INVESTIGATING COMPREHENSION TEACHING STRATEGIES THAT TEACHERS USE TO TEACH LEARNERS COMPREHENSION SKILLS: THE CASE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITHIN LILONGWE, MALAWI

M. Ed. (CURRICULUM AND TEACHINGSTUDIES LANGUAGE EDUCATION) THESIS

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Chancellor College

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Other people's work available in this thesis has been acknowledged.

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Full Legal Name

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Signature

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Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband Francis, children: Crispin, Amy, Noreen,

Jeremy, and Jason, nieces: Memory and Violet, my father and mother.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teaching strategies that teachers of English use to teach learners comprehension skills. This study was guided by Social Cultural Theory (SCT) by Vygotsky (1978), which emphasises that learning is a social process which occurs when a competent person (teacher) or peers interact in a psychological space called Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The theory emphasises on the use of 'tools' as resources in the learning process such as the comprehension strategies. The researcher used a qualitative case study design to generate data. The data was generated from the following: form three teachers of English, learners, head teachers and an English Language Paper III Chief Examiner. The participants were purposively selected in order to get qualified and experienced teachers who could provide the data that was sought. Further, the data was generated through document analysis, oral interviews and classroom observations using semi-structured questionnaire and checklist respectively. Besides, the data analysis followed the thematic procedure according to the procedure stipulated by Creswell (2009) and Cohen et al. (2007). The study firstly found that the teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills was limited. Secondly, the study established that teachers used eleven research-based strategies but were used inadequately due to insufficient knowledge of teaching strategies obtained during initial teacher training and from experienced teachers. Lastly, during implementation, the teachers were not modelling or explicitly teaching the learners comprehension skills because they had insufficient knowledge. The study further established that the expected sources of teachers' knowledge, pre- and in-service training, experienced teachers and texts on language teaching did not help the teachers acquire the appropriate knowledge. The study, thus, concludes that the teachers failed to effectively teach their learners comprehension skills due to the fact that they did not have appropriate knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CER	Chief Examiner's Report
CEWD	Central West Education Division
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
DSS	Day Secondary School
EDM	Education Division Manager
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learner
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDI	In-depth Interview
L1	First Language: An initial language acquired by a human being at home.
L2	Second Language: Any language(s) learned after the first language
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
M.C.D.E	Malawi College of Distance Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
M.S.C.E	Malawi Schools Certificate of Education
QG	Question Generation
QA	Question Answering
QtA	Question the Author
RT	Reciprocal Teaching
SBE	Standard British English

SCT   Social Cultural Theory

TL   Target Language: A language which a learner is learning.

TSI   Transactional Strategy Instruction

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the background to the use of English language in Malawi, focusing on its wide use in official communication and as a language of instruction in education. It covers the following: the background, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of operational terms, organisation of the thesis and chapter summary.

1.1 Background

English is an official language of communication in Malawi. Historically, English has been used in the country under the British colonial rule for official communication and as a medium of instruction in education. Following independence in 1964, the government retained English for both purposes; thereby placing it at the centre of the political, economic, and social affairs of the country.

Further, according to Malawi School Certificate of Education (M.S.C.E) English syllabus (2001), the justification for teaching English in Malawi's schools is for communication at both international and national levels since English is the most widely used language internationally. Additionally, at national level English language is used as medium of instruction in education and promotes unity because it facilitates communication within Malawi's multilingual society. It is also used as an official

language in business transactions in government. In this regard, a high level of English language proficiency, which includes competency in comprehension, is an important factor in defining endeavours for the prosperity of individuals and the nation of Malawi.

In the light of the above significance of the English language, success in English enables most Malawians to pursue further studies and become professional experts in different disciplines like teaching, medicine, legal practice, business and many others. However, success in English language needs appropriate teacher's use of teaching strategies in different sections of the curriculum, including comprehension lessons in order to pay attention to improvement in academic performance. Furthermore, English language is very important in education. The skills learned in English are applicable to all subjects. In this case, English as a skill subject requires a learner to learn and use the strategies independently in future. In this regard, poor performance in English affects other subjects as well and their social goals in life. Reading comprehension is even a crucial skill as it is the basis for academic success in that most of the knowledge in the academic setting is acquired through reading. Therefore, English in general and reading comprehension in particular, are success determiners to learners both in their academic and social achievements.

The Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) Chief Examiners' Reports (CERs) indicate that one of the areas in which learners struggle is reading comprehension. The Chief Examiners' Reports (CERs) (2009-2015) provide some feedback on what makes learners score poorly in comprehension section every year. The reports mention things like misunderstanding of the passage that leads to

irrelevant answers to the questions, teacher's negligence to read the CERs and lack of teachers' improvement in their teaching methods just to mention a few.

Due to the place that reading holds in the academic world, it is crucial for learners in Malawi to develop the reading skills independently without the support of the knowledgeable teacher or peers. Despite the realisation of the importance of developing appropriate comprehension skills, the development of comprehension skills by learners still remains a challenge. Mudzielwana (2013) established that the teachers' use of particular strategies for teaching comprehension enable learners to gain reading skills, to understand what they read and respond to questions correctly. This means that one way of addressing the challenges related to reading comprehension is the teaching of appropriate reading comprehension skills through use of relevant strategies for teaching comprehension. This study therefore, sought to investigate the teaching strategies that teachers use to teach learners comprehension skills.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is a general outcry from the public that most learners have poor results in English and yet it is a success determiner in education. This worries the parents, learners and all stakeholders in education. The failure is more pronounced in the area of reading comprehension. According to CER reports from 2009 to 2015, most learners perform poorly in comprehension. Besides, as a teacher of English and a researcher too, the researcher observed that there are many factors that contribute to learners' poor performance in comprehension lessons in the classroom. A number of factors have been cited as reasons behind learners' failure to answer comprehension questions. Some of the challenges are: large classes that results in inadequate textbooks, limited vocabulary, learning environment, the learners' interest to learn the language (Chisamba, 2014). Besides, 2009- 2015 CERs indicate that most learners perform poorly due to the way they read the comprehension passage and the way teachers teach the learners to comprehend a text. The CERs suggest that either the teachers do not address the problems in the course of teaching or they do but the strategies they use to teach comprehension might not be working. In this regard, the reports present the uncertainty in the way the teachers use the strategies in comprehension lessons to teach learners comprehension skills. Besides, Kamlongera (2010) posited that most findings in Malawi looked at the learners' achievement in reading and writing but very few on instructional approaches. This study aimed at filling this gap and contributes to the body of knowledge on strategies for teaching comprehension. The study therefore, sought to find out strategies that teachers use to teach learners comprehension skills.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies that teachers of English used to teach learners to develop comprehension skills during comprehension lessons. As such, special focus was on the types of strategies and how the teachers used them to help learners learn comprehension skills and improve in understanding of what they read.

1.4 Research questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1.4.1 Main research question

- What are the strategies for teaching comprehension that teachers of English use to teach learners comprehension skills?

1.4.2 Specific research questions

1. What is the teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies for teaching comprehension skills?

2. What strategies do teachers use during comprehension lessons?

3. How do teachers implement the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension?

1.5 Significance of the study

According to both international and local research studies that the researcher came across in developed and developing countries including Malawi; there is an existing gap in the strategies that teachers use when teaching comprehension lessons in secondary schools. As such, the results of the study on teachers' knowledge of the strategies and how they use them in class would contribute to the existing gap in literature.

Further, according to literature, most studies have been conducted in primary schools. However, there is also need to find out what is happening at secondary schools. Additionally, the results of the study would form a basis for future studies that would focus on interventions. The curriculum developers, training institutions and policy makers will have research based information on teachers' efforts applied when teaching comprehension lessons. In this case, the results of the study add knowledge to the Education Department. The teachers' appreciation of the results would enable policy makers to come up with policies that equip most teachers with updated information on how to teach the learners comprehension skills. In fact, the effective implementation of language policy is dependent on the appreciation of the rationale of the policy by relevant stakeholders (Chiziwa, 2000).

In summary, as a teacher and a researcher, the findings would add knowledge to the field of education especially the English Department, on how teachers use strategies to teach learners comprehension skills. Besides, the recommendations from the research would support further studies in language policy, language curriculum

development, suggested teaching strategies and other areas within the language domain.

1.6 Definitions of operational terms

Key words: *comprehension, comprehension strategies, reading strategies, mediation, scaffolding ZPD and teaching strategies.*

Comprehension: "Comprehension refers to a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with the text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text" (Pardo 2004, p 3).

Comprehension strategies: Kabita (2015) defined comprehension strategy as a technique that involves how to construct meaning from text; based on the reader's purpose, task or text demands, and situational context.

Reading strategies: Reading strategies are tools that teachers use to help learners learn to read and comprehend what they are reading (Harvey 2012, p. 5).

Mediation: Mediation refers to the part played by other significant people in the learner's lives, people who enhance their learning and selecting and shaping the learning experiences presented to them (Vygotsky, 1978).

Scaffolding: Scaffolding refers to "a process of setting the situation to make the child's entry into easy learning, successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he or she becomes skilled enough to manage it"(Bruner, 1983 p. 60 cited in Bradley and Bradley 2004).

ZPD: "Zone of Proximal Development is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the

level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86)

Teaching Strategies refer to the structure, system, methods, techniques, procedures and processes that a teacher uses during instruction, (Chapter 9, Active teaching strategies and learning, n.d.).

1.7 Organisation of the study

This thesis is organised in five chapters. Chapter 1, the current one, has provided the introduction, background to the thesis and the teaching and learning of English language in Malawi. It has also provided the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study and definitions of operational terms. Chapter 2 discusses the literature that is related to this study, and the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 presents the research design and methodology of this study. Chapter 4 covers the presentation and discussion of the results of the study. Lastly, chapter 5 discusses the conclusions and implications.

1.8 Chapter summary

The first chapter has covered the stand or current status of English language in Malawi and why it is a very important subject. In this case, it has covered the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of operational terms and the organisation of the study. The next chapter is about literature review and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the literature that is related to this study. It has two sections.

The first section reviews relevant literature on comprehension strategies that teachers

of English use to teach learners to develop reading strategies (receptive) skills. The

second section presents the theoretical framework as a basis for this study. In this

regard, the chapter sought to explore the teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching

strategies, the strategies that teachers use in comprehension lessons, how the teacher

uses the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension and finally presents the

theoretical framework.

2.1 Teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies

This section presents the teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies,

importance of knowledge in the teachers' teaching strategies, and how teachers get

the knowledge in teaching strategies.

2.1.1 Teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies

Research reveals that teachers' knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension is

minimal. Kabita's (2015) study in Kenya revealed that specific instructional strategies

that teachers use in teaching comprehension in primary schools are not well known

because the pre-service teacher training curriculum content did not include such strategies. The findings also revealed that all the teachers who participated in the study were not trained during their pre-service training, in reading comprehension instruction strategies. Kabita also sought to find out teachers' level of preparedness towards teaching English comprehension in class 3 learners, in public primary schools in Kenya. The findings revealed that the teachers had the required qualifications but were not aware of research-based comprehension strategies. In this case, they were not prepared to apply comprehension strategies. The teachers relied on their own experiences in school and on the instructions and activities that were available in pupils' course books for guidance (Kabita 2015). As such, the teaching of comprehension followed a systematic pattern.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Bruwer (2013) on teachers' and learners' knowledge and application on reading comprehension strategies in selected primary schools in Namibia, revealed that the teachers had limited knowledge in teaching strategies as well as the learners. The following comprehension strategies were under study: monitoring comprehension, semantic and graphic organisers, answering questions, generating questions, recognising story structure and summarising. The schools were categorised as top performing schools and lowest performing schools. In both schools, the teachers were aware about answering questions, recognising story structures and summarising strategies only. However, the learners in the low performing schools failed to summarise and answered off point in spite of their teachers' awareness about the strategies. This implies that the teachers' knowledge on comprehension strategies alone without proper delivery fails to achieve the intended teaching purpose.

Another study by Chisamba (2014) investigated how regular teachers' instructional strategies in teaching comprehension lessons to standard four learners in Malawi are employed in inclusive classrooms. The results indicated that all the teachers used their own approaches because they had limited knowledge on the appropriate use of instructional strategies. Chisamba posits that best practices are delivered by a professional teacher. Such a teacher chooses instructional strategy to use because learners do not have the autonomy of transferring mental comprehension process without being taught. Instead the teachers focused on testing comprehension through answering of comprehension questions after reading the passage.

Chisamba (2014) found that most teachers test comprehension instead of teaching comprehension because the emphasis is on answering of the questions that are written at the end of the passage. According to the researcher of this study, there are several ways of resolving this issue in Malawi and some of them are: writing a book on how teachers may teach learners comprehension skills, reviewing learner activities that teachers may use when teaching comprehension lessons or conducting workshops throughout the country on teachers' use of comprehension strategies and including comprehension teaching strategies in pre-service teacher training curriculum.

Oyetunji (2011) studied the effect of reading strategy instruction on L2 teacher trainees' performance at Botswana College of Education using mixed (qualitative and quantitative) approach. Oyetunji focused on teaching reading as a process that involves an application of reading strategies that facilitate comprehension of texts. The results indicated that training student teachers in how to use strategies has a positive effect on both acquisition of comprehension skills and understanding what

they read. The findings also indicated that reading strategy instruction should be a type of literacy instruction in primary schools' teacher training institutions. This study aimed at understanding how teachers get knowledge on how to use the strategies to help learners acquire comprehension skills.

Mmela (2006) studied how teachers in primary schools learn to teach learners. She observed that the learner-centred integrated literacy approaches which have constructivism-based philosophy are also included in the Malawi curriculum. However, she found that most teachers failed to teach following the learner-centred integrated literacy approach. According to the researcher, this implies that the quality of training that teachers get also affects the effectiveness of teacher's lesson delivery.

2.1.2 Importance of teacher's knowledge in comprehension teaching strategies

Teachers' knowledge of teaching strategies cannot be over emphasised. It is the tool that equips the teacher and enables him or her to teach learners comprehension skills that enable them to understand what they read with less effort. This sub-section examines the importance of teacher's knowledge of the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension lessons. The section will discuss four ways in which knowledge of teaching strategies is important, namely: development of critical thinking and problem solving skills; knowledge in planning and choosing teaching strategies; knowledge of teaching strategies for effective learning and knowledge to model or explicitly teach learners comprehension skills.

2.1.2.1 Development of critical thinking to solve problems

Firstly, according to McNamara (2009), knowledge of teaching strategies is important not only for successful comprehension but also critical thinking which helps the reader to solve reading problems and to become a better reader and comprehender. In other words, teaching strategies enable learners to think critically as they generate more effective explanations. For example, word decoding (turning print into speech) development in sentence comprehension leads to understanding of what is being read.

2.1.2.2 Role of teacher's knowledge in planning and choosing the appropriate teaching strategies

Secondly, the knowledge of teaching strategies enables the teacher to plan and use appropriate strategies before, during and after reading comprehension passage. Additionally, it helps the teacher to know what strategy to use, when, how and why in order to achieve the learners' purpose for reading as they develop comprehension skills (Atkins, 2012).

2.1.2.3 Teachers' knowledge of teaching strategies for efficient learning

Thirdly, knowledge of teaching strategies plays the essential role of promoting efficiency in addressing comprehension challenges. The study that was conducted by McNamara (2009) led to the belief that teaching strategies provide means to tackle problems in more efficient way. This assertion concurs with Vygotsky's social learning theory which states that learning is a social process where the learner is assisted by the competent teacher or peers. Besides, other literature sources provide abundant evidence that teaching strategies improve reading comprehension that results in deep learning (Palinscar & Brown 1984; Adler, 2013; Mudzielwana, 2013).

13

2.1.2.4 Teachers' knowledge to explicitly teach or model teaching strategies

Lastly, teachers' knowledge of teaching strategies helps teachers to explicitly teach or model teaching strategies appropriately which promotes learners' comprehension skills acquisition. One way in which the modelling is done is through explicit instruction of the strategies. Explicit instruction means the teaching that involves the exact demonstration of the activity when guiding learners to new or unfamiliar cognitive processes according to the goal(s) to be achieved, using authentic materials in context. The investigation that was conducted by Parr and Woloshyn (2013) established that explicit teaching provides teachers an opportunity to model teaching strategies which learners can adopt to develop comprehension skills. In this case, Parr and Woloshy (2013) assert that modelling is the main concept of explicit instruction.

2.1.3 How teachers get the knowledge of teaching strategies

This sub-section discusses how the teachers of English get the knowledge of teaching strategies in comprehension. In this regard, teachers get knowledge through teacher training and through interaction with other experienced teachers.

2.1.3.1 Teacher training

Teacher training is the training that equips teachers with knowledge on how to teach learners effectively. According to Harris and Sass (2008), there are two main forms of teacher training that influence productivity. These are pre-service and in-service training.

(a) Pre-service training

Pre-service training is the initial teaching professional training where a teacher obtains content of the subject and instructional strategies at a teacher training institution (Harris & Sass, 2006).

Carrier, Finholt-Danniel, and Sales (2014) conducted some studies in the Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support (MTPDS) project on how effective were the teachers in Open Distance Learning (ODL) equipped with instruction knowledge during pre-service training. Their findings indicated that student teachers' initial training was easy when they used Information Communication Technology (ICT) devices (media players) as a tool. They found that student teachers effectively delivered the instructions unlike the use of paper-based training materials that lecturers were using. There is need to change means of lesson delivery if the strategies prove to fail to achieve positive results.

This is consistent with the teachers' knowledge to use teaching strategies as tools to teach learners comprehension skills, which the current researcher sought to study. Further, (NRP 2000) reports that training gives teachers the opportunity to learn about cognitive processes that occur in reading, how to instruct in comprehension strategies that are beneficial to readers, how to teach strategies through demonstration and other techniques, how to explain to them, how to allow the student learn and use them in the context of reading a text and how to use individual strategies in conjunction with several other reading comprehension strategies.

For instance, Scott (2009) conducted a study on knowledge for teaching reading comprehension mapping the terrain on secondary school teachers. He observed that

the university coursework did not target knowledge for teaching reading in ways that would be usable. The results revealed that teacher's lack of knowledge became apparent when supporting students who were struggling to learn to read because most of what was learned at the university was not always usable or translatable. In other words, very little was done at teacher training colleges to prepare teachers to teach using appropriate comprehension strategies.

Furthermore, Harris and Sass (2006) studied the impact of various types of education and training of teachers in relation to their productivity. The results indicated that teacher training generally had little influence on productivity. In this case, teacher training lacked correlation with productivity because teachers who underwent the same training performed differently. Probably teacher training needs other factors to bring about productivity such as provision of teaching resources.

Another study that was conducted by Harris and Sass (2008) reflected on the relationship between teacher productivity and teacher training. The focus was on pre-service training and in-service training. They found that pre-service teacher training has positive results but has little impact on the teachers' effectiveness. On the contrary, they found no positive effects of in-service professional development on the teachers' productivity. They documented that prior professional development training has positive effects due to increased exposure to content-focused training. Whereas in-service training that focuses on pedagogical training fails to foster teacher productivity. In this study, the researcher sought to find out how the combination of pre-service training and in-service training help teachers to sufficiently use teaching strategies knowledge in comprehension lessons.

(b)In-service training (Inset) course

In-service Training Course is a professional training that is done either at Teacher Development Centre (TDC) level or school level, depending on number of schools involved.

Telez and Waxman (2004) investigated the quality of training that teachers for English obtain during in-service training. They documented that in-service training is important because the teachers get the following: professional learning induction programmes to help new teachers, compensation to encourage gaining new skills and rectification requirements to support high quality professional learning. Besides, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) cited in Telez and Waxman (2004) assert that single in-service programmes are likely to change teaching practice despite the argument that teacher's knowledge is built on what one knows about human learning.

The implication is that no matter how much a teacher is trained or has knowledge of teaching strategies, in-service training is important and accounts for the teacher's improvement in lesson delivery. The findings of these researchers contradict Harris and Sass (2008) findings. The researcher of this current study sought to find out how in-service training help teachers to use strategies in comprehension lessons.

2.1.3.3 Teacher interaction with experienced teachers

In their study, Jensen, Sandoval-Hernandez, Knoll and Gonzalez (2012) found that newly trained teachers spend a smaller proportion of their time on actual teaching thanmore experienced colleagues. Further, these new teachers have high level of need for professional development to improve their classroom management skills compared to more experienced teachers. According to Jensen et al. (2012), new

teachers are those with two years or less of teaching experience. The paragraph below explains how less experienced teachers' interaction with more experienced teachers, in turn imparts comprehension skills in learners.

New teachers are important in that they have great impact on learners. The reason being that they provide high quality education to learners because they are still fresh from college and therefore effective in their lesson delivery (Jensen et al., 2012). However, they have lower levels of self-efficacy, classroom teaching time and class management that are equally important to achieve effective teaching. The new teachers struggle to provide effective instruction in the classroom according to Jensen et al., (2012). In other words, there is no direct relationship between teacher knowledge obtained through training and effective use of the teaching strategies. Rather, knowledge of teaching strategies obtained through interaction with experienced peers is practically oriented and therefore effectively applied in teaching learners. However, teacher training remains important to give teachers knowledge which is developed as the teacher gets experienced in the service.

This implies that teachers interaction with colleagues enable them to improve their knowledge in teaching strategies. This study sought to find out how less experienced teachers learn from more experienced teachers in the use of teaching strategies.

2.2 Strategies for teaching comprehension

This section presents the strategies that are research based for teaching comprehension. As such, it presents the definitions of comprehension strategies and the types of comprehension strategies.

2.2.1 Definitions of comprehension strategy

This section presents different perspectives to the definition of the term *"comprehension strategies"*. According to Pardo (2004), "Comprehension refers to a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text" (p.272). While Kabita (2015) states that comprehension strategy is a technique that involves how to construct meaning from text; based on the reader's purpose, task or text demands, and situational context. Further, Harris and Hodges (1995) defined a reading comprehension strategy as "a systematic sequence of steps for understanding text" (p. 39). The implications of these definitions tend to gain reasonable consensus though with some slight variations. For instance, these authors refer to comprehension strategies as, process, techniques, and systematic sequence of steps respectively. The ultimate objective is to construct meaning of the text to show the understanding of what is read. However, this study will use Kabita's definition that seeks to understand the teachers' use of comprehension strategies.

2.2.2 Types of comprehension strategies

This section focuses on different comprehension strategies that are research-based that the teachers of English use. These are single strategies and multiple strategies that are research-based (NRP, 2000). The multiple strategies cited in this study are: reciprocal teaching (RT) and transactional strategy instruction (TSI).

2.2.2.1 Single strategies

Single strategies are specific cognitive (mental abilities) processes that guide readers to understand what is read and are taught in isolation. Murnane, Sawhill and Snow (2012) argue that single strategy tend to be limited to the particular activity and generally has little impact on reading comprehension. The examples of single strategies are: monitoring comprehension (clarification), meta-cognitive, graphic and semantic organisers, generation of questions, question answering, story structure, cooperative learning and summarising. In this case, the researcher defines the strategy, describes how it works and explains why it helps learners to gain comprehension skills.

(a) Monitoring comprehension strategy

Monitoring strategies are strategies that enable a reader to self-monitor whether he or she understands what is read and comes up with strategies to solve the problem encountered during reading. This strategy was first studied by Markman (1978) cited in NRP (2000). It is used for teaching learners the following: to be aware of what they read, to identify what they do not understand, to use appropriate strategies to understand the material, and to resolve problems in comprehension. It enables the reader to identify the main ideas, restate what was read and look back or forward in the text for specific information. This strategy enhances the understanding through the emerging concepts and meaning of the text (NRP, 2000; Adler, 2013; Harvey &Goudvis 2007; Valencia, Pearson &Wixson, 2011; Medina 2012; Anon 2011). The strategy actively engages a learner and supports learner-centred approach. This study aimed to investigate the monitoring strategies that teachers use to achieve the set goal(s).

(b) Meta-cognitive strategy

Meta-cognitive strategy is a technique that teachers use to aid learners' comprehension. McKee (2012) defined meta-cognitive strategy as knowledge of cognition (mental abilities) and regulation of cognition. Cognitive strategies as mental processes assist learners in understanding what is being read to achieve the set goals. Further, research findings revealed that cognitive strategies involve determining important information, through direct explanation and scaffolding (Serafini, 2012). According to Jerome Bruner, scaffolding is "a process of setting the situation to make the child's entry into easy learning, successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he or she becomes skilled enough to manage it" (Bruner 1983, p. 60 cited in Bradley and Bradley, 2004). Similarly, meta-cognitive strategy instruction focuses on provision of teacher's explicit instruction and feedback about how and when to use strategies and give learners opportunity to apply it independently (Davis, 2011; Medina, 2012). However, the strategy assumes that learners' mental capability is the same, which is not the case. It is within the scope of this study to establish how the teacher assists the learners with different capabilities to use this strategy. It is not surprising therefore; that Soleimani and Hajghani (2013) argue that strategy instruction does not significantly enhance students' reading ability but increases students' meta-cognitive awareness. Hence, Davis (2011) described cognitive, meta-cognitive and graphic organisers as strategies that skilled readers use to understand a text.

(c) Graphic and semantic organisers strategy

This refers to learners' visual knowledge representations of main ideas depending on their relations to one another. It involves arrangement of information and

understanding of complex ideas by means of spatial positions that connects lines and intersecting figures (Chang, Sung & Chen, 2002; Hamra & Syatriana, 2010; Goss, 2014). Graphic organisers constitute maps, graphs, charts, frames, picture books, graphics and semantic maps or webs. The semantic maps or webs mainly help learners to activate and organise prior knowledge around the topic under discussion. This strategy illustrates concepts and relationships between concepts in a text or used diagrams and help readers to focus on the read concepts (Adler, 2013). It is a means to understand information, apply ideas to new situation and analyse connection and direction (Martin, 2006 & Krus, 2010).

However, the strategy ignores the fact that language learning is associated with culture according to Vygotsky's (1978) Social cultural Theory which states that information is socially constructed then processed internally. The use of graphic and semantic organisers therefore, enables learners to generate representations of the material to assist comprehension. Scott, (2009) asserts that these graphic organisers help learners with reading difficulties and English language learners (ELLs). Further, the perceptions of graphics and semantics tend to vary amongst cultures. For example, fishbone map sometimes called a herringbone map is an example of a graphic organiser that learners use to explore cause and effects of a complex topic to organise their thoughts in a simple and visual way (Hamra & Syatriana, 2010; Krus, 2010; Bose, 2012; Nasir, 2014). As such, if the learner understands differently because of differences in the writer's culture, the created meaning might be misleading. It is therefore, the objective of this study to establish the teachers' use of graphics in the classrooms to enhance learning.

(d) Generation of questions strategy

In this strategy, the learners ask themselves questions about various aspects of the text. The literature says that learners acquire the skill on how to focus and ask main idea questions related to the important information in a text. The teachers use questions to teach learners to use signal words; generic question stems; and story grammar model, to develop questions and answers (Stahl, 2004). For example, the story grammar elements use graphic organisers to document learners' comprehension of text like: setting (when and where the story takes place), characters (who is in the story), plot (what happens in the story and why), problem (conflict, issue, disagreement) and solution (how the problem is solved) (Trehearne & Doctorow, 2004; Scott, 2009). Besides, knowledge of text structure may promote long-term organisation, retention or retrieval representation showing a text's progression (Butler, Urrutia, Buenger & Flunt, 2010). It is out of motivation that learners ask the right questions, share new ideas and gather others' perspectives (Parr & Woloshyn, 2013). Nonetheless, the strategy assumes that all learners have adequate repertoire in word knowledge to use when asking questions, which is not always the case. It was therefore, in the interest of this research to investigate how teachers of English use this strategy amongst learners with varying word knowledge.

(e)Question answering strategy

Question answering is a strategy in which a teacher or learners answer the questions that they ask themselves in pre-reading, during reading and after reading the passage. This is done to activate background knowledge and understand what they read (Adler, 2013). Besides, question answering strategy enables learners to respond to questions posed by the teacher and both receive immediate feedback (NRP, 2000). The

questions help learners to monitor or activate prior knowledge, understand what readers are reading, to clarify, resolve problems and respond to comprehension questions concerning the whole passage orally or in writing. The strategy fails to consider the contradiction that exists between answering of an examination question and answering a question to learn the use of the language. This study sought to find out how teachers use this strategy in the classroom, to assist learners strike the balance in the above contradiction as they learn comprehension skills.

(f) Story structure strategy

In an investigation that was conducted by NRP (2000), story structure refers to the content of stories systematically organised in episodes. The reader identifies the categories of content (characters, events, problem and resolution) and their comprehension improves (Adler 2013). The use of story structure strategy enables learners to use the structure of the story as a means of helping them recall story content to answer questions about what they have read. For example, the teacher may use a story map. A "story map" is a time line showing the sequence of events in a text or a semantic map showing the meaning of relationships between events or concepts in the text, regardless of their order" (Harris &Hodges, 1995, pp. 243-244). In this case, Scott (2009) asserts that mapping instruction is an essential and understanding way to systematically improve the preparation of teachers in order to enhance reading outcomes. It is however, a handicap to singularly consider only mapping without considering the contexts of both the writer and the learner. It is the aim of this investigation to find out how this strategy is used by the teacher to help learners address the challenge arising from contextual differences.

(g) Cooperative learning strategy

The cooperative learning strategy refers to classroom organisation that ensures that learners learn together to negotiate meaning or construct new information to achieve the required goal(s) (Kagan, 1995; Rahavard, 2010;Nassar, 2012; Durukan, 2011). Odwan (2012) concurs with the above definition but describes sizes of small groups of either four or five learners and further elaborates different levels of ability corresponding to the variety of learning activities. Cooperative learning enables learners to learn reading strategies reciprocally. That is, each member is responsible for learning and helping peers to learn, and creating an atmosphere of achievement. There are both advantages and disadvantages of this cooperative learning strategy. The issue is that the capable learners with higher abilities much as they gain mastery of task, do not obtain the required levels of progression in their learning. While learners with low abilities benefit more as they learn from peers and they experience progression in their learning. For instance, when the modeller is the learner, he or she is tasked to provide instruction to fellow learners (Harvey & Goudvais, 2007; Odwan, 2012). However, the researcher concurs with Odwan (2012) who asserts that cooperative learning techniques promote student learning and academic achievement; increase student retention; and help students to develop skills in oral communication. This study sought to understand how teachers use cooperative strategies in the classroom.

(h) Summarising strategy

The last single comprehension strategy is summarising. Harris and Hodges (1995) defined summarisation as a "brief statement that contains the essential ideas of a longer passage or selection" (p. 247). Summarisation is an important technique as the teachers focus and reflect on the content and pedagogy of their instruction (NRP,

2000). In this strategy, learners are taught how to integrate ideas and generalise from the text information. Adler (2013) posits that the process of summarising involves identifying or generating main ideas, connecting the main or central ideas, ignoring irrelevant details and remembering important information they read. Similarly, (Khoshsima & Tiyar,2014; Oczkus, 2013) observed that summarising strategy, sufficiently improves students' reading comprehension ability. It is however; doubtful that summarisation strategy generalised as it is above, improves the comprehension. There are other factors that make this strategy deficient. For instance, NRP (2000) documents that most readers fail to summarise and it is time consuming. This raises a question relevant to this study on how teachers use the summarisation strategy.

Further, other researchers doubt the effectiveness of the use of single strategies. It takes a variety of classroom strategies to be an effective teacher of reading (Blair, Rupley & Nichols, 2007). This implies that, a teacher needs to use multiple strategies to teach comprehension lessons (Pardo, 2004). This study sought to appreciate how the teachers use the eight single strategies and two multiple strategies.

2.2.2.2 *Multiple strategies*

This is the use of more than a single strategy in one lesson. The knowledge of the use of multiple strategies is important to the teacher. According to literature, most frequently used are Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI) (Brown, Pressly, Van Meter & Schuder, 1996; Gaskins, Anderson, Pressley, Cunicell & Satlow, 1993) and Reciprocal Teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984; Palinscar & Brown, 1986; Oczkus, 2013). TSI model and Reciprocal Teaching (RT) are similar to Vygotsky, (1978).

Their similarity is that each multiple strategy (TSI and RT) respectively, require use of mental abilities and social interaction in order for learning to take place.

(a) Reciprocal teaching

Palinscar and Brown (1984) coined this strategy. Adler (2013) defined reciprocal teaching as an instructional activity in which students become the teacher in small group reading sessions. Besides, Carter (1997) defines it as an interactive process of reading where the activated learners' background knowledge interacts with the context. These definitions subscribe to social cultural theory (SCT) of Vygotsky (1978) which posits that learning involves interaction with competent teachers or peers. The underlining factor is that there is shared learning amongst individuals involved.

Reciprocal teaching involves: questioning, clarifying, predicting and summarising strategies. The teacher or the learner uses two or more combinations of its strategies. However, Oczkus (2013) adds an additional dimension in that whilst more than one strategy is used, it must be in a natural context and that leads to acquisition and use of reading strategies in future. The researcher agrees that natural context plays a critical role to the success of this strategy. Additionally, (Oczkus, 2013;Trehearne et al.,2004) point out the importance of reciprocal teaching as a hands-on work that needs scaffold discussion technique, in particular, older struggling readers who support young readers, as they develop the skill and confidence. This implies that both teachers and learners who use this strategy may improve in their reading and teaching skills. The researcher sought to establish how the teachers and learners mutually benefit from the use of reciprocal teaching strategy to achieve their goals.

(b) Transactional strategy instruction (TSI)

Gill (2008) states that in these strategies learners learn to coordinate the use of complex repertoire strategies. TSI combines eight reading comprehension strategies namely: activating prior knowledge, text texture, predicting, questioning, goal setting, imagery, monitoring and summarising. This involves teaching learners to construct meaning as they read and emulate good readers (Gleeson & College, 2013; Adler, 2013). The implication to the researcher is that the good readers have amiable characteristics that they model the poor readers. Otherwise the teacher's use of this strategy fails to achieve its intended purpose. The teachers use the strategies to introduce, model, scaffold and explicitly teach learners through prediction, clarification, question generation, story structure, and visualisation.

However, Snow (2002) argues that there is no evidence that learners use these strategies in the classroom and outside the school or that the strategies are transferred to new situations. Snow was not right because that was just a statement that was not research-based. For this reason, this study aimed to establish how teachers teach learners comprehension skills by using both single and multiple comprehension strategies.

2.3 How teachers implement the teaching strategies

This section presents how teachers implement teaching strategies to enhance comprehension skills in the learners. It is said that, since the 1980s, there has been broad consensus that strategy-oriented instruction is a powerful approach to fostering reading comprehension (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991; Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991; Pressley, Johnson, Symons, Golddrick, & Kurita, 1989). Zygouris-Coe

(2009) asserts that monitoring comprehension strategy that is effective involves reading for a purpose, asking questions, reading and looking back at a chart or other important information of the text, predicting, solving word problems or synthesizing what has been read to check understanding of content.

Further, Scott (2009) asserted that questioning is the most important strategy in order to understand a text. Beck, McKeown, Sandora and Worthy (1996) developed Questioning the Author (QtA) comprehension technique. These questions are asked before, during and after reading of a text. In this regard, the teacher moves through six steps in QtA strategy. According to Simarmata and Hum (2012), these are: select a reading text; identify stopping points where students may need to obtain a deeper understanding; create questions to encourage higher-order thinking; present the passage to learners using one to two questions; use "think-aloud" to model to students on how to think through the questions; ask students to read the passage and work through the questions. In QtA, the learners learn to ask questions as they read a text to think more totally about what they are reading. They question where the author had said or not said, or implied and why (Trehearne & Doctorow, 2004).

Asking questions before, during and after reading are important because learners' world knowledge would increase, enhance their discussion contributions, writing main ideas and overall academic success (Parr & Woloshyn, 2013). Besides, this technique involves few questions from the teachers so that learners concentrate and develop the skill of asking questions about what they are reading.

Further, some of the questions according to Luke, O'Brien and Comber, 2001 p. 116 cited in Trehearne et al. (2004) are: What is the topic? How is it presented? What themes are being expressed? Why are they presented in this way? How might you change a character(s) and why? What is the purpose of the text? What is it trying to make you think or feel? What was not said about the topic? Why did it leave out? What would you add or delete if you were writing this topic? Who is writing to whom? Whose positions are not heard? However, (Scott 2009; NRP 2000) documented that few teachers were trained in teaching of cognitive strategy instruction.

Additionally, during implementation of teaching strategies in comprehension lessons explicit teaching of the strategies is very important because learners develop comprehension skill to understand what is being read according to Adler (2013). According to Scott (2009), explicit instruction refers to the type of teaching that involves the exact demonstration of the activity when guiding learners to new or unfamiliar cognitive processes according to the goal(s) to be achieved; using authentic materials in context. In this view, Parr and Woloshyn (2013) carried out a qualitative case study with 1,400 first year students at University. The readings ranged from 1,900 to 5,300 words – average length of 3,322 words, which were used to provide authentic context for strategy instruction. Throughout the cognitive skills of monitoring skills for monitoring meaning, analysing text, features/structures, questioning, paraphrasing, inferring, summarising and synthesising were presented as collective process. Instruction involved instructor modelling to the learners and were often reminded that asking questions before, during and after reading could help them comprehend text deeply and develop comprehension skills. The researchers and the

learners discussed and provided examples of questioning that they used during reading. The learners searched across texts, making inferences and discussing, seeking additional information/research.

Alaraj, (2015) investigated if Metacognitive Think-Aloud reading strategy is effective on reading comprehension of male 9th grade students in Saudi Arabia. The teachers engaged learners in the use of Think-Aloud strategy, by teaching learners to pause and describe what they are thinking when they were reading aloud, to monitor their thinking as they were reading to comprehend a text (Alaraj, 2015). The researcher established that it was effective because learners under the experiment were able to comprehend a text better than the control group.

The researchers found that question generation encouraged learners to formulate and share new ideas and gather other perspectives. Besides, it encouraged to integrate the use of questions with prior strategies introduced in the course. This implies that the learners used the strategies learned from the researchers and developed comprehension skills. In this case, Parr and Woloshyn (2013) asserted that modelling is the main concept in explicit instruction. If the teacher uses Reciprocal Teaching strategy, the learner becomes a predictor, clarifier, questioner and summariser (Oczkus, 2013). However, the study was conducted at college and taught by the researchers. This study sought to find out how teachers explicitly use the teaching strategies in secondary schools to teach learners comprehension skills, which is a different context.

Furthermore, according to literature, there are several activities a teacher can explicitly use to teach learners comprehension skills in pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading stages. Some of them are: story grammar, using prior knowledge (predicting, skimming, scanning, illustration, title) anticipating guide, probable passage, coding text, concept mapping, Direct Reading Thinking Activity (DR-TA), corners, jigsaw, round table/round robin, SCAMPER, SMART, Think/Pair/Share, re-reading, scales, Very Important Points (VIPs), and Somebody-Wanted-But-So (SWBS), fishbone, summarising, making connection, responding, Who Wants But So (Then) Bloom's taxonomy, SCROL and questioning (NRP, 2000;Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl, 1956 cited in Mtunda and Safuli, 1988; Ogle, 1986;Parr&Woloshyn, 2013; Stauffer, 1969; Beers, 2003; Odwan, 2012). However, Sykes (1999) argues that research-based practices have an effect only to the extent that teachers implement those practices.

On the other hand, Beers (2003) found that the teacher's use of think-aloud strategy is effective and helps the teachers to know why and how a learner is encountering problems in understanding what is being read. In fact, Beers (2003, p 119) suggested guidelines for thinking aloud strategy and for details refer to appendix 3.In this regard, best practices are delivered by a professional teacher (Chisamba, 2014). Additionally, research results indicate that educators learn to teach strategies explicitly and effectively over a period of time and not instantly (Keene and Zimmermann, 2007).

Fredricka, Neil, William and Reiko (2013) studied the English as Foreign Language instructional enhancement to improve students' reading abilities. They found that

during lesson delivery a lesson plan is important because it provides the teacher with a tool to keep on track and maintain consistency across sections of the teaching approach. They also observed that teachers' knowledge in the teaching strategies enable them to modify them to suit the learners' abilities and promote their comprehension skill development. According to Fredricka et al. (2013), all the teachers used Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA). They said DR-TA could enable the teachers to ask how, when and why questions about the chosen reading strategy. Besides, according to Fredricka et al. preview and formed questions about the text, answering of questions while reading, help the reader to identify difficulties encountered in the text, take steps like rereading to correct faulty comprehension, judge how well the purpose for reading is met, take notes, underline, highlight main ideas and summarise using notes. These researchers observed that all the teachers asked learners to write a-one-sentence summary for each paragraph while reading or write a phrase in the margin that captures the main idea of each paragraph. All the teachers asked learners questions at the end of the reading activity which they termed it as 'testing comprehension'. However, Delcourt and McKinnon (2010) argued that even though research standards promote the use of skill in questioning, most pre-service teachers colleges do not include training in the development of these skills. The researcher contends to Delcourt and McKinnon's argument in that the teachers cannot be trained in everything; some of the skills can be developed as they gain their experiences through practice.

Durkin (1978, 1979) examined whether elementary schools provide comprehension instruction or not through classroom instruction in grades three through six in America. Durkin found no comprehension instruction as one of the major findings.

Further, research findings indicated that teachers asked learners questions after they had read the text. This concurs with Fredricka et al. (2013) findings. Besides, research findings indicated that most teachers concentrate on asking questions instead of teaching how to comprehend the texts. The questioning was not for the learners to improve their comprehension skills before, during and after reading. However, according to Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Hampston, and Echevarria (1998), research results revealed that despite availability of research based questions the learners' comprehension was poor and teachers preferred post-reading comprehension questions. On the other hand, several research findings indicated that asking learners questions before, during and after reading guide learners to work with challenging texts and internalise comprehension strategies. Most research findings in reading comprehension found that the L2 learners require explicit instruction (NRP, 2000; Scott, 2009). Making the instruction very explicit is the instructional strategy that was developed because of learners who are low achievers in understanding the text (Snow, 2002). Hence, this study sought to find out how the teachers use the teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills in secondary schools.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This section presents a theoretical framework for the study. The study used Social Cultural Theory (SCT) by Lev Vygotsky (1978). As such, the study focuses on the following: the theory in general, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) concept and how the ZPD was utilised.

2.4.1 The theory in general

Social Cultural Theory (SCT) is a theory that considers the important contributions that the society makes to individual development and stresses on the interaction that takes place between developing people and the culture in which they live (Vygotsky, 1978). The Social Cultural Theory emphasises on the notion that learning is a social process. According to SCT, human learning is successful in social interaction. That is, learning is based on the learner interacting with other knowledgeable elderly people or peers, a text, activity and the information read and later internalised at the individual level.

Consequently, reading is about understanding what is being read. According to SCT, learning reading is viewed as a social process since a learner constructs meaning in interaction. Additionally, SCT higher order functions development is in social interaction as learners participate in activities that require cognitive and communicative functions (Vygotsky, 1978). There is interdependence between individual cognitive development and social processes in learning (Scott & Palinscar, 2013). The theory therefore emphasises on the point that teachers and learners collaborate in learning and practising (Vygotsky, 1978). In reading, this is reflected in the following four key skills: summarising, questioning, clarifying and predicting. These are the same skills used in reciprocal teaching according to Palinscar and Brown (1984).

As such, the teaching of strategies involves the use of psychological tools (such as reading strategies). Vygotsky (1978) states that cognitive development is based on social interaction, that is guided by the competent elderly people or peers. A teacher

or more experienced peer is able to provide the learner with "scaffolding" to enable the learner understand the complex skills. According to Vygotsky, collaborative learning, discourse, modelling and scaffolding are the strategies that facilitate intentional learning and support a learner to access intellectual knowledge and skills. In this view 'tools for thinking' are made available by the competent teachers or experienced peers. As such, this study will apply SCT which is deemed relevant to this study because the researcher sought to understand the types of strategies and how teachers use them to teach learners comprehension skills.

2.4.2 Major concepts of SCT

This section presents the major concepts in SCT and how they will be utilised in the study. The major concepts to be discussed are the zone of proximal development (ZPD), psychological tools, interaction, scaffolding and mediation.

2.4.2.1 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

According to Vygotsky (1978), ZPD is a very important concept in Social cultural Theory. The ZPD refers to "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). This implies that a learner can negotiate meaning independently but at a certain point fails and needs assistance from the teacher or peers who are knowledgeable. It is at this point, according to ZPD, that effective learning takes place.

In her research, Kamlongera (2010) argues against Vygotsky who assumes that learning takes place in an ideal situation in that all of the knowledge and skills that a person fails to understand or perform on his or her own is possible when guided by a competent teacher or peers. The researcher however agrees with Vygotsky's idea that learning takes place when a learner is assisted by competent teachers or peers. However, other factors may hinder the learning. For example, the learning of L2 without proper teaching strategies may result in partial or no learning at all by English Language Learners (ELLs). However, the sociocultural perspective has profound implication for teaching and education.

According to Turuk (2008), SCT advocates learning that includes L2 acquisition as a semiotic (study of signs, symbols and their meaning and use) process, where learners' participation in socially mediated activities is very important. It implies that SCT regards instruction that takes place in ZPD as the one that is important to L2 development, in which learning is done in context. SCT has a holistic view about how learning takes place in a child. While ZPD helps in determining a child's mental functions that are not yet matured but are in the process of maturation after being given the necessary skills, ZPD learning awakens a variety of internal development processes when a child interacts with people in his or her environment and in cooperation with others (Turuk, 2008). ZPD provides psychological tool through which internal development can be understood and used by educators such as teachers. This helped the researcher to perceive how the teacher uses strategies to assist learners at a point where they face difficulties in comprehension lessons.

Vygotsky's (1978) theories stresses the important role of social interaction in the development of cognition (mental ability) and that learning takes place in ZPD. Vygotsky mainly believed that the community has a major role in the process of "making meaning" in interaction. The researcher therefore sought to use Vygotsky's notion unlike Piaget's notion which bases on the idea that children's development must precede their learning. Thus according to Piaget, a child has the capability to learn on its own. In this study, the learners are ELLs as such their cognitive development depends much on interaction in order to understand what they read in ZPD.

The implication is that Vygotsky places more emphasis on social interactions within the ZPD as children and competent partners construct meaning. In view of this cognitive development that results from internalisation of the language which stems from social interaction, Vygotsky (1978) believes that important learning by the child takes place through modelling or provision of explicit instruction for him or her to understand what is being read and internalises the skills. This study sought to find out how the teacher uses strategies to model in the process of teaching comprehension lessons.

Furthermore, ZPD provides the difference between what children can achieve unassisted or unmediated with what they manage in interaction, guidance and encouragement from a skilled person (Vygotsky, 1978). The implication is that what a child can achieve independently is what is known whereas a child needs guidance from a skilled person in what is not known. In this case, the progress in teaching needs to be from known to unknown. Vygotsky (1978) sees that the area where the learner does not know requires more sensitive instruction or guidance to enable the

learners develop the skills they will use on their own. This supports the assertion that reading is a social process (Chisamba, 2014). The researcher sought to observe the teacher's teaching of strategies from known to unknown.

In SCT, learners do not only learn the language but also learn how to value culture as they effectively apply the strategies to prompt learning and reading ability. In this case, it is holistic. Besides, language holds a social importance and requires more social constructivist approaches to learning as learners construct meaning based on interaction and dialogue within a classroom (Gilbert, 2010). This implies that the teacher might face challenges to support the learners if he or she is not well knowledgeable about the culture in which the text is written. This indicates that even though Vygotsky stresses on the important role that social interaction plays in cognitive development for a child to learn, there are some factors that might hinder learning if the teacher is not prepared or knowledgeable about the subject matter or teaching strategies. The researcher sought to find out how the teacher applies strategies to teach learners comprehension skills to understand texts that are written in different social and cultural contexts.

Further, ZPD approach involves the use of systematic scaffold support and the teacher gradually withdraws the assistance as the learners learn interactively, internalise the process and develop learner autonomy. Learner autonomy, according to Hedge (2000), refers to the ability of the learner to take responsibility for his/her own learning, to plan, organise and monitor the learning process without depending on the teacher. In this case, the researcher investigated how the teacher uses strategies to

ensure gradual release of responsibility to enable the learner develop autonomy in use of comprehension skills.

2.4.2.2 Psychological tools concept

In SCT, when mediating or assisting learners in the area where the learner fails to learn on his or her own, the teacher or competent learner uses tools. The tools that were utilised in ZPD were the teaching strategies in this context. Besides, human action on both social and individual places is mediated by tools and signs (Scott & Palinscar, 2013). The researcher sought to observe how the teacher uses the strategies (tools and signs) to teach the learners comprehension skills and construct meaning of what is read collaboratively. Besides, in SCT, Vygotsky views a social process by taking the context of children in and outside school. He is of the view that what a child encounters at school always has a cultural background knowledge (previous history) that he or she learned at home. With this idea of a child in mind, Vygotsky is interested in the use of signs and tools in mediating learning and the importance of speech, which supports social process. As such, Vygotsky looks at the language as a psychological tool for cognitive development (Chisamba, 2014). This theory equips the researcher to investigate the teacher's and learners' knowledge on strategies that are used to activate prior knowledge that supports learning.

2.4.2.3 Interaction concept

Besides, Vygotsky (1978) views interaction with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies and suggests that teachers should use cooperative learning. The less competent children should benefit from the skilful peers. The study sought to get its findings in context which was the classroom. Further, Vygotsky

(1978) proposed that the key to internalisation rests on human capacity to imitate the intentional activity of other people. Additionally, private speech in children's talk aloud later develops into talk that makes sense (Bruner, 1990). In Vgotsky's theory, the sense is that what a learner makes out of speech or print is through internal or personal (inter-mental) dialogue (Kamlongera, 2010). Furthermore, Chisamba (2014) asserts that spoken and printed words that a child has strongly influences the learners' proficiency in future. In this case, the child's speech and social interaction with the community are important tools to develop thoughts and language learning. Using this concept, the researcher observed how learners learned comprehension skills through speech as they interacted in groups.

2.4.2.4 Scaffolding concept

Scaffolding happens when a teacher or competent peers help a learner to structure or arrange a reading task so that the less competent learners can successfully read. Jerome Bruner coined scaffolding as "a process of setting the situation to make the child's entry into easy learning, successful and then gradually pulling back and handling the role to the child as he or she becomes skilled enough to manage it" (Bruner 1983, p. 60 cited in Bradley and Bradley 2004). This implies that the less competent learners are assisted to read and understand within the ZPD. While in scaffolding, where a learner fails to construct the new knowledge independently, he or she depends on socially mediated interaction with the knowledgeable teacher or peers. The signs and tools and scaffolding play central role to the "knowledgeable other" Chisamba (2014). Besides, this theory looks at reading and writing activities as social activities that reflect the child's culture and community (Kamlongera, 2010). This

scaffolding concept was used to investigate the teacher's use of teaching strategies to let learners internalise comprehension skills.

2.4.2.5 Mediation concept

Mediation is a concept in SCT that is rooted in the observation that humans do not act directly on the world but depend on peers or material activities to construct new knowledge (Vygotsky 1978). As such, literacy learning is grounded in a mediated social cultural environment that involves cultural and study material interactions. The teacher needs to have tools to scaffold dialogically with learners, (Pressley, 2006). Besides, Vygotsky (1978) posited that higher-order mental functions including voluntary memory, logic thought, learning and attention, are organised and amplified through participation in culturally organised activity. This concept helped the researcher to inquire and observe materials used in the pedagogical teaching and learning of comprehension lessons.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies, the strategies that teachers use in comprehension lessons and how teachers implement the strategies during comprehension lesson. The teachers were limited in knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies and unsuccessfully taught learners the skills (Kabita, 2015; Bruwer, 2013). In addition, most teachers were testing learners' comprehension instead of teaching comprehension skills (Chisamba, 2013).The chapter has also discussed the theoretical framework that guided the study. The next chapter presents research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview

This chapter describes and justifies the approach, design and methodology utilised in this study. The chapter presents the general study approach and design and the reason it is appropriate for the study. Secondly, the chapter focuses on how data was generated using appropriate tools. Sample selection, sample size and sampling procedures are discussed too. Finally, it presents a discussion on the methods of data analysis, ethical considerations, issues of credibility and trustworthiness, reliability, validity, generalisability, limitation, delimitations of the study and chapter summary.

3.1 Research approach

This section presents the research approach used in this study. In this regard, the researcher used the qualitative approach. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) and Creswell (2009), a qualitative research refers to studies that investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations, objects and materials in a given context.

In qualitative research, the natural setting is a direct source of data and the researcher is a key part of the instrumentation process (Creswell, 2000). Qualitative data is mainly generated in the form of words or pictures and seldom involve numbers. Dunn (1999) asserts that qualitative approaches are distinguished by their reliance on verbal reports, descriptions and interpretation of events.

Furthermore, qualitative research was used because it has expressive language, generation of thick descriptions, presentation of data in the form of words and images; and the researcher has close contact with the participants and is context sensitive (Sarantakos, 2005). In this respect, the researcher sought to observe the behaviours of the participants, and views of key informants through interviews that were done in

context, to understand the teacher's use of strategies to teach learners comprehension skills.

Additionally, the results depend on the participants, and the key informants' behaviours and views, and the researcher's interpretations of data that validates the accuracy of the findings. That is, one of the strengths of the design is that it enabled the researcher to access directly what happened in the schools that the participants live or operate in (Silverman, 2006). Besides, images are formed from evidence in order to make sense of the findings, summarise it and relate it back to the idea on [how teachers use teaching strategies] in comprehension lessons that initially motivated the collection of evidence (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). The weakness of the qualitative study is that it is subjective because individual participants have what they observe and believe in concerning the phenomenon, in the case of this study, use of teaching strategies. As a result, the researcher used several methods to address most of the weaknesses as will be shown in this chapter.

In this regard, qualitative research approach was chosen because it is consistent with the aim of this study. The research aimed at obtaining narrative descriptions to understand the strategies that teachers use and how they teach learners comprehension skills. Further, Silverman (2006) stresses one of the strengths of qualitative research as its ability to access directly what happens in the world. Therefore, it was the feeling of the researcher that the appropriate approach to this study must be the qualitative one because it needed explanations from the participants regarding teaching strategies that teachers use in the classroom. This view is supported by Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) who claim that qualitative researchers are especially interested in how things

occur and particularly in the perspectives of the subjects of a study. Further, Dunn (1999) stated that qualitative approaches disclose the richness of human experience. Consequently, since the researcher intended to explore the experiences of the participants in their natural setting, she used qualitative approach in her investigation.

3.2 Research Design

This section describes the design of this research. She chose case study design. A case study is a strategy in which the researcher explores in depth a programme, an event, activity, and process on one or more individuals (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, the researcher used various sources of generating data concerning one phenomenon. In this case, the intention was to obtain deep understanding of the teacher's use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills rather than getting partial description. Creswell (2009) asserts that a case study brings personal values into the study. He further points out that the researcher generates detailed information using a variety of data generation methods and the aim is to understand the case or cases in their context. As such, the researcher sought to observe and orally interview the participants to get first-hand information that informed her on how the teachers use teaching strategies. According to Robson (2002), case studies may involve looking at a case or phenomenon in its real-life context, usually employing many types of data. Miles and Huberman (1994) confirm that a case may be an individual, a role, a small group, an organisation, a community, a school or a nation. It may also be a decision, a policy, a process, an incident or event of some kind.

In the current investigation, the aim was to obtain narrative descriptions to understand what strategies teachers use to teach learners comprehension skills. Further,

qualitative research employs 'standard' designs and 'methods' as well as projective procedures in which a researcher meets his or her methodological standards (Sarantakos, 2005). It is however not possible to study everything even with a singular case, but specific focus is still required (Sarantakos, 2005). For this reason, the specific research questions assisted to define the focus. In this study, there were three specific questions: First, what is the teachers' knowledge of appropriate strategies for teaching comprehension skills? Second, what strategies do teachers use during comprehension lessons? Lastly, how do teachers implement the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension?

A case study design was chosen for this study because it meets the principal aim of this investigation which is to conduct an in depth analysis. The study took a cross-sectional design which Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) describe as a design where data is generated within a short period of time and across different categories of people. So the researcher sought to generate detailed data by using several data generation procedures in a given period of time. This study was further concerned with documentation and analysis of a single instance according to Nanun, (1992). The study was supported by several data generation methods to strengthen the reliability of the results. It focused on exploring the strategies which teachers use to teach learners comprehension skills.

3.3 Sampling and Population

This section presents sampling and the population in terms of the sample types, size and participants that were involved.

Trochim (2006) describes sampling as the process of selecting units (for example, people, organisations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalise the results back to the population from which they were chosen. Purposive sampling was used to come up with the schools, the head teachers, the teachers, the Chief Examiner and the learners who participated in this study. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), purposive sampling refers to techniques that researchers use to handpick the cases for inclusion into the sample, based on their judgement pertaining to their typicality or possession of the particular traits they look for. In addition, according to Creswell (2009), the idea behind qualitative research is to purposively select participants or sites (or documents, or visual material) for the researcher to understand the problem and the main research question.

In this investigation, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to get samples that were knowledgeable and informative about the teachers' use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skill she was investigating. Further, Creswell (2009) asserts that, purposive sampling is suitable when the study targets a particular group. In the current study, the researcher targeted teachers of English who teach comprehension in form three. Hence, Ball (1990) supports this view when he asserts that in many cases purposive sampling is used in order to access people who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, expertise or experience. This study involved four form three teachers of English, four head teachers, one Chief Examiner, and twenty-four learners. The sample size was small. According to Ragin and Amoroso (2011), the sample size was small because it was a qualitative study but enough for the researcher to interpret the

findings. The researcher sought to collect first-hand information from the practitioners of teaching strategies on how they used them in comprehension lessons. It also included other participants who were directly connected to teachers in the selected public secondary schools.

3.3.1 Study area

This section describes the choice of the area where the study was conducted and its nearness to the researcher's residential base and other reasons.

This case study was conducted in four selected public secondary schools in the Central West Education Division (CEWD), in Lilongwe urban. Since it is an educational research, school was the appropriate setting. The selection of the schools involved purposive sampling because they were within reach (1-10 km)of the researcher. Secondary schools in this area are categorised as national and private secondary schools. National secondary schools are further classified into National Secondary Schools (NSS), Day Secondary Schools (DSS) and Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). This study was done in the urban area because the researcher felt that the probability of finding competent teachers of English was higher than in the rural areas.

3.3.2 Selection of schools

Four urban schools were selected purposively. These constituted two Day Secondary Schools (DSS) and two Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). The justification for this sampling is that it was observed that learners from the two types of schools face similar problems in comprehension lessons in that both types of

48

schools get lower grades compared to National Secondary Schools, yet they use the same syllabus. The evidence is provided in the MANEB chief examiners' reports for Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) compiled results for English paper III (2010 & 2015) that contain comprehension passages. Regarding such reports and the researcher's observation since she is a teacher of English too, she aimed to investigate the teacher's use of teaching strategies in comprehension lessons in these secondary schools. The researcher got the information about the four schools from the CEWD office.

3.3.3 Selection of participants

The following section presents the description of the participants in the study and the reasons for their selection.

In this study, the sample comprised thirty- three participants. There were four teachers (one from each school which comprised one male teacher and three female teachers. In this respect the researcher purposively selected the schools and the teachers in those schools were supposed to be qualified teachers of English and gender was not considered) , twenty-four learners (six from each school – three females and three males),four head teachers (one from each school) and one Chief Examiner for MANEB English Paper III - that contains a section on comprehension)This sample size of thirty-three was considered sufficient to avoid too much data that can be a liability and present challenges during analysis and interpretation that may bring about confusion (Nthala, 2010). Small sample sizes are preferred in qualitative studies. The reason is that qualitative data is not easily and quickly summarised and analysed (Dunn, 1999).

The head teachers of the schools and the chief examiner participated through in-depth interviews that were conducted by the researcher who personally administered a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix 4).The head teachers were important participants in this because they monitor and supervise the teachers during the lesson delivery. Further, the chief examiner was also included as a participant because she compiled the chief examiner's reports that highlighted lack of comprehension skills in the learners (CERs, 2009-2014).

In this study, teachers and learners were chosen because they were the ones who were directly involved in the teaching and learning process. The teachers applied the teaching strategies for comprehension while learners developed comprehension skills to understand what they read. The teachers of English were targeted because they see challenges that learners encounter in comprehension lessons. Therefore, it was believed that the teachers were better placed to inform regarding types of teaching strategies and how they implement them to teach learners comprehension skills.

Further, participants and the key informants were expected to give the required answers to the research questions because they are the practitioners. Besides, form three learners, who were at M.S.C.E. level, have the potential to provide the required data. The learners would be disturbed in their learning somehow because of the presence of the researcher. However, they were not involved in the MSCE examinations of this particular year; as such the findings would help them to use comprehension skills to understand what they read and improve their performance.

In this case, the three boys and three girls from each school were randomly selected from form three classes to avoid biasness. These were expected to participate in one on one oral interviews and focus group discussions in order to obtain in-depth data. Additionally, the sample involved twenty-four learners and the six learners per group which suffices the minimum number required for focus group discussions (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). Further, four form three qualified teachers of English with three or more years of experience were purposively selected.

Table 1: Selection of schools and participants engaged in the study (with codes)

SCHOOL	A	B	C	D
Teachers	T1	T2	T3	T4
Learners	L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6,	L7, L8, L9, L10, L11, L12,	L13, L14, L15, L16, L17, L18,	L19, L20, L21, L22, L23, L24,
Head Teacher	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4
MANEB Chief Examiner	-	-	-	-

Source: Researcher's generated data (2014)

Additionally, the key informants were expected to contribute to the collection of in-depth data through their responses to the questionnaire. These were: four head teachers, and one Chief Examiner. The data generated was adequate to understand the teaching strategies that teachers use to teach learners comprehension skills in order to transcribe the data and write the report. Table 2 shows the qualifications and experiences of the teachers from the selected schools.

Table 2: Qualifications and experience of teachers of English in the selected schools

Teacher	Qualification	Experience
T1	Degree	15 years
T2	Diploma	3 years
T3	Diploma	3 years
T4	Degree	4 years

Source: Researcher's generated data (2014)

Furthermore, the researcher was mindful that purposive sampling procedure might be criticised for biasness and failure for generalisation to the entire population because it covers the small area (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). However, the researcher feels that it is not completely biased because it is done in context with qualified and experienced key informants, teachers of English and learners. In addition, the generalisation of the results applies to the participating schools only.

3.4 Data generation techniques

This section presents the key instruments that were used in data generation, how data was generated and justification of the methods used in generating the relevant data.

Data generation remains a very important activity in qualitative investigation and there were a number of methods that were used. In view of this fact, Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) assert that qualitative researchers use a variety of methods and instruments to generate data as a measure for checking biases and ensuring that there is no misinformation. As such, this study used several methods to generate data. These methods involved writing down field notes during observations, interviews and focus group discussions that were voice-recorded. The other information was generated through unstructured or semi structured questionnaires and observation of teachers' and learners' classroom practices and documents.

The primary data was generated in context, within the natural setting, where the teaching strategies that teachers use to teach learners comprehension skills were used. That is, the data was generated during the teaching of English that integrates comprehension lessons in classroom. Primary sources [or data] were the things that the researcher was investigating or directly drawn from the context according to Hofstee (2006). In addition, primary data refer to not analysed or unprocessed information. That is why primary data is always considered to be stronger than secondary data. Secondary sources are what someone else had already investigated, interpreted and analysed.

The researcher generated primary data in the classroom setting because it is the natural setting for formal education. Additionally, the organisation of the primary data

was an ongoing process right from the beginning of the data generation up to the interpretation of the results.

The researcher spent a considerable period of time at each of the four schools in order to get familiar with the research participants. She engaged seven activities in each school (three observations, one FGD, 3 interviews (each ranged from 20 to 30 minutes) with head teacher, teacher and learners respectively) plus one oral interview with the Chief Examiner. All this involvement aimed at getting detailed and sound data. Nkhoma (2012) argues about some educational researchers who generally make brief observations such as once for a few hours, and then making sweeping generalisations about teachers, schools and learners. In this investigation, the researcher was engaged very actively for nearly four (4) weeks, thus from November 6th to December 10th, 2014 as summarised in table 3.

Table 3: Class observations, in depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted with the selected schools and participants

Secondary School	Class observations			In depth interviews with participants			Focus Group
	1st	2nd	3rd	Head teacher	Teachers	Learners	Learners
A	06 Nov	19 Nov	20 Nov	20 Nov	19 Nov	07 Nov	07 Nov
B	07 Nov	13 Nov	19 Nov	17 Nov	17 Nov	17 Nov	19 Nov
C	11 Nov	12 Nov	20 Nov	21 Nov	18 Nov	18 Nov	20 Nov
D	14 Nov	24 Nov	25 Nov	10 Dec	14 Nov	14 Nov	24 Nov

Source: Researcher's generated data (2014)

In this case, the researcher employed the following instruments/methods: observations, in-depth face-to-face oral inter-views, focus group discussions, documents analysis, voice recording, field notes and other visual materials.

3.4.1 Observations

The researcher used classroom observation to generate data. White (2000p.34) refers to observation as: "an accurate record of what people do and say in real life situation." Actual behaviour of an element can be noted through observation. Besides, Tilstone (1998) defined observation as the systematic and accurate generation of usually visual evidence that lead to informed judgements and necessary changes to accepted practices. They stress the significance of observation as a useful instrument for generating data: since some behaviour involves habitual routines for which people are unaware. As for the use of observation in classroom, Jones (2007) asserts that classroom observation provides data on improvement of the quality of learners'

education by improving the teachers' effectiveness - when looking at what actually happens in the classroom.

Observation was used in this study in order to learn what strategies teachers used to deliver lessons when teaching comprehension and what skills learners developed. Observations were quite instrumental in answering all the three specific research questions. It was assumed that during the teaching thus pre-reading, during and post reading stages the researcher observed teachers' knowledge, strategies used and how the strategies were implemented.

Observation is one of the main techniques for generating data in qualitative research (Chisamba, 2014; Creswell, 2009; Keith, Punch & Oancea, 2014). In this study, a checklist was used as recommended by Zhang, (2005). Checklist constituted what was observed and how it was done though data generation was not more systematic (Cohen et al., 2007). In this investigation therefore, a checklist was designed for focusing on the details of the specific research questions. In this case, the researcher was a complete observer. The purpose of observation was to examine whether or not both teachers and learners value the teaching strategy in comprehension to understand a text. The researcher was mindful that her presence inside the classroom environment might affect the behaviours and answers to the research questions of the participants being observed. That might result in generation of biased and unnatural data. To address this, the researcher had all the designated observation sessions before conducting interviews and focused on group discussions. In addition, the researcher did not disclose exactly what she wanted to observe but let the teachers know that she was interested in teaching of comprehension lessons.

Therefore, the use of multiple methods of generating data on the teachers' use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills helped the researcher to generate natural data. The observation was essential to this study because it provided description of the situation and helped to gather supplementary data. Such data was used to interpret other sources of data to gain insights of the teachers' use of strategies to teach learners comprehension skills.

In this case, the researcher directly observed the targeted participants' behaviour, which could not be easily expressed during interview. To achieve this, the researcher was guided by the checklist to mark outcomes of teachers' use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills. Besides, the researcher was not restricted to observing comprehension lessons only because of the integration system but the report focused on the answering of specific research questions of the study.

Further, data generation involved three observations during teaching class sessions in each school, which constituted primary data. All learners' pieces of comprehension work were observed so that ethically no learner was ignored. However, samples of learners' work were picked from the selected six participants from each school. As such, those observations were used to explore insightful teaching strategies that teachers used when teaching comprehension lessons. Field notes on behaviours such as facial expressions, gestures and other important observations were noted and written down by the researcher. After all the observation sessions, the researcher interviewed the individuals to understand some of the behaviours observed and unobserved.

3.4.2 In-depth oral interview (IDI)

According to Cohen et al. (2007), an interview refers to a two-way conversation in which the researcher asks the participant research questions to generate data and learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant. This entails that it is a verbal communication between the researcher and the research participant(s). Seidman (2006) posits that the purpose of interviewing is a root of the depth of interview to understand the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make out of that experience. Further, Creswell (2000) insists that interviews offer the researcher opportunities to probe issues of interest deeper and investigate beliefs and practices.

In this research, in-depth interview involved all the participants and the key informants. The researcher self-administered a semi-structured interview guide to understand the comprehension teaching strategies that teachers use. Thus, the researcher interviewed the teachers once each after observing them teaching English lessons and comprehension sections in particular, in the classroom to learn the intentions behind the observed behavioural patterns. This act is consistent with Punch's (2009) claim, who maintains that it is good to combine observational and interview data generation techniques. To accomplish this, the researcher used an approved predetermined investigative in-depth semi-structured interview guide, to question the selected participants in order to generate descriptive data that has meaning. As guided by Sekaran (2003), questions were asked and responded to by each participant in person. This was to probe deeper and let the interviewee to explain further, which provided more and rich data. Consequently, Silverman (2006) too justifies the use of interviews in qualitative research. The interviews were very

important because not everything could be directly observed. Besides, the interviews and focus group discussions were voice-recorded.

Voice-recorded materials were important primary data because the researcher captured the exact words that the participants and key informants expressed. Audio-recording interviews saved time and avoided missing out some of the important information. Further, this was utilised during transcription and report writing. It fostered the reliability of the study. That is, the participant or key informant shared the reality of the teachers' use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills and improve their performance. The semi-structured questionnaires with different but similar questions were used in both face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher was also able to capture the voice and tone change, though it did not capture the participant's body language during the interview. Therefore, that problem was dealt with by writing down the behaviours such as facial expressions and gestures. Besides, it was overcome by coming up with transcription, coding, and having categories or themes the same day that the interview was done before small but important details were forgotten. This is known as thematic procedure according to Creswell (2009).

To enable effective interviews, the researcher cultivated a conducive atmosphere. She allowed establishment of free and secure environment so that each participant could talk freely. This was achieved by prior discussion on other interesting subjects, informed consent, guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity and that respondents could not be harmed in any way. Further, they were assured that the research results would be shared with them. The interviews ranged from 20 to 30 minutes with each

participant. Thus, the IDIs were brief and communicated positively to allow participants ask questions.

3.4.3 Focus group discussion (FGD)

FGD was also used to generate data. During this session, the researcher asked a small group of people (in this case there were six learners of balanced gender from each school) to reflect about a series of questions (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). In spite of FGDs' disadvantages that prevent learners from active participation and hence talk less because of language barrier and shyness, the researcher was well organised and involved every member of the group in order to be successful (White, 2000). The participants sat together in a group and exchanged responses to the questions and they often expounded with added remarks that they originally could not. Focus group discussion was done after face-to-face interviews to probe further explanations in order to understand the behaviours and teaching practices that learners observed during comprehension lessons. In this case, the researcher facilitated the discussion and used open-ended questionnaire to encourage participants to say all that they knew about the teaching and learning of comprehension lesson. Thus, the six selected learners from each school were engaged in similar discussions. The researcher ensured that every participant took part. In this case, it was important because it allowed the researcher to control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2009). As such, the participants reminded each other of certain in-depth data that individuals forgot to mention during one-on-one interviews.

The reason for using FGDs with the learners was twofold: firstly, FGD method activated forgotten issues and experiences. For example, should one participant forget

some details, the others in the group reminded the participant and sometimes corrected each other if an error took place. Explicit views expressed during FGD enriched the data generation. Secondly, conducting FGDs saved time because they were quicker than IDIs (Cohen et al., 2007). In this study, FGD was rather supplementary as it followed class observation and IDIs. As such, the questionnaire had fewer questions. Further, discussions with six learners were faster than dealing with them individually. However, there are some disadvantages of FGDs. One of them is that FGDs made some learners talk less and barred them from active participation because of language barrier and were shy.

The researcher conducted one FGD with the learners at each school in order to learn from them their past experiences, motives, attitudes, perceptions and types of teaching strategies in comprehension and the sort of skills learners gained. Punch (2009) observed that FGD is an attractive data gathering option when research is trying to probe the views, perceptions, motives and experiences of a group of people. The researcher used an FGD questionnaire that had both closed and open-ended questions, which mainly focussed on learners' experiences and behaviours relating to teaching comprehension strategies to develop learners' skills in comprehension (Appendix 4). However, during FGDs some of the learners requested to use Chichewa and the researcher allowed them to do so.

At each school, the FGD was held after observing the last lesson. The FGDs were deliberately conducted after classroom observations to avoid influencing the learners from changing their behaviour in the classroom. In addition, the researcher wanted to use the interviews to confirm and understand better the impression she got from the

observations made in the classroom. Besides, some of the answers were obtained through documents such as teachers' schemes and records of work, text books and learners' marked comprehension exercises.

3.4.4 Document analysis

The other method the researcher used to generate data was document analysis. Cohen et al. (2007) describes documents as comprising a multitude of forms including: diaries, records, biographies, autobiographies and samples of students' work. Documents in this study refer to English comprehension exercises that were written by learners which the researcher studied and analysed. This was done in order to identify comprehension skills learners learnt for a detailed analysis. The analysis significantly contributed to the answering of the specific questions. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) claimed that the relationship between the content to be analysed and the objectives of the study should be clear in mind beforehand and then select materials in which the question can be investigated.

The researcher examined forty-eight exercise books for English comprehension. She decided to analyse learners' written work to address the three specific research questions on comprehension skills developed by learners. According to Nthala (2010) and Nunan (1992), learners' records of what they write reveal their competences.

3.4.5 Review of official and other relevant records and documents

The last method used to generate data was the review of secondary data and documents. They constituted senior English teaching syllabus, pupils' books, teachers' textbooks, schemes and records of work, CERs and past English MANEB

Paper III were examined. These determined and influenced teaching practices adopted by teachers.

The researcher reviewed schemes and records of work to establish how the teachers used teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills and understand what they read. Schemes and records of work are documents that a teacher prepares from the syllabus and textbooks for the work to be covered in a term and in a prescribed order for each week (Mtunda & Safuli, 1988). The schemes and records of works were authenticated by both Head of Departments (HODs) and head teachers' stamps and comments. However, the researcher was limited to believe the teachers' evaluation. As such, the use of various sources of generating data helped to come up with the reliable data on teachers' use of comprehension teaching strategies.

Further, the researcher compared MANEB English Paper III past papers with some of the questions asked in class to see how they use question generation strategy. She further looked into the English teaching syllabus objectives and what teachers were supposed to include when planning comprehension lessons. She also checked how teachers filled their schemes and records of work concerning comprehension teaching strategies despite the integration system that was currently followed.

Purposefully, learners' English exercise books were reviewed to determine their use of comprehension strategies on reading before responding to written comprehension questions. The teachers' and learners' documents were checked and photographs taken after getting consent from the participants (appendix 3). The findings are

reported in chapter 4. Briefly, the data generated through the use of the above five instruments that were administered by the researcher, were analysed on a daily basis.

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis is a very critical process in every qualitative study because it is subjective as it depends on the researchers' interpretation in words (Sarantakos, 2005). That is, qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data (Creswell, 2009). Thus, it refers to making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities in relation to the research questions. According to Cohen et al. (2007), data analysis should abide by the issue *of fitness for purpose.* In other words, the researcher must be aware of what he or she wants to analyse to be able to determine the kind of analysis that is to be undertaken based on research questions.

Information from multiple sources of data such as observations, face-to-face in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, documents, field notes, voice recordings and so forth were analysed. In addition, the researcher sought to take pictures of learners' work in the notebooks for evidence of learners' use of comprehension teaching strategies that the teachers use in the classroom when reading a passage. Examples of the strategies are questioning, clarifying, visualising (graphic and semantic organisers) and summarising. The case study procedural steps were documented so that they became reliable as recommended by (Yin, 2003 cited in Creswell, 2009). As such, the researcher familiarised and analysed all the data from all sources. She made sense of it and organised it into categories or themes, arrived at a theory and wrote a report. The qualitative procedures relied on participants' descriptive responses,

observations and image data. As a result, the data analysis in this study was conducted as guided by thematic procedure (Creswell, 2009; Cohen et al., 2007). However, it was a challenge to transcribe data for 33 participants, have codes and come up with themes related to the research questions.

In this case, the researcher familiarised with the raw data (voice-recorded, documents, field notes and learners' work) after reading through. Then she organised and prepared data for analysis by transcribing, and generating initial codes for each participant. Codes were used because coding is the process of organising the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information (Rossman and Rallis, 1998 cited in Creswell, 2009). The coding of data was done by hand. The researcher combined the coded data, searched and came up with themes or descriptions. She reviewed the themes, defined the interrelating themes/descriptions, named the themes and interpreted the meaning of those themes/descriptions. Then, those themes were interpreted into information in form of words which was a basis for the established theory. Theory refers to an inductive process of building from the data to broad themes to a generalised model (Punch, 2005). Therefore, the three predominant themes, based on the three sub-research questions and what emerged from the study were summarised.

Further, the data was analysed inductively by building patterns, categories, themes and organising the data into more abstract units of information. This was done to ensure that the researcher focused on the meaning that was held by the participants concerning the teaching strategies that teachers of English use to teach learners to develop comprehension skills during comprehension lessons. Additionally, it was

done to avoid biasness as the researcher is also an experienced teacher of English. The established theory for this study stated that there was relationship between teachers' use of strategies to teach learners comprehension skills and the understanding of what learners read.

3.6 Data management

The researcher sought to organise the data that was generated in the proper and safe manner for easy accessibility in terms of storage and retrieval during analysis. The data obtained from learners' exercises, schemes and records of work, classroom observations, IDIs and FGDs was typewritten and stored in separate files on a computer, flash disk and compact disk (CD) as soft copies while hard copies of the data in the form of original manuscripts were also kept safely under key and lock in a cupboard for backup. The most secure and best means of ensuring that data is not lost, is to save in an email account with a password that has no less than eight characters.

3.7 Credibility and trustworthiness of the study

The results of any study needs to be credible and trustworthy. According to Creswell (2009) and Nunan (1992) consider credibility as a good and useful indicator of goodness in case studies. Further, Chauma (2013) insists that credibility issues and trustworthiness are critical factors in all investigations. Consistent with these assertions, this study ensured credibility and trustworthiness by applying several strategies (White, 2000; Creswell, 2009). These were: triangulation, pilot study, peer review, and use of direct quotations to ensure validity and reliability. The following sections discuss and justify the above strategies as applied in this study.

3.7.1 Triangulation

The researcher used triangulation to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of this study. According to White (2000) and Sarantakos (2005), triangulation is the use of multiple techniques/instruments or approach to data generation to make sense of the same study. In this case, the study used observations, one-on-one oral interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. The generation of more data benefited the researcher in the sense that some of the findings that could be missed out were generated, hence making it more valid. However, the disadvantage with data triangulation was that it was time consuming since it involved generation of more data. Besides, it required greater planning and organisation (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, for credibility and trustworthiness, the researcher used several methods of data generation to a single study to check the accuracy of the data with participants.

Further, the findings had multiple perspectives on the use of comprehension teaching strategies and factors that contributed to lack of comprehension skills in the learners which developed a picture that emerged in the interpretation. That resulted in a large picture. That was why the final report was not rigid but had a flexible structure to allow participants and key informants contributions.

However, the researcher was mindful about this challenge of social research in order to construct powerful and instructive representations of social life and at the same time to embrace breadth or depth of evidence (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). To address this issue, the researcher sought to use a lot of evidence based on the examination of detailed multiple information sourced out using several instruments on the same small

number of participants. The researcher was convinced that triangulation was essential to enhance the validity of the results of this study.

In summary, the researcher used the qualitative case study because the intent of the inquiry was to generalise the findings to the participants and selected public secondary schools under study. Creswell (2009) asserts that the value of qualitative research has in the particular description and themes developed in context of a specific site. That is, the meanings and interpretations were negotiated depending on the participants' realities in behaviours, answers to research questions and document analysis concerning comprehension teaching strategies that teachers use to teach learners comprehension skills.

3.7.2 Pilot study

This section presents the relevance of testing data generation instruments, and the generated results of the pilot study.

White (2000) describes pilot study as involving a small scale implementation of the draft data generation instruments that assess clarity, comprehensiveness and acceptability to enable amendments. Therefore, before conducting the main observations and interviews, in this study a pilot study was conducted. The aim of this pilot study was to examine the instruments for plausibility, clarity, quality, and relevance. Further, Cohen et al. (2007) indicate that a pilot study allows a researcher to make necessary changes to the procedure and observation systems. Additionally, a pilot study assisted the researcher to practice the necessary skills needed to carry out both observation and interviews. Besides, Nunan (1992) emphasises thorough testing

of research instruments through a pilot study. In accordance with literature guidance, a pilot study was carried out.

The pilot study for this research was conducted at Mwenyekondo CDSS - a school that is not included in this study but it is very similar to the schools that were studied. The reasons for the similarities were that firstly, it was easily accessible due to its closeness to where the researcher stayed; secondly it was a public secondary school and lastly it admitted learners of similar selection criteria. Interviews were conducted with the English Language paper III chief examiner, head teachers, class teachers as well as learners. Some respondents faced some difficulties in understanding some of the questions and the researcher could rephrase them. Further, from the feedback obtained, some of the instruments were amended accordingly and that resulted in some skills gained too. The exercise further equipped the researcher with skills to explain analytical results as well.

3.7.3 Direct quotations

Direct quotations are a very useful tool to achieve credibility and trustworthiness. This study used direct quotations when expressing issues and analysing data obtained from teachers' and learners' responses during classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and FGDs. Chauma (2013) emphasises the importance of using direct quotations as they provide evidence of exact spoken words. Additionally, Cohen et al. (2007) reinforces the importance of reporting directly in exact words to enhance the palatability of the maintained original data and hence distinguishing them from the researcher's words. Therefore, credibility of the study was enhanced by providing direct quotations from participants throughout the report.

3.7.4 Peer review

Peer reviews are very significant tools to ensuring credibility and trustworthiness of a study. Throughout the entire study, the researcher sought remarks from friends who could critique elements in the study and conduct relevant editing as one way of ensuring the trustworthiness and credibility of the study. The friends who critiqued the study were postgraduate colleagues as well as fellow students. Utilising this feedback from the critical friends, the researcher was able to refine the study, (Creswell &Miller, 2007).

3.7.5 Research ethics

This section presents research ethics that covers confidentiality issues, permission to carry out the study and the security of the study. White (2000) defines ethics as moral principles and values that govern the way an individual or group conducts its activities. In this case, for confidentiality's sake, the names of participating schools, teachers and learners were not disclosed. To achieve this, codes were used instead of actual names. Additionally, this study sought to protect the anonymity of individuals and roles in the schools by disassociating names from responses during the recording and coding process. Keith et al. (2014) describes codes as tags, names, or labels against pieces of data.

Firstly, access to the institution where the research is to be conducted should be accepted by those whose permission one needs before embarking on the task (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Consistent with this requirement, the researcher got a letter of introduction from the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies at Chancellor College (Appendix 1) before embarking on the study. Then, she sought permission

from the Ministry of Education through the office of the Education Division Manager (EDM). The researcher submitted a request letter from Chancellor College to the EDM and the response was used to obtain consent from each school and participant (Appendix 2). The researcher further sought permission from the head teacher of each of the four schools verbally and the research participants themselves. This is to avoid falsifying information from unwilling participants (Silverman, 2006).

Secondly, the researcher maintained the confidentiality of the participants throughout the research by taking into consideration the ethics and being sensitive to human rights as emphasised by Robson (2011). In this regard, the data was treated with confidentiality to protect the privacy of the participants. On the same, their code names are kept confidential and shall be deleted together with the data after a period of five to ten years.

Lastly, the data is kept most securely as a soft copy in the researcher's email account and hard copy in a lockable filing cabinet. Thus, data once analysed need to be kept for a reasonable period of 5-10 years before discarding it as suggested by (Sieber, 1998 cited in Creswell, 2009).

3.8 Limitations of the Study

The sample size was very small compared to the number of form three teachers of English and learners in public secondary schools in Lilongwe district. Due to the qualitative case study research design, which was appropriate for this study, the data generation instruments could not accommodate a large group of participants. A smaller group was recommended to ensure good quality and reliable results.

Therefore, findings of this study cannot be generalised to other schools. The results were generalisable to the sampled four schools only. In support of this assertion, Creswell (2009) asserts that generalisation of qualitative studies must apply to the participants under study. Lastly, the study did not focus on how teacher training institutions in Malawi train teachers in the teaching strategies that they use to teach learners comprehension skills. This was important but it fell outside the scope of this study.

3.9 Delimitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were addressed through the use of the triangulation to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of this study. According to White (2000) and Sarantakos (2005), triangulation is the use of multiple techniques/instruments or approaches to data generation to make sense of the same study. In this case, the study used observations, one-on-one oral interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. Further, the findings had multiple perspectives on the use of comprehension teaching strategies and factors that contributed to lack of comprehension skills in the learners, which developed a picture that emerged in the interpretation. The researcher was convinced that triangulation was essential to enhance the validity of the results of this study. Therefore, due to some of the limitations and delimitations stated above, the findings of this study could not be generalised to all learners, teachers or schools but only to those that were under this study.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter firstly presented discussion on the study design and approach, the methods and instruments that were used for data generation, the study area, and how participants were identified, as well as how data was analysed. Secondly, the chapter presented issues of credibility and trustworthiness of the study, validity and generalisability, and ethical considerations. Finally, the chapter has discussed the limitation and delimitation of the study. The following chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents findings and discussion of the results of the study. This study aimed at investigating comprehension teaching strategies that teachers of English use to teach learners comprehension skills. In this regard, the researcher gathered data through document analysis, lesson observations, focus group discussions and oral interviews. The participants were: teachers, head teachers, learners from DSS and CDSS type of schools and English Language paper III chief examiner. The findings of the study are presented in two main sections. Section one discusses the general properties or traits of the schools and the participants that were investigated. Section two discusses findings in relation to the research questions.

4.1 General findings

This section discusses the general characteristics of the four schools and the participants that were under this study. All the schools were co-education public secondary schools.

4.1.1 School A– DSS

This DSS is located 5 kilometres North West of Lilongwe City. The position of this school provided good learning environment because it was away from the resident

houses. It was a quiet place. There was a big library with books but not adequate for each learner to take home due to high enrolment. Besides, due to high enrolment of learners that came from the school's catchment area, the school had double shift. The morning shift began classes at 7:00 a.m. and ended at 11:55 a.m. The afternoon shift started at 12:00 noon and ended at 17:55 p.m. Instead of having the normal forty minutes per period, such schools had thirty-five minutes. This posed negative effect on comprehension lessons because they required more time. In total, they had eight periods per day instead of nine, which was not normal for secondary schools allocated time. The form 3 class that was under this study had 24 boys and 23 girls, a total of 47. Their ages ranged from 13 to 19 years. They had average performance.

4.1.2 School B – CDSS

This school is located about 3 kilometres South East of Lilongwe City. The school had a noisy learning environment. Of course it had a brick fence but it was surrounded by resident houses, a market, shops and bars. Besides, this school was using borrowed premises from a primary school. Both the primary and secondary school teachers were working in the same environment. This made the teachers working environment not conducive. Each form had a single stream. There was no library and the available books that were kept in the stores were few for both learners and teachers to use. The school had single shift that started classes at 7:30 a.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m. with normal break time and a lunch break. Each period had forty minutes unlike the double shift schools. The form 3 class that was under this study had 47 boys and 38 girls, a total of 85. Their ages ranged from 14 to 20. These learners had average performance.

4.1.3 School C – CDSS

School C is located about 4 kilometres South East of Lilongwe City. The position of this school did not provide a good learning environment because it was very close to resident houses. It had no fence and passers-by sometimes could disturb learners in class with noise. There was no library, instead the stores was used as a library. The classes had very high enrolment and the Ministry of Education was planning to make it a double shift type of school the following year. In form three, there were 90 learners consisting of 49 boys and 41 girls. Their ages ranged from 14 to 19 years. These learners had average performance.

4.1.4 School D – DSS

School D is located about 6 kilometres to the South East of Lilongwe City. The position of this school provided good learning environment despite being very close to the resident houses separated by a fence. There was a library which was not adequate to accommodate learners who wanted to study; as such each class had its own day, which limited learners in reading. School D was just like school A in that it was also a double shift one. There were 58 learners: 30 boys and 28 girls under this study. Their ages ranged from 13 to 19. They had average performance. Table 4 presents the summary of the characteristics of the teachers who participated in this study.

Table 4: Specific characteristics of the teachers who participated in the study at respective schools

Characteristics of the teachers	School A	School B	School C	School D
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female
Languages	Chitumbuka, Chichewa and English	Chichewa and English	Chichewa and English	Chichewa and English
Professional grade	P8	Grade J	Grade J	Grade I
Highest academic qualification	Degree	Diploma in Education	Diploma in Education	Degree in Education
Teaching experience at secondary school level in years	Fifteen	Three	Three	Four years
Number of years at this school	Five	Two	Two	Four years
Number of periods per week	Twenty-one	Fourteen	Fourteen	Twenty-one periods
Teaching subjects	English and History	English and Chichewa	English and Chichewa	English and Social Development Studies

Source: Head teacher's records and form 3 teachers, at schools A, B, C and D

Table 5 presents the summary of the characteristics of the four schools and head teachers who participated in this study.

Table 5: Characteristics of the four schools, teachers and head teachers that were involved in this study

Findings	School A	School B	School C	School D
Location	Lilongwe Urban	Lilongwe Urban	Lilongwe Urban	Lilongwe Urban
Distance from the District Centre	Five kilometres	Three kilometres	Five kilometres	six kilometres
Type of school	DSS	CDSS	CDSS	DSS
Head Teachers				
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Female
Highest Academic /Professional Qualification	Bachelor's Degree in Education	Bachelor's Degree in Education	Bachelor's Degree Education	Bachelor's Degree in Education
Grade in the Civil Service	P5	P7	P7	P5
Head Teacher's Experience	Ten years	Three years	Six years	Twelve years
Number of years at this school	One year	Three years	Three years	One year
Subjects of specialisation	Biology and Home Economics (Sciences)	Geography and History (Humanities)	Physical Science and Mathematics (Sciences)	Biology and Physical Science (Sciences)

Source: Head teacher's records and form 3 teachers, at schools A, B, C and D

Further, table 6shows the specific characteristics of the English Paper III Chief Examiner who was a qualified serving teacher. She was an informant in this study on how CERs contributed to the teacher's use of teaching strategies in comprehension lessons.

Table 6: Specific characteristics of the Chief Examiner who participated in the study

Chief Examiner's (CE) Gender	Female
Chief Examiner's Academic Qualification	Bachelors of Arts Degree in Education and specialised in English and Chichewa
Chief Examiner's Professional Grade in the Civil Service	P6
Chief Examiner's Experience	3 years as senior examiner and 4years as Chief Examiner.

Source: M.S.C.E English Paper III Chief Examiner

4.2 Findings on research questions

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research questions. The study was guided by a main research question and sub-questions. The main research question was 'what are the comprehension strategies that teachers of English use to teach the learners comprehension skills?' The sub-questions were: What is the teachers' knowledge of appropriate strategies for teaching comprehension skills? What type of strategies do teachers use during comprehension lessons? How do teachers implement the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension? The findings are presented according to three themes that are arranged according to the specific research questions. First, the researcher sought to establish the teachers' knowledge of appropriate strategies for teaching comprehension skills. The second section explores the type of strategies that teachers use during comprehension lessons. The last section explores how teachers implemented the teaching strategies when teaching learners comprehension skills.

4.2.1 Teachers' knowledge of appropriate strategies for teaching comprehension

This section presents the teachers' knowledge of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills. It presents the strategies that teachers know, the extent of their knowledge of the strategies and sources of their knowledge of the strategies. The researcher collected data through oral interviews, focus group discussions, document analyses and classroom observations.

4.2.1.1 Teaching strategies that teachers know

This section presents the teaching strategies that the teachers know. The results of the study indicated that, in total, the teachers knew eleven strategies. Furthermore, the results also indicated that the teachers' knowledge of the strategies was both explicit (where they mentioned the strategies) and implicit (where they did not mention but were observed using). This was established due to the fact that some teachers were observed using strategies that they did not say they know. The two tables 7 and 8 show the strategies that teachers know. Table 7 shows the strategies that teachers said they know and table 8 shows the strategies that the teachers did not mention but were observed using.

Table 7: The teaching strategies that teachers said they know

Teaching Strategies	T1	T2	T3	T4
1. Predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations)	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Think-aloud (reading aloud)	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. repeated reading (reading three or more times)	✓			✓
4. Generation of questions	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Learner-centred	✓	✓	✓	
6. Vocabulary	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Silent reading	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Elements of literature	✓			✓

Source: Researcher's generated data analysis (2014)

Table 7 shows that in total, there were eight strategies for teaching comprehension that teachers said they know. However, one of them, learner-centred, was not a teaching strategy per se but an approach to language learning or teaching. According to the teachers, it just meant learners participating in the learning process without teachers' support and no learners were actually teaching one another the comprehension skills. Thus, there were seven strategies that the teachers knew. From table 7, T1 and T4 said they knew all the seven strategies that the teachers mentioned which are: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations), think-aloud (reading aloud), repeated reading (reading three or more times), generation of questions, vocabulary, silent reading and story structure (elements of literature). T2 and T3 said they knew five of the mentioned strategies namely: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations), think-aloud (reading aloud), generation of questions, vocabulary, and silent reading. They did not say and were not observed

using repeated strategy (reading three or more times) and story structure (discussing elements of literature).

Table 8 presents the strategies that teachers did not say they know but were observed using.

Table 8: The teaching strategies that teachers did not say they know

Teaching Strategy	T1	T2	T3	T4
1. Summarising	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Monitoring comprehension (clarifying)	✓	✓		
3. Question answering	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Cooperative learning	✓	✓		

Source: Researcher's generated data analysis (2014)

Table 8shows that in total there were four strategies that teachers did not say they know but were observed using during comprehension lessons. The following were the teaching strategies that they were observed using: summarising, monitoring comprehension (clarifying), question answering and cooperative learning. T1 and T2 used all the four strategies while T3 and T4 used only two which are: summarising and question answering and not the other two of the observed strategies namely: monitoring comprehension (clarifying) and cooperative learning.

Tables 7 and 8 indicate that the teachers actually know the following eleven teaching strategies: predicting, reading aloud, repeated reading (reading three or more times), generation of questions, vocabulary, silent reading, story structure (elements of literature), summarising, question answering, monitoring comprehension (clarifying) and cooperative learning.

The researcher's analysis of observations conducted during the teaching of comprehension also indicated that the knowledge of the teachers in the comprehension teaching strategy was limited. The researcher did not observe the teachers applying other single research-based strategies such as meta-cognitive and graphic and semantic organisers according to literature review (NRP, 2000; Adler, 2013). Further, no teacher showed knowledge of multiple strategies according to literature review. These are multiple strategies that include Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI) and Reciprocal Teaching (RT) strategies that were not observed. Multiple strategies combine different strategies and instructional techniques in one lesson. TSI combines eight reading comprehension strategies namely: activating prior knowledge, text texture, predicting, questioning, goal setting, imagery, monitoring and summarising. RT combines four different strategies namely: predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarising.

Additionally, all the teachers showed knowledge of less than 50 per cent of the research-based comprehension teaching strategies in how they utilised the knowledge. All the teachers mentioned some of the single strategies and none mentioned the multiple strategies amongst the research-based comprehension teaching strategies. Even the most frequently used multiple strategies like RT and TSI (Oczkus, 2013; Mudzielwana, 2013; Brown, Pressly, Van Meter & Schuder, 1996), were not mentioned. From the teachers' responses, the analysis indicated that the teachers had knowledge regarding single research-based strategies only and not multiple strategies.

When the teachers were asked to mention the teaching strategies that they knew in comprehension lessons, there were several responses as listed as follows:

T1 replied,

"Yes, I know some of the comprehension teaching strategies."

T2 claimed,
"I know comprehension teaching strategies. You must have observed that I know them when you observed my comprehension teaching lessons last time you were here."

T3 explained,
"I partially know secondary school comprehension teaching strategies. Mostly I apply the knowledge from the primary school teaching. I am not sure if there are differences between the two; thus primary and secondary comprehension teaching strategies."

T4 similarly reported,

"I know primary school comprehension teaching knowledge because I was teaching at primary school before I became a secondary school teacher."

The researcher observed that T2 seemed satisfied with the knowledge that he had. On the contrary, T1, T3 and T4 expressed inadequacy in their knowledge. Nonetheless, the researcher's analysis of the teachers' responses indicated that there is a limitation in the teachers' knowledge of comprehension teaching strategies that are mostly used by teachers of English to teach learners comprehension skills. Therefore, based on their responses, all the four teachers were considered to have limited knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension. This concurs with Kabita's (2015) who said that teachers' knowledge of comprehension teaching strategies was limited.

The researcher observed that the teachers' knowledge of the teaching strategies was inadequate. According to the teacher's responses and the researcher's observation, the strategies they knew were partially known depending on how they demonstrated during implementation. That is, all the four teachers on average knew few strategies

and had partial knowledge in each one of them; hence they failed to teach learners comprehension skills effectively. Further, all the eleven strategies they knew were of high order and relevant to development of comprehension skills (NRP, 2000; Adler, 2013). However, the teachers lacked adequate knowledge of the strategies which resulted in failure to use them appropriately. This concurs with a number of researchers who found out that comprehension teaching strategies were effective depending on how much the teachers knew and effectively use them (NRP, 2000; Beers, 2003; Mudzielwana, 2013; Oczkus, 2013; Adler, 2013). All in all, the four teachers' knowledge was limited to be successfully used to teach learners comprehension skills. The findings of this study therefore concurs with Mudzielwana (2013) who posited that teachers who lack adequate knowledge in comprehension teaching strategies fail to teach learners comprehension strategies effectively.

4.2.1.2 The extent to which teachers know strategies for teaching comprehension

This section discusses the extent to which the teachers knew the strategies for teaching comprehension. As stated in various sections above, the extent is the measure of the number of strategies, knowledge in each strategy and level of expertise observed when using the strategies. The discussion is based on both the researcher's observations during the classroom observations that utilised a checklist to record the data as well as the teachers' responses that were generated during the IDI. The data was analysed based on the researcher's observation on number of strategies, the knowledge they had in each strategy and the level of expertise observed when implementing the strategies in order to teach learners comprehension skills. In this regard, the teachers' knowledge was categorised as never, very little, little, not much,

much and very much. Further, the reasons for the extent of knowledge in comprehension teaching strategies are also discussed.

Table 9: The extent to which the four teachers know strategies for teaching comprehension

Teaching strategy	Never	Very little	Little	Not much	Much	Very much
1. Monitoring comprehension (clarifying)		*				
2. Meta-cognitive strategy	*					
3. Graphic and semantic organisers	*					
4. Generation of questions		*				
5. Question answering			*			
6. Recognising story structure				*		
7. Cooperative learning		*				
8. Summarising		*				
9. Think-aloud			*			
10. Reciprocal Teaching (questioning, predicting, clarifying and summarising)	*					
11. Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI)	*					

Source: Researcher's data (2014)

Table 9 indicates that the teachers did not know about meta-cognitive and graphic and semantic organizers single strategies as well as reciprocal teaching and transactional strategy instruction multiple strategies. Very little was known regarding monitoring comprehension (clarification), generation of questions, cooperative learning and summarising. Little was known on question answering and think-aloud as teaching

strategies to teach learners comprehension skills. Not much was known on recognising story structure if the passage was not picked from a literature textbook. There was no observation on teaching strategies that were known much or very much. The four teachers demonstrated that they knew some of the other single teaching strategies partially and never knew anything about the multiple strategies. Further, based on their teaching practices, their knowledge was poor (limited) and more details will be discussed later when discussing how the teaching strategies were implemented in section 4.4.

An analysis of the results generated during the researcher's observation, on the extent to which the teachers knew the teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills indicated low level knowledge. This was evident firstly through the inconsistencies in their responses about knowledge in comprehension teaching strategies. In their practices, they regarded some strategies as stand-alone while in the essence they were simply parts of research-based strategies. An example is scanning or skimming which is a component of prediction as one of the research-based strategies. The researcher also observed partial knowledge of some strategies. For instance during silent reading, all the four teachers were observed telling learners to read silently without telling them important steps of picking main ideas, and other story structures.

Further, the researcher's analysis of extent of teachers' knowledge of teaching strategies obtained through IDI, indicated that all the four teachers had inadequate levels of knowledge of the strategies for teaching comprehension. The following are

what they said when they were asked on what they felt about their knowledge of the strategies for teaching comprehension skills:

T1 complained,

> "*I am not that confident as I only knew the comprehension teaching strategies through interaction with experienced teachers. I do not know if I have all the required knowledge about these comprehension teaching strategies.*"

T2 reported,

> "*I am comfortable with what I know regarding comprehension teaching strategies through the initial teacher training course on introduction and development of comprehension lessons.*"

T3 doubted,

> "*I am not very sure of the strategies that I use as I only know what I learnt from primary school teacher training course and what I read from Malawi Correspondence Distance Education (MCDE) sets that had special sections on teaching comprehension.*"

Lastly, T4 explained,

> "*I am worried because I have only primary school teaching knowledge on the teaching of comprehension in general.*"

The analyses of these assertions from the four teachers point to the probable fact that there is a general inadequacy feeling amongst them regarding the extent of their knowledge. In all instances, there was a demand for the knowledge of teaching strategies which the teachers had to find and apply in whatever way they found feasible and appropriate.

The researcher thus observed scanty levels of knowledge amongst the teachers. However, Atkins (2012) observed that teachers should have knowledge in order to

88

adequately assist learners to develop comprehension skills. This is in line with Social Cultural Theory, which states that the knowledgeable teacher or peers assist learners using psychological tools. In this case, the comprehension reading strategies that teachers use when teaching are the tools for learning and understanding what is read.

4.2.1.3 Sources of knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension skills

This sub-section discusses how comprehension teaching strategies were acquired by the respective teachers. In this respect, data was generated through IDI. The researcher established that the teachers had different sources of obtaining knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension. The table 10 presents the sources of the teachers' knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension.

Table 10: Sources of knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension

Sources of knowledge	T1	T2	T3	T4
1. Initial Training (Secondary School Teacher Training College)	✓	✓		
2. Initial Training (Primary School Teacher Training)			✓	✓
3. In-service Training				
4. Experienced teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Other sources			✓	

Source: Researcher's data analysis (2014)

In total the four teachers had three sources of knowledge namely: initial teacher training (Secondary School Teacher Training or Primary School Teacher Training), experienced teachers and other sources. T1 and T2 said that they obtained the teaching strategies knowledge from two sources namely: initial Training (Secondary School Teacher Training College) and experienced teachers. T3 and T4 said that they

obtained the knowledge from the following two sources: initial Teacher Training (Primary School Teacher Training) and experienced teachers. Additionally, T3 obtained the knowledge from another source namely MCDE sets. In total T1, T2, T3 and T4 had two, two, three and two sources of knowledge respectively. The two common sources among the four teachers were initial teacher training and experienced teachers. The findings that teachers access knowledge on teaching strategies through teacher training and from experienced teachers, partly concurs with Harris and Sass (2008) whose findings revealed that teachers obtain knowledge of teaching strategies from experienced teachers and in-service training. However, according to this study none of the teachers accessed the teaching strategies knowledge from the in-service training. Thus, the findings of this study revealed that teachers obtained knowledge mainly through two sources namely: initial teacher training and from experienced teachers but none obtained it through in-service training.

4.2.1.3.1 Teacher training

Out of four teachers, two teachers got knowledge of teaching strategies through teacher training and this represented 50 per cent. When asked if they were taught strategies for teaching comprehension skills in college, the teachers explained the following:

> *"I was not trained to specifically handle comprehension lessons. I was taught different course like creative writing, literature, use of Bloom's Taxonomy questioning technique in English as a whole."* [**T1, In-depth interview, 19th November, 2014**]
> *"The courses were very important in teaching because in one of the lessons we were taught how to handle comprehension. We were taught how to introduce and how to give reinforcement, how to teach learners to understand difficult vocabulary and how to help learners when they are in trouble."* [**T2, In-depth interview, 17th November, 2014**]

"Mmm! I can say we were not trained on how to handle these comprehension lessons at the college. We only did eeee I can say some areas like grammar and composition. We did not do all areas but few of them. The lecturers were teaching English in general, so they were taking few areas." [**T3, In-depth interview, 18th November, 2014**]

"I was not taught how to teach comprehension but English in general." [**T4, In-depth interview, 14th November, 2014**]

From the responses, it is clear that 3 out of 4 teachers did not receive explicit training on knowledge and skills relating to strategies for teaching comprehension.

T1, T3 and T4 complained that they found teaching of comprehension lessons difficult because they did not learn specifically on how to teach learners comprehension skills but methods of teaching English in general. T2 claimed to have learned from Domasi College of Education but differed from T3 who also graduated from the same college. The researcher's observation was that all the teachers inadequately learned on how to use teaching strategies in order to teach learners comprehension skills. This finding concurs with Scott's (2009) findings, which revealed that initial teacher training ineffectively prepared teachers to teach learners comprehension strategies.

From the teachers' responses above, it is evident that teacher training did not adequately prepare teachers to engage students strategically rather than mechanically in approaching comprehension tasks. This concurs with Butler et al., (2010) who found out that initial teacher training did not adequately prepare teachers for the demands of the classroom.

In support of how some teachers get trained during teacher training, Scott (2009) found that the university coursework did not target knowledge for teaching reading in ways that would be usable. The researcher of this study found that T1, T2, T3 and T4 lacked learned knowledge in the teaching strategies that involve strategic processes such as use of graphic and semantic organisers, and meta-cognition to monitor the comprehension. The researcher observed that the teachers' knowledge of teaching strategies obtained in college could not enable them teach learners' comprehension skills, which concurred with Scott (2009).

The evidence observed was that the learners could not interactively learn the comprehension skills with the teacher or competent peers in comprehension lessons due to the teachers' inability to support the learners. This was contrary to SCT, which states that learning is a social process where the learner is assisted by the teacher or competent peers and takes place in the ZPD according to Vygotsky (1978). Further, the teachers responded that they addressed the problem of inadequate pre-service training through in-service training and interaction with experienced teachers as discussed in the sub-section below.

4.2.1.3.2 In-service training

Telez and Waxman (2004) documented that in-service training is important because the teachers get the following: professional learning induction programmes to help new teachers, compensation to encourage gaining new skills and rectification requirements to support high quality professional learning. Besides, the Chief Examiner acknowledges the importance of in-service training in development of teachers' teaching skills by stating that;

"Teachers are expected to read and address the problems that learners encounter in comprehension examination papers during in-service training where experienced teachers are used as resource persons to teach teaching strategies." [**Chief Examiner, IDI, 27th October, 2014**]

All the four teachers indicated that they have not learnt the strategies through in-service training. Despite the fact that they meet in their schools and share skills and expertise during in-service training (In-set) workshops, nothing is done on specific teaching strategies. The following were the teachers' verbatim responses:

"Normally we have in-service courses on how to teach English in general and other new information or changes made in the curriculum."[**T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014**]

"The school organises in-set on how we can handle lessons in English Language once they notice new things, they always notify us. Sometimes the in-set facilitator teaches on teaching of comprehension in general not specific on the use of teaching strategies in all reading stages but some as I said, we learned them in college"[**T2, IDI, 17th November, 2014**]

"During in-service training at cluster or departmental level we are taught on problematic areas and how to teach English in general. Some areas are: types of compositions, grammar and literature. On comprehension the concentration is on CER reports and how we can improve to teach learners so that they improve in their performance like using the title, illustration etcetera to prepare their minds for the passage they are going to read and how to write answers in brief. Much emphasis is not put on teaching strategies in comprehension and yet it covers a wide area since a learner needs to understand the passage, vocabulary and questions, before answering."[**T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014**]

"We have workshops – language department workshops and sometimes the administration arranges in-service courses by inviting experts and all of them do not specifically cover teaching strategies in comprehension."[**T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014**]

The teachers said that in-service workshops are done at cluster level at Teacher Development Centres if many schools are involved or school level if only one school is involved. On the other hand, the teachers responded that the competent teachers who taught during such workshops did not specifically teach strategies that teachers use to teach learners comprehension skills. They taught about teaching of English in general and other details that focused on teaching that involved integration. For example, the teaching of comprehension and grammar using a story picked from a literature book. Furthermore, regarding how teachers ensured sharing of knowledge, the researcher learned that there was team teaching among teachers of the same department. For instance, the following were the head teachers' responses:

> *"I tell Head of Departments (HODs) to tell teachers to ask others to teach on their behalf in their respective classrooms so that they learn from each other."* [H**T1, IDI, 20th November, 2014**]

> *"We organise in-service training so that those who are experienced in teaching particular subjects teach others even in scheming or share most of the solutions to the problems through team teaching. To say the truth we never had in-service training on teaching strategies in comprehension type of lessons."* [**HT2, IDI, 17th November, 2014**]

> *"At cluster level we have orientation with teachers who are supposed to teach English. Clusters need finances and we do partially not as required. This affects teaching strategies because teachers do not get all the information they require. I am not aware of teachers' knowledge in comprehension lessons and I suggest the use of facilitators within or outside the school but they do not specifically teach teachers the teaching strategies in comprehension."* [H**T3, IDI, 21st November, 2014**]

> *"In-service training uses good and experienced teachers to teach others in writing the schemes and even marking scheme but not specific sections like comprehension teaching strategies."* [H**T4, IDI, 10th December, 2014**]

94

The researcher observed that all the four head teachers' responses indicated that the in-service training was conducted in these schools but none was done to specifically equip the teachers with knowledge on teaching strategies to enable them effectively teach learners comprehension skills.

When the teachers were asked about the importance of in-service training, they weren't convincing in the answers. For instance, T3 said, "Yah, it is important because teachers update knowledge learned in college." Further, in response to a probing question on how in-service training workshops helped teachers in updating teaching strategies in comprehension, the teachers said that in-service training is silent on specific strategies that are done during and after reading when teaching comprehension but strategies that are used before reading the passage like prediction and questioning that follows Bloom's Taxonomy. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, for cognitive domain (mental abilities) to function properly there are six types of questioning techniques that needs to be followed in the following order: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill and Krathwohl, 1956 cited in Mtunda and Safuli, 1988). Thus, the workshop focuses on how to use Bloom's taxonomy and not necessarily strategies for teaching comprehension skills.

The findings indicated that in-service training had failed to equip teachers with knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension because no facilitator attempted them. From these responses, the researcher concluded that in-service courses were not adequate to provide the necessary knowledge in comprehension teaching skills to equip teachers since even the teachers who teach fellow teachers during in-service

training do not have thorough knowledge of comprehension teaching strategies. As such, teachers learned from experienced teachers.

4.2.1.3.3 Teacher interaction with experienced teachers

All teachers indicated that they know the strategies from experienced teachers. For instance, T1 explained her challenges in the teaching of English and how she consults her peers to assist her;

> *"When I find problems in how to teach English on certain passages or stories, I consult the experienced teachers. They teach me how to begin a lesson with motivation by using the title or illustration or certain drawn pictures or real object that are relevant to the lesson to let the students predict and connect to what they are going to read".* [**T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014**]

T2 described the predicament that teachers face regarding the consequences of lack of teaching knowledge and how such situations are addressed;

> *"There is no one who knows everything in teaching strategies like how to make learners understand a passage that is not common with our Malawian culture. I sometimes ask the experienced teachers to help me with some methods."* [**T2, IDI, 17th November, 2014**]

T3 explained how she involves her superiors to acquire more teaching skills to teach;
> *"Sometimes I ask the Head of Department to help me in how I can teach a certain passage because the Senior Secondary Certificate English book that I am using is new and most English words are difficult for students to understand the passages. She is a well experienced teacher. She mostly teaches me on how to activate learners' knowledge at the beginning of the lesson."* [**T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014**]

T4 described her efforts to acquire knowledge;
> *"Sometimes I ask competent or experienced teachers to plan and teach together (team teaching). Sometimes I ask my fellow teachers to observe my lessons and tell me my strengths and weaknesses. None ever talked about other teaching strategies other than prediction and using Bloom's Taxonomy questioning technique. I never heard about the use of other strategies like reciprocal teaching, graphic or*

semantic organizers and monitoring *strategies."* **[T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014]**

The quotes show that teachers get help from experienced teachers. This concurs with Jensen et al., (2012) who state that new teachers (less than three years experience) struggle to provide effective instruction in the classroom and learn more strategies when they interact with experienced colleagues. Furthermore, the observations and responses of the participants indicated that even the experienced teachers had limited knowledge if they did not learn from other experienced teachers. From the teachers' responses and the researcher's observation, the results indicated that knowledge of teaching strategies obtained through interaction with experienced peers was practically oriented and successfully applied because they are hands on.

4.2.1.3.4 Other sources of teaching strategies knowledge

During IDI some teachers mentioned other sources where they obtained knowledge of teaching strategies. T3 and T4 are quoted as follows:

> *"I was not trained in teaching strategies, instead I use the knowledge I got from primary school teacher training course and some MCDE sets that are special for comprehension."***[T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014]**

> *"I was not trained in college but I use knowledge from primary teacher training course because I was teaching at primary school before I became a secondary school teacher."***[T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014]**

The teachers' responses and the researcher's observations indicated that the teachers applied knowledge from the above cited sources. It was nonetheless evident that their knowledge in teaching strategies was limited as they complained, laboured and haphazardly taught the comprehension lessons.

In summary, all the four teachers' responses and the researcher's observations indicated that they had knowledge of different types of strategies for teaching learners comprehension skills. However, it was observed that their knowledge of the strategies was limited.

4.3 Strategies that teachers use to teach comprehension

To answer the second specific research question which sought to find out what comprehension teaching strategies teachers employ during comprehension lessons, the researcher observed comprehension lessons, and later conducted in-depth interviews with the teachers as well as conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the learners. After analysing the data, the researcher identified the eleven comprehension teaching strategies that the teachers used. The researcher categorised the teaching strategies that teachers used as follows: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations), think-aloud (reading aloud), story structure, vocabulary, repeated reading (reading three or more times), silent reading, comprehension monitoring (clarifying), generation of questions, question answering, cooperative learning and summarising. Table 11 shows the strategies that the teachers used.

Table 11: Teaching strategies that the teachers used

Strategy	T1	T2	T3	T4
1. Predicting	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Reading aloud	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Repeated reading (reading three or more times)	✓			✓
4. Generation of questions	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Vocabulary	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Story structure (elements of literature)	✓			✓
7. Silent reading	✓	✓	✓	✓
8. Summarising	✓	✓	✓	✓
9. Monitoring comprehension (clarification)	✓	✓		
10. Question answering	✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Cooperative learning	✓	✓		

Source: Researcher's generated data analysis (2014)

In total the four teachers used eleven teaching strategies. T1 used eleven strategies T2 and T4 used nine strategies T3 used seven. All the four teachers used the following seven teaching strategies: predicting, reading aloud, generation of questions, vocabulary, summarising and question answering. Additionally, T1 and T4 were observed using repeated reading (reading three or more times) and story structure (elements of literature). T1 and T2 were observed using monitoring comprehension (clarification) and cooperative learning. The next sub-section discusses the teaching strategies that the teachers used.

4.3.1 Predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations)

Predicting strategy involves guessing what the reader is going to read based on prior knowledge through skimming, scanning, use of title, and illustration. Besides, (Medina 2012) defined predicting as anticipating what is coming next. The researcher observed predicting being used by three of the four teachers which represents 75 per cent of the teachers. During the lesson, several activities were involved that included

the process of skimming (reading fast for general idea), scanning (reading to find specific information), use of title and illustrations. It was observed that not all teachers used all these processes. All teachers asked the learners to predict what they were about to read after looking at either the illustration or title of the passage. T1, T2 and T3 went into some detailed and thorough work with the learners to activate background knowledge by including skimming, scanning and text mapping. However, the researcher observed some omissions. For example, T4 used very little of the steps in this strategy to activate learners' background knowledge. She only used the title of the passage to predict. The researcher felt that this was not adequate to achieve the purpose of activating background knowledge in the learners. She also omitted, skimming to obtain general information and did not ask learners to conduct scanning for specific information in order to predict what they were about to read.

During IDI, the teachers explained the steps they use to apply the prediction strategy when teaching comprehension. They mentioned skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations. T1 and T4 provided the explanations that concurred with T2 and T3.

> *"I ask learners to discuss illustration (if present), discuss the title of the passage, skim and scan the passage in order to predict what they were going to read. This helps them to understand the passage better when they are told to read and comprehend about it."***[T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014]**

> *"I begin the comprehension lesson with the prediction of what they are going to read by looking at the title of the passage, then illustration if any, skimming and then scanning to ensure that learners understand what they read."***[T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014]**

To the contrary, T4 was observed once using the title only as prediction strategy during the three occasions the researcher observed her comprehension lessons in spite of the fact that she said she uses the strategy appropriately and even explained well

the steps and process. In this respect, the researcher concluded that this teacher knew the comprehension teaching strategy theoretically but failed to apply it practically either deliberately or lacked adequate knowledge.

To confirm the teachers' responses regarding the use of this strategy, the learners: L19, L20, L21, L24, L23 and L24 consistently confirmed that their teacher taught them to predict prior to reading comprehension passage and it enables them to predict what they are going to read. This finding concurs with Adler (2013) who posited that predicting strategy is used in order to activate learners' prior knowledge that is connected to the passage that readers are about to read.

Furthermore, in the course of the focus group discussion (FDG), the learners concurred in confirming their teachers' use of prediction strategy. One learner however, complained of lack of follow up on the results of their prediction. For example, quoted verbatim L21 said the following:

> *"Prediction assist us to foretell what we are about to read. But our teacher does not tell us if we are right or wrong."***[L21, FGD, 25th November, 2014]**

In her conclusion, the researcher noted that though prediction is a popular comprehension teaching strategy, its use by the teachers had lapses. On the other hand, the findings of this study indicated that except T4, all teachers taught learners to predict what they were about to read. Most learners were active and were involved in thinking and responding to what the teacher asked. The teachers explicitly used this strategy before reading and learners were positively connecting their prior knowledge to what they were reading that day. The teachers could actually tell the learners to

predict. Learners confirmed that their understanding of the passage differs from just reading a passage without the teacher giving them an opportunity to predict what they were about to read. This concurs with Medina (2012) who posited that when teachers explicitly use reading strategies in the classroom students improve their performance.

4.3.2 Think-aloud strategy (Reading aloud)

A think-aloud strategy is a meta-cognitive (mental ability) technique or strategy in which the teacher models the strategic decision making and interpretive processes that a reader uses (Glass & Zygouris-Coe 2005). Think-aloud is a strategy which ensures that learners read correctly and with understanding (Beers, 2003). The reader makes mental pictures or visualises what is being read. Visualisation or the use of mental imagery is the ability to create mental pictures of characters, characterisation, themes, scenes et cetera from what one is reading. All the four teachers who participated in the study read the story or the passage or asked a learner(s) to read the passage aloud with the aim of improving reading comprehension. This belief concurs with Alshehri (2014), who posited that reading aloud improves reading comprehension. However, no teacher was observed guiding the individual learners to think aloud (express their thoughts about what they were reading), intervening to explain or ask learners questions, let learners write down the main ideas or make drawings as visual representations of what they read. The omission of these steps failed to fully address think-aloud strategy. All the four teachers concentrated on the correct reading and ignored the use of mental abilities to understand what they read.

Thinking-aloud is not synonymous to reading aloud. The later does not apply cognitive powers of the mind. It was not surprising that the teachers provided contrary

responses to the reasons for using think-aloud. Their responses indicated that they had inadequate knowledge about this strategy. All the teachers used the strategy for classroom or resource management purposes; that due to inadequate books the teachers opted to reading aloud so that all the learners learn what the passage is about. This reason contradicts what Beers (2003) asserted as the purpose for reading aloud. As regards use as a teaching strategy, T1 showed some understanding of the purpose of the strategy as shown in the following verbatim:

> *"I let learners read aloud in groups so that they understand the passage and correct each other's mistakes."***[T1, IDI: 19th November, 2014]**

However, no teacher said that they tell learners as individuals to write down the main ideas or create visual representations of what was being read and find ways to solve problems they encountered to understand what they read. Taking down notes is an important element in this strategy. The researcher concluded that the teachers' responses and reasons on how they teach did not fully address think-aloud strategy. In this regard, it was not in line with what think-aloud strategy stipulates. Think-aloud requires explicit instruction as indicated in table 12.

Table 12: Shows think-aloud explicit instruction

1. Teacher explains what the strategy consist of.
2. Teacher explains why this strategy is important.
3. Teacher explains when to use the strategy in actual reading.
4. Teacher models using a think-aloud, how to perform the strategy in the actual context of reading.
5. Teacher provides guided practice, teacher gradually releases responsibility to the students, students practice what they are capable of doing on their own and teacher intervenes when support is needed.
6. Students independently use the strategy in their own reading.

Source: Wilhelm, 2001 cited in Glass and Zygouris, 2005

4.3.3 Repeated reading (reading three or more times)

Repeated reading involves the reader in reading the story or passage a number of times in order to identify what he or she is able to understand and find means to understand what is not understood. The researcher observed T1 and T4 telling learners that if they do not understand what they were reading, they should read the passage three or more times. They did not do it but just said it. This was also confirmed by the learners during FGD on the types of strategies they use to understand what they read. L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, L19, L20, L21, L22, L23 and L24 which represents 50 per cent said, reading of the passage three or more times is one of the strategies that they use to understand difficult passages or stories that their teachers tell them. Thus, T1 and T4 could tell learners to use repeated reading if they fail to understand what they read. Berg and Lyke (2012) posited that when teachers instruct learners on how to use repeated reading strategy, the learners' reading fluency increases. However, T2 and T3 did not tell their learners or use repeated reading strategy. From this finding, the results indicated that T1 and T4 which represents 50 per cent of the teachers could just tell learners to use certain strategies without actually teaching the learners the comprehension skills. This contradicts the demands of use of comprehension strategies which state that teachers must model and explicitly use them when teaching the learners (Adler, 2013).

4.3.4 Generation of questions

In generation of questions strategy, learners are actively involved in thinking as they learn to ask their own questions, connect different parts of the text to understand the content and to relate new information to what they already know. During IDI all the four teachers responded that they use generation of questions strategy. As a follow up question, the researcher asked the teachers why they asked learners questions before

reading the passage. Generally, all the four teachers said that they wanted to activate the learners' background knowledge that is related to what they were about to read; to understand the story or passage. No teacher mentioned about asking learners questions during and after reading to keep track of what they were reading as expected of this strategy. To the researcher, generation of questions strategy was not complete by only asking questions at the beginning and end of reading a passage without doing the same during the reading of the passage.

During observation, the researcher observed that all the four teachers were asking learners questions to activate their prior knowledge before reading the story or passage. However, no teacher was observed asking learners questions during and after reading the passage to keep track of what they were reading as expected of this strategy. Additionally, the learners were not given opportunity to ask questions. The researcher observed that all teachers were asking questions to let learners activate their prior knowledge before reading the story or passage and after reading to assess understanding of what was read. All the four teachers were observed asking questions at the end of the lesson. T1, T3 and T4 asked the learners to predict what they were about to read after looking at either the illustration or title of the passage. T2 went into some detailed and thorough work with the learners to activate background knowledge.

 For instance, T2 wrote the title 'The Strike' on the chalkboard and asked learners to guess what they think they were going to read about (use of title). Then he asked the learners to say something about the strike they witnessed or they heard about. The learners cited several strikes and one of them was about the teachers' strike because they wanted salary hike. After that he asked learners to find meanings of certain words and expressions (scanning) and lastly asked them about the picture in the book

(illustration). However, the researcher observed that all teachers did not give the learners an opportunity to ask questions. The researcher observed that learners found asking questions from the text more difficult than providing answers when they wanted explanation from the teacher. The way the four teachers used this strategy indicated that they had inadequate knowledge. Additionally, the researcher found that the four teachers had limited comprehension strategies knowledge to sufficiently use and enable learners learn generation of questions skill. The findings concur with Bruwer (2013), who found that teachers did not ask learners to compile own questions because they had limited knowledge of reading comprehension strategies and they failed to transfer sufficient skills to learners.

4.3.5 Vocabulary

Every language uses single items or phrases or potion of several words which convey a special meaning. All the four teachers were observed discussing with the learners the words that either teachers or the learners asked for their meanings during prediction and after reading aloud. The researcher observed that learners made connections between some visual features (cues) of the word and their pronunciations in L1, read letters and used them to attempt pronunciation. For example, T3s class had the word *ostracism* meaning *exclusion* which the learners managed to pronounce but failed to give its meaning. In this case, the learner was able to form alphabetic connections by mapping graphemes and phonemes of sight words. However, some of the words were wrongly pronounced such as *ask* where L3, L7 and L19 could say *aks*. The researcher observed that some learners asked for the meanings of words either from the teacher or competent peers in their reading groups in T1 and T2 classrooms. In T3 and T4 classrooms, the teachers were the ones providing meanings to the

difficult words. All the teachers were correcting the learners' wrong pronunciation of words either themselves or knowledgeable peers were allowed to pronounce or give meanings of words. The use of this strategy concurs with SCT which states that learning takes place in Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) when the learner interacts with knowledgeable teacher or peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

4.3.6 Story structure (elements of literature)

In this strategy the teacher provides instruction on plot, sequencing, characters, events, time line et cetera. Two of the four teachers used story structure strategy. T1 and T4 used story structure to enable learners to identify the main points of the story and the literary devices on passages that were picked from literature books. In this regard, the researcher observed that the teaching strategies of comprehension depended on the type of book that the teacher used.

When asked why T1 and T4 chose to use story structure comprehension teaching strategy when using literature books, they said that they wanted to know if the learners had picked the required elements of literature such as setting, characters, characterisation, themes and other literary devices. Additionally, T1, T2 and T3 said that they do not use story structure strategy when the passages were picked from books that were not meant for literature because they were written for comprehension purposes. For instance, T1 reported,

> "*I was trained to use elements of literature when teaching learners in literature to identify the setting, characters, characterisation, themes, plot, language use et cetera and if the passage is not selected from a literature book it becomes difficult to teach comprehension.*"

T2 and T3 explained,

> *"Comprehension passage is taught differently from literature stories because in literature books you follow elements of literature for the learners to understand what they read."*

T4 claimed,

> *"Due to integration system I mostly use literature book because it is easier to teach comprehension since I use the elements of literature."*

From the assertions, all the teachers were equipped with knowledge in how to teach learners to understand what they read since they used elements of literature which seek the following information: what is the setting of the story? Who are the characters in this story? What themes can you draw from this story? Justify your answer. What is the plot of the story? Which are the similes or metaphors or paradox et cetera has the writer used? In other words the above quotes indicated that when teaching comprehension from literature textbooks the teachers use the elements of literature as psychological tools for the learners to understand what they read. This concurs with Vygotsky's (1978) SCT, which states that the use of psychological tools to teach a learner promotes learning in ZPD.

However, the teachers had insufficient knowledge in that they failed to use the same story structure strategy they used when teaching comprehension using a literature passage to teach learners comprehension skills in a similar ordinary passage. Additionally, use of such teaching strategies concurs with what research-based comprehension strategies stipulate in that employment of multiple strategies equips teachers with necessary skills to explicitly teach learners to understand the text (Adler, 2013). Further, T4 was not explicit about the use of story structure in comprehension but rather she uses it when the selected passage is from a literature book and not any other book. According to the researcher, this meant that

comprehension teaching does not use story structure as a teaching strategy when the passage is not selected from a literature book. These responses deemed that teachers were not exposed to the story structure as a research-based strategy for teaching learners comprehension skills.

4.3.7 Silent reading

Silent reading means an active interactive process that takes place between the reader and the text. All the four teachers said and were observed using silent reading strategy. As soon as a teacher or a learner had read the passage or story aloud all of them asked learners to be in their groups and read the story silently. T2, T3 and T4 generally explained that they wanted the learners to concentrate on what they were reading and identify the main points to easily answer the questions. T1 explained:

> *"I let learners read silently. The reason is that I want the learners to understand more about what they are reading and pick the main points as individuals."***[T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014]**

However, the researcher observed that all the answers that those teachers said lacked use of comprehension skills to teach learners such as writing of setting, characters, characterisation, main ideas, resolution, et cetera. They just told the learners to read silently without teaching them when, what, how, why the strategy was used. This act does not confirm Vygotsky's (1978) Social Cultural Theory which promotes the idea that the knowledgeable teacher or peer need to scaffold silent reading to the learners.

4.3.8 Summarising strategy

Harris and Hodges (1995, p. 247) define summarisation as a "brief statement that contains the essential ideas of a longer passage or selection". All the four teachers

asked learners to summarise what they read. They asked the learners to summarise the passage by identifying the main ideas of the passage and write them in their own words. The idea was to assess if the learners could manage to identify main ideas and write them in their own words; to show how much they understood what they read in the given story or passage. When the teachers used a literature book, they did not involve learners in summary writing instead they asked them to orally give the plot of the story. Besides, the teachers who used books that were not literature textbooks asked learners to summarise what was read in writing. As such, all the teachers used summarising strategy. Their assertions were as follows:

> *"I ask learners to identify main ideas and write them in their own words. If they manage to do that then it shows how much they understood what they read."* **[T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014]**

> *"I asked learners to summarise because it is one of the questions that the author of the textbook wrote for the learners to do as an exercise. Again I want to see if they have understood what they read".* **[T2, IDI, 17th November, 2014]**

> *"I asked the learners to summarise the passage because I wanted to know whether they have understood it or not after explaining in brief to them before they read it."* **[T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014]**

> *"I ask learners to tell me the plot of the story to check if they have understood the story all not."* **[T4, IDI 14th November, 2014]**

From the four teachers' responses, the researcher concluded that T1, T3 and T4 indicated what is expected of learners after they have read a passage to show that they have understood the passage while T2 was not clear of the reasons for summarising passages on the first part of the answer. When the researcher engaged them in an IDI regarding their comprehension lessons, they said that sometimes they let learners summarise the passage and they also recognised the importance of the strategy. Their

responses were in line with Khoshsima and Tiyar (2014) who emphasised the significance of summarising strategy by saying that it sufficiently improves students' reading comprehension skills. However, all the four teachers were not using it to teach learners comprehension skills but to assess learners' understanding of what was read. The researcher concluded that the teachers casually applied the summarisation strategy despite their acknowledging the advantages that the strategy brings in development of reading comprehension skills.

4.3.9 Monitoring comprehension (clarification)

In this strategy the reader self-monitors his or her understanding of what is being read. In this regard, monitoring comprehension stipulates that a reader should be aware of what he or she understands, identify what is not understood and use the appropriate strategies to resolve comprehension problems. T1 and T2 were observed using the monitoring comprehension (clarification) strategy in the classroom. However, T3 and T4 did not use this strategy. T1 and T2 asked learners to explain what the story they had just read was all about. The researcher observed that some learners could say it in a chronological order but others were not. Such a question made learners come up with the characters and main points of the story or passage. As the learners were coming up with the main ideas, the teachers could assist the learners with more explanations. In this way, the main points were being clarified and the learners' facial expressions and the nodding of their heads could confirm that they were now able to understand the story or passage. This finding concurred with Harvey and Goudvis, (2007) and Medina (2012) who stated that monitoring comprehension strategy enables the reader to identify the main ideas, restate what is read and looks back or forward in the text for specific information. However, the researcher observed that T1 and T2 did

not use this strategy fully as it stipulates. The two teachers did not let learners identify what they failed to understand and how to resolve such problems. The inadequacy in the use of this strategy concurs with Kabita's (2015) finding which states that the teachers were limited in knowledge to use the monitoring strategy satisfactorily.

4.3.10 Question answering

The purpose in question answering strategy is to teach learners to analyse questions in order to effectively respond to questions. None of the teachers was observed teaching the learners how to answer questions during the reading of the passage to keep track of what they were reading as required in this strategy. The researcher observed that all the four teachers were asking learners questions before reading the passage or story and learners answered orally. Generally, all the four teachers said that they asked learners to answer questions that were written at the end of the passage to assess how learners understood the passage. For instance, four teachers asked the following questions:

T1 asked,

> "*Explain the meaning of the following words and a phrase as used in the passage: designate and replenished, fiery speeches.*"

T2 asked,

> "*Why did the girl run to the scene of strike?*"

T3 asked,

> "*Explain two misunderstanding traits of Branko Oblak.*"

T4 asked,

> "*Describe two themes in the story 'They sold my sister'?*"

Further, the researcher observed teachers marking the learners' answers at the end of the lesson to assess if the learners had grasped the main ideas in the passage or story.

This action confirmed that all the four teachers were inadequately teaching learners the question answering skill but concentrated on assessing the learners' understanding of what they read. In this regard, the expectation was that the learners would answer questions orally or written to assess the extent to which the learners had grasped the question answering strategy without the teacher demonstrating how to do it. The researcher also observed that all the four teachers included the following: question and answer, pair or group discussion, explanation, et cetera in the schemes and records of work as strategies they were going to use during comprehension but never filled how these were done, in work done column. Besides, mainly the provision of answers was done by the learners. The researcher also deemed the teachers' use of question answering strategy as incorrect because they were not teaching learners skills for answering comprehension questions.

4.3.11 Cooperative learning

In cooperative learning, teachers plan for learners to work in small groups to assist one another to learn after the teacher has given instructions on what to work on. T1 and T2 were observed using cooperative learning strategy. Additionally, T1 and T2 responded that they instructed learners to read in pairs or have group work so that they learn from each other in the attempt to understand the passage. As a matter of fact, there was no evidence of learners in the groups writing visual representations of main ideas or semantic graphics (to focus on concepts) to understand what they read. Two issues were observed regarding the groups. Firstly, the sizes of the groups were variable. Schools A, B, C and D had the following maximum numbers of students: 5, 7, 7 and 8 per group respectively. Only school A had maximum of five learners per group which concurred with Odwan (2012) who posited that sizes of small groups of

either four or five learners elaborate different levels of ability corresponding to the variety of learning activities. Secondly, the reasons for engaging the learners into groups were at variance with cooperative learning objectives. According to responses from all the teachers, group work was not necessarily used as cooperative learning strategy as it mainly addressed the shortage of textbooks and not for teaching learners comprehension skills.

All teachers said that learners were encouraged to read in groups because the books were not adequate. For instance, T4 complained of the book shortage in the vernacular language, *Chichewa* then explained further in English.

> *"Mabukualipoochepandiyeanawaakhozakuchokeramoasaphunziraken akalikonse*(We have books but very few for use by all learners. As such some learners may not be able to follow the story in the books). Just imagine nine copies of *Looking for a rain god and other stories from Africa"* as you saw them were shared among over fifty learners."**[T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014]**

The teacher's tone and gestures showed great concern and disappointment at the shortage of books to allow effective teaching of comprehension lessons.

T1 showed some element of appreciation and use of cooperative learning as explained in the following quote:

> *"Besides addressing the shortage of textbooks, I encourage group work to let learners learn from one another on how to identify the right answers to questions. This is helps them a lot"*.**[T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014]**

T1's use of cooperative learning strategy concurred with Social Cultural Theory which states that learning takes place in a socially constructive process. The researcher however, concludes that the cooperative learning strategy was not well attempted. This is so as the practices that were described and were observed did not

conform to the principles of cooperative learning which require teachers to ensure that learners learn together to negotiate meaning or construct new information to achieve a required goal(s) (Kagan, 1995; Durukan, 2011;Odwni, 2012).

In summary, responding to the second research question, eleven strategies were either observed or teachers mentioned that they use them. The researcher categorised the teaching strategies that teachers used as follows: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations), think-aloud (reading aloud), story structure, vocabulary, repeated reading (reading three or more times), silent reading, comprehension monitoring (clarifying), generation of questions, question answering, cooperative and summarising. The findings also established that the teachers did not appropriately use the strategies and that they encountered challenges in using comprehension teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills.

4.4 How teachers implement the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension

To answer the third specific research question that sought to find out how teachers implement the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension lessons, the study analysed at what stage of the lesson was a strategy used and how it was used. Data was generated through observing comprehension lessons, conducting IDI with the teachers as well as conducting FGDs with the learners. After analysing the data, the researcher identified three reading stages during which the teachers implemented comprehension teaching strategies.

This section presents the results of this study on how the four teachers implemented the following teaching strategies: predicting, think-aloud (reading aloud), repeated

reading (reading three or more times), generation of questions, vocabulary, story structure (elements of literature), silent reading, summarising, monitoring comprehension (clarification), question answering and cooperative learning, through the three reading stages. Sample responses with direct quotations are provided below to illustrate various scenarios on how these strategies were implemented before, during and after reading stages of reading comprehension lessons. Table 13 shows the stages at which particular strategies were implemented by the teachers of English in the four schools.

Table 13: Teaching strategies used in each reading stage

Teaching strategy used	Pre-reading	During reading	Post reading
1. Predicting	T1,T2, T3, T4		
2. Thinking-aloud (Reading aloud)		T1, T2, T3, T4	
3. Repeated Strategy (Reading three times or more)		T1, T4	T1, T4
4. Generation of questions	T1, T2, T3, T4		T1, T2, T3, T4
5. Vocabulary	T1, T2, T3, T4	T1, T2, T3, T4	T1, T2, T3, T4
6. Story structure (elements of literature)			T1, T4
7. Silent reading		T1, T2, T3, T4	
8. Summarising			T1, T2, T3, T4
9. Monitoring comprehension (clarification)		T1, T2	T1, T2
10. Question answering	T1, T2, T3, T4		T1, T2, T3,T4
11. Cooperative learning			T1, T2

Source: Researcher's data analysis (2014)

The results in table 13 indicate that four strategies were used during the pre-reading stage, five strategies during reading and eight strategies during the post reading stage. Next are the details on how these strategies were implemented in pre-reading, during reading and post reading stages and why.

4.4.1 Teaching strategies used in pre-reading stage

This sub-section presents strategies that teachers used in the pre-reading stage and how the strategies were employed. The researcher observed the teachers using the different strategies during pre-reading stage. These were: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations), generation of questions, vocabulary and question answering.

4.4.1.1 Predicting (title, illustration, skimming and scanning)

Predicting strategy involves guessing what a reader is going to read based on background knowledge related to information available in the text. It is done to activate prior knowledge that is believed to be used to connect to the information in the text for easy understanding of what is being read. This is done through skimming, scanning, use of title, illustrations et cetera. The researcher observed that all four teachers used it before learners read the passage only. For instance, the researcher observed that learners could think and talk about the topics like 'discrimination', 'the strike', 'they sold my sister' et cetera. They could connect the strike, discrimination, dowry payment scenarios and experiences that they had or heard about in real life situation to what they were about to read. The teachers could also ask learners to find certain words and expressions from the text before reading and come up with their meanings. However, though teachers and learners claimed to use skimming they failed to explain how it is used in order to predict what they were about to read. Besides, the researcher did not observe the teachers teaching learners how to predict through skimming. That failure indicated that the teachers did not teach learners explicitly how to skim.

117

When all the four teachers were asked to explain how they implement predicting strategy, their answers were similar. In summary, all the four teachers said that they ask learners to scan the words that are written on the chalkboard or highlighted in the text to draw the learners' attention. This is done to let them focus on the passage. They sometimes ask learners questions on what experience they have either daily or the one they had in the past pertaining to what they are about to read or something related to the title of the passage to activate their prior knowledge and predict what they are about to read.

Further, in practice only T2was observed asking the learners questions to keep track of the purpose for reading, identify and discuss difficult words, phrases and concepts (scanning) in the text in details. For example, he asked the learners several questions that are directly quoted.

> *"Have you ever heard about the word strike? Who has ever witnessed any strike? Where? What happened? What can you predict about what we are going to read from the passage entitled 'The Strike'? Open your books at page 122 and tell me what you see in the picture."***[T2, Class Observation, 13th November, 2014]**

Additionally, asking learners' to recall the past experience in real life situation to connect to new information assisted learners to understand the new passage. Pre-reading strategies that include prediction actively involve learners in identification of themes, concepts and vocabulary of the text to stimulate the learners' background knowledge about the topic (Schoenbach, 1999; Pardo, 2004). However, the researcher observed that the predicting strategy that all teachers implemented did not teach learners to come up with themes, concepts and vocabulary of the text they were about

to read. Furthermore, the teachers did not make learners confirm their predictions after reading. The findings indicated that the teachers' use of predicting strategy fell short of the principles of the strategy as some important steps of the research-based predicting process were not implemented.

4.4.1.2 Generation of questions

In this strategy, teachers teach learners the skill of how to focus and ask questions on the main ideas related to the information that activates learners' prior knowledge before reading the actual story or text. All the four teachers were observed asking learners questions before reading the story or passage; to let the learners activate their prior knowledge and prepare their minds for comprehension. However, no teacher was observed asking learners to practise asking questions that would let them predict what they were about to read. This indicated that the strategy was not implemented as required because learners were not taught to ask the right questions. The findings of this study concur with Mudzielwana (2015) who asserted that lack of teacher's knowledge in a strategy results in learners' lack of skill to control their learning.

4.4.1.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary strategy refers to the "actions set of techniques or language teaching skills that the teacher teaches learners to discover the meanings of new words so that learners retain them in long term memory" (Carranza, Manga, Dio, Jamora & Romero,2015). As such, teachers need to let learners develop comprehension skills that focus on higher-order processes (mental abilities) for them to find the meaning, identify main ideas and integrate information from what they read. All this require good level of word knowledge. T1, T2 and T3 only discussed with the learners some

of the difficult words or expressions during scanning. T4 who used literature book only did not teach learners vocabulary in this stage but asked learners to give meaning to few words in post reading stage. Not much of strategies for learning vocabulary was observed being taught by the four teachers in pre-reading stage. Despite the fact that the following learners: L1, L3, L4, L8, L10, L16 and L24 responded during IDI that they use dictionaries or guess as the word has been used in context, the learners were not observed practising how to come up with meanings of words.

The findings of this study contradicts (Carranza, Manga, Dio, Jamora & Romero,2015) study which revealed that the students oftentimes used strategies in learning vocabulary such as reading books and other materials, looking for clues in sentences and use of the dictionary to find the unfamiliar words. This indicated that the implementation of vocabulary as a strategy to teach learners comprehension skills was poorly done.

4.4.1.4 Question answering

This is a strategy that requires the skill of knowing if the type of question is low or high order question in order to answer appropriately. Low order questions have answers given in the text while high order questions are those that require thinking and more understanding of what has been read in order to answer correctly and appropriately. In this regard, high order questions require application. Despite the fact that the teachers were observed using question answering strategy, none of them was observed explicitly teaching learners the question answering skill. The teachers only asked the learners questions to activate their background knowledge. The findings indicate that the teachers lacked understanding of the strategy which led them to fail

to properly teach the strategy as they did not explicitly teach the learners how to answer questions. The finding concurs with Bruwer's (2013) who posits that teachers who do not know a strategy consequently do not teach it. The result was that most learners failed to answer the questions with ease and correctly. According to SCT, the teachers' modelling and explicit teaching result in learning that takes place in the learner and he or she internalises the skill and uses it independently later.

4.4.2 Teaching strategies used during reading stage

This sub-section presents the teaching strategies that the researcher observed being used during reading. In general the teachers used the following: Reading aloud (thinking-aloud), vocabulary, monitoring comprehension (clarification), repeated reading (reading three or more times) and silent reading.

4.4.2.1 Thinking – aloud (reading aloud)

According to Beers (2003), oral-thinking does not only help the teacher to understand why or how a student is facing challenges with a text but also give the opportunity to let the learners themselves analyse how they think as individuals. As such he suggested some of the steps to follow. Unfortunately, all the four teachers inadequately attempted to use some of the steps involved in thinking-aloud strategy. Table 14 presents the eight steps.

Table 14: Steps used in think-aloud strategy

1.	First model thinking aloud.
2.	Before you begin to think aloud, tell students that as you read a passage aloud, you will be stopping to think through what you are reading.
3.	As you read the text stop frequently to talk about how you are analysing what happened in the text.
4.	As you stop to report out, give students a verbal or visual cue that you are switching from reading the text to thinking aloud.
5.	Sometimes as you report out, write your comments down on a transparency as you make them.
6.	After you have modelled thinking aloud a few times, have students try it on a portion of the text with a partner.
7.	Provide ample opportunities for students to practice think- aloud.
8.	Lastly give students a chance to reflect on how the think-aloud has changed their reading habits.

Source: Beers (2003) (p. 123 -125)

The strategy involves eight steps which engage both the teachers and learners. The teacher begins with modelling of thinking aloud and winds up with learners given a chance to reflect on how to think-aloud which changes their reading habits. All the four teachers could not model how to think-aloud or intervene when one of the learners or the teacher herself or himself was reading to discuss the main ideas read. Instead, all the four teachers were observed reading aloud in order to let learners' mispronounced words be corrected and to address the shortage of textbooks. Further, some teachers said that they tell learners the whole story in brief. For instance, T3 explained the steps she goes through in this strategy:

> *"I read the passage to the learners and explain to them what the story is all about."***[T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014]**

T3 showed that she was thinking for the learners. Besides, all the four teachers' responses and the researcher's observations indicated that they did not fully

implement think-aloud strategy. The reason was that they knew very little about this strategy.

Further, the researcher observed the strategy was being implemented to a very limited extent, in a manner that was not satisfactory in that some important steps were not implemented. The study, thus, concludes that the unsatisfactory use of the strategies was due to the teachers' lack of appropriate skills. This finding concurs with Mudzielwana (2013) who posited that teachers ineffectively taught learners comprehension strategies because they lacked appropriate knowledge. Further, the current study did not observe either the teachers or learners making connections, monitoring understanding, stopping to summarise, or asking questions about what they were reading (Beers 2003).

4.4.2.2 Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is a critical tool in language learning because every language is based on words; as such it is important that teachers teach learners this skill. All the four teachers were observed correcting learners' mispronounced words during reading aloud strategy. They also gave learners meanings of the difficult words or asked the other learners to say what they think could be the meanings. Once the learners failed the teachers could give meanings either in English or in vernacular. Besides, the researcher observed that learners in T1 and T2 classrooms were giving meanings of words in vernacular when they were reading in their groups and the learners confirmed this during FGD. Then during IDI, the researcher asked the teachers to explain how they teach learners vocabulary. In response to this the four teachers responded as follows:

*"In the past we used to teach vocabulary first before reading the story but these days due to the integration system it is hard to teach that because it is taught as we are teaching learners how to read with understanding. I just tell learners to ask me, peers, guess from how it has been used in context or check in the dictionary."***[T1 IDI 19th November, 2014]**

*"I encourage them to read the sentence more than once and get the meaning depending on how it has been used in context if this fails they should check in the dictionary."***[T2, IDI, 17th November, 2014]**

*"Most learners fail to understand what they read because of the difficult words that the writers of books use. Sometimes, I ask fellow learners to give meanings of words or I do it myself. The meanings are sometimes given in vernacular or checked in the dictionary."***[T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014]**

*"I tell the learners to read the sentence more than twice and get its meaning as it has been used in context or look up in the dictionary."***[T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014]**

The responses indicate that all the teachers were not confident because of the facial expression they displayed when answering about the best practice that they could use to teach learners this skill of getting meanings of words. It was also observed that learners were not given opportunity to practice this strategy. The researcher observed that all the teachers had problems to teach vocabulary in order to teach learners the skill and use it when reading for comprehension. The findings of this study are in line with Schmitt and McCarthy (1997), which indicated that teaching vocabulary may be problematic because many teachers are not confident about the best practice. According to Schmitt and McCarthy (1997), the three proposed strategies to learn vocabulary are: guessing from the context; using word parts and mnemonic techniques to remember words (using key word techniques) or looking up in the dictionary. In this case, the four teachers' strategy of getting meaning from context and looking up in the dictionary concurred with Schmitt and McCarthy. However,

from their responses actual implementation to teach learners this skill of guessing the meaning from the context was a challenge because of learners' level of proficiency in L2. As such, all the four teachers inadequately implemented this strategy and yet according to SCT by Vygotsky (1978) that guided this study, support the notion that explicit teaching should be done to let a learner learn in context. The weakness of SCT considered teachers who used teaching strategies as psychological tools when teaching learners as knowledgeable people. However, the results indicated that the learners failed to use, internalise and practice the skills.

4.4.2.3 Monitoring comprehension (clarification)

Monitoring comprehension (clarification), according to Zygouris-Coe (2009), is a strategy that involves reading for purpose, asking questions, reading and looking back at a chart or other important information of the text, predicting, solving word problems or synthesising what has been read to check understanding of content. Further, NRP (2000) defined monitoring strategy as a strategy that enables a reader to self-monitor whether a reader understands what is being read and comes up with strategies to solve the problem. The researcher observed that out of the four teachers; only two teachers T1 &T2 were implementing this strategy. T1 and T2 were observed asking learners questions that learners could get answers from the passage and those that required explanation about the information in the text, to clarify the main points and assess learners' understanding of the passage. However, the teachers did not explicitly give learners opportunity to practice it. The teachers implemented the strategy inconsistently with the requirements. The two teachers' implementation of this strategy fell short of the principles of monitoring comprehension strategy in that

the teachers were not observed explicitly teaching the learners self-monitoring strategy. These findings are in line with NRP, 2000 and Zygouris-Coe, 2009.

4.4.2.4 Repeated reading (reading three or more times)

Repeated reading is the instruction that teachers use in order to increase reading fluency rate and accuracy of reading to understand what they read and value the text. T1 and T4 just told the learners to read three or more times to understand what they were reading before responding to the questions. Both teachers did not teach the learners to read a short passage three or more times and later ask them questions to tell the extent of understanding at each reading. In this case, learners were not given a chance to practice using the strategy for purposes of understanding the passage. Besides, both teachers were not observed monitoring the level of the learners understanding so that if they still failed to understand they could instruct them to read again from different perspectives as the repeated reading strategy stipulates. However, the researcher observed that the way T1 and T4 implemented this strategy contradicts Beers (2003) who posits that re-reading encourages struggling learners to value the text. This was so because learners were not given a chance to practice using the strategy for purposes of understanding the passage.

4.4.2.5 Silent reading

In this strategy, learners read silently for purposes of concentrating on what they were reading. As soon as the reading aloud was over, the researcher observed that all the four teachers asked learners to be in groups and read silently. The teachers did not instruct learners how to monitor their understanding of what they read. Scaffolded reading stipulates that the teacher should teach learners what to do, how, when and

why as they read silently. In this case, the teachers did not use the scaffolded silent reading (ScSR) which requires the teachers to provide structure, accountability and ways of monitoring what they read as they read silently. Good use of silent reading strategy concurs with the principles of SCT in that this strategy promotes internalisation process (Vygotsky, 1978). Besides, learning according to SCT takes place in a social cultural context in which a teacher has a scaffolding role to play.

4.4.3 Teaching strategies used in post reading stage

This sub-section presents the teaching strategies that the researcher observed the teachers using in post reading stage. These were: cooperative learning, monitoring comprehension (clarification), story structure (elements of literature), generation of questions, vocabulary, question answering, and summarising.

4.4.3.1 Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning refers to classroom organisation that ensures that learners learn together to negotiate meaning or construct new information to achieve a required goal(s) (Kagan, 1995; Rahavard, 2000; & Durukan, 2011). The researcher observed that only two teachers took steps to implement cooperative learning. T1 and T2 involved learners in group work that was meaningful. During IDI, T1 and T2 responded that they employed this strategy because of two reasons. These were: to enable learners to negotiate meaning of what was read interactively in order to answer the questions correctly and to solve the problem of inadequate textbooks. T3 and T4 did not use groups for purposes of cooperative learning but rather to address the shortage of books.

To confirm the implementation of this strategy, all the learners, which represented 100 per cent, said that they were engaged in group discussions. Besides, all learners said that they read while in groups because books were inadequate and the researcher observed that that was true. Further, during FGD the learners for T1 and T2 responded that they were discussing meanings of words in vernacular to understand both the information in the text and the questions, in order to answer the questions correctly. On the contrary, learners for T3 and T4 were not involved in fruitful group discussion. It was ironical that instead of sharing ideas the teachers let learners share textbooks as the fundamental reason for the pairing or grouping of learners according to the responses of all the four teachers.

The findings of this study based on how T1 and T2 implemented the strategy; and it is in line with Rahaman, (2014) who posited that group work is one of the major activities for generating ideas of any written piece of text because it facilitates EFL learners to read in social perspective. This also concurs with SCT in that learning takes place through social interaction. Indeed T1 and T2, who used group work as an activity in cooperative learning strategy, encouraged learners to be more interactive and socialised while learning in the classroom. This confirmed that learning is a social process as emphasised by SCT (Vygotsky, 1978).

The learners were required to think, talk and write the main ideas about the topic of the text. However, no learner was observed writing the main ideas about the topic and shared in a group, which is an important activity in this strategy. In this regard, no teacher was observed explicitly teaching the learners comprehension skills as the cooperative learning strategy stipulates. T1 and T2 did not explicitly teach learners

this comprehension skill by telling them what, when, why and how to learn interactively as this strategy demands. Therefore, T1 and T2 implemented this strategy but inadequately.

4.4.3.2 Monitoring comprehension (clarification)

Monitoring strategies are strategies that enable a reader to self-monitor whether he or she understands what is read and comes up with strategies to solve the problem. Thus, in monitoring comprehension strategy the learner acquires the following comprehension skills: being aware of what is read, identifying what they do not understand, using appropriate strategies to understand the material and to resolve problems in comprehension. Only two teachers, T1 & T2, were observed implementing this strategy. The teachers did not explicitly give learners opportunity to practice it. The two teachers' implementation of this strategy fell short of the principles of monitoring comprehension strategy in that the teachers were not observed explicitly teaching learners self-monitoring strategy. According to her observation, T1 and T2 could implicitly teach learners to be aware of what was read by just telling learners to come up with main points and retelling the story instead of teaching them how to generate questions and predict what they were going to read to self-monitor their reading.

Both teachers were not observed teaching learners how to identify what they did not understand, to use appropriate strategies to understand the material and to resolve problems in comprehension. In this regard, T1 and T2 were observed implicitly teaching learners how to monitor the understanding of what they were reading. The researcher also confirmed this fact when she observed that no learner practised this

strategy. Teachers' lack of knowledge about importance of using comprehension strategies led to learners' failure to use the strategies sufficiently (Mudzielwana, 2013). However, T1 and T2 were unable to sufficiently implement this strategy as relevant steps were not addressed.

4.4.3.3 Story structure (elements of literature)

Story structure strategy is the use of the structure of the story as a means of helping the learner to read story content in order to answer questions about what they have read such as the use of a story map. A "story map" is a time line showing the sequence of events in a text or a semantic map showing the meaning of relationships between events or concepts in the text, regardless of their order" (Harris &Hodges 1995, pp. 243-244). The researcher observed T1 and T4 using story structure strategy that enabled learners to recall content of the story to answer questions about what they had read. For example, T1 and T4 taught the learners how to retell the main points in the passage. There was no observation made on story structure strategy being implemented by T2 and T3 who did not use literature books. Additionally, T1 was not observed employing this strategy when she used a book which was not a literature book. The researcher concluded that T1 and T4 selected the use of story structure strategy only when they were teaching literature during the integration teaching approach. However, both of them did not use explicit instructions to explain why, when, and how to model the procedures. Modelling of strategies is important because learners have an opportunity to learn and see how to apply the strategy (Mudzielwana, 2013).

Furthermore, the researcher did not observe the use of visual representation activities like the fishbone action, and story maps that are important elements that make up a narrative passage. Further, as stated in the previous sections, only the teachers that used literature textbooks employed this strategy. T4 was observed telling learners what the whole story was all about instead of asking learners to do it after demonstration. T4 confirmed this observation when explaining the process she undertook to implement the strategy.

> *"I tell learners what the whole story is all about in order to guide them. Chifukwatuanaamasikuanokupandakuterosangamve passage yonsekomansoamalakwakwambiri. (Without assisting them in this manner, today's learners cannot learn and they fail badly)."***[T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014]**

Teaching comprehension in this manner beats the essence of the strategy as learners do not actively learn the skills. Furthermore, the perspective of such teachers was that the learners should understand the passage or story they were reading and not teaching learners the comprehension skills so that they become self-directed in identification of main ideas and understanding of what they read. Further, this finding contradicts Adler's (2013) observation that the teacher needs to let the learners indicate that they have understood what was read through: writing, dramatizing, playing, singing or debating and so forth. T1 and T4's use of the strategy was closer to what this strategy stipulates. However, the results indicated that T1 and T4 attempted to implement the story structure strategy in ways that did not teach learners comprehension skills because they did not explicitly teach the learners the story structure strategy.

4.4.3.4 Generation of questions

Generation of questions is a strategy that enables learners to understand what is being read. In this strategy, teachers teach learners the skill of how to focus and ask questions on the main ideas related to the information that activates learners' prior knowledge before reading the actual story or text, during and after reading stages. All the four teachers were observed asking learners questions before reading the story or passage to let the learners activate their prior knowledge and prepare their minds for comprehension. However, no teacher was observed asking learners to practise asking questions that would let them predict what they were about to read, they were reading or they had read. This study found that the teachers concentrated on letting learners answer questions that were written at the end of the passage, in post reading stage. What the researcher of this study observed and found through oral interview from learners as well as teachers concurs with Pressley et al. (1998). She found that despite the availability of question generation strategy, teachers did not use it effectively and consequently the learners' comprehension was poor. All the teachers preferred post-reading comprehension questions to test learners' understanding of what were read and not to teach them to understand what they were reading, to acquire comprehension skills.

This is contrary to the requirements of this strategy that demands teaching learners to comprehend the text through generation of questions by both teachers and learners interactively. The following were the responses as to why teachers employ these strategies:

> *"I use questioning technique to teach learners how to answer questions correctly. I also follow Bloom Taxonomy's way of asking questions."* **[T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014]**

132

*"I teach learners to read the questions either before or soon after reading the passage so that they have an idea on where to find answers to the questions that are written in the text and I follow Bloom taxonomy."***[T2, IDI, 17th November, 2014]**

*"I follow Bloom Taxonomy when asking learners questions which begin with recall questions and then those that require them to give answers according to how they understand the passage."***[T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014]**
*"I use Bloom Taxonomy as I was trained in college."***[T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014]**

The responses indicated that the teachers did not use the questions to teach learners how to understand what they were reading but to assess how the learners had understood the story or passage. Their responses contradict what the questioning strategy stipulates. This was an indication that the teachers were not implementing this strategy correctly. For instance, Beck, McKeown, Sandora and Worthy (1996) developed the Questioning the Author (QtA) comprehension technique. These questions are asked before, during and after reading of a text. In this regard, the teacher moves through six steps in QtA strategy. According to Simarmata et al. (2012), these are: select a reading text; identify stopping points where students may need to obtain a deeper understanding; create questions to encourage higher-order thinking; present the passage to learners using one to two questions; use "think-aloud" to model for students how to think through the questions; ask students to read the passage and work through the questions. This strategy has proved to motivate learners to ask the right questions, share new ideas and gather other people's perspectives (Trehearne & Doctorow, 2009; Scott, 2009).

Regarding this study it is doubtful if the learners learned much of question generation use. The researcher observed that both teachers and learners contributed to the inadequate use. T3 explained the learners' failure to ask questions;

> *"Learners do not want to ask questions in class or answer any question because amaopa kulakwitsa. People laugh at him or her, ndiye amachita manyazi. (They are shy of friends in case they get it wrong.)"* **[T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014]**

The researcher observed and confirmed the above assertion during FGD that the learners were really laughed at when they failed to express what they intended to say.

Additionally, the researcher observed that the teachers did not explicitly teach the questioning skill by giving them the opportunity to generate their own questions. This contradicts Vygotsky's (1978) SCT, which states that social interaction with the competent teacher or peers results in learning. As such, the findings of this study revealed that the learners were not given opportunity to practice asking own questions because the teachers did not implement the generation of questions strategy as it stipulates.

4.4.3.5 Vocabulary

Vocabulary strategy involves the use of context clues, word analysis, dictionary skills and so on. Except T4, all the teachers were observed asking learners to give meanings of words they had read as part of the questions. The teachers confirmed that learners face challenges because of difficult words that impaired the understanding of what they read. This finding concurs Caranza, et al.(2015) findings, which indicated that learners have difficulty in learning vocabulary. T3 said:

*"Sometimes I tell them [learners] in vernacular (Chichewa) the meanings of difficult words and even what the passage or story read is all about."***[T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014]**

The quote shows that among other techniques, the teacher uses vernacular which has been found to be a less effective strategy in teaching learners target language vocabulary. The teacher was not letting learners acquire the skill for future use. Regarding the teacher's use of such strategy, Chisamba established that vernacular lowers the rate of comprehension in learners as they were expected to answer in the target language (English). The finding of this study concurs with Chisamba (2014) in that the learners' vocabulary was low. Thus, vocabulary is about knowing words and their meanings as used in that language, as such translation has low positive effect on the learner as the same word may change meaning when used in a different context.

Regarding strategies that work, Harvey and College (2007) posited that vocabulary cannot be taught, but most vocabulary words are learnt through reading. What T1, T2, and T4 except T3concurred with this assertion. In this case, the assumption is that the more the learners comprehend the more one learns new vocabulary. However, vocabulary in L2 still requires the teacher to assist learners with strategies in order to get the meanings of words such as the use of context clues. This is in line with SCT which states that learning occurs when teachers or competent peers interact with the learner and uses psychological tools.

4.4.4.6 Question answering

The essence of question answering strategy is that it enables learners to respond to questions posed by the teacher and receive immediate feedback (NRP, 2000).

Question answering is the mostly used strategy as means to assess success of the learner. All the teachers mentioned that they marked the learners' answers at the end of the comprehension lessons. They said that the aim was to assess if learners had grasped the main ideas in the passage. For instance, all teachers said that they expected the learners to answer questions orally or in writing, to assess the extent to which the learners had understood what was read. T1 explained the following:

> *"Mainly, the learners provide answers to the questions. The questions are asked at the end of the lesson. I do not answer questions for learners."* **T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014]**

None of the teachers responded that he or she teaches the learners how to answer questions throughout the reading of the passage to keep track of what they were reading, as required in this strategy. Further, failure to teach learners how to answer questions during reading impedes them to monitor or activate prior knowledge, to understand what they are reading, in order to clarify and respond to questions correctly. The responses indicated that the teachers used question answering strategy incorrectly.

The responses indicated that the teachers did not use the questions to teach learners how to understand what they were reading but to assess how the learners had understood the story or passage. Their responses contradict what the questioning strategy stipulates. This was an indication that the teachers were not implementing this strategy correctly. It was observed that all the four teachers concentrated on generating questions during pre-reading stage and post reading and not during reading stages. Additionally, the researcher observed that the teachers did not explicitly teach the questioning skill by giving them the opportunity to generate their own questions.

The findings of this study revealed that the way the four teachers asked the questions did not explicitly teach the learners generation of questions skill as it demands.

4.4.4.7Summarising

Summarising, according to Harris and Hodges (1999, p. 247), is a "brief statement that contains the essential ideas of a longer passage or selection. All the teachers asked learners to summarise what they read. The teachers used the summarising strategy if the passage was not picked from the literature book and they used the word plot if the story was picked from a literature book. All the teachers were observed asking the learners to summarise the passage by identifying the main ideas of the passage and write them in their own words.

In this study, all teachers stated that most learners failed to summarise passages or stories. T2 reported that,

> *"Summarising a passage is difficult because it requires adequate time and must not include or involve integrating it with other topics such as grammar and literature."*

Further, some teachers expressed the scanty process they use to teach learners summarising skills. For instance, T1 is directly quoted explaining the steps she instructs the learners to follow during summarising.

> *"I define what summary is. Then I tell them to use own words and join sentences with linking words. I tell them not to copy but use simple words. However, most learners fail because of lack of appropriate words to use."***[T1, IDI, 19th November, 2014]**

This explanation is not adequate to enable learners learn and acquire skills on how to summarize a story or passage as it is taught implicitly without actual practice by way of modelling. Additionally, three teachers described the challenges that learners face in summarizing passages due to lack of comprehension skills.

137

"Learners have difficulties in summary writing; therefore they just copy the sentences (word lifting). They find it hard to put all the important words together to match with the required number of words indicated in the question." **[T2, IDI, 17th November, 2014]**

"Although I teach them how to sum up, they fail and some of them fail to search for the main points." **[T3, IDI, 18th November, 2014]**

"I tell learners to look for the main points and write in their own words. Most learners fail because it is time consuming and learners fail to use their own words, instead they just copy from the passage." **[T4, IDI, 14th November, 2014]**

The researcher's class observation and the teachers assertions regarding the implementation of this strategy was that the teachers were not scaffolding learners to assist learners when teaching summary writing. From the teachers' responses, the statements indicated that the teachers did not explicitly teach the learners summarising strategy, failed to guide learners or asked learners to work in groups so that the competent ones should teach fellow peers. In this regard, the SCT that states that learning is a social process was not utilised to facilitate learning in the ZPD (Vygosky, 1978). Therefore, teachers did not commit adequate effort and time to implement summarizing strategy.

Finally, in this study, the researcher observed that four research-based higher-order thinking strategies were not implemented by the teachers. These were two single strategies: Meta-cognitive strategy and Graphics and semantic organisers and two multiple strategies: Reciprocal Teaching and Transactional Strategy Instruction.

In summary, the four teachers implemented the strategies in pre-reading, during reading and post reading stages. In pre-reading stage, the teachers implemented the following: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations), generation of questions, vocabulary and question answering. In during reading stage, the

following strategies were implemented: think-aloud (reading aloud), vocabulary, monitoring comprehension (clarification), repeated reading (reading three or more times) and silent reading. Lastly, in post reading the following were implemented cooperative learning, monitoring comprehension (clarification), story structure (elements of literature), generation of questions, vocabulary, question answering, and summarising. In all the strategies, predicting, monitoring comprehension, story structure and cooperative learning were attempted and fairly taught. On the other hand, the rest of the strategies were attempted but poorly taught. Furthermore, most of the teaching of the strategies failed to achieve their goal of teaching learners comprehension skills.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings on the teachers' use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills. The study established that the teachers knew eleven strategies for teaching comprehension and that their knowledge in the use of the teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills was limited. The study also established that the teachers attempted to implement the eleven strategies they knew with struggles. They all failed to explicitly teach the learners the comprehension skills. The next chapter presents conclusions and implications.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents a brief summary of the whole study in terms of the purpose of the study, conclusions, and implications for practice and areas for future research.

5.1 Conclusion of the findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teachers' use of strategies for teaching comprehension in teaching learners comprehension skills. The main research question was, 'what are the comprehension strategies that teachers of English use to teach the learners comprehension skills?' The sub-questions were: What is the teachers' knowledge of appropriate strategies for teaching comprehension skills? What strategies do teachers use during comprehension lessons? How do teachers implement the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension? The three sub-questions were answered as summarised in the following sections:

5.1.1 Teachers' knowledge of appropriate strategies for teaching comprehension

To address the issue of teachers' knowledge of appropriate strategies for teaching comprehension, the study investigated the strategies that the teachers knew, the extent of their knowledge and the sources of their knowledge of the strategies. Firstly, the

study focused on the appropriate strategies that teachers know to teach learners comprehension skills. It was established that the teachers knew eleven strategies which are; predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title, illustration), think-aloud (reading aloud), repeated reading (reading three or more times), generation of questions, vocabulary, story structure (discussing elements of literature), silent reading, summarising, monitoring comprehension, cooperative learning and question answering. The study further established that the teachers did not know a number of research-based and more effective strategies like: meta-cognitive, graphic and semantic organisers, reciprocal teaching and transactional strategy instruction. However, looking at the number and type of strategies that they know, it can be concluded that the teachers knew a good number of single strategies that could facilitate effective teaching.

As for extent of teachers' knowledge of the strategies, the study established that the teachers' knowledge of appropriate strategies for teaching comprehension was limited. Much as they mentioned the strategies, their explanation on some of the strategies showed lack of proper understanding of the principles and steps to be undertaken in the implementation of the strategies. This was further reflected during lesson observations where the strategies were not properly implemented.

Regarding the sources of the teachers' knowledge of strategies for teaching comprehension, the study established that the teachers had three different sources of obtaining the knowledge of the teaching strategies in comprehension lessons. These were: initial teacher training, from experienced teachers and other sources like Malawi Correspondence of Distance Education sets. Results indicated that initial

teacher training had insufficiently equipped the teachers with adequate knowledge to teach learners comprehension skills. The results also revealed that the knowledge obtained from experienced teachers mostly helped them to use predicting strategy and not teaching learners the skills in comprehension. This means that the help from the experienced teachers was also not adequate to help the teachers under this study to effectively teach learners comprehension skills. It was further established that despite having a number of in-service training workshops, the focus was on general language teaching methods and nothing was offered specifically on strategies for teaching comprehension.

5.1.2 Strategies that teachers use to teach comprehension

Secondly, the study sought to find out the strategies that teachers use during comprehension lessons. The teachers were observed using eleven strategies in total. These were: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title, illustration), think-aloud (reading aloud), repeated reading (reading three or more times), generation of questions, vocabulary, story structure (discussing elements of literature), silent reading, summarising, comprehension monitoring (clarifying), question answering, and cooperative learning. The results of the study indicated that the four teachers inadequately used the strategies except predicting which they performed better. Looking at the number of strategies they attempted and the extent of use, the results indicated that they struggled to use them in comprehension lessons. Besides, they never demonstrated teaching learners the comprehension skills as they were denied opportunity to practice and internalise the strategies.

In summary, the teachers attempted to use eleven strategies but their use of the strategies in comprehension lessons was not appropriate. The findings revealed that the four teachers lacked appropriate knowledge hence the inadequate use in implementation.

5.1.3 How teachers implement the teaching strategies when teaching comprehension

Lastly, the third research question sought to find out how teachers implemented the strategies to teach learners comprehension skills. The results established that the teachers attempted to implement the strategies in three stages namely: pre-reading, during/while reading and post reading. In pre-reading stage the teachers implemented the following strategies: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title and illustrations), generation of questions, vocabulary and question answering.

At least three out of four teachers implemented predicting strategy better than the rest of the strategies but never used it during/while reading which was deemed inadequate use. The other strategies were not explicitly implemented; as such the teachers insufficiently used these strategies to teach learners comprehension skills.

In during/while reading stage the teachers used the following strategies: think-aloud (reading aloud), vocabulary, monitoring comprehension (clarification), repeated reading (reading three or more times) and silent reading. Similarly, in this stage all teachers were not observed explicitly teaching comprehension skills. Besides, the learners were not given opportunity to teach one another or practice to internalise the strategies. Further, no teacher was observed scaffolding the learners to read using

cognitive (mental abilities) strategies to visualise what they were reading for easy understanding. The results indicated that the teachers lacked pedagogical tools to assist learners to develop comprehension skills. In fact all the teachers just told the learners to read aloud without instructing them what or how to think about what they were reading. Then silent reading followed still without telling the learners what to focus on or identify their problems and how to solve them. The results in during/while reading revealed that teachers were not explicitly teaching the learners the comprehension skills demonstrated in their insufficient implementation behaviours.

In post reading stage, the teachers implemented the following strategies: cooperative learning, monitoring comprehension (clarification), story structure (elements of literature), generation of questions, vocabulary, question answering, and summarising. Like in pre-reading and during/while reading stages, the teachers did not explicitly teach learners comprehension skills that could enable them to internalise and use to solve their reading problems in the absence of the teacher. Even the learners confirmed that they find summarising and question answering difficult. In summary, the results revealed that the teachers did not explicitly teach the learners the comprehension skills in post reading stage and learners faced challenges to summarise and even respond to the questions at the end of the lesson.

Finally, the study established that the teachers attempted to use eleven strategies to teach comprehension skills. These were: predicting (skimming, scanning, use of title, illustration), think-aloud (reading aloud), repeated reading (reading three or more times), generation of questions, vocabulary, story structure (discussing elements of literature), silent reading, summarising, comprehension monitoring (clarifying),

144

question answering, and cooperative learning. However, the teachers' minimal knowledge forced them to use the strategies inadequately. The extent to which the teachers knew and used the strategies demonstrated minimal knowledge, hence they insufficiently taught the comprehension lessons and were not able to teach learners comprehension skills. All the teachers were not explicitly teaching the learners the comprehension skills because they lacked appropriate knowledge in what strategies to use, when, how and why due to the inadequate knowledge acquired during initial teacher training, from experienced teachers and other sources that seemed feasible to them.

5.2 Implications of the Study

The implications of the results of this study were that the teachers had minimal appropriate knowledge that resulted in not explicitly teaching and using the strategies as stipulated. The lack of knowledge in teaching strategies in order to teach learners comprehension skills affected the appropriate use of the strategies to achieve that goal. The teachers' initial training as well as in pre-service training lacked comprehension teaching strategies. The researcher's argument is that due to the place that reading holds in the academic world, it is crucial for teachers of English in Malawi to develop the reading skills independently without the support of the knowledgeable educators, during pre- and in-service teacher training, despite the fact that experience makes one perfect the practices. This is in line with SCT which emphasises on the mediation by the expert adults or peers. That is why the teachers' use of comprehension skills remains a challenge. Consequently, the way the teachers implemented the strategies failed to enable learners to learn, practice and internalise the comprehension skills. In this regard, there is need to focus on equipping the

145

teachers with specific teaching strategies during pre-service training and conduct in-service training that specifically addresses teachers' use of skills like comprehension strategies for teaching learners comprehension skills.

5.3 Suggestions for further studies

Based on the key findings, the researcher was convinced that further research is needed in areas such as:

- A study in secondary schools to investigate the learners' classroom activities in comprehension lessons to ensure use of interactive strategies.
- A study on how teachers can obtain adequate teaching strategies knowledge before and after they become professionals.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: An introductory letter from Chancellor College to the EDM of CWED

Principal
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Our Ref.:
Your Ref.:

28th October 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am pleased to introduce to you Mrs Advent Changantuwa-Banda, our final year Master of Education [*Language Education*] student in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies, Faculty of Education. Mrs Banda has finished her course work, which covered a variety of courses in Curriculum Studies and Education Foundations.

As part of the requirements for the Master of Education Program, Mrs Banda has planned to carry out a study on the *teaching of comprehension in secondary schools* in the Central West Education Division (CWED).

I therefore write to kindly ask for your support towards her study as she collects the appropriate data.

I thank you in anticipation for your cooperation and support.

Many thanks

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cc.   Head CATS Department
          Postgraduate Coordinator CATS Department
          Postgraduate Coordinator, Faculty of Education

160

Appendix 2: An introductory letter from the EDM to the selected schools

REF. NO. CWED. ADMIN 2/1   04th November, 2014

FROM: THE EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER(CWED),
           P.O. 98, LILONGWE

TO   :   HEADTEACHERS,
           CENTRAL WEST EDUCATION SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

RE   :   PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA

I write to advise that **Mrs Advent Changantuwa Banda** has been granted permission by Ministry of Education Science and Technology to collect data on the teaching of comprehension in secondary schools for her research in your institution.

You are therefore requested to render to her any assistance she may require in the course of her data collection.

PP E Muletano

Joseph J. Nkhata
EDUCATION DIVISION MANAGER(CWED)
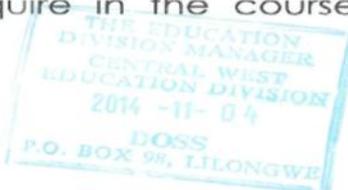
Appendix 3: Samples of Teachers' teaching materials

Figure 1: Teaching materials sample A.
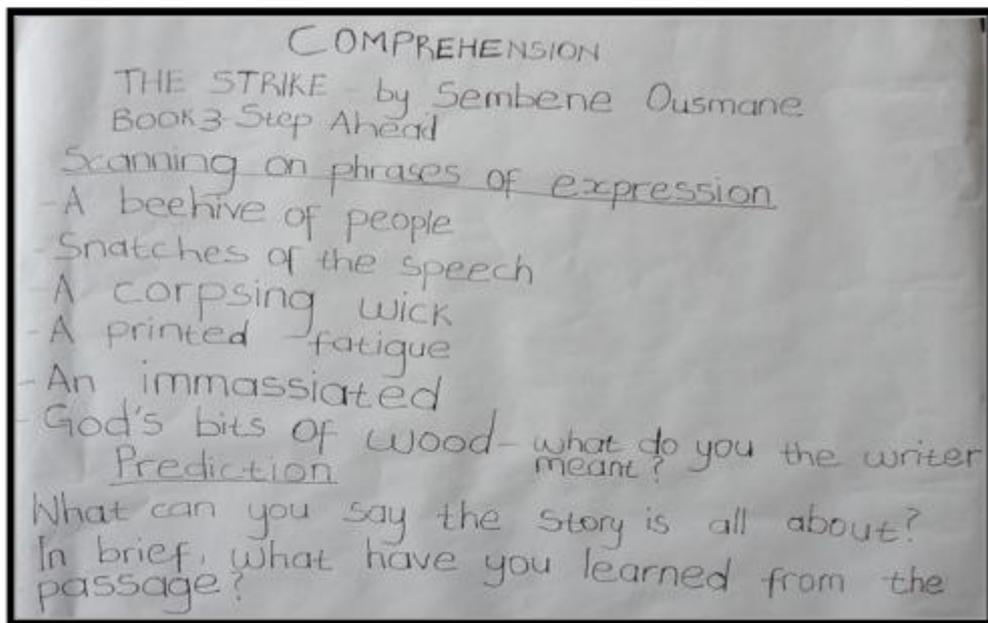
Figure 2: Teaching materials sample B.
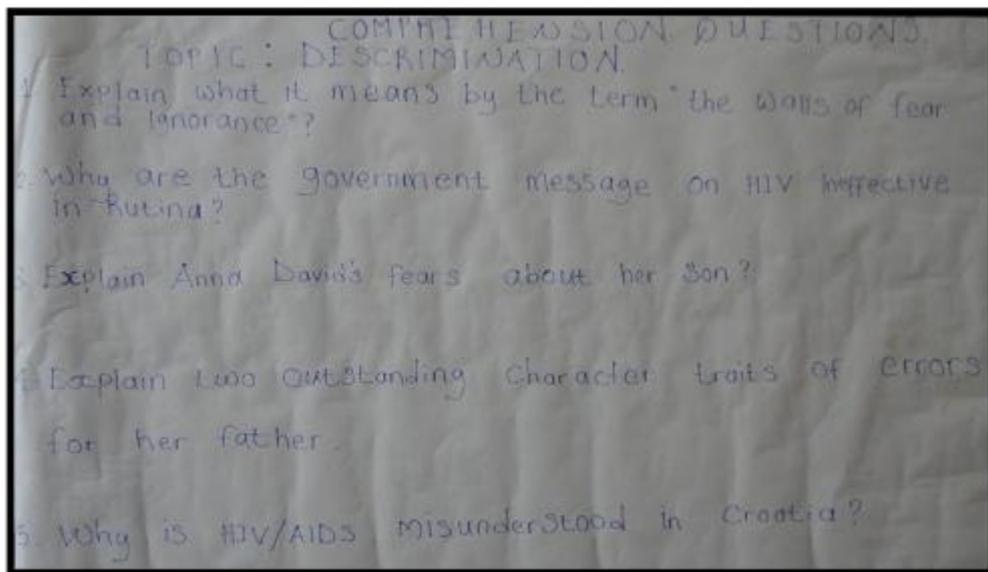
Figure 3: Teaching materials sample C.

Appendix 4: Questionnaires for participants

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What is the teachers' knowledge of appropriate teaching strategies for comprehension skills?

Teacher's training and experience in teaching strategies

1. What is your highest academic qualification?

MSCE	Diploma	Degree

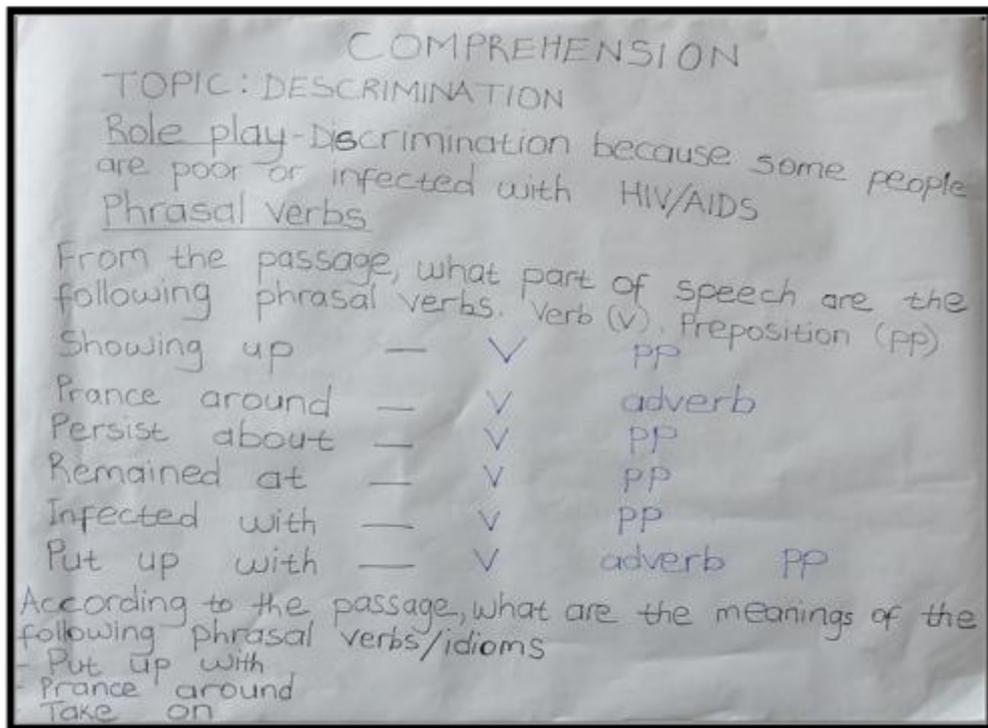2. Were you trained to teach English? (*Probe: Where? For how long?*)
3. How long have you been teaching English? (*Probe: what about at this school?*)
4. To what extent did your training course as a teacher of English help you confidently handle comprehension lessons in the classroom? Explain your answer.

Teacher's knowledge in comprehension lessons

1. What is comprehension?
2. What knowledge do you have in teaching strategies in comprehension lessons?
3. How did you come to know these teaching strategies?
4. Why is it important to teach reading comprehension skills to learners?
5. How much information and skills concerning the use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills did you complete during your pre -service training?
6. How does your school ensure sharing of skills and expertise in the use of teaching strategies in comprehension lessons?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Teaching practice

1. What teaching strategies do you use during comprehension lessons?

2. *How important are the sources of knowledge you have mentioned? (Probe:what types of teaching strategies do experienced teachers teach you? Which ones of these are research-based strategies?)*

3. Which of the following types of teaching strategies were included during your training:

Teaching strategy	Yes		No
	Partially	*In full*	
1. monitoring comprehension			
2. meta-cognitive			
3. cooperative learning			
4. graphic and semantic organisers			
5. recognising story structure (e.g. setting, characters, plot)			
6. generating questions			
7. question answering			
8. summarising			
9. reciprocal teaching (predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarising)			
10.transactional strategy instruction.			

Source: researcher's data collection tool (2014)

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

Implementation of teaching strategies

1. In general, how do you teach comprehension lessons in your class? (*Probe: Describe the process.*)

2. Describe the process of each teaching strategy that you use?

3. During which circumstances do you use each of the strategies you have mentioned?

4. Why do you use each of the strategies you have mentioned?

5. Which other skills do you encourage learners to use when reading a comprehension passage? Please explain how you teach them.

6. Do you make use of peer teaching to improve their use of reading comprehension strategies? *(Probe: If yes, please explain how you organise this. If no, why?)*

7. How do you teach summary writing? (Probe*: Please describe the process?)*

8. How often do you give learners reading comprehension assignments to practice the learned skills?

Supportive Environment

1. How does the administration at this school provide support to the teaching of comprehension lessons?

2. What are your needs regarding the use of teaching strategies in order to teach learners comprehension skills?

3. Are you aware of CERs in your school? *(Probe: How do they help you to improve in the way you use teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills?)*

General Comments

1. What recommendations can you give to the following in order to improve the teachers' use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills?

   Policy

   makers...

   Curriculum

   designers..

   MANEBCERs...

   Ministry of

   Education...

2. What is your general comment regarding this interview?

Appendix 5: Interview guide for learners in secondary schools

Learners' knowledge about the teacher's use of teaching strategies

1. Do you like English as a subject? Why?

2. Does your teacher teach you comprehension lessons? (*Probe: What is comprehension?*)

Learner's responses to teacher's use of teaching strategies

1. How does your teacher of English teach you comprehension? *Describe the process of each strategy that is used before, during and after reading stages?*

2. What strategies does your teacher use to make the passage or story that you read become easier to understand?

3. Does your teacher let you ask your own questions to keep track of what you are reading? *(Probe: For example, what is the setting of this story? Who are the characters?*

4. How often does your teacher ask you to generate your own questions before, during or after reading the passage?

5. What sort of reading strategies do you teach each other in the classroom when reading comprehension passages? (*Probe: how does your teacher help you to successfully teach each other?)*

6. Do you learn summary writing? How do you summarise a comprehension passage? (Probe: *Describe the process.*)

General Comments

1. What are your expectations from your teachers and the Ministry of Education in addressing the reading comprehension strategies?

2. Teacher..
......

3. The Ministry of
Education...

4. What are your general comments regarding this interview?

Appendix 6: Focus group discussion guide for learners

Teaching strategies knowledge

1. How is reading culture promoted at this school? (Probe: *What sort of books do you like reading?*

2. What strategies do you use when reading a passage or a story to understand what you read?

Types of teaching strategies used to ensure understanding of what is being read

1. How does your teacher teach you comprehension during comprehension lessons? (*Probe: describe the process of each strategy that is used before, during and after reading stages?*

2. What were you taught to write in the process of reading the text?

3. Apart from the teacher's strategies, do you also use your own strategies to understand what you read during comprehension lessons.

4. What comprehension strategies does your teacher teach you to practice during group work in order to understand what you read? (*Probe: what do you do to ensure that everyone participates?*)

5. What strategies does your teacher teach you to use when answering questions?

6. Do you learn summary writing at this school? (Probe: *Describe the process that your teacher teaches you on how to summarise a passage?*)

General comments

1. In your opinion, how can you be responsible for your own use of comprehension strategies that you learn in class when reading?

2. What general comments do you have on what we have discussed?

Appendix 7: Key informant interview guide for head teachers

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADTEACHERS

The head teacher's professional experience

1. What is the teacher/pupil ratio in form three at this school? (Probe: *What effect has this ratio to the teaching and learning of English language)?*

2. What is your highest qualification?

Diploma	Degree	Masters	PhD

3. How long have you been on this position?

4. How long have you been managing this school? (Probe: *What is your overall experience in how teachers teach learners comprehension skills at this school?*

5. How does the school promote reading culture? (Probe: *What challenges do you encounter and how are they resolved?*

6. Do you think the teacher of English under this study was equipped with teaching strategies information and skills to teach learners comprehension skills?

7. How important do you view the instruction that should be given to teacher's concerning teaching strategies when teaching comprehension lessons? *(Probe:Please explain your answer).*

8. What do you regard as essential information and skills that teachers must be equipped with in order to ensure that they will be able to teach learners comprehension skills?

9. How do you ensure that the teacher of English is sufficiently equipped to use the teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills?

10. What does your school do to ensure sharing of skills and expertise to improve the teachers' teaching strategies in comprehension lessons?*(Probe: how are these organised to ensure that teachers improve in their teaching strategies)?*

11. As the administrator, what support do you provide to teachers of English to ensure their effective use of teaching strategies in comprehension lessons?

General comments

1. What can you suggest the Ministry of Education to do, to ensure the teachers' appropriate use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills?

2. What is your general comment regarding this interview?

Appendix 8: Key informant interview guide for   Chief Examiner

Chief Examiner's background information

1. What is your field of experience? *(Probe: How long have you been a Chief Examiner)?*

2. What is Chief Examiner's Report (CER)? *(Probe: What is the purpose of (CER)?*

Availability of CERs and how they are handled at MANEB and in schools

1. In your opinion, what are CERs prepared for?

2. How do CERs help teachers of English professionally in the use of teaching strategies in comprehension lessons?

3. What do overall CER results in comprehension reveal about how most teachers handle English lessons?

4. What questioning techniques should teachers of English use in order to teach learners comprehension skills?

5. What can you say about the relationship between the teacher's use of teaching strategies to teach learners comprehension skills and the examination syllabus?

General Comments

1. What is your general comment on the discussion?

Appendix 9: Class observation checklists

CLASS OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR FORM THREE CLASS OF ENGLISH

CHECKLISTS

Lesson delivery

Lesson topic _____

General methodology used in lesson delivery

Task	Availability (Yes/No)	General Comments
Introduction		
Development		
Conclusion		

Classroom interaction

2.1 Classroom activities

Research-based comprehension strategies observations

Comprehension strategy	Frequency
Monitoring comprehension (clarification)	
Cooperative learning	
Graphic and semantic organisers	
Recognising story structure	
Generating questions	
Question answering	
Summarising	
Multiple strategy e.g. Reciprocal Teaching (predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarising)	

Source: Adapted from NRP, 2000

Does the teacher's teaching strategies include the following:

Strategic teaching process	Yes				Never
	Not much	Much	little	Very little	
Explicit description of the single strategy					
When, why and how the strategy should be introduced					
Modelling of the strategy in action					
Collaborative use of the strategy in action					
Teacher's guided practice when using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility to the learners?					
Teacher giving learners independent practice using the strategy					
Teacher's explicit description of the multiple strategies (RT and TSI)					

Researcher's checklist 2014

To what extent did the four teachers know strategies for teaching comprehension?

Teaching strategy	Never	Very little	Little	Not much	Much	Very much
1. Monitoring comprehension (clarifying)						
2. Meta-cognitive strategy						
3. Graphic and semantic organisers						
4. Generation of questions						
5. Question answering						
6. Recognising story structure						
7. Cooperative learning						
8. Summarising						
9. Think-aloud						
10. Reciprocal Teaching (questioning, predicting, clarifying and summarising)						
11. Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI)						

Researcher's checklist

Teacher's Comprehension Exercises Records

Researcher's assessment of teachers' records – Schemes and records of work

Observation	Tick	General Comments
Evaluation done		
Evaluation done at times		
Evaluation not done		
Remarks available		
Remarks not available		

READING STAGES AND OBSERVATION

1. Planning

a. How prepared is the teacher to teach learners comprehension skills?
b. Is the comprehension lesson delivered in isolation or integrated with authentic material
c. What is the comprehension teaching strategy that the teacher is using to ensure cooperative learning?
d. What are the research-based comprehension strategies that the teacher has planned to teach?

2. Presentation

A. Pre-reading

a. Is the teacher teaching the learners using comprehension teaching strategies for the learners to understand what they read or not?
b. What are the comprehension strategies that the teacher uses to activate the learners' prior knowledge?
c. What is the learners' response to the pre-reading stage?
d. How are question generation and answering question techniques used?
e. Are the learners learning interactively?
f. Does the teacher let learners learn comprehension without intensive use of research-based strategies?

During-reading

a. What strategies were used to connect prior knowledge with the text?
b. How was the reading of the passage done?
c. What are the learners' actions to ensure understanding of what is being read?
d. How do learners check understanding of what is being read?
e. Does the teacher drill learners to learn comprehension strategies?
f. Does the teacher focus on form or vocabulary then reading of the passage?
g. Do learners cooperatively learn comprehension strategies?
h. What is the learners' response in the during-reading stage?
i. What is the learners' response to the reading exercise?

C. Post-reading

A. What tasks are used to connect the main ideas of the passage in order to summarise what is read?
b. What clarification strategies were used to ensure misunderstanding of the passage was taken care of?
c. What were the problems faced in the comprehension lessons?
d. What is the learners' response in post-reading stage?
e. Did teachers teach learners question answering skills?

3. Conclusion

Issues that were observed during the conclusion of a lesson

a. How does the teacher conclude the lesson?
b. How did the teacher teach learners comprehension skills?
c. What were the teacher's strengths and weaknesses in the provision of comprehension strategies?
d. What is the teacher's knowledge in how to teach learners comprehension skills?
e. How knowledgeable are the learners in theuse of comprehension skills to understand what they read?

Teachers' questioning technique

Type of comprehension question	Learners response	General comment
Observation		
Comparison		
Reflection		
Selection		

Adapted from Chisamba 1988

1. *Observation questions***:** They test critical thinking of the learner according to the passage.
2. *Comparison questions*: They test the learners' ability to notice differences and similarities between two or more items and facts.
3. *Reflection questions***:** They involve critical thinking so that learners notice how a passage is written and scrutinise its picture according to the writer's mind.
4. *Selection questions***:** These seek to find out if the learner can select the appropriate options from the close reading and observations in the passage.