

Title: Investigating the Teaching of Literacy to Children with Hearing Impairment
in Mainstream Primary Schools in Malawi. A case of selected schools in Central
East Educational Division

By

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to investigate the teaching of literacy to children with hearing impairment (HI) in mainstream primary schools in Malawi. The study focused on three regular teachers in standards 3 and 4 and one specialist teacher for children with HI in a resource room. The shift from special schools to mainstream schools has witnessed declines in literacy performance among children with hearing impairment in regular schools, hence the need to investigate the instructional strategies employed by teachers.

A qualitative case study design was adopted for this study. Data was mainly collected through observation of lessons in class and interviewing the participants. The participants were purposefully selected in order to get a deeper understanding of the case. Among them were three regular teachers and a specialist teacher for children with HI. The theoretical framework guiding the study was socio cultural theory. The study came up with four themes which included teaching strategies teachers use when teaching literacy to children with HI, teaching materials/resources used when teaching literacy to children with HI, assessment of literacy to children with HI and challenges teachers face when teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary schools.

The findings revealed that teachers are not effectively using inclusive methodologies when teaching children with HI in mainstream primary schools. The findings also revealed that in most classes the resources such as learner's books were not adequate and made reading tasks very difficult to most learners including children with HI. The study also found that children with HI were not fully engaged/supported because of language and communication problems between the

regular teachers and the child with HI. The findings also revealed that specialist teachers who are stationed in resource centres fully helped children with special needs but are few and overloaded with work of teaching both regular classes and resource room. The findings entail that there are many challenges as regards to the teaching of literacy in mainstream schools which need urgent attention by all stakeholders. Schools and government should mobilize resources to train all teachers in mainstream primary schools through the existing specialist teachers in various districts and regions on inclusive methodologies which are responsive to the needs of all children of different diversities, including children with HI in Malawi.

Declaration

I declare that Investigating the Teaching of Literacy to Children with Hearing Impairment in Mainstream Primary Schools in Malawi. A case of selected schools in Central East Educational Division is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Signature:

Date:

Name:

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List of Abbreviations

CEED	Central East Educational Division
DOSNE	Divisional Officer for Special Needs Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
FIC	Fathers of Immaculate Conceptions
FPE	Free Primary Education
HI	Hearing Impairment
MANAD	Malawi National Association of the Deaf
MANEB	Malawi National Examination Board
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MGDS	Millennium Development Goals
MOEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MRA	Maternal Reflective Approach
MSL	Malawi Sign Language
MSLD	Malawi Sign Language Dictionary
MTTA	Malawi Teacher Training Activity
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
SNE	Special Needs Education
UNICEF	United Nations Childrens' Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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Chapter 1: Introducing the study

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate the teaching of literacy to children with hearing impairment (HI) in mainstream primary schools in Malawi (Standards 3 and 4). This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, motivation, research questions and sub-questions, operational definitions of terms, and finally the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the study

The ability to read and write is very crucial to the learning of all subjects in the primary school curriculum (Westwood, 2008). Literacy skills such as reading and writing determine not only school success but also enhance the quality of life in our society (Snow, 1991). The primary schools in Malawi provide the foundation for the development of literacy skills (UNICEF, 1993). They equip children with skills to read fluently, to critically understand different types of texts for enjoyment and information, and to write legible, factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes (Malawi Institute of Education, 2009). However, despite these efforts, many children with HI in Malawi fail to acquire basic literacy skills because regular teachers in mainstream primary schools do not apply inclusive methodologies when teaching children with disabilities in an inclusive setting (RESULTS UK, 2010). In agreement to this, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services (2003) commented that poor literacy skills among children with HI has been aggravated by the absence of Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities in both rural and urban areas and also failure of parents to engage the child in meaningful communication at an early age. The 2010 and 2011 USAID/ Malawi Early Reading Assessment (EGRA) report show that

97.1% of learners in standard 2 and 69.3% of learners in standard 4 scored zero in letter recognition. This report further showed that learners in both classes read few words and had minimal comprehension of grade level text (USAID/MALAWI, 2013-18). According to this report, failure to acquire basic literacy skills among most children in Malawi is one of the factors leading to high repetition and dropout rates. A baseline study conducted by Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD) revealed that very few children with HI get selected to secondary schools from mainstream primary schools in Malawi because of communication breakdown (MANAD, 2008-09). This is very discouraging to parents since lack of literacy is connected to an increase in poverty levels and if not checked would hinder economic growth, and Malawi would have the next generation with even higher adult illiteracy than today's generation (UNESCO, 2010, USAID/MALAWI, 2013-18). It is because of the above observations that the researcher has been compelled to find out how teachers teach literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary schools.

1.1.2 Education of Children with HI in Malawi

Children with HI in Malawi are educated in special schools for the Deaf and mainstream schools. The first school for children with HI was introduced at Montfort in Chiradzulu by the Fathers of Immaculate Conception (FIC) in 1968 (MOEST, 2010). Currently, Malawi has five special schools for the deaf, and these are Maryview, Mountain View, Mua, Embangweni and Karonga School for the deaf. These schools have adequate number of specialist teachers, but are very exclusive, expensive to run and accommodate very few numbers of children with HI due to limited capacity of classes (MoEST, 2010). Majority of children with HI are educated in mainstream primary schools. The mainstream setting has a resource centre where children with HI are supported by

specialist teachers or sometimes itinerant specialist teachers. However, not all mainstream schools in Malawi have specialist teachers. In these schools children with HI are handled by regular teachers who have little or no background knowledge about Special Needs Education (SNE). With the introduction of Primary Curriculum Assessment Reform (PCAR) in 2005, Malawi introduced an introductory course in special education in all teacher training colleges (TTCs) in order to equip graduating student teachers with some skills on how to handle children with special needs. However, the major challenge is that there are very few specialist tutors who teach special education. The majority of tutors who teach special education are not qualified in special education. This implies that most student teachers who are graduating from these colleges are not fully equipped to handle children with educational needs (SEN) in an inclusive setting.

1.1.2 Language of Instruction for HI

Children with HI are taught Malawian Sign language when they start school. However, this language is not taught in many primary schools due to shortage of specialist teachers (MANAD report, 2008-09). There is also lack of political will to legally recognise the Malawi Sign Language (MSL) as one of the languages for the Deaf. Besides, the Malawi Sign Language Dictionary (MSLD) has not yet been completed (Malawi Daily Times, 2012). This poses a challenge regarding the type of language of instruction the regular teachers may use when teaching children with HI in mainstream primary school. There is a possibility that children with HI may fail to grasp literacy skills because of language and communication problems between teachers and children with HI or among learners themselves. As a result of this, their participation in class activities will be greatly affected due to their limited skills in language and literacy. This may

result further in making Malawi unable to meet Education for All (EFA) and Global Millennium Development Goals (GMDS) if no efforts are made to support children with SEN.

In an effort to address issues affecting children with SEN, the Malawi government introduced some policies such as the Free Primary Education (FPE) and Special Needs Education Policy guidelines (MoEST, 2010). The policy of Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in 1994 soon after the dispensation into the multiparty politics. This was put into force because Malawi is a signatory to the World Conference on Education for All which was held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 (Masperi & Hollow, 2008, MoEST, 2010). The aim of FPE was to increase access to primary education, eliminate inequalities in enrolment and build a strong socio-economic base within the society and enhancing civic education and economic benefits of education at the community level (MoEST, 2010). This initiative attracted children of different disabilities to attend regular schools alongside their normal peers under the care of regular teachers. Although this policy was aimed at reducing illiteracy levels in Malawi, it encountered some challenges such as overcrowding of classes, untrained teachers, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and inadequate classroom blocks (Riddell, 2003, Gwayi, 2009). These challenges have greatly affected the teaching of literacy to children with HI in mainstream school in terms of support. The government also introduced Special Needs Education Policy guidelines with the following objectives: providing equal educational opportunities to all learners, providing educational facilities with needed supportive provisions, ensuring accommodating learning environments for all children with SEN, and increasing SNE service provisions (SNE, 2007). All the above policies are very crucial to this study because they contain priorities of access and equity which encourages children of different disabilities, including children with HI, to have greater opportunities to acquire literacy skills which are fundamentally important to facilitating their greater access to education by being

engaged in meaningful activity with hearing peers either through spoken, or signed or written form (MoEST, 2008).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Since the shift of special schools to mainstream schools was introduced in Malawi in the 1990's, many children with HI have been experiencing a lot of challenges in literacy skills due to poor teaching methodologies of teachers in regular classes and also lack of exposure to language at an early age which ultimately lead to language limitation which is a key to the development of literacy skills. Although government of Malawi has introduced FPE policy, SNE policy and the Primary Curriculum Assessment Reforms, acquisition of literacy skills for children with HI has received little or no attention because most of the teachers are not adequately prepared to handle children with special needs in an inclusive setting. As a result, many children with HI fail to reach literacy levels as their hearing peers and may eventually drop out of school.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers teach literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary school.

1.4 Critical Research Question

How is literacy taught to children with HI in mainstream primary schools?

1.4.1 Sub-Questions

- What strategies are used when teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary schools?

- What teaching materials are used when teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary schools?
- How are children with HI assessed in literacy in mainstream primary schools?
- What challenges are faced by teachers during the teaching of literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary schools?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study will be of great significance in several ways: First, the findings will help curriculum developers to address issues concerning pedagogical approaches to cater for all learners of different diversities, including children with HI. Secondly, this study will help teachers realize that each individual is very unique, they have different skills and abilities, different needs and expectations, as such; cannot achieve things in the same way. Therefore, this research will provide an opportunity for teachers to understand and respect these differences and teach the right things in the right way in order for children with HI achieve proficiency in literacy skills.

1.6 Motivation

I have taught in mainstream primary schools for quite some time. Throughout the years I have been a teacher, I noted that children with HI were not fully supported enough in their schooling. This prompted me to enrol for a degree course in Special Needs at Catholic University in 2009 in order to devise ways of helping them excel in their education. It is against this background that I have resorted to conduct an in depth study of teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary schools since they are the basis for literacy development.

1.7 Theoretical framework

This study is informed by the theory of Socio- Cultural Theory. It is a theory that claims that learning takes place in social cultural theory. Vygotsky (1978) stressed that learning occurs through interaction or dialogue. In this theory, learning of literacy is transferred from the teacher to the child with HI or the child with HI with his/her peers. It is from these social contexts that children draw on a range of mediational tools in the construction of meaning (National Council for Curriculum & Assessment [NCCA], 2012). Research in the socio-cultural field has also demonstrated how adults can scaffold children's literacy learning through apprenticeship models as recommended by Rogoff (1990). For example, during the teaching of new vocabulary, the teacher may demonstrate the correct pronunciation of the words while the learners are observing. After that the teacher may read together with the learners. Finally, the learners themselves may read the words under close supervision of the expert.

1.6 Operational Definitions of Terms

This study has made a description of some concepts relevant to the research topic under study. These include; mainstream, special school, itinerant teacher, regular teacher, hearing impairment, teaching methods and literacy.

1.6.1 Mainstream school

A type of school placement in which children with disabilities attend a public school for part or all of the school day, sometimes in regular education programme classrooms with students without disabilities and sometimes in special classrooms within a regular or general education school. It is the educational equivalent of the normalization principle which suggests that people with

disabilities have a right to life experiences that are the same as, or similar to, those of others in society (Swart & Pettipher, 2011, cited in Bell, 2012).

1.6.2 Special school

A type of school that provides educational and other related services solely to children with special educational needs and is staffed by specially trained teachers. These schools usually have small number of children in order to fully support them when in class (MoEST, 2010).

1.6.3 Regular teacher

A regular teacher is one who teaches both children with and without disabilities in a regular class. They are qualified teachers for primary schools, but have not been trained in the field of special education. Most teachers in Malawi teach children with special needs because of shortages of specialist teachers.

1.6.4 Itinerant teacher

An itinerant teacher is a professional who provides instruction and consultation for children with HI and generally he/she travels from school to school (Luckner, 2013). He is a fully trained specialist teacher. He provides direct service to children as well as consulting services to classroom teachers and other adults who work and interact with children with HI (Luckner, 2013).

1.6.5 Hearing Impairment

The term hearing impairment refers to the reduced ability to hear (MOEST, 2010). Marschark and Spencer (2009) refer hearing impairment as the condition of having any level of hearing loss in the ranges from mild to severe.

1.6.6 Deaf

Deaf means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing with or without amplification, which adversely affects educational performance (Angell, 2009, Meyen & Bui, 2007).

1.6.7 Teaching methods

A teaching method is characterised by a set of principles, procedures or strategies to be implemented by teachers in order to achieve desired learning needs in students (Liu & Shi 2007, in Westwood 2008). Children with HI require special methods which may involve use of many senses to compensate for the hearing loss.

1.8.6 Literacy

In the traditional sense, 'literacy' is the ability to read, write and perform simple numeric calculations (The Canadian Language & Literacy Research Network, 2009). Literacy is very essential to children with special needs because it is a catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political and economic activities and for learning throughout life.

1.9 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis has five chapters which are attempting to answer the research question ‘How is literacy taught to children with HI in mainstream primary school’.

The second chapter presents related literature review to the topic of teaching literacy and also discusses theories of literacy (reading and writing).

The third chapter presents a detailed description of the methods study used such as research design, population sample, data collection and instruments, data analysis, trustworthiness in qualitative research and ethical issues (considerations).

The fourth chapter presents and discusses the findings.

The last chapter presents a summary and conclusion of the findings.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature relevant to the purpose of the present study. To provide the reader with a better understanding of the study, the literature review includes concepts related to hearing impairment, language development in children, language and culture, importance of literacy, components of literacy development, instructional approaches to teaching of literacy, communication approaches for children with HI, assessment for children with HI, teaching and learning resources for literacy, challenges encountered in the teaching/ learning of literacy and finally theories related to literacy (reading and writing).

2.2 Concepts related to Hearing Impairment

Hearing impairment is a general term that covers all degrees of hearing loss (Kaplan, 1996). According to MoEST (2010) hearing impairment is described as the reduced ability to hear. However, some people with hearing loss are against the use of the term HI because it conveys a description of someone who is in need of correction or repair. They do not want to be viewed as people who need to be fixed or cured (Meyen & Bui, 2007). In addition, the term HI is used to describe subsets of deaf and hard of hearing (Paul & Quigley (1990). According to Meyen & Bui (2007) the term deaf is referred to as a hearing impairment which is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing with or without amplification, which adversely affects educational performance. It is further pointed out that individuals who are deaf have a hearing loss of 70-90 decibels (dB) or greater and cannot utilise their hearing, even with amplification, as their primary means for developing language (MoEST, 2010). On the

other hand, hard of hearing is described as an impairment of lesser degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance (Kaplan, 1996). According to this group, their hearing loss is in the range of 20-70 dB, and they benefit from amplification and communicate primarily through speaking (MoEST, 2010). As evidenced from the above concepts, hearing impairment poses a very big challenge to the educational performance of children with HI in the areas of reading and writing. Meyen & Bui (2007) remark that *'lack of exposure to a visually encoded language and inability to process auditory information,'* contributes to these challenges. For instance, in Malawi no serious early identification programmes such as child tracking are done in a large scale. Children with HI are fitted with assistive devices and start to learn sign language when they come to school. It is reported that the earlier the interventions are made, the better the child is enhanced in communication (Heward, 2003, Meyen & Bui, 2007). Therefore, since the terms Deaf and HI are used interchangeably to refer people with hearing loss, this study will employ both terms.

2.3 Language Development in Children

Language is very crucial for communication purposes both at school and home. It also plays a critical role in the development of cognitive functioning (Pearson Series in Education, 2012). Language is defined as a systematic use of sounds or signs by human beings for the purpose of communication and self expression (Wood, 1964). People communicate each other by verbal (oral) means and non verbal means through facial expression, gestures, eye movements, body movement and writing (MoEST, 2010). All languages whether spoken or signed are acquired naturally from the environment through interaction with adults who are proficient in the language (Patkin, 2008 & Briggles, 2005, Vygotsky, 1978). It is further said that all children,

regardless of their disabilities, follow the same pattern of language acquisition (Meyen & Bui, 2007). The experience that children acquire within the family when they are young has a significant impact on their language development (The Canadian Language & Literacy Research Network, 2009).

Other research findings also have shown that early childhood settings have positive impact to the development of early vocabulary, literacy and numeracy (French, 2013). It is from this exposure that children begin to understand and use sounds/signs of their language, its words and combine them to form ideas. However, not all home environments support optimal language development to children. Meyen & Bui (2007) observed that children with HI experience delays in language acquisition because of their inability to process auditory information or lack of exposure to a visually encoded language. Many studies reveal that children with HI have delays in language because ninety percent of them are born from hearing parents (Kaplan, 1996, Berk, 2003, Terlektsi, 2009). The parents are shocked when they realize that they have a child with HI and are faced with a decision of how they are going to communicate with their child (Wikipedia, 2014, Marschark, 2009 & Westwood, 2008). It is during this period that the child with HI is delayed in language acquisition. Some of the children with HI even start school with little or no language at all, and hope that teaching of language is the responsibility of the school. It is critical to recognize that any success to learning at school hinges on language. The better the language a child has, the wider the range of their cognitive concepts and the more they will be able to learn at school (DeafChildrenAustralia, 2012). Therefore, teachers need to engage children with HI in a variety of activities for them to develop language skills.

2.4 Language and Culture

The development of any language, whether signed or spoken, and the culture in which language is practiced work in close collaboration. No culture can emerge without language and no language can emerge without culture (MoEST, 2010). In short, language and culture are closely linked (Kramsch, 1993). Culture has a powerful influence in the development of language both spoken and signed. Children with hearing impairment view themselves as those who are influenced by their culture (deaf culture). They use sign language for communication and share beliefs, values, customs and experiences (Meyen & Bui, 2007). Sign language is defined as a visual gestural language. It makes use of hands, eyes, face, mouth, head and the rest of the body (World Federation of the Deaf, 1993). It has a structure and grammar different from that of English. Each country has its own sign language. The sign language used in Malawi is called Malawian Sign Language. Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD) is an organisation that represents all people with hearing impairment in Malawi. MANAD is lobbying for the recognition of Malawi Sign Language as well as Sign Language Dictionary to provide a chance for all Malawians to have access to the sign language. The failure of relevant authorities to recognise the viability of sign language means that these children would run a risk of linguistic deprivation and cognitive deficits (Humphries et al, 2014). This eventually may increase illiteracy levels among people who are deaf (Malawi News Agency, 2014).

2.5 Importance of Literacy

Literacy is described as an individual's ability to read and write in the societal language so as to achieve one's needs and goals (McAnally, Rose & Quigley, 1999). Both reading and writing

focus on meaning and the development of one reinforces progress of the other (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). It is further observed that children learn to read and write better when the two processes are linked (Ibid). This is the reason why reading and writing skills are considered to be the foundation for achievements in school and throughout life. In support of this, Kamlongera (2010) asserts that ability to read and write in English enhances the learning of other subjects in the curriculum. However, Malawi Teacher Training Activity (2005) argues that reading is not simply a process of ‘figuring out’ or decoding the words, but is a complex developmental process. This is to say that a reader must bring previous knowledge to the text in order to make sense of the author’s message. Therefore, a child who successfully learns to read in the early primary years of school will be well prepared to read for learning and for pleasure in the years to come (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004). On the other hand, writing is understood as a way of learning and thinking on paper. By writing, according to Giasson (2000) learners are helped to gather and revise their ideas, and also express their responses. Not only that, it also helps learners to organize their thoughts, remember important information, reflect on a wide range of perspectives, and learn how to communicate effectively for specific purposes (Giasson, 2005). However, careful attention must be given to the teaching of reading and writing skills to children with HI. Though they lag behind their peers in terms of reading ability (Marschark, 2007), with the right instruction and support, it is believed that all children can learn to read and write (Malawi Teacher Training Activity [MTTA], 2005).

2.6 Components of Literacy Development

Children with HI and those without disabilities need to learn a variety of skills and strategies in order to become proficient in reading. According to SEGREM (2014), successful early grade

reading take into consideration the following key components: vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and writing (Strengthening Early Grade Reading in Malawi (SEGREM), 2014).

2.6.1 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings in a language (SEGREM, 2014). Vocabulary knowledge is very essential because it provides much of the basis for how learners speak, listen, read and write (NCCA, 2012). Vocabulary development entails coming to understand unfamiliar words and being able to use them appropriately (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003). Children acquire most of the vocabulary through interaction with their parents, peers and teachers. Research indicates that children acquire vocabulary indirectly or sometimes through teaching in class (Ibid). However, children with HI struggle to understand what they read because of lack of exposure to the spoken language (Singleton, et al, 2004). They start school with little or no vocabulary knowledge. Ontario Ministry of Education, (2004) recommends that teachers should use a variety of strategies for children to understand meaning of words. Additionally, the report recommends that teachers should select resources for reading aloud in order to expand learner's oral vocabulary and to provide opportunities for children to see and use new reading vocabulary in different contexts. In support, SEGREM (2014) suggests use of some strategies for teaching of new vocabulary such as miming, use of real objects, use of models, pictures and drawings.

2.6.2 Fluency

Fluency is an important part of skilled reading, without fluency, readers may be hindered in comprehending what they read. SEGREM, (2014) describes fluency as the ability to read

quickly, accurately and with proper expression. Children develop fluency when they are practising reading new content several times in order to get acquainted to it. Children with HI find fluent reading very challenging. They may read inaccurately if they don't understand the content and in most cases they read very slowly (MoEST, 2010). NCCA (2012) recommended some strategies for improvement in fluency such as repeated reading, radio reading and paired reading. However, some of these approaches such as radio reading may not be applicable to children with HI in Malawi considering that they don't hear.

2.6.3 Comprehension

Comprehension is described as the main goal of reading (SEGREM, 2014). It is the process of getting meaning from the spoken language and/ or print. The Rand Reading Study Group (2002) explains that comprehension involves interaction between the reader and the text. When a child is not able to understand what he/she is reading it means learning is not taking place. Kamlongera (2012) says comprehension is very important because it is what reading is all about. NCCA (2012) argues that every person reads a text for different purposes and in a variety of contexts. In agreement, SEGREM, (2014) says that comprehension helps learners to recall the information in texts. It is further said that comprehension helps learners to develop analytical skills in later stages. Children with HI meet a lot of challenges with comprehension because of some strategies which are involved in comprehension such as making prediction, analysing a story structure, making inferences and drawing conclusions etc. The teacher should bring in some interventions measures where some activities need to be adapted to suit the needs of children with HI. NCCA (2012) recommends that teachers should scaffold children with HI to

develop reading skills by following a guided practice and gradual release of responsibility to the child.

2.6.4 Writing

Writing plays a critical role in enhancing literacy development in children. Writing skills begin from the early stages of emergent writing when the child is young. During this period the child is involved in symbolic drawings as he/she engages in plays and social interaction with others. However, children with HI experience some delays and difficulties in producing written work (Marschark & Spencer, 2009). Research done on children with HI found that deaf children of 17 to 18 age write at levels of skill like those of hearing student of 8 to 10 (Marschark et al, 2002). It is however reported that children with HI can be supported by engaging them in language based activities (NCCA, 2012).

2.7 Instructional Approaches to the Teaching of Literacy

It is important to note that learners are different and they learn through different ways. Therefore, teaching of literacy demands use of many methods if the lesson is to be effective. There is no single method or technique which on its own may satisfy the learning needs of all learners (MIE, 2004). A teaching method is characterized by a set of principles, procedures or strategies to be implemented by teachers to achieve desired learning in learners (Liu & Shi, 2007, cited in Westwood, 2008). Teaching of children with HI demand use of multi-sensory approaches whereby the child make use of the senses such as sight (seeing), touching and smelling to supplement the sense of hearing (MoEST, 2010). The teaching of literacy to children include use

phonic method [skilled based], whole language method (meaning based approach) and balanced approach [combination of approaches] (Tompkins, 2011, Snow et al, 1998).

2.7.1 The Phonic Methods

Phonics is a set of instructional strategies for teaching the relationship between letters and sounds. Tompkins (2011) defines phonics as the set of relationships between letters and speech. Kadzamira (2010) perceives the phonic approach as an instructional approach that helps learners to read by sounding out parts of words according to common pronunciation of letters. Research has shown that explicit and direct teaching of phonics decoding skills is effective for beginning readers (Raven, 2003, Wheldall, 2006). Before teaching phonics the teacher has to know the content of phonics so as to be in a better position to decide how to teach phonic elements and in what order these elements might be taught (Gunning, 2008). Kadzamira (2010) remarks that the child breaks down a complicated skill such as reading into smaller components like letters before moving on to tackle larger components such as words and sentences. Once the skill has been mastered, children may become independent in reading the new words commonly used in English (Raven, 2003, Wheldall, 2006). However, the emphasis on skill based instruction is opposed by the proponents of whole language approach. They contend that English does not have a one to one sound symbol relationship (Acosta, 2013). But with proper teaching strategies, the phonic approach has helped learners to develop alphabetical principle. It has improved the achievements of many children in both word recognition and spellings in the early grades (Adams, 1990 cited in Kadzamira, 2010). Early acquisition of decoding skills has also proved to be a powerful predictor of a child's future skill in reading comprehension (Acosta, 2013). However, there is a challenge in mastery of language skills by children with HI in Malawi. Most

of them start school with little or no knowledge of language. This is because they may not have acquired the spoken language in either English or Chichewa which are essential for acquisition of literacy skills. Sometimes, it may be because the language they use such as sign language may not match with the language used at school or even the textbooks they use (MANAD report, 2008-09). So for these children to master skill based approach is very challenging. The teacher's role consists of primarily being sensitive to the difficulty and helping the child apply the skills in the classroom that he/she is learning. The teacher should also be supportive and help the child build the confidence, providing opportunities for the child to take part in the purposeful oral reading (Gunning, 2008, MoEST, 2010).

2.7.2 The Whole Language Methods

The whole language method (also called the look and say) is the method that focuses on whole words and drawing meaning from the content of words within sentences and paragraphs (Kamlongera, 2010). Whole language is described as a philosophy of learning rather than a teaching approach (Gunning, 2008) because it focuses on naturalistic view of literacy learning. Therefore, it is defined as a naturalistic theory of literacy learning based on the premise that learners learn to read and write by being actively involved in reading and writing for real purposes (Ibid). Further, Gunning (2008) states that whole language advocates embodies the following principles. First, reading is best learned through actual use. Children learn by reading whole i.e. words, sentences, paragraphs, stories etc, and draw meaning from the context of those sentences or paragraphs. Second, children read and write for real purposes. Third, literacy is a social undertaking best learned in the context of a group such as group conferences, cooperative learning, peer editing e.t.c. Children with HI still may face many problems with words, phrases

and sentences of which they don't understand their meanings. If the class does not have a specialist teacher or a sign language interpreter, it would be difficult for children who are deaf and hard of hearing to recognize the words when reading and writing.

2.7.3 The Balanced Approach

Both the phonic and whole language approaches are good methods to teaching reading and writing, but neither of the two is better than the other. No one approach can meet the needs of all children including children with HI. All the methods are effective in some cases than the other. The approach which is now strongly recommended for use in the teaching of literacy is combination of approaches called balanced approach (Gunning, 2008). A balanced approach, according to Spiegel (1998) is a decision making approach through which teachers make thoughtful and purposeful decisions about how to help learners become better readers and writers. A teacher employs the balanced approach considering that in a class there are children of mixed abilities including children with HI. Therefore, use of balanced approach may help children of mixed abilities to benefit from the instruction being delivered.

2.8 Communication Approaches of Children with HI

Communication is very crucial to the effective teaching of reading and writing. Communication is the meaningful exchange of information, ideas, needs and emotions between two persons or a group of persons (MoEST, 2010). All the communication approaches or methods available to children with HI have the aims of promoting age-appropriate language development and access to education (Spencer & Marschark, 2010). There is a long history of controversy surrounding which approach is the most appropriate. Ultimately, no single type of communication meets the

needs of all children (Meyen & Bui, 2007). The Children with hearing loss have a choice on the type of communication to be used with the support of the parents. The method preferred is usually influenced by, but not limited, to the age of onset and type of hearing loss (DSDHH, 2013). When a child with a hearing loss starts school, the communication choice may change depending on the severity of the impairment. According to Moore (2001) the change is meant to meet the needs of individuals in individually occurring context. The mode of communication used in the educational setting in Malawi includes the auditory-oral approach, maternal reflective approach, sign language, manually coded English, the total communication which include the combination of the others (Meyen & Bui, 2007) and sign bilingualism.

2.8.1 Auditory-Oral Approach

This approach focuses on developing listening and speaking and discourages children from using visual clues. This method is most suitable for those who are mildly or moderately impaired (Pearson Series in Education, 2012). It is founded on the belief that children with HI can learn to use their residual (remaining) hearing to develop good listening and speaking skills which will enable them to communicate and mix with hearing people as part of the wider hearing community (National Deaf Children's Society, 2011). The underlying philosophy is that spoken language provides support to the development of literacy skills and that written language is built on understanding of the sounds and structure of the spoken language (Ibid). This approach therefore emphasizes on the use of amplification such as hearing aids, cochlear implant and radio aids to maximize the use of the child's remaining (residual) hearing. Though this approach is quite popular, some educators view this approach quite challenging to children with severe hearing impairment in the areas of speech reading (Meyen & Bui, 2007, Heward, 2003). Heward

(2003) argue that some other words in English look alike on the lips when pronouncing them e.g. bat, mat and pat. In this situation, it is very difficult to discriminate the words by just watching the speaker's lips. Such words may be accompanied by use of concrete things to make concepts clear. In some instances, visual clues may be blocked if there are multiple speakers. This may happen the following ways: a) if the speaker is not facing the recipient or is at an odd angle. b) if the speaker has facial hair. c) if the room is not well –lighted or the speaker uses unusual words or improper grammar, or speaks with accent (Iversen, 2011). Despite these problems in speech reading, oral approach remains strong with the growing popularity of cochlear implant and other aids. For the child to benefit from this approach s/he must always receive audiological services. The hearing aids must be working consistently and any repairs or maintenance must be completed promptly so that any disruptions to amplifications is kept to the absolute minimum (DeafHear, 2011).

2.8.2 Maternal Reflective Approach (MRA)

The maternal reflective approach is sometimes called the graphic method. This approach is mostly used in schools for the deaf or special units attached to a mainstream where groups of deaf children are taught together. The maternal reflective approach is based on the way mothers or carers encourage language through conversation, and children are encouraged to reflect back on what was said during the conversations. The approach is also called graphic oral because it involves writing down a lot of what is said to help children reflect on it and to help them learn language (MoEST, 2010). This type of approach is used in Malawi particularly in special schools for the deaf.

2.8.3 Sign Language

Sign language is a visual gestural language that involves the use of the hands, eyes, face, mouth, head and body (World Federation of the Deaf, 1993, Pearson Series in Education, 2012). People use sign language to ask complicated questions, describe things around them, discuss relationships, ideas and beliefs and everything that a hearing person can communicate using spoken language. Like in spoken languages, complete sign language differs from region to region and country to country. Malawi has its own sign language known as Malawi Sign Language (MSL). Though Malawi government has not yet recognized the MSL, it is still used in many schools where children with HI or deaf are educated. Sign language is an independent and complete language with a unique set of rules. It has its own grammar that does not reflect in any way the grammar of English. For example, the order of signs in a sentence is often different from the order of spoken words. English follows the subject-verb-object order while the sign language either follows the object-subject-verb or any order as long as the message is heard. In Malawi sign language, ‘What is your name?’ would look like this, ‘Name?’ or ‘Your name what?’, ‘What is his name?’ could be ‘Name who he?’ (MoEST, 2010). In Malawi each community of learners with hearing impairment has developed its own set of signs. This enables them to communicate effectively with each other. It will be necessary for teachers of children with HI to learn the local signs in order to effectively communicate, teach and socialize with those learners. Teachers should first observe their learners in different environments at school and in the community in order to identify the common signs being used. After identifying the signs, there is need for the teacher to practice these signs and use them in the teaching and learning process (MoEST, 2010). Some of the things to consider when signing are as follows: The signing space should be in front of the body just below the waist to above the head level (chest position).

During conversation, both the teacher and the child must face each other while standing or sitting. The teacher and the child must accompany the signs with facial expressions and the body movements. It is a good idea to have enough light during communication process. This enables both persons to see the signs clearly. In classroom setting, there is need to consider the sitting position of learners who are deaf. It is also important to use as many visual clues as possible when teaching learners who are deaf (MoEST, 2010, Wood, 1998).

2.8.4 Manually Coded English

Manually coded English refers to an approach in which signs are used in English word order (Kaplan, 1996). In this system the teacher speaks while signing. He/she makes special effort to follow the form and structure of spoken English as closely as possible (Heward, 2003). Other methods which are signed based include signed supported English, signed English, signing exact English (Spencer & Marschark, 2010). These methods are designed to facilitate/ support the teaching of reading, writing and other language skills (Heward, 2003). This approach is effective if both the teacher and the child know sign language. In Malawi very few people know sign language. This means that competency in manually coded English will be a challenge to most children with HI as well as teachers. Those who may be privileged to this approach are children with HI in special school because they are exposed to sign language when young than in mainstream schools due to shortage of trained specialist teachers.

2.8.5 Total Communication

Total communication is a philosophy that advocates the use of a variety of forms of communication to teach language skills to children with hearing impairment (Spencer &

Marschark, 2010). The child receives information through signs, spoken language and support for residual hearing as recommended by Meyen & Bui, (2007). Other aspects of this approach include finger spelling, writing, gesture and facial expression, use of pictures and objects (Ibid). This approach is sometimes called simultaneous communication or Simcom (Moore, 2001, Heward, 2003, Leigh & Hyde, 1997). For example simultaneously signed sentence can be as follows: Are you hungry? When signing, one hand should point at the subject while the other should hold the stomach and the face asking (Montfort SNE handbook, 2010). Total communication approach is based on the belief that children with HI learn better and communicate effectively if all means of communication are available to them. It is a very flexible approach since it employs a variety of methods that aim to provide a communication environment that best suits the needs of a child with a hearing loss (DeafHear, 2011). This approach is commonly used in special schools for the deaf in Malawi, however, in mainstream setting only teachers trained in the field of special education use this approach than regular teachers.

2.8.6 Sign/Bilingualism

Bilingualism in simple terms is the mastery of two different languages. Sign bilingualism is often called 'bilingual/ bicultural'. This approach involves the use of sign language as the child's first language and the spoken language of the family as a second language (National Deaf Children's Society, 2011). Children with HI learn sign language as their first language and then learn Chichewa or English later as a second language. Learning Chichewa or English as a second language is essential for children to develop reading and writing skills as there is no written form of MSL. However, this approach faces many challenges in Malawi due to a number of reasons.

First, 90% of children are born to hearing parents, and 10% are from deaf parents. This explanation means there are many children with HI who are not exposed to MSL from birth because their parents have had no knowledge of the language. Secondly, as a result of language gap, they start school without proficiency in MSL. They are supposed to learn two languages at the same time, thus sign language from peers and specialist teachers as well as Chichewa or English.

2.8.7 Summary

The literature reviewed on communication approaches show that children with HI use a variety of methods for the purpose of acquiring language and literacy skills. Though different approaches are employed, no single method has been found to be more successful than the other for all children with HI. There are demerits in some of these approaches. For instance, in sign language, a child can not communicate to people who do not know sign language (MoEST, 2010). In addition, if a child with HI is born to hearing parents they tend to be unconcerned with the language of the child, that is, sign language. Similarly, communication in auditory oral approaches is hampered by degree of deafness. Even with the provision of powerful hearing aids, there are a lot of challenges in acquiring basic language skills because of the limited and distorted nature of the learner's auditory experience. However, when some approaches are combined, they provide flexibility and adaptability in order to meet the needs of individuals (Meyen & Bui, 2007). Most of the regular teachers in mainstream schools do not know how to communicate with children with HI, and hence ignore them in the teaching and learning process.

2.9 Assessment for children with HI

The only way in which teachers may know if what they teach is being achieved is through assessment. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve the learning of children by identifying those having problems in mastering the course content, and then give them additional help to move on to the next stage. This idea is connected to vygotsky's notion of ZPD where children who do not do well in assessment are assisted to do better through revisions or make up lessons (Kimani, 2012). In addition, assessment enables teachers to evaluate themselves on the effectiveness of their teaching and if possible make necessary modifications to methods, activities and resources (MIE, 2010). This is very important because before teachers set tests or exams they consider the age, extent of impairment and language of instruction in order to be responsive to the needs of nearly all children in the class (UNESCO, n.d, MOE, 2008). Assessment for children with HI in Malawi follows what has been stipulated in the Outcomes Based Education (OBE), that all assessment should be responsive to the needs of all learners regardless of disabilities (MIE, 2008). This is to say, setting test items that will cater for all children including children with HI. Therefore, children with HI should write the same exams set by the teacher or MANEB.

In OBE curriculum, the learner's progress is measured against the broad results expected at the end of each learning process, such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (Mbukwa, 2009). Furthermore, the OBE curriculum puts emphasis on continuous assessment (CA), that is, the process of assessing learners within a literacy lesson or a unit or within a certain period of learning within a week, a month, a term or a year. The activities in CA varied in order to provide children with HI with different styles and different levels of mastery of concepts and skills (MOE, 2009). CA are very essential because they provide feedback on what learners have

achieved and so builds up a record of each learner's progress against the primary outcomes for each learning area. Furthermore, teachers are able to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses and are helped through remediation or enrichment. In the same vein, they also provide teachers with feedback about the methods and assessment techniques in order to make decisions on how to improve their teaching (MOE, 2004). Apart from this, teachers also give summative assessment at the very end of a course or unit of instruction. These are designed to evaluate and determine the extent to which instructional objectives have been achieved. They are therefore used to assign course grades or certifying learners' mastery of the intended learning outcome (MOE, 2004).

Assessment in primary schools in Malawi are categorised into two, namely, oral and written forms. Oral forms are commonly used in infant classes whereas the written forms are used in infant, junior and senior classes (MIE, 2008). Assessment for literacy (reading and writing) on children with HI is quite challenging because of limited linguistic skills arising from deafness. Their needs are often overlooked and misunderstood (Meyen & Bui, 2007). Because of these challenges, the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB) arranges for accommodations and adaptations during the exams for these children with HI. For instance, every hour in exams, is given additional twelve (12) minutes to provide equal opportunity for all learners to do well. They also provide an invigilator who is a specialist teacher for the deaf, who oversees the smooth writing of exams by communicating and simplifying the language on the exam paper through sign language or through speech reading. Another provision is that all children with special needs are given a special room where they write exams without any disturbance.

2.9.1 Summary

This area of assessment has looked at the purpose, sameness of assessing learners in a mixed class, continuous and summative assessment, forms of assessment for literacy and adaptive measures MANEB use to accommodate children with HI and other disabilities. However, though children with HI are assessed in the same way as children without disabilities in Malawi, it has been observed that they still do not perform well as compared to their peers in both teacher made tests and MANEB examinations. The main problem is slowness when writing the papers due to difficulties in understanding the concept on question papers. It's very difficult to write something you don't know. Another challenge is that invigilators for children with special needs are not many, and in some schools they are invigilated by regular teachers who may not communicate effectively to children with HI. Literature supports the view that assessment should be adapted to provide flexibility to the needs of all children regardless of their disabilities (Chilemba, 2011). This implies that tests/ exams should consider the pace of writing, sign language interpreter, and providing a quiet environment in which to assess them.

2.10 Teaching and Learning Materials/ Resources for Literacy

Teaching and learning materials/ resources have become a critical component in language since they help in promoting reading and writing skills among learners. Good teaching and learning resources enrich most lessons (MIE, 2013). Teaching resource is defined as any material that a teacher uses during the teaching and learning process in order to facilitate learning (Foundation Studies Handbook, 2008). Teaching resources have several positive outcomes. a) They help in making teaching and learning more interesting. b) They help learners to be fully engaged in their learning, hence making it easier for learners to grasp and better remember facts, concepts and

skills. c) They help learners to understand the subject matter easily. d) They help to provide concrete experiences to learners so that they do not forget the concept (MIE, 2013). According to MoEST, 2010 (2010), the resources that children with HI benefit from are those they can see, touch, taste and not audio aids that help learners learn through hearing. Therefore, teachers in mainstream primary schools are encouraged to use resources that would appeal to many senses such as objects, real things, or anything commercial or teacher made materials which may help children to be proficient in reading and writing.

In addition, teachers who create print rich environment in their classroom help in creating conducive environment for incidental learning for learners. MIE (2014) reports that literacy environment in a classroom reveals a lot of information about the teaching and learning that goes on in the class by showing whether learning is taking place or not. Therefore, teachers should make sure that classroom displays reflect learners' performance. It is therefore important that the textbooks and other appropriate print materials are neatly and creatively displayed in the classroom so that all learners including children with HI interact with them all the time (MIE, 2014). In addition, teachers are also encouraged to provide supplementary materials for their children to read apart from the learner's books. Since learners books for Chichewa and English are in short supply, supplementary materials can help promote the reading culture in schools, hence increasing children's opportunities to gain fluency and other reading skills (MoEST, 2009). Children need to be immersed in a literacy rich environment, filled with books, pictures, poems, charts, wall news boards to display stories from newspapers, magazines and other resources that can capture their interest and make them want to read for information and pleasure (MIE, 2013, Foundation Studies Handbook, 2008).

2.10.1 Summary

This part of teaching and learning resource has looked at definition, role of resources in the teaching and learning process and need for teachers to create print rich environment. However, much as we appreciate that resources contribute to the effective learning in class, it has been shown that children with HI are not fully exposed to the visual aids which help learners to learn through seeing. For instance, in many schools, there are not enough English learners books to cater for large classes. Teachers are also not resourceful enough to come up with appropriate resources that are responsive to the needs of children with HI in mainstream school because they have not been trained in special education needs programme. As such, they use resources that benefit the hearing children. In addition, children with HI are rarely given a chance to use the resources because of communication problems and also that they take long to complete the task e.g. reading in learner's book. Vygotsky (1978) argued that where the child's learning activities and environment are insufficiently challenging or supportive, learning and development will not take place thus leading to inequalities in educational outcomes for children of equal ability. However, schools should create a rich print environment in all classes to help learners who struggle with reading to benefit. The rich print environment may include displays of words, sentences, poems, stories, and pictures, name cards of different items in class, wall news boards / reading boards and phonic charts. Furthermore, Department of Teacher Education [DTED] (2009) expounded that good resources are those that are appropriate for the age, level and learning area. They are to be clear for learners to get a message and also bold for learners to see and read. Still on the same, all displays must be removed every fortnight to bring in the new resources so that the interest of learners should be renewed all the time. If in some cases, teachers just come to teach without use of the resources learners get bored and the lesson may

lose its touch because learner's curiosity is triggered when they are interacting with the resources.

2.11 Challenges encountered during teaching and learning of literacy

As it has been expounded in 2.5, literacy plays a fundamental role to the learning of all subjects in the curriculum. It has been observed that being literate increases opportunities for the individual to find and retain satisfying life, and also acts as a foundation for lifelong learning and work (American Federation of Teachers, 2007, cited in Westwood, 2008). However, children with HI in mainstream schools are not taught in the right way for them to enjoy the privileges of literacy after school. Since most of the teachers in mainstream primary school are regular teachers, they are not conversant with inclusive methodologies that are responsive to children of different diversities in class. Research show that children with HI often receive qualitatively different and less motivating instruction which include slower pace of instruction, fewer opportunities to read, write and discuss the text than their peers (Duke, 2001, cited in NCCA, 2012). Gunning (2008) is of the opinion that the heart of instructional method is the quality of teaching. According to him, effective teachers should master a variety of techniques that may be adapted to fit the needs of children with HI.

Another challenge is the breakdown of communication between the teacher and children with HI in the course of teaching and learning process. Regular teachers in mainstream schools have no background information on how to handle children with special needs. For instance, during the course of teaching, if the teacher turns his/her head to another direction, the child loses much of what was to be acquired through speech reading (MoEST, 2010). It is the same with sign language; no message may be conveyed with people who do not know sign language. However,

as one way of improving communication to children with HI, teachers may write on the chalkboard, or may engage an interpreter or may call a guardian to help in communication with the child.

The other challenge is the inadequate use of materials/resources during the teaching of literacy. Giangreco (1997) commented that if resources are not easily available, it makes the teaching of children with HI very difficult. In order for a child with HI to do well in literacy, teachers should be resourceful in bringing a lot of visual aids to the class. MIE (2008) recommends the importance of visual aids in that it can be used in oral, reading and writing activities e.g. use of real objects, pictures and drawings. In addition, resources also include good learning environment. If children are not learning in a safe and good environment, they become barriers if not adapted to the needs of learners. For instance, classes with no good lighting, make children unable to see properly in class.

2.11.1 Summary

This part has looked at challenges teachers encounter as they teach literacy in mainstream schools. These include lack of inclusive methodologies, communication problems and inadequate use of resources. However, studies show that intervention such as allocating sufficient time to literacy and a classroom environment stocked with books are some of the solutions to the challenges faced by teachers (NCCA, 2012). In addition, preparedness in terms of lessons and resources has been recommended to be the key to the success of literacy lesson in a class of children with different diversity.

2.12 Theoretical Framework related to Literacy: Socio-Cultural Theory

This study is informed by the theory of socio-cultural theory. It is a theory that emphasizes the role that culture plays in the development and practice of literacy (NCCA, 2012). According to this theory, literacy learning is a social practice where specific cultural contexts are mediated by particular cultural tools (Gutierrez, 2002). Vygotsky (1978) stressed that learning occurs through interaction or dialogue, and this may be between the teacher to the child or the child with his/her peers. Research in the socio-cultural field has demonstrated how adults can scaffold children's literacy learning through apprenticeship models as recommended by Rogoff (1990) and Snowman & Biehler, (2006). It is further pointed out that as children demonstrates mastery over the content, the learning aids are faded and removed (Snowman & Biehler, 2006). For instance, in language and literacy lesson, the teacher may demonstrate the correct pronunciation of the words while the learners are observing. Then the teacher supports the learners in having the correct pronunciation and later children do it on their own under close supervision of the expert. In the same way, this theory can be applied to children with HI during the process of acquiring the second language (Skidmore & Gallagher, 2005). What the teacher does is to engage the child with HI in a dialogue or sometimes children themselves are engaged in a dialogue with an aim of exchanging information. It is through this dialogue that learning takes place. This is called a '*community of practice model*' where both active learners and more expert partners are actively involved in a dialogue (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Slobin, 2003). However, the more the novice gains skills, knowledge and understanding, the more he/she will be transformed and the higher the chances of becoming central members of the expert group. This theory has been opted because of its focus on the need for interaction and communication between the teacher and the learners and also among learners themselves. With the use of this approach, I believe children

with HI can acquire literacy skills as well as social skills which are lacking in most children with HI.

2.12.1 Summary

Socio-cultural theory offers valuable insight into how children with HI acquire language and literacy skills from the cultural context. Vygotsky (1987) pointed out that learning is influenced by interaction between the novice and expert in the environment in which they are operating. Through exposure to mediational tools, children with HI get acquainted to the language and literacy skills. However, for the learning to take place, an expert is supposed to be understanding and caring considering that children with HI have limited auditory input. He/she should be patient and should accord learners adequate time until the skill has been mastered. The classroom should provide a conducive learning environment for all learners. The class should have lots of literacy displays to aid in reading as well as writing and also to have good lighting.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Introduction

The focus of this study is to investigate the teaching of literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary school. The research used classroom observations and interviews in order to have a clear picture of the participant's experiences both in class and outside the classroom. This chapter presents a detailed description of the research design, data collection methods and instruments, population sample and sampling procedures, data analysis techniques, limitations and delimitations, trustworthiness and ethical issues in qualitative research.

3.2 Research Design

This study followed a qualitative case study design. This approach was used in order to obtain maximum information from the respondents in their natural setting as recommended by Fraenkel & Wallen, (2009). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as the study of things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Using this approach the researcher went direct to a particular setting of interest to observe and collect data several times with an aim of gaining an in-depth information and also have a holistic view of what goes on in a natural setting (Fraenkel & Lincoln, 2009). Furthermore, this approach was used because it is concerned with the process on how things occur, that is, how strategies and resources are used in the delivery of literacy lessons in a class where both children with HI learn together with children without disabilities. This approach was also used for this study because the area under study has not been explored very much in Malawi, therefore, the researcher aimed at finding an in depth information on the teaching of literacy in mainstream schools. In qualitative research, the researcher is the key

instrument (Cresswell, 2008). This means that the researcher must use his/her observational skills, trust and ability to extract the correct information from the participants (Bhahacherjee, 2012). The researcher must not ignore anything that might lead to insight of a situation, since no data are trivial or unworthy of notice in qualitative research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

3.3 Research Site

This study was conducted at Kasungu Demonstration School in Kasungu and Ngala School in Dowa. Both of these schools accommodate children with HI. Kasungu Demonstration School has 13 classrooms with a population of 1,435 learners. It has also a resource room. At this school, there are 26 learners with special needs of which 2 are children with HI and the rest are children of mixed impairments. The school has 26 teachers altogether, of whom one is a specialist teacher for children with special needs. Ngala School has 8 classrooms with a population of 868 learners. There are 2 children with HI and has 15 qualified teachers and 8 practising student teachers from Kasungu Teachers College. The school has no specialist teacher and no resource room. Children with special needs are assisted by a female regular teacher.

3.4 Pilot Study

A pilot was conducted in order to assess the appropriateness of research methodology, particularly the questioning techniques and the general conduct of the interviewing method. The pilot study was done at Lilongwe Demonstration School. This school was chosen because it has some children with special needs. The pilot study used both tools, that is, observation and interviews. Pre-testing involved only a small number of persons as recommended by Singleton et al., (1993). This was made to ensure that there was clarity on each item and to identify any

ambiguity, weaknesses and problems in the design, and to check time for completing and other problems that might be experienced. I was permitted to observe language lessons in resource room for special needs and a regular class. A camera was used to take pictures of what was going on in class and also a recorder to capture the actual lessons. After observations, interviews were done with teachers who had taught the language lessons. Thereafter, some adjustments were made to the interview guides and observation checklist (Cohen & Manion, 2007).

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

According to Bhahacherjee (2012), sampling involves a statistical process of selecting a sample of a population of interest for the purpose of making observations and statistical inferences about the population. Therefore, in order for the researcher to make a conscious decision about which individuals and which primary school sites would best provide the desired information, the study used purposive sampling (Cohen & Manion, 2010). This type of sampling was chosen in order to provide the researcher with the most useful data upon which to develop, implement and evaluate the teaching of literacy to children with HI (Cohen & Manion, 2010).. The identification of the schools where children with HI learn together with children without disabilities was done with the assistance of the Divisional Officer for Special Needs Education (DOSNE) at the Central East Educational Division. The schools chosen were Kasungu Demonstration School and Ngala School in Kasungu and Dowa respectively. This study targeted four teachers. Both Kasungu demonstration and Ngala School had two respondents each. Kasungu demonstration school had more one regular teacher and one specialist teacher while Ngala School had two regular teachers. The study only engaged teachers who teach language and literacy in both the two schools.

3.6 Data Collection Methods and Tools

Data for the study was collected using two research tools, namely, observation and interview methods. The researcher believed that use of multiple sources (triangulation) was essential because it helps to cross-check and validate the findings, thereby increasing the trustworthiness of the results under investigation. The two methods also complement each other in coming out with data that is valid. The researcher also believes that use of many tools in collection of data will help improve the consistency and accuracy of data by providing a more complete picture of the phenomenon (Morsi, 1991).

3.6.1 Observation schedule

The most obvious way to identify good practice is through observation in the classroom. Robson (1993) defines observation as a systematic way of watching, recording, describing, interpreting and analysing what people do, behave and say. The observation tool was designed bearing in mind four key areas that are essential in the teaching and learning process. These include strategies, materials/resources, assessment and the learning environment. Prior to observation of lessons, the researcher sought permission from the head teacher to allow him conduct the research (Swedish Research Council, 2011). Then the researcher met the concerned participants to agree on the day and time of lesson observations, and also to tell the respondents of the instruments that would be used during observation such as lesson observation guide and a video camera to take pictures and record of what would be going on. The researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality, and that no information would be released without their consent. The researcher observed language and literacy lessons in resource room and mainstream class. Some of the focused skills included reading and comprehension, writing, listening and speaking

skills. During the observation, the researcher assumed the role of non-participant, which means that he does not participate in the activity but rather sit at the back or sidelines and watch (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Observing people in their natural setting is very essential to the researcher because he is in a position to capture the truest picture on how children with HI are taught literacy in mainstream. More complete descriptions of behaviour in natural settings allow researchers to establish a firmer basis for predicting future behaviour (Shaughnessy et al., 2003). The major disadvantage of observation method was that it was time consuming because the researcher had to observe the lessons several times in order to come with the reliable data.

3.6.2 Interviews

The other most widely used data collection method in qualitative studies is the interview. An interview is a face to face conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondents (Bell, 1994). The interview was conducted to four teachers and it was done in English although some lessons were conducted in Chichewa.

However, before the interview process started, every respondent was briefed on what the interview was all about and how much time it will take (Driscoll, 2011). Thereafter, I asked the respondent if I could be permitted to use a recorder during the interview, and they accepted. This was done in order to assure the respondents that the interview will be done in a more transparent manner, and also to establish a rapport between the researcher and respondents. The interviews were done soon after finishing observing lessons in their respective classes. The interview used semi-structured questions in order for the researcher to add questions or modify them as would be necessary (Gall et al., 2003). The interviews were very important because, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), they help the researcher to clarify any questions that are obscure.

They also helped in eliciting data in its great depth through probing questions which may lead to getting more information. The interviews were also flexible and adjustable for data collection since they used multi- sensory channels such as verbal and non-verbal means as recommended by Cohen and Manion (2007). The time span for interviews varied from 3 to 5 minutes depending on the knowledge of the respondents.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The primary goal of data analysis is to determine whether our observations support a claim about behaviour (Abelson 1995, cited in Shaughnessy et al., 2003). The data in this study was analysed using thematic analysis. The first thing the researcher did in data analysis was to check the questions and responses of all the teachers. Thereafter, the researcher categorised and organized the data into themes (Henning et al., 2005).

3.9 Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is an indication of methodological soundness and adequacy as recommended by Holloway & Wheeler, (2002). Trustworthiness includes credibility, applicability, dependability and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency, where the core issue is ‘how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so (Gasson, 2004, In Morrow, S.L. 2005). Credibility reflects the degree to which the results of a study are factual and is an indication of whether they truly reflect the goal of the research and the social reality of

the participants (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). To ensure credibility in my research study, I had prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, member checking and debriefing. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation were realized through continuous observation in a class where both children with HI and those without disability were learning together. This was done twice a week for a period of one month on Tuesdays and Fridays. Fridays were chosen because many teachers assess their learners at the end of the week, hence very crucial for the researcher to get information on assessment techniques used by the teacher. Credibility was also realised through triangulation, whereby the researcher employed both observation and interview. This helped the researcher to have enriched information as well as crosschecking the information gathered on either side. Member checking (participant checks) as a means of fulfilling credibility was realised through discussion with teachers during the interview and after observation of lessons.

3.9.2 Applicability (transferability)

Applicability refers to the degree to which the results of the research can be applied to other events/situations, settings or groups in the population (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). It is also referred to as transferability. Transferability, according to Wise (2006), refers to the ability of a researcher to make others interested in transferring the conclusions from the study to other contexts. This was facilitated by the researcher by providing a full, detailed and accurate description of the strategies, materials and assessment used in the context the study was conducted. The participants were probed to give detailed descriptions and recorded the accounts of their experiences and challenges as regards to the teaching of literacy, which was later saved in flash drives or CD's.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability implies that the findings of a study are consistent and accurate (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Dependability ensures future researchers to repeat the study (Shenton, 2003). This can only be done if the process within the study is reported in detail and that it was done in a dependable way. The researcher may employ an audit trail, which allows readers to follow the researcher's path in order to see how conclusions have been reached. An audit trail also called inquiry audit guide other researchers who may want to undertake similar research to scrutinize and examine the research documents, findings and interpretation of data gathered and the final recommendations. To ensure dependability a lengthy period of time was spent conducting fieldwork to enable the researchers to gain a thorough understanding of the circumstances and to establish a relationship of trust with the participants. In addition, a careful observation of each respondent took place; and all the raw data collected in the form of field notes and life stories was stored (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability, also referred to as neutrality, is an intricate process that supports the fact that the data must verify the research findings, recommendations and interpretations (Struwig & Stead, 2001). It is also called member check. It determines whether the research findings are unbiased and it relates to how neutral and objective the researcher is (De Vos, 1998). To ensure confirmability, the researcher would produce the data collected and the findings to support the conclusions. In addition, confirmability will be achieved through the audit trail whereby readers could trace or check fieldnotes and the given data to their origin.

3.10 Ethical Issues

The researcher gained consent from the respondents taking part in the study. The researcher ensured that the respondents were well informed about the purpose of the research they were being asked to participate in. The researcher informed the respondents of the risks they may face as a result of being part of the research. Also were informed of the benefits that might accrue to them as a result of participating. The respondents were assured that the responses provided would be treated in complete confidence and anonymised as part of the research. In addition, participants were informed that they would be free to withdraw at any time (Cohen, et al., 2009).

3.11 Summary

This chapter has explained the details of the research methodology which has been used in the study. The rationale for using the qualitative research design has been explained. An explanation has also been given on the participants who took part in the research. The methods which were used have also been described in detail. The study has also included how data has been organized and analyzed. Trustworthiness of qualitative research has also been explained and ended with ethical issues.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the results and discussion of data collected from the participants in the selected sample schools. In this chapter the results from observations and interviews will be presented and discussed in detail together with the themes that emerged during the analysis of the data. Theme 1: (4.2) examines the strategies teachers use when teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream. Theme 2: (4.2) explores the materials teachers use when teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream. Theme 3: (4.4) explores how children with HI are assessed in literacy to determine their progress. Theme 4: (4.5) identifies the challenges faced by teachers when teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream schools. Therefore, to follow the presentation of data analysis in an orderly way, the participants have been assigned alphabetical letters in both observations and interviews as follows: Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C and Teacher D

4.2 Theme 1: Teaching strategies teachers use when teaching literacy

This theme was aimed at looking at the strategies teachers employ when teaching literacy in mainstream classes. The teaching strategies included inclusive methodologies and other techniques embedded in the teaching such as allocation of time on a given task, supporting techniques (scaffolding). This theme is addressing the first sub-question, ‘What strategies are used when teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream primary?’

4.2.1 Teaching methods (Inclusive methodologies)

It was observed that there were variations in the way teachers used the methods. Some teachers used varied inclusive methodologies that were responsive to the needs of children with special needs while others were not. Some of the methods observed included pair work, group discussion, games, demonstration, role play, questions and answer, reading aloud in groups, writing tasks individually. During observations Teacher A wanted her children to distinguish the sounds of words with similar final letters.

She wrote several words ending in 'ake' and 'ght' such as 'take' and 'brought' on the chalkboard. She underlined the three letters and asked several learners to read aloud one at a time after the teacher. Children with HI had a big task in pronouncing some of the words ending in 'ake' and 'ght' such as take, taught, caught. The teacher helped them in having the right pronunciation and demonstrated 'take' by taking a book. Some words like 'taught' and 'caught' were accompanied by drawings/pictures showing a teacher teaching learners and a thief being in the hands of policemen. Then, learners were requested to read the words in groups from learner's books under the guidance of a group leader. Though few reading books were distributed, the group leaders managed to make each and every learner read out the words. After that she drew learner's attention to the sound of the final letters in both groups of words. Finally learners were asked to write the list of words into their notebooks.

From the above extract, Teacher A used a variety of methods. First, she engaged learners in reading aloud individually to check if learners were pronouncing the words correctly (MIE, 2008). According to Cunningham and Zibulsky (2011) reading aloud helps both average and below average children to develop confidence in word recognition when guided by a teacher or a skilled reader. In addition, Trelease (2001) remarks that reading aloud gives children background

knowledge which helps them make sense of what they see, hear and read. It was further said that the more teachers read aloud to children the larger their vocabularies grow (Ibid). Gee (1996) emphasised that reading aloud supports literacy development since children are able to distinguish letters and notice the difference between written and spoken languages. However, reading aloud posed some challenges to children with HI in terms of pronunciation and understanding of words. In addition, no ample time was given to them to practice the words for mastery. They were simply repeating words after the teacher without actually understanding the reading the text (MoE, 2010). Teacher A also used demonstration methods to consolidate the concept being delivered. MIE (2008) recommends that demonstration as a method supports reading and writing because it involves telling, showing and doing something for the benefit of children. Allington and Cunningham (2002) in agreement remark that, *'good teachers demonstrate how to apply a range of strategies. Teaching involves 'showing' and 'demonstrating'*. By combining drawings/ pictures with spoken words children were given a chance to understand difficult and abstract concepts easily. However, children with HI were not given a chance to practice pointing at picture and saying a word. To my view, they could have been given a chance to demonstrate to the class or a group of learners for them to internalise the concept. Teacher A also used group work method whereby quick and clever learners were used to help and support the novice (children with HI) and other learners without disabilities who faced challenges in pronunciation of the words correctly in their respective groupings. MIE (2008) recommends that group work helps children to actively participate in the classroom activities and also promotes social interaction among learners. However, despite this method being participatory, it was very difficult for the teacher to trace the children who had challenges with reading because learner's books were very few, the class was large and groups were many.

It needs ample time and thorough supervision to check all children having problems. Now during the interview, when asked to mention the strategies used in the lesson, Teacher A pointed out reading aloud, demonstration and group methods. When asked on whether the strategies were responsive to other disadvantaged children such as those with hearing impairment, Teacher A said that; *'I was aware that my class has some children with problems. I tried to engage them, but maybe I did not help them very much because of time factor. As for children with HI, it is very challenging to teach them, more especially to lessons regarding reading.'* But I always make sure that these learners should not be isolated in my class.

Teacher B taught Unit 13 on a topic 'Tadala's breakfast. She wrote two sentences on the chalkboard. 1. I _____ breakfast every morning. 2. We_____our classroom every day. Before answers were given to the two sentences, she drilled *eat/ate, sweep/swept*, and gave answers to the two sentences. Then she distributed learner's books for learners to work in groups for three remaining sentences in the book. She started marking maths from the previous period while learners were discussing between and amongst themselves for the answers. After finishing marking, she asked group leaders to go in front of the chalkboard to report their answers to the class. Thereafter, she consolidated. During the interview the researcher wanted to know the strategies used by the teacher. Teacher B, said, *'I used only method and that is group method'*. When asked why she did not move around to see and support learners as they were discussing in their groups. She said she wanted first to finish marking the sums the learners had written in the previous period since the class is very big. I enquired further to know whether children with HI had benefitted from the lesson. *'I hope they were assisted by their friends as they were working in their groups.'* Based on what was observed from the lesson, it showed that learners did not enjoy the support of their teacher. Moll and Whitemore (1998) describe the teacher's roles as

guide and supporter, active participant in learning, evaluator and facilitator. Research suggests that children are more likely to develop positive attitudes to learning when they experience positive relationships with their teachers (Serow & Solomon, 1997, Prawat & Nickerson, 1985). In this case, children in teacher B class had no direction to an extent that some groups were just looking at one another without any discussion. Vygotsky (1962) emphasizes the pivotal contribution of social interaction to cognitive development and the view that cognitive development is a process of continuous interplay between the individual and the environment. Although some groups wrote and presented their work, it was full of grammatical errors and some answers were not correct. The support given by the teacher to learners in class is very essential if learners are to do well. Learners should not be left alone when doing work but be guided on how the work should be done.

Teacher C taught a Chichewa lesson on the topic '*Mayina oyimira magulu a zinthu*' (Collective nouns). Teacher C sampled few learners to read a story aloud from Unit 6. After that, teacher C wrote the following words: mkoko, msambi, namtindi, tsangwe, mkuku and mtolo on the chalkboard. When Teacher C asked learners to give meaning of the words on the chalkboard the responses were generally very poor. Teacher C also tried one learner who was sitting at the very back of the class. She remained silent when the teacher asked her to give her understanding of the word 'tsangwe'. Her friends had to repeat to her what the teacher had asked but she remained quiet. Later, learners were asked to write Exercise C on '*Mayina oyimira magulu a zinthu*' in their notebooks. During the interview teacher C was asked why he did not modify the teaching instruction to meet the needs of the child with HI by employing use of concrete things or use of pictures having collective nouns. He responded that when planning he had that in mind but was unable to do so because some items had to be bought to make the lesson colourful, but

unfortunately he had no money to buy these things. On whether the lesson had achieved the intended purpose, teacher C said that most of them got correct in the exercise they were given but the child with hearing impairment did not do well in both reading and writing. On the part of poor performance by the child with HI, Teacher C was asked to explain what he does to ensure that the child with HI participates in the lesson. The response was that *'I try my best to involve the learner, sometimes she does not respond as you have seen today. Sometimes I get help from children she plays with, who encourage her to participate. The problem with me is that I am not trained in this field of special needs, so it's very difficult for me to know whether I am doing it correctly or not.'*

From the above lesson, it is a known fact that children with HI are not fully supported by regular teachers because of lack of communication between the teacher and the child. The child was unable to speak or read and the teacher ignored her completely. According to Gunning (2008), teachers should be sensitive to learner's difficulty, be supportive and help the child build confidence, and also provides opportunities for the child to take part in discussions and purposeful oral reading. Some writers have commented that without ability to communicate and learn effectively through reading and writing, individuals are severely disadvantaged for life (Rose, 2006). Similarly, any child who does not learn to read early and well will not easily master other skills and knowledge, and is unlikely to do well in school or in life (Moats, 1999). Most children with HI face challenges in reading and writing because they lack background knowledge in the language they are learning. Wery and Nietfeld (2010) were of the opinion that background knowledge provides a basis for understanding, learning and remembering facts and ideas in stories, academic content and textbooks. Brown (2008) remarks that people who have knowledge of a topic have better recall and are better able to elaborate on aspects of the topic

than those who have limited knowledge of the topic. In teacher C class, more learners were unable to read ‘mayina oyimira magulu a zinthu’ because of lack of background knowledge of the words given.

Teacher D taught a lesson in Chichewa on the topic ‘*mawu otsutsana m’matathauzo*’ (*opposite words*). He wrote two examples on the chalkboard such as *Zoyera (white)* _____ and *Tseka (close)* _____. Then he did the work together with learners. For example: *Zoyera (white) - Zakuda (black)* *Tseka (close) - Tsekula (open)*. Teacher D as a specialist teacher used many resources when teaching the concept *Zoyera (white) –Zakuda (black)*. For example he brought pieces of cloths and chickens both black and white to teach the concept ‘*Zoyera / Zakuda*, and books, cartons and the door to teach the concept of *Tseka* and *Tsekula*. Before demonstrating he tapped the table to get the attention of children with HI, and then he pronounced the words slowly while demonstrating using the resources he had at hand several times. His concern was for children with HI to grasp the concept. Then he engaged them in pronunciation of the words. Thereafter, learners were asked to write exercise B which contained ‘Chira’, ‘Vundukula’ and ‘Uve’. Teacher D also took a long time marking and supporting learners who were meeting some challenges with the work. During the interview when asked how the learners had performed in the Chichewa lesson, teacher D said that most of them including children with HI had performed fairly well. When asked why it was like that, teacher D said that, ‘*I employed inclusive methods that supported all learners of different diversities. In addition, the methods were accompanied by concrete resources, and I also used the language which all learners were understanding and as for children with HI I used sign language and gestures and also that I moved around to support the learners as they were doing their work.*’ Furthermore, he said that he gave all learners who were struggling ample time to write their work at own pace so that work given should be

finished. So from the above lesson, it showed that teacher D was fully prepared by looking at the resources and the approaches/strategies he used during the lesson presentation. Other scholars have argued that the amount of time given to instruction and practice in reading and writing, is an important influence on literacy development (Biancrosa & Snow, 2006, Kourea et al., 2007 cited in Westwood 2008). Because of this support, that's why most of the learners handled by the specialist teacher are doing well.

Theme 2: 4.3 Teaching Materials/Resources

This theme is responding to the second research question: What teaching materials are used when teaching literacy to children with HI in mainstream schools? In most of the lessons observed, teaching resources such as charts and pictures, word cards, objects and learners books were not available in some classes and very few in others. For instance, Chichewa and English learners books were inadequate to an extent that one or two books was shared to a group of 10 to 15 learners. Some learners even had no writing materials such as pens and exercise books to use when writing an exercise. During the interviews when teachers were asked to explain how they cope up with the issue of shortage of learner's books and writing materials. Here are some of the responses:

Teacher A: *'I have very few learners books in my class and what I do when it is a language and literacy lesson is to put learners in groups of 10 where they take turns in reading aloud, and sometimes I write on the chalkboard so that learners benefit from the reading lesson.'* She argued that her school more especially her class does not have adequate learner's books. Teacher A, blamed the government of Malawi for not committing itself to the provision of resources, more especially English and Chichewa learners books in many schools. Regarding the issue of

writing materials, Teacher A said that there is nothing she could do because provision of exercise books and pens is done by the government. She further said that there is a World Bank programme called School Support Programme (SIP) which provides funds through the District Education Manager (DEM) for schools to buy their own resources including exercise books, pens and charts but the challenge to this programme is that it is done once a year and depending on priorities children may not get essential resources.

The above explanation reveals that both children with and without HI are not exposed to reading and writing skills because of serious shortage of reading books and other materials. Literacy skills cannot be realized if children are not exposed to books and other locally found resources in the environment. Children with HI benefit a lot from resources they can see, touch, taste and not audio aids that help learners learn through hearing. It is through the use of multi sensory activities that knowledge of literacy is constructed. As the Chinese proverb say, *'I hear I forget, I see I remember, I do I understand'* the use of locally found resources promotes literacy learning hence improve the children's ability for long term storage and eventual recall (Gwayi, 2009). In addition, Nicholus, Rupley and Rickleman (2004) children's knowledge of concepts about print, which is a major factor in determining literacy levels, is fulfilled when children are given a chance to interact with the resources. Furthermore, as children are allowed to write what they see and experience, they develop a way of crafting new ideas, making connections, extrapolating, making sense of experiences, exploring and expressing ideas as recommended by Winch et al., (2001). IPTE Mentoring Guide (2013) suggests that creating a print rich environment in the classroom and schools is the only way that can influence their reading during lessons and breaks. Therefore, teachers must use resources that would appeal to many senses. A classroom literacy

environment reveals a lot of information about the teaching and learning that goes on in the class (MIE, 2014).

On the other hand when Teacher B was asked about the teaching materials/resources used, she said, '*I used the chalkboard and English learners books.*' She further said that the chalkboard was used to write sentences and words whereas the English learner's books were used by learners to find answers. She was quick to say, '*but the learner's books were not enough even before I asked her. I only have five books.*' On why other materials such as word cards or charts were not used as supplements reading and writing due to shortage of books in your class? Teacher B, said that charts are a big problem at her school, and she relies very much on the use of the chalkboard for everything she wants to write. I probed further to know if children with HI are considered in a special way as regards to the type of resources to be used. Teacher B responded that there is no such consideration because she has not been trained in special education and she teaches them just like all learners who are without disabilities.

Teacher C like teacher A and B had the same challenges in the use of materials. In his lesson on mayina oyimira magulu a zinthu (collective nouns) Teacher C relied much on the chalk board for the new words. Teacher C did not make use of local environment to bring concrete things like mkoko wa nthochi (bunch of banana), mkuku (maize stalks), tsangwe la mtedza (bunch of ground nuts) and other collective nouns. Reading was done from the few learners' books in the class where drilling of new/difficult words were taken from. During the interview I wanted to know the resources that were used in the lesson. Teacher C responded that he used chalkboard and the learners' books. I probed further to know why the words drilled to learners were not written on word cards or charts so that all learners including children with disabilities could have seen them. Teacher C said that he did not have chart papers on which to write the new/ difficult

words. Then when asked why local environment was not utilised to get real things such as bunch of bananas, maize stalks and bunch of grass. Teacher C, said, *'I could not have found some of the resources because they were not in season for example the maize stalk, bunch of groundnuts. He further said that some resources were available at the market such as the bunch of bananas, but due to lack of money they were not bought.'* On whether children with HI had acquired the concept of collective nouns, Teacher C was quick to say that the lesson will be repeated with enough resources so that all learners benefit from the lesson. So from the above discussion, it shows that teacher C was not fully prepared in his lesson in terms of the resources. Gwayi (2009) commented that use concrete things found in the local environment motivate learners because since they are within learner's everyday experience, and this captures their interest and attention. Teacher D taught English in a resource room. This one being a qualified specialist teacher for children with special needs employed a number of resources to respond to the needs of children with HI. The resources included those that appealed to many senses such as sight, touch, taste. I observed two lessons from him, one was a Chichewa lesson in mainstream class and the other was an English one in a resource room. The reason was to compare how the resources were used in both situations. What was different from him to the rest of all teachers who were observed was that he prepared the resources according to the needs of all learners. During the interview when asked on the use of many resources in class, teacher D said that not all learners may grasp a concept from one resource, so by employing a number of resources which are concrete in nature, it helped learners with special needs including children with HI to grasp the difficult concepts easily.

Theme 3: 4.4 Assessment

This theme is in response to the third research question: How are children with HI assessed in literacy in mainstream primary school? This theme is looking at different techniques children with HI are assessed in class alongside their peers without disabilities. Some of the techniques the study focused included oral as well as paper and pencil tests. Assessment in schools under study is done every two weeks and observation was done on Friday. Teacher A assessed learners in reading vocabulary. She prepared in advance ten reading words for her children. She was calling one learner at a time to read the words on the list. If the learner is able to read the word on his or her own, teacher A was putting a tick on assessment record sheet under the name of the child. If the child fails the teacher was leaving a blank and move on to the next word. Teacher A seemed was in a hurry, was not spending much time with those who had problems in reading. This continued until all children have attempted reading the words. During the interview teacher A was asked to explain how children with HI are assessed in general. Teacher A, said, 'I assess them in the same way as other learners in class. On the same, Slobart (2005) remarked that there should be 'equity and fairness' when assessing children of different diversities to avoid biasness. On whether children with HI are given certain consideration, Teacher A said, 'I give equal chances to all learners, and mind you, I have a large class. I probed to know how she manages the large class during assessment. Teacher A said that, assessment for example, reading vocabulary does not end in a day, it may take several days. On the right time to conduct the assessment, Teacher A said that assessments are sometimes done before or after classes, she added that sometimes learners are put into groups and I make a timetable for testing each group. As you were assessing the reading vocabulary, children with HI had challenges in reading some words on the list. Why did you not help them? Teacher A responded that during assessment no

help is given to learners. The aim of this assessment was to see if learners were making any progress or not. If the learner keeps on falling behind from their peers, teachers are supposed to give extra help or remedial work.

Teacher B wrote ten sentences on chalkboard and requested learners to complete with 'a' 'an' and 'the'. Examples of sentences included: a) I eat _____ egg every day. b) I wear _____ shirt when going to school everyday. c) _____ moon shines at night. Then Teacher B asked learners individually to write the tasks in their notebooks. She moved around marking, and later recorded the results in progress book. During the interview, teacher B was asked how often she assesses learners in her class on language and literacy. Teacher B answered that most times it is every two weeks, but in most cases it is done during the time of teaching. On why she did not start with revision of definite and indefinite articles so that children with HI could have familiarized themselves with the activity. Teacher B said that she revised the articles the previous day, and all learners were aware of the test. I probed further on why adequate time for completing the task was not given to children with HI. Teacher B said she gave some minutes to all learners to complete the task, I give same time to all learners because I know them well myself. From the work you have marked, how was their performance? Did they get the concept of articles? Teacher B responded that children with HI did fairly well from the activity because of the revision they had the previous day.

Teacher C wrote a story on the chalkboard as follows: *Mrs Chigwambale is an agricultural advisor. One day I found Mrs Chigwambale teaching people about local treatment. She said that there are many trees that could cure different diseases. She also said that local medicine is cheap. She mentioned the trees and diseases they cure. She told the people that the pawpaw sap*

can be used to cure wounds; lemon leaves can cure coughs, leaves of avocado pear increases blood. In addition, mango leaves could cure fever.

Later, teacher C asked learners to answer questions from the passage. During the interview, teacher C was asked to explain how successful were the children with HI in the comprehension exercise? Teacher C said that children with HI did not do better in the exercise because they did not understand the questions and some concepts in the passage. He was asked why no support in terms of clues were not given to these children? Teacher C said that during examinations or when learners are writing a test no help is given, but according to your question I could have clarified these concepts before they write the exercise.

Teacher D had an assessment on Friday. He divided the class into two groups. He conducted riddles for the two groups to compete in Chichewa but here a will be translated into English.

The riddles were as follows:

- a) Chiputu zu mbewa lakaa! _____ When I uproot a plant mice fall/come out. What is it?

- b) Chitsa chagwetsa mfumu! _____ A small stamp makes a chief to fall down. What is it?

- c) Asilikali ndandanda mzungu pakati! _____ The boss is always surrounded by soldiers.
Who is he? _____
- d) Mkango walira wopanda matumbo! _____ A lion cries without intestines. What is it?

- e) Ndamanga nyumba yopanda khomo! _____ I have a house with one pole. Who am I?

Teacher D asked each group to solve the riddle. If the group gives the correct solution, it was awarded some points. If it fails, the other group was asked to solve the riddle and award it points if it answers correctly. The scores for each group were recorded on the chalkboard, later the results were transferred on the progress book. During the interview, teacher D was asked why he chose the activity for your class. Teacher D said he wanted the class to be active and live, where by all learners will be competing for the right answer. But I saw that children with HI were not as active as other learners in the class why? Teacher D said that by nature children with HI are not as active as the able ones because of language deprivation, but you saw clearly I was involving them. Yes, I saw you doing that, but it was too much, why focusing much on children with HI in every riddle you asked the group? Teacher D responded that as inclusive class all learners are to take part in the lesson, so by including them to respond to every question asked I wanted them to feel that they are part of the class.

Theme 4: 4.5 Challenges faced by teachers during the teaching of literacy to children with HI

The study has revealed some of the challenges the teachers face as they teach children with HI in a mainstream schools. Most of the challenges were noted during lesson observation and others were told by participants as they were being interviewed. Some of the notable challenges were lack of teaching and learning resources, learning environment, inability to modify the instruction and inadequate time.

4.5.1 Teaching materials/resources

Teaching materials/resources was reportedly to be one of the challenges in the three classes taught by regular teachers. Teachers in these classes had few books for learners to use as has

already been explained in 4.3. Use of few learners' books in a class of children with different diversities and different needs makes the teaching and learning process very challenging. In this situation teachers are compelled to use group work where chorus reading is done under the guidance of a group leader. However, this kind of reading only benefits those who are positioned towards the textbook than those seated behind the book. It was different in a class where a specialist teacher was teaching. At his disposal were a variety of teaching and learning resources and learners were interacting with them. His teaching was aimed at meeting the needs of individual learners, or in other words, the learner was the centre of attention. This was supported by MIE (2007) '*all learners can learn and succeed if they are given necessary attention and support.*' MIE (2013) reports that good teachers need to be creative and improve what learners learn through the use of a variety of teaching and learning resources. Apart from the learners' books, children need to be exposed to the print-rich environment during lessons and breaks in order for them to be proficient in their reading skills.

4.5.2 Learning environment

The learning environment looked into the sitting arrangement of children with HI and the classroom ventilation and lighting, large class and how these are affecting their learning literacy lessons. Most of the classes at the Kasungu demonstration school have desks, and that all children are seated according to sensitivity to gender and special needs. The classes have big windows that provide ventilation and good lighting and also the walls have print-rich displays for the benefit of learners. However, one of the challenges faced by this school is large classes. The catchment area around the school is growing in population, and most of the children take demonstration as their nearest school. This has brought in many challenges to children with HI considering the low level of attention they get from their teachers. Vygotsky (1978) recommends

that interaction between the child and adult or peers help him/her to internalize the concepts and strategies used by mentors and are able to perform on a higher level (cited in Gunning, 2008). On the other hand, the classes at Ngala school had no desks and all learners in the lower classes sit on the floor. They are seated in lines facing the chalkboard and only make circles when they have been requested to work in groups. The walls do not have enough displays. When asked why the class has few displays teacher B said that she used to hang the displays in class but has since stopped doing so because the villagers come at night to remove the displays in the classes which are not locked.

4.5.3 Inability to modify the instruction

During observation lessons, it was noted that other teachers were able to modify the activities to suit the needs of the learners but others had some challenges. Considering that classes have children of mixed abilities, good teachers always adapt, change and improve lessons in order to accommodate the needs of all children (MIE, 2013). In this case, teachers may use appropriate and relevant methods for teaching children with HI and also use communication strategies that can facilitate the learning of children with HI (MoEST, 2010). Gunning (2008) adds that accommodation include also changes in instruction and assessment. For instance, by allowing a test to be taken orally would be an accommodation, and teachers should always make sure that accommodation benefit all children. Accommodation may also include provision of adequate time to children with HI when they are doing an activity.

4.5.4 Inadequate time

It was observed that children with HI were not fully completing the tasks given to them by their teachers. They were writing very slowly and in some cases showing loss of direction. It is during

this time that children with HI need the support of the teacher in order to accomplish the tasks given. According to Gunning (2008) extra help is very essential to children who struggle, and they be given a one to one or small group instruction before or after school. Research clearly indicates that the more time students spend engaged in learning activities and the more content they cover, the more they learn (Berliner, 1985, Brophy & Good, 1986, Rosenshine & Stevens, 1984 cited in Gunning, 2008).

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented and discussed the data which was collected from the observations and interviews. The chapter has covered four themes which are presented as follows: 1. Teaching strategies teachers use when teaching literacy (reading and writing). This theme looked at the methods such as reading aloud/silent, writing tasks, group discussion, games etc. It also focused on supporting techniques, the interaction between the teacher and learners, how they were engaged in activities (participation) and the pacing of the teacher when teaching literacy. 2. Teaching materials/ resources looked at the charts and pictures, word cards, availability of learner's books and the displays. 3. Assessment focused on the techniques teachers used when assessing learners such as oral and paper and pencil tests. 4. Challenges focused on the inadequacy of some resources such as learners books, the learning environment included the large classes, teachers were unable to modify instructions to meet the needs of learners with special needs and lack of time to finish tasks.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to investigate the teaching of literacy (reading and writing) to children with HI in selected mainstream primary school in Central region of Malawi. This chapter is therefore giving a summary of the findings from the study. It is dwelling at the four themes which have been outlined as follows: 5.2. The teaching strategies teachers use when teaching literacy. 5.3. Teaching materials/ resources. 5.4. Assessment and 5.5. Challenges teachers face when teaching literacy to children with HI.

5.2. Teaching strategies teachers use when teaching literacy

The findings of this theme indicated that teachers use a variety of methods when teaching literacy (reading and writing) in class. Some of them include reading aloud, silent reading, group method, games, demonstration, role play, questions and answer. However, each one applied his/her own approach to teaching of literacy depending on class ability and availability of resources available in class. For instance in a class where few books were available teachers resorted to reading aloud in groups under the guidance of a teacher or group leader. Reading aloud as a strategy provides children with new vocabulary, exposes them to a variety of literature and contributes to their oral and written language development (Expert Panel Ontario, 2003). Though this approach was involving many learners in the classroom, most of them were just repeating words after the teacher without actually reading from the page (chorus reading). Children with HI failed to read words after the teacher or their group leaders because of lack of background knowledge in the language they were engaged in. Educators like Wery and Nietfeld (2010) say that background knowledge provides a basis of understanding, learning and remembering facts

and ideas found in stories, academic content and textbooks. Teachers need to be aware of the children's background, cultures and experience in order to provide appropriate instruction (Expert Panel Ontario, 2003).

Another technique was the support given to children with HI by different teachers. It was noted that teachers trained in the field of special needs were supported all children in class than regular teachers. They were moving around to see what each learner was doing in their respective groups. They adapted their language, provided guidance, simplified the content and provided remedial work to any child having challenges. The findings from regular teachers showed that interaction between the teacher and the child with HI was minimal because of language communication breakdown. The findings reveal that most of these children were not fully supported when doing activities, for instance, during reading time, children with HI had a tough time recognizing and pronouncing words and were just left as such. Morrow, Gambrell and Pressley (2003) suggest that, *'teachers should provide instructional support to learners when introducing unfamiliar knowledge and skills. They should gradually withdraw instructional support as learners demonstrate ability to use specific strategies and move towards independence.'* Another area of support was reflected when doing an activity. Children with HI were not accorded much time to finish their work. By the end of the day, it was the hearing children who cover much work than children with HI.

5.3. Teaching materials/resources

The findings of this theme revealed that teachers use teaching materials/ resources when teaching literacy to children in a mixed class. They all know that resources are essential for clarifying difficult concepts and for early reading instructions. Some of the resources that were used by

teachers were the charts/pictures, chalkboard, word cards, objects, learner's books. Though these resources were available in some classes, in others, they were inadequate. For example at one school learner's shared one book against 10 or 15 learners due to large class. This meant that reading as a skill is not practiced by many learners at the school. The findings reveal that many learners are not given an opportunity to interact with the resources with an aim of promoting reading and writing skills.

5.4. Assessment

The findings in this theme show that all teachers were assessing their children in various activities. However, it was noted that children with HI were reading and writing very slowly when given a task to do. And much of the tasks were a bit difficult for them to understand because of lack of previous knowledge/ experience which may have helped them to link to the concept presented to them.

5.5. Challenges teachers face when teaching literacy to children with HI

The findings reveal that children with HI face numerous challenges such as lack of teaching and learning materials/ resources where books were inadequate in some classes. The learning environment was also a challenge whereby some classes were large and very difficult for children with HI to be assisted individually. Some teachers were unable to modify the teaching instruction because they claimed not to have been oriented or trained in the field of special needs. And also children with HI were not completing tasks because of inadequate time.

5.6 Conclusion

This study was aimed at investigating how literacy is taught to children with HI who are learning together with children without disabilities in mainstream primary school. The study was qualitative and used both observations and interviews. The study involved four teachers (two males and two females) and one of them was a specialist teacher for children with impairment. Data was collected using one video camera and everything was done with consent from teachers concerned.

With regard to the question on strategies for teaching literacy, my findings show that teachers used a lot of techniques which involved learners in one way or another. Some of them included use of varied methods, support, interaction, pacing. All these were employed to meet the needs of all children in class, though some techniques were not in favour of children with HI more especially in a class where children with HI were handled by regular teachers. The findings show that most of the teaching was done orally and not much signing was done although here and there use of gestures was observed to emphasize or clarify a point. The findings show that most of the teachers in mainstream schools have not been oriented on how to handle children with HI using inclusive methodologies. This research therefore finds that lack of orientation on the part of teachers is one area which is impeding effectiveness in the teaching of literacy. If teachers are denied professional training to meet the needs of children of diverse needs, the end result is that they become demotivated. Kaufman & Chick (1996) argue that lack of knowledge and support on how to take care for children with special needs make regular teachers give inappropriate work to learners with special needs and this eventually leads to learners' dissatisfaction and poor quality of learning.

On the question of teaching resources, the findings of the research indicated that resources were available but not adequate to cater for all learners in class because of large number of children per class. For instance, it was found that learner's books are in short supply to an extent that 10-15 learners share one book per group. Children with HI had no chance to access the learner's books because of the challenge they already have on hearing and speaking and were just spectators of what was taking place. Without necessary teaching and learning resources, education is significantly impaired. Giangreco (1997) pointed out if resources are not readily available to teachers it makes the teaching of children with HI difficult. The tools of the teacher are the resources and when the resources are in short supply or not available; it makes the whole purpose of teaching very problematic. As a result of shortage of resources, children with SEN perform poorly in class.

On the question of assessment, the findings show that teachers were assessing their learners through various means. Children were assessed on reading vocabulary, completing blank spaces, answering comprehension questions and assessment on riddles. The findings from the assessments given showed that children with HI were struggling in literacy activities. Their dismal performance in literacy is also affecting other curriculum subjects being offered at primary school level.

5.7 Limitations and Delimitations

The study was limited by a number of things and the following are some of them the researcher encountered. First, respondents were not usually available when booked for observation of their lessons and to be interviewed possibly because of busy schedule or no sign of interest by teachers. Second, data collection was interrupted by Kasungu District hospital officials who were administering Bilharzia and De-worming programme at the school to all children hence classes

were suspended. As for delimitation, this study involved teachers who teach literacy and languages and not the teacher teaching other subjects.

5.8 Recommendations

Although several studies have investigated the learning of children with HI in special school in Malawi, this study was the first to investigate the teaching of literacy in mainstream primary schools in Central East Education Division. Several recommendations have arisen from the findings of the study which included recommendations for practice and policy and recommendations for further research.

a) For practice and policy

- Government with the support of other stakeholders should investigate the teaching methodologies used in the teaching of literacy in mainstream primary schools in the educational divisions in order to have a picture on how teaching of literacy is done in schools if children with HI are to benefit.
- Schools should arrange for professional development trainings of regular teachers by inviting resource persons from Montfort SNE College or the Catholic University of Malawi to teach inclusive methodologies.
- Furthermore, the office of the District Education Manager (DEM) should arrange for supervision exercise in all schools with the collaboration of Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) to ensure that teachers are observing the good practice of teaching so that standards of education are maintained.
- The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) should ensure the availability of appropriate and accessible materials, equipment and devices to meet the needs of children with HI in schools where these children are learning. In addition,

schools should hold open days where they may showcase different local materials used during the teaching of literacy.

(b) Recommendation for further research

- Since the findings have shown that children with HI perform poorly in literacy, a further research on how assessment is done to children with HI is ideal. Is it the fault of teachers or children or other external factors?
- Teaching of Special Needs Education (SNE) in public Teacher Training Colleges needs further research on the content being delivered. Should it stand on its own or be part of Foundation Studies? Should it be taught by only qualified in the field of special needs or any lecturer?

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Appendices


Appendix A: Observation Guide

NAME OF SCHOOL _____	CLASS _____
SUBJECT _____	DATE _____
TIME _____	NO OF PUPILS _____
EVALUATION ITEMS	COMMENTS
1. Learning environment	
1.1 Availability of resources e.g. Literacy and language books	
1.2 Sitting arrangement of children with HI	
1.3 Classroom ventilation and lighting	
1.4 Classroom displays	
2. Lesson presentation	
2.1 Suitability of introduction	
2.2 Suitability of the content	
2.3 Adaptability of language/activities	
2.4 Learners participation in activities	
3. Instruction	
3.1 Language used during the instruction	
3.2 Use of multi-sensory techniques	
3.3 Clarity of instructions and explanations	
3.4 Teaching techniques used to make content clear	
3.2 Organization of pupils activities	
4. Strategies	
4.1 Provision of adequate time on tasks	
4.2 Provision of supporting techniques to help learners	
4.3 Promotion of interaction between the teacher and the child	
4.4 Promotion of groupings(sensitivity to special education needs)	
4.5 Providing opportunities for learners to ask questions	
4.6 Pupils participation	
4.7 Pacing of the lesson appropriate to the HI ability level	
5. Assessment	
5.1 Provision of equal assessment of all learners	
5.2 Provision of adequate time for assessment tasks to learners	



Appendix B: Interview Guide for Teachers

1. What strategies do you use when teaching literacy to children with HI in a mixed class?
2. How do you communicate to children with HI when teaching literacy?
3. What teaching materials/resources do you use for teaching reading and writing to children with HI?
4. How do you select materials/resources for teaching literacy and language lessons?
5. How do you assess literacy to children with HI
6. How often are children with HI assessed in literacy?
7. What challenges do you face when teaching literacy?

Appendix C Letter of recommendation from Mzuzu University

	MZUZU UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF EDUCATION	Mzuzu University Private Bag 201 Luwingu Mzuzu 2 MALAWI
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7th February 2014





TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter, Mr Willie Mpinda is an MEd (Teacher Education) student in the Faculty of Education at Mzuzu University.

He is at a stage where he needs to collect data for his thesis.

Any assistance rendered to the student shall be highly appreciated.



JOSHUA KUMWENDA
OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF EDUCATION

Appendix D Learning Session in a class

