, training is required for critical reading to become most useful: “Students become cognisant of what they read, developed the ability to recognise how material is organised and the ability to monitor comprehension and adjust reading rate or reread when necessary” (Moat, 1994, p.56). In addition to the stages of reading development outlined above, views on the lower primary school English curriculum are presented below. This is to present the focus of the English curriculum at the lower primary phase.

2.4. Views on the lower primary school English curriculum

The lower primary phase of formal education covers the first four years of primary education. The focus of the lower primary phase is primarily on three areas: literacy, numeracy, and broad knowledge of the immediate environment of the learner. Developing the learner’s language is the most fundamental aspect of the lower primary phase. The language policy therefore, states that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction throughout the first three years, with a transition to English Second Language starting in the fourth year. This is to get learners to understand various concepts that they are taught and to build a sense of identity among the young ones. The curriculum further states that language is the key to understanding the educational expectations at lower primary phase (MOE, 2005). Therefore, learners should be able to communicate orally or in written English with

their teachers and among each other in order for them to understand the educational expectations at their level.

In Grade 4 the learners' ought to transit to the English medium of instruction and the mother tongue to be a taught subject. This is viewed as creating an increase in use of English, while proportionately decreasing the use of mother tongue in the classroom. Nonetheless, this seems not to be the case, as some fourth graders are not confident enough to use the English language in Grade four.

This is evident in some Namibian studies, for example Van Graan (2006) maintains that most learners in Namibian English classes are quite passive and sometimes speak in the mother tongue. Van Graan further states that the learners have a tendency of talking to one another in their mother tongue rather than having full discussion in English as a medium of instruction. This is not a bad approach for someone transitioning from one language to the other, but it could have an effect on the learners' progress in mastering the medium of instruction. Consequently, the purpose of the transition is viewed as creating an increase in the use of English in the classroom while proportionately decreasing the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction (Baker, 2003). The mother tongue however, may be used to scaffold English but entirely in the English classroom discussions.

Similarly, Shilongo (2007) observation at an unidentified school in Oshana region revealed that both Grade 4 teachers and learners are struggling to learn through the medium of English. For this reason, it seems that limitations in English proficiency overshadow the intention of the English curriculum for lower primary (2005). Baker (2003), suggest that, in order for the transition to succeed, the teachers at these levels

need to be bilingual in order to promote the transition from home language for example Otjiherero to the school language (English). The idea of Baker (2003) on the transitional bilingualism is excellent, it makes the transition period easy and worthy for the learners.

2.5. Transitional Bilingualism

Transitional bilingualism focuses on the early exit from mother tongue to English. Learners in Namibia at grade four are taught in mother tongue for the first three years of primary school and transition to English as the medium of instruction until university level. The learners' transition to the English medium of instruction and the mother tongue becomes a school subject up to university. This is viewed as creating an increase in the use of English in the classroom while proportionately decreasing the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction (Baker, 2003). Therefore the transition phase should be handled with serious attention by the policy makers and implementers in order for bilinguals to reap opportunities of being bilingual.

2.5. Bilingualism

Bilingualism brings about many social and academic opportunities. Bilinguals often experience some fun in acquiring a new language, yet, there are also challenges involved (Bifuh-Ambe, 2009). Some factors which make learning English a challenge are the experiences in the first language and learners' age. Language proficiency includes the ability to use language skills effectively in both social and academic contexts.

Harley, Allen, Cummins and Swain (as cited in Bifuh-Ambe, 2009), show that it takes on average two years to develop basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) while the development of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) requires a period of five to seven years. Therefore, both BICS and CALPS must be developed sufficiently for a learner to attain the level of proficiency required to meet the cognitive challenges of the classroom.

Obviously, it will take more than two years for a Namibian child to develop the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) due to the fact that the social interaction is influenced by the country's historical background. For example, in Namibia children and adults interact mainly in Afrikaans, or in their home languages. Hence, English is only used as a medium of instruction in schools, official language and for legislation purposes.

Even though, English is the language of the media in the country; children tend to learn Afrikaans and their home languages faster than English as they are used more socially (Van Graan, 2006). Therefore, it will take even more years than what is expected for a Namibian child to develop the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in English language.

Thus in the Namibian context, BICS may be applicable to Grade 1-3, when instruction take place in the mother tongue and English is taught as a subject. This means that in these Grades, simple English language that provides non-verbal support is used to facilitate understanding. On the other hand, CALP would be associated with Grade 4 and upward, where English is used as a medium of instruction. This implies that in line with the requirement of the Grade 4 syllabus,

learners are expected to be sufficiently proficient in English as a medium of instruction to face the academic demands in the upper primary and beyond. Consequently, BICS and CALPS are of great relevance to the current study. They indicate clearly the challenge faced by learners who were in the Otjiherero medium of instruction from Grade1-3 and now transitioned to the English medium of instruction in Grade 4 where learners are more expected to use English when writing, reading and speaking with each other during class and on the school premises. As a result, fourth graders are expected to be fluent readers of English, as well as being able to write compositions using simple sentences, read single words, spell words and respond to comprehension passages.

2.6. The role of the learners' communication in the second language

Studies conducted by Gass and Selinker (2001), and Dulay and Hawings (1982) have identified three types of communication in which learners participate.

One way communication: according to Gass and Selinker (2001), a learner listens to or read the target language but does not respond. The communication is one-way towards the learner. This type of communication is a typical example of most primary school learners in rural areas when introduced to English as a subject. At this stage, (Grade1-2), the teaching provides simple, basic communication to facilitate understanding and learners do understand the simplified instructions but cannot respond.

Restricted two-way communication: Here the learner responds orally to someone, but does not use the target language. The response might be in the learner's first language or even non-verbal (Gass & Selinker, 2001 p.143).

Full two-way-communication: for Dulay and Hewings (1982), the transition is made and the learner may respond in the target language, acting as both recipient and sender of the verbal messages. These studies emphasise the benefits of allowing one-way communication and restricted two-way communication during early parts of the learning process, and waiting until the learner is ready to produce the target language before engaging in full two-way communication. In the Namibian education system the two full way communication is a requirement for Grade 4 and upward, but, of significance is whether learners at this stage have adequate English language proficiency. This is because there are various aspects of literacy within the English language that learners experience difficulties with that could hinder the learners' full engagement in a full two-way communication. These aspects are discussed in the next section.

2.7. Aspects of literacy within English that learners experience difficulties with

An adequate progress in learning to read English, or any other alphabetic language beyond the initial levels, depends on having an understanding of how sounds are represented alphabetically and sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts. According to Snow et al., (1998), there are three potential stumbling blocks that are known to throw children off course on the journey to skilled reading.

The first obstacle is the difficulty in understanding and using the alphabetic principle. That is the idea that written spellings systematically represent spoken words. It is hard to comprehend connected text if word recognition is inaccurate or laborious. The second obstacle is a failure to transfer the comprehension skills of spoken language to reading and to acquire new strategies that may be specifically needed for reading. The third obstacle to reading is the absence or loss of an initial motivation to

read or failure to develop a mature appreciation of the rewards of reading. However, it is not known whether the grade 4 learners in the study have similar obstacles.

Learning to read poses real challenges, even to children who will eventually become good readers. Furthermore, although every writing system has its own complexities, English presents a relatively special challenge, even among alphabetic language speakers (Daniels & Bright, 1996). The alphabet poses a challenge to the beginning reader, because the units represented graphically by letters of the alphabet are meaningless and phonologically abstract. For example, in the word “but”, there are three sounds represented by three letters in that word, but each sound alone does not refer to anything and only the middle sound can really be pronounced in isolation.

On the other hand, the sounds of the letters are different from their names as noted by (Walton, 1998). He believes that the teacher should try to make learners understand that the sounds of the first letters are not the same as their names. For example, the sound of the first letter of “fat” is like air escaping from a puncture, whereas its name is pronounced as “eff”. Of course, eventually, children need to know both, but in early stages, the names of letters do not help with reading and spelling. What is meant here is that if one says that “cat” is spelt “see any tea”, it is impossible to run “see-ay-tea” together and hear anything that sounds like “cat”. Some of the illustrations use inappropriate pictures if one is trying to teach a child the sounds of the letters. For example “giraffe” is like the “j” in jam”, whereas, the sound of the letter “g” in “gorilla” is like in “g” in “garden” (Walton, 1998, p.14).

Furthermore, Daniels and Bright (1996) note that the deep orthography-a method of representing spoken language by letters and spelling in English is further complicated by the retention of many historical spellings, despite changes in pronunciation that make the spelling hard to understand. For example, the “gh” in the word “might” and “neighborhood”, represents a consonant that has long since disappeared from spoken English. Another example is the “ph” in “morphology” and “philosophy” useful in signaling the Greek etymology of those words, but represents a complicated pattern of sound-symbol correspondences that have been abandoned in other languages such as Spanish, and many other languages. In brief, English can present a challenge for a learner who expects to find each letter always linked to just one sound. Thus, a need to investigate on literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders, as the target learners’ first language has letters that are linked to one sound.

In addition, Hartney (2011) indicates that reading is an incredible job, and what is worse is that reading English is not a simple matter of learning what sounds go with which letters or group of letters. Gooyesen (as cited in Hartney, 2011) further states that some languages are straight forward such as Spanish and Japanese. In Spanish, for example, there is an unambiguous letter-sound correspondence unlike in the English language. Again, when learning the principles of a syllabic system like Japanese “katakana” is straight forward, since the units represented syllables are pronounceable and psychologically real, even to young children.

Furthermore, Snow et al., (1998) state that English, rather than preserving one letter to one sound correspondence; it preserves the spelling even if that means a particular letter spells several different sounds. For example, the last letter pronounced “k” in

written word “electric” represents quite a different sound in the word “electricity” and “electrician”. The second letter pronounced “o” in the written word “monster” represents a different sound in the word “mother”, indicating the morphological relation among the words but making the sound-symbol relationship more difficult to understand. In the following words; “private/motivate”, “put/cut”; ünit/umbrella”, “promise/advise”; “rule/cute”, the same letters represent quite different sounds. Gooyesen (as cited in Hartney, 2011) notes that three out of every 100 British school children have difficulties in learning to read English even though English is their mother tongue. How much more with learners whose mother tongue is not English? Notable is that reading in English is a challenge to native and non-native speakers of English. Thus, the study extends these frontiers of knowledge to investigate the literacy difficulties in fourth graders transitioning to English language from Otjiherero.

Moreover, Pang, Muaka, Benhard and Michael (2003) observe that real progress in reading depends on oral language development, an observation that suggests that children learn to read by associating the written form with speech. For children to know how to read they must learn the vocabulary, grammar and sound system of the oral language in which the reading takes place. Dickinson and Neuman (2006) see a connection between oral language and early reading; therefore, lack of prior oral knowledge of English language might be one factor contributing to the reading difficulties experienced by learners in the Okakarara constituency in the Otjozondjupa region.

Reading, as a language-based activity (Lyon, 2000), does not develop naturally, and for many children, decoding, word recognition, and reading comprehension skills

must be taught directly and systematically. If a child's knowledge of English is poor the reading skill as well as reading comprehension will also be poor (Baker, 2006). Having raised the question of whether the problem with reading "is a reading problem or language problem," Carter and Nunan (2002, p.22) concluded that it involved both.

Notable also is that reading and writing English have powerful implications relating to teaching and learning globally and in Namibia. If one cannot read, one cannot learn and that can impede teaching. Therefore, this area has largely remained uninvestigated in the Namibian literacy context, as can be seen from the studies reviewed above. This study therefore attempted to fill up this critical gap. Thus, a need to tackle English as a second language reading and writing difficulties among the primary school learners to enhance learner performance in Namibian schools.

2.8. Causes of reading and writing difficulties

The field of literacy is broad and diverse, in some aspects it is well developed and explored, and in others it is still at the elementary stage. Therefore, there is a need to investigate literacy difficulties in fourth graders transitioning to English language. Reading and writing difficulties may be attributed to a number of causes; major among them is environmental factors such as insufficient reading instruction, lack of exposure to reading materials, impairments such as language or hearing, terminal illness and psychosocial problems (Lyster, 2001); and Hamilton, 2012). Therefore, the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction is not the only factor that contributes to reading and writing difficulties. There are many other factors involved, as mentioned above.

For Gonzales, Minaya-Rowe and Yawkey (2006), pre-literacy skills emerge when ESL students achieve oral language maturity. They emphasize that ESL learners need to achieve maturation in oral language proficiency as a prerequisite for developing literacy skills such as Knowledge of print, ability to discriminate letters, phonemic awareness, acquisition of phoneme-grapheme knowledge and reading comprehension (2006). This is a challenge to transitioning learners as they have these knowledge in their first language and thus have a limited exposure to English.

Furthermore, Hartney (2011) discovered that insufficient exposure to the target language (English) resulted in it becoming a barrier to learning writing, and reading. Hartney (2011) found that classes were overcrowded with 40 learners, while the ideal teacher-learner ratio is 1:30, hence teachers did not work with individual learners to give more attention to those with reading difficulties and that most children did not attend kindergartens. Most learners seem to start primary schools with insufficient literacy knowledge and skills in relevant domains such as general verbal abilities; the ability to attend to the sounds of language as distinct from its meaning; familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading, and letter knowledge (Richek, Caldwell, Hennings & Lerner, 1996).

Moreover, Imene & van Graan (2001), noted that schools complain frequently that many primary school learners cannot read and write at their expected level. Those learners who seem to read well seem to have problems in writing and it is a challenge for such learners to master literacy skills at grade four. There are various factors responsible for reading and writing difficulties that affects learners at grade four.

These factors could be from within the individual such as poor sight, factors in the home such as hunger and poverty, social factors, such as loneliness and cultural environment, factors in the school environment, such as shyness and the teaching methods by unskilled teachers (Imene & van Graan, 2001).

Thus, there is a need for this study to explore literacy difficulties in fourth graders transitioning to English language from Otjiherero in Otjozondjupa region as there is limited research in this area, particularly in the context of Otjiherero learners transitioning to English medium of instruction. The section below focuses on the skills required for proficient reading which at times some learners at grade four level do not possess and they are necessary in the mastering of reading.

2.9. Skills Required for Proficient Reading

According to Snow et al., (1998), effective reading instruction is built on a foundation that recognizes that reading ability is determined by multiple factors such as social, cognitive and psychological. Indeed, many experiences contribute to reading development without being prerequisite to it. Although there are many prerequisites, none by itself is considered sufficient.

Again, Snow et al., (1998), maintains that adequate initial reading instruction requires that children:

- Use reading to obtain meaning from print,
- Have frequent and intensive opportunities to read,
- Be exposed to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships,
- Learn about the nature of the alphabetic writing system, and
- Understand the structure of spoken words.

Furthermore, Snow et al., (1998), noted that adequate progress in learning to read English or any alphabetic language beyond the initial level depends on:

- Having a working understanding of how sounds are represented alphabetically,
- Sufficiently practice reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts,
- Sufficient background knowledge and vocabulary to render written texts meaningful and interesting,
- Control over procedures for monitoring comprehension and repairing misunderstandings, and
- Continued interest and motivation to read for a variety of purposes.

Furthermore, phonetic awareness refers to the ability to distinguish and manipulate the individual sounds of language. The (NRP, 2000) argues that the phonics method helps beginning readers understand how letters are linked to sounds (phonemes), patterns of letter-sound correspondences and spelling in English, and how to apply this knowledge when they read.

The ability to read fluently is one of several critical factors necessary for reading comprehension. The aforementioned arguments could be interpreted that if a reader is not fluent, it may be difficult to remember what has been read and to relate the ideas expressed in the text to his/her background knowledge. Accuracy of reading serves as a bridge between decoding and comprehension. A critical aspect of reading comprehension is vocabulary development. It is the NRP's view that when a reader encounters an unfamiliar word in prints and decodes it to derive its spoken pronunciation, the reader understands the word if it is in the readers spoken

vocabulary. Otherwise the reader must derive the meaning of the word using another strategy such as context.

Therefore, the National Reading Panel describes comprehension as a complex cognitive process in which a reader intentionally and interactively engages with the text. Reading comprehension is heavily dependent on skilled word recognition and decoding, oral reading fluency, a well-developed vocabulary and an active engagement with the text.

In the first place, comprehension is crucial throughout learning. After a child reads a selected text aloud or silently he/she should be asked to tell the teacher what happened in the story. An excellent response would naturally include answers to the 5 W's and an H questions (Who, What, Where, When, Why and How). A good response would have the child answering the first four or more of the questions based upon the 5 W's and an H. Therefore, weaker responses would leave out three or more of these key components.

Whether one chooses to question a child or asks him/her to retell the story one observes that he/she understands these essential elements. One could turn each one of the story elements into prompt questions at the child's level of understanding.

In order to determine a child's comprehension score of the story one can use the scale table 1:1 below.

Table 1.1 The Elements Used to Test Comprehension

Retelling should Include these story Elements:	Prompt Questions Examples:
Main idea	What was the story all about?
Characters	Tell me about the main characters in this story.
Details	Could you tell me a little more about the story ...?
Event/ Problem	What happened at the beginning, middle and end of the story?
Resolution (solution to the problem)	How did the problem get solved/ so what happened then?

Table 1 above indicates the elements used to test the reading comprehension.

Following is a section on reading risk indicators that teachers could use in early detection of literacy difficulties among learners.

2.10. Reading Risk Indicators

Beginning readers have poor reading skills that can give rise to confusion between letters like p, d, b, q, which have the same form, but different orientations. Jorm (1985) discovered that retarded readers are frequently found to have major deficiencies in two areas of reading: word identification, using phonological reading and comprehension of passages where the component words can be adequately identified. Jorm (1985) further indicated that reading retardation can cause reversal

of sequence such as “split” being read as “spilt” and “slat” as “salt”. Jorm (1985) concludes that confusion of this sort occurs very commonly in all children when they are first beginning to read. Martin and Miller (1996), maintain that when children learn to read they are faced with a number of tasks such as the physical characteristics of the written system, the notion of the letters, words and sentences, word length and word space, lexical and grammatical forms.

Smith and Sensenbaugh (1992) state that a child is considered to have a reading problem if he or she has difficulty in learning to read, despite having adequate intelligence, attention, motivation, and exposure to education. They further state that sometimes a child with dyslexia may be poor at rhyming, slow to talk or have trouble finding the “right” word while he/she is speaking or writing.

Rockets (2003) further maintain that specifically, children need to learn letters and sounds and how to read for a meaning. They also need opportunities to practice reading with many types of books. While some children need more intensive systematic individualized instruction than others, all children need three essential elements. These are to learn letters, to learn how to sound the letters and learn how to read for meaning in order to read well and independently by the end of the third grade. Rockets (2003) are convinced that effective teaching and extra resources can make it possible for the many “at-risk” children to become successful readers. As a result, it is necessary for teachers to adjust their teaching instruction with regard to learners reading difficulties.

2.11. Teaching instruction with regard to learners reading difficulties

Good reading instruction is required for beginners to learn to read, however it is not easy to accomplish this task. Lyon (2000) stresses that many children in Grade one and two or beyond will require explicit instruction to develop the necessary phoneme awareness, phonics, spelling and reading comprehension. Lyon (2000), further suggests that young children with difficulties in learning to read should be taught the foundational skills to ensure a sufficient level of fluency, automaticity and understanding.

Reading is seen as a process which requires various inputs. Drummond and Marshall (2005) point out that although there are different reading components it can be difficult for teachers to diagnose learners reading difficulties and find appropriate techniques to remediate them. A dilemma that has a diverse effect on learners future-reading and in order to be successful, the teacher requires a strong and deep understanding of reading theories and practice. A teachers understanding of theories shall be used as a basis for improving the methods of teaching reading. However, children learn differently, as they all have their own learning style and pace. This suggests that teaching to read is not a constant process but a matter of trying various approaches.

Consequently, this study attempted to identify literacy difficulties experienced by transitioning learners and how teachers assist them with these difficulties., investigating the types of reading methods teachers use when teaching reading to transitioning learners is therefore important.

2.12. Reading teaching methods

There are numerous altered teaching methods from which teachers can choose, but the question on which is the most effective one continues to concern teachers.

Gonzalez et al., (2006) states that all methods have shown some success, a number of which are summarised below:

2.12.1. Phonics

Phonics is a method whereby “the speech is broken into individual sounds and represented letters” (Alderson, 2000, p.132). It teaches the correspondence between letters and the sound they represent. Children are taught to look at individual letters or groups of letters, recognize the sounds and blend letters to form a fluent sound. For example, in the word /cat/, children are taught that the sound represented by the word “cat” are k which is a glottal sound, then a /ae/ and t which constitutes k-a-t.

According to Lerner (2000), there are two approaches to teaching phonics. In the first analytical phonics, learners are taught to look initially at the whole word and then break it down to compare parts for the letter sound relationships they came across previously. In *synthetic phonics* they are taught to link an individual letter or letter combination with its appropriate sound then blend the sound to form words. They are systematically taught letters of the alphabet and the combination of letters used to represent each sound, for example the combination of letters f-a-t-h-e-r gives the word “father”.

2.12.2. Whole word method/whole language method of reading

Look and say or whole word method of reading teaches children to read through pattern recognition rather than decoding the word into letters (Levine, 1994). Flashcards with words and an accompanying picture are often used with this method,

until they memorise the pattern of letters, words or sentences as help in building up high-frequency sight vocabulary. For example, a picture of a ball is given to learners without the accompanying letter representing it. Learners are asked to say what they see, and name it, after which the teacher places the letters string (b-a-l-l) beneath the picture. The activities can be extended to other objects beginning with the same letter sound, and even to sentences.

Furthermore, according to Lerner (2000) the whole language method is based on the belief that all children will learn to read naturally, as they learn to talk and walk.

Similarly, the underlying whole language is the unity and interrelationship of oral language, reading and writing. Unlike the phonic method, this puts the focus on letter sound relationship, it emphasizes that active expression in writing and oral language improves reading skills. Goodman (1990) initiated the whole language method based on a belief that an emerging reader needs little direction to decode the letters, creating sentences representing pictures and sounds of languages. The whole language approach to reading focuses on meanings not on correspondence between sound and symbols, so that children start reading stories immediately without resorting to phonics. The whole language method posits that children be immersed in good books for them to become fluent readers, with interesting and fun books to excite them so that through play they memorise the many words they see in them.

2.12.3. Combining phonics and whole language in teaching reading

Reutzel and Cooter (2010) believe that learning to read is accomplished by placing the emphasis on mastering the three skills areas of decoding, vocabulary and comprehension, which are assumed to lead to component understanding, and consequently enable skilled and independent reading. However, other proponents of

combining the phonics and whole language approaches, Rumelhart (as cited in Reutzel and Cooter, 2010) suggest that phonics be taught separately, directly, and systematically to learners, and not in the context of reading literature. He further claims that while processing features of letters and spelling patterns, at the same time a reader is also attending to general context, syntax, and the semantic and syntactic environment in which the words occur. However, another proponent Stanovich and Siegel (1994) speculates that for learners to master reading skills they need daily exposure to good literature.

2.13. Choosing appropriate teaching methods of teaching reading in English

Phonics is a method whereby “the speech is broken into individual sounds and represented letters” (Alderson, 2000, p.132). It teaches the correspondence between letters and the sound they represent. Phonics should be taught first, followed by regular reading practice so that learners become skilled readers.

Many experts in the field of teaching reading agree that there is no best method to teaching reading (Lerner, 2000; Snow et al., 1998). Goodman (1990) argues that the phonics method is less engaging, with endless sounds to learn and simple books to read using regular words. Goodman is a proponent of the whole language method. Goodman believes that the method can produce learners who understand the meaning of the words they are reading and so they start reading more interesting books early on. However, Lerner (2000) and Snow et al., (1998) criticize the phonics method for encouraging learners to guess when faced with an unfamiliar word, and for the limited number words children can memorise.

While it is evident that teacher training institutions prepare student teachers in all these approaches, methods, and techniques outlined in this chapter, it has been

observed in some studies (Hartney, 2011; Junias, 2009) that once these student-teachers graduate and are in the field they hardly follow them. In the cases of teaching reading skills, particular attention is needed in preparing learners to acquire them so that numerous reading difficulties are avoided.

With the assertion above, it is not known whether teachers at the three selected schools in the Otjozondjupa Region, Okakarara constituency apply these methods and approaches in reading lessons. Thus, the need for teachers open ended questionnaire to focus on the types of methods used by teachers of transitioning learners.

2.14. Summary

Baker (2006) acknowledges that the reading process is a function of the individual's ecological system, including cognitive, linguistic and cultural background. In line with this, teachers should appreciate the child's linguistic and cultural background in order to make potential contributions aimed at improving learners' reading. According to Dickinson and Neuman (2006), reading difficulties are major problems that may have a negative bearing on learners throughout school. Thus, there is a need for the study to explore literacy difficulties in fourth graders transitioning to English language from Otjiherero.

With the basic understanding of the Stage model theories, it is vital for Grade 4 English teachers to acknowledge that children go through different stages of reading and therefore should be assisted at their stages in order to improve in their various literacy difficulties if any. Regardless of the foundation that is strongly in mother tongue and the environment in which they live which highly uses the vernacular, there are various approaches, methods and techniques that teachers may apply when

teaching English to children transitioning from one language to the other, through understanding of the different stages at which each transitioning learner is at.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design and the methodology for the study. A mixed method approach to data collection was used namely; open-ended questionnaire and five tasks on the various aspects of English literacy. The main tool for data collection was the five tasks, which was supported by an open-ended teacher questionnaire. This was followed by a description of the setting of the study in order to shed light on where the study was conducted. The sampling procedures and techniques, process of data collection, validity and reliability and ethical considerations for the study were also discussed. The chapter ends with a summary.

3.2. Research Method

A mixed method design was employed with focus on the validation variant, as the researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, but analysed the two sets of data separately. The qualitative method was applied to collect data from the teachers by use of open-ended questionnaire in order to provide the researcher with emergent themes and interesting quotes on teachers' experience when dealing with learners who were taught in the Otjiherero medium of instruction at the lower primary phase and had to switch to the English medium of instruction in grade four. That can be used to validate and elaborate the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2011), while the quantitative method applied was in a form of five English tasks administered to learners in order to provide the researcher with data on the learners' performance in the tasks and the difficulties they might experience. The suitability of these tasks on fourth graders is that they assess the various literacy skills covered in the Grade 4 curriculum and are skills that learners at grade 4 level ought to possess.

3.3. Population

A target population is a group of people in whom the researcher has an interest. Such a group should share a given set of characteristics from which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions (Cardwell, Clark, & Meldrum, 2004). The study population consisted of 103 learners. This entire population of 103 constituted the sample studied, because all these 103 learners were taught in the Otjiherero medium of instruction from Grade 1-3 and transitioning to the English medium of instruction in Grade 4. In addition, the three schools were of interest to the researcher because they met a set of characteristics from which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions. Three teachers also formed part of the study population and sample; as there was only one English subject teacher per school who possessed the required criteria. Hence a teacher from each school formed the population of the study.

3.4. Sampling procedure

A sampling is about finding research participants for the study. A sample of a class per school with 30-40 learners was selected through purposive sampling procedure. The following criteria were used in support of the purposeful sampling: (i) learners who were Otjiherero first language speakers; (ii) learners who were taught in Otjiherero from grade one to three. The teachers who formed part of the study had to match the following criteria; (iii) grade four English subject teachers. A purposeful criterion sampling provides “information-rich” respondents (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Purposeful criterion sampling allowed the researcher to have a wider understanding of the learners’ literacy difficulties in English in grade four. Each school under study had only one English subject teacher and therefore the three English subject teachers formed the sample. Three teachers from three different

schools completed an open ended questionnaire that helped the researcher in understanding the phenomenon in different contexts.

3.5. Research instruments

An open-ended questionnaire was administered to the teachers in order to obtain English teachers' experiences of teaching reading and writing to Grade four learners (see Appendix A).

The other tools for data collection were the five English tasks prepared and administered by the researcher to the learners. These tasks were developed from the different grade 4 reading materials in corporation with the curriculum. The five tasks consisted of various English components of the primary level and focused on single word reading, pseudo word decoding, spelling, reading comprehension and listening comprehension. Similar tasks were used in other studies, but the above mentioned tasks were specifically prepared and administered by the researcher for the purpose of this study. The reading comprehension task, listening comprehension and single word spelling task were administered in groups. These instruments were administered in groups because they have been designed to be administered in groups. Group administration also helps reduce the time spent on testing samples. The single word reading test, the pseudo word decoding test, and the spelling test were all administered individually, because their design is such that no more than one person can be tested at a time. The individually administered tests were used to assess the learners' ability for reading different single words at their level presented out of context as well as to assess whether or not a child could apply the phoneme-grapheme correspondence rules to decode unknown words as well as to spell words. The difference in the administration of the tasks (group vs individual) does not impact the results of the studies negatively, for the manner in which they have been

designed to be administered is such that they yield meaningful results. any impact on the results is more likely to be due to faulty administration or to factors inherent or external to the individual tested, not due to the nature of their administration

Task 1: Reading comprehension

The reading comprehension task was used to assess whether learners had the capacity to understand the text (its meaning). Learners were required to read in English and respond to the questions meaningfully in English. The comprehension task took approximately 40 minutes per class. The total mark was eight as it consisted of eight questions (see Appendix B).

Task 2: Listening comprehension

Listening comprehension task assesses listening through natural classroom situations rather than evaluating listening through simple repetition or discrimination subtests. The tasks is meant to reveal students' strengths and weaknesses in integrated language problem solving, reasoning, and comprehension of material presented auditory. The total mark was seven and lasted for about 40 minutes per class (see Appendix D).

Task 3: Single word reading

The single word reading task was used to assess the learner's reading of different single words at their level presented out of context. Learners had a list of seventy words to read and if they were unable to read ten words consecutively the task was discontinued. The task was an individually administered and it took about 20 minutes per learner (see Appendix E).

Task 4: Pseudo word reading

Pseudo word reading task was used to assess whether or not a child could apply the phoneme-grapheme correspondence rules to decode unknown words. This task consists of ten unknown words that learners had to read by applying the phoneme-grapheme correspondence rule and the task took approximately 20-35 minutes per learner. This task was individually administered to pay close attention to the learners' application of phoneme-grapheme correspondence to decode unknown words (see Appendix F).

Task 5: Single word spelling

Single word spelling task was used to assess whether learners' spelling is phonetic (the representation of vocal sounds which express pronunciations of words) or non-phonetic (a word that is not spelled phonetically, that is, a word that is pronounced very differently than the way they are spelled) and the task consists of seventy words that each learner had to spell out on an A4 page. It was group-administered and lasted for about 30 minutes per class (see Appendix C).

3.5.1 Data collection procedure

A letter was written to the Otjozondjupa Education Regional Office to obtain permission to conduct the study at the three selected schools in the Okakarara constituency (see Appendix I) The letter of approval from the regional office was shown to the respective principals of the three target schools, to get their permission to speak to the grade four teachers and learners.

The following procedures were then followed:

Firstly, the researcher scheduled a meeting with the teachers identified from each selected school to complete a questionnaire. The meeting took approximately 15-20 minutes per participant. The questionnaire administered to the teachers consisted of two sections, the demographic section and the open-ended questions. The questionnaire was completed in the presence of the researchers who provided clarification on questionnaire items when necessary.

The second section of the questionnaire consisted of open ended questions on the teachers' experience of teaching English to fourth graders who were previously taught in Otjiherero at the lower primary phase and transition to the English medium of instruction. In assessing Grade four learners' literacy levels, five tasks (see Appendices C, D, B, E, and F) were completed by participating learners. The five English tasks used to assess learners' literacy skills in English second language are discussed below in details.

3.6. Pilot study

In addition to the above mentioned measures of research, the researcher had to test the instruments before using them. A pilot study was conducted at a school that was not included in the sample. One teacher and thirty learners took part in the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted in order to test the instruments. The researcher had to adjust the questionnaire of teachers as some questions were referring to the same issue more than once. The timing of the single tasks was removed by the researcher as it was time consuming and put pressure on the learners when completing the tests. However, the test would have to be discontinued if the learner gets ten words wrong consecutively.

3.7. Data Analysis

Data analysis and findings of the study are presented in chapter 4. The findings of the study from the teachers' questionnaires are presented in verbatim. The teachers' questionnaires were analyzed by looking at various responses on what literacy difficulties they faced in teaching former Otjiherero medium-of-instruction pupils. Responses from the three teacher's questionnaires were scrutinized and the recurring views formed themes that were discussed in chapter 5.

Quantitative data from tasks completed by learners' are more descriptive and the Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) was used. The data were arranged into tables, and percentages to indicate key findings of this study. The researcher was interested in the performance of the learners in each task in order to determine the specific literacy difficulties experienced by learners who were taught in Otjiherero medium of instruction at the lower primary school phase and transitioned to the English medium of instruction in Grade four.

The five tasks were first marked and thereafter the variables were entered on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to get the standard deviation, mean, maximum, and minimum scores of each task administered in percentages. The focus was on the scores of learners per task in terms of how spread or close the scores are to each other (standard deviation), the average (mean) score of learners in each task, and the highest (maximum) score obtained by the learners per task, and the minimum score per task that presented the lowest score obtained by the learners in each task. The findings of the five tasks were then presented in graphs and charts.

The main focus of the literacy tasks was on how the learners performed in the various English measures they were assessed on. Consequently, through the use of descriptive statistics the researcher was able to discover the learners' performance in each task and thus determined the specific literacy difficulties experienced by transitioning learners.

3.8 Research ethics

As a procedure in educational research, the aspect of informed consent was taken into account. The respondents were informed of the nature and implication of the study through a letter (See Appendix H). Freedom to participate as well as to withdraw from the study was guaranteed. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the Otjozondjupa Education Region, the principal; teachers and parents of the learners of the three primary schools.

The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided. Confidentiality was highly observed and no one else will have access to names and responses of respondents. Besides, the names of the respondents were not used in the data instead pseudo names were used (schools A, B and C and teachers Z=X, Y and Z).

3.9 Summary

This chapter described the methodology that was used for the study. The concurrent mixed method approach was used to investigate the literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders taught in the Otjiherero medium of instruction in Grades one to three.

Firstly, the pilot testing was done prior to collection of data and the ethical considerations were taken care of in this study. As pseudo names were used to refer

to the three teachers and the schools. A semi-structured open-ended questionnaire was administered to the teachers in order to obtain their experiences of teaching literacy (reading and writing) to learners that were in an Otjiherero medium of instruction at the lower primary school phase and transitioned to the English medium in Grade four.

Five literacy tasks were used to measure learners' performance in the various English literacy tasks at Grade four; with specific focus on single word reading, single word spelling, reading comprehension, listening comprehension and pseudo words. These literacy tasks were administered to the learners during the second semester in order to determine their readiness to use English as medium of instruction. Since the first semester is always a hectic semester full of adjustments to the new grade and athletics. Thus, tasks had to be administered in the second semester.

The researcher used the purposeful criterion sampling in selecting the learners sample and the convenient sampling method for the teachers' selection. This purposeful sampling method provided the researcher a chance to have a wider understanding of these learners' literacy performance and difficulties in English at Grade four and the convenient method in selecting the teachers since the three teachers met the studies criteria.

Furthermore, the following criteria were used in selecting the sample: (i) learners were Otjiherero 1st language speakers; (ii) learners were taught in Otjiherero from grade one to three and (iii) teachers were English subject teachers.

Lastly, data was analysed by looking at the various responses of teachers' on what literacy difficulties they experience and how they teach English to learners that were taught in the Otjiherero medium of instruction in the lower primary school phase. This was followed by the creation of themes that emerged from the teachers responses on the questionnaires. On the other hand, the quantitative data (five literacy tasks) were analysed through the use of descriptive statistics. The five tasks were first marked and then variables were entered on SPSS in order to get the tasks results in percentages of each task administered.

The next chapter presents the results the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 of the study discussed the methodology and research technique used in collecting and analysing the data in order to realise the purpose of the study. This chapter presents the major study findings in accordance with the research questions. This chapter focuses on the literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders transitioning from the Otjiherero medium of instruction in the lower primary phase to the English medium of instruction at upper primary phase and beyond.

The findings of the study will be presented in three sections. The first section will reflect on the teachers' profile in order to document their professional preparations to effectively deal with the transitional phase of learning and the challenges that goes with that. The second section will cover issues around teaching and learning of reading and writing, that is presented in verbatim. This includes issues such as prerequisite skills, teaching methods and support services available to teachers from within schools and beyond. The third part will present the different literacy tasks that the researcher carried out in order to further point out the reading and writing problems of grade 4 learners. The chapter ends with a conclusion in which an overview about the reading and writing difficulties which are presented by the grade 4 learners is given.

4.2. Section 1: Qualities of teachers working with transitioning learners at grade 4 level

The researcher was interested in first finding out the educational levels and experience of the teachers involved in the study. Thus, the first part of the section presents the demographic data of the teachers in the study, of which the three

teachers were required to give information on their highest academic qualifications and their teaching experience of English to fourth graders. The demographic information was considered to see whether it would explain the performance of the learners on the literacy difficulties experienced.

4.2.1 Teachers Demographic Information

Table 4.1 Teachers Demographic Information

	Highest Qualification	Teaching Experience (years)
Teacher X	BETD	2
Teacher Y	BETD	10
Teacher Z	BETD	7

Table 4.1 above illustrates that all the three teachers hold the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) from the Windhoek College of Education. This is the highest professional qualification they hold. This information was important because it highlighted if teachers were in fact professionally well equipped to work with learners at this transition stage in their education. It also shows that the three teachers have different years of teaching experience. Their experience would be useful especially in understanding the needs of the learners at this level as they may have come across learners transitioning problems and have worked with them thus enabling the teacher to meaningfully help their learners who may struggle to cope with English as medium of instruction.

4.2.2 Reading instructional methods

Figure 4.1 Teachers' use of reading instructional methods

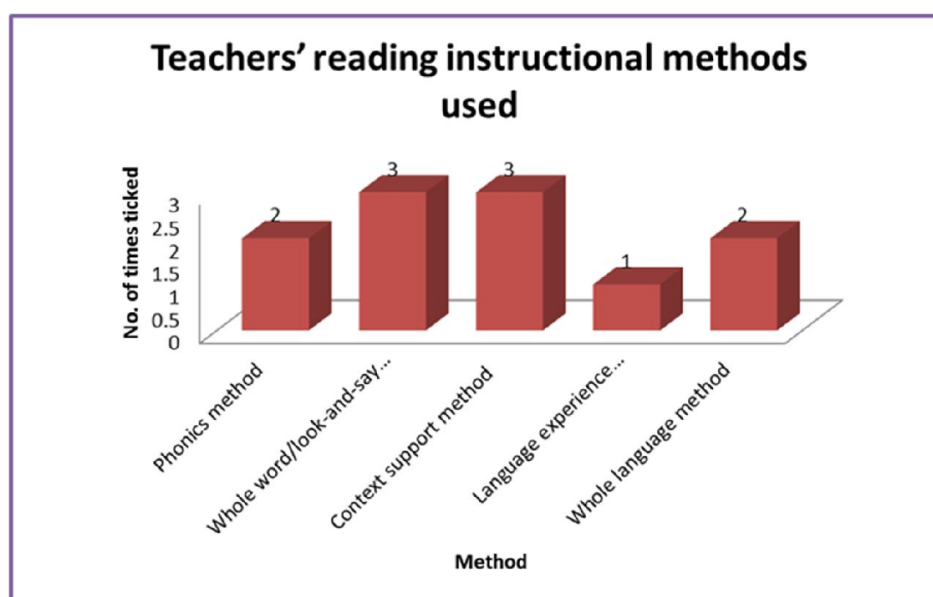


Figure 4.5 above demonstrates the reading instructional methods used by these teachers in the English classroom. The three teachers indicated to be using a combination of methods when teaching reading to grade four learners by ticking each method they have used. Each method was ticked at least once. Whole word / look-and-say and context support methods were popular amongst the others while language experience was the least used method.

4.2.3 Reasons for method used

The three teachers stated that they use a combination of reading methods when teaching reading, which they learned at college/teachers training as the best. None of the teachers used reading methods from their personal experience of teaching.

4.3 Section 2: Teaching reading and writing

4.3.1 Aspects of English language that learners had difficulties with at Grade 4 level

In teachers' responses to the questionnaire section B (see Appendix A), the three teachers mentioned various aspects of English that the learners they teach struggles with and this is presented in verbatim. The common challenge brought up by the teachers is reading. Teacher Y states that most learners struggle to understand short stories read to them or when they read themselves.

Teacher X mentioned two challenges that her learners find difficult to cope with. The first one was reading, whereby she stated that some of the learners struggle with reading double letters with one sound e.g. "ee as in the word need", "st as in street", "Br-bread", "Pl-place". The second aspect that her learners find difficult to cope with was listening with understanding and understanding English words when completing a listening comprehension task. Teacher Z had a similar response to the aspects her learners find difficult to cope with. The first aspect she mentioned was again reading. Furthermore, she stated that most learners are unable to construct grammatically correct sentences in English and they fail to express themselves in the English language during oral presentations or when answering questions.

4.3.2 Views on literacy challenges identified from the previous section 4.3.1

The teachers have various views to why learners find it difficult to cope with the various aspects mentioned in section 4.3.1 above.

Teacher X believed that learners do not know the English sounds of the words and how those sounds change when they are blended with the others. For longer words like complementary, they struggle because they do not know how to do a breakdown

of syllables in order to read the word easier. As for Teacher Y, the reason why these learners find it difficult to cope with various English aspects in grade four is because of their low level of English. However, she did not provide a detailed explanation of her argument.

Teacher Z was of the opinion that the lack of vocabulary development makes it difficult for learners to understand the meaning of different words for example, in a story or to summarise the story which they have read. As a result most learners fail to respond to comprehension exercises, because they struggle to understand a text. Teacher Z further on explained that most of the times the target learners sentences do not follow the correct English writing structure. They confuse their writing with the Otjiherero writing structure subject verb object.

4.3.3 Expected prerequisite skills at Grade 4 level

Teacher X stated that there are prerequisite skills for learning to read and write in English that learners should possess.; which include; introduction to phonics (sound reading system before entering grade 4), being able to sound the entire 26 alphabets and be able to read simple words such as cat, dog, mother etc. In addition, teacher Y mentioned that they are required to at least be able to read and write. Regrettably, did not elaborate on the specific reading and writing skills which the learners should possess. Moreover, Teacher Z stated that learners need to possess phonetic skills, to be able to blend letters to form simple words, know the alphabets, write short simple sentences by joining words e.g. “Lalaa sits on the pot, my school is big, our school’s anthem is, my family” etc...

4.3.4 Learners knowledge (possession) of required skills at Grade four level

Teacher X said that some learners fail to demonstrate the required skills when they enter Grade four and majority of them know nothing about phonics.

In addition, Teacher Y contributed to the question by stating that most of the learners lack the following English skills required at grade four; reading, understanding and writing skills. Her emphasis was that their writing is so ungrammatical; they do not follow the instructions, as they read with little understanding of the language. Furthermore, learners avoid the use of the English language outside the classroom environment which is a serious limitation to acquiring a foreign language. This is manifested by the learners mostly due to the fact that they prefer to communicate with their teachers and peers in Otjiherero (The familiar language).

Furthermore, Teacher Z stated that most of the learners can understand words in English but are unable to reply in English and construct grammatically correct sentences. They are so shy to express themselves in English verbally and mostly choose to put their answers in writing. They write simple sentences but even those short simple sentences tend to be grammatically incorrect. This could be a result of mixing the two writing systems of Otjiherero and English.

4.3.5 Importance of prerequisite skills in reading and spelling

Teacher X noted that when learners enter grade 4 with the required prerequisite skills helps a lot, as she believed that when learners already know the sounds, they are able to blend them and read out the words or even write them. She continued to emphasize that if a learner can listen attentively it makes it easier for them to spell new words because they know how to sound them. This was evident with a few learners that had these skills because; they could spell out words by sounding them

first even if they do not understand their meanings. Consequently, she said it makes teaching and learning effective as learners take in the new information given to them to build on what they already know. This in itself contributes to effective time management as the teacher moves on with the new work without repeating work that was supposed to have been covered in the preceding grades.

Whereas, Teacher Y seemed to have misunderstood the question on how the prerequisite skills assist learners with reading and spelling and therefore did not provide any answer. Her elaboration was that they cannot spell and read, therefore their writing and reading is usually very weak at grade 4 level.

In addition, Teacher Z stated that learners who enter grade four with the prerequisite skills in English were very fast to improve in their writing and reading; as they had the basics of reading and writing that they have acquired in the three grades when English was not the medium of instruction but taught as a subject. These skills help learners to blend letters and sounds, link words to form sentences and enable learners to read out loud in the class. She also noted that these are the learners who are at least confident in expressing themselves in English during lessons and on the terrains.

4.3.6 The teaching of reading and writing in the English classes

Each of the three teachers has their own approach to teaching English, at the primary level. Teacher X responded that she teaches reading through a certain context or theme as per the syllabus of the lower primary phase. Teacher X responded that there are words provided for teachers when teaching phonics and these are the words she uses when teaching reading and writing in the English class. She, further on provided an example of teaching writing. Whereby, she stated that the learners are first expected to write on pieces of paper as a pretest for the teacher to see what they

already know and then she builds on that. This is an indication of teacher's use of the KWL chart for her lessons, as she focuses on building from the known to the unknown. The teacher looks at what the learners know (K), what they would like to know (W) and what they have learned (L) at the end of her lesson presentations.

Besides, Teacher Y responds that she let her learners' sound words, in order for them to be able to recognize the various sounds used in different words. She also teaches them reading and writing through the use of flashcards, picture cards, let them form sentences with given words, explain the meaning of words as used in a story and read paragraphs to the learners so that they can respond to questions on a reading e.g The paragraph that was read them in class.

In addition to the above responses, Teacher Z replied that she teaches reading through direct instruction: She asks the learners to read short stories and write about what they have read. She teaches learners to read through letter-sound correspondences in order for them to have letter knowledge in English, she ask them to read after her and she also ask the learners to read words correctly one by one in order for them to practice their fluency.

Furthermore, Teacher Z describes how she teaches writing. She said that she follows the syllabi and teaches her learners as per the syllabi, for example, writing a five paragraph essay, teaching writing through spelling etc. She assesses the five paragraph essay, by checking on the structure of the essay, the grammar and spelling. Then follow up activities include spelling test, grammar activities on: tenses, suffix and prefixes, part of speech, root words and many more.

4.3.7 The literacy learning support that was made available to the learners at Grade 4

The teachers were asked how they support learners with reading and spelling difficulties. The question invited specific responses as shown below:

Table 4.2 How teachers assist learners who struggle with reading and spelling

Name of Schools	Name of Teachers	Teachers Responses
A	X	<i>"I take them back to sounding, as they have to know how to sound letters to be able to read and spell."</i>
B	Y	<i>"I Let them sound different words, read words on flashcards, give them sentences to read and start with short sentences, paragraphs and then the whole story."</i>
C	Z	<i>"By spending more time with them during the lesson and also after school. As well as giving them homework to go read the words discussed during the lesson, so that the next day I rearrange the words and ask each child to read them."</i>

Teachers' assistance and support to learners with spelling and reading difficulties include; extra teaching outside normal lessons in a form of remedial work, and homework, as well as reverse in lesson presentations in order to bring learners to the expected level.

4.3.8 Teachers experience of teaching writing:

The following were the teachers' responses on their personal experiences of teaching writing to transitioning learners.

Table 4.3 Teachers experience of teaching writing

Name of School	Name of Teacher	Teachers Responses
A	X	<i>"When taking notes, they skip or drop some letters, when writing for comprehension purposes they write words in their mother tongue and they can hardly construct sentences."</i>
B	Y	<i>"They improve a lot..."</i>
C	Z	<i>"It is challenging because they mostly mix the English structure with the Otjiherero writing form, and they tend to spell some words in Otjiherero. E.g. Carpenter- "Kapenda"..."</i>

Table 4.2 above present's teachers experiences of teaching writing to learners coming from the Otjiherero medium of instruction to the English medium in grade 4, which include the use of vernacular words in their sentences or the use of some vernacular language structure leading to ungrammatical sentences. Teacher Y from school B responded that regardless of the challenges experienced by these learners in writing, they do improve in the middle of the year, more especially during the second semester and manage to obtain the basic competencies at the end of the grade 4 year, and consequently manage to be promoted to Grade five.

4.4 Section 3: Literacy activities/tasks carried out to document reading and writing problems of grade 4 learners

Five literacy tasks were used to determine transitioning learners' performance on specific tasks and to find out the challenges they experienced in completing the tasks. Below is the presentation of the learners' performances in the five English literacy tasks which were undertaken with them. For the variables presented here, the descriptive statistics were displayed separately because each task has its own values of mean and standard deviations and therefore it will be less communicative when displayed in a single table.

4.4.1 Listening Comprehension Task

Listening comprehension task was one of the five tasks conducted in determining effective transition of learners from mother tongue to English as a medium of instruction. The listening comprehension task (see Appendix, D) was about "A day at the walker Dam: Fishing" which was designated as a 'yes' or 'no' response task.

Figure 4.2 Listening Comprehension Task Results

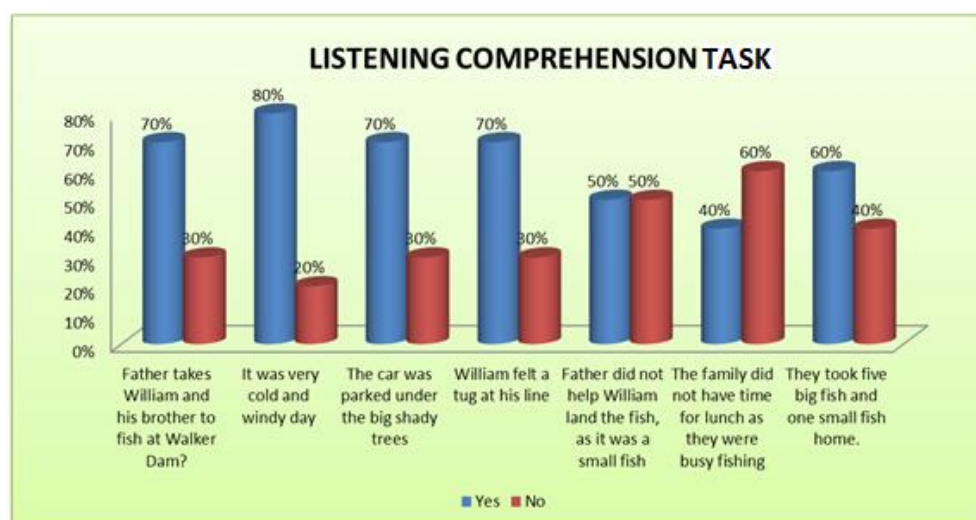


Figure 4.7 above presents the seven questions asked during the listening comprehension test and the learners' responses of yes and no in percentage. Question

1, 2, 3 and 4 the majority of 70%, 80%, 70% and 70% respectively answered correctly. Question 5, 50% got it right and the other half got it wrong. Meanwhile question 6 only 40% got it right and 60% got it wrong. Question 7, 60% picked the correct answer and 40% failed.

Table 4.4 Learners' scores in listening comprehension task

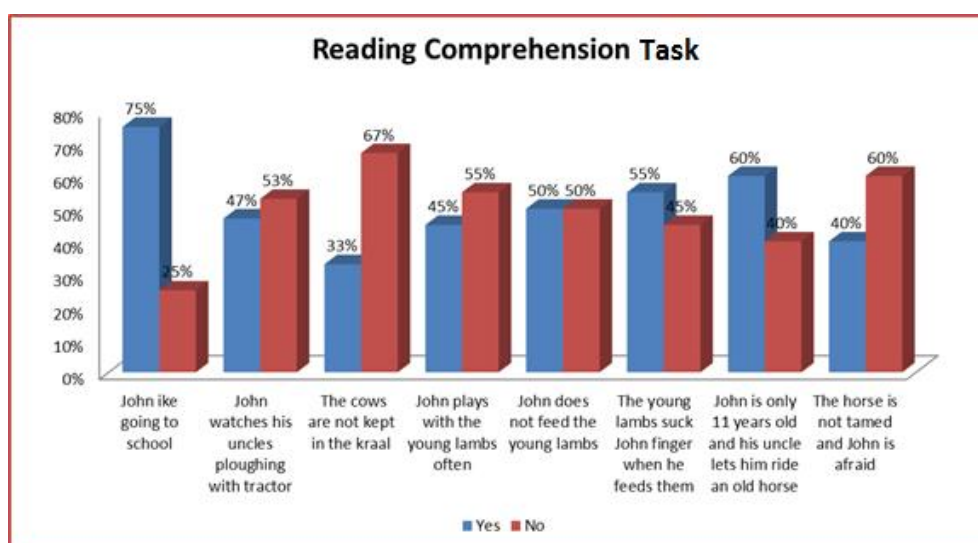
Sample size	Mean score	St deviation	Maximum score of test	Minimum score of test
103	60.9	21.27	100	0

The table above presents the performance of 103 learners in the Listening comprehension task of grade four learners. The table shows a mean score of 60.9 % and a standard deviation of 21.27%. The big standard deviation reflects that there is a large variance between the scores and the statistical average (mean). The scores are scattered far from the average score.

4.4.2 Reading Comprehension Task

A closed-ended question was designed for the learners in order to evaluate the reading and understanding ability of the learners'. Questions that were included in the test were designed in such a way that they were short, clear and precise. This was to ensure that the participants have a common understanding of the questions asked. The questions were framed from a short comprehension about a farm. The questions and responses are presented below in figure 4.8:

Figure 4.3 Reading Comprehension Task



As per figure 4.8 above, for question 1, 75% of the respondents indicated 'yes' which is the correct answer while the remaining 25% of the respondents indicated 'no'. On question 2, 53% of participants indicated 'no', which is an incorrect answer. Question 3 and 4, 67% and 55% of respondents respectively answered correctly. Equal responses of 50% to question 5 were recorded. For question 6, 55% respondents indicated 'yes' which is the correct answer, while for question 7 only 40% got it right. However for question 8 60% of respondents gave the correct answer.

Table 4.5 Learners' performance in Reading comprehension

Sample size	Mean score	St deviation	Maximum score	Minimum Score
103	52.6	23.47	100	0

Table 4.4 above presents the performance of 103 learners in the Reading Comprehension Test of grade four learners. The table shows a mean score of 52.6 % and a standard deviation of 23.47%. This is a big standard deviation, which means

the scores are scattered far from the average score of 52.6%. In comparison with the other tests e.g. word reading and pseudo word decoding which for the correct words the mean and standard deviation were (16.8 and 12.99) and (38.4 and 21.58) respectively, where they have scored lowly, the average score on reading comprehension is higher. This implication on good performance on reading comprehension could be that the learners just guessed the correct answer since it was a yes or no questions, hence the odd results.

4.4.3 Single Word Reading Task

The participants were given the opportunity to participate in single word reading task which consisted of 70 words. This task was conducted for all the participants individually. The passing mark was set to 35 correct words which is 50%. Figure 4.9 below shows only 20% of the participants have managed a pass rate from the single word reading task, while the remaining 80% failed the task by reading less than half the words fluently.

Figure 4.4 Single Word Reading Task



Table 4.6 Learners performance in Single word Reading Task

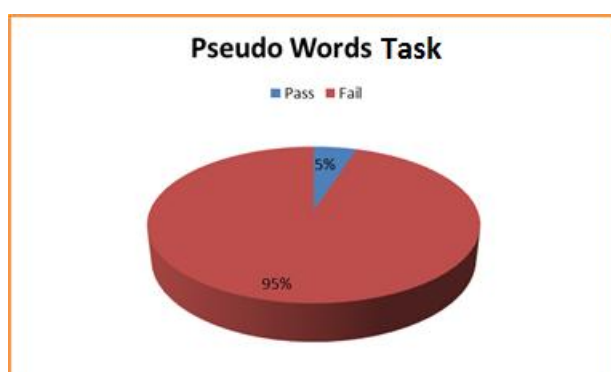
Word read	Sample size	Mean score	St deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score
Correct	103	16.8	12.99	70	0
Error	103	38.4	21.58	70	0

The mean score of the correctly read words was 16.8, with a standard deviation of 12.99, while the mean score of the words read with errors was 38.4 and standard deviation of 21.58. The mean score for words read correctly was lower than the mean score for words read incorrectly. This suggests that the subjects read more words wrongly.

4.4.4 Pseudo Word Reading Task

The researcher also conducted a 10 pseudo-words reading task for all the participants that participated in the research. Pseudo words are pronounceable words based on phonics rules but are not real words. Pseudo-words are part of the curriculum in order to help and facilitate learners to be able to transit from mother tongue to English medium of instruction effectively. The passing mark was set to 5 correct words which is 50%.

Figure 4.5 Pseudo Word Reading Task



Unfortunately, looking at Figure 4.10 above shows a 5% of the participants who passed the task, and a 95% failed to get half the words correctly.

Table 4.7 correctly read pseudo words and those read with errors:

Words read	Sample size	Mean score	St deviation	Maximum Score	Minimum score
Correct	103	27.8	15.18	10	0
Error	103	42.3	23.13	10	0

The mean score of the correctly read pseudo words was 27.8, with a standard deviation of 15.18, while the mean score of the words read with errors was 42.3 with a standard deviation of 23.13. Both the correct and error scores have a large deviation which indicates that there is big variance away from the mean scores by which the majority scored below the mean scores of 15.18 and 41.3 respectively. This results in poor performance in the pseudo word test.

4.4.5 Single Word Spelling Task

In understanding the literacy level in transition from mother tongue which is Otjiherero to English, a spelling task was given to the participants. The test consisted

of 40 words and the pass mark was set at 20 words correctly spelled. Figure 4.11 below presents the results in percentage.

Figure 4.6 Spelling Task



Figure 4.11 above shows the participants who failed were ninety percent (90%) and only 10% passed the task with an average of a 50% from the spelling task.

Though the words were selected at grade 4 level from the prescribed English textbook and seemed to be simple ones that could be understood, the performance was not encouraging.

Table 4.8 Learners performance in single word Spelling Task

Words spelt	Sample size	Mean score	St deviation	Maximum score	Minimum score
Correct	103	26.6	19.20	40	0
Error	103	47.4	28.61	40	0

The mean score of the correctly spelt words is 26.6 whereas that of the words read with errors is at 47.4. The scores within the correctly spelt words had a standard deviation of 19.20 in comparison to the scores of the words read with errors with a standard deviation of 28.61. Both the correct and error scores have a large standard

deviation of 19.20 and 28.61 respectively which shows that the scores are scattered far from the mean scores of 26.6 of the correct scores and 47.4 of the error scores and the majority of learners have scored below the mean scores. Performance wise, this is poor.

4.5 Conclusion

In section 1 results show that all three teachers hold the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) and have teaching experience ranging between 2 and 10 years. Whole word / look-and-say and context support methods were popular amongst the others while language experience was the least used method

In section 2 it was discovered that aspects of English language that learners had difficulties with at Grade 4 level were reading and inability to construct grammatically correct sentences.

Section 3 presented literacy activities/tasks carried out to document reading and writing problems of grade 4 learners. There was poor performance across all the tests. In the listening and reading comprehension tests there were large standard deviations of 21.27 and 23.47% respectively. These are big standard deviations, which mean the scores are scattered far from the average score. In the single word reading task only 20% of the participants managed a pass rate while in Pseudo Word Reading Task only 5% of the participants passed the task. In spelling test, only 10% of participants passed the task with an average of a 50%.

The next chapter discusses the results presented in chapter 4, their interpretations, draw conclusions and give recommendations.

CHAPTER5: RESULTS DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results discussion and interpretation of the study in accordance with the research questions. The mixed method was used to collect data with a focus on the validation variant for result analysis. Therefore, learners' literacy tasks results and the teachers' questionnaire results were presented separately in Chapter four and merged under *themes* for discussion and interpretation in this chapter.

5.2 Results discussions

The main objective of the learners' five English tasks of the research was to establish their level of literacy. While the main objective of the teachers' questionnaire was to establish specific reading difficulties experienced by transitioning learners and teachers' responses on how they handle the transitioning period. From the qualitative and quantitative data presentations in section 1 and 2 of chapter four, various literacy difficulties emerged and an integrative discussion under the two emerged themes (Reading and writing difficulties) is presented below:

5.2.1 Reading difficulties

One of the reading difficulties experienced by transitioning learners is an inability to deal with English concepts/terminologies as witnessed in the reading comprehension tasks. Learners portrayed a limited English vocabulary when completing their tasks.

The learners' performance in reading comprehension showed a mean performance of 52.6%. The standard deviation showed a wide distribution of scores, which indicates

that there were good and weak readers. This shows the different reading levels of Grade four learners. It is a sign that learners may be in need of learning support in some areas because reading comprehension scores are average. As a result the learners achieved competencies satisfactorily (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Moreover, the three teachers in their response to the questionnaire (see Appendix A) also alluded to limited access to English words, being a challenge to most transitioning learners, stating that learners' have no associational background information to most comprehension passages from prescribed textbooks and sufficient English vocabulary as most of their vocabulary are still in the first language (Otjiherero).

Hence, the learners' find it difficult to relate short stories they read to their immediate environment and to transfer the comprehension skills of spoken language to reading and to acquiring new strategies that may be needed for reading. In addition, this was evident by the researcher from the learners' responses to the reading comprehension task assigned to them as indicated in Figure 4.8.

In the same vein Lerner (2000), argues that when a person attempts to speak a language in which he/she has not yet become automated, she/he will necessarily have to divide attention between the content of the message and the language itself. This also applies to reading and if the skill in reading is automated it will not be disrupted by concurrent processing of the language because this does not take up the attention resources. Lerner (2002) further stresses that a person in whom the language is not automated will read with great difficulty, being forced to pay all the attention to word recognition and none to decoding the written word, thus, impeding comprehension.

Given the odd results in reading comprehension compared to pseudo-word decoding and single word reading, the researcher can only conclude that the learners might have just guessed the correct answers in the reading comprehension test as it consist of two options (Yes/No). As well as the support from cues in the reading comprehension passage. Cues are part of the context that a reader can use to deduce meaning of the context and they do assist with text comprehension. Anyone who can use contextual cues to understand the text is a good, or can be a good comprehender.

Chall (1987) identified six stages of reading development, from pre-reading, an early stage known as ‘logographic reading’, which is the earliest stage in which young children begin to recognise limited vocabulary of whole words, using incidental cues such as a logo, a picture, a colour or a shape, through early literacy to mature fluent reading. With evidence from the research, learning to read happened through different approaches in the classrooms, of which teachers mainly indicated to use a combination of methods during the lesson presentations. Each method was used at least once as shown on Figure 4.5. The reasons teachers have used these methods was as a result of teacher’s training at college as per Figure 4.6 this was also used to accommodate all learners learning styles, as revealed in (Appendix A).

Notable, with regard to the study of focus, the learners were not highly exposed to the English books in early years of schooling and therefore, lack the English alphabet knowledge to successfully complete English reading tasks. Results from the single word reading task shows only 20% of the participants have managed a pass rate, while the remaining 80% failed the task by reading less than half the words fluently.

The mean score of the correctly read words was 16.8, with a standard deviation of 12.99, while the mean score of the words read with errors was 38.4 and standard deviation of 21.58. The mean score for words read correctly was lower than the mean score for words read incorrectly. This suggests that the subjects read more words wrongly.

Furthermore, transitioning learners have difficulty with reading English because they lack the English alphabet knowledge which poses a challenge as the units represented graphically by the English letters of the alphabet are meaningless and phonologically abstract as stated by Daniels and Bright (as cited in Snow et al., (1998). At this stage children establish a foundation for a lifelong relationship with books, however, researchers such as Lerner (2000), and Dickinson and Neuman (2006), maintain that children who are exposed to books in their early years learn to read more easily. With regard to the study of focus, the learners were not highly exposed to the English books in their early years and therefore, lack the English alphabet knowledge to successfully complete English reading tasks. These suggest that learners might have not been explicitly taught the English alphabet knowledge in pre-primary school, as preparation for learning to read in Grade one.

Children go through a series of developmental stages in the acquisition of skilled, adult-like reading and writing. In literature, Marsh, Friedman, and Frith (1985) present four stage-theories, the first stage is known as the Linguistic Guessing stage. This is when children have little or no phonic skills to decipher unknown words, especially when presented out of context (Ellis, 1993). As a result, they read words logographically, or merely guess them. Thus, reading is dependent on the visual

aspects of words and/or the content within which a word is placed. Spelling is non-phonetic and shows no sound-letter correspondence understanding (Stackhouse & Wells, 1997). The learners' performance in the five tasks shows that they are at the first stage of reading in English as it is evident from the descriptive statistics of the huge standard deviation of scores in the different tasks. Moreover, having witnessed the weak performance of transitioning learners the researcher deduced that learners' communication at this stage is one way. This according to Gass and Selinker (2001), during the one way communication a learner listens to or read the target language but does not respond. The communication is one-way towards the learner, but not from the learner. This type of communication is a typical example of most primary school learners in rural areas when introduced to English as a subject. Thus, transitioning learners are in the right direction of acquiring the English language, even though it is not what is expected in the school curriculum.

In addition, learners transitioning from Otjiherero first language to the English medium of instruction revealed a reading difficulty experienced by most during the single word reading task, which was letter confusion during their reading. Most learners confused letters which have the same form but different orientation in single word reading (Appendix E), example: /p/ in *private to drive*, /d/ in *depth to death*, decoding words like *c/a/t to (c-u-t)*, *b/e/d to (bad)*. Teachers' findings further revealed that most of the learners coming from the Otjiherero medium of instruction do not know the English sounds of most letters and how they change when they are blended with others. Therefore, misreading some words such *_doctor/* read as */dog/* and */morning/* read as */mother/* because of an attempt to read by analogy.

Furthermore, the challenge faced by most learners during the pseudo word reading task was that most could not read all the words and had to sound them letter by letter. This is an attempt to decode the unknown words, after which they would then blend the sounds to form words but at grade 4 level it's expected that learners should read fluently. According to teachers responses they explained that the challenge was that most of the learners could not pick the sound of words effectively because they are not used to the English phonetics. This is basically because the learners had the foundation of been taught in mother tongue (Otjiherero) and had most of the phonemic awareness of the first language. This challenges culminated that the learners were unable to use phonetics effectively, unable to form words and had inability to write short and simple cohesive sentence. On contrary, if learners had Otjiherero phonemic awareness, this awareness would easily have crossed transferred and facilitated reading development in English, which is not the case in the study. As a result, based on the pseudo word task administered it is concluded that the teaching of the English phonetics at the foundation was simply poor.

Established on teachers' findings, pronunciation of English words is another major challenge and this really has a negative impact on the learners' single word reading task as they would pronounce words differently from their origin. English words are not pronounced as they sound e.g. /t-a-l-k/ should be pronounced as /tok/, whereas most Otjiherero words are pronounced as they sound. Thus, the pronunciation of words that start with letter /b/ and /d/, Otjiherero- speakers put /m/ before words starting with /b/ and /n/ before words starting with /d/. In relation to the pseudo word task (Appendix F) learners would pronounce the words starting with the /b/ sound as

/m-b-l-o-od (Bluud)/ putting letter /m/ before the word. When pronouncing words starting with /d/ sound they put the /n/ sound before it E.g /n-d-o-o-r-s/ (Doss).

Reading, as a language-based activity (Lyon, 2000), does not develop naturally, and for many children, decoding, word recognition, and reading comprehension skills must be taught directly and systematically. If a child's knowledge of English is poor the reading skill as well as reading comprehension will also be poor (Baker, 2006). Though some learners possess the necessary skills for learning to read, others do not have the skills, but the teachers indicated that mother tongue really had an impact on the single word reading tasks pronunciation of words by the learners and with time learners might improve.

5.2.2 Writing Difficulties

The following writing difficulties emerged from the findings of the study: Confusion of letters in some words, omission of letters, substitution of letters in writing and mixing the Otjiherero and English writing systems. Jorm (1985) indicated that reading retardation can cause reversal of sequence such as "split" being read as "spilt" and "slat" as "salt". Jorm (1985) concludes that confusion of this sort occurs very commonly in all children when they are first beginning to read. Martin and Miller (1996), maintain that when children learn to read they are faced with a number of tasks such as the physical characteristics of the written system, the notion of the letters, words and sentences, word length and word space, lexical and grammatical forms.

The learners in this study revealed various writing difficulties of which one is the confusion of letters in some words when spelling. During the assessment of the single word spelling task (see Appendix C), the researcher noticed that a few learners

were able to correctly spell words such as *responsibilities, government, environment, friendship, nutrition* and many others which they had to spell. On the other hand, most of the learners were confusing letters, substituting and mixing the English words with Otjiherero words.

Furthermore, learning to read poses real challenges, even to children who will eventually become good readers. Moreover, although every writing system has its own complexities, English presents a relatively special challenge, even among alphabetic language speakers Daniels and Bright (as cited in Snow, Burns and Griffin, 1998). In brief, English can present a challenge for a learner who expects to find each letter always linked to just one sound as evident from the spelling task (see Appendix C) of the learners' in the study who are transitioning from Otjiherero medium of instruction of which each letter is mostly linked to just one sound. Thus, most learners omitted; substituted and added letters in most of the words they spelt and this resulted in wrong spelling of these words. These errors were evident in words such as resources which was spelt as *resorces*, Tree-*tee*, Sink -*sing*, read- *ried*, Thunder -*zandar*, uncle-*unkel*, Tractor -*tructor*, Kitchen-*kitchean*, Carpenter-*Kapenda*, environment-*enviroment*, private-*prevate*, nutrition-*newtrision*, earrings-*earings*, transformed-*transport*, responsibilities-*responsebelti*, quarter-*cortar*, behaviour-*behave*.

In addition, the Grade four teachers stated that most of the learners in the study are able to understand words in English but are unable to construct grammatical sentences in their composition because they write simple sentences that are ungrammatical. For example, "I am go to school everyday." "mathr is cook food." "father cut wood" and Timo paly outside."

5.3 Summary

This study was conducted in order to investigate the literacy difficulties in fourth graders transitioning to English language from mother tongue (Otjiherero) in the Otjozondjupa region Okakarara constituency. The study answered the following questions:

1. What are the literacy difficulties experienced in English by Grade four learners taught in Otjiherero 1st language at the lower primary phase?
2. How do the fourth grade learners perform in the English literacy tasks such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, spelling, single word reading, and pseudo word reading?
3. What are the teachers' experiences of teaching literacy to learners coming from an Otjiherero medium of instruction?

The concurrent mixed method approach was used to investigate the literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders taught in the Otjiherero medium of instruction at the lower primary phase.

A semi-structured open-ended questionnaire was administered to the teachers in order to obtain their experiences of teaching literacy (reading and writing) to learners that were in an Otjiherero medium of instruction at the lower primary school phase and transitioned to the English medium. With regard to testify the learners five literacy tasks were used to measure learners' performance in the various English literacy tasks at Grade four; with specific focus on single word reading, single word spelling, reading comprehension, listening comprehension and pseudo words.

With regard to data analysis, the qualitative data was analyzed by looking at the various responses of teachers' on what literacy difficulties they experience and how they teach English literacy to learners that were taught in the Otjiherero medium of instruction in the lower primary school phase. This was followed by the creation of themes that emerged from the teachers responses on the open ended questionnaires. On the other hand, the quantitative data (five literacy task) was analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics.

The findings were presented in two sections: Qualitative findings and quantitative findings and an integrative discussion that involves the two methods to create data integration were discussed in chapter 5, under two main themes (reading difficulties and writing difficulties). Learners' reading in this study was accomplished by identifying a number of reading miscues learners' uttered in the given reading task. Some of the reading difficulties identified during the literacy tasks in this study were limited access to English word meaning, lack of the English alphabet knowledge, confusing letters during reading and confusion of letters in some words when writing, omission of letters, substitution of letters when writing and mixing the Otjiherero and English structure when writing.

By analyzing the English reading skill of most learners in this study it was found that lack of word decoding ability stemmed from faulty recognition and naming of letters of the English alphabet. The possible cause of these reading miscues is lack of decoding and word attack skill, because most of these learners were unable to read all the words with fluency as they sounded out words into letters before blending them.

This was an indication of poor word attack skill, as learners tried hard to put letters together to form a meaningful sound. According to the Grade 4 syllabus, reading in such a way is not appropriate (MBESC, 2005), since learners at this stage should focus on meaning and not on sound symbols correspondence.

In brief, the findings of this study are in stark contrast with the basic competencies contained in the Grade 4 syllabus, meaning that many learners are fallen behind in the Grade four basic competencies (MBESC, 2005b).

5.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out the literacy difficulties experienced by fourth graders taught in Otjiherero at the lower primary phase and transitioning to the English medium of instruction. The researcher found that most of the transitioning learners have literacy difficulties, of which they have limited access to English word meaning (vocabulary), lack the English alphabet knowledge, confuse letters when reading and difficulties with the confusion of letters in some words, omission of letters, substitution of letters when writing and mixing the Otjiherero orthography when writing in English. Furthermore, the weak performance in the assigned literacy tasks portrayed a lack of English language development in transitioning learners, insufficient word recognition strategy and lack of comprehension skills. These weak performances were alluded to by teachers when they shared their experience of working with transitioning learners’.

The Grade four teachers stated that most of the learners in the study are able to understand words in English but are unable to construct grammatical sentences in their composition, because they write simple sentences that are ungrammatical, as they mix the English writing structure with Otjiherero. In addition, the teachers explained that pronunciation of words is another major challenge and this really has a negative impact on the learners writing. Though some learners possess the necessary skills for learning to read, others do not have the skills, and the teachers indicated that mother tongue really had an impact on the single word reading tasks pronunciation of words by the learners, as they pronounced the words wrongly. This does not dispute other possible factors that could cause literacy difficulties at grade4 level, but for the purpose of this study mother tongue instruction was the focus, as it influences learning in the transitional process from lower primary to upper primary phase. With evidence from the research, learning to read happened through different approaches in the classrooms, of which teachers mainly indicated to use a combination of methods during the lesson presentations. Each method was used at least once. Usage of the methods by the teachers was informed by their college of education/university training, but not by their teaching experience.

5.5 Recommendations

Arising from the findings of the research, the following recommendations are made:

Teachers during the transition phase should assist transitioning learners with the English phonemic awareness skills, word attack skills and a lot of reading practice in order to improve the learners English alphabet knowledge. They should not consider what is in the syllabus without bringing transitioning learners on par with their peers from the English stream.

Grade 4 English teachers should receive special training on how to handle the transition period, with pertinent focus placed on the development of English letter sounding skills, word recognition, decoding, oral presentations and comprehension skills, for an improved literacy (reading and writing) competencies at this level.

Hence, fulfilling the purpose of mother tongue medium of instruction in lower primary phase and avoiding the literacy difficulties experienced by most learners in the upper primary phase and beyond. In terms of the findings and discussion on the literacy difficulties experienced by transitioning learners identified in this study, the following recommendations for further research can be made:

That further research be conducted to investigate on what literacy difficulties are experienced by transitioning learners in Otjiherero language. In order to have an idea on whether the learners during the transitioning phase are facing similar challenges in the two languages or not.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Teacher's Open-ended Questionnaire

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Gender?

Female ☐

☐
Male

2. How old are you?

20-30 years ☐

31-40 years ☐

41-50 years ☐

51-60 years ☐

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

Grade 12 ☐

B.A. ☐

Major subjects (e.g. English, Otjiherero, Social Studies, etc.)

B. Sc. ☐

Major subjects (e.g. Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math, etc.)

BETD

☐

B.ED ☐

Honours ☐

Masters ☐

Others Specify ☐ _____

4. Are you professionally qualified to teach English at grade 4?

Yes ☐

No ☐

5. If yes, what is your highest professional qualification?

GRADE 12

☐

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) ☐

If no, why are you teaching English at grade 4 level? _____

6. How long have you been teaching English at grade 4 level?

1-2 years ☐

3-4 years ☐

5-6 years ☐

7-8 years ☐

9-10 years ☐

Others ☐ Specify _____

7. 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 | ☐ |
| All of them | ☐ |
| None of these methods | ☐ |

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Phonics method | ☐ |
| Whole word/look- and say- method | ☐ |
| Whole language method | ☐ |
| Context support method | ☐ |
| All of them | ☐ |
| None of these methods | ☐ |

If none, how do you teach?

9. 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

☐

SECTION B: SEMI- STRUCTURED QUESTIONS

10. Which aspects of English do your learners find difficult to cope with? (Give an example of what learners could be struggling with)

.....

.....

.....

11. In your opinion, what are the reasons why your learners find it difficult to cope with the aspects of English you referred to above?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Are there any prerequisite skills for learning to read and write in English that learners should have before entering grade 4? Please elaborate on the required skills.

13. Based on your knowledge of prerequisite skills necessary for learning to read and write in English, do your learners in Grade 4 possess any of these prerequisite skills?

.....

.....

.....

.....

14. How do these prerequisite skills help your learners with reading and spelling?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. Describe how you teach reading and writing in your English class?

.....

.....

16. When any of your learners struggle with reading and spelling, what do you do to help them?

.....

.....

17. Describe your experience when teaching writing to these learners?

.....

The End, thank you!!

Appendix B: Reading Comprehension Task

READING COMPREHENSION TASK

Case number :

Learner's name and Surname:

Grade :

Name of School :

Gender :

Child's Date of birth :

Age of Child :

Date of Testing :

Grade: 4, English as a second language

ON THE FARM

Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow.

John likes to go to his uncle's farm because there are so many things to do and see. John can watch his uncle ploughing with the tractor or he can look at the cows in the kraal where they are kept. He often plays with the young lambs and sometimes feed them. They even suck John's fingers when he put them in their mouths. John is only nine years old but his uncle lets him ride an old horse. The horse is tame and he is not scared that he will fall off. John always wants to visit his uncle during the holidays because he is such a kind man.

Questions:

Does John like to go to his uncle's farm?

YES	NO

Does John watch his uncle ploughing with the tractor?

YES	NO

Are the cows not kept in the kraal?

YES	NO

Does John play with the young lambs often?

YES	NO

Does John not feed the young lambs?

YES	NO

Does the young lambs sucks Johns finger when he feeds them?

YES	NO

John is only eleven years old and his uncle lets him ride an old horse.

YES	NO

Is John not afraid of an untamed horse?

YES	NO

[TOTAL: 8]

Appendix C: Spelling Task

SPELLING TASK

INSTRUCTIONS: I am going to ask you to spell words. First, I am going to say the word, then use it in a sentence, and then ask you to spell the word. I want you to listen carefully before you can spell the word. For example: spell the word “see”. Father can see the dogs running. Spell the word “see”. There are forty (40) words on this card, which you are going to spell now.

Run	Dogs run fast	RUN
Legs	People have two legs	LEGS
Out	let us go out tonight	OUT
Like	Do you like to mathematics?	LIKE
Play	children like to play outside	PLAY
What	what is your name?	WHAT
Look	look at me	LOOK
Sink	the boat sink in the river	SINK
Tree	There is a tree next to the house	TREE
Catch	the boys catch the ball	CATCH
Read	I read two pages a day	READ
Angry	The teacher is angry with the girls	ANGRY

Uncle	My uncle has a big farm	UNCLE
Tractor	There tractor is bigger than a truck	TRACTOR
Taste	The meat taste delicious	TASTE
Kitchen	Mother is in the kitchen	KITCHEN
Respect	The teachers have respect for their learners	RESPECT
Forgiving	my brother is forgiving my father for beating him	FORGIVING
Thunder	There is thunder storm in China	THUNDER
Carpenter	My brother is a carpenter	CARPENTER
Environment	we must take good care of our environment	ENVIRONMENT
Behavior	young people's behavior towards adults is not good	BEHAVIOR
Quarter	this is the second quarter of the school year	QUARTER
Biscuit	the children needs biscuits	BISCUITS
Village	village life is better than city life	VILLAGE
Mother	I love my mother	MOTHER
Library	the most important place at school is the library	LIBRARY

Survive we all need water to survive **SURVIVE**

Precious Life is precious **PRECIOUS**

Private the office building is private **PRIVATE**

Blackboard the teacher writes on the blackboard **BLACKBOARD**

Search the farmers search for goats every afternoon **SEARCH**

Friendship girls value friendship more than boys **FRIENDSHIP**

Responsibilities each one of us have responsibilities
RESPONSIBILITIES

Transformed people transformed their lives **TRANSFORMED**

Government our country is ruled by a government
GOVERNMENT

Resources Namibia has a lot of resources **RESOURCES**

nutrition The body needs nutrition for it to develop **NUTRITION**

conservation Animal conservation is important **CONSERVATION**

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correct	
Total Items	
% Correct	

Appendix D: Listening Comprehension Task

Listening comprehension Task

Case number:

Learner's name and surname:

Grade :

Name of School :

Gender :

Learner's Date of birth :

Learner's Age :

Date of Testing :

A day at the walker Dam: FISHING

Listen to the following passage and answer the following question. The passage will be read to you twice:

Questions:

Does father takes William and his brother to fish at Walker Dam?

YES	NO

It was a very cold and windy day.

YES	NO

The car was parked under the big shady trees.

YES	NO

William felt a tug at his line?

YES	NO

Father did not help William land the fish, as it was a small fish.

YES	NO

The family did not have time for lunch as they were busy fishing.

YES	NO

They took five big fish and one small fish home.

YES	NO

[TOTAL: 7]

Appendix E: Single Word Reading Task

Individual Task:

SINGLE WORD READING

TASK

Case number:

Learner's name and surname:

Grade :

Name of School :

Gender :

Learner's Date of birth :

Learner's Age :

Date of Testing :

Child's Response

X **√** **Word spelt**

Wise			
Noise			
Soft			

Question			
Arrive			
Reward			
Junior			
Fail			
Friendly			
Depth			

Doctor			
Empty			
Morning			
Unite			
Awake			
Sell			
Better			
Maximum			
Ancestor			
Together 21. Smooth			

22. Reader			
23. Here			
24. Peace			

25. Honest			
26. Subject			
27. Good			
28. Depart			
29. Succeed			

30. Trust			
31. Respect			
32. Wrist			
33. Flood			
34. Private			
35. Palms			
36. Elbow			
37. Apron			
38. Bowl			
39. Cabbage			
40. Scarce			
41. Protect			
42. Pineapples			
42. Exist			
43. Calf			
44. Kind			
45. Baker			

46. Struggling			
47. Growl			
48. Palms			
49. Floats			
50. Sigh			
51. Numb			
52. Croak			
53. Buzz			
54. Regional			
55. Defence			
56. Health			
57. Transport			
58. Blast			

59. Cupping			
60. Spill			
61. Moo			
62. Flow			
63. Shawl			
64. Surge			
65. Reap			
66. Billions			
67. Fling			
68. Roar			

69. Tight			
70. Power			

Reading scores

Total Errors	
Total correct	
Total Items	
% Correct	

Appendix F: Pseudo Word Reading Task

PSEUDO WORD READING TASK

Pseudo words are pronounceable based on phonics rules but are not real words.

Useful means to determine if these young learners can apply phonics to read genuine words:

WORDS	SOUND	CHILD'S RESP.	
		×	√
Dake	/K/		
Poot – as in pool/boot	/OO/		
Slipe – as in slide	/I/		
Doss – as in boss	/B/		
Dar – as in car	/R/		
Jow – as in cow	/OW/		
hile – as in file	/L/		
Bluud – as in blood	/U/		

Wight- as in white	/W/		
Frish- as in fresh	/F/		

Reading (Decoding) scores

Total Errors	
Total correct	
Total Items	
% Correct	

NB! Words sounded letter by letter, but not blended, are not acceptable. It is considered as an error.

Appendix G: Research Permission Letter

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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



The School of Postgraduate
Studies
P.Bag 13301
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: LIANA KAPUTU (Student number: 2003/1111) is a registered student in the Department of EDUC. M. + L. + I. + G. 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 Postgraduate 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,

Name of Main Supervisor: Karavire R. H. Veri

Signed: [Signature]

Dr. C. N.S. Shaimemanya

Signed: _____

Director: School of Postgraduate Studies

Appendix H: Ethics Clearance Certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: SEC/FOE/7/2014

Date: 5 March, 2014

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: Literacy Difficulties Experienced in English 2nd Language Fourth Graders Taught in Otjiherero 1st Language at the Lower Primary School Phase in the Otjozondjupa Region

Nature/Level of Project: Masters

Principal Researcher: Tjara Kaputu (Student No. 200317571)

Host Department & Faculty: Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education, Faculty of Education

Supervisor (s): K. Veii (Main), J. Hengari, H.U. Kandjeo-Marenga (Co-)

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
 - (i). withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii). request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "I. Mapaura".

Prof. I. Mapaura
UNAM Research Coordinator
ON BEHALF OF UREC

Appendix I: Permission Letter from Otjozondjupa Region

	REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA OTJOZONDJUPA REGIONAL COUNCIL	
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION		
Tel no: 264 67 308000/04 Fax no: 264 67 304871 Ref no: 11/4/8 To: Ms. Tjara Kaputu P. O Box 321 Windhoek		Private Bag 2618 Otjiwarongo NAMIBIA
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON LITERACY DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY FOURTH GRADERS IN OTJOZONDJUPA REGION. Your letter dated 1 April 2014, bear reference. The director does not have any objection towards your intention. Therefore permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research with grade 4 learners 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  Ms. Faustina N. Caley Director	OTJOZONDJUPA REGIONAL COUNCIL DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION 14/08/2014 2014 -08- 14 OFFICE OF DIRECTOR Tel: 067-308000 Fax: 067-304871 PRIVATE BAG 2618 OTJIWARONGO OTJOZONDJUPA REGION	