CHALLENGES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A CASE OF GRADE 10 IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE QUTHING DISTRICT

BY

'MATEMO. B. LIKHOELI

(200401090)

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this dissertation has been read and approved as having met the requirements of the Faculty of Education, National University of Lesotho, for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Supervisor: _____

Co-supervisor: _____

Head of Department: _____ _____

Dean, Faculty of Education: _____

External Examiner: _____

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my Dearest American friends, Matthew Bower, Kenneth Bower and Doris Persicketti for being a source of encouragement and inspiration, and for believing in me even at times when I doubted myself. This is also a dedication to my daughter, Bohlokoa Tšepahalo Mosothoane, for her, I am setting an example that she should never stop falling in love with books. Thank you, my girl, for understanding and giving me an opportunity to explore my horizon. THE SKY IS THE LIMIT! Every time when I closed the door behind and left you for school, your words even today still echoe: *"Bomme ha ba kene sekolo, kopa u se tlohele o lule hae le nna."*

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ABSTRACT

The reading skill is considered as one of the four fundamental language skills that every learner must possess. However, it seems to be not an easy task especially for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. The aim of this study was to investigate the nature of challenges faced by ESL teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. The inquiry further explored the contributing factors to those challenges. The focus of the investigation was on Grade10 English Language teachers and learners in two selected secondary school in the Quthing district. The study was underpinned by Vygotsky (1978) Socio-cultural theory. A case study qualitative design was employed where teachers' interviews and students' tests were used to generate data for the study. Data analysis procedure followed five phases of thematic coding as advocated by Robson (2011).

The main findings revealed that teachers are incompetent to teach reading comprehension while learners have poor comprehension and limited vocabulary to comprehend written texts. From this discovery, the study proposes that teachers should go for in-service programs and learners should be exposed to print-rich environment.

Key words: reading, comprehension, reading comprehension skill and strategies, vocabulary and comprehension difficulty.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION/ ACROYMS

CAP: Curriculum and Assessment Policy

ECOL: Examination Council of Lesotho

ESL: English as a Second Language

LGCSE: Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education

MKO: More Knowledgeable Other

MoET: Ministry of Education and Training

NCDC: National Curriculum Development Centre

RAND: Research and Development

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The intent of this study is to investigate challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language at Grade10. This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study followed by brief a outline of methodology, trustworthiness issues and ethical considerations, organisation of the study and chapter summary.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The term *literacy* would seem understandable to everyone. However, literacy as a concept has proved to be multifaceted and dynamic as it continues to be interpreted and defined in various ways. Being literate or illiterate is understood differently based on academic research, institutional agendas, national contexts and personal experiences. According to UNESCO (2016), literacy is defined as the ability to recognise, appreciate, understand, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Alderson (2000) and Hull (2003) conceive literary as being able to read and understand a simple text, use and transmit written information of everyday life. In concurrence, Jennings (2005) posits that literacy means ways of reading the world in specific contexts such as technological, media, and health contexts. It is reasonable therefore, to assume from the aforementioned postulations that globally, people are regarded as being literate only when they are able to read and interpret what they are reading. These understandings also point to the idea that reading involves communication using a specific language. With this in mind, teaching and learning of reading for meaning in a foreign language such as English is demanding and may pose challenges to both ESL teachers and learners.

Several scholars have come up with what reading for understanding really is in terms of how it is defined and what it entails. Pressley (2002) cited in Mwanambuku (2013) and Dennis (2008) claim that reading comprehension is a complex process between identifying written symbols and deducing meaning behind those symbols. In the same line of thought, RAND Reading Study Group (2002) asserts that reading comprehension consists of constructing and extracting meaning from

the text. RAND further illustrates that the process of comprehension is achieved through the reader's involvement with the text. Klapwijk (2015) agrees with RAND's (2002) claims on reader's participation. The author reinforces that reading comprehension is a strategic process in which the readers use clues from the text together with their existing knowledge to make intelligent guesses and build meaning from the text. These affirmations from RAND (2002), Dennis (2008) Pressley (2006) and Klapwijk (2015) validate that the essence of reading comprehension is to understand the writer's communication in print. It is acceptable to conclude that reading for meaning is not just a mere word recognition and ability to understand oral language because some learners still encounter difficulty in understanding the very words they speak. Comprehension is the essence of reading because the aim of written language is understanding of message (Dennis, 2008). Based on the notion that English is taught and learned as a second language in Lesotho schools, understandably, reading comprehension in English Language may be challenging. Therefore, further research is needed to empirically investigate teachers' and learners' reading comprehension challenges simultaneously.

Literature indicates that there are series of cognitive processes that impact leaners' reading comprehension (Pressley, 2006; Mwanambuku, 2013; Klapwijk, 2015). This submits that there are specific key elements that facilitate reading comprehension and without them there will not be comprehension. Ibrahim, Sarudin and Muhamad (2016) illustrate that vocabulary knowledge is one important skill that supports reading comprehension. Vocabulary in this case may mean words which are used in a language. McIntyre (2011) avers that children learn some words accidentally in a context, but they acquire large chunks of words through interaction with their immediate world. Similarly, Hu and Nation (2000) indicates that in their interaction with learners, teachers should provide varied and rich language experiences with deliberate effort to teach new challenging words. Given this, it may be deduced that vocabulary connected with the domain knowledge links the reader to the text and that helps him make inferences based on the situation being read. This may also support that learners' limited lexical knowledge may affect their ability to comprehend written texts.

In addition, prior knowledge is the most important constituent of reading comprehension (Gunderson and Chen 2011; Tompkins, 2011; & Manaido, 2016). This may be referred to as all experiences learners may have acquired before learning experiences. Different situations in which

the learners participate in, enrich them with a number of experiences which are important for teaching and learning. Background knowledge of learners assist in bringing written texts into life, hence making comprehension easy and meaningful (Pressley, 2006; Tompkins, 2016). Seemingly, prior knowledge assists learners to relate information in the text with what they already know. Pressley (2006) further assets that prior knowledge has an important role because it enables people to have a very good understanding of a complex situation with very little information. With this perspective, a research among others, can investigate the cause of poor vocabulary and the role of prior knowledge to understanding reading comprehension passages.

Furthermore, other variables that constitute reading comprehension are reading comprehension strategies and reading motivation (Anderson, 2003; Pressley, 2006; Denis, 2008 and Klapwijk, 2016). Duke, Pressley and Hilden (2004) concur that reading strategies are conscious behaviour that readers employ before, during, and after reading in order to derive meaning from the text. The latter is defined as purposeful cognitive actions that learners perform in order to construct and keep meaning from the passage (Anderson, 2003; Lai, 2013 & Meniado, 2016). Additionally, McIntyre (2011) highlights that reading interest and reading motivation is also linked to reading comprehension. The implication may be that strategic readers use reading strategies as effective instruments to obtain, store and retrieve new knowledge. It may also be concluded that if learners find reading texts monotonous they will disengage with it and it will be difficult to remain focused. Premised on the highlights of the understandings around reading comprehension and what it entails, this suggests that ESL teachers and learners may encounter challenges around teaching and learning of reading comprehension. It makes sense therefore, for empirical research at one stage to focus on what could be reading comprehension challenges which are related to reading strategy and motivation.

The issue of reading comprehension has been subjected to research over decades in different places. Sanford (2015) for instance, conducted a quasi-quantitative design study in the United States of America to analyse factors affecting reading comprehension ability of secondary students. Sanford's key findings indicate that learners have reading comprehension deficiency. Sanford therefore proposes that reading comprehension skills and strategies should be taught explicitly. Similarly, in India, Zaheer and Rahman (2016) discovered that learners struggle to recognise words from the text and that makes it difficult to follow the authors' intended meaning.

Moreover, in Malaysia, Maxwell (2014) employed quasi-experimental design to explore the use of implicit and explicit instruction to teach reading comprehension to elementary school leaners and discovered that better readers emerge from explicit teaching of reading skills. It seems, from these discoveries that there is a need to conduct further research to establish factors contributing to the nature of challenges around the teaching and learning of reading comprehension that could be the result of failure to teach comprehension explicitly.

African researchers are not exceptional to researching reading comprehension. For instance, Ariong (2013) adopted case study qualitative design to explore instructional practices of primary school teachers teaching reading comprehension in Uganda. She discovered that teachers' lack of variety of instructional practices hinders the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. Furthermore, an inquiry in Malawi was carried out by Chisamba (2014) to explore how regular teachers were teaching reading comprehension in inclusive classrooms in primary schools. She revealed that the teaching of reading comprehension is still rooted in the old tradition of decoding and answering reading comprehension questions. Recently, using a cross-sectional survey Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) surveyed reading comprehension in South African schools to assess whether teachers were teaching it effectively. Their findings indicate that teachers in poorer performing schools do not give reading comprehension instruction the attention it deserves, hence students' poor performance. In the light of the discoveries from previous researches, it is not enough to claim that teachers have a negative attitude towards teaching reading comprehension and to further declare that they do not use a variety of modern instructional approaches, yet the nature of challenges they encounter in their daily teaching of reading comprehension in English Language is not yet unknown. Hence, there is a need for further research to bring knowledge and understanding around the challenges English Language teachers and learners experience simultaneously.

In Lesotho, the concept of literacy particularly reading comprehension has also received a certain interest. Thamae (1993) reveals that poor instructional practices contribute to learner's poor performance. Since scholarship is dynamic with research much has been done pertaining to challenges related to reading comprehension across the globe. This means that there is a limited research done on reading comprehension in Lesotho if one could refer to a study carried out more than two decades ago. Teaching as a field, technology and educational research are at a more

advanced stage now. Therefore, current research is needed to align reading comprehension skills with the 21st century skills. Further example, though it is an old one also, Hloele (2003) investigated the use of learner-centred approach in teaching reading comprehension in Maseru high schools. It is noted, her study is limited to the use of learner-centred approach in teaching reading comprehension in Maseru high schools. The nature of reading comprehension challenges faced by teachers and learners remain unclear in the context of Lesotho junior secondary schools. Henceforth, the inquiry seeks to study challenges teachers and learners experience simultaneously in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language in Lesotho schools.

Taken in sum, the cited studies conducted in different contexts and with different research designs, have illustrated that reading comprehension still poses a challenge to English Language teachers and learners. Their findings also imply that instructional methods, content, language in textual materials and theoretical knowledge of reading comprehension are paramount to the teaching and learning of reading comprehension as highlighted by Pretorius and Lephalala (2011). However, these studies are generally limited to their contexts. Additionally, the research designs adopted by Ariong, (2013), Sanford, (2015), Zaheer and Rahman, (2016) and Pretorius and Klapwijk, (2016) in forgoing studies are either qualitative or quantitative but findings obtained are not inclusive of Lesotho secondary schools. The discoveries might have been influenced by geographical situations, political and socio-economic variables. It is important therefore for further research to focus on Lesotho ESL teachers and secondary learners teaching and learning reading comprehension challenges simultaneously.

Lastly, the tendency of previous work on reading comprehensions seems to focus on either teachers' or learners' challenges in isolation. For instance, Pretorius and Lephalala (2011), Mwanambuku (2013), Chisamba (2014), Sanford (2015) and Zaheer and Rahman (2016) barely focus on challenges faced by teachers and learners simultaneously. Preceding researchers have divorced teaching from learning in studying reading comprehension challenges. Basically, teaching and learning are inseparable. The present study, for that reason, intended to adopt a different perspective by studying teachers' and learners' reading comprehension challenges simultaneously. Our knowledge of teachers' or learners' reading comprehension challenges is largely based on limited data as many of recent researchers such as Ariong (2013), Chisamba (2014), Maxwell (2014), Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) have their focus on primary levels. It

appears that further research should be established to address further the challenges experienced at Secondary school levels.

In essence, the niche areas which have prompted the current study as highlighted in the background are bulleted below.

- Previous research is limited to studying either teachers' or learners' reading comprehension challenges. A neglected area is studying teachers' and learners' reading comprehension challenges.
- There is dearth of research around reading comprehension challenges in Lesotho schools.
- Recent findings obtained from other studies conducted elsewhere are not inclusive of Lesotho junior secondary schools.
- Little is known on reading comprehension challenges at secondary school levels. Focus of the previous researches is mainly at primary school levels.

It is against the above bulleted gaps in previous research that the researcher intended to study simultaneously challenges English Language teachers and learners face in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The statement of the problem is defined as what is being investigated or an issue to be addressed (Bowen, 2014). The research problem in this inquiry emanated from documented literature on reading comprehension in English Language and personal experience of the researcher as an ESL teacher. As discussed earlier in the background, literature articulates that teachers and learners experience difficulties in reading comprehension. Lapp, Flood and Fisher (2013) and Sanford (2015) contend that reading comprehension is a global problem and it is even a more complex task with ESL learners. In consensus, Ippolito, Steele and Samson (2008) and Nurie (2017) maintain that ESL students often face difficulty in understanding content taught in schools because they lack comprehension and seem underprepared for reading tasks placed on them. This would mean that learners' failure to comprehend written communication may impede their attainment of academic, personal and professional success given that most of the knowledge nowadays is imparted in printed forms. It is imperative therefore, for research to address among others

challenges faced by ESL teachers and learners simultaneously in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language.

Reading comprehension challenges have been a subject of investigation in ESL contexts such as India, Malaysia, Uganda and South Africa. For example, Zaheer and Rahman (2016) and Ariong (2016) in their studies conducted in India and Malawi respectively, reveal that reading comprehension in English Language poses a problem to many ESL teachers and learners. In line with these researchers, Klapwijik (2016) avers students have limited vocabulary to understand communicated information from the texts. Ariong (2016) concurs that teachers' lack of appropriate instructional techniques in teaching reading comprehension contributes to learners' poor performance in reading comprehension in English Language. In the light of the forgoing articulations it is crucial to study teachers' and learners' challenges simultaneously as recommended by Maxwell (2014). Seemingly, studying either teachers' or learners' challenges in isolation may result into limited knowledge around some challenges that are teachers' and learners' related. Moreover, it would be difficult to deal with those challenges if they remain unknown. It makes sense to conclude that inadequate research on simultaneous study on reading comprehension challenges faced by teachers and learners may result into recurring teaching and learning difficulties.

Literature also depicts that despite many years of English Language being taught as a subject in ESL primary and secondary schools, students continue to fail to derive meaning from English written texts (Roth, 2004; Pretorius and Klapwijik 2016; Nurie 2017). The cited literature points to learners' lack of reading comprehension skills as one of the variables that facilitate reading comprehension. Pressley (2006) and Lai (2013) posit that learners who do not have reading comprehension skills find it difficult to predict, summarize, infer, question, find meaning of unfamiliar words and identify main ideas from the text. It may also be assumed that poor reading comprehension skills amongst learners may not only deny learners an opportunity to understand reading passages in English Language but also would cripple them to grasp content across other subject. This implication is supported by Nurie (2017) who affirms that most academic communication is in the printed form. Based on these observations, further research may also explore contributing factors to learners' lack of reading comprehension skills.

Grounded on the extended personal experience of the researcher as the English Language teacher and a JC English Language maker at junior certificate level, students' incompetence in mastering reading comprehension tasks has triggered a concern. For many years, her students do not perform well on the reading comprehension tasks. Some of her students seem to struggle with reading fluency while others are able to read fluently but fail to construct and extract meaning from what they are reading. These learners' lack of comprehension is endorsed by Examiner's Report (0175/2) (2015), (2016) and (2017). The reports establish that many learners perform below average on reading comprehension in English Language. Students' poor performance in reading comprehension implies that there are underlying challenges that need to be addressed empirically. Ariong (2016,) and Chisamba (2013) aver that students' lack of reading comprehension skills would cause them to fail a class. They might also finish secondary education or drop out from school without having acquired the ability to read for understanding if reading comprehension challenges in schools remain neglected. These previous researchers' statements therefore trigger the present-day study.

There is a large body of research on reading comprehension difficulties in contexts where English is spoken as a second language and is a medium of instruction. However, most previous studies seem to focus on reading comprehension challenges at primary levels. Recent research studies in African contexts, for instance, Ariong (2013) in Uganda, Mwanamukubi (2013) in Zambia, Chisamba (2013) in Malawi, Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) in South Africa have addressed the problem but their focus was either on primary teachers' challenges only or primary learners' challenges only. If reading comprehension challenges at secondary school levels remain a neglected area, it is difficult to be definite of challenges at the level-specific form. This calls for further research to discover challenges faced by teachers and learners on reading comprehension at secondary school level in Lesotho.

There is dearth of research on reading comprehension in Lesotho schools. Some preliminary work (s) that the researcher is aware of is that of Thamae (1993) and Hloele (2003). In the absence of current research on reading comprehension challenges in Lesotho, it remains difficult to deal with challenges experienced by teachers and learners. Constituents which facilitate reading comprehension such as prior knowledge, reading skills and strategies, motivations, lexical knowledge as highlighted in Section (2.4.3) presented later in the study would remain unknown.

Yin (2003) and Brownell (2011) contend that educational research assists in developing new knowledge and understandings to teaching and learning. It was against the forgoing research niches that the researcher found it imperative to carry out educational research to establish challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. Below are research questions to direct the inquiry.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A research question is a fundamental core of a research because it guides data collection (McMillian and Schumacher, 2014). The authors further maintain that the research question gives the researcher a focus as it prevents the researcher from "going all over". Supposedly, a good research question centres the research. In this study, the questions are categorised into main and subsidiary questions as presented below.

1.3.1 Main research question

The main research question is what the inquiry is intended to answer (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). It logically originates from problem statement. The main research question for this inquiry is:

- What challenges do both English Language teachers and learners face in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language in Lesotho junior secondary school levels?

1.3.2 Subsidiary research questions

According to Maree (2016), subsidiary questions are more specific in giving an inquiry a direction. The subsidiary questions help in answering the main research question step by step. The following are subsidiary questions to help unpack the main research question for the study.

1. What challenges do English Language teachers face in the teaching of reading comprehension in English Language to ESL learners at junior secondary school level in Lesotho?
2. What challenges do learners face in the learning of reading comprehension in English Language at junior secondary school level in Lesotho?

3. What are the possible contributing factors to these challenges?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Hopefully, the findings and recommendations from this inquiry will be of value to English Language teachers, ESL learners, and to the researcher herself. Teachers will find solutions to problems and challenges they face in their daily teaching of reading comprehension. According to Yin (2003) and Bernard (2011) educational research helps in developing new understandings related to teaching and learning. Moreover, the findings of the study will also be shared in the district English Language Teachers' Association (QUATE) to help teachers develop reading comprehension competences amongst learners with regard to teaching and learning reading comprehension challenge. Again, learners in the selected schools will benefit as they will overcome learning comprehension challenges. They will become critical thinkers; and as a result, that will help them improve their grades in reading comprehension and grasp content across other subjects. Nurie (2017) asserts that reading skills enable learners to learn other subjects with ease. Additionally, the findings will hopefully assist the researcher herself to understand for personal and professional development what teachers and learners experience as challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. Hence, that would also lead her to reflect on her daily teaching methods and adjust to the recommended approaches in teaching comprehension successfully.

In conclusion, challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language will be revealed as well as possible contributing factors to those challenges. Hence, recommendations will be made on how to improve the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

Methodology is defined as strategies used in the investigation of the nature and such strategies deal especially with the manner in which data is collected, analysed and interpreted (Maree, 2007; Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Razavier, 2010). This section is comprised of the research paradigm and design, participants, sample and sampling techniques, data collection methods, data collection procedures, data analysis, procedure for ensuring trustworthiness of the findings, ethical

consideration, organisation of the study and the summary. Extensive details of methodology would be in Chapter three.

1.5.1 The research paradigm

The investigation was situated within the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist paradigm seeks to understand the meaning people give to their social interaction and how people and individuals' perceptions and interpretation of the world around them influence their actions (Leedy and Ormord, 2010; Bowen, 2014; Maree, 2016). Interacting with teachers and learners afforded the researcher an opportunity to understand the perceptions and interpretations of the challenges they experience in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language.

1.5.2 Research design

The study was qualitative by design. McMillian and Schumacher (2014) define qualitative research design as a study of things in their natural setting in trying to interpret 'phenomena' in terms of meanings people bring to them. The study was intended to investigate and understand the challenges teachers and learners experience in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. The natural setting in this study was taken as schools and classrooms where teaching and learning occur.

1.5.3 Participants

Participants are a group of people who are involved in the investigation. According to Leedy and Ormord (2010), participants are individual persons or a group of people from whom data is collected. The participants in this inquiry were Grade 10 learners and their English Language teachers in the Quthing district.

1.5.4 Sample and sampling criteria

Sample in qualitative designs refers to a small group of people selected purposively to help understand the problem and the research questions (Creswell, 2012). Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the two schools in the Quthing district. The two schools formed the appropriate research sites because they are near to where the researcher works. Two schools were randomly selected out of four accessible schools. Grade10 learners from each school wrote a test on reading comprehension. One English Language teacher from each school was

interviewed. These teachers and learners were chosen on the notion that they are information rich regarding the question under study. Their willingness to participate was also considered.

1.5.5 Data collection techniques

Litchman (2010) defines data collection techniques as instruments and tactics used to gathering all information needed for the study. Data for the study was collected from Semi-structured interviews with teachers and learners' tests.

1.5.6 Data collection procedures

Data collection procedure is referred to as steps taken in gathering data for the study (Litchman, 2010). Upon being given permission by the National University of Lesotho through the Faculty of Education to collect data for the inquiry, the researcher made arrangements with the school principals and heads of departments of English Language to schedule time for data collection. One English Language teacher per school was randomly sampled for interview. The students' tests were invigilated and marked by the researcher.

1.5.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of classifying, summarizing, accounting for and describing data for presentation (Robson, 2011). The investigation used thematic data analysis which is described by Litchman (2010) as an analysis interested in common ideas found in the qualitative data. The study adopted five phases of thematic analysis as proposed by Robson (2011). Such phases are familiarization, generating codes, identifying themes, constructing thematic network and integration and interpretation. This five model would be explained in Chapter three and how it was implemented.

1.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness deals with the question of how the researcher can persuade her or his audience to have trust and belief in the findings of the study (Bowen, 2014). To ensure trustworthiness of the findings from this study, the researcher followed standards to satisfy believability of her findings to her readers. These standards are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To be ethical is to pay attention to the fact that participants have their privacy and compassion which need to be protected if their personal information does sets out from them (Bowen, 2014). The researcher exercised ethical principles to protect her participants. The study maintained research ethics by observing anonymity, confidentiality and freedom of participation principles (Maree, 2007; Maree, 2016). The process of observance of ethical requisites is detailed in Chapter three.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The research consists of five chapters characterised as follows:

Chapter One features the background of the study, the problem of the statement, research questions, significance of the study, brief review of research design and methodology, issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and organisation of the study as well as the summary of the chapter.

Chapter Two consists of the review of related literature, the theoretical framework underpinning the study and the summary of the chapter.

Chapter Three deals with an in-depth clarification of research design, participants, sample and sampling criteria, methods of data collection, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness of the findings, ethical consideration and summary of the chapter.

Chapter Four presents data analysis and interpretation followed by the summary of the chapter.

Chapter Five features conclusions and recommendations made based on the main findings and implications for further research. The chapter closes with the summary of the chapter.

1.9 SUMMARY

This chapter presented extensive background to the study drawing from global understanding of what reading comprehension is and what it entails. It also highlighted how reading comprehension is a problem especially in ESL contexts. The chapter further tabled research questions towards unpacking the main research question. The other objective derived by the chapter was to discuss

the significance of the study. The chapter highlighted on how data was collected and analysed. A plan on how the study was organised was also shown and lastly, a brief discussion on issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations was given. The next chapter presents literature review as Chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a review of the related literature for the study "Challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language". The chapter consists of operationalisation of key concepts, the theoretical framework, literature on challenges faced by teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language and possible contributing factors to those challenges.

2.1 OPERATIONALISATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section seeks to explicate and contextualise key concepts that guide the study. These concepts are reading and reading comprehension.

(a) Reading

Reading is commonly known as translating text into sounds or spoken words. Grabe and Stroller (2002) conceive reading as a complex cognitive process in which the reader decodes the symbols or printed messages into sound. In contrast, Klapwijk (2015) maintains that reading involves more than the ability to recognise letters and decode words. The author posits that reading is ultimately about understanding the meaning of the text. With this in mind, this suggests that the aim of reading is not only saying aloud individual letters or words but rather the essence is to make sense of what is being read. It would not make sense for one to argue that reading is taking place while they cannot understand the communication in prints. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, Klapwijk (2015) definition of reading is adopted.

(b) Reading comprehension

RAND Reading Study Group (2002) and Pressley (2006) define reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and the involvement of the reader with the written language. The inference from the articulated literature is that reading comprehension means being able to deduce meaning from the printed words. The authors affirm that the construction of meaning depends on the reader's background knowledge

and word processing skills. Furthermore, Fountans and Pinnell (1999) cited in Chisamba (2013) aver that comprehension is not the output of reading but rather what should happen during the course of reading.

In conclusion, both definitions of reading and reading comprehension have the reader in mind who should integrate with the text for him to understand. The explored literature emphasises the significance of interaction and engagement which the learners may have with words in their immediate environment or socio-cultural context. Ideally, the two concepts, of reading and reading comprehension are intertwined; there is no former without the latter. It is in this regard that the study perceives reading and reading comprehension as one.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory is like a lens through which one views the world (Maree, 2007). It shows how the research is going to shape until the conclusion. This study is guided by the belief that a child can learn to read for meaning only if there is supervision and support from either an adult or a fellow peer. For the purpose of this inquiry, understanding of written texts is seen both as a cognitively and socially constructed process. Hence, this study is underpinned by Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-cultural theory.

Socio-cultural theory proposes that a child learns from the behaviour, attitudes, values and skills of the people around him (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory also highlights the importance of social and collaborative modes of learning. Literature articulates that knowledge emanates from social contexts and is initially shared with others instead of being stored in the mind of an individual (Vygotsky, 1978; Nurie, 2017; Salem, 2017; Pathan; Memo, Memo, Khoso, and Bux, 2018). With reference to reading comprehension classes, this theory implies that teachers act as models and facilitators of verbal communication that leads to internal understanding of reading comprehension processes. Teachers, adults or peers facilitate cognitive and social processes so that the novice learner can perform tasks that he could not yet master alone.

According to Bauer (2018), Vygotskian theory puts learning into human social context where interaction with people plays a paramount role in developing a child's cognitive level. Adapting to this theory, when learners are engaged in structured activities such as reading together, they would acquire complex reading comprehension strategies such as how to infer, predict, and identify main ideas. Their lexical competences and background knowledge would be coiled

together to deduce meaning both implicitly and explicitly stated. Behind the theory of Vygotsky (1978), there are two main metaphors as given below.

2.2.1 Scaffolding

Vygotsky (1978) describes scaffolding as the support that is given to a child to meet his cognitive potential. This situation is facilitated by "the more knowledgeable other" (MKO) for the novice learner to engage in activities meant to increase his current skills and knowledge to a high level of development (Pathom, Memo, Memo, Khoso and Bux, 2018). In the case of the classroom, the teacher first models reading comprehension strategies and gradually modelling is reduced to stimulate learners' autonomy in using reading comprehension strategies. This metaphor also seems to emphasise that the constructivist teacher should not just give learners reading comprehension tasks to complete on their own but rather should guide and support them though probing and questioning. Literature reveals that instructional scaffolds are of utmost importance to learning a language especially learning reading comprehension because reading is seen as a problem-solving behaviour that gets the reader engaged in deriving meaning from the written discourse (Pressley, 2006; Chisamba, 2014; Salem, 2017; Pathom, 2018). In the light of this, instructional scaffolds foster reading comprehension skills and hence, in this situation, learners need the assistance and guidance of the teacher to apply reading strategies that would enable them to understand and appreciate the written language.

In this chapter, the explored literature on the use of scaffolding as a teaching technique to facilitate reading comprehension skills depicts that teachers should model comprehension strategies and demonstrate how to solve comprehension problems. Further, the principle of scaffolding demonstrates that when learners are given the support they need while learning something new, they stand a better chance of using that knowledge independently. Among others, interview was one of the data collecting tools employed to gather data. Teachers were probed to narrate instructional approaches they use in teaching reading comprehension. This was done to diagnose the challenges that could be instructionally related and possible contributing factors to those challenges.

2.2.2 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotskian Social-Cultural theory entails the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as an attempt to show how human activities and social interactions foster learning:

> Zone of proximal development is the distance between the actual development level as determined by the independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under the guidance or collaboration with more capable peers, (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86)

An inference from the above articulation is what an individual can achieve in terms of learning while working collaboratively with others as against what he could have achieved when working alone**.** Relatively, ZPD describes activation of reading comprehension strategies used for guiding students to acquire high order cognitive skills**.** Vygotsky (1978) claims that what learners can do with support from their peers or more skilled adults determines their intellectual development than what they can do on their own. In the same view, Pressley (2002) as referred to in Chisamba (2013) affirms that collaboration with others is enhanced through reading comprehension strategies which the teacher scaffolds and is adopted by the learners to help them engage independently in reading tasks.

ZPD infers that if learners are grouped together in small shared groups, they would become skilled and strategic readers through using comprehension strategies to extract and construct meaning from the text. Building upon this perspective, Palinscar and Brown (1984), as quoted in Salem (2017) affirm that comprehension strategies should be taught in a setting of a reading group where learners learn collaboratively. Seemingly, shared reading groups grant opportunities for learners with comprehension deficit to acquire complex comprehension skills which they would not be able to acquire in the absence of their peers. The engagement is easily facilitated by the claim that learners learn freely and actively with their peers (Pressley, 2006; Salem; 2017).

According to Vygotskian theory, learners should be exposed to problem solving tasks that are socially and culturally meaningful to them. The implication is that this would actively engage them to participate and work collaboratively to construct new knowledge. In line with reading comprehension, learners' prior knowledge founded on social interaction and cultural background

facilitates easy understanding of reading comprehension texts. Simply put, the content in reading comprehension passages should be familiar the learners' experiences and exposure so that they can relate and build new knowledge on the already existing knowledge.

Taken in sum, application of reading comprehension strategies in regard to Social Constructivism theory is intended to incorporate all learners with different reading comprehension abilities. Hence, teachers should be strategic in knowing their learners' diverse needs so that learners with reading comprehension difficulties get the support they need.

2.3 LITERATURE BASED ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

A research question is a broad question to which the researcher seeks answers for (Maree, 2016). This section reviews relevant literature for the study in question. It explores the nature of challenges faced by ESL teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language and the contributing factors to those challenges.

2.3.1 What is the nature of challenges faced by English Language teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language?

2.3.1.1 Demanding curriculum

Teachers need to be more flexible with teaching approaches and instructional skills in order to respond to learners' individual needs. However, Zaheer and Rahman (2016) argue that in situations where there is national curriculum, teachers fail to be more flexible in teaching reading comprehension because the curriculum dictates the predetermined skills of instruction to be followed. In concurrence, Kalinda (2005) avers that teachers of reading are faced with the demands of overburdening curriculum which includes variety of tasks, activities and presentations just to mention but a few. It cannot be ignored that all of these demands require teacher's facilitation, guidance and monitoring. Sentanda (2014) also highlights that if curriculum is controlled by those who are least familiar with the consumers being the learners, it poses a challenge to teachers during implementation. With this in mind, teachers have to meet the requirements of the curriculum within a specified time and that turns into a challenge since they may not have adequate time to help all learners experiencing reading comprehension difficulties.

2.3.1.2 Poor pedagogical skills of teachers

Another challenge facing teachers is teacher's knowledge and orientation towards teaching reading comprehension (Ariong, 2013; Chisamba, 2014; Pretorius and Klapwijik, 2016). It may be that teachers are not well trained to teach reading comprehension from teachers' training institutes. Hence, they lack appropriate pedagogical skills to teach reading comprehension inclusively. Teachers' own understanding of reading and their own reading practices may have adverse effects on their learners' literacy level (Pretorius and Lephalala, 2011; Pretorius and Klapwijik, 2016). Moreover, literature depicts that content knowledge, pedagogic content knowledge and curriculum knowledge as three areas of knowledge continue to pose a challenge to many ESL teachers (Kalinda, 2005; Taylor and Taylor, 2013 cited in Pretorius and Klapwijik, 2016). In consensus, Pressley (2006) posits that good comprehension instruction demands teachers with extensive knowledge of the language, and modern pedagogical instruction to teaching reading comprehension. It is reasonable therefore, to assume that teachers who are poorly oriented to teaching comprehension end up assessing comprehension by asking learners questions based only on what they have just read instead of teaching them comprehension skills. This is highlighted by Pressley (2006) who further argues that reading comprehension cannot only be assessed with learners mastering questions from the passage. This suggests that lack of theoretical knowledge of teaching reading, knowledge of nature of reading comprehension instructions and poor teachers' training impede effective teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

2.3.1.3 Overcrowded classrooms

It is difficult to manage large classrooms. Even though teacher- student ratio in Lesotho schools as given by UNESCO (2010) is 1:45, there is an influx of large enrolments in Lesotho junior secondary school. This is drawn from the researcher's teaching experience. Mwanambuku (2016) affirms that if there are too many learners in the classroom that impedes effective teaching and learning. Understandably, since the teacher is overburdened with a large class even if she has expertise in teaching reading comprehension it is difficult to deliver in such a crowded class. Documented in the Lesotho Education Sector Plan (2016-2025) in MoET (2016), it is specified that there is serious poor staffing of teachers in Lesotho schools. Grounded on the researcher's experience, some schools are overstaffed while others are short-staffed. In cases where classes are

large, teachers seem to be doing more of the administrative duties than to facilitate learning and this is time consuming.

2.3.1.4 Scarcity of reading materials

Moreover, scarcity of teaching and learning materials remains a challenge to many teachers and learners. According to Brownell (2010), a teacher may have relevant skills to teach reading comprehension but it becomes difficult to teach effectively in the absence of reading materials. Logically, scarcity of reading materials will result into overcrowding of learners on one book which does not guarantee proper learning. The environment in which teaching and learning occur should be conducive while there must also be adequate reading materials (Pressley, 2006; Brownell, 2010). Reading comprehension is a cognitive process that requires critical thinking and engagement of the reader with the text (Grabe and Stroller, 2002; RAND, 2002) In the light of this, comprehension will only occur in a calm and organised setting where reading materials are accessible. Overcrowding of learners to share a reading material will result into learners losing concentration on what they are reading as some may not even have a chance to see what is written. Classrooms with inadequate reading texts usually turn into playgrounds for learners.

2.3.1.5 Lack of reading fluency

The process of comprehension revolves around fluency. Verbeek (2014) describes reading fluency as the ability to read accurately, smoothly and with expression. This implies that the reader's ability to apply his knowledge of letter-sound relationship which includes knowledge of sound patterns to correctly pronounce written words helps him understand better without decoding issues. Such readers sound natural: as if they are speaking. Documented scholarship illustrates that decoding is still a problem even among secondary school learners (Dennis, 2008; Pretorius and Lephalala, 2011; Sanford, 2015; Ibrahim, Sarudin and Muhamad, 2016). Fluency is important as it bridges between word recognition and comprehension. Fluent readers are able to concentrate on comprehension and that may allow them to make a connection between what they are reading with own background knowledge. Similarly, Verbeek (2014) contends that the ability to recognise familiar words quickly supports learners to figure out words they have never seen before. Drawing from experience, the researcher has also observed that many of her learners do not have reading

fluency and that affects their comprehension. Decoding skill as one of reading aspects, basically, one would expect it to be treated at elementary classes.

2.3.1.6 Poor language proficiency

Literature highlights that comprehension is also affected by the reader's knowledge of the topic, knowledge of language structures, text structures and cognitive strategies (Dennis, 2005; Ssentanda, 2014; Murris, 2014). The implication is that if readers are unfamiliar with the subject matter in the text and also do not have a good command of English Language, deducing meaning from the texts will be a challenge to them. According to Ahmadi and Islam (2013) quality of the reading materials also plays a major role in comprehending written texts. Further, Ssentanda (2014) highlights that some writers write better than others in terms of organization and clarity. Seemingly, learners with lack of knowledge of language structures, prior knowledge, text organizations and genres may struggle to grasp the intended meaning of the author. Many ESL learners fail to understand English Language passages because they do not understand the language itself (Murris, 2014; Ahmadi, 2017). However, Pretorius and Lephalala, (2011) argue that it is not valid to claim that reading in a foreign language causes poor comprehension. Pretorius and Lephalala further confirms that learners fail to understand texts even when they are reading in their mother tongue language. Considering this perspective, learners struggle to communicate in prints in all sorts of languages. Besides, very complicated reading passages in terms of language structures and themes disengage learners from following and enjoying reading texts.

The reviewed literature highlights the nature of challenges around the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language highlights some of the challenges. These are, the demanding school curriculum, poor pedagogical skills of teachers, overcrowded classrooms, scarcity of learning materials, poor reading fluency and language proficiency. It is evident that reading comprehension in English Language appears to be challenging to both teachers and learners. The present inquiry was intended to study simultaneously the nature of challenges teachers and learners face in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language, so the above challenges would help in exploring the extent to which such affect teachers and learners simultaneously.

2.3.2 What are the possible contributing factors to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language?

2.3.2.1 Lack of learners' interest and reading motivation

Literature portrays that learner's interest and reading motivation are crucial in developing reading comprehension (Alizadeh, 2016). Ahmadi (2017) argues that motivation impacts greatly on language learning. These assertions infer that learners with intrinsic motivation and willingness to engage with written texts will develop efficient and effective reading comprehension skills. It may also be assumed that reading interest and reading motivation are the products of appropriate and fascinating texts. This is supported by Wang and Rosefield (2015) and Tompkins (2015) who illustrate that those learners who are learning a foreign language should develop reading interests for better comprehension. Taking this into account, if learners find reading material monotonous or the content of the reading material unfamiliar, they will find it difficult to concentrate and to develop understanding (Ahmadi, 2017). Teachers should engage learners to reading by giving those reading passages that are relevant and meaningful to them so as to stimulate reading motivation. A relevant text ignites background knowledge of readers and thus makes comprehension easier. In Section 2.2.2 of chapter two Vygotsky (1978) proposes that learners should be exposed to problem solving tasks that are socially and culturally meaningful so that they can solve them.

2.3.2.2 Poor vocabulary knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge plays a fundamental role in the process of reading comprehension. This claim is backed by Pressley (2006) and Ibrahim, Sarudin and Muhamad (2016) who posit that in acquisition of a foreign language learners need adequate words to communicate effectively either verbally or otherwise. Learners may not comprehend what they read if their lexical bank is limited. It is also worthy to note that learners should be familiar with most of the words used in the texts however; it does not necessarily denote that every word in the passage must be familiar with the learners. Tompkins (2016) avers that vocabulary knowledge helps learners find meaning of the unfamiliar words with ease. This is maintained by Mwanambuku (2013) who weighted in that insufficient word knowledge blocks absorption of new knowledge. It is reasonable to conclude that for learners to have a better understanding of reading comprehension texts they should know

the meaning of words. It is the role of the teacher to design instructional strategies that will enable learners to learn as many new words as they can. Learners can acquire meaning of words indirectly through everyday experiences with oral and written language.

2.3.2.3 Lack of reading skills and strategies

The process of comprehension is both interactive and strategic (Lai, 2013). Skilled readers employ a number of reading strategies to engage with the text. Documented scholarship points that poor readers do not possess strategic reading skills; therefore, they find it difficult to predict, summarize, infer, question, compare and contrast, draw conclusions, distinguish between facts and opinion, contextualise meaning and identify main ideas from the text (Pressley, 2002 cited in Mwanambuku, 2013; Koda, 2004; Lai, 2013; Menaido, 2016). Reading strategies are purposeful and cognitive schemes that readers use before, during and after reading (Alder, 2001; Meniado, 2016). This suggests that reading strategies are planned activities that learners should tap on in case they come across challenging texts. Stated by literature already, these reading strategies promote active, competent and intentional reading. According to Koda (2004) reading strategies are deliberate cognitive steps learners use to acquire, store and retrieve new information. Notably, reading strategies can help learners become critical thinkers and active readers. Those learners who do not have reading skills are limited to understanding written text.

2.3.2.4 Sided Focus of instruction

Focus of instructional attention may impede comprehension. Research reveals that many teachers spend more time teaching decoding skills other than comprehension and meaning (Brownell, 2010; Pretorius, 2012). Experience has taught the researcher that some of the students could read but cannot understand the message behind those written symbols. This inability is more observable when they fail to engage with simple reading comprehension tasks. This comprehension deficiency denotes that English Language teachers fail to teach learners comprehension skills and strategies. There is an array of empirical research that points that explicit teaching and modelling of comprehension strategies improve comprehension competences of learners (Pressley, 2006; Murris, 2014; Klapwijk, 2016). Seemingly, comprehension instruction is not given the attention it deserves. The expectation is that reading instruction should incorporate both decoding skills and

comprehension skills. If teachers are not developing reading skills that support comprehension skills of learners, leaners will experience challenges in dealing with texts.

2.3.2.5 Poor literacy environment

It cannot be ignored that some students come from poor literacy environments where they have access to English Language only while at school. Literature on teaching and learning reading reveals that the support leaners receive at home is crucial to their learning journey as it helps to enhance their reading comprehension skills (Pressley, 2006; Ariong, 2013; Chisamba, 2014; Zaheer and Rahman, 2016). Similarly, Ziegler (2006) cited in Ssentanda (2014) affirms that many learners come to school without emergent basic literacy skills and background knowledge; as a result, it may be difficult to deal with reading tasks. Learners from illiterate families miss an opportunity to receive learning support from home. Taking this into account, unprivileged literacy environment opposes the Vygotskian theory of sociocultural theory (1978) which highlights that language emanates from social interactions. This implies that the society in which the learner lives in helps to shape him to develop his education. Seemingly, reading is a socially embedded phenomenon. Parents and society have a role to play in helping learners become proficient readers because social interaction develops prior knowledge and vocabulary that is needed to connect with reading comprehension texts.

Different authors have contributed to the existing knowledge of the casual factors on challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. Some of the contributions as documented are lack of learner's interest and learning motivation, limited vocabulary knowledge, lack of reading comprehension strategies, poor literacy environment and sided focus of instruction. The explored literature reveals that the contributing factors are also a challenge to teachers and learners. Based on the illustrated factors, what remains to be researched on are the contributing factors to the nature of simultaneous challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. It is noteworthy to mention that the study was pursued in order to study teachers' and learners' reading comprehension challenges simultaneously.

2.4 SUMMARY

The chapter has reviewed relevant literature to the study. Discussion on the Socio-cultural theory and its relevance to teaching and learning of reading comprehension is covered. Finally, the chapter

has looked into challenges teachers and learners face in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language and possible contributing factors to such challenges. The subsequent chapter presents how data for research questions was generated and analysed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

It is important to determine first the methodological strategies to be employed towards attainment of the objective of the investigation. Maree (2016) defines methodology as a philosophical orientation to inquiry; while Howell (2013) describes it as the general strategy that sketches out the way in which the research is to be undertaken. Methodology deals with techniques used in generating data, analysing and interpreting it. Methodology for this study is presented in terms of the research paradigm and design, participants, sample and sampling criteria, data collection techniques, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, procedure for ensuring trustworthiness of findings, ethical considerations and the summary of the chapter.

3.1 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

A paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which give rise to a particular world view (Maree, 2016). A research paradigm reveals the person's world view that has a specific influence on the perceived aspect of reality. The study is located within the interpretivist paradigm. Eusafzai (2014) positions that interpretivist paradigm seeks to uncover how individuals and a group of people's interpretations and understandings of the world around them influence their actions. In this regard, the researcher sought to understand teachers' and learners' reading comprehension challenges in their natural environment being schools and classrooms where teaching and learning take place.

Furthermore, an interpretivist paradigm allows for interaction between the researcher and the participants that leads to the researcher's deep understanding of participants' perspectives (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2017). The researcher had time to interact with teachers and learners through interviews and tests. According to Litchman (2010), interpretivists believe that reality is not objectively determined but is socially constructed; therefore, data is collected from human beings. Data collection techniques adopted in this study allowed for human interaction. These were teachers' interviews, and students' tests. Maree (2016) highlights that an interpretivist paradigm is context-depended; it takes into account natural context in which participants function because it's

aim is to get an in-depth understanding of real-world problems. The investigation was carried out in schools in the presence of teachers and learners in their classrooms where teaching and learning of reading comprehension occurs.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan or strategy which emanates from underlying philosophical assumptions about an inquiry (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenses, and Razavier 2010). The inquiry adopted a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design is an interdisciplinary landscape including different perspectives and practices for generating knowledge (Maree, 2016). This research design was deemed appropriate because it investigates human actions in their natural settings so that one can deeply understand what participants are thinking and why they think and act the way they do (Howell, 2014). The study was conducted in two schools where teachers and learners were involved in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. Moreover, qualitative designs rely on linguistics data rather than numerical data and employ meaning-based rather than statistic form of data analysis (Rule and John, 2011). The researcher interpreted data gathered from teachers' interviews and learners' tests based on what she heard and understood. In qualitative research approaches, researchers use various data collection techniques to interpret, analyse and understand the study in question (Ary et al., 2010). A number of data collection instruments were used to generate data from participants.

There are various types of qualitative research designs. This investigation employed a case study qualitative design type. According to Yin (2009) cited in Maree (2016, p.81), a case study research refers to "*an empirical investigation about a current phenomenon, set within its real-world situation especially when boundaries between phenomenon and setting are not clearly evident''*. The case was Grade10 English Language teachers and learners and it was a case of that challenges they face in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. The settings were two schools in the Quthing district. Rule and John (2011) assert that a case study provides a deep understanding on the phenomenon and provide a thick, rich description of the case and also illuminates its relation to a larger context. Furthermore, Cohen et al., (2011) postulate that case studies can establish cause and effects (how and why). Indeed, this was a strength in this inquiry because the investigation took place in real contexts of teaching and learning which are schools, teachers, learners and reading comprehension tests.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS

Participants are a group of people from whom data is collected. According to Bernard (2011), researchers do not just select groups of people to take part in the study but such groups should matter as a source of data. Maree (2016) asserts that it is impossible to include everyone in the study due to time and costs. The participants who informed this study were English Language teachers and Grade10 learners in two selected schools in the Quthing district. They constituted the right participants because they have experience in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language.

3.4 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING CRITERIA

Sample in qualitative designs refers to a small group of people selected purposively to help understand the problem and the research questions (Creswell, 2014). Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the two schools. Cohen (2011) avers that purposive sampling is a feature of qualitative research design where the researcher intentionally selects participants and the research sites. Furthermore, purposive sampling aims at selecting cases which will provide rich information in regard to the purpose of the study (Litchman, 2010). Participants should be people willing to participate in the study and should have experience with the phenomenon under discussion (Leedy and Ormord, 2010).

3.4.1 Schools

As indicated earlier, the two schools in the Quthing district were purposively selected to take part in the study. They formed appropriate research sites because of their proximity to where the researcher works. Maree (2016) affirms that other principles guiding purposive sampling is feasibility based on finances, time, and accessibility of the research areas. For purpose of the study, accessibility eased data collection in terms of time and costs. Moreover, these schools are situated in the least performing district in terms of national terminal examination results which recurrently show below 60% pass rate (ECOL, 2016; ECOL, 2017; ECOL, 2019). Out of four accessible schools two schools were randomly sampled to participate. In cases where there were more than one stream of Grade10 classes, the researcher randomly selected one class to participate in the study. Random sampling gives every participant a chance of being selected (Bernard, 2011).

3.4.2 Learners

Data was generated from Grade10 learners. They were purposively selected because they have completed nine years of basic education and it can reasonably be assumed that by the time they reach Grade10, their reading comprehension skills are at the more advanced stage. Participants in a qualitative study should have rich information regarding the phenomenon (McMillian and Schumacher, 2014). Grade10 learners experience learning of reading comprehension in English Language. They were also the available participants because they were not preparing for national terminal examinations. Simple random sampling was used to select 15 learners per school to participate for reading comprehension tests.

3.4.3 Teachers

Because of time and costs, not every person can participate in research (Howell, 2013). Two English Language teachers were purposively selected to take part in the interview sessions. Participants must be people with wealth of knowledge about the phenomenon and willing to share their experiences with the researcher (Creswell, 2014). The selected teachers were interviewed because they were qualified to teach English Language and therefore familiar with the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. Participants are expected to have opinions and perspectives on the phenomenon in question. (Eusafzai, 2014).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Data collection techniques are instruments and strategies used to collect data based on the research problem (Rule and John, 2011). These are the tools used to generate data. Howell (2013) and Robson (2011) affirm that interpretivists rely heavily on naturalistic methods in collecting data and such methods include interview, observation, focus group and survey in trying to understand the social world of specific people and groups in their natural context. Data was generated from schools as natural settings for both teachers and learners. Semi-structured interviews and students' tests were employed as data collection techniques.

   (a) **Semi- structured interviews**

Interviews are methods of gathering data through oral quiz using a set of pre-planned core questions (Leedy and Ormord, 2010; Ary et al., 2010). Data was generated through face-to-face

semi-structured interviews with selected English Language teachers. The essence of interviewing teachers was to get their opinions, perspectives and experiences related to challenges they have in the teaching of reading comprehension and possible contributing factors to those challenges. Teachers were also probed on their instructional approaches to teaching reading comprehension. This was done in order to diagnose the extent to which their approaches align with the principles of Socio-Cultural theory underpinning the study.

The study adopted a face-to-face kind of interviews. In face to face interview there is a potential trust and co-operation between the researcher and the interviewee, thus, sensitive questions can be handled better than in groups (Litchman, 2010; Bowen, 2014). The two teachers were interviewed individually to provide them with an environment where they could be free to answer even sensitive questions. This was done based on cost and time (Howell, 2013). During the interview, the teachers granted the researcher a permission to use an audio recorder. An audio recorder was used to reduce the burden of note taking and to retain answers and richness of individual statements as supported by Rule and John (2011). Therefore, an audio recorder was used in two separate interviews for later references as not all information was easily captured by pen and paper.

(b) A class test

A test is a reliable instrument used to assess a test-taker's knowledge and skills (Bell, 2010; Litchman, 2010). Further, Eusafzai (2014) illustrates that a test is a measure used to diagnose the quality or performance of the test taker. The objective of the test in this case was to identify the nature of challenges Grade10 students experience with reading comprehension texts and the contributing factors to those challenges. Grade10 learners from each school were randomly sampled to take a test on reading comprehension in English Language under the invigilation of the researcher. The reading comprehension task was taken from previous LGCSE English Language final examination question paper. The learners were expected to read passage 1 and passage 2 and thereafter answer questions aimed at challenges related to management on explicit and implicit meaning. Twelve (12) scripts in school A and thirteen (13) scripts in school B were marked by the researcher. As observed by Bell (2011), the researcher was conscious of sample size because if the sample is too big, it might not be possible to finish the study within the given time, Five learners withdrew from participating in the study. The total number of scripts for marking was 25 instead

of the anticipated 30 scripts. This was done to reduce effects of time and costs for conducting the study.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Saldana and Omasta (2018) describe data collection procedure as an outline of steps taken to generate data from the sources. These procedures draw a line for the researcher to see where collection of data begins and ends. The researcher first sent request letters to schools seeking permission to conduct the study. Then the researcher met in person with school principals and heads of departments to discuss and agree on the time to gather data and methods of data generation which were to be employed in the course of the study. This procedure resulted into one English Language teacher being randomly selected to participate in the study. The researcher prepared, invigilated and marked students' tests.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a summary of what the researcher has heard and seen in terms of common words, phrases, themes or patterns that emerge from the data (Mare, 2007). The inquiry adopted a thematic data analysis. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017), a thematic data analysis is interested in identifying common ideas emerging from the data. In thematic analysis the researcher closely examines the data to identify topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. Data from teachers' interviews and students' tests were analysed using Robson (2011) five phases of thematic data coding analysis as presented below.

- **Familiarization:** The researcher repeatedly read data gathered from teachers' interviews and students' tests. This was done in order to familiarise herself with the meanings and patterns of her data before analysing it. Saldana and Omasta (2018) affirms that during the stage of familiarization the researcher can start to mark ideas for coding. Audio-recorder was also played at this stage to double check whether there was nothing left out from the interviews.

- **Generating initial codes:** The researcher went through the transcripts of every tool used in collecting data to highlight ideas for coding that seemed relevant and potentially interesting to the study. The entire data was coded manually using different colours to

identify patterns. The codes allow the researcher to condensed overview of the main points and common meanings that recur throughout the data (Robson, 2011).

- **Identifying themes:** The researcher studied the created codes to identify patterns among them in order to come up with themes. The emerging themes were checked whether they were responding to the phenomenon under investigation, ''Challenges teachers and learners face in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language''. Mack (2010) argues that looking at the object from different standpoints, it makes possible to come up with a true representation of the whole picture. Given this, codes from interviews and tests were checked to find out if they portray similar meaning.

- **Constructing thematic networks:** This phase is interested in reviewing themes to cross-check if they display what is in the data (Saldana and Omasta, 2018). Emerging themes were then tuned to respond to the research questions. This was done by checking similarities and differences with other themes. Finally, some themes were combined while others were discarded for not being relevant to the study.

- **Integration and interpretation:** This stage involves the write up of the whole analysis. The phase is treated in Chapter four.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness deals with the degree to what one can depend on and trust the given findings of the study (Robson, 2011). This implies that researchers should follow guided principles in trying to convince readers that results from the study are genuine. To ensure trustworthiness of the findings the researcher followed the four principles used in qualitative research. According to Maree (2012), the principles are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability,

(a) Credibility

Credibility measures the extent which qualitative research findings are believable (Creswell, 2014). In order to gauge the accuracy of the findings, the author submits that the researcher should use detailed data collection methods and triangulation. In this regard, the researcher has employed various data collection instruments and multiple data sources for triangulation purposes. Furthermore, Robson (2011) asserts that other measures to ensure credibility include among

others, the researcher's field notes and member-checks. The researcher submitted her transcripts and field notes to the participants to verify their correctness.

(b) Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which research findings are applicable to contexts of similar situation (Creswell, 2014). The intention of this study was not for transferability, but to bring understanding to challenges teachers and learners experience in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. However, if other researchers are interested, the researcher will provide a paper trail for them. The trails are in terms of data instruments used, data transcripts, participants' information and data analysis procedures so that other researchers who may want to use data in other contexts can do so.

(c) Dependability

Maree (2016) defines dependability as taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change. Mack (2010) holds the view that in a naturalistic inquiry the phenomenon is constantly affected by changing conditions. Dependability can also be seen as a way in which the researcher accounts for changing conditions in the phenomenon. To address the issues of dependability, the researcher made use of a critical reader. The critical reader was helpful to ensure that the findings originate from the data. Also, the reader was employed to comment on findings and data analysis.

(d) Conformability

Conformability is the degree of neutrality or extent to which findings of a study are shaped by the participants' responses and not by researcher's bias, motivation and interest (Maree, 2016). The implication is that the researcher should not have any influence on the findings of the study. In this study, the researcher submitted raw data, analysis notes, synthesis notes, process notes and personal notes for audit trail. This is done to allow any observer to trace the course of the research step by step through decision made and procedures described (Robson, 2011).

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Having ethics means knowing what is right and wrong. McMillian and Schumacher (2014) describe ethics as moral features observed by researchers in trying to protect participants from any potential harm. It is important to understand and follow research ethics in conducting a research.

This is because educational research deals with human beings as participants. In regard to research ethics pertaining to this study, the researcher requested a written consent letter from the National University of Lesotho through the Faculty of Education that permit her to conduct a study. She further requested permission from principals and heads of departments in the two selected schools to carry out her inquiry. The researcher disclosed to participants the purpose of the study. Participants were also informed that their participation depends on their willingness and they were free to withdraw from participating at any time in the process of the study.

Another ethical principle the researcher adhered to was keeping participants' information confidential**.** Saldana and Omasta, (2018) affirm that participants have a right to expect that when they give the researcher permission to observe and interview them, the researcher, in turn, pledge to protect their confidence, respect their privacy and preserve their anonymity. The researcher, therefore, took a pledge that she would not disclose the information and findings to other people unless it is for the purpose of the study. The gist of anonymity is that the information given by the respondents should in no way reveal their identity (Litchman, 2010). In this study, the researcher used pseudonyms and the selected schools were given letters to ensure the protection of the identity of the participants.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter detailed the research methodology used. A rational for using qualitative design was explained. The chapter also provided criteria for selecting participants. Various data collection techniques employed in this study were given in details. The chapter showed how data was collected and analysed in this. Finally, details of issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations were looked into. The next chapter covers data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter discussed the research methodology that was used to conduct the study. The present chapter unfolds a detailed presentation and interpretation of data together with a comprehensive discussion based on the themes that emerged during data analysis. Stated already in Section 3.7 data collected from teachers' interviews and learners' tests was thematically analysed adopting to Robson (2011) thematic data coding analysis. The findings are reported by research questions and discussed on the basis of literature as presented in Chapter Two. The analysis is also done by research questions and each section ends with discussion and interpretation of the findings.

4.1 CHALLENGES ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS FACE IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION AT GRADE10

This section addresses the question on challenges English Language teachers face in teaching reading comprehension at Grade10. Data towards answering this question was generated through one-on-one semi-structured interview with two Grade10 English Language teachers at the two selected schools as explained in Section 3.5. The interviewed teachers were coded as T001 and T002.

4.1.1 Findings from interview with teachers

Based on their experience as English Language teachers at Grade10, teachers were asked to mention challenges they have in teaching reading comprehension. Below are the main themes which emerged from interrogation with data.

(a) **Teachers' poor pedagogical skills**

Poor orientation towards teaching reading comprehension surfaced as one of the challenges teaches are faced with. Teachers stressed that they do not teach reading comprehension skills and strategies effectively because they are not well equipped with appropriate instructional skills to do so. T001 even blamed the teachers' training institution for not incorporating teaching reading skills

and strategies in teachers' training. Similarly, T002 commented that he simply brings reading materials to class and asks learners to read and answer questions. The teachers' declarations verify Pressley's (2006) findings in Section 2.3.1.2 that good comprehension instruction requires teachers with extensive and modern pedagogical instructions. Moreover, teachers' statements were in contradiction with Socio-Cultural theory which stipulates that More Knowledgeable Other (peer or adult) should scaffold social interactions. The finding, therefore, points to poor teachers' orientation as a challenge to teaching reading comprehension in English Language.

(b) Demanding curriculum

The study revealed that teachers barely teach reading comprehension because of overloaded Grade10 syllabus. In the interview, teachers mentioned that English Language as a subject is too broad. Besides teaching reading comprehension, T002 lamented that they are expected to teach grammar, creative writing, directed writing as well as other language activities like impromptu speech, debate and poetry. They stated that they do not have adequate time to ensure proper instillation of reading comprehension skills; their aim is to finish the syllabus. This finding coils with Kalinda (2005) in Section, 2.3.1.1 that teachers of English Language are faced with the overburdening curriculum to cover. Given this perspective, the researcher finds it reasonable to conclude that some teachers at Grade10 are not able to teach reading comprehension skills and strategies adequately because of the demanding curriculum.

(c) Poor comprehension

Learners' poor comprehension appeared as one of the challenges English Language teachers are faced with. T001 and T002 shared the same opinion that learners seem not to internalize what they are reading and therefore comprehension cannot take place. For instance, T002 remarked that her learners are grappled by even questions whose answers are directly stated in the passage. This discovery coils with RAND Reading Study Group (2002) and Pressley (2006) in Section, 2.1 that reading comprehension involves extracting and constructing meaning through engagement with the text. This finding suggests that learners with poor comprehension may not be able to deduce meaning from what they are reading and that translates into a challenge to teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

(d) Scarcity of reading materials

The study proceeded to advance that another challenge is shortage of reading materials. The teachers specified that learners have to share books and that hinders them as teachers to give learners work to do at home. One teacher stated that in some instances five learners have to share one book. Additionally, T002 affirmed that photocopying is still a problem in her school. The school administrator complained about the cost of photocopying such that she no longer bothers herself to photocopy reading hand-outs for her class. This finding on reading materials is related to Brownell (2010) in Section 2.3.1.6 where the author stresses that it becomes difficult to teach reading comprehension effectively in the absence of reading materials.

(e) Overcrowded classrooms

Teaching large classrooms emerged as another challenge to teachers. The two teachers shared the same sentiments that it is difficult to help learners with reading comprehension deficiency because of a large number of students in one class. T001 confessed that his class is so large that he does not even know the names of some of his learners. Equally, T002 declared that she does not have time to help learners with comprehension disabilities because her students are many. This is in line with Mwanambuku's (2013) assertion in Section 2.3.1.3 that overcrowded classrooms impede effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, the teachers mentioned that when classes are large, many students do not participate in class activities. T001 and T002 had 75 and 68 learners respectively in their classes. This finding points to large classrooms as an impediment to the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language.

Taken in sum, in relation to the first research question the study has brought to surface at least four issues as challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading comprehension at Grade10. These are poor pedagogical skills, demanding curriculum, learners' poor comprehension, scarcity of reading materials as well as overcrowded classrooms. It was also important to establish what challenges Grade10 learners face in the learning of reading comprehension in English Language. This is the subject of the next section.

4.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY GRADE10 LEARNERS IN THE LEARNING OF READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

In this section, the findings on challenges learners face in the learning of reading comprehension in English Language are the focus. Teachers' interviews and learners' tests were used to generate data for the question.

4.2.1 Data from teachers' interviews

The researcher asked teachers to specify learners' reading comprehension challenges. Following are the challenges teachers cited.

(a) Poor reading fluency

Poor reading fluency was reflected as a challenge facing learners at Grade10. The teachers emphasised that learners' inability to pronounce and read words accurately and smoothly prevents them from extracting and constructing meaning from text. They further indicated that many of their learners lack confidence to read in class because they fear they might be laughed at for struggling with the flow of words. This challenge is consistent with Verbeek (2014) in Section 2.3.1.5 that fluent readers are able to concentrate on comprehension and that allows them to make connection between what they are reading with their own background knowledge**.** In particular, T002 stressed that some learners' lack reading fluency so much that they do not even obey punctuation marks which could help them in understanding of the passages read. The teachers further stated that they were shocked at the revelation that some of the secondary learners are unable to read. Their expectation was that teaching word recognition should have been treated at primary level. The study, therefore, seemed to reveal that poor reading fluency affects learners' reading comprehension.

(b) Lack of reading comprehension skills and strategies

Learners' lack of reading comprehension skills and strategies was also raised as another challenge facing learners. The teachers highlighted that many of their learners are unable to deal with explicit and implicit meanings of the text. For instance, T001 specified that her learners are mostly troubled by inferential questions which require the reader to draw conclusion using the available information. Added to this, both teachers commented that because of lack of reading comprehension strategies, learners fail to deal with challenging reading tasks at large. Alluded to

the background of the study, reading strategies were defined as purposeful cognitive actions that readers perform to construct, keep and retrieve information (Anderson, 2003; Lai, 2013; Meniado, 2016; Duke, Pressley and Hilden, 2004). It is evident from the findings that lack of reading comprehension skills and strategies affects learner's reading comprehension.

(c) Lack of concentration

According to this study lack of concentration emerged as another challenge facing learners. The Teachers reported that learners do not pay full focus on what they are reading. This is proved where learners are seen rushing to answering questions instead of spending time on reading for better understanding. T002 in particular added that learners seem to confuse reading speed with reading comprehension. She believes that the latter requires a lot of concentration. The finding suggests that if leaners do not pay full focus on what they are reading, this may affect their ability to deduce meaning from the text.

(d) Poor language proficiency

The knowledge of English Language was highlighted as an impediment to Grade10 learners in dealing with reading tasks. Teachers cited the fact that learners are reading in a second language which is English, that already is a challenge. The teachers complained that learners are not competent in English even though Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) (2009) stipulates that from Grade4 English shall be a medium of instruction. They further lamented that learners are reluctant to join school clubs like debate club and theatre club which are meant to improve their English Language competency. The finding bears the conclusion that for learners to comprehend texts written in English Language, they must first be competent with the language.

For triangulation purposes, under the same research question the researcher gave learners reading comprehension test to identify whether the same challenges mentioned by teachers would emerge.

4.2.2 Findings on learners' reading comprehension tests

As alluded to in Section 3.5, learners from the two selected schools were given same reading comprehension test. The test was supposed to be taken by 15 learners from each school. However, five learners withdrew from participating in the study, three from school A and two from school B. Findings presented in a table form in tables 4.1 and 4.2 were thematised into poor comprehension, poor pedagogical skills, poor language proficiency and poor vocabulary.

Table 4.1 School A reading comprehension test

Question type	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7	L8	L9	L10	L11	L12
Main idea (15)	9	5	9	12	4	9	10	9	10	8	6	10
Experiential (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Summary (5)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Factual (13)	10	7	8	8	7	9	10	8	9	7	8	9
Vocabulary (7)	3	1	1	2	2	2	3	1	2	1	0	2
Inferential (4)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Language proficiency (5)	2	0	2	2	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	2
TOTAL (50)	**24**	**13**	**19**	**24**	**14**	**23**	**27**	**18**	**22**	**16**	**15**	**25**

Table 4.2: School B reading comprehension test

Question type	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	L7	L8	L9	L10	L11	L12	L13
Main idea (15)	10	**9**	9	11	10	9	8	10	6	7	5	8	9
Experiential (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Summary (5)	2	1	0	2	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
Factual (13)	10	7	8	9	10	10	8	9	7	8	6	6	8
Vocabulary (7)	5	0	3	2	5	4	3	2	2	1	0	0	1
Inferential (4)	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Language proficiency (5)	3	2	1	0	1	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL (50)	**32**	**20**	**21**	**25**	**27**	**29**	**21**	**24**	**16**	**18**	**11**	**14**	**20**

(a) Poor comprehension

The results show that learners are unable to read for understanding. Questions 1(a) is categorised as main idea question where students were supposed to identify points from the passage. Moreover, questions 3, 4, 5-(a), 5 (c), 7-(a), 8-(a) and 8-(b) are factual questions whose answers are directly stated in the passage. The results from both schools established that some learners do not read the passage with comprehension. The expectation would be that learners would not be challenged by such kind of questions whose answers are explicit. The finding is similar to Pressley's (2002) cited in Mwanambuku (2013) and Dennis' (2008) claim that reading comprehension is a complex process between recognizing written symbols and deducing meaning behind those symbols. This discovery implies that inability to deduce meaning from the passages affects learners' comprehension.

(b) Poor language proficiency

It was clear through this test that learners' English Language proficiency is very low and that turns into a reading comprehension challenge. From questions which were intended to assess their language proficiency in Section 2.3.1.6, the majority of learners from both schools were unable to correct linguistic errors within one given paragraph. To some extent, learners did not attempt the language proficiency question while those who attempted it failed. The result from this kind of question validates the fact that knowledge of language structures and grammar has an impact on the understanding of written texts (Murris, 2014) in Section 2.3.3.6. As pointed out in the teachers' interview, the study seemed to reveal that ESL learners are first challenged by the language before they can even start reading the passages meant to assess their reading comprehension.

(c) Lack of background knowledge

The discovery from both schools indicated that learner's knowledge of the topic remains as a challenge to learners in dealing with reading comprehension tasks. In question two, all students from the two schools failed to draw from their own knowledge or experience one example of a major oil company, hence they were challenged by that question. This discovery aligns with Pressley (2006) and Tompkins, (2016) in Section 1.1 that background knowledge of learners assist in putting written words into life and that makes comprehension easy and meaningful. This finding is in contrast with the Socio-cultural theory which specifies that learning should be within learner's social and cultural settings. It is reasonable therefore, to conclude that since the subject matter of passage one was about continental shelf oil which the researcher found not to be in the context of Basotho learners, learners found it difficult to relate the passage with their experience.

(d) Poor vocabulary knowledge

Limited vocabulary emerged as one of the learners' reading comprehension challenges. All learners from school A did not attempt a summary question because they were instructed to write it using their own words. Although some students in school B attempted it, the results established that they also have limited vocabulary. This finding is parallel to Ibrahim, Sarudin and Muhamad's (2016) illustration that vocabulary knowledge is one important skill that supports reading comprehension Section 1.1. On the same question which required demonstration of vocabulary knowledge, for instance question 5-(b) and (c) and 10, it was revealed that learners from both

schools have limited lexical bank. All of them failed to supply correct synonyms of the given words in question 10. To this far, the findings point to learners' limited vocabulary as a challenge facing learners at Grade10 to deal with reading comprehension tasks.

Taken in sum, with reference to the second research question, the study has established main challenges learners face in reading comprehension. These challenges emerged as poor reading fluency, lack of reading skills and strategies, poor language proficiency, poor comprehension, lack of prior knowledge and poor vocabulary. Given this perspective, the researcher found it essential to also establish possible contributing factors to challenges faced by teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. The subsequent section presents such possible contributing factors.

4.3 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO CHALLENGES FACED IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF READING COMPREHENSION

This section presents findings on possible contributing factors to the challenges faced by teachers and learners in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language. The findings are from data generated through teachers' interview and learners' tests.

4.3.1 Findings on teachers' interviews

Grounded on their experience, Grade10 teachers were asked to comment on the possible contributing factors to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. Below are the findings from their interviews.

(a) Lack of support for learners with reading comprehension problems by teachers

The findings of the study indicated that teachers do not support learners with reading comprehension problems. This revelation came into surface again when the two teachers confided that they do not do anything to help struggling learners. In particular, T002 commented that she does not have time to assist such learners because they cannot even copy notes on the board correctly. Failure to support a child is seen as a contradiction to Vygotsky (1978) theory where the principle is that the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) who is a teacher in this case, should first scaffold learning activities so that a child can meet his cognitive potential (Section 2.2.1). It is practical, therefore, to suggest that if learners are not given the support they need in their learning journey, they are likely not to master the given activity especially reading comprehension.

(b) Lack of reading culture and motivation

Lack of reading culture and motivation were disclosed as some of the contributing factors to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. The teachers affirmed that learners seem not to be exposed a lot to reading which they think would expose them to a lot of information while it will also develop their comprehension skills. T001 and T002 also shared the same sentiments that leaners show no motivation to read. They stated that they normally put learners in reading groups so that they work together but that has not yielded positive learning. T001emphasiesed that most of his learners were demotivated, they did not have interest in working with others to help them. Teachers' teaching approach is in line with Socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (1978) where he promotes collaborative modes of learning as explained in Section 2.2.2. Moreover, according to T002, extensive reading is important as it exposes learners to wider vocabulary, sentence construction and linguistic competence which are all important for language learning. The findings imply that reading culture and reading motivation are ingredients for better understanding of prints.

(c) Poor vocabulary knowledge

The study also revealed lack of vocabulary knowledge as another contributing factor to challenge in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. The teachers illustrated that for learners to understand written texts they must have plenty of lexical knowledge so that they can engage easily in a given language. They also insisted that reading would not make sense to readers if they do not know the meaning of those words. This idea is backed up by Mwanambuku (2013) in Section 2.3.2.2 that insufficient knowledge of words blocks absorption of new knowledge. One of the teachers claimed that learners are unable to deal with own words questions, vocabulary questions and summary questions because they do not have enough words to express themselves. In essence, the findings here translate into limited vocabulary as a hindrance the teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

(d) Illiterate home environment

The findings further demonstrated that parental involvement has a great impact on child's learning. Interviewed teachers declared that learners do not receive support from home. They clarified that this is because many learners come from poor families where schooling is seen not as a priority. Again, teachers commented that many learners come from child-headed families while others are

living with illiterate parents and grandparents who are unable to do a follow up on their child's schooling. T001 highlighted that many parents never take an initiative to visit schools; they that feel their part was only to pay school fees. Literature reveals that the support learners receive from home is crucial to their learning journey (Section 2.3.2.7). This finding aligns with Socio-cultural theory which clearly strengthens that the society in which a child lives shapes him.

Taken this into account, it is evident that if learners are not supported in their learning journey teachers and learners will experience challenges.

(e) Complexity of reading materials

The study proceeded to advance that another contributing challenge to the teaching and learning of reading comprehension is the complexity of the reading texts. Teachers complained that prescribed LGCSE books for reading comprehension are not in line with cognitive level of students and thus, learners have developed attitude that reading is difficult. This is in contrast with Wang and Rosefield (2015) and Leung and Oltman (2010) in Section 2.3.2.1 that learners learning a foreign language should develop reading interest for better understanding of written texts. T002 further commented that reading itself is not an exciting activity to teach and learn and it is even worse to come across reading passages that are dry, uninteresting and difficult in terms of language usage. This claim by teachers is against Socio-cultural theory where Vygotsky (1978) advocates that learners should be exposed to problem solving activities that are socially and culturally meaningful. The teacher indicated that even though they were told that the new curriculum is localized, reading passages still involve experiences that are outside learners' contexts and it becomes difficult to deal with such texts. It is, therefore, understandable to draw conclusion from these findings that uninteresting and complex reading passages contribute to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

(f) Reluctance to speak English

Teachers established that failure to practice speaking English is another contributing factor. They stressed that competence comes along with practice but learners are reluctant to speak English which they believe would help them deal easily with reading tasks. They pointed out that learners are not exposed to English speaking at home and even at school because the commonly used language is their mother-tongue which is Sesotho. T002 further revealed that she is sometimes

forced to teach in Sesotho because her learners would complain that they do not understand English. It is reasonable to conclude that if learners do not practice speaking English that would hinder their engagement with the written text because they would find language in written materials totally strange to them. Again, data revealed that teachers also contribute to challenges because they sometimes teach in Sesotho.

4.3.2 Data from learners' tests

As indicated in Section 3.5 of chapter three, another objective for giving learners a test was to establish the contributing factors to challenges Grade10 face in the learning of reading comprehension in English Language. Learners' scripts were marked and findings were thematised into complexity of reading materials, lack of extensive reading and motivation, lack of support for learners with reading comprehension problems and lack of reading comprehension skills and strategies.

(a) Complexity of reading materials

Complex reading materials appeared as a contributing factor to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. For instance, passage one of the test was about drilling oil from underneath oceans. The researcher found the content itself unreachable to ESL learners like Basotho. Teaching unrelated content is against Socio-cultural theory. The theory highlights that learners should be engaged to activities that are socially and culturally meaningful. The second passage which was about the commemoration of King MoshoeshoeI was quite familiar to the cultural context of the learners and they were able to follow it. The conclusion in this regard is that when subject matter is unfamiliar to learners, deducing meaning from the text will be difficult. Generally, language structures in both passages were too complicated for the level of ESL Grade10. The same sentiments appeared in teachers' interview. One teacher commented that language usage found in texts is still complicated. The finding could suggest that learners' knowledge of the topic and text structures affect learners' reading comprehension.

(b) Lack of reading culture and motivation

Lack of reading culture was reflected as another contributing factor to learners reading comprehension challenges. From learners' tests, it was apparent that they are not exposed to a lot of reading which could help them develop comprehension skills and wider vocabulary. One

teacher in the interview expressed that reading itself involves knowledge of words which comes as a result of extensive reading. The findings specify that majority of learners from both schools do not have a reading culture. For instance, learners failed to identify main ideas, deal with factual question and use own words as aspects of reading comprehension which they could easily deal with if they were regular readers. It is evident from this finding that exposing learners to a lot of reading helps them build comprehension skills.

(c) Lack of support for learners with reading comprehension difficulty

Looking at the learners' tests, the findings established that learners do not receive support from their teachers, peers and parents. For instance, the majority of learners from both schools seem to have reading comprehension difficulty. It was revealed in the teachers' interviews that teachers do not have time to help struggling learners. Some learners are grappled by identifying main questions as well as factual questions. The discovery points to lack of support. This revelation is in contrast with Socio-cultural theory underpinning this study. The theory proposes that a child learns from the behaviour, attitudes, values and skills of the people around him (Section 2.2). The study, therefore, seemed to indicate that learners at Grade10 find it difficult to deal with reading comprehension tasks because they do not get the support that they need, either from school or home.

(d) Lack of reading comprehension skills and strategies

Results from both schools indicated that learners seemed to have no knowledge to deal with advanced reading tasks such as inferential questions and contextual questions. Because they lack comprehension skills and strategies, they failed to read between the lines to find what is implied by the author (implication). They failed to reach conclusions from details given by the author (inference) and they failed to make intelligent guesses (deduction). Question 6-(a), 6-(b) and 9 required learners to apply their reading skills and strategies. This discovery is related Lai (2013) and Menaido (2016) in Section (2.3.2.4) that poor readers do not possess strategic reading skills; therefore, they find it difficult to predict, summarize, infer, compare and contrast, draw conclusions, distinguish between facts and opinion, contextualise meaning and identify main ideas from the text. The findings therefore, lead to lack of reading comprehension skills and strategies as another contributing factor to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language.

4.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The findings from this report revealed that English Language teachers face challenges in teaching reading comprehension. According to this inquiry, the teachers' challenges were consolidated to poor pedagogical skills, demanding curriculum, poor comprehension, scarcity of reading materials as well as overcrowded classrooms. These findings are similar to RAND Reading Study Group (2002), Kalinda (2005), Pressley (2006), Brownell (2010) and Mwanambuku (2013) as narrated in Sections 2.1., 2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.2, 2.3.3.4, and 2.3.3.4.

Learners are expected to carry out reading comprehension tasks as stipulated by LGCSE Grade10 syllabus (2019). However, the findings established that learners experience challenges because they have poor reading skill, poor language proficiency, poor comprehension, limited background knowledge and poor vocabulary knowledge. The findings are in line with documented scholarship as articulated by Dennis in Section (2008)1.1, Verbeek (2014), Ibrahim, Sarudin and Muhamad (2016) and Tompkins (2016) cited in sections 1.1, 2.2 and 2.3.3.5.

There are several issues relating to factors contributing to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language which the study has brought to surface. Teachers' interviews and learners' tests have pointed to lack of support for learners with reading comprehension difficulty, lack of reading culture and motivation, illiterate environment, complexity of reading material, reluctance to practise speaking English and limited vocabulary. The findings coil by Socio-cultural theory as it advocates for a number of principles such as scaffolding of learning activities, collaborative modes of learning, and social and cultural learning contexts (Section 2.1). Because the mentioned principles were not implemented hence challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

4.5 HOW THE BELIEVABILITY OF THE FINDINGS WAS ENSURED

In relation to believability principles as presented in Section 3.8, below are the steps the researcher has followed. In this regard, the findings from this study can be taken as trustworthy.

1. **Credibility**

   For purpose of triangulation, the researcher has generated data from interviews with teachers and tests by learners. Field notes were also used to complement teachers'

utterances during the interview. Furthermore, the researcher submitted her transcripts to the interviewed teachers to verify their correctness.

2. **Dependability**

The study has come to surface to report how unforeseen circumstances such as Covid19 have not allowed for observation of classrooms on the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. The use of audio recorder helped in documenting interviews with teachers.

3. **Transferability**

The intention of this study was not for transferability, but to bring understanding to the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language at Grade10. However, if other researchers are interested in the concept, the researcher will provide a paper trail for them. The trail are in terms of data instruments used, data transcripts, participants' information and data analysis procedures so that other researchers who may want to use data in other contexts can do so.

4. **Conformability**

To ensure that the findings are the results of experiences and ideas of the participants rather than the interests and preferences of the researcher, the researcher submitted raw data, analysis notes, field notes and audio recordings to supervisor-(s) for audit trail.

4.6 SUMMARY

The chapter presented data analysis and presentation. Principles on how the believability of the findings of the study was ensured was also illustrated. The next chapter provides conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the findings that are presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter features conclusion and recommendations based on main findings per research question as reported in Chapter Four. It begins with conclusions followed by recommendations, research limitations, suggestions for further research and summary of the chapter.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are organised by main findings per a research question.

5.2.1 Conclusions on findings associated to challenges English Language teachers experience in the teaching of reading comprehension at Grade10

With regard to the research question on challenges teachers experience in the teaching of reading comprehension, these were the conclusions reached.

(a) Teachers' poor pedagogical skills

The analysis of data revealed that instructional approach is a challenge to teachers. The teachers disclosed that they feel that they do not teach reading comprehension skills and strategies effectively because they are not equipped accordingly with requisite pedagogical skills from their training institutions. Literature on reading comprehension shows teachers' own understanding of reading instructions and their own reading practices which may have adverse effects on their learners' literacy level (Pretorius and Lephalala, 2011; Pretorius and Klapwijik, 2016) in Section (2.3.3.2). If there is a deficiency in teachers' pedagogical skills, learners are likely to face challenges in the reading comprehension.

(b) Demanding curriculum

In Section 4.1.1 (b), overloaded Grade10 syllabus was mentioned as another challenge teachers face in teaching reading comprehension. Interviewed teachers stressed that secondary English Language syllabus is too broad that they spend less time drilling learners to master reading comprehension skills demands placed on them. Teachers often find themselves in a situation where they are pressed by time to finish the syllabus. The conclusion is similar to Kalinda's (2005)

assertion in Section 2.3.1.1. that teachers of English Language, particularly reading, are faced with the demands of overburdening curriculum which include a variety of tasks and activities. Based on this discovery, the study concludes that challenges teachers face in teaching reading comprehension could be the results of a demanding LGCSE English Language curriculum.

(c) Scarcity of reading materials

The analysed data established that scarcity of reading materials in schools hinders teachers to effectively teach reading comprehension. It was revealed in teachers' interviews that in some instances, five learners have to share a reading material (Section 4.1.1). Understandably, it is difficult to put reading passages on the board for everyone to see. Similarly, Brownell (2010) (vide 2.3.3.4) empathises that it becomes difficult to teach reading effectively in the absence of reading materials. It is arguable as reflected by findings that shortage of reading material affects the teaching and learning of reading comprehension negatively.

(d) Large classrooms

Teacher–learner ratio emerged as another challenge faced by teachers in teaching reading comprehension. Teachers specified that they teach large classes of about 60-75 learners; as a result, it is very difficult to attend to individual needs of learners. The finding leads to an impression that large classes do not have a negative impact on teachers only but also on learners. Since learners do not get the attention they need, they find themselves in a situation where they cannot deal with reading comprehension activities. The conclusion is parallel to Mwanambuku's (2013) affirmation in Section 2.3.3.3 that overcrowded classrooms impede effective teaching and learning.

5.2.2 Conclusions on findings related to challenges Grade10 learners face in reading comprehension in English Language

In reference to the research question on challenges learners face in the learning of reading comprehension, analysed data reflected the following challenges:

(a) Lack of reading fluency

As shown in Section 4.2.1 (e), teachers remarked that learners have reading fluency deficiency. Teachers lamented that some of the learners are unable to read words accurately and smoothly

while others cannot read a word completely. Correspondingly, literature on reading comprehension highlights that readers' inability to recognise sound patterns prevents the reader from reading with understanding (Veerbek, 2014 cited in Section 2.3.3.5). The findings reflect that if learners struggle with reading fluency and accuracy, they might not be able to read for understanding.

(b) Poor language proficiency

Engagement with data from teachers' interview and learners' tests revealed that learners are not competent in English Language. Teachers declared that learners are challenged by reading comprehension activities because passages are written in a foreign language which is English. It also appeared from learners' tests that some learners fail reading comprehension tasks simply because their English proficiency is very low. The study, therefore, draws a conclusion that if learners do not have good a command of English Language which is a language in prints, they will be challenged to deduce meaning from what they are reading in the same way, teachers will find it difficult to teach such learners.

(c) Poor comprehension

Teaching learners with poor comprehension surfaced as a challenge to teachers teaching reading comprehension. Teachers pointed out that they are faced with learners who read to finish reading passages but do not understand the message behind the prints. From learners' test it surfaced that learners do not read for comprehension. Learners were mostly challenged by explicit meaning of the texts. The finding points to a conclusion that learners' reading comprehension challenges could be linked to poor comprehension because learners with poor understanding cannot deal with reading comprehension tasks.

(d) Limited vocabulary knowledge

Analysed data pointed to learners' poor vocabulary as a challenge averting them to deal with written texts. This finding emerged from interviews data and learners' tests. Seemingly, learners do not have a sufficient bank of words in English to easily engage with reading passages. In Section 1.1, Ibrahim, Sarudin and Muhamad (2016) illustrate that vocabulary knowledge is one important skill that supports reading comprehension. In relation to this finding, the study concludes that learners with limited lexical knowledge are faced with a challenge in learning reading comprehension.

(e) Lack of background knowledge

Unfamiliar themes in comprehension passages appeared among challenges Grade10 learners' experience. From the given test, learners did not do well and one may conclude that it was because passage one was outside learner's context. The finding is not supported by Socio-cultural theory which emphasies that leaners should be exposed to meaningful learning experiences; learning should imitate their social and cultural context. Since passage one was about extraction of oils from oceans, the researcher concludes that the passage was irrelevant to learners' context; as a result, they failed to understand it.

5.2.3 Conclusions pertaining to possible contributing factors to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension

In relation to the research question on possible contributing factors to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension the study arrived at the following conclusions:

(a) Lack of support for learners with reading comprehension problems

Analysis of data gathered from teachers' interview and learners' tests highlighted that teachers and parents do not give support to learners with reading comprehension difficulty. Teachers specified that they never schedule time to assist struggling learners. Similarly, they pointed out that many learners come from illiterate families which do not support them with learning needs. From the tests, it was discovered that if struggling learners were drilled by their teachers or any More Knowledgeable Other, they could have developed reading skills and strategies to tackle reading challenges. The Socio-cultural theory recommends that a child should learn from skills, values and attitude of people around him. This finding reflects that if learners with reading comprehension deficiency do not get learning support from adults or peers, they cannot manage with reading comprehension activities placed on them.

(b) Lack of reading culture and motivation

Teachers declared that they believe reading culture and reading motivation expose learners to different styles of writing and wider vocabulary. In the same way, Hassard (2005) cited in Section 2.3.2.3 contends that lack of extensive reading culture is one of the factors that contribute to learners reading comprehension challenges. The learners' marked tests also revealed that some learners are not exposed to wider reading as they were challenged by vocabulary questions and

contextual questions. In essence, this finding points to learners' lack of exposure to rich-print environment as a challenge to the teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

(c) Complexity of reading materials

Analysed data revealed that difficult passages in terms of language use and structures as well as content outside learner's context contribute to challenges in teaching and learning of reading comprehension. Socio-cultural theory underpinning this study proposes that for meaningful learning, learners should be exposed to learning activities that reflect their social and cultural contexts (vide 2.2.2). The researcher, therefore, draws the conclusion that if learners are exposed to difficult texts, dry and uninteresting themes in reading materials that might contribute to challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

(d) Reluctance to practise speaking English

Teachers indicated in Section 4.3.1 (g) that learners are reluctant to practise speaking English. They stated that learners are not exposed to English speaking because they are surrounded by people who speak Sesotho. Teachers also confessed that they sometimes teach comprehension in Sesotho. Documented scholarship reveals that learners' poor performance in written and reading tasks becomes worse in situations where the medium of instruction in schools is English since learners are exposed to speaking English for a limited time (Al- Maheooqi, 2015). The finding points to a conclusion that challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension are related to learners' reluctance to practise speaking English.

(e) Lack of reading comprehension skills and strategies

From learners' tests and teachers' interviews, it surfaced that lack of reading skills and strategies affects learners' understanding of written texts. McIntyre (2011) in Section (1.1) concurs that reading strategies are useful conscious behaviour that readers employ before, during, and after reading in order to deduce meaning from the text. Based on this finding, the present study concludes that if learners do not possess reading skills and strategies, they might fail to summarise, identify main ideas interpret, deduce and infer the author's message behind the printed symbols.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are tabled based on the conclusions of the study as detailed in Section 5.2 above.

1. Based on the findings of this study, teachers are not competent to teach reading comprehension. The implication is that teachers need a lot of in-service teacher training programs to equip them with appropriate pedagogical skills. These trainings can be done nationally, regionally or at school level. This recommendation translates into suggestions that include the following:

   - Teachers should be encouraged to work collaboratively in their departments and even in their subject associations to help one another on how to eradicate teaching and learning reading comprehension problems. Moreover, there must be proper supervision in schools to ensure efficient and effective teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

   - English Language markers especially those who mark reading comprehension should share with teachers their marking experiences and expectations. This will help teachers to teach their learners along those lines so that they can perform better in English reading comprehension.

2. In relation to overloaded LGCSE curriculum, there is a need for key education stakeholders such as the English Language curriculum developers at the NCDC to reduce the number of topics to be taught at LGCSE Grade10. This will be done in order to accommodate enough time to teach and learn reading comprehension skills and strategies.

3. It is recommended that schools should ensure adequate English Language textbooks to avoid learners overcrowding on one textbook. The government of Lesotho has established book rental schemes to schools. Similarly, the parents should be willing to pay for those rental books.

4. Teacher-learner ratio is 1:45 as recommended by UNESCO (2010). However, from the findings of this study, it was discovered that there is an influx of learners in classrooms. It is therefore recommended that the number of learners per teacher be a priority for efficient and effective teaching and learning.

5. As indicated in Section 2.3.3.5, learners with reading fluency problems do not read smoothly and accurately and that affects their comprehension ability. Concerning the finding and conclusion that learners are unable to read, teachers should find time to drill learners for smooth and fluent reading. The same goes for another finding that learners with comprehension problem do not get support from their teachers. The teachers should support such kind of learners. Perhaps they should find time to give extra classes and assign those learners extra work.

6. It is further recommended that learners should be exposed to print-rich environment. This will improve their language proficiency. Extensive readers have wider information, gain wider vocabulary and have improved language command which help them understand reading passage easily (Hassard, 2005). The schools should have a ready supply of modern novels, newspapers and magazines so that learners are exposed to a lot of reading. Through reading, learners are exposed to language and that improves their English competence.

7. Concerning complexity of reading materials, teachers should ensure that reading materials brought to class align with the level of understanding of language for learners. Such reading materials should also have content that stimulates prior knowledge of the learners. This recommendation is made in line with Socio- Cultural theory underpinning this study. The theory highlights that learning should be within the context of the learner for meaningful learning.

8. With regard to poor comprehension, teachers should provide teaching and learning strategies that promote collaborative modes of learning. This aligns with Socio-cultural theory that during learning, a struggling learner should be supported by the More Knowledgeable Other (adults or peers). When learners are grouped together in a small reading group, that can promote learning ownership, thus better performance.

9. Based on the findings, learners are not exposed to speaking English. It is therefore suggested that learners should be exposed to speaking English from as early age as possible. Again, schools should declare schools as English-speaking environment (s). Teachers should also stick to English as a medium of instruction as indicated in the CAP (2009) that English shall be a medium of instruction and taught as a subject in Lesotho schools.

10. This study recommends that for learners to acquire reading comprehension skills and strategies, teachers should teach reading comprehension strategies explicitly (Maxwell, 2014) vide 1.1. They should first scaffold comprehension activities and slowly pull out from scaffolding to allow learning autonomy. Scaffolding as a teaching technique is supported by Vygotskian Socio-cultural theory. Lastly, teachers should allow learners to share tasks in their small reading groups. This strategy coils by Socio-cultural theory that knowledge emanates from social contexts and is initially shared with others instead of being plunged upon the mind of an individual (Section 2.2).

5.4 STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study was aimed at understanding challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in English Language at Grade10. The empirical results reported herein should be considered with some of limitations listed below.

- **Sample size**

Although the sample size for this inquiry was fairly selected, it was taken from one district and has covered the urban part of the town only. Hence, further research needs to be conducted with larger sample from schools situated in different areas throughout ten districts of the country to see if same findings would be revealed.

- **Lack of previous research on the topic**

In addition, there is inadequacy of literature pertaining to literacy especially reading comprehension in Lesotho. I barely found books or articles which have focused on reading comprehension. This made it difficult for me to review what has been covered in this area.

- **Unforeseen circumstances**

Should the study have calculated the unforeseen circumstances like that of the pandemic Covid-19 which gave rise to a total lockdown of schools, the study would have gone further to contribute additional knowledge emerging from classroom observation(s). Because circumstances could not permit that, there still remains a gap in existing knowledge in that regard. It is, therefore, recommended that further research on challenges in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in Lesotho secondary schools incorporate classroom observations for information would generate a complement to other sources of data. For that matter, a school-classroom-action research approach focusing mainly on observations and reflections on teaching therein could be one of the best ways to better understanding of the challenges

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The main finding for this study is that teachers and learners are challenged to effectively teach and learn reading comprehension skills and strategies simultaneously. Therefore, there is a need to enquire how English Language teachers are trained and the relevance of teacher education curriculum. The teacher education curriculum should be looked into in accordance with English

Language secondary syllabus. Another area of interest should be that of learners' inability to read. Future research should focus on teaching reading at primary level. This suggestion stems from teachers' remarks that the kind of learners they receive from primary schools is unable to read.

5.6 SUMMARY

The study highlighted the conclusions based on the main findings. The recommendations were presented in relation to the conclusions probed by the findings. The suggestions for further research as implied by among others, the limitations of the study, were also spotlighted in the chapter.

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Appendix A: Request letter to the school Principals

'**Matemo B. Likhoeli (senior teacher)**

Location: Masitise High school

Tel: +266 5809 4443

Student number: 200401090

Email: matemomosothoane@gmail.com

20th February 2020

The Principal

Dear Sir

Re: request for permission to conduct research in your school

I kindly submit my request to conduct a study in your school. I am a third year student in the MA.ED programme (English Language Education) at The National University of Lesotho. My study is entitled '**CHALLENGES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE: A CASE OF GRADE10 LEARNERS IN TWO SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE QUTHING DISTRICT.**

Upon granted permission, English Language teachers and Grade10 learners will form participants for sole purpose of data collection related to the study. I hope my humble request receives your best consideration. I am also ready to come in person for further details on when to collect data and modes of data collection. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely yours,

'Matemo Likhoeli

Appendix B: Interview consent form

I confirm that I fully understand what is requested of me as a participant in the research. Therefore, I am willing and prepared to participate in the study.

Participant's name and surname: _____

Participant's signature: _____

Researcher's name and surname: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Appendix C: Interview guide

1. (a) Based on your experience, what challenges do you experience in teaching reading comprehension at Grade10?

   (c) How do you deal with those challenges?

2. (a) What kind of questions constitute your teaching of reading comprehension?

   (b) What challenges do you experience around those questions?

3. (a) Which instructional strategies do you employ in teaching reading comprehension?

   (b) Why do you use these strategies?

4. (a) What are learners' reading comprehension challenges?

   (b) How do you deal with these challenges?

5. What are possible contributing factors to these challenges?

6. What do you think should be done to help teachers and learners to teach and learn reading comprehension effectively?

Appendix D: Learners' reading comprehension test

Section 1

Passage 1

Continental shelf oil

1. Continental shelves (the edge of a continent that slopes into the ocean) are good places to explore for oil as this is where oil deposits often accumulate.

2. Drilling on continental shelves, however, is not without its problems. Most of the world's shelves have been thoroughly searched for favourable structures by the major oil companies with the hope of finding large amounts of oil. Another major issue is the difficulty 5 of drilling in deep water. At present, oil wells in offshore areas, such as those in California, are drilled in water as much as 100 metres deep. In the future, that depth will probably need to be increased at least two to four times. In order to drill in deeper water on continental slopes, new kinds of drilling technology will need to be developed. Perhaps the Glomar Challenger's equipment, which has been used to drill the holes for the deep-sea drilling 10 programme in the Atlantic Ocean, will serve as a model.

3. Another major issue for offshore drilling is the prevention of oil pollution. The name 'Santa Barbara' calls to mind the environmental damage that resulted from the accidental release of oil from an offshore drilling platform which happened there in 1969. However, this was not an isolated incident as there were many similar accidents, although they did not make 15 headlines.

4. Ensuring complete safety at drilling wells is difficult, although not entirely impossible. Improving technological systems and controls and enforcing safety procedures would greatly reduce the chances of a serious accident but is expensive. The flushing of oil tanks by ships at sea poses a serious current danger of oil spills. Even though offshore drilling 20 can have adverse effects on the environment (if the necessary precautions are not taken), it is a necessity because there are large reserves of oil and gas under the sea bed that will eventually have to be drilled to satisfy the world's needs.

5. A petrol geologist plays a major role in ensuring an adequate supply of oil worldwide by analysing new and existing oil fields. An oil field is made up of several oil wells which not 25 only give a hint of the ultimate size of the oil field, but also enable a geologist to determine the thickness and the permeability of the oil-saturated porous beds. How permeable an oil field is, is a good indicator of how easy it will be to pump the oil. As more wells are drilled in an area, the productive areas are outlined and the volume of oil in the new oil field becomes easier to estimate. 30

6. Not all of the oil in the ground can be recovered, though improvements in recovery engineering are constantly being made. The general abundance and distribution of existing oil fields are guides to estimating future reserves. For example, exploration has been so thorough in the older areas that there is little doubt that more than 90 percent of the oil there has already been discovered, though not all of it has been pumped. These proven reserves 35 are those that have been geologically outlined and at least partially drilled. Estimates of proven reserves are constantly being updated as the balance changes between the increase from new discoveries and the decrease by production at pumping wells. The next step is the geological estimate of the future exploration of where untapped oil fields might be found. With more than a hundred years' worth of experience in drilling oil and 40 the increase in the geological knowledge of the world, geologists can make a good guess about how much oil is left to find.

Section 2

Passage 2

Re-tracing the steps of history

1. In March 2013, I made a bold decision to be part of the annual Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu walk which commemorates the journey taken in 1824 by King Moshoeshoe I and his people from Botha-Bothe to settle in Thaba-Bosiu. The arduous 116 km walk was incident-filled and taught me the true meaning of endurance and perseverance and that, in many cases, physical fitness was not enough but would need to be complemented by mental and psychological strength, as three full days of walking awaited me. Some of my friends doubted if I would finish the walk but I managed it without resorting to the vehicles that were readily available to assist those whose legs could carry them no more.

2. Not only did the punishing trip put a strain on the muscles and knee-joints of many of the approximately 600 travellers, but it vented untold destruction on their footwear as well. On day two I was walking behind one guy when I noticed that both of his supposedly tough shoes had snapped from the heel to the mid-section of the sole. As the man walked, the heel opened up like a shark's mouth devouring smaller fish, but he kept going. He still had many kilometres ahead of him.

3. The spirit of comradeship on the trip was also put to the test. During the darkness of day two, when we were about to climb the seemingly endless rough terrain leading to Malimong Primary School, our final boarding venue, one man fell and hurt his hip bone. It was around 9pm and being stuck in an area which even the most elevated 4x4 vehicle could not reach meant we had to think fast. Helpful villagers brought a home-made ladder and mattress and we strapped him on to it so that we could carry him safely; this involved a trek all the way to the top of the treacherous pass, where the Lesotho Defence Force ambulance was waiting. A weak telephone signal had enabled one of us to seek help. The numerous flashing torch lights of fellow travellers lit up the man's face: it was obvious from the way his face twitched and grimaced that he was in considerable pain. His story had a happy ending though, as he was later discharged from hospital; his condition, though painful, had not been as serious as had been feared.

4. To me the trip revealed how much more can still be discovered about the beauty of the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho and I became aware of the potential available here to boost the highly lucrative tourism sector. That year's walk had attracted people from as far afield as South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and the United States of America (a Peace Corps volunteer based in Lesotho) and I felt it was a perfect opportunity to market Lesotho and anticipate some future returns. The ever-present Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation officials at many of our stops, with their colourfully branded vehicles, meant everyone on the walk was constantly being alerted to the idea of making Lesotho a destination of choice for any future travel plans.

5. The trip passed through landmarks such as Lipetu, the area where the collar bones of Peete, King Moshoeshoe's grandfather, are said to be interred. We stopped briefly to read the inscription on the plaque which had been erected by the road.

6. To conclude on a lighter note, a friend, who had done this walk before, decided to venture on his own from Ha 'Makhoroana to Malimong and nearly got lost! As he approached Malimong Primary School the battery in his torch ran out and he took the wrong way, only to be rescued by a villager who shouted in the darkness when he saw his light go off. The kind villager escorted him all the way to the school. My friend's main fear, as he later told me, was that he might have missed the path altogether and fallen down the hillside.

5
10
15
20
25
30
35
40

Section 1: Reading for Ideas

Read **Passage 1** in the Insert and then answer **all** the questions below.

1 **(a)** **Notes** [15 marks]

> **Identify and write down** the problems related to drilling on continental shelves, what petrol geologists do now, and what they and others need to do in the future.

> **USE THE MATERIAL FROM PARAGRAPH TWO TO PARAGRAPH SIX INCLUSIVE.**
> At this stage, you need **NOT** use your own words.
> To help you get started, the first point is done for you in each section of notes.
> You will be awarded up to 15 marks for content points.

MAIN POINTS

Problems related to drilling on continental shelves

- *Most of the world's shelves have been thoroughly searched*

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3

What petrol geologists do now, and what they and others need to do in future

• *Ensure an adequate supply of oil worldwide*

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(b) Summary [5 marks]

Now use your notes to write a summary of the problems related to drilling on continental shelves, what petrol geologists do now, and what they and others need to do in the future.

This time you will be awarded up to 5 marks **for using your own words** wherever possible and for **accurate use of language**.

Your summary, which must be in continuous writing (not note form), must be no longer than **160** words, including the 10 words given below. Begin your summary as follows:

Finding new continental shelves to drill is difficult because most

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2   'Most of the world's shelves have been thoroughly searched for favourable structures by the major
oil companies' (lines 3–5). From your own knowledge or experience, give **one** example of a major
oil company.

.... [1]

3   From your reading of paragraph 4 decide which **one** of the following statements is true and tick
the box you have chosen.

It is easy to guarantee a hundred percent safe drilling well. ☐

It is necessary to explore every possible oil resource as our present ☐
reserves have dwindled.

It is clear that there are large supplies of oil and gas under the sea bed. ☐ [1]

4   From your reading of the entire text, tick the box which best applies to the statement given.

	True	False
The location of continental shelves makes the oil reserves easily accessible.	☐	☐
Oil is one of the most eco-friendly minerals to produce.	☐	☐
It becomes easier to drill, if the oil beds are very permeable.	☐	☐ [3]

Total for Section 1 [25]

Section 2: Reading for Meaning

Read **Passage 2** in the Insert and then answer **all** the questions below.

From paragraph 1

5   (a)   What is the main purpose of the walk from Menkhoaneng to Thaba-Bosiu?

....

.... [1]

(b)   Pick out and write down a word from the paragraph which shows that the walk was difficult and punishing.

.... [1]

(c)   Did the writer finish the walk? Tick the right answer.

No ☐

Yes ☐

[1]

From paragraph 2

6   (a)   Why does the writer describe the man's shoes as 'supposedly tough'?

....

....

....

.... [2]

(b)   The writer says the man whose shoes were torn kept walking. What does this suggest about the man?

....

.... [1]

From paragraph 3

7 **(a)** One of the walkers suffered an accident on the walk. What happened to him?

....

.... [2]

(b) Explain fully how the villagers were able to help the injured man.

....

....

.... [2]

(c) What does the word 'treacherous' suggest about the pass?

.... [1]

(d) Pick out and write down **two** words from the paragraph which show that the injured man was in serious pain.

.... [2]

From paragraph 4

8 **(a)** From the information given in the paragraph, say how the country can benefit from the walk.

....

....

....

.... [2]

(b) Name any **two** countries from which some of the travellers came.

.... [1]

From paragraph 6

9 A villager rescued and escorted the writer's friend all the way to the school. What does this suggest about the villager's character?

....

.... [1]

10 Choose **three** of the following words. For each of them give **one word** or **short phrase** (of not more than seven words) which has the same meaning that the word has in the passage.

    1.   bold (line 1)
    2.   devouring (line 13)
    3.   lucrative (line 29)
    4.   anticipate (line 32)
    5.   escorted (line 43)

    ( ) ....

    ( ) ....

    ( ) ....

                                                         [3]

Total for Section 2 [20]

Section 3: Language Proficiency

The passage below contains 10 errors. Correct each error by writing the correct form in the space at the end of the line in which the error occurs. Note that not every line contains an error. The first one is done for you.

0	Going to school opens up a hole new world to students and	..................whole..................
1	ensure that any future opportunities will not be missed.	....
2	Studied in itself is a journey of discovery, and it equips those	....
3	who undertake it with the know they would otherwise not be	....
4	able to have. While schools have traditional been the most	....
5	common places to acquire education, some people opt to	....
6	study privately under the guide of their own parents, or with	....
7	the help of privately hired tutors. While that could be many	....
8	reason for children to study privately, in the comfort of their	....
9	own homes, some people believes it denies children the	....
10	opportunity to mix with children of their own age and gain	....
11	the much needed social skills which usually result for regular	....
12	interaction and play together.	....

[5]

Total for Section 3 [5]