

**THE ROLE OF READING IN ENHANCING ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE
LEARNING OF ORDINARY LEVEL LEARNERS IN NAMIBIA**

By

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I, Sylvia Ndapewa Ithindi, hereby declare that this thesis entitled, **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning in Namibia**, which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Humanities Education, at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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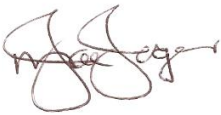
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PRETORIA

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, MJ de Jager, edited the language in the PhD dissertation, **The role of reading in enhancing English second language learning in Namibia**, by Sylvia Ndapewa Ithindi.

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MJ DE JAGER

5 October 2019

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my children, Aino Ndamana Tangi Matheus, Simon Nanyooshili Tangeni Matheus, and my nephew Samuel Kalitheni Shiindi, in the hope that they will all complete their studies and lead successful independent, career lives.

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Abstract

Reading is regarded as one of the most important, but also most complex skills utilised to attain fluency (Snyman, 2016). In this study I argue that Namibians have not yet adopted reading as part of their culture, and this is believed to have contributed immensely to the high failure rate of learners and students in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. The purpose of this study was to investigate the contribution that reading can make towards ESL learning at Ordinary Level (OL) in Namibian Senior Secondary Schools. The research focused on the challenges pertaining to reading by contemplating the nature of the reading culture of OL learners, how the curriculum and textbooks model reading for OL learners, and how ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in the classroom. This research was informed by the principles of the multiliteracies pedagogy of the New London Group (NLG) (1999), the work on social constructivism of Lev Vygotsky (1978), Stephen Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, as well as Jim Cummins' (1984) distinction between BICS and CALP. Following a qualitative approach, a descriptive case study design was employed to explore why OL learners lack analytical and critical reading skills that would enable them to learn English from their engagement with the texts they read. Four purposively selected ESL teachers and eight stratified randomly selected learners from four Secondary Schools in the Khomas education region, Windhoek, participated in the study. Data were collected using open-ended surveys, non-participant classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Using qualitative content analysis, five themes on the role of reading in ESL emerged from the raw data: reading experience, access to reading materials, inadequate curriculum, inadequate infrastructure, and the use of textbooks to enhance reading. The findings indicate that reading is not developed as a culture for the majority of OL learners, as OL learners indicated that they only read for school purposes, as opposed to reading for fun. The OL curriculum was found not to support reading, because reading is not part of the OL syllabus. As opposed to the Higher Level (HL), there are no prescribed reading materials for OL and the OL syllabus lacks proper guidance regarding integration of reading in ESL lessons. The study concludes that a great deal needs to be done to instil the love of reading in OL learners for them to reach the same level as HL learners.

Keywords: English as a second language learning, Namibia, ordinary level, pedagogy of multiliteracies, qualitative content analysis, reading culture, textbooks,

List of abbreviations

ADL	Actual Development Level
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALPS	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CEDME	Cape Education Department Matriculation Examination
CIE	Cambridge International General Examinations
CLA	Communicative Language Approach
CUP	Common Underlying Proficiency
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ER	Extensive Reading
FAL	First Additional Language
HL	Higher Level
H/IGCSE	Higher and International General Certificate of Secondary examinations
IR	Intensive Reading
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAMCOL	Namibian College of Open Learning
NLG	New London Group
NSSCH/O	Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Higher/Ordinary Level
NPH	Namibia Publishing House
OL	Ordinary Level
PDL	Potential Development Level
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy
RO	Regional Office
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SSCE	Senior School Certificate Examinations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Definitions of terms

ESL is an abbreviation for English as a second language. For the purposes of this study, ESL refers to a scenario where an individual learns English after they have learnt their mother tongue (Richards & Schmidt, 2002:180)

Literacy is defined in a number of ways, and these definitions are continually evolving. The term “literacy” sometimes refers only to reading, sometimes to reading and writing, and sometimes, more rarely, to reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The National Literacy Trust (2012) defines literacy as the ability to read, write, speak, and listen well. A literate person is able to communicate effectively with others and to understand written information.

The **Pedagogy of multiliteracies** was originally proposed in 1996 by the New London Group. The manifesto is a comprehensive framework for understanding the key principles of literacy education. The two overarching components of this theory are that the scope of literacy education needs to be extended to account for cultural and linguistic diversity. The second principle recognises the importance of teaching to the extensive array of text forms that serve as modes of communication in our digitally rich environments (MacKay, 2014).

The **Readathon** in Namibia is a week-long reading and book festival held annually in schools, culminating in the National Readathon Day on the Friday of that specific week, in an effort to nurture a book culture in Namibia (Töttemeyer, 2001) .

Reading is making meaning from print. It requires that we identify the words in print (a process called word recognition); construct an understanding from them (a process called comprehension); and coordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate (an achievement referred to as fluency) (Awe, 2014).

Reading culture refers to a way of life characterised by the habit of reading intensively and extensively (Nalusiba, 2010).

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Ruterana (2012:42), a researcher from Rwanda, characterises the reading culture in his country in the following way: “If you want to hide something from Rwandans, you need only to put it in a book. But if you want something to be known, you need to only whisper it to one person”. In this regard, Namibia is no exception. Namibians are not a reading society, but rely heavily on the oral tradition. Mulindwa (2001) refers to most African societies as oral societies, thereby implicating the lack of an established reading culture.

Interest in, and a love of reading do not develop suddenly, but increase gradually, depending on exposure and the background of the individual. This exposure can be through, for instance, reading for leisure, to acquire knowledge and information, or simply for the sake of interest. In Namibia, the performance of learners in English at secondary level is declining (Ministry of Education: Directorate of National Examinations, 2015) (hereafter indicated as Ministry of Education, 2015) despite the use of English as a medium of instruction across the curriculum. According to reports by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2015), learners’ poor performance in English as a second language (ESL) is due to the fact that they often misinterpret questions and are not familiar with concepts or terms used in texts, where a lack of understanding results in irrelevant answers (Hilongwa, 2011). The aforementioned can be attributed to the fact that learners do not read from a variety of books or reading materials, but concentrate only on prescribed textbooks to pass examinations – a situation that has created poor reading habits, poor language coordination and expression, poor academic performance, and hampering learners’ creativity in various aspects of life. Given the reasons above, I wished to investigate the role that reading can play in learning English Second Language at Ordinary Level (OL) in Namibian secondary schools.

In this chapter, I provide the background and contextualisation pertaining to the research problem. A personal and professional rationale for the study is followed by a problem statement, and the purpose and questions directing the study.

I then summarise the design and methodology of the study, after which the possible contribution and limitations of the study are highlighted. The chapter is concluded with an outline indicating the chronological order of the study.

1.2 Background to and contextualisation of the study

In Namibia, English is used as a language of communication, and as medium of instruction in schools from Grade 4 to tertiary level (Iiping, 2013:1). Despite the extensive use of English, the language remains a challenge for most language teachers in Namibia, possibly due to the historical background of how and when English acquired its status in Namibia. It was only from 1990, when Namibia gained political independence, that the government adopted English as an official language and a language of instruction, as stipulated in the language policy of the country (Wolfaardt, 2002). Before 1990, learning took place through the mediums of Afrikaans and native languages such as Oshindonga/Oshikwanyama, Otjiherero, Silozi, and Kwangali (Murray, 2013). This explains why teachers have not only been less exposed to the English language, but also to reading texts in English. The reason for the above is that the language of education and communication was Afrikaans and not English. Therefore, it made sense for the government to primarily expose its teachers to reading texts in Afrikaans. Reading texts in Namibian schools may have existed prior to independence but was likely to have been in languages other than English.

After Namibia had gained independence the government considered education to be one of its top priorities. It was then that English was introduced as the official language, as language of communication, and as the medium of instruction in schools (Iiping, 2013:9). Before independence English was presented as a second language in most Namibian schools, although it was managed like any other school subject. That is to say that English did not receive the prominent attention it did after independence (Frydman, 2011). Immediately after independence, together with English having been accorded the status of official language, language of instruction, and language of communication, the use of the communicative language teaching approach was introduced, which recommends teaching English in context (Nyathi, 2001). This meant that the teaching focus changed from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred approach, in which learners are supposed to be active participants in building their own language abilities.

Instead of reaping the benefits of the communicative approach that aimed to improve learners' performance in English as a second language, results seem to have deteriorated. There has, so far, not been any significant improvement in examination outcomes, especially for Ordinary Level learners. Based on the statistics from the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2015), the performance of learners in English at secondary level in Namibia is declining. This is indicated by the high failure rate in English in Grades 10 and 12 external examinations (Ministry of Education, 2015). Many English Second Language learners in Namibia, particularly from rural schools, have difficulties expressing themselves in English. As a result, they choose to remain silent during lessons to avoid embarrassment (Namundjembo, 2016). According to Mackey and Gass (2015) individuals suffering from communication apprehension usually adopt avoidance and withdrawal behaviors and are therefore less likely to engage in oral communication.

Mackey and Gass (2015) further argue that teachers may regard quiet learners in the classroom as perfect, in the sense that they do not present disciplinary problems. The same authors also emphasise, however, that learners' lack of response or participation is often due to their low proficiency in English. This has a negative, spiralling effect as they tend to be perceived as less capable and are thus called on less frequently in class discussions (Namundjembo, 2016).

As a result, the Ministry of Education, together with some non-governmental organisation, have put several measures in place to counteract the decline in learners' performance in English. Two of the measures worth mentioning here are the Let's read project and the Readathon. The Let's read project is an initiative by *The Namibian* newspaper aimed at promoting a reading culture among the Namibian youth. The *Namibian* newspaper came up with the idea of distributing a bundle of copies of their newspaper to several rural schools every month (Amukwaya, 2014). Amukwaya (2014) explains that by doing so, the newspaper tried to expose learners to reading and enjoying national and international news, sports, entertainment and other lifestyle issues of interest. The project was launched by the then minister of education, Dr David Namwandi, who emphasised the importance of reading: "If my students don't know how to read, then they cannot pass their examinations. Without education or the ability to read and write we can kiss the vision 2030 goals goodbye" (Amukwaya, 2014:02). Readathon is part of the Namibian Children's Book Forum (NCBF) introduced in Namibian schools for the purpose of promoting a reading culture in Namibia. Töttemeyer (2001) defines the Readathon as a national festival of books and reading that

lasts a whole week, with the highlight being the National Readathon Day on the Friday. The purpose of the Readathon is the development of a book culture in Namibia, but reading competitions, *per se*, are not the main purpose of the event. The emphasis is on the fun and joy that reading can bring, as well as raising funds for books and libraries. Schools do not receive enough books from the Ministry's initiative programme, such as the Millennium Challenge Accounts. The Readathon takes place during the last two weeks of September when schools display various books and all schools schedule half an hour during which all teachers and principals read stories purely for the audience's enjoyment. The junior learners listen to the adults reading to them and no textbooks or official reading materials are allowed.

All these attempts are undertaken to promote a culture of reading throughout the country. However, even though the Ministry of Education expects all Namibian schools to implement the Readathon programme, only a few schools comply. This raises the question whether schools that have not yet implemented it did so out of a lack of understanding, or simply out of disregard for the role of reading in learners' lives.

Research outcomes from a study performed by the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ III) as presented by Miranda, Amadhila, Dengeinge and Shikongo (2007) clearly establish that there are still challenges in the literacy abilities of junior learners at primary level. This above study was undertaken in Swaziland, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, and Mozambique. All Namibian educational regions formed part of this study, which established that the majority of Namibian learners did not attain the minimal mastery in literacy based entirely on the criteria set by Namibian literacy experts. The study tested learners in reading and mathematics proficiencies, and Namibian learners performed below average compared to learners of the same level from the other countries that participated in the same survey. Based on the 2007 report the reading level of learners who could do basic reading (which involves interpreting the meaning of a short and simple text) was at 25,5%, which was below the desired level of competency. More than 80% of learners have not attained sophisticated reading levels of at least combining information from different components of a text and infer the intention of the writer (Miranda at el., 2007).

Miranda et al. (2007), in their SACMEQ III study, showed enormous differences among Namibian regions; the country's northern regions displaying the lowest reading skill ratings. Approximately two thirds of Namibia's population live in the northern regions. Surprisingly, in these areas not all teachers attained a desirable level of reading skills.

Having presented an analysis of the level of reading among Namibian teachers and learners as reported in the SACMEQ III report, it is important to contemplate existent reading skills. Reading is one of the most important academic skills, and it is one of the most complex skills in which to develop strong second language fluency (Grabe, 2001). The reason for the latter is, unlike speaking and writing, that the reader is not able to control the message or the language used, and unlike listening, there are no opportunities to ask for clarification or additional information (Stanovich, 2000). The foregoing leaves the reader who finds it hard to understand a specific text lost and unable to grasp the meaning presented in such a text.

The above-mentioned can be as a result of the fact that for a long time now, the OL syllabus does not prescribe reading materials, such as prose, drama, or even short stories, which learners would need to master and understand in preparation for and as part of their examinations. The reading passages that OL learners encounter in the examination are usually short essays taken from various sources. Most of these texts would be new to most, if not all learners, due to their lack of exposure to extensive reading. It ought to be mentioned here that the texts learners see in examinations are solely aimed at guiding them to answer specific questions for assessment purposes, and not necessarily to challenge their linguistic competencies like learning new words or for in-depth understanding (Simataa, 2013). This indicates a likelihood that OL learners lack analytical reading skills that would enable them to do well in their English examinations as a result of their engagement with the texts.

One of the vital abilities expected of individuals living in multilingual and international environments is the capacity to read in a second language. According to Haider (2012), reading, among the four macro-abilities in English, is often challenging for learners. Teaching reading is a complicated job as it involves a mixture of abilities and sub-skills that pervade the processing of information from a text. In addition, the fact that different readers read a text with different

purposes have resulted in the development of a range of approaches or techniques practiced in many second-language teaching situations (Haider, 2012:126).

Two main approaches to teaching reading are commonly followed in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) namely, intensive reading (IR), and extensive reading (ER). IR generally includes a slower reading process of a comparatively small quantity of material, with a view to extracting particular information, while ER enables learners to read a comparatively large quantity of easier texts primarily for fun (Haider, 2012:127). In most developing nations second language curricula emphasise IR, overlooking ER. Research on ER, however, indicates that this reading technique can have an important effect on the development of L2 among learners (Bamford, 1998; Horst, 2005; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Bell, 2001). The fact that extensive reading in the target language has a beneficial effect on language teaching authenticates the advantages of ER. It can be agreed that learners who read extensively in the target language become better and more confident readers, they write better, their listening and speaking abilities improve, and their range of vocabulary extends (Huffman, 2014:20). In addition, such learners develop positive attitudes towards an increased motivation to learning the new language. It requires shared effort of both learners and teachers to get learners to read more with greater understanding (Haider, 2012). This can be achieved through the application of language teaching methods that include introducing learners to a variety of reading strategies during lessons.

Reading strategies ought to be a component of the strategies used in linguistic teaching. Reading strategies are intentional, goal-oriented attempts to regulate and alter the efforts of the reader to decode texts, comprehend phrases, and build meaning (Haider, 2012). Haider (2012) further explains that effective strategies are those reading techniques that allow readers to comprehend the texts that they are reading. Although some studies were conducted within the context of English as a second language, it was less so in multilingual environments, such as Namibia. Some learners in Namibian secondary schools, particularly those in rural regions, are unaware of or do not have the required approaches to understand English reading material. The reason for this is that in English teaching in Namibia, especially in rural areas, the emphasis is more on grammar than on the elements of reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Namundjembo, 2016). With the introduction of the Communicative Language Approach (CLA), the situation was expected to improve, that is, to enable teachers to incorporate all language skills, including reading, in their

teaching. Unfortunately, one still finds that most teachers teach pure grammar rather than teaching through the CLA that incorporates vital language skills namely reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Nyathi, 2001). One may understand from the above that with the enhancement of reading strategies teachers will be challenged to use multiple texts from multiple sources in their teaching. This will expose learners to a variety of subjects to enable a wide understanding of issues. The above is likely to assist learner comprehension in examinations for two main reasons. Firstly, learners will have learned how to read for understanding, and secondly, learners may cease to find texts strange, as they have been exposed to texts in a variety of subjects in their reading lessons.

According to Amer (2012), reading can result in the expansion of vocabulary and efficient second-language writing. If learners' reading effectiveness are enhanced, their writing abilities will also be enhanced. One of the many reasons that Namibian learners do not learn ESL effectively is their lack of engagement with the written language (Nkandi, 2015). The latter exposes learners and readers to how language works, namely how words are spelled, how sentences and paragraphs are constructed, and how words relate and are arranged in sentences.

Currently the learner population in Namibia is more inclined to conversing than it is to reading. This is evident in most schools – during breaks and other free time learners commonly associate in conversational groups. Rarely will one find an individual learner reading a book on his or her own. One may deduce that a lack of interest in reading and a lack of reading skills contribute to poor ESL mastery, which could be reversed should learners engage more in reading.

1.3 Problem statement

Reading has not been a priority in the Namibian culture and for the Namibian nation. This largely contributes to the failure rate of Namibian learners in primary, secondary and tertiary education. The above statement is supported by the then Minister of Education, Dr David Namwandi, as cited in Hambunda (2014): “Yes, it is a problem; by the time many reach university they are not eloquent. What we see is that young people don't like reading”. The Minister emphasised the problematic nature of reading in Namibia, noting that reading problems can be traced to the foundation of the learners' education.

When it was announced in 2016 that the government would be implementing changes to Namibia's basic education curriculum, hopes were high that the changes might curb the plethora of educational problems the country faced. These problems ranged from the prevailing lack of sufficient teachers and teaching materials (particularly reading materials) to the high drop-out and failure rates, and the fact that many learners who pass Grade 12 move on to tertiary education without an interest in industrious reading. Some of the proposed changes implemented in 2016 were the addition of an extra grade, new rules for learners repeating grades, and new technical subjects.

Early in 2017 the educational hopes of the nation were shattered when the Namibian economy experienced a huge crisis as a consequence of which all government ministries were forced to cut their budgets. With the lack of learning materials that already existed in schools, the Ministry of Education was forced to cut its spending by half from N\$ 500 to N\$ 250 per learner (Stephanus, 2017). This meant that, instead of curbing the problem of the shortage of the reading materials in schools, the situation only worsened.

According to Töttemeyer, Alexander and Kirchner (2015:4), an underdeveloped reading culture in Namibia was caused by a host of factors ranging from low reading proficiency in English and in the learners' mother tongue, parents' low educational levels, a lack of reading materials in the home, insufficient suitable teaching materials and storybooks for language teachers, a small number of children's books being published in various indigenous Namibian languages, as well as a shortage of adequate libraries, to mention but a few. It is against the above background and the gap presented in the extant literature that this study seeks to unveil the role that reading can play to enhance ESL learning by learners in Namibian schools, especially OL learners.

Substantial evidence from the available literature (Simataa & Nyathi, 2016, Nkandi, 2015, Shapaka, 2015) indicates that a need exists for learners in Namibian schools to become interested in reading in order to enhance their ESL learning. Unlike other methods of ESL learning, reading does two things at once: it exposes the reader to the manner in which the language is used, and through the content the reader's horizons are broadened, which in turn increases their ability to express themselves efficiently and extensively. The latter enables them to construct critical arguments through the language they learn, while they engage with the text they read.

According to Nalusiba (2010), a reading culture was also lacking in Uganda, but much has subsequently been done to promote such a culture. Nalusiba (2010) further explains that the Ministry of Education and Sport has been and is still playing a role in the development of the reading culture among learners in Ugandan schools. The above scenario is similar to that in Namibia, because as mentioned in the introduction, the Ministry of Education, together with other stakeholders, introduced a Readathon programme in schools, with the aim of instilling an interest in and a love of reading among Namibian learners. Despite the initiation of the Readathon programme, I, as an English teacher by profession and currently being an English lecturer, noted that most Namibian learners were not yet interested in reading activities. Based on an observation by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, nd), the problem in this regard lies with the impact that technology has on learners. UNESCO (nd) also observed that learners nowadays read from their cellular phones, and when they write, they mostly use popular text acronyms, which negatively impacts on their academic writing skills (Hambunda, 2014). It is for the above reasons that I was motivated to investigate the role of reading in enhancing ESL learning of OL learners in Namibia.

1.4 Rationale

As language lecturer and having been an English teacher for more than 10 years, I found the poor Grade 10 and 12 year-end results disconcerting. From my observations while marking national examinations, it seemed as though learners did not study well prior to their examinations. Learners struggled to write even simple essays and performed poorly in English as a result. When looking at countrywide Grade 10 and 12 English results as indicated in the statistics by the Ministry of Education, it becomes evident that urban schools perform better in ESL, while rural schools perform below average, despite the fact that they are taught by equally qualified teachers. This state of affairs has since become an issue of concern to me as educator, because due to their difficulties with English, a large number of learners cannot proceed to Grade 11, or indeed qualify for entry into tertiary institutions.

A number of discussions led by the Ministry of Education have taken place to determine why learners fail English, despite the fact that English is the medium of instruction in Namibian schools. Through daily interactions with learners I have identified a lack of interest in reading as the main

challenge. In class or around the school, one can hardly find a learner reading a novel or a poem. This phenomenon piqued my interest in the state of reading among learners. It thus led me to ask the following questions: Is reading encouraged among learners? Are teachers creating opportunities for reading and are they motivating learners to read beyond the classroom? The paucity of research studies on the lack of a reading culture among OL English Second Language learners in Namibian education adds to the rationale for this study.

1.5 The purpose and research questions of the study

Having taken cognisance of the poor reading habits of OL learners, this study explores the reading habits of the OL learners in Namibia. This study should therefore assist in enlightening ESL teachers and other stakeholders about the significant role that reading can play in improving learners' language skills. It might also be applicable to learners who want to study English at tertiary level, and may provide impetus to other researchers in carrying out additional or similar studies regarding the role of reading in ESL learning at different levels. Another significance factor could be to inform the Ministry of Education in Namibia about the lack of reading culture, in order for them to address the problems facing learners in Namibia in learning and using English.

The main research question guiding this study is: *How can reading enhance English Second Language learning of ordinary level learners in Namibian schools?*

The secondary questions in this study are:

1. What is the nature of the reading culture of OL learners?
2. How do the curriculum and textbooks model reading for OL learners?
3. How do ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in the classroom?
4. What are the challenges pertaining to reading for OL learners?

1.6 Summary of research design and methodology

The study covers the nature of reading of OL learners in secondary schools in Namibia in terms of the reading practices adopted on the basis of the education system followed by the relevant schools,

and covers the role that reading can play in enhancing ESL learning in secondary schools in Namibia. Four secondary schools from the Khomas education region were selected to participate in this study about the reading culture among learners.

The research design used in this study is summarised in table 1.1, and is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

Table 1.1: Summary of the research design and methodology

Paradigmatic approach	I employed an interpretivist approach to investigate the role that reading can play in ESL learning. I chose the qualitative approach to seek to understand, explain, and clarify the role that reading plays in ESL learning among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibian secondary schools. Qualitative research focuses primarily on understanding, explaining, exploring, discovering, and clarifying a group of people’s circumstances, emotions, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences (Kumar, 2015).
Research design	To obtain a clearer knowledge of whether and how reading can be instrumental in learning ESL, I used a descriptive case study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).
Selection of participants	Data were collected from four purposively selected ESL teachers, and eight purposively selected ESL Grade 11 learners at Ordinary Level.
Data collection methods	I used open-ended surveys with the learners and semi-structured interviews with ESL teachers as primary data collections methods, and non-participant class observations and document analysis as secondary data collection methods.
Data analysis	Data were analysed through qualitative content analysis. I transformed, transcribed, and coded each participant’s responses and identified and classified data themes and trends (Patton, 2002; MacMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The same procedure was applied to the data gathered through observations of lessons and analysis of documents.

Ethical considerations	I followed the following ethical considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before starting the data collection process, I ensured that I had received informed permission from all participants. • I shielded the participants from possible harm during and after data collection and ensured their confidentiality and anonymity.
Quality measures	I applied measures of trustworthiness, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

As indicated in table 1.1 I chose a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study as research design. Data collection instruments consisted of open-ended surveys with eight Grade 11 OL learners, semi-structured interviews with four Grade 11 OL teachers, non-participant class observations, and document analysis of the OL curriculum and prescribed textbooks.

1.7 Outline of the study

Chapter 1: Background and contextualisation of the study

Chapter 1 offers the context for the research of the role of reading in improving ESL teaching and learning. The section details the study context, the problem statement, the rationale, as well as the purpose of the study. This section also presents a summary of the study’s design and methodology as well as the ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this section I highlight the gaps in the literature on ESL teaching that provided justification for the study. I also address the theoretical framework for the study. This study is based on the concept of the pedagogy of multiliteracies established by the New London Group in 1996, Social Constructivism by Lev Vygotsky (1978), Stephen Krashen’s (1985) Input Hypothesis, and Jim Cummins’ (1984) distinction between BICS and CALP.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

The design, methodology, and paradigm used in the research are outlined in chapter 3. I also address the sampling techniques and methods, the evaluation of data collected, quality measures, and ethical considerations in this chapter. I also provide a rationale for the choice of research participants.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

The results of this study are presented in chapter 4. The findings are described in themes that reveal the participants' reading experience and practices. The themes are analysed and each theme and its interpretation are presented for a greater appreciation of the results.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

I conclude the study in chapter 5 and make the results-based suggestions to different stakeholders who are believed to be interested in the role of reading in ESL learning. I also present suggestions for future studies before concluding with remarks on the contributions of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL LENSES

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I first present the reviewed literature pertaining to reading. After contemplating reading as a phenomenon, I argue in a generic manner the importance of reading in the ESL classroom. Secondly, I discuss the nature of reading in developing countries to prepare the reader for the very specific Namibian context. The case of Namibia's curriculum reform and its distinction between Higher Level (HL) and Ordinary Level (OL) are then explained. The use of textbooks to promote reading concludes the literature review. The latter part of the chapter presents the study's conceptual framework section. The framework incorporates the pedagogy of multiliteracies as described by the New London Group (1996), as well as language learning theories by Vygotsky (1978), Krashen (1985), and Cummins (1984), as these pertain to ESL learning.

2.2 Literature review

2.2.1 The phenomenon of reading

The concept of reading is defined in different ways in the literature. Caddy (2015:09) describes reading as a combination of automatic and precise decoding that makes it possible to understand what is being read, while Jacob (2016:317) defines reading as a process of sight, sound, and sense. Awe (2014:25) refers to reading as the process of making meaning from print. Another definition offered by Nandiemo (2015:18) is that reading is a mental process, which involves someone absorbing information from a written linguistic message. Sandhu (2016:1) defines reading as a "cognitive process that involves decoding symbols to arrive at meaning". From a cognitive point of view, reading is a process in which readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them, make new hypotheses and so forth (Verhoeven, Reitsma & Siegel, 2011:388). Kekhana-Mhoney (2015:14) explains that a cognitive view of reading looks at the role of the reader's prior knowledge in addition to what appears on the printed page. The above implies that cognitive reading is a top-down (knowledge-based process) model that directly opposes the bottom-up model (language-based process) (Kekhana-Mhoney, 2015). The top-down emphasises that reading starts in the reader's mind, claiming that the reader moves from the top – the brain – down to the

text on the page (Harris, Turbilli, Firtzsimmons & Mckenzie, 2006). The reader then uses their prior knowledge stored in their memories to unlock the text. Kekhani-Mhoney (2015) explains that it is impossible for a reader to extract meaning from the text without prior knowledge, hence the objective of reading is making meaning of the text by using the reader's prior knowledge.

According to Wahyono (2019:261), the cognitive reading process is vital to the development of learners' language skills because when learners use cognitive reading strategies, they end up managing their learning of the language and overcoming deficiency in English reading, and they acquire improved comprehension skills. It is therefore important for ESL teachers to apply cognitive reading processes/strategies in their classrooms if they want to achieve cognitive reading goals.

Apart from the general definitions available from various authors, perspectives on reading are provided by several language and neuro-scientist researchers. According to Lazutina, Shuler and Pletyago (2016:9945), reading is multifunctional, because it does not only transmit information, but creates a dialogue between the author and the semantic structure of the text, creating the moral guidelines of a culture, and shaping the useful attitudes for positive behaviour. Neuroscientists believe that reading is multifunctional, in the sense that it enriches connectivity in the brain and improves brain function (Bergland, 2016) while the reader engages in the activity of reading.

In addition, Shihab (2011) and Lazutina et al. (2016:9943) define reading as the interaction between a reader and a text, where the mind of the reader interacts with the text by conducting a dialogue, actively engaging with the text in order to assign it meaning. Bergland (2016) argues that this process of interaction happens when the reader's prior knowledge interacts with what is conveyed by the text. This means that the reader uses what s/he already knows, alongside the information from the text to make meaning. A reader arrives at comprehension through this interaction. Snyman (2016) argues for the importance of the interaction between the reader and the text, noting that the construction of meaning from reading the text, becomes beneficial to the reader.

Reading is also part of a social process. Foncha, Mafumo and Abongdia (2017) explain that while reading a text, the reader engages in the sharing of thoughts with the writer. Besides this, Lazutina et al. (2016) are of the opinion that reading a text involves the meeting of the minds of the reader

and that of the writer. Vygotsky (1978) claims that reading is a social process, because it occurs through an internal dialogue between the text and the reader through which the reader constructs meaning. Merga and Moon (2016) agree that reading can also be social, in the sense that as one reads one gets to know the characters depicted in the text. The reader responds to the text with empathy, based on how the author conveys the message, whether with humour or melancholy, for example.

Foncha et al. (2017) illustrate that reading has the potential to confront as, after reading a well-written text, a reader can apply the knowledge gained from the text to his/her own life. A reader's empathy with the characters in the book can impact a reader's own circumstances, whether this involves positive influences or dangers such as drug abuse, difficult emotions, or other challenges.

Merga (2017) categorises nine reasons for reading, namely: perspective taking, knowledge, personal development, mental stimulation, habit, entertainment and pleasure, escapism and mental health, books as friends, imagination and creative inspiration, as well as writing, language and vocabulary. Foncha (2017) limits the number of reasons to two: pleasurable and purposeful reading, and states that personal development, books as family, imagination, and creative inspiration all form part of pleasurable reading. According to Snyman (2016), reading for pleasure means reading fiction and non-fiction for enjoyment. Pleasurable reading can be done anywhere, prevents boredom, promotes relaxation (Foncha, 2017), and often limits stress in people's lives (Merga, 2017).

Bergland (2016) refers to purposeful reading as reading to acquire and use information. Lazutina et al. (2016) explain that purposeful reading is deep reading, often for academic purposes, and it should be done carefully, slowly, and deliberately. This is the type of reading done with the intent to increase comprehension of a text.

Foncha et al. (2017) state that the following reading strategies are employed during purposeful reading: **before reading**, **during reading**, and **after reading**. The before reading strategy allows readers to activate prior knowledge and set the purpose for reading to gain new information, while the during reading strategy allows the reader to interact with the text through generating questions (Merga, 2017). Bergland (2016) explains that an after-reading strategy allows readers to reflect on what they have read and process this reflection into their core knowledge. This is done through

summarising, discussing, and responding to a text. Readers use these strategies to achieve text comprehension. As expressed by Foncha et al (2017), the Namibian context is no exception; the three strategies are the informed strategies at school level, especially at Grade 11 level. In addition to the definitions from the modern scholars, the pioneers in the language field defined reading according to how they understood it. Prater (2008) says that reading means decoding or converting written symbols into a language spoken by the reader, and applying basic knowledge to build and grasp the message of the author (Prater, 2008:608). Edwards and Turner (2009) describe reading as a continuum of skills from the identification of individual letters and their corresponding sounds, to word recognition, to the competency of text processing. Daniel, Esonane, Chima and Udoaku (2017) view reading as the fundamental process of learning. This is because learning is focused on comprehension skills (reading words correctly and fluently, accessing lexical representation), multi-domain knowledge (vocabulary, linguistic structure, discourse, and world knowledge), and cognitive processing capacities (text memory, exposure to relevant background awareness, drawing reasonable inference) (Prater, 2008:610). From the above it is clear that reading is more than just knowing and decoding words; it involves a range of different skills and purposes.

2.2.2 The importance of reading in the ESL classroom

In this section, I consider the literature by international, African and Namibian authors on the importance of reading in ESL, and I present my argument under the following sub-themes: reading assist mastery of language skills, reading models social issues and behaviour, and reading of literary texts develops critical thinking.

2.2.2.1 *Reading assists in mastery of language skills*

Mart (2012) states that reading is the most readily available form of comprehensible input, especially in place where there is hardly any contact with the target language. If carefully chosen to suit learners' level, it offers them repeated encounters with language items that they have previously encountered. This helps them to merge and extend what they already know. It is unlikely that learners will learn a new language within the limited available number of hours that they spend in class. The only reliable way to learn a language is through repeated exposure to that language in context, which is precisely the opportunity that reading provides (Zhang, 2009).

(a) Language skills

Many international research studies have addressed crucial issues regarding the study of reading (Mart, 2012; Fosudo, 2010; Jacob, 2016). They agree on the importance of the four basic language competencies, namely: reading, writing, listening, and speaking, which can all be developed through reading. Several authors agree that reading supports the mastery of the main language skills. Chukueggu and Ogbona (2013), assert that learning English through reading not only improves the basic language skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking, but also other aspects of language, such as grammar and pronunciation.

Zhang (2009) states that reading can be a powerful and motivating source for teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatisation, improvisation, role-playing, re-enactment, and discussion are some effective learning activities, which centre on reading that can be used in ESL classes to enhance these two skills. Asking learners to read stories aloud can develop their speaking, listening skills, and pronunciation. Reading fosters an overall increase in language skills, since reading can be considered not as a text response, but as a text-mediated interaction between a writer and a reader (Smit, 2009). This implies that if Namibian Ordinary Level learners are encouraged to read more, their reading and listening skills will be improved.

Fusudo (2010) is of the opinion that reading helps learners improve their listening skills in many ways. For example, a teacher may read out in full or in part, or a recorded version of the text might be played to bring out its rhythmic quality. When reading is done out loud, it can also develop the learners' listening ability. The various themes and topics in a text create avenues for learners to engage in discussion, which encourages oral practice. Listening is important in language learning, because it helps ESL learners to acquire the correct pronunciation, word emphasis, and comprehension of the text being read (Renukadevi, 2014). It is therefore important for ESL teachers to encourage learners to apply listening strategies during reading in order to gain text comprehension. Speaking and listening to register or dialects embedded in social contexts can also be illustrated by reading texts (Nkandi, 2015). Therefore, reading becomes the basis for determining why a particular form is used. This being the case, it becomes clear that reading is ideal for developing an awareness of dialectic language use.

Secondly, reading can be a strong and motivating source for ESL writing, both as a model and as a topic (Jacob, 2016; Fusudo, 2010). Adam and Babiker (2015) confirm that reading exposes

learners to coherent and expert writing, which in fact helps them to become better writers. The latter entails being exposed to reading as an active way of learning the necessary language skills needed for writing, since reading can be a basis for learners to learn how to write and construct their own ideas and views. Jacob (2016) maintains that reading texts by different authors introduces learners to different writing styles, and will in turn assist learners and encourage them to develop their own writing styles. Gibson (2012) indicates that one advantage of using reading texts as the source of compositional exercises is that they can provide compositional subject matter. A compositional reading practice allows learners to make inferences, formulate their own thoughts, and look carefully at a text to support generalisations. They learn to think creatively, freely, and critically in this manner. Such preparation enables learners with other topics requiring logical reasoning, autonomous thinking, and thorough text analysis (Mart, 2012).

Amer (2012) agrees that reading is an instrument for developing efficient second-language writing. If learners' reading effectiveness is enhanced, their writing abilities will also be enhanced, as one needs to be a good reader to be a successful writer. Likewise, Ayo (2003) argues that the reading of prose, in particular, promotes the capacity of learners to write. The capacity for an intelligible debate about the vital components of a novel can assist in learners' mastery of some fundamental types of writing, such as an argument, description, narration, and exposure (Bella, 2013). When considering the advantages of reading texts, it is evident that reading enhances language acquisition in general, and efficient writing in particular.

(b) Vocabulary

Reading is one of the most effective methods of acquiring vocabulary that can assist in the four basic language skills (Shapaka, 2015). When learners read different English texts they acquire the meanings of different words they come across as they read. The acquisition of vocabulary can either be done individually, or through class discussions (Simataa & Nyathi, 2016). Tickoo (2003) and Shapaka (2015) concur that reading extends, consolidates, and sustains vocabulary growth. According to Nkandi (2015), vocabulary is not learned by single exposure. Reading allows for multiple encounters with words and phrases in context, thereby making a progressive accretion of meaning possible. By presenting items in context, it also makes the deduction of meaning of unknown items easier. Many studies have been done on acquisition of vocabulary from reading

(Nation & Wang 1999; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006). ESL teachers should encourage their learners to tease out meanings of different words in the context in which they are used. This would create awareness that the words in the English language contain more than one meaning. Therefore, as learners are constantly exposed to different words, they would be able to use these words effectively in their own writing, listening, and speaking development.

Leo and Krashen (2000) compared the reading achievement of a group of learners who often read literary texts to that of a group of learners who did not often read literary texts. The result of the comparison revealed that the group who read literary texts showed better improvement in vocabulary compared to the group that did not read such texts. Therefore, ESL learners need to be encouraged to read widely to develop their vocabularies.

It becomes clear that reading is a good resource for learning and acquiring ESL. Tickoo (2003) states that the reason is that reading encourage talking and active problem-solving, and generate purposeful, referential questions. Chipili (2013) advocates the use of reading in the ESL classroom because unlike with a course book, reading designed material can be adapted to suit the classroom situation.

Namupala (2013) states that reading increases all language skills, because it extends linguistic knowledge. Learners can be taught all four language skills through reading by paying attention to the constructions of sentences and the significance of vocabulary. However, when reading in the ESL classroom, these language skills should never be taught in isolation, but instead, in an integrated way (Bella, 2013). Teachers should strive to teach basic linguistic skills as part of oral and written work. They should create both referential and interactional meaning, not merely concentrating on phrase production.

I now discuss the way in which reading models social issues and behaviour.

2.2.2.2 Reading models social issues and behaviour

Reading is described as life-changing, because after reading a specific text, readers might feel as though their eyes are opened to see the other side of the world (Hormes, Rozin, Green & Fincher,

2013). Due to this experience, readers often tend to change their behaviour to match the modelled behaviour in the text they read. Zhang (2009) explains that reading can be useful to learners, because it helps them to become aware and to learn about social issues and behaviours that can contribute to a wider understanding of the world around them. Reading is the mode through which language and culture is passed on from generation to generation. Therefore I concur with Gibson (2012) who argues that reading English texts can introduce learners to a range of social aspects, not only of the English language, but also of English culture.

Forefathers and mothers pass on their cultures and traditions (norms and values) through oral narrations, owing to their inabilities to read and write. This makes orature the only, or at least the most common means of passing on traditions and cultural norms from generation to generation. As time passed, people were introduced to literacy – developing the ability to put what was related orally into writing. Nowadays learners can access reading texts from all cultures and in all languages through books and the internet. According to Lewis (2010), reading English texts does not confine the learners to the traditions of the British, but introduces them to the traditions that give rise to English reading. In addition, Cheng (2001) explains that reading texts provide learners with alternative behaviours. Reading provides an alternative for the television culture and entertainment. Enjoyment and appreciation of reading texts will help learners to develop interest in books and reading as they become adults. They will have the confidence to approach new books and new forms of writing, because they were exposed to a wide range of books during the course of their education.

(a) Values and norms

Reading a storybook from another culture provides learners with insight into other people's values and customs (Hormes et al., 2013). In line with the above, Cheng (2001) point out that reading exposes learners to various cultures from different countries. Okebukola (2004) also notes that learners can appreciate the similarities and tolerate the differences between their culture and other cultures through reading. They can understand that there is no correct way of thinking and feeling, and no society can pretend to have all the correct answers. By examining the views of other societies and cultures, we achieve perspective and insight into our world. Hence, reading is a strong instrument for coming to terms with the relativity of cultural values and the fundamentals of cross-

cultural interaction (Hilongwa, 2011). Reading exposure encourages learners to reflect on ideas, acknowledge real-life issues, discover causes and solutions, and compare their values and lifestyles with those of other cultures. In comparison to other cultures discovered or met in the texts they read, educators and learners in the language classroom are provided with an authentic and rich framework to discuss cultural values and traditions. This could encourage learners to prevent ethnocentrism and develop intercultural skills and tolerance (Lewis, 2010). In addition, Okebukola (2004) urges that learners should be exposed to different reading texts in order to teach them to consider the culture of others in international communication. To promote such international communication skills, the ESL curriculum ought to include exposure to a wide variety of reading texts.

English reading texts explore the life worlds and emotions of English-speaking individuals towards certain cultural values. By combining religion, superstition, and folktales, that is, by means of culture, learners become aware of the hidden facets of English-speaking society (Nalusiba, 2010). Marungudzi (2009) notes that learners learn to understand how individuals approach and react to the same reading text by exchanging their reading experiences. Learners discover the underlying social and historical contexts through the reading of texts, and become acquainted with the society about which they read.

(b) Exposure to reality

Chukuegu and Ogbona (2013) describe children's books as multifunctional, as they help learners to expand their imagination and not only their literacy. Through various reading texts learners learn to deal with social, cultural, ethnic, or real-world issues (Rodrigues, 2014). For instance, when adolescents or young adults read texts that deal with familiar stress and trauma experienced by characters, they tend to emulate such characters when tackling their own issues. Seeing characters overcoming life trials can help teenagers' struggle as it can assist them to see their issues conquered (Mile, 2011). Young adult writer Anderson (2005) says that young adult texts need to be "frank in order to communicate with the teen reader". Reading about these problems, teenagers can better comprehend what is happening to them, and what is happening in the world around them (Hormes et al., 2013).

Some writers also point out the hazards of reading. Honest reading texts for young adults generally present problems contradictory to the principles that parents try to instil in their teenagers (Giuria, 2015). Parents may oppose their children reading these books as protagonists may act contrary to parental values (Hormes et al., 2013). Anderson (2005) explains that these reading texts may even prompt learner curiosity about certain behaviours, where young adults may begin to imitate poor behaviours through what they read. Mile (2011) points out that most learners face worse issues in the reality of their own school hallways. Whatever content their parents attempt to safeguard them from, learners will ultimately face these issues. Depending on how well their parents educated them, they may be unaware of the implications of certain actions. Reading texts written specifically for their age group on these issues could therefore assist them to navigate through the overwhelming waves of adolescence (Hormes et al., 2013).

Chukuegu and Ogbona (2013) claim that reading helps to inculcate particular social attitudes considered acceptable in the society in readers. Indeed, one of the advantages of reading texts is that texts can serve as a means of communicating the culture of the people who speak the language in which the texts are written. Through reading, one has the opportunity to learn about other people's experiences and living conditions, and in this way, can acquire an understanding of alternative beliefs and time periods (Giuria, 2015). This may, however, prove to be a negative aspect of reading as reading may contribute to indoctrination and advancing negative cultural norms like the oppression of women in readers.

Giuria (2015) states that certain emotions like anger, greed, love, and jealousy are universal. When reading various emotive texts the reader is likely to be engaged in the emotion portrayed in the text (Smit, 2009). Engagement is generally thought to be a key component of the learning environment, especially when learning ESL. This engagement is created especially through the conflict prevalent in reading texts. Of course, conflict is not only present in narrative forms; it exists in all other reading texts, even in short poems, as the poet creates a situation in which the reader encounters conflict over understanding what the poet means. Conflict resolution and communication strategies are excellent mediums to be used in these instances to create learning environments based on learners' engagement with the reading text at hand (Keshavarzi, 2014). In the next section, I discuss how reading of literature develops critical thinking.

2.2.2.3 Reading of literary texts develops critical thinking

Because the reading of various literature texts presents learners with rich sources of authentic materials, they internalise the English language at a high level, which could facilitate critical thinking skills. Starja (2015) argues that the acquisition of second language can be enhanced by directing learners to assignments that enable them to function independently, and which encourage them to express their views. This is because reading motivates, encourages learning, fosters linguistic awareness, develops interpretation abilities, and educates learners. According to Babae and Yahya (2014) and Shapaka (2015), reading literature in particular can assist students to gain and target linguistic skills, and learn how to use idiomatic phrases and how to speak correctly to become more fluent and creative in the target language. As a result, reading opens doors of opportunity and permits learners to criticise and investigate (Hall & Cook, 2012, Simataa, 2013). In addition, Nkandi (2015) claims that reading expands the understanding of language, in the sense that when learners are asked to examine advanced or non-standard language incidents that happen in reading texts, they readily acknowledge them and become more conscious of language norms and standards. Yusuf (2011) further emphasises that learners also become more productive, critical, and adventurous when they start to perceive the richness and variety of the language they are attempting to learn, and start taking advantage of that potential. Thus, learners are likely to improve their communicative and cultural competence through the richness of authentic texts. Based on the above arguments, it is clear that reading literature presents learners with rich sources of authentic materials. If learners interact well with these materials, they will become able to internalise the language at a higher level of competence, which becomes a vessel for their critical analysis of literary texts.

Register or dialects embedded in social contexts can also be presented in textual form (Nkandi, 2015). Yusuf (2011) describes that from a sociolinguistic perspective, its sociolinguistic richness is a significant justification for reading in language teaching and learning. Reading represents the language characteristics of social groups and cultural geography. In distinct circumstances, occasions, and locations (i.e. formal, informal, dialects, colloquialisms, etc.) people speak in different registers. Reading texts therefore provide authentic samples of a broad spectrum of styles, registers, and text types at distinct levels of difficulty (Ticko, 2003). Reading helps to incorporate linguistic competence into communicative competence which implies the ability to use language

appropriately in different social situations (Starja, 2013). To obtain such a level of sociolinguistic competence enhances the critical perspectives of the young adult reader. All the competencies discussed in this section (cultural, communicative, and sociolinguistic) contribute significantly to the development of young children's thinking and language development, including the understanding of not only themselves and their world, but also their communication skills, as well as encouraging positive relationships with those close to them (Jacob, 2016).

Advocating the teaching of language through reading in Africa, Chipili (2013) from Zambia argues that reading and intellectual development can never be separated. In this regard, reading of different genres plays a significant role in language awareness and the nurturing of critical thinking skills in young adults.

(a) Poetry

Parab (2016) explored the role of poetry, short stories, and drama in ESL teaching, and discovered that by existing beyond established use, poetry is able to provide readers with a distinct point of view on language use. Poetry also evokes emotions and ideas and familiarises learners with figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor, and personification. Cubukcu (2001) further states that learners become acquainted with various elements of the target language, such as emphasis, pitch, intonation, and juncture by reading poetry. In addition, Mart (2012) suggests that learners can also study the semiotic elements in the target language through poetry. Mart (2012) further describes that poetry is one of the most powerful transmitters of culture, allowing learners to play with their own dialogues and personalities. These activities lead to enhanced language abilities with focus on pronunciation (Hismanoglu, 2005).

(b) Drama

Using drama in ESL reading classes also increases awareness of the target language and culture among learners. Parab (2016) established that through reading drama, learners come to understand the grammatical structures in depth, and also learn how to use the language to interact, control, and educate. According to Saricoban (2014), drama promotes and accelerates the growth of verbal

abilities as it motivates students to gain a better understanding of the plot of a literary work through a greater understanding of its characters. The use of drama in language teaching improves learners' awareness of the target language and culture. This implies that ESL learners should read drama to enhance their understanding of life experiences, to reflect on specific conditions, and gain a deeper understanding of their additional linguistic sphere. Bas (2008) asserts that reading drama could assist learners towards fluency. It provides learners with excellent possibilities to interact with others, even when their vocabulary is restricted. To convey their aims, they can use body movements and gestures. Parab (2016) believes that reading drama enhances learners' understanding of themselves and others. They might compare the characters in the drama with their own lives, in other words, drama has the ability to alter the thinking of learners in dealing with interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, Bas (2008) argues that reading drama inevitably immerses learners in a social environment and creates more opportunity for learners to learn how to get along with others. Drama encourages learners to generate thoughts and synthesise them. Thus, the value of drama lies in the creative method and the chance it provides to work with others. According to Winston (2014), drama activity helps improve the integrated linguistic skills of learners, as groups of learners are motivated to read a story and act it out as if creating an imaginary film.

Belliveau and Kim (2013) describe the benefits of drama in the ESL classroom as follows: drama stimulates imagination and fosters creative thinking, develops critical thinking skills, fosters linguistic development, and enhances understanding and learning retention by involving all the senses as an important aspect of the learning process. Drama also improves other people's sense of empathy and consciousness, fosters peer respect and group collaboration, strengthens positive self-concept, and offers educators with a new learning view. In relation to the above advantages, Parab (2016) claims that drama is crucial in the ESL classroom, because it creates authenticity to the classroom, and exposes learners to the target culture and the social issues that a society may face. In addition, drama improves creativity, originality, sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, emotional stability, and collaboration, and allows moral attitudes to be examined, while developing communication skills and an appreciation of reading texts.

(c) Prose

Simataa (2013) believes that working with prose in the ESL classroom can make a significant contribution not only to learning ESL, but also to inspiring critical thinking pertaining to a fictional story. Engaging imaginatively with a fictional plot is complex, requiring readers to recall, collect, and reflect on their previous experiences or memories in order to build textual meanings (Parab, 2016). Reading does not only help learners to comprehend the meaning of given texts, but it also enhances the thinking of learners and their language abilities (Awe 2014). In the same vein, Jacob (2016) claims that reading prose assists learners in discovering questions, evaluating evidence individually, forming judgements based on synthesis, and developing a coherent argument in support of a position.

De Villa (2017) claims that one of the factors that can be put forward to promote the potential of prose to contribute to the critical thinking and understanding of learners is that these texts provide the learners with desirable motivation. If motivated, learners are more enthusiastically pursuing prose, and paying more attention to introduced concepts (Mart, 2012). Bas (2008) and De Villa (2017) emphasise that the authenticity and significance of the context make narrative texts meaningful. Shrestah (2008) also regards the motivation and authenticity of prose to be of paramount importance. Another line of argument that promotes the positive function of prose in fostering critical thinking and understanding of reading is that it invites learners into the problem-solving of broader global issues. Solving problems involves analysing, synthesising, and evaluating various elements of the same or distinct problems. Reading texts involves learners through conflict resolution in problem-solving assignments (De Villa, 2017).

Children's tales are full of perceptible conflicts with which readers can identify, and which can empower learners to empathise with characters in dangerous circumstances experiencing difficult conflicts (Parab, 2016). Having elaborated on the topics, plots, characteristics, viewpoints, symbols and allegories, a teacher could empower learners to better perceive their environment, and to find their own alternatives, thereby improving the abilities and perspectives they need, while dealing with disputes themselves (De Villa, 2017). Parab (2016) further notes that implementation constitutes critical thinking capacity. Reading prose enables learners to apply the ideas they encounter to real-life circumstances through reading comprehension courses. Bas (2008) emphasises that since separate narratives cover distinct topics, learners can become familiar with these insightful topics that can be extrapolated to real-world circumstances.

Based on the above, it can be argued that if OL Namibian learners were encouraged to read literature, the teaching and learning of ESL would be enhanced, and learners might master the English language better. Reading literature texts will enable learners to find and express meaning through words in a creative and critical manner (Simataa, 2014). In the next section I discuss reading challenges in other developing countries, and then focus on how reading is dealt with in schools and the curriculum in Namibia, specifically.

2.2.3 Reading in developing countries

Reading problems that result from a poor reading culture are not limited to Namibian learners. International research indicates that there is rising concern in many countries around the world regarding a poor reading culture among learners (Ronaldo, Chuma Benard & Ondari, 2014; Mungambi, 2015; Fatmasari, 2016).

2.2.3.1 Reading in other developing countries

Semtin and Maniam (2015) point out that many learners in Malaysian secondary schools are not exposed to reading, and do not understand its importance. The root of this is the emphasis placed on learning grammar rather than other language abilities, like reading, writing, listening and speaking (Hussaini & Nadia, 2015). As a result, learners lack the necessary reading abilities to make a success of their academic performance. Fatmasari (2016) found that in Indonesia, reading is not commonly practiced. Learners who participated in the study revealed that, although a daily one-hour reading period is scheduled in secondary schools every day, teachers are seldom present and learners usually do other tasks unrelated to reading. Indonesian learners therefore blame their teachers for not creating a conducive environment for reading. Fahlepi (2018) confirms that, although there are many libraries in Indonesia, learners rarely use them because they lack the passion for reading. This can be attributed to the fact that English in Indonesia is used as a foreign language (EFL), and learners find it difficult to understand English-medium texts. Additionally, Singh (2014) notes that one of the contributing factors to poor reading habits in Indonesia is the limited number of reading materials, and that those that are available are not created in Indonesia.

Although library infrastructures in Indonesia are good, Fatmasari (2016) states that the collections are old and dusty, and that the libraries do not involve the community in reading events. Indonesian

families are also not interested in visiting libraries for reading purposes, and even schools rarely undertake excursions to local libraries (Shang, 2016). As a result, learners grow up without the knowledge of the benefit of reading. Poor reading among learners, especially in developing countries, is of great concern, and needs urgent attention.

A major obstacle to the establishment of a reading culture in the African context, is the fact that African societies are predominantly oralistic. Many African communities regard reading as an anti-social activity and that it is only meant for educational purposes. Although multiple languages are used in Africa, many African countries choose to use English as their official language, due to prevailing economic and political reasons (Stein & Newfield, 2006). Even countries that have never been colonised by Britain have also adopted English as official language (Plonski, Teferra & Brady, 2013). Plonski et al. (2013) relate that Rwanda, Burundi, and Gambia (former French-speaking countries) use English as an official language. The issue of adopting English raises many questions, not least why African countries prefer English to local languages. Stein and Newfield (2006) explain that the effect of using English, rather than indigenous African languages, as medium of instruction has introduced inequalities into the education system, especially for those who opted for an indigenous language as Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). Naafan (2018) supports the notion, namely that some African researchers fear that the introduction of English as a LoLT will have a detrimental effect on the use of indigenous languages.

In a study conducted in Kenya, Ronaldo, Benard and Ondari (2014) observed that poor reading is a serious problem among secondary school learners, despite Kenya being ranked with the highest literacy rate in Africa. According to Nandiemo (2015), a poor reading culture in Kenyan schools is attributed to the fact that the Kenyan culture encourages community members to spend their free time on sport, recreation, and church. A study done by Mugambi (2015) on reading habits and academic performance showed that, apart from reading class notes and textbooks for examination purposes, learners are losing interest in reading. Nandiemo (2015) blames the Kenyan education system for the poor reading culture, because although schools are interested in enabling learners to achieve good grades, they do not emphasise the benefit of reading enough. This means that one finds secondary school graduates who, although having achieved good grades in English, will be unable to express themselves freely in English.

In their study on reading for pleasure among learners in Ghana, Kavi, Tackie and Bugyei (2015) found that the poor reading culture in the country is attributable to the fact that learners were not introduced to reading early in primary school as is done in developed countries. Most African education systems provide explicit teaching of reading only in the first three years of primary schools, by the end of which learners are expected to be independent readers (Moore & Hart, 2007). Such education systems operate on the assumption that all learners are independent readers and are thus able to develop the ability to learn from reading, whereas in reality, learners struggle with it.

Awe (2014) investigated the link between reading attitudes and reading understanding of secondary school learners in Nigeria and found that learners were not interested in reading, apart from reading to pass their examinations. In addition, Daniel et al. (2017) investigated the effects of reading habits on the academic performance of students. The finding from their study are in line with Awe's discovery that students only read for the examination purposes, and that they mainly read notebooks, textbooks, and electronic resources relevant to their school subjects. Because learners read exclusively for examination purposes, there is a high failure rate in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) (Awe, 2014). Daniel et al. (2017) blame the poor reading culture on social media, such as WhatsApp and Facebook (Daniel et al., 2017). Kavi et al. (2015) urge that the education system introduces reading in English earlier in primary schools in Nigeria, to ensure that by the time learners reach tertiary education, they understand the benefits of reading other than reading for examination.

The reading situation in South Africa is more or less the same as it is in the rest of Africa. Joubert, Ebersöhn, Ferreira, Du Plessis and Moen (2014) have stated that more than 70% of learners are struggling readers. Howie, Cambrinde, Tshele, Roux, Palame and Mokoena (2016) in the PIRLS literacy report indicate that about 80% of Grade 4 learners cannot read with comprehension. Similarly, Le Roux (2017) reveals that 85% of South Africans are non-readers, and many have no access to books. Research further indicates that the reading skills of many students studying at tertiary institutions in South Africa are not up to the standard required for academic study, and this affects their academic performance (Hlalethwa, 2013). Joubert et al. (2014) noted a number of reasons for poor reading among South African learners. Firstly, English is used as LoLT, although the majority of learners and even teachers are second language speakers of English and are not

fluent readers or speakers of English. As a result, there is no sufficient support from teachers during reading in English. Secondly, many parents are illiterate, and this acts as a barrier to promoting reading habits among their children (Hlalethwa, 2013). In addition, Le Roux (2017) explains that most of the schools in South Africa are in rural areas where there are limited resources, such as libraries. This places a burden on learners who are interested in reading, because it is difficult for them to access books and other reading materials.

Joubert et al. (2014) blame the education system for promoting a poor reading culture, because only in their fourth year of primary school are South African learners taught through the medium of English. For the first three years learners are taught in their mother tongue. By the time learners change to English, they might not have fully mastered the comprehension skills required for effective reading, thus they do not understand what they are reading in English.

2.2.3.2 Reading in the Namibian context

Namibia is a multilingual country, with more than ten spoken local languages. Like many other African countries, Namibia was never colonised by the British, yet English was made accepted as the official language after independence. A brief overview of Namibia's colonial history is imperative to understand how English became the official language of Namibia. Although the official language in many other is that of the former coloniser of the country, this is not the case in Namibia (Frydman, 2011: 182). Namibia was under Germany colonial control from 1884 to 1915. During this time, German was recognised as an official language, although the indigenous languages of Namibia have also been adopted and used in everyday life in schools. In 1915, Germany lost its colonial power over Namibia to South Africa who was under British colonial rule at the time. As a result, German lost its official status and Afrikaans and English become the official languages and languages of instructions in schools. These were also the languages used in official environments (Steel, 2014: 226).

According to Frydman (2011), the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), the leading democratic party during Namibia's independence in March 1990, found it necessary for the elimination of Afrikaans, a language that they regarded as "the language of the oppressors" and officialised English only as Namibia's official language. Putz (1997) argues that at the time of selecting English as the official language, Dr Hage G. Geingob, prime minister at that time,

defended the proposal based on the notion that “Namibians had long been limited in their ability to communicate with the outside world (Putz, 1997:92). From the above statement, it can be inferred that the official language in Namibia is meant as an opportunity for Namibians to communicate with the outside world. This may be one of the main reasons why Namibia would use English as its official language instead of its local languages.

In Namibia, English is used as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and is regarded as the second language (ESL). Since the majority of learners speak their mother tongue at home, learners experience difficulties in learning in English (Hautemo & Julius, 2016). Töttemeyer, Kirchner and Alexander (2015) investigated the reading habits of Namibian learners, revealing that the majority of learners have not developed a reading habit, and as a result, their academic performance is significantly affected. The poor reading culture among Namibian learners is caused by many factors, such as poor socio-economic background, lack of parental involvement, poorly resourced libraries, and limited reading materials (Kirchner & Mostert, 2017).

To instil a love of reading among Namibian learners, the importance of reading needs to be emphasised at the primary school level. This is because learners in this phase need to develop and acquire positive attitudes and fundamental techniques required for school, as well as for lifelong learning thereafter (Naidoo, 2013). The latter can be achieved if learners are involved in meaningful reading activities like reading from various sources. Although the above appears to be the aim of the readathon programme introduced in Namibian schools, the fact that only a few secondary schools have implemented the readathon programme creates doubt as to whether or not Namibia is indeed ready to promote a culture of reading (Hambunda, 2014).

Several studies have been carried out regarding those factors that contribute to the poor performance of learners in English as a second language, both in junior and secondary schools in Namibia (Namupala, 2013; Nkandi, 2015; Shapaka, 2015; Simataa, 2013). Factors such as lack of resources, low English proficiency of teachers and learners, ineffective teaching strategies, negative teachers’ and learners’ attitudes towards ESL, low socio-economic status of learners, lack of motivation and support, as well as lack of parental involvement are some of the factors contributing to poor performance in ESL (Namupala, 2013; Nkandi, 2015; Shapaka, 2015;

Simataa, 2013). Students at tertiary institutions are struggling – both in reading and communication (Hambunda 2014).

I have not come across literature focusing on the enhancement of reading in ESL learning, specifically on OL learners and their teachers in Namibia. It is against this background that I decided to contribute to this body of knowledge, to at least remind involved stakeholders in the education fraternity that reading is food for the mind, and indeed could contribute not only to ESL learning and acquisition, but to the understanding of the LoLT in Namibian schools. It is therefore up to the education stakeholders to enable initiatives and a learning curriculum that promote a love of reading. I now explore ways to enhance reading in Namibian schools.

(a) The impact of curriculum reform on reading

Soon after independence the Namibian government invited representatives of the Cambridge International General Examination (CIE) to assist in the reform of the Secondary education phase. The aim of the Ministry of Education was to assist learners to communicate effectively in both spoken and written English (Ipinge & Likando, 2012). To supplement this initiative, two syllabi were designed, namely the Higher and International General Certificate of Secondary Examinations (H/IGCSE). These replaced the Cape Education Department Matriculation Examination (CEDME), which Namibia used prior to independence.

The H/IGCSE syllabus contained a component of literature used in ESL learning, while the IGCSE syllabus did not contain a literature component (NIED, 2003a). The new system made provision for the compulsory school-based assessment or coursework in some subject syllabi, and optional school-based assessment or course work in others. English was compulsory in both H/IGCSE and IGCSE syllabi. Howarth (1995) claims that H/IGCSE was founded on the ideal that learning and assessment ought to be integrated and not divorced from one another, as was the case with the Cape education system. Ipinge and Likando (2012) discovered that from the initial consultations with the CIE, provision was made for the localisation of the H/IGCSE syllabi, as they would serve as the foundation for developing the Namibian Certificate for Secondary Education. The H/IGCSE was revised and in 2006 new ESL syllabi, known as the Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary and Higher Level syllabi (NSSCO/H), were introduced to address previous shortcomings. Literature still did not form part of the learning content for learners in the NSSCO

syllabus, while it was present in the NSSCH syllabus. According to Simataa (2013), literary texts allow learners to read widely as a result of the reading texts prescribed by the Ministry of Education. On the other hand, OL learners are not exposed to reading widely, because no reading material is prescribed for their ESL syllabus. Thus, according to Busari (2014), the Namibian education system does not promote a reading culture for OL learners. As reading is not emphasised in the syllabus, OL teachers fail to emphasise reading. The fact that learners are taught in their mother tongue from Grade 1 to 3 is also a contributing factor, as learners struggle with the shift in LoLT from their home language to English (Hautemo & Julius, 2016) when they reach Grade 4. Kirchner and Mostert (2017) elucidate that teachers are frustrated too and have revealed that it is difficult for them to promote reading habits among learners. Teachers have revealed that classrooms are not reading friendly, because there are no cupboards to store reading materials, and they are overcrowded, leaving no space for reading corners (Busari, 2014; Hautemo & Julius, 2016).

(b) The significance of taking ESL at Higher Level

According to the NSSCH syllabus (Ministry of Education, 2010a), the literature component consists of three categories, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 2.1 Skills, objectives and competencies of the literature component, as outlined in the syllabus

SKILLS	OBJECTIVES	COMPETENCIES
Knowledge and understanding	Acquire knowledge and understanding of different texts.	Recall and narrate events in the texts studied; Provide details of settings and summaries of plots, themes and characters; Explain literal meanings in texts; and Understand intentions of the writer.
Critical interpretation	Critique and review texts.	Distinguish different points of view; work out various themes, imagery, and symbolism in texts studied; Provide analysis of plots, characters, etc. Employ appropriate literary language in their critical analysis of texts studied, e.g. imagery, irony, sarcasm, satire, etc.
Judgment and personal response	Form and develop own ideas and opinions on aspects of the different genres.	Appraise texts studied; Communicate an informal personal response to texts studied; Discuss relationships in texts studied; Compare and contrast themes, characters, etc.

Source: Adapted from the NSSCH syllabus Grade 11-12, (Ministry of Education, 2010a:14)

Simataa (2013) critically analysed the same table (table 2.1) and concluded that HL learners are encouraged to become critical thinkers, readers, and writers through the skills, objectives, and competencies stipulated in the literature component. OL learners, on the other hand, are deprived of that opportunity, as a literature component is lacking as part of their language learning. As indicated previously, there are multiple benefits of reading widely in a second language. Depriving NSSCO learners of these benefits means that they are not receiving comprehensive teaching in ESL and are deprived of becoming fluent in spoken and written English as a result.

(c) The implications of ESL at Ordinary Level

The difference between HL and OL can be clarified by stating the following: the only components included in OL are reading and directed writing, listening, comprehension, and oral communication. The lack of a literature component differentiates OL from HL. Additionally, the grade distributions and values are different in OL and HL, as indicated in table 2.2. The points values indicate that Ordinary Level ranges from 0 to 8 points, while that of the Higher Level ranges from 0 to 9.

Table 2.2: Grading distribution between Higher and Ordinary Level

Higher Level		Ordinary Level	
Grade	Points	Grades	Points
1	9	A*	8
2	8	A	7
3	7	B	6
4	6	C	5
U	0	D	4
		E	3
		F	2
		G	1
		U	0

The points and values indicated above have the following implications:

1. Ordinary Level learners, who obtain between A-D symbols, have a chance to enter tertiary institutions, while those who obtain lower than that cannot be admitted to tertiary institutions.
2. Higher Level learners, on the other hand, regardless of points they get (except for an ungraded (U)) have the opportunity to be admitted to tertiary institutions. It is therefore evident that Higher Level points are higher in values compared to those at Ordinary Level.

Nkandi (2015) and Shapaka (2015) explain that studying English at an OL is not sufficient for the expected proficiency of English, because not all aspects of the English language are tested at OL. For example, there is no oral paper to test speaking skills, but instead OL is dominated by writing skills tests. As a result, learners leave school with poor communication skills and cannot express themselves in the market-place (Sibanda, 2016). Most developing nations' second language

curriculum emphasises IR (Intensive Reading), often overlooking ER (Extensive Reading). Namibia, being a developing country, is no exception. A lack of relevant reading materials in OL classrooms is an indication that less ER and more of IR is taking place. ER characteristics include learners self-selecting from a wide variety of enjoyable, well written reading materials on their level of ability. Furthermore, learners read extensively but individually, and are guided towards the objectives of extensive reading, which includes an emphasis on reading speed, and encouraging them to read for pleasure or for information rather than for acquiring new vocabulary and learning grammar (Huffman, 2014:18). The above characteristics are lacking in the OL syllabus (cf.2.2.3.2b), hence the conclusion that the OL syllabus focuses more on IR.

IR on the other hand is characterised by learners analysing texts with the hope of understanding the text. This way of teaching reading has been considered as a pedagogical practice in language lessons and not reading lessons (Davoudi, Zolfasharkhani & Rezaei, 2016:549). Davoudi et al. (2016) argue that learners who read intensively are not fluent because they translate every word into their first language while reading a text. They also analyse the written text word for word, which hinders fluent reading. According to Huffman (2014), intensive readers face many difficulties in reading texts, which leads to the development of a negative attitude towards second language learning.

Another implication is that teachers value HL more than they do OL. According to Nkandi (2015), many teachers are not committed to fully attend to their OL lessons as they do to HL lessons. Sibanda (2016) notes that some teachers complain that OL lacks teaching and learning materials and teachers are required to spend most of their free time searching for such materials. Finding relevant reading material is also a challenge due to a lack of other resources, such as computers and the internet. Teachers have revealed that in most cases materials found in their poorly-equipped libraries are also outdated (Shapaka, 2015). Busari (2014) explains that OL learners lack critical thinking skills because of their under-exposure to reading at school. As a result, they experience several problems when writing ESL examinations. Hilongwa (2011) and Nkandi (2015) state that in most cases OL learners are unable to understand basic instructions in the ESL question papers, experience difficulties in the interpretation of resources provided in the question papers, and have limited knowledge of subject matter. Learners with the above-mentioned problems will naturally perform poorly in their ESL examinations.

2.2.4 The role of textbooks in reading

Swanepoel (2016) explains that it is not an easy task to define the concept of a textbook. Educational researcher, Emami (2015:78) defines a textbook as “a reference with a complete series of materials and activities from which the most suitable or useful issues can be selected”.

Ahmed, Yaqoob and Yaqoob (2015) value of a textbook as an important tool that teachers use to motivate learners to give them maximum understanding about the topic and problem under discussion. Snyder (2014:50) defines a good quality textbook as the congruence between the desired learning outcomes, as specified, and the actual learning outcome achieved. Moreover, Snyder (2014) states that textbooks are believed to be trusted sources that connect well to syllabi goals and aims. Tabari (2014) adds that educational researchers regard textbooks as books written for educational purposes and published by accredited publishing houses.

2.2.4.1 The use of textbooks in ESL classrooms

In the ESL classroom the textbook serves as the basis for a large part of the language input by learners and the language practice taking place in the classroom (Richards, 2015). Apart from the teacher’s feedback, a textbook also offers the main source of interaction with the target language (Emami 2015). Nilsson and Horvat (2018:8) explain that most teachers rely heavily on textbooks in ESL classrooms where textbooks serve as a guiding tool for teachers to help learners through learning activities and tasks. Textbooks provide learners with different language components, such as grammar, and reading texts. Many cultural aspects are included in the language textbook, and culture is connected to language learning (Rodrigues, 2014). Another reason that textbooks are important and can be useful in ESL classrooms is that they are trusted tools of which the content tends to be taken for granted, whereas, teachers face more scrutiny (Emami, 2015). That being said, it is not surprising that textbooks play an important role in ESL classrooms. Lundahl (2014) points out that in using textbooks in ESL classrooms teachers have the responsibility of ensuring that the content is authentic, and that they match syllabi goals.

Many educational researchers argue that textbooks still play a vital role in classrooms in developing countries (Rezat, 2009; Snyder, 2014). The reason being that most of the time the

textbook is the only resource available to learners at home, since advanced technology is not available to them (Snyder, 2014). Stein and Newfield (2006) argue that many schools in Africa are poorly equipped in English, as few textbooks and reading materials are available, and teachers are not fully proficient in English.

2.2.4.2 The use of textbooks in Namibian ESL classrooms

The above scenario is similar to the current situation in Namibia. Töttemeyer et al. (2015) found that three quarters of Namibian schools had either no library or only a small collection that did not meet minimum standards. They point out that teachers in ESL classrooms use few textbooks, supplemented by photocopied reading texts, to teach ESL. Of the few textbooks available, many are not locally published, but are imported (Kirchner & Mostert, 2017). As imported textbooks are written for worldwide markets, they often do not represent Namibian learners' interests and needs (Töttemeyer et al., 2015). For this reason, such textbooks can hinder learners' meaning making (Early, Kendrick & Potts, 2015). To free Namibian learners from the above, Stein and Newfield (2006) urge that local literacies should be used and that the study of ESL should intersect with local circumstances or conditions. This means that English in Namibia must be indigenised to enhance meaning. Namlish (a portmanteau of Namibian and English) is a non-standard language spoken in Namibia (Kelly, 2017). Many local terms have become acceptable as the majority of Namibians speak English as a second or third language, and this new hybrid language is often referred to as Namlish. Namlish should not be regarded as incorrect, as it is a living example of how language changes over time.

Early et al. (2015) motivate this statement by pointing out that African ESL classrooms have suffered from 'foreignness', hence Stein and Newfield (2006) argue that curriculum developers should include reading materials that contain culturally relevant texts that are of value to Africans, in this case particularly to Namibian learners. More familiar resources engage disadvantaged learners, using the community practice of narrative to inform new meanings (Early et al., 2015). This means that Namibian learners, especially in rural schools, as well as the disadvantaged, require familiar content with which they might identify. The familiar content might be oral performance, visual texts, and story books produced by Namibian celebrities like musicians, fashion icons, and other locals (Töttemeyer et al., 2015). The Ministry of Education in Namibia has

the responsibility of distributing textbooks to government schools and as a result has approved particular publishers that produce textbooks and different learning materials. Of the many approved publishers, Namibia Publishing House (NPH) and Platinum, a South African publishing company, are most widely represented in terms of distribution across Namibia. The aim of the NPH is to meet the need of the new curriculum introduced in 2014, and to produce books that are up to standard, such as e-books and digital products (Shikongo, 2013). The NPH is doing a good job, especially with local languages and in the Junior Phase, publishing storybooks and other reading materials written by Namibian authors. The challenge still lies with the Secondary Phase, because the NPH is still producing books written by non-Namibian authors for this level. In the same vein, the Platinum series also does not deliver Namibian content. ESL teachers are not in favour of using textbooks of which the content is not Namibian based. In their study on factors contributing to ESL acquisition, Hautemo and Julius (2016) found that some teachers complained that they stopped using foreign textbooks because the language was difficult for learners, and activities did not cover all four language skills. Teachers indicated that they sometimes searched for local and easy texts from the internet and used it for reading in their classes.

When selecting an English language textbook to be used for teaching ESL, it is vital for teachers to examine it carefully to ensure that it is suitable for their particular school and setting (Naseem, Shah & Tabassum, 2015). The perfect ESL textbook ought to be linguistically adapted to suit the literacy level of the learners (Snyder, 2014). Examples should be made relevant to the learners' environmental and social contexts. Exercises should be scaffolded, with levels obtainable by slow to fast learners.

By looking at the situation critically, it is clear that textbooks are important in ESL classrooms. Due to the fact that textbooks are imported, the content becomes too difficult for the learners to understand, because it is not based on phenomena known to them. The realities of Namibia in terms of the availability of educational and particularly reading resources for learners requires that certain adjustments are made during the review of the current curriculum (Töttemeyer et al., 2014). It is therefore important for developers of the curriculum and reading material to consider local textbooks so that learners may identify with the content.

In the next section I discuss the conceptual framework.

2.3 Conceptual framework

The study is based on the multiliteracies pedagogy developed by the New London Group (NLG) (1996), Lev Vygotsky's (1978) work on social constructivism, Stephen Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, and Jim Cummins' (1984) distinction between BICS and CALP. In this section, I first discuss the concept of the multiliteracies pedagogy in general, followed by a contextualisation of the multiliteracies approach in an ESL classroom. Secondly, I deliberate on the works of Vygotsky, Krashen and Cummins. These four lenses used illuminate the phenomenon of reading, each from its own perspective, and act as theoretical underpinning for my research on reading in Namibian schools. Figure 2.1 illustrates the four theoretical perspectives that informed this study and presents a summary of the conceptual framework used in this study.

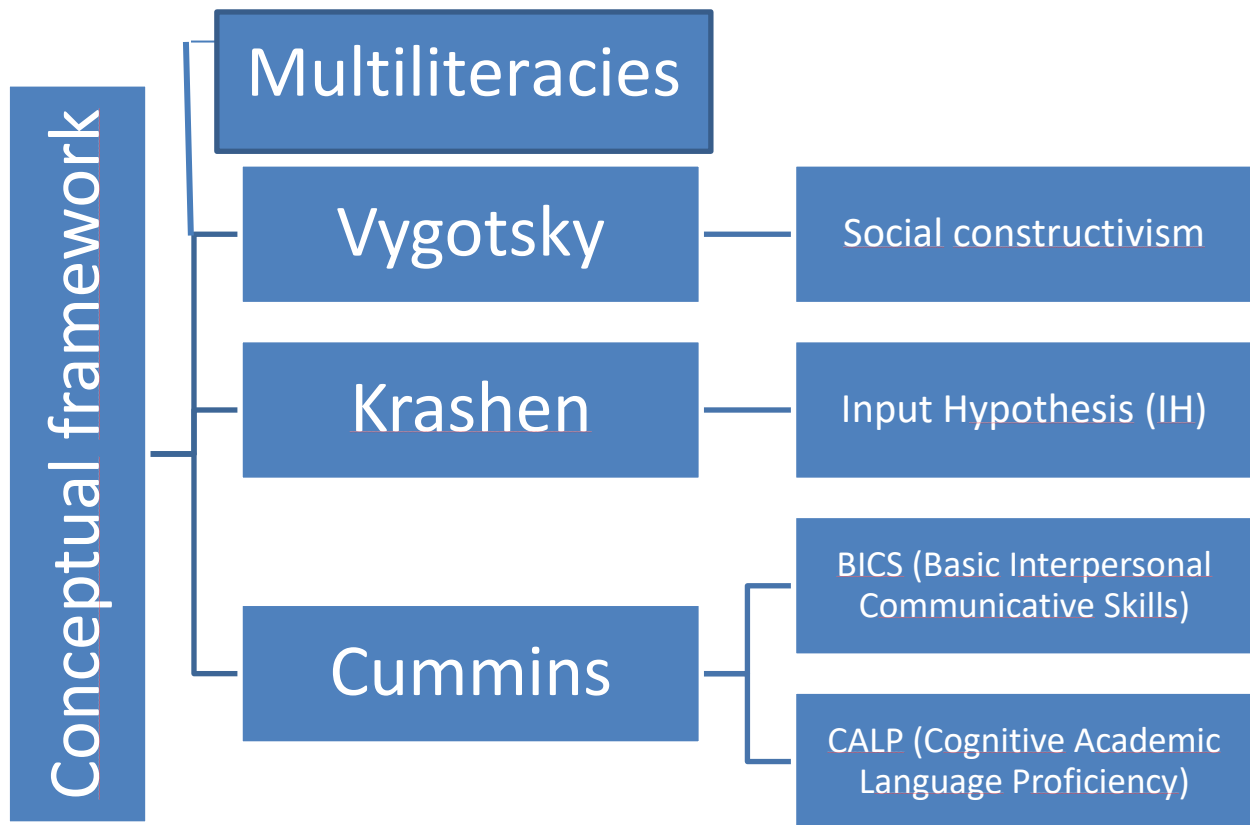


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

2.3.1 The pedagogy of multiliteracies

The term “multiliteracies” is interpreted differently by different researchers. Kaur (2015:21) defines multiliteracies approach as the ability to identify, interpret, create, and communicate meaning across a variety of visual, corporal, musical, and alphabetical forms of communication. Yi and Angay-Crowder (2016) explain multiliteracies as a pedagogy developed by the New London Group (NLG) in 1996 to overcome the challenges of traditional language-based approaches to literacy pedagogy. The pedagogy of multiliteracies challenges the old narrative perspective of reading as a mechanical exercise. In the past, around the 1960s, one would be considered literate if one could read and write (Leimbigler, 2014). In today’s globalised era literacy requires a wider knowledge and skills of how to interact in a diverse and complex world, through a variety of electronic media (Early et al., 2015).

According to Yi and Angay-Crowder (2016), the multiliteracies approach address how Information Communication Technology (ICT) affects education, and how learners can be prepared for such changes in a globalised world. Skinnari and Nikula (2017) mention that in this globalised world ICT is considered to assist in the acquisition of language skills, as well as aid in the important tasks required for the mastery of curriculum content in English. Ganapathy and Seetharam (2016) argue that ESL teaching and learning ought not only to involve grammar, phonics, and vocabulary, but also practical learning. In today’s world learners are actively engaged in various multimodal texts on a daily basis through the use of their mobile devices, and the internet (Kaur, 2015). As a result, learners are acquiring facts and gaining access to various knowledge forms through the mere touch of a screen (Engelbrecht, 2019). This incorporation of ICT into learners’ daily lives begs for a shift in ESL teaching and learning from print-based to screen-based texts as a result of a globalised world (Yi & Angay-Crawder, 2016). Not only is the role of ICT technology and multi-modality assumed by principles of the multiliteracies approach, but self-directed learning, learner-autonomy, and motivation is intrinsically part of the multiliteracies approach.

Ganapathy and Seetharam (2016) advocate for the capacity of using multiliteracies to promote learners’ autonomy in learning, their motivation to learn, and to facilitate their own various learning styles. In the ESL classroom, learners become highly collaborative and participative,

show improved interest in reading, and appear to be positive-minded when exposed to multiliteracies principles. Moreover, Angay-Crowder, Choi and Yi (2013) argue that learners' motivation and attitude are often linked to the learning of ESL. The use of the multiliteracies approach is helpful in achieving such a positive attitude towards ESL reading skills. When learners are encouraged, permitted, and motivated to freely use tools such as electronic devices (which they constantly do) they are also likely to access, search, and find sites and programmes comprising helpful reading materials. The foregoing can be helpful in creating interest in reading and improving ESL from such uses. The latter is supported by Kaur (2015:22), who explains that "learners who lack interest in reading will be motivated to read with the use of multimodal texts, as they are more easily comprehended with the pictures and other supporting modes such as visuals and sounds". It is, therefore, vital for ESL teachers to integrate ICT and other appropriate materials in teaching ESL to make reading more enjoyable and beneficial to learners. For this reason Kaur (2015) suggests that the multiliteracies pedagogy advocates the potential to motivate readers, as it help learners develop their visual literacy, while at the same time make reading fun.

The use of the multiliteracies pedagogy in the Namibian context will bring remarkable benefits in terms of ESL learning as it helps lessen learners' anxiety and worries about learning ESL, and the process of meaning making is much easier with the help of audio-visuals. In addition, Sujee (2015) reasons that reading from online settings may enhance literacy development, because the more learners engage in communication in the target language, the more they will learn the correct sentence structures and expand their vocabularies. For most of their time, learners are busy on their cell phones, iPads, tablets, and laptops (Sujee, 2015). This implies that instead of learners carrying story books (hard copies), they are now able to download and save the books and materials they need to read from their devices.

Angay-Crowder et al. (2013) point out that for the multiliteracies pedagogy to be put into practice, the classroom should reflect the following four pillars of multiliteracies:

(a) Situated practice

Bonche (2014) explains that situated practice involves providing meaningful experiences for learners to participate in their own learning by building on their lived experience. In situated practice the teacher links the learners' pre-knowledge and own experiences to new knowledge

(Engelbrecht, 2019). In terms of reading, teachers should encourage learners to start reading texts that they are familiar with, and then move on to reading unfamiliar and difficult texts in the ESL classroom. Teachers encourage, and when necessary, guide learners to use their devices to obtain and read unfamiliar texts online, so that the online audio-visuals accompanying such texts can support their comprehension.

(b) Overt instruction

Overt instruction occurs when the teacher provides active intervention and scaffolding to help learners gain conscious understanding and control of their learning (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013). Bonche (2014) clarifies that overt instruction enables learners to create conscious understanding and control of learning. Similarly, Campbell (2015) argues that overt instruction requires learners to be active makers of concepts and theory. This process requires of teachers to apply their professional knowledge and skills to build upon the learners' current level of interest in and love of reading within the ESL classroom (Engelbrecht, 2019). This implies that teachers can use available resources to instil interest and the love of reading into the ESL OL learners. The latter can be done through ESL teachers' efforts to explain why learners need to understand and be confident in applying the skills that they are taught. Teachers need to support their learners in their journey of mastery of the language. This requires ESL teachers to be actively and creatively involved in their learner's discovery of new learning styles, effectively linking them to what they presently know. Such is not as yet a common practice in Namibian secondary schools.

(c) Critical framing

Through critical framing learners step back from what they have learned, critique their learning, and extend and apply their learning in a new context (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013). Campbell (2015) clarifies that critical framing needs learners to investigate causes and impacts, create reasoning chains, and clarify patterns in texts. The above implies that learners learn how to critique texts, because in the process of reading, they interrogate the motive and interest behind an action in a given text, breaking down its layers, and analysing the components of language use presents (Kaur, 2015). When learners critique a reading text, they develop their metacognitive abilities to examine their own assumptions, as well as those that are embedded within the text itself (Bonche, 2014). In the context within which this study is undertaken, the claim cannot be made that analytical reading is encouraged and enhanced among ELS OL learners. This is because it is a

common occurrence that when these learners are presented with reading texts in their classrooms, it is usually intended for comprehension activities rather than for challenging their analytical and application skills for language mastery (Ministry of Education, 2010b).

(d) Transformed practice

This pillar includes the transfer, reformulation, and redesign of current texts by learners from one context to another (Bonhe, 2014). MacKay (2014) argues that the main goal of the multiliteracies pedagogy is to apply the skills, knowledge and behaviour that they have learnt through the first three pillars to their lives outside the classroom, in the real-world context. Every time learners read a specific text, they are transformed in some way, as they use knowledge, skills, strategies and ideas used by the authors in new contexts (Engelbrecht, 2019). In addition, transformed practice enables learners not to become passive consumers of knowledge, but instead, to become producers of knowledge in ways that are relevant to them as individuals and their surrounding communities (Ganapathy & Seetharam, 2016). This pillar thus allows ESL learners not only to be transformed through multiliteracies, but also to possibly transform or influence the community's economic, social, or political life (MacKay, 2014). Through this pillar, ESL teachers and learners will become active and practical consumers of texts, who, upon engaging with specific texts, will visibly display growth, improvement, and positive change in the way they act, do, and even in the way they reason. ESL learners – and for the sake of this study, readers – should be shaped into applying the positive knowledge and skills they acquire in their classrooms, by their engagements with reading texts.

The four pillars entail that learning is situated and context-based, and that scaffolding provides for the connection between prior and new knowledge (MacKay, 2014). Therefore, to instil a love of reading in ESL learners, one should not stick to a single literacy, but consider all available literacies to create holistic readers. Teachers should use the multiliteracies pedagogy, for example, by allowing learners to download novels or other reading texts using their devices, as this has the likelihood of encouraging learners to continue reading outside the classroom. The foregoing is in agreement with the writing of Skinnari and Nikula (2017) who posit that conceptualisation cannot reach its full potential if the textbook is the only source, particularly if the textbook is not adapted with a specific kind of learner, such as the OL learner, in mind.

I concur with Crawford (2013) who maintains that textbooks require a multimodal approach to fully lead learners towards successful learning, and that different forms of literacy need to be understood. This means that if Namibia is to become a successful reading nation, teachers need to integrate multiliteracies within their ESL lessons. A summary of the above discussion and the four pillars of the multiliteracies pedagogy as discussed in this study are indicated in table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Pillars of the principles of the multiliteracies pedagogy in the Namibian context

Pillars of multiliteracies	Application	Action	Namibian context
Situated practice	Looking	Experiencing	Adaptation of textbooks and reading materials.
Overt instruction	Connecting	Conceptualising	All available literacies to create holistic readers.
Critical framing	Thinking	Analysing	Moving beyond comprehension activities, interrogate texts.
Transformed practice	Doing	Applying	Apply knowledge to the real world. Become producers of knowledge relevant to their communities.

Source: adapted from Kalantzis & Cope (2010:39)

2.3.1.1 The multiliteracies pedagogy in the ESL classroom

The multiliteracies approach is an innovative effort to bring together the strengths of previous methods and approaches (Hepple, Sockhill, Tan & Alford, 2014). If the act of reading is supported by multimodal, digitally mediated resources such as cellphones and e-books, the classroom can become a dynamic system that can change reading to involve into something more than examination-oriented (Andrei, 2014). In such a scenario learners will not passively read texts as is common in many traditional language classrooms, but they will actively engage in the collective

creation of meaning (Bonhe, 2014). Principles of multiliteracies approach, through multimodality, promote the pedagogical acts of experiencing, conceptualising, analysing, and applying in reading to acquire knowledge and learn ESL (Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016).

The multiliteracies pedagogy regards learners as active designers of meaning, as opposed to traditional views of literacy, which position learners as passive receivers of information (Rajedram, 2015). Learners can search the internet on their own for appropriate texts to read, unlike in the past, when teachers posed texts to learners to read, even if they did not have an interest in the chosen texts (MacKay, 2014).

It is vital for ESL teachers to integrate and enable the use of technology and appropriate materials to make reading enjoyable and beneficial for learners. The multiliteracies pedagogy aims to create an ESL learning environment in which the blackboard, textbook, exercise book, and test are augmented and, at times, replaced by digital technologies (Yi, 2014). The aim of the multiliteracies pedagogy is to assist teachers to design learning experiences that enable learners to develop strategies to read in a new and unfamiliar manner (Schoeman, 2011). The latter entails that instead of teachers imposing boring texts onto the learners, teachers ought to allow learners to come up with their own reading texts, and to present these to others. By doing so, learners do not just passively read texts, but they actively engage in the collective creation of meaning (Bonche, 2014).

When learners engage with digital devices such as iPads and cell phones to read, this allows them to annotate and share notes, which are interactive and social (Rajendram, 2015). If the above happens in the ESL classroom, it provides learners with a platform to integrate meaning, ideas, and interests. As their sense of writing develops, so does their sense of possibility as active agents in their language learning (Andrei 2014).

Although the above discussion provides significant justification for the implementation of principles of the multiliteracies approach in ESL classrooms in Namibia, Jacobs (2013) argues that it is not enough merely to provide opportunities for learners to engage in ICT, for three reasons. Firstly, in rural schools the reality is that not all learners have access to cell phones and not all schools have access to computers and the internet (Töttemeyer et al., 2014). Even for learners who have access to cell phones, the availability of data will likely hinder them from using the internet and other social media. Secondly, the lack of training in the use of principles of the multiliteracies

approach poses another challenge. ESL teachers and learners need to be trained, to embrace the changing dimension of more than one literacies, especially with regard to reading (Schoeman, 2011). This can be done through ESL workshops and other in-service training sessions.

Thirdly, Rajendram (2015) points out another possible challenge to the implementation of the multiliteracies approach in an ESL classroom. Most First Additional Language (FAL) textbooks do not incorporate the critical framing component of the multiliteracies pedagogy in a systematic manner. This is because it is often believed that FAL learners have limited linguistic abilities, and that they are unable to engage in activities that require critical thinking, reflection, and explanation of social, historical, and cultural perspectives (Jacobs, 2013). However, Skinnari and Nikula (2017) advocate that with the necessary scaffolding from teachers, the pedagogy of multiliteracies can foster critical literacy practice among ESL learners by offering them opportunities to reflect on and challenge those very discourse practices that marginalise them.

Given the challenges of implementing the multiliteracies approach in existing ESL classroom practices, it is important that ESL teachers and other education stakeholders have a platform to engage in constructive dialogue about how they can integrate multiliteracies into the existing curriculum (Rajendram, 2015). Through this collaborative effort ESL teachers will hopefully be better informed about the ways in which they might overcome the challenges, and effectively harness the potential of the multiliteracies approach in order to enable effective reading (Jacobs, 2013).

2.3.2 Social constructivism (Vygotsky 1978)

This study is also based on Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism. According to Vygotsky's theory of language acquisition, the gaining of knowledge, including learning a second language, is a social process (Hay & Nilsson, 2016). Similarly, Nkandi (2015:2) explains that the social constructivist theory views learning as socially dependent, in the sense that it is through interaction with others that one learns a language. Moreover, Rahman (2015) avers that involving other individuals in the language learning process is essential, reasoning that language is communication. Pertaining to reading in an ESL classroom, other people can be involved when learners read texts from various authors from all over the world. Through reading written narrations of societal activities, livelihoods, and views, learners are most likely to identify what

they have already come to know through socialisation with what they read in their texts (Hay and Nilsson, 2016).

Through exposure to interaction with reading texts, learners' ability to acquire knowledge, cultivate linguistic consciousness, develop skills of interpretation, and thereby become educated, is enhanced (Babae & Yahya, 2014). This claim is supported by Vygotsky (1978) who advocates that social interaction promotes learning, and in the case of language, interaction also enables acquisition. Consequently, meaningful interactions with reading activities conducted in ESL classrooms not only provide learners with the vital linguistic abilities required for efficient interaction, but also with an authentic teaching framework that is not available in a standard classroom environment (Nkandi, 2015). Therefore, in line with the above, learners are anticipated to create their linguistic communicative skills through social interaction and exposure to specific and distinct kinds of textual reading (Rahman, 2015).

By building on their prior knowledge and experiences, learners build their own meaning as they accumulate experience through socialisation with elderly members of their societies (Vygotsky, 1978). New ideas and experiences are matched against existing knowledge and the learner constructs new or adapted rules to make sense of the world (Lack, Soleiman & Paraneh, 2017). In addition, Hay and Nilsson (2016) support the opinion that social constructivists consider teaching to be a complicated interplay between teacher and learner, based on their experiences in the classroom. Such interplay links what is done in the classroom to what is previously known by the learners, helping them to draw conclusions, or come to their own understanding of concepts. The main concepts of Vygotsky's social constructivism theory used in this study are the Zone of Proximal Development, and scaffolding, which are discussed below.

2.3.2.1 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD refers to "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978:86).

Hay and Nilsson (2016) explain the ZPD as the stage of learning that includes cognitive structures in the process of maturation but can only mature under the supervision of others or in cooperation with others. My own understanding of ZPD is that it refers to the gap between what a learner has already mastered and what he or she can achieve when provided with educational support by teachers or fellow learners. Naturally, learners learn from their own discoveries and experiences, as well as from others. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning takes place within the (ZPD). In the ZPD learners can, with assistance from adults or children who are more advanced, master concepts and ideas that they cannot understand on their own. Vygotsky mentions a whole range of possible interactive interventions to be used for ZPD assessment, which includes asking leading questions, modelling, solving tasks, and asking learners to persevere until they overcome a given hurdle (Rahman, 2015). These interventions strongly support the use of assessment feedback in facilitating the learning process undertaken through reading and developing understanding.

According to Christians, Kudzai, and Josiah (2012), this model has two developmental levels:

1. The Actual Development Level (ADL) – the point that the learner has already reached and can problem-solve independently. At this level learners can read texts with comprehension and make meaning without teachers’ or peers’ assistance.
2. The Potential Development Level (PDL) – the point that the learner is capable of reaching under the guidance of teachers or in collaboration with more advanced peers. At this level learners can critique texts that they read with the help of teachers and other learners.

The difference between ADL and PDL is ZPD. Figure 2.2 summarises the above.

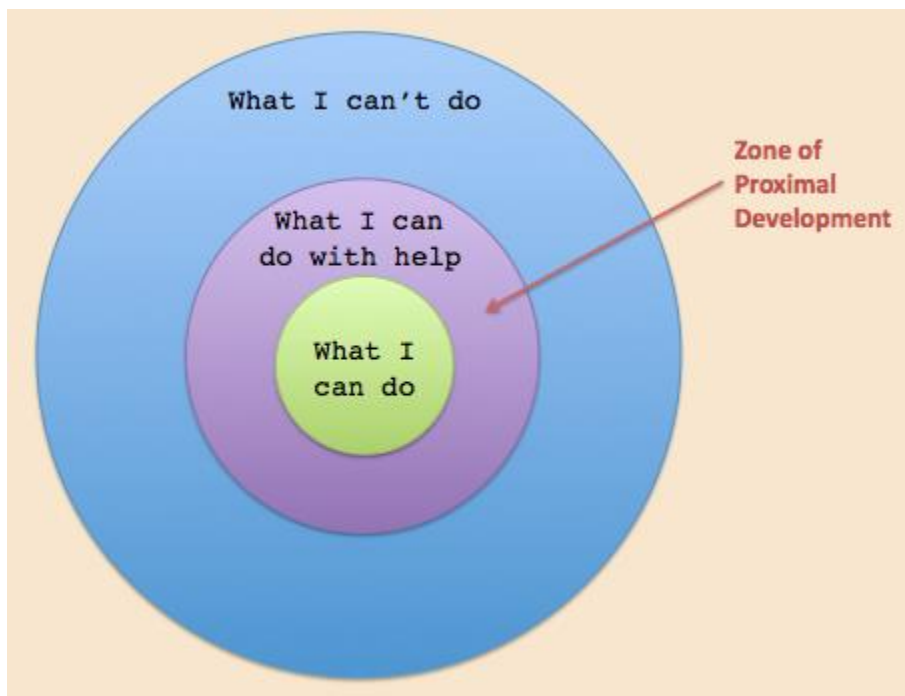


Figure 2.2: The difference between ADL, PDL and ZPD: adapted from Christians, Kudzai & Josiah (2012: 85)

2.3.2.2 Scaffolding

Scaffolding applies to the assistance provided during learning episodes by adults and more experienced peers (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Although scaffolding was not coined by Vygotsky, it is important to understand its role in the ESL classroom. Dass and Ferguson (2016) explain that

scaffolding can also occur when learners interact with each other - either during group work, or in collaborative efforts to resolve a language-related problem. In reading, this can happen when learners read and critique a text in a group or when learners discuss a text that they have just read (Nkandi, 2015). Scaffolding can also take the form of hints, reminders, or encouragement, dividing the issue into measures, giving examples, or anything else that enables the learner to develop autonomously (Hay & Nilsson, 2016). Thus, learners learn during the experiences within the zone of proximal development as a result of scaffolding.

In the ESL classroom teachers can use the concepts of the ZDP and scaffolding, for example, during the introduction of a new novel to be read. When the class is introduced to a new novel, learners can read it in one of the three ways, depending on their reading levels. Bhooth, Azman and Ismail (2014) explain that the more advanced learners can read the novel independently. Learners at the middle level read the novel with a partner, while learners with the lowest reading level listen to the story on tape while following in their texts. While each learner experiences the story in his or her own way, the teacher should move around in the class to interact with the learners, asking learners individual questions and helping to clarify parts of the story that they do not understand (Bhooth et al., 2014). In light of social constructivism theory, the teacher may use practical examples from the events or experiences of learners' daily lives to help them understand what they read.

Social constructivism can also be linked to multiliteracies. Sujee (2015) explains that this happens in technologically integrated environments, such as chat rooms where scaffolding is provided. In chat rooms support is provided through discussions and messages to help complete tasks and support collaborations in order to comprehend a reading text (Sujee, 2015). By doing so learners are actively involved in meaning making with the assistance of the teacher, fellow learners, technicians, and the internet.

Taguchi, Gorsuch and Rosszel (2016) emphasise that with the understanding of the social constructivist theory, ESL teachers might be able to apply learner-centeredness in their own teaching. They would be able to encourage learners to use own life experiences to understand the given reading texts. For learners to have a better understanding of the texts they read, teachers should select texts that learners can relate to (Töttemeyer et al., 2015). In this way learners would

be able to actively participate in their own learning as they construct meanings from the given reading texts, eventually acquiring a better understanding of the texts and the purpose of reading them (Nkandi, 2015). Since Vygotsky (1978) believes that social interaction is the key to learning, we can conclude that the classroom and the online environment are social contexts for learning, and they allow learners to work together and share information.

2.3.2.3 ZPD and reading in ESL

The ZPD is critically important when it comes to reading in ESL. Fisher, Frey and Hattie (2016) emphasise that ESL teachers ought to use levelled readers if they want learners to benefit from reading. According to Delacruz (2014), levelled readers refer to books that are written with learners' ZPD in mind. He further explains that levelled readers are meant to introduce learners incrementally to new challenges in their reading. When books are chosen based on learners' ZPD, reading becomes an opportunity for a modicum of fun, and a great degree of praise.

Additionally, ESL teachers should motivate learners to read widely. Hay and Nilsson (2016) highlight that motivation plays a role in building confidence in learners as it urges learners to share their knowledge and experiences, for example, in group reading and presentations. It is therefore important for ESL teachers to establish motivational strategies that promote a love of reading in the classroom. I strongly believe that ZPD recognises that learners at any given level or age have the potential for development, where, through appropriate and systematic mediation, scaffolding, motivation, and other support from teachers, meaningful language learning can be achieved. Therefore, the ZPD is relevant to reading in ESL since it has the ability to contribute to ESL acquisition (Fisher et al., 2016). This owes to the fact that through mediation, motivation, and scaffolding, learners' potentials for further development can be enabled.

It is vital for ESL teachers to know the learners' level of development to enable them to shape their reading beyond their development (Jordaan, 2011). Fisher et al. (2016) point out that besides providing the reading instruments to further the development of the love of reading, the teacher also mediates and scaffolds the reading progress of the learners until they develop an interest in reading, and they can read widely and independently.

2.3.3 Input Hypothesis

In addition to multiliteracies and social constructivism, this study is also based on Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis. Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis continues to be a seminal and influential Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theory. It suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners receive messages (comprehensible input, for example, reading texts) that they can understand. According to Ahmed and Rajab (2015), the Input Hypothesis states that the input a language learner receives should be comprehensible and should be at a slightly higher level than the learners' current linguistic proficiency. Krashen (1985) calls this level of input "i+1", where "i" is the learner's interlanguage and "+1" is the next stage of language acquisition. Gilbert (2017) clarifies that the input can be understood using context or extra-linguistic expertise that allows the principles to be acquired. The word "comprehensible input" refers to input that is neither too easy (previously acquired) nor too complicated. I + 2/3/4/...will not be helpful for SLA (Chew & Krashen, 2017). This hypothesis highlights the importance of using the target language in the classroom (Gilbert, 2017). By providing as much comprehensible input as possible (verbal-visual scaffolding, collaborative learning, code switching, multimodality, etc.) the teacher is able to create a more effective opportunity for language acquisition (Ahmed & Rajab, 2015).

Rygiel (2016) claims that when it comes to reading, input theory is important, since it is a foundation that challenges learners to read texts that may require them to do some extra work in order to fully appreciate and understand what they read. For this reason, the target level of difficulty should be a challenge to learners, but not on a level that they cannot achieve. It can be argued that English Second Language HL learners in Namibian schools (unlike OL learners) gain exposure to challenging texts in the form of the literary genres prescribed to them. This is because such learners are expected to read, identify aspects of analysis such as poetic devices, and explain their meanings, and indicates whether their use is relevant in the contexts in which they are used (Simataa & Nyathi, 2016). With such activities, Higher Level learners are not only driven to seek to understand the texts they read, but also to use analytical and critical thinking skills (Busari, 2014). This cannot be said for Ordinary Level learners.

Larson (2015) emphasises that input alone is not enough in the SLA process as output is a crucial stage in language acquisition, where the active function of learners (cooperative learning) and their production (e.g., essays) are important elements of learners' achievement. Chew and Krashen

(2017) point out that production allows the teacher to assess learners' progress and to select and adapt teaching materials properly. Language activities compel learners to reorganise and develop their understanding of the target language and the input and output needed for communication, negotiating significance, and expanding their own language understanding (Larson, 2015).

Hautemo and Julius (2016) discuss two separate cognitive functions of language: language acquisition and language learning. Acquisition focuses on language understanding, while learning focuses on grammar rules, through which precise speech is produced. Learners require both features (Hautemo & Julius, 2016:1219). The acquisition of language input is most efficient when it is natural, exciting, and understandable (Chew & Krashen, 2017). Thus, grammar rules are first obtained intuitively through meaningful use of language, and then learned later (Gilbert, 2017). Those acquiring the English language gain from listening comprehension exercises. Learners only acquire a second language when they are subjected to understandable input (Krashen, 1985), which can be obtained through the process of listening to or realigning the target language to a degree beyond their present level of expertise ($i+1$). The provision of comprehensible input to learners promotes the acquisition of their natural language (Chen, 2014; Chew & Krashen, 2017). Furthermore, Chew and Krashen (2017) argue that understanding spoken and written language input is regarded as the only device that results in the increase of underlying linguistic competence, and language output is not seen as having any effect on learners' ability.

2.3.3.1 Input Hypothesis and reading in ESL

According to Chew and Krashen (2017), individuals only acquire language in one way – by understanding the messages or gathering comprehensive input that contains structures that are relatively beyond their current level of competence. For example, in an ESL classroom, teachers ought to provide learners with challenging reading texts beyond their current level to challenge them to expand their knowledge and acquire ESL. Rygiel (2016) emphasises that such challenging texts should be interesting to the learners, so that they are motivated to read. Acquisition is the result of comprehensive input, and not production (Ahmed & Rajab, 2015). This implies that for SLA to take place, learners must be exposed to comprehensible and message-oriented input. Comprehensive methods, such as movie talk and voluntary reading, enable more acquisition than grammar practice (Rygiel, 2016). This means that only speaking the target language (production)

does not assist language acquisition sufficiently, but that instead, learners should be exposed to reading widely (input) in the target language (Hautemo & Julius, 2016).

For the purpose of this study, ESL teachers should, in their mediation, try to use well-formulated reading texts, which they know their learners will understand (Nkandi, 2015). While doing so, they should provide new challenging texts slightly above the learners' level for advancement and progression to a higher linguistic level (Rygiel, 2016). The above provision should not be confused with giving learners difficult texts far above their comprehension level. It should be understood that the latter would be a futile exercise because that might frustrate and demotivate them from reading in future (Rygiel, 2016). It is up to ESL teachers to provide level-appropriate reading materials to ensure that the input remains comprehensive, while giving learners enough room to explore and experiment with the language (Chew & Krashen, 2017). This can be done when teachers guide learners to find such level-appropriate reading materials from the internet and other social media (Hepple et al., 2014).

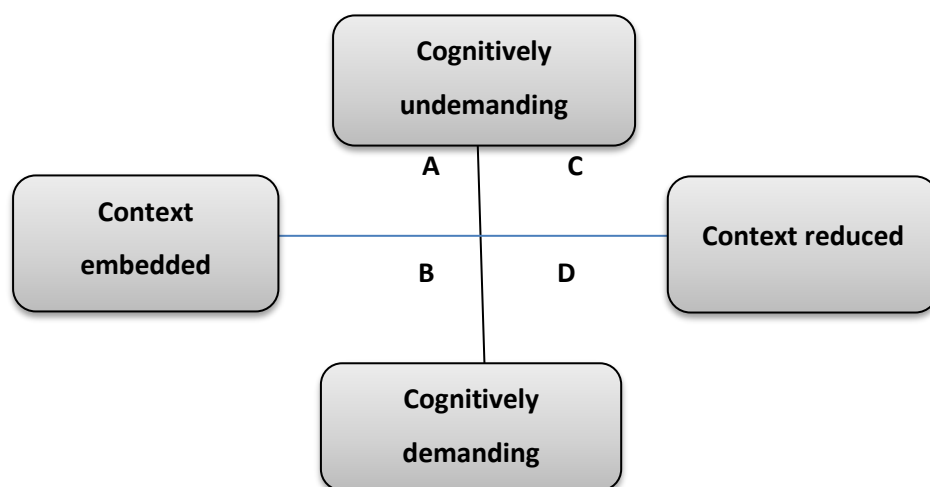
2.3.4 BICS and CALP theories

This research was also based on Cummins' (1984) distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to the capacity to effectively interact and communicate through social interactions, and to showcase linguistic fluency (Caddy, 2015:25), and is commonly referred to as conversational English. CALP refers to the ability to communicate proficiently in an academic setting in order to achieve well academically (Hirose, 2014:8). Learners acquire proficiency in BICS or their mother tongue before they enter formal schooling, while learners acquire proficiency in CALP when they read textbooks, including reading texts, and by speaking and writing fluently (Cummins, 1984). Perera and Kularatne (2014) explain that second language learners typically acquire BICS in two to three years. As a result, learners are able to communicate and talk about informal, concrete things with their classmates although they are not able to read or write fluently in ESL yet.

Although learning an additional language can be achieved by a person within two years, the emphasis of BICS is on unconscious language acquisition (Perera & Kularatne, 2014). Cummins (1984) describes that there is a Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) based on mother tongue and second language (L2) growth. The CUP enables individuals to learn the second language in

the same manner that they learn their home language (Cummins, 1984). Cummins believes that if one is sufficiently skilled in the first language (L1), it is feasible to transfer such skills to the L2 when there is adequate exposure to L2, either in school or in the child's environment. There also has to be adequate motivation to learn L2 (Caddy, 2015). This indicates the connection between home language and second language acquisition, and shows that home language skills have a beneficial impact on the development of a second language (Makoe, 2014). For the above reason, the CALP of the home language and second language of each learner overlap, and thus, if originally learners are skilled in their home language, they will acquire the second language successfully. To be academically successful, ESL learners need to be experts in CALP. According to Cummins (2009) it takes five to seven years for ESL learners to become masters of CALP. CALP is crucial for learners to be academically successful in school since learners need time and support to reach both L1 and L2 CALP abilities. A study done by Nikolov (2009) on language development revealed that learners who lack support in mother tongue development may take more than seven years for L2 CALP skills to develop. For this reason, encouraging learners to read more in their mother tongue is imperative for ESL teachers if they want their learners to become effective readers in ESL.

CALP involves more than the understanding of content area vocabulary (Nikolov 2009). It includes the abilities to compare, classify, synthesise, evaluate, and infer. Academic language tasks are context-reduced (Cummins, 1984). This means that at this stage learners rely primarily on knowledge of the language, entirely without personally experiencing events in a realistic environment. Hirose (2014) claims that the language becomes cognitively more challenging as learners master CALP abilities, because at the same time fresh ideas, concepts, and language are unleashed. The above is illustrated in Figure 2.3.



B

D

Figure 2.3: The BICS and CALP quadrants (Cummins, 2009)

Cummins created the above quadrants to facilitate understanding of what makes a language easy or difficult for ESL learners to learn. Quadrants A and C represent spoken or written tasks that are cognitively undemanding or easy, whether socially or academically. Quadrants B and D represent tasks that are cognitively demanding and that involve academic activities that are difficult and require higher levels of thinking and language proficiency. Cummins also evaluated the amount of contextual support engaged in the tasks. Makoe (2014) explains that contextual support offers clues to the meaning of the words. The more spoken and written words are supported or embedded in context, the easier they are to understand. Spoken language is contextually supported through facial expressions, gestures, body language, demonstration, and visual cues from the environment in which a learner finds him or herself (Perera & Kularatne, 2014). Perera and Kularatne (2014) further explain that written language can offer contextual support through pictures, graphs, and other textbook aids. Spoken and written tasks with the above kinds of supports are called context-embedded tasks, while tasks for which learners have only spoken or written words to work with are called context-reduced tasks (Cummins, 2009). From figure 2 it is clear that quadrants A and B represent tasks that are highly embedded and contextually supported, while quadrants C and D represent tasks that are context reduced. Namibian ESL learners will generally find tasks in quadrant A easy because they are low in cognitive demand and have more hints to help learners comprehend content information. ESL learners will find tasks in quadrant D extremely difficult to understand because these tasks are academically demanding and lack contextual hints to aid comprehension.

I found Cummins' theory to be applicable to what is happening in Namibian schools. Although English is the medium of instruction in Namibian schools, most learners fail to obtain the required scores in ESL for university entry. This means that learners do not master the academic and cognitive language. Most learners struggle to understand what they are reading, and have trouble expressing what they understand in writing, which goes some way towards explaining the large number of learners who do not meet university requirements in English. Many learners can say all the words in a reading passage or can memorise the definitions of vocabulary words, but they still

cannot understand the text. More than knowing vocabulary and studying academic facts for a test, CALP also requires of learners to sharpen their cognitive skills and learn fresh ideas (Hirose, 2014). The above challenge can be ascribed to the reality that English is not the language learners use socially at home and with their peers around school during break or while participating in sport. Learners instead use their mother tongue at home, as well as when they are socialising with their peers. This simply means that the majority of learners develop BICS and CALP in their home languages and some BICS in ESL through socialisation, but they do not develop CALP in ESL. As mentioned earlier, CALP is needed if learners are to read different reading texts, write, and answer questions (Caddy, 2015)

2.3.4.1 BICS and CALP in ESL classrooms

Most ESL learners function well in conversational English, however, they lack proficiency in the academic language necessary to succeed in ESL (Perera & Kularatne, 2014). Hirose (2014) explains that learners need to know what it means to go beyond the BICS if they want to be successful in school, because language skills are important across disciplines. Learners are expected to use appropriate language skills in different subject areas. Learners are required to do oral presentations, write reports, develop essays of various forms, and display skills of analysing, synthesising, and evaluating (Makoe, 2014). If learners lack CALP skills, they will not be able to perform the above tasks in different disciplines. Hirose (2014) clarifies that nowadays ESL learners lack CALP because they have shifted more towards non-standard, non-academic dialects, and he blames this on technology. This occurs, for example, when learners use cell phones; they use terms like “LOL” (laughing out loud) or “U” (you) and many other that are not considered formal English when texting one another. As a result, they apply such non-academic language in academic writing, which results in poor performance – particularly in ESL.

Another challenge in ESL classrooms is that learners find it difficult to differentiate between spoken and written language (Perera & Kularatne, 2014). This implies that learners want to write the way they speak. Speaking is supported by body language, while writing is not. It is, therefore, the responsibility of ESL teachers to narrow the gap between spoken and written language. Hirose (2014) urges ESL teachers to use Bloom’s taxonomy to ensure that they challenge learners’ thinking to develop CALP skills. Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners require language instruction that

promotes higher levels of conceptual development and communicative ability. Since the focus at Grade 11 and 12 has shifted from learning to read to reading to learn, learners at this point are required to think, talk, and write about content (Namupala, 2015). At Grade 11 and 12 level learners should be given reading tasks that require of them to engage in critical thinking and literary criticism. It is, therefore, important to train ESL learners, especially those in Grade 11 and 12, to always practice using English without external clues and information if they want to succeed academically.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I consider selected literature about the phenomenon of reading, the importance of reading pertaining to ESL learning, and the importance of textbooks to guide the reading process. Chapter 2 therefore demonstrates the role of reading in ESL learning. The perspectives on reading in ESL classrooms were captured from international, African, and Namibian authors. Substantiated evidence demonstrates how reading can be instrumental in enhancing the learning of English as a second language. The conceptual framework uses a variety of theoretical assumptions and perspectives on learning, which emphasise that it is through multimodality, social interaction as well as comprehensive input that a learner ought to learn a language. Chapter 3 is devoted to outlining the research design and methods used to answer the research questions. The research approach and the research paradigm are also explored. Furthermore, consideration is given to the sampling criteria along with data collection and data analysis strategies.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 serves as a platform to review the literature about the role of reading to enhance ESL learning and to present the conceptual framework. In chapter 3 I describe the research design and methodology. A qualitative research paradigm was selected using open-ended surveys, classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis. The paradigmatic orientation, research approach, data collection, data analysis, and ethical measures are discussed before I present concluding remarks. Table 3.3 provides a summary of the research design I followed in this study.

3.2 Epistemological paradigm

3.2.1 Interpretivism

An interpretivist paradigm emphasises the significance and comprehension of the operations of participants in their situations (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). An interpretative perspective enables the researcher to obtain an understanding of the participants' experiences by interacting with them; using interviews, observations, and open-ended surveys to comprehend and experience other's points of view is an efficient means of collecting data (Cresswell, 2013). In an interpretivist paradigm the emphasis is on researching, describing, and clarifying human experience and considering the impact of context on understanding the experience (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2014). In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2011:57) state that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them". Through the use of semi-structured interviews and classroom observations I was able to gain valuable data on teachers' personal experiences on how they integrate reading in their ESL lessons. The open-ended surveys enabled me to gain data on learners' reading experiences in their ESL classrooms.

Gioia (2017) explains that, within the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative researchers consider knowledge within the participants' minds, which, by nature, is subjective and personal. Each learner is likely to have a distinct interpretation of an ESL classroom, depending on his or her views and experience of reading. Learners can read the same text, but each interprets it differently. Rind, Shahriar and Fatima (2016) clarify that all learners' interpretations will jointly generate

various realities that will improve researchers' knowledge of their learning process in a particular context. Thus, an interpretivist paradigm was appropriate for this study, because it enabled me to understand a love of reading or a lack of reading among ESL OL learners. It also allowed me to interpret the way in which each participating ESL teacher went about integrating reading in their ESL lessons, and how they instilled a love of reading among ESL OL learners. Since the primary concept of this paradigm is to try to comprehend rather than clarify (Nieuwenhuis, 2016), this was an appropriate paradigm to be used in this study, because I also tried to comprehend the culture of reading among OL learners at ESL level.

3.2.2 Application of interpretivism to the study

In this study I used the interpretivism paradigm through a discussion of its ontological, epistemological, and methodological features (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Mertens, 2014).

(a) Ontology

Ontological assumptions refer to the researchers' views of the nature of reality or being (Cresswell, 2013; Mertens, 2014) in terms of what every individual think about themselves and their environment/s. This includes an individual's beliefs, customs, and ideologies, which can affect relationships (Nieuwenhuis, 2016; Rind et al., 2016). For the purpose of this study, this relationship is between the ESL teacher and ESL OL learners. It entails how the ESL teachers perceive OL learners, and how OL learners perceive the ESL teacher with regard to reading. I believe that individuals are not the same. Individuals have different beliefs and customs relating to their environments and the world at large (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2014). This affects individuals' relationships and their way of thinking. In the ESL classroom, this individuality affects the way teachers and learners relate to one another.

Furthermore, interpretivists think that truth does not exist in a single form, but in multiple realities (Mpofu, 2015). I concur with Mpofu, understanding that every teacher and learner has different ways of interpreting reading texts, and therefore, their knowledge is personal and true to their context. Individual teachers deal with reading situations in their ESL classroom differently. For the above reasons I believe in multiple rather than in a single reality.

(b) Epistemology

Epistemology is associated with a given knowledge base and how individuals come to know or how knowledge is acquired (Hirose, 2014). In other words, epistemology asks how one knows something. Similarly, epistemology entails “how knowledge can be acquired and communicated to others, how one distinguishes between what is legitimate knowledge as opposed to opinion or beliefs” (De Jager, 2012:60). Interpretivists regard researchers and participants as co-builders of knowledge (Mertens, 2014; Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Based on the above, I argue that OL learners construct knowledge (learning ESL) through various reading texts, rather than by receiving knowledge from someone else (teachers). ESL teachers and OL learners interact with each other during reading. By reading out loud, for example, they give meaning to what they are doing (constructing meaning from reading texts) and note why they are reading (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

As an interpretivist researcher I came to understand and interpret ESL teachers’ actions when integrating reading in their lessons. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) explain that interpretivism involves interpreting and understanding human actions, and these actions must be interpreted to give it meaning. In this study I observed teachers’ actions when integrating reading in their OL lessons. I was able to understand teachers’ actions while I explored the relationship between their knowledge, experience, and actions by analysing what I observed in the classroom.

I therefore regard myself as an interpretivist because I wanted to interpret and give meaning to the data that I collected on the role of reading in enhancing ESL learning in Namibian secondary schools.

(c) Methodology

Methodology entails those procedures that one can use to acquire knowledge (Hirose, 2014), which in this study was a qualitative approach. Using a qualitative methodology opens up possibilities for researchers to study a specific case within a complex context, by using tools such as interviews, observations, and document analysis (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). In this research I used non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, open-ended learner surveys, as well as document analysis of ESL syllabi and ESL textbooks used in Namibian secondary schools.

The use of these research methods came from an understanding that they enabled participants to discuss in-depth experiences of the contribution that reading could make towards learning and

acquiring ESL (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Using these research methods enabled a wealth of knowledge to be gleaned about the role of reading in ESL learning and acquisition from theoretical and experiential perspectives (Olivero, 2015).

Figure 3.1 indicates a summary of the interpretivist paradigm and the relationship between the different aspects thereof.

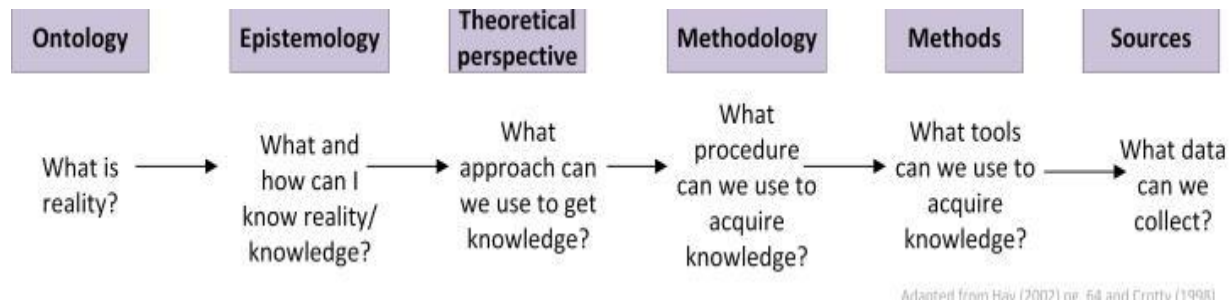


Figure 3.1: Aspects of the interpretivist paradigm (adapted from Olivero, 2015)

3.3 Research design

3.3.1 Qualitative approach

This study followed a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is naturalistic in nature (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), which means I attempted to comprehend teachers’ opinions in their natural learning settings (classrooms). Yin (2014) states that qualitative methods allow the researcher to study selected issues. The issue under scrutiny in this study was the role of reading in enhancing ESL learning in Namibian secondary schools. This was done in depth, with a sense of openness, and detail, as I identified and attempted to understand categories of information that emerged from the data. Ritchie et al. (2014) clarify that the main focus in qualitative research is to understand, explain, explore, discover, and clarify the situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences of a group of people.

In this study on reading and its role in enhancing ESL learning I sought to understand, explain, and clarify the role of reading in ESL learning among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibian schools. This was achieved through seeking the opinions, views, experiences, and understanding of teachers and learners of ESL regarding the role of reading in language learning.

3.3.2 Case study

A case study is an in-depth inquiry of a single unit (Stake 2005). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) explain that case studies can be particularistic, descriptive, or heuristic. This study was descriptive. Yin (2014:36) defines a descriptive case study as “the type of case study which is used to describe an intervention or a phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred”. This was considered to be the right method for this study, since it sought to understand how reading might enhance ESL learning, which is also a real-life phenomenon. McMillan and Schumacher’s (2010) argument that descriptive case research encourages a stronger knowledge of a practice or problem was another reason why I chose a descriptive case study. I wanted to gain a better understanding of whether and how reading can be instrumental in learning ESL. As an English teacher, a case study helped me to acquire a deeper understanding of how reading stimulates ESL learning.

Cresswell (2014) explains that case study designs have both strengths and limitations, both of which need to be considered by every researcher. One of the strengths of case studies is that it provides rich descriptions of the real nature of a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). For the purpose of this study I provided thick and rich descriptions of ESL teachers’ and OL learners’ experiences of the role of reading in learning ESL. Furthermore, case studies enable the use of various data collection techniques (Nieuwenhuis, 2016). Four instruments were used to collect data in this research, namely open-ended surveys, class observations, semi-structured interviews, and documents analysis. This was most efficient because it provided a full perspective of the issue under study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). ESL teachers were observed in their classrooms and later interviewed. This allowed me to compare techniques that ESL teachers employed to integrate reading in their ESL lessons with their statements and techniques proclaimed in the interviews. Another strength of case studies is that they concentrate on a specific activity, how it is interconnected with, or related to a given phenomenon, and how to make a generalisation about a sample (Cresswell, 2014).

In case studies a single phenomenon is investigated in depth, irrespective of the amount of locations, participants, or research records (Yin, 2014; Cresswell, 2014). This can, however, be a shortcoming of this design, since the phenomenon selected for scrutiny might not be a true representative of others, as might be assumed. In this study, this was not a hinderance because I ensured that the only phenomenon studied was the effect of reading on second language learning.

Another limitation of case studies is that bias can affect the final product (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I should mention here that personal favouritism and bias might have influenced the class observations and interviews as the ESL teachers might have presented what they had thought I wanted to hear or see from them on a particular day. To curb this shortcoming, I explained the importance of this study to the Namibian child and the education system to the participating teachers. I encouraged participating teachers to be as relaxed as possible because genuine data would yield helpful results to add to existing literature on reading.

3.4 Research site and selection of the participants

The study was conducted at four secondary schools in the Khomas education region in Windhoek, Namibia. The teaching staff and learners were mainly second-language speakers of English. The four participating schools all had brick classrooms accommodating about 40 learners per class. Each of the participating schools had more than five Grade 11 OL classes, while some Grade 11 learners also studied ESL on Higher Level. I only focused on the Grade 11 learners studying ESL on Ordinary Level, since the purpose of the study was to examine the role of reading and its contribution to ESL learning and acquisition at OL.

The sample of this study consisted of eight OL learners – two learners per class (Grade 11 OL classes) from each of the four selected schools, and four ESL teachers – one teacher from each of the selected schools. The purposeful sampling technique was employed to select a sample for this study. Ritchie et al. (2014) define purposeful sampling as a process that leads to selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of reading and its contribution to learners' performance in ESL. I considered purposeful sampling to be appropriate for this case study because I aimed to improve my understanding of how reading could improve OL learners' ESL learning (Patton, 2014; Merriam, 2014). Since the study was qualitative in nature, with the aim of collecting rich data, the sample size was limited (Theron & Malindi, 2010). However, the nature/characteristics and years of experience of the participants made me believe that they have provided the most information on the chosen topic, based on their personal experiences. As a qualitative researcher, I believe that the composition of the sample for this study was rich as it included ESL teachers who were

involved in the integration of reading in their actual teaching of ESL (Patton 2014; Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Merriam 2014). The application of this sampling technique is conventional in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Nieuwenhuis, 2016) where a smaller sample could provide a more detailed account of the reading experience of ESL teachers and OL learners, which may not have been produced by a larger sample (Patton, 2014; Yin, 2014; Creswell, 2014).

The type of sampling employed to select the schools was concept-based purposeful sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:399) define concept-based purposeful sampling as “a strategy that selects information-rich situations known to experience the concept under study”. Although several schools in Namibia offer English at various levels, most schools offer English at Ordinary Level. The schools selected were, therefore, those that offered English as a second language at Ordinary level (Grades 11 and 12), which made them information-rich cases for this study.

Learners were selected by means of stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling entails that the population is divided into subgroups on the basis of a variable chosen by the researcher, such as gender, age, or level of education (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The variable in this study was the level of education, which was Grade 11. From the participating Grade 11 classes a total of two learners, one high performer and one low performer, were randomly selected from the class lists.

3.5 Data collection

Data were collected in two phases, using four research methods, namely: observations, semi-structured interviews, open-ended surveys, and document analysis.

3.5.1 Pilot study

As first phase I conducted a pilot study in three schools in the Oshana education region, Ondangwa Town – one school from the town and two schools from the rural areas of Ondangwa. The reason why I chose a different region for the pilot study was that I did not want to prepare the participants in the main about the purpose of the study, nor to the data collection tools to be used.

The pilot study enabled me to assess the quality of instruments to be used in the study so that the instruments could be reviewed and improved. Three ESL Ordinary Level teachers took part in the

pilot study. I observed their ESL lessons and interviewed them after the class observations. The teachers distributed the open-ended survey to 10 learners per observed class and learners were given about 40 minutes to complete the survey. Learners were selected randomly using the class lists. Only ESL teachers who taught double lessons on the specific day took part in the pilot study. This was done to provide enough time for the learners to complete the survey.

Most of the learners and teachers in the Oshana region are Oshiwambo speakers. Learners speak in their vernacular more than they do English in interactions with others. Very few teachers and learners in this region speak other indigenous languages such as Afrikaans and Silozi, especially in town schools. Hence, all participants in the pilot study spoke English as a second language.

Learners from the rural schools experienced difficulty in completing the open-ended survey. A number of them could not understand the content of the questions and asked for clarification for almost all questions (Questions 2–11). Some of them did not understand what “leisure time” was, requiring of me to explain such concepts. Due to all the explanations, learners could not finish the survey within 40 minutes. As a result, some returned incomplete surveys, and some requested extra time to finish. It took about 30 minutes for those who asked for extra time to finish. In addition, learners’ responses did not correlate. For example, some learners stated that they loved reading (Question 1), yet, in answer to Question 5, they indicated that they did not read any storybooks because these were not available at school. Some learners had to discuss the questions with their friends to provide answers. The aforementioned indicates that if I had included learners from rural areas in the actual study, the results might have been skewed by social desirability bias. Social desirability bias refers to respondents’ tendency to deliver a response in a manner considered to be more socially acceptable than their real responses would be, to project a favourable image of themselves and to prevent receiving negative evaluations (Frey, 2018).

However, the situation in the urban schools was different. The learners who understood the content of the questions, did not ask for clarification, and managed to finish within the allotted time. Their responses were related to one another, and they completed all the questions.

Due to the high social desirability bias scenario outlined above, I decided not to include rural schools in the actual study, but to use only schools in the Khomas region. Töttemeyer et al. (2014) found that rural schools presented certain hinderances when data were collected in the rural areas.

Because the data would have been compromised, I could not use this data set. Learners from urban schools are more exposed to speaking English all the time, and they understood the content of the questions, which ultimately saved time and contributed to an authentic and credible data set.

3.5.2 Actual study

Phase two of the study involved gathering data for the actual study in the Khomas education region. Four instruments, namely non-participant classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, open-ended surveys with learners, and document analysis of ESL syllabi and ESL textbooks were used to collect data for this study.

(a) Non-participant classroom observations

One of the strategies used for data collection in this study was non-participant observations. I chose non-participant observation because I wanted not to interfere with the activities taking place in class. The role of the observer in this type of observation is to remain objective in terms of the observational site, participants, and their methods (Maree, 2013:84). I observed a total of four ESL (OL) lessons, which lasted for 40 minutes each. Observation was done while the learners were present in class. I chose a non-participant observer position, because I wanted to see how teachers engaged with learners in reading activities, and how teachers encouraged the learners to read without my input. Learners were advised that I was just there as a learning guest so that they would not be disquieted by my presence. By using this method I was able to observe what was actually happening in the ESL classroom in terms of reading during an ESL lesson. I observed whether and how learners interacted with reading texts and how meanings were constructed from such texts.

I also noted whether reading methods such as group and individual reading were applied in classes, whether information was displayed on classroom notice boards, and whether other reading rooms existed. I also noted whether the libraries or reading rooms contained enough books and other reading materials.

Furthermore, I noted the organisation of school libraries and bookstores (in schools where these were present), the labelling of books and racks, and overall cleanliness. This evaluation provided proof of whether the reading materials were used for reading, or whether they were only stored

away without encouraging the learners to use them. With the participating teachers' consent I took photographs to demonstrate what I had observed in the schools.

An observation schedule (Appendix H) was used to document what I had observed in each ESL classroom.

(b) Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews with Grade 11 ESL OL teachers at each participating school were conducted to explore their understanding of the role of reading towards ESL learning. Semi-structured interviews enabled me to ask appropriate questions, both open and closed-ended, which provided me with crucial information to answer the research questions pertaining to how ESL teachers exposed OL learners to reading in the classroom. I conducted and audiotaped a total of four semi-structured interviews with ESL teachers. Interviewing ESL teachers enabled me to obtain information on their experiences of the role of reading in ESL learning in OL classrooms.

To prevent interruptions, the interviews were conducted after the class observations in the teachers' classrooms after school. The interviews were guided by an interview schedule (Appendix I) and lasted approximately 35 to 40 minutes on average. Conducting the interviews after the lesson observations allowed me to compare the strategies that the teachers used in class to expose learners to reading to what they were telling me. This was done to avoid the so-called interview effect, which refers to a situation in which participants answer interview questions in a manner that they thought the researcher would want to hear (Merriam, 2014). The fact that the interview was conducted shortly after teaching had taken place minimised the interview effect, as we could discuss what had happened a short while ago in the classroom. I also noted the participants' reactions like facial expressions and paralanguage to each question

(c) Open-ended survey

Another method used to collect data in this study was the open-ended survey (Appendix G). The survey was disseminated to two learners electronically via the four participating schools' e-mail. Learners were selected according to their level of performance – the survey was given to one high-performing learner and one low-performing learner in each participating ESL class. I found the open-ended survey to be suitable for this study, because I concur with Ritchie et al. (2014) who state that with open-ended surveys the respondents are free to provide answers in their own words.

Hence, there is a greater chance that they would provide rich and detailed responses about the topic under investigation. Participants have the liberty to react precisely as they choose and in their own words when using open-ended surveys, knowing that their views will be heard (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Therefore, the open-ended survey enabled ESL learners to reveal their individual reading experiences, because they were free to outline their feelings and describe their reading habits and challenges. The fact that the survey was electronically distributed to learners also gave learners more time to structure their answers.

(d) Document analysis

In this study I also employed document analysis of ESL syllabi and textbooks used in ESL classrooms. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014:97), document analysis is “the way of analysing and evaluating various existing documents as a source of data”. I used the NSSCO and NSSCH syllabi published by the Ministry of Education, which are public documents, and the OL textbook currently used in ESL lessons at the participating schools. This analysis enabled me to view the elements taught to OL learners that promote reading in Grades 11 and 12. This method provided answers to secondary question 2, namely: how do the curriculum and textbooks model reading for OL learners? Based on the analysis I came to understand the quality of the content and skills regarding reading taught to learners. Conclusions and recommendations in this study were based on these aspects.

A summary of the research method and how data were documented are provided in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Summary of research methods

Participants	Method of data collection	Type	Documentation of data	Research question answered
Teachers and learners	Classroom observations	Non-participant	Field notes Observation schedule	How do ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in classroom?

Teachers: Grade 11 ESL (OL)	Semi- structured interviews	Individual interviews	Audio recordings (transcribed) Field notes	How do ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in classroom?
Grade 11 learners (OL): 2 high performing and 2 low performing per school	Open-ended surveys	Individual participants	Field notes Learners' electronic survey answers (e-mail)	What is the nature of the reading culture of OL learners? What are the challenges pertaining to reading for OL learners?
Public documents (MoE)	Document analysis	ESL syllabi ESL textbook	Field notes	How do the curriculum and textbooks model reading for OL learners?

Source: Adapted from Mpofu (2015:92)

3.5.3 Strengths and weaknesses of the data collection methods

I was aware of both advantages and limitations of the data collection methods used. Table 3.2 below summarises and highlights the strengths and weakness of each of these data collection methods, of which I took cognisance during data collection.

Table 3.2: Strengths and limitations of data collection methods

Data collection type	Advantages of the type	Limitations of the type
Non-participant observations	Researcher has first-hand experience with participants. Researcher can record information as it occurs.	Researcher may be seen as intrusive. Private information may be observed that the researcher cannot report on.

	<p>Unusual aspects can be noticed during observation.</p> <p>Useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss.</p>	<p>Researcher may not have good organisational and observational skills.</p> <p>Certain participants (e.g. children) may present special problems in developing rapport.</p>
Semi-structured interviews	<p>Allow researcher control over the line of questioning.</p> <p>Participants can provide historical and background information.</p> <p>As the interviews occurred directly after the class observation, this added to the meaning-making process.</p>	<p>Provide indirect information filtered through the views of interviewees.</p> <p>Provide information in designated place rather than the natural field setting.</p> <p>Researcher's presence may create bias in responses.</p>
Open-ended surveys	<p>Allow respondents to include more information such as feelings, attitudes, and their understanding of the subject.</p> <p>May yield more candid information and unique insight for researchers as respondents may find them less threatening than scaled questions.</p> <p>Do not allow respondents to complete the survey using all the same answers.</p>	<p>Respondents may perceive open-ended survey as taking too much time or requiring too much effort to answer, causing them to give brief, unfulfilling answers.</p> <p>If the open-ended survey contains questions that respondents regard to be irritating or offensive, they may break off and choose not to complete the survey.</p> <p>If respondents are not adequately literate, or if they do not find writing or typing a comfortable way of expressing themselves, the answers may be minimal and may not provide the necessary or expected insights.</p>
Document analysis	<p>Can be assessed at a time convenient to the researcher.</p>	<p>Requires the researcher to search out information in hard-to-find places.</p> <p>Materials may be incomplete.</p>

	<p>As written evidence, it serves the researcher the time and expense of transcribing.</p> <p>Represents data to which participants have given attention.</p>	<p>May be protected information unavailable to public or private access.</p>
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Source: adapted from Creswell (2014:191)

3.6 Data storage

The data collected through open-ended surveys, lesson observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were stored as detailed below.

3.6.1 Open-ended surveys

The open-ended surveys were distributed to the participants via e-mail, after which the participants returned the completed surveys via e-mail. After I had printed the copies I used for analysis, I saved the completed surveys on Google Cloud for future reference. I also filed the printed copies in the data-collection file that I had created.

3.6.2 Lesson observations

I made copies of the lesson observation checklists after every lesson observation and saved these in the data-collection file. The observation checklists contained descriptive notes made during the observation. These notes helped me to find emerging themes and to interpret the data.

3.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

All the interviews were audio recorded (with the participants' approval) and transcribed verbatim. I transferred the audio recordings to my laptop and saved them on Google Cloud for future reference.

3.6.4 Field notes

While I was in the field, I jotted down field notes on everything that I heard and saw – field notes are “notes that researchers write while they are in the field of research” (Bertram & Christiansen,

2014:90). During class observations I also compiled notes on how learners interacted with each other and how they code-switched during the ESL lesson. I recorded their verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom and observed their responses in the open-ended surveys. In my notes I described how what I saw and heard contributed to my comprehension of ESL learners' poor interest in reading. During the interviews I also noted the teachers' reaction, for example, their facial expressions and paralinguistic used. I also made notes of the informal discussions I had with ESL teachers regarding the nature of reading at OL. The notes included a record of my frustrations, confusions, and impressions in the field (Maree, 2013). For me field notes were essential because when analysing the classroom observations and teacher interviews, I was able to consult these notes, which led me to a more enlightening conclusion than anticipated.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Before I started the process of data collection, I applied for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria. A request to conduct research in the Oshana and Khomas education regions was submitted to the Ministry of Education in Namibia (Appendix D). After approval was granted I used the permission letter from the Permanent Secretary of Education to seek permission to conduct my study in the two regions, Oshana and Khomas (Appendix E). After having received written consent from the two directors (Appendix F), I also received approval from the principals of each of the sampled schools to undertake the study in their schools. Before the interviews and classroom observations were conducted, consent was acquired from the ESL teachers who participated in the study (Appendix G). Permission was also sought from parents/guardians of the learners to participate in this study (Appendix H).

The letters requesting approval to undertake this study stated the objective of the research and provided information on what was expected from each participant in the research. All participants were notified that their involvement was voluntary and that they were entitled to withdraw from the research at any moment without penalty. In order to confirm their readiness to engage in this research, participants were also asked to sign a consent form. I was aware that as a consequence of their involvement no respondents were in danger of any harm. Consequently, I ensured all participants that their identity and that of their schools would be kept anonymous throughout the study. I applied anonymity from as early as the organisation of data whereby participating teachers

where referred to as T1, T2, et cetera, and learners as L1, L2, and so forth. To ensure confidentiality, all the data I had collected from the interviews (audiotaped) and classroom observations were carefully stored on my private laptop and Google Cloud, and were only accessible for academic purposes to myself and my supervisors.

3.8 Data analysis

Nieuwenhuis (2016) claims that the use of inductive analysis to enable topics to emerge from information is the best way to analyse qualitative information. In this study I used an inductive orientation with qualitative content analysis to analyse the data. Qualitative content analysis was used as a technique for identifying recurring themes from raw data and interpreting them to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon without a predetermined theory (Maree, 2013). If nothing is known about the phenomenon under inquiry (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014), an inductive qualitative content analysis is suitable. Therefore, qualitative content analysis was important in this study as it aimed to delve into the information and discover responses to comprehend and clarify the role that reading can play in ESL learning.

I followed the data analysis steps proposed by Creswell (2014). Firstly, I read and re-read the responses from the open-ended surveys, listened carefully to and transcribed the interview recordings word for word. Secondly, I repeatedly read through the data line by line to become acquainted with the data and understand the participants' answers. Thirdly, I looked for similar responses in the data, grouped them together, and generated codes by using different colours. Codes with similar meanings were grouped into categories and categories were grouped into themes (Creswell, 2014). After reading through all the data, I manually coded the data into categories. I looked for themes among categories and presented what I found in a descriptive form, which was easy for readers to understand, and for me to extract meaning regarding the contribution of reading in learners' performance in ESL.

The same procedure was applied to the data that I gathered through observations of lessons and analysis of documents. To make the data understandable and ready for analysis, the descriptive notes that I produced from the observations and document analysis have been extended. Once themes were finalised, they were compared to the literature and the following themes were created: reading experience, access to reading materials, inadequate curriculum, inadequate infrastructure,

and the use of textbooks to enhance reading. The final phase of data analysis was an accurate reflection of the results, with the aim to draw conclusions and make suggestions. Figure 3.2 below presents a summary of the steps used to analyse data for this study.

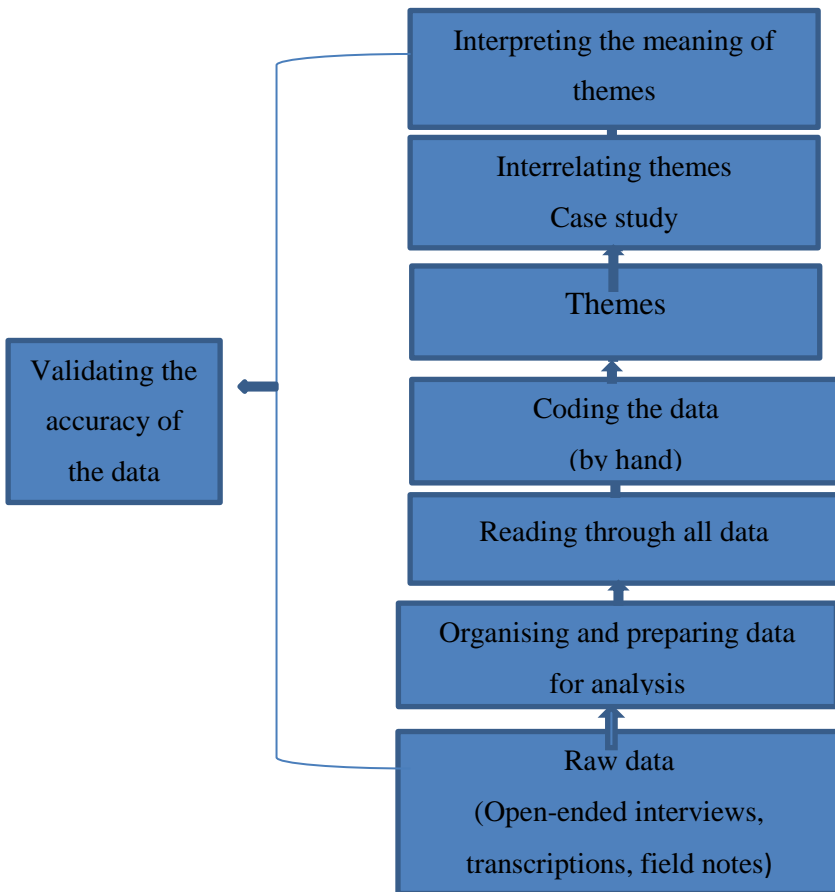


Figure. 3.2: Steps for data analysis (Creswell, 2014:247)

3.9 Role of the researcher

As researcher I was the key data collection tool as I collected, analysed, and interpreted all data. I attempted to be conscious of my private and professional bias, as I am an ESL learner and an ESL teacher as well. These experiences may have had an impact on my worldview of the role of reading in improving ESL learning. Although I was the primary research tool, I chose a non-participating researcher’s position; I observed the ESL lessons without participating in or influencing them. Being a non-participant observer enabled me to look at how ESL teachers exposed and motivated OL learners to read. While in the field I succeeded in developing a connection with the participants while retaining credibility as a researcher. I realised that my role changed from that of researcher

to friend, to the point where the participants were more relaxed about having me around and could even ask me for assistance. For example, some learners were struggling with the meanings of some of the words in the open-ended survey. They would then ask me to explain meanings.

3.10 Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, trustworthiness relates to “the measure of quality, the extent to which the data analysis is believable and trustworthy” (Nowell, Noris, White & Moules, 2017:3). In order to ensure quality in this study, credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability have been taken into consideration to uphold trustworthiness.

3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the trust one can have in the truth of the findings, or in other words, the assurance that the researcher’s findings are in effect the results of the data (Nowell et al., 2014:3). One of the ways to achieve credibility is through triangulation (Merriam, 2014). Triangulation is the “collection of data from a variety of sources” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:188). In this study triangulation was obtained through the use of multiple sources, namely participants (teachers and learners), and public documents. Multiple research methods were also used, namely interviews, observations, open-ended surveys, and document analysis.

Triangulation provided me with an opportunity to seek deeper understanding regarding the role that reading can play in ESL learning through data gathered through different techniques from different sources. The use of different data collection techniques also improved the internal consistency of the data (Yin, 2014). By allowing participants the freedom to refuse to participate in the research was another way to guarantee legitimacy of this study. This implies that only those participants who were prepared to engage and provide information of their own free will, were part of the study.

3.10.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the study findings can be transferred or generalised to other contexts (Yin, 2014). To ensure transferability in this study, I used two strategies for transferability, purposive sampling and a thick description of data (Nowell et al., 2017). The use

of purposive sampling provided me with rich in-depth information, because data were gathered from key respondents that were selected purposively. This study provided rich, thick descriptions of the context by using a case study as design to provide insight into whether and how reading could be instrumental in ESL learning.

3.10.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the degree to which the researcher can convince the readers that the findings are worth paying attention to, and that they have actually occurred as the researcher says they have done (Nowell et al., 2017). In this study I used a data collection audit trail to improve dependability, where I documented observation and document analysis notes, audiotaped the interviews, and documented the open-ended surveys.

3.10.4 Conformability

Conformability refers to the degree to which the findings are the products of the focus of the investigation and not the biases of the researcher (Yin, 2014). Merriam (2014) explains that the best way to ensure conformability is to use reflection journals to record memories on the process of conducting the research as it is being undertaken. I used field notes in which I recorded my ideas to guarantee conformability in this study, which ultimately helped me to distinguish personal beliefs from the opinions of the participants. It also helped me to keep track of the research process. Table 3.3 presents a summary of the methodology used in this study.

Table 3.3: Summary of methodology

PARADIGMATIC ASSUMPTIONS	
Epistemological paradigm	Interpretivist
Methodological paradigm	Qualitative
RESEARCH DESIGN	
Research design	Descriptive case study
Selection of cases	Four secondary schools in the Khomas region Two secondary schools in the Oshana region (pilot study)
DATA COLLECTION	

Selection of participants	Teachers teaching ESL OL, Grade 11 (purposive sampling) Learners taking ESL at OL level, Grade 11 (stratified random sampling)
Qualitative data collection techniques	Qualitative data documentation techniques
Semi-structured interviews	Voice recordings of semi-structured interviews
Non-participant classroom observations	Observation checklists
Open-ended surveys	Open-ended surveys
Document analysis	ESL syllabi ESL Ordinary Level prescribed textbooks
Data analysis and interpretation	
Semi-structured interviews	Transcribe interviews and code into emerging themes (Qualitative content analysis)
Classroom observations	Code checklists into categories and themes
Open-ended surveys	Code content divided into categories and themes
Document analysis	Code into categories and emerging theme
Trustworthiness	
Credibility	Triangulation
Transferability	Thick descriptions and purposive sampling
Dependability	Audit trail, audio recordings and field notes
Conformability	Field notes and reflexivity
Ethical considerations	
Ethical clearances Informed consent from all participants Protecting participants from harm Confidentiality and anonymity	

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter addresses an in-depth perspective of the research paradigm, methodology, design, data collection and analysis used to undertake this study. Measures to maintain the study's

trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also discussed. The next chapter provides the data collected from the interviews, classroom observations, open-ended surveys, and analysis of documents.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3 I present the research approach and design used in this study, which is a qualitative study situated in the interpretivist paradigm using a descriptive case study design. In chapter 3 I also describe the sample selection, data collection and analysis procedures. In this chapter I present the findings from the collected data and the interpretation of the findings according to themes.

The findings are presented in three categories that correspond with the data collection instruments, namely: **the nature of the reading culture at OL** (open-ended surveys with learners), **the learners' exposure to reading at OL** (class observations and semi-structured interviews with teachers), **and the role of the syllabi and textbooks in ESL learning** (document analysis of OL syllabi and ESL textbook). For each of these categories, I provide a description of the findings. After describing the coding, I present and briefly discuss the main categories, which emerged from the raw data. The main themes that emerged are: **reading experience, access to reading materials, inadequate curriculum, inadequate infrastructure, and the use of textbooks to enhance reading**. The findings from the study are recapitulated by comparing and contrasting the research results with the literature and theoretical framework pertaining to the role of reading in enhancing ESL learning.

4.2 Description of the participants

4.2.1 Description of the participating teachers

T1

T1 was a female teacher with 34 years of teaching experience. She taught Grade 11 and 12 at both HL and OL. She was the head of the debating and public speaking club at her school. She was a mature, responsible and extrovert person who enjoyed reading and tried to make reading fun for her learners. Her passion for reading was evident during the classroom observation as she allowed learners to watch a video on the story they read. I appreciated her honesty and genuine approach. Throughout her lesson, she tried to include all learners.

T2

T2 is a male teacher with 9 years of teaching experience and held a Master of Arts in English studies, apart from the Bachelor of Education. He was very strict with his learners and was very serious and quiet. He taught Grade 11 and 12 OL only. He stated that he followed the syllabus religiously. During silent reading, he walked around the class, making sure that every learner was reading. During the feedback time he tried to engage all learners.

T3

T3 was a female who taught Grade 11 and 12 at both HL and OL. She held a Master of Arts in English studies in addition to the Bachelor of Education and has been in the teaching profession for 12 years. She explained that she was enthusiastic about reading and always motivated her learners to read more. During her lesson, she used cooperative learning effectively which worked well and encouraged mass participation of learners by stimulating their ability to think critically during oral questions. The learners' excitement during her lesson was tangible. She had a great sense of humour and was a motivational teacher.

T4

T4 was a female teacher with 6 years of teaching experience. She taught Grade 11 OL only. She explained that she struggled to integrate reading in her lesson when she started teaching because reading was not well outlined in the syllabus. During the observation, she showed signs of insecurity but allowed me to observe her anyway. She looked unmotivated and quiet. However, she exercised firmness within her disciplinary style.

4.2.2 Description of the participating learners

L1

L1 was a male learner. He was one of the top performers in ESL in their class. He stated that he liked reading as he had enjoyed books since he was small. He remembered reading with his sisters and parents in their house. His parents sometimes bought him books from CNA, a bookstore that they often visited.

L2

L2 was a female learner and one of the poor performers in ESL in their class. She stated that she hated reading because she did not see the reason why she had to be forced to read. She believed that reading for her tests and examinations was enough. She indicated that her parents never encouraged her to read and what they usually did was watch television together, which she enjoyed.

L3

L3 was a female learner who was a poor performer in ESL. She stated that she liked reading, especially her schoolbooks. She indicated that difficult words in books sometimes made her lose interest in reading. She said that her parents were not readers.

L4

L4 was a female learner and a good performer in ESL. She stated that she developed a love of reading when she was in Grade 1 because their teacher used to read them stories. She said that mainly reads her school books and could only read other reading materials when she was not busy with schoolwork.

L5

L5 was a female learner and performed very well in ESL. She said that she became interested in reading when her sister started taking her to the library. She started taking out storybooks with her sister and she now enjoyed reading.

L6

L6 was a male learner who performed poorly in ESL. He said that he had developed a love of reading when he started receiving school projects because he was forced to read to obtain information to complete them. His parents also encouraged him to read.

L7

L7 was a female learner who was a good performer in ESL. She developed an interest in reading while in primary school. She said that they were required to read a book whenever they had a library lesson, which forced her to read.

L8

L8 was a female learner and a poor performer in ESL who did not like reading. She stated that reading wasted time because one often had to use a dictionary to look up difficult words from the text. She preferred reading school subjects, especially her notes, because teachers usually explained the notes, which helped her to understand what she had read.

4.3 Open-ended surveys: The nature of the reading culture at OL

The phenomenon under scrutiny in this study was the role of reading in enhancing ESL learning in Namibian secondary schools. The purpose was to assess the nature of the reading culture for OL learners. This included OL learners' reading practices in ESL, classroom reading materials, factors that attract OL learners to reading, challenges that OL learners encounter when reading, and strategies that OL learners think can improve the nature of reading for OL learners.

Using open-ended survey, it was established that the nature of the reading culture for OL learners in the four participating schools differed from school to school, and are presented in the sections that follow.

4.3.1 Reading practices

The first question in the open-ended survey asked of learners to explain why they loved/hated reading. Six of the learner participants who completed the survey indicated that they loved reading. They indicated that reading helped them learn new words and improve their vocabulary and writing; that they acquired new information through reading; that reading kept them occupied in their free time; that reading helped them improve their spelling and pronunciation. However, two of the learner participants stated that they did not like reading at all. They provided the following

reasons why they did not enjoy reading: the English words used in storybooks were difficult and they did not have time to consult dictionaries; places mentioned, and pictures used in most books were not from Namibia, which made reading about them boring; reading was time consuming. The learner participants also indicated that the only times they forced themselves to read was in preparation for examinations, because they wanted to pass their subjects.

When asked when they started to read, half of the participants (four learners) indicated that this was at the age when they started school. Some participants related that it was at the age of 10 when they realised that there were different environments and surroundings that they never realised before, and that this awareness became a reason why they began to take notice of these through reading. Other participants suggested that once they had mastered the skill of reading, they started to read more. A minority of the participants stated that they became readers after their teachers had read stories to them in class.

When asked about the frequency of reading, half of the participants who stated that they loved reading mentioned that they engaged in reading during their free time, reading storybooks, magazines, or newspapers. Other participants indicated that they read twice to three times a week and that they would mainly read novels, or any other book. Nevertheless, one of the learner participants stated that they only read during exam times in order to pass their examinations, reading mainly school subject textbooks.

4.3.2 Reading materials

In Question 3 learners were to indicate what they normally read during their leisure time, while Question 5 asked of learners to mention specific reading materials they usually read. I decided to present these questions together, because of the similarity found in the answers. Half of the participants, especially those that indicated that they loved reading, said that they usually read more than one kind of reading material. The majority of the learner participants indicated that they mainly read storybooks, novels, magazines, and newspapers, as well as online articles. Other participants mentioned comic books as well. The participants who indicated that they hated reading said that they only read materials such as school subject textbooks.

4.3.3 Factors that motivate OL learners to read

To assess factors that motivate learners to read, learners were asked to identify what attracted them to reading. The majority of the participants indicated that eye-catching titles and the desire to learn new things would make them curious about what the book or magazine was about. Three learner participants stated that pictures on the cover would play a fundamental role in motivating them to read a book, whereas others stated that they only became interested in reading a book if it was recommended by fellow learners or friends.

When asked to provide the titles of the storybooks they had read so far, almost all participants indicate a title that they had read, of which the following were examples:

The Pearly, New Year's Day, Mamabele, Seduced by the Highlander, Separate Lives, Three Little Pigs, Crocodile Burning, Master Harlod and the Boys, The Other Presence, Miguel's Street, Diary of a Wimpy Kid.

Participants were asked to indicate where they obtained the storybooks that they had identified earlier, and half of the participants indicated that they got them from their ESL teachers. The other half of the participants stated that they got the books from bookshops or from their friends.

4.3.4 Current reading culture

Under this theme, learner participants were asked to explain the reading culture at their schools. Almost a third of the participants acknowledged that the reading culture at their schools was not well established because they exclusively read from subject textbooks. The participants responded as follows:

Only few learners are interested in reading, others make noise when the teacher tell us to read, learners have not yet created a positive attitude towards reading, and the atmosphere is not positive because reading materials are not enough for every learner and sometimes we keep on reading one book over and over, year after year (L3).

Learners are not into the reading culture, out of 100 learners, maybe only 20 learners you can find reading either novels or newspapers (L1).

Not everyone in our school is interested in reading, but we have an English club where few learners get together and read different books (L8).

Many learners do not want to join the club, because they are saying reading is time-consuming, but with the help of our English teacher few has started to join day by day (L3).

However, one of the participants (L6) confessed that reading at their school was developing because their ESL teachers forced them to read, and most of the learners at school were starting to like it. When asked about the overall reading culture in Namibia, the participants had different views. The following are participant responses presented verbatim:

Especially in homestead, you find no one reading at home, apart from reading school subjects at school (L4).

Very poor, people are more into social media posting selfies and gossiping to each other, they are not interested in reading. They forgot that in order to learn you need to read, reading is the basis of success (L3).

Very low, because the majority of people are illiterate and cannot read and speak English (L1).

Not up to standard, lots of schools do not have reading materials and lots of people in Namibia prefer watching entertainment videos rather than reading (L8).

Very absent-minded in Namibia, because people show less interest in reading (L2).

It is not very good, because learners are not visiting libraries to borrow books to read. Again, there are not enough reading materials available in libraries and learners are not interested in reading (L5).

Better, because we can see that people sent their articles to the Namibian newspaper; some people have written their own books although have not yet published them due to financial problems (L7).

Only one of the learner participants indicated that the reading culture was good, because according to her, when she visited local libraries such as Greenwell and Maxwilili libraries, she often found many people reading there.

Question 8 asked of learners to mention the reading activities they normally did in their ESL classrooms. Most of the participants stated that they did individual reading in the form of reading comprehension where they were required to read and answer short-answer questions. A few participants indicated that they sometimes read short storybooks in class and analysed them or wrote essays or book reviews on them. One of the learner participants explained the reading situation in their class as follows:

To be honest, we don't read that much in class, only sometimes we do activities if the teacher is present in class. If the teacher leaves the class, most learners turn to do their own things (L6).

4.3.5 Challenges encountered by OL learners

On the challenges that prevented learners from reading, the question was multivariate in nature, so learners provided various responses:

House chores are one of the challenges, because after cooking or cleaning the house, one will be tired and has no desire to read anymore (L1).

I have a problem of procrastinating, but I always managed to find time to read, because it is my hobby and I have adopted it as a part of me (L3).

Lack of money to buy books I really want to read (L2).

Social media e.g. Facebook really takes up my time to do anything else (L6).

Lack of reading materials (L5).

Difficult words, unknown content and unfamiliar places used in a certain reading book make someone to lose interest in reading (L4).

Too much homework and lack of time (L8).

Asked how the libraries at their schools helped them with reading, half of the participating learners acknowledged that the libraries did not have the latest reading books/materials, while one of the learner participants explained that they preferred the community libraries because such libraries were up to date compared to their school library. Nevertheless, other participating learners indicated that their libraries were trying their best since they allowed them to read books and use the few available computers to search for online reading materials, which enhanced their attitudes towards reading.

4.3.6 Improvements for reading

Learners were asked to propose strategies that could develop their love of reading. The first question asked of them to suggest reading materials that they thought could be used to develop a love of reading among ESL (OL) learners.

Learners should be provided with lots of reading materials with familiar content to develop the passion of reading. Schools should have readers club where learners meet to read together (L1).

Learners need to be given books that have to do with youth issues (L2).

Provide more youth newspapers, because this is mostly where the youngsters can learn more about their social problems and how to overcome them and formation of readers clubs so that learners can discuss what they read (L3).

Give reading materials to each learner and assess on them and establish readers clubs at every school (L4).

Readers' clubs formation should be compulsory in all schools (L5).

Every school must have computers with internet, so that we can download latest storybooks and dictionaries to develop a love of reading (L7).

Asked to suggest reading materials that they thought could attract all ESL learners to reading, almost all the participating learners acknowledged that they needed the latest reading materials of any type, enough for all learners instead of them sharing. Some learner participants suggested that

reading materials with pictures would attract them, whereas others indicated that online reading materials would be best since they were always accompanied by visuals and sounds. One participant suggested that providing learners with technologically advanced gadgets that have eBooks or online articles stored on them would attract learners to read, because it would save time, rather than paging through a book with hundreds of pages. Another learner participant advised that teachers needed to make reading interesting in their classrooms, instead of just telling learners to read on a specific page while they were busy with something else.

The third question asked of learners to explain how libraries could play a role in promoting learners' love of reading. The majority of participants stated that libraries should have the latest technology to promote reading for learners, which in turn would develop learners' interest in visiting them. Some participants felt that libraries should provide books of different levels according to learners' ages, because in some school libraries the old books were only suitable for adult learners of the past decades.

The last question asked of learners to explain how teachers, fellow learners, and parents encouraged them to read. The learners' responses to this question are presented below.

(a) Teachers

Half of the participating learners stated that their teachers encouraged them to read widely. However, almost all participants who indicated a semblance of encouragement from teachers stated that it was more like forcing them to read. For example, one learner participant said:

My English teacher is so obsessed with reading, she always tells us to read, read, and read. It's like a song in our English class. At first it was more like forcing, but with time we all got comfortable with it (L8).

Another participant explained:

It is through the challenging reading pieces we received in class that I become very motivated to read more and build my vocabulary (L4).

Two of the participating learners stated that their ESL teachers encouraged them to read by giving them novels to read, and asking them to analyse them after reading, but due to the fact that they had to share the novels, their motivation declined.

(b) Fellow learners

On how fellow learners encouraged ESL learners to read, most of the participating learners acknowledged that they helped each other to cultivate an interest in reading among themselves. One learner revealed the following:

With the help from those who have shown interest in reading, we now share ideas and we have established a book club where we meet and discuss our book reviews (L4).

Some participating learners indicated that once they heard of an interesting book/story from their friends, they tended to look for that specific storybook to read. However, few participants stated that their peers were not into reading and that they did not encourage them to read at all.

(c) Parents

Only a few participants indicated that their parents encourage them to read at home. Again they stated that they felt like they were being forced into reading. One responded explained:

My parents buy me interesting books and encourage me not to put their money to waste, so I have to force myself to read. They always ask me to read to them what I have read in the storybooks or ask me to read breaking news on the daily newspapers to them (L5).

Another participant explained:

My parents were doing their postgraduate degrees so they would actually wake us up to read with them. I didn't really like reading then, but I appreciate it now, I guess I wouldn't be where I am today had I not done it (L3).

The majority of the participating learners acknowledged that they did not receive any reading support from their parents. One of the participants said:

I don't get any support; I don't think they know that they need to tell us to read rather than reading school subjects to pass our grades. Parents only buy newspapers and watch TV (L1).

Another participant stated that few parents were interested in reading. Once they have told their children to complete their homework or read for tests or exams, their intervention ended. Another participant reported that her parents did not like her to borrow books from the library because if she lost these, they could not afford to replace them.

4.4 Classrooms observations and semi-structured interviews: Learners' exposure to reading at OL

4.4.1 Findings from classroom observations

I observed a total of four lessons conducted by ESL teachers at the four participating schools. I observed the types of reading activities taking place in ESL classes, such as group reading, individual reading. I also observed the organisation of classroom libraries, and information charts displayed in classrooms. I observed whether sufficient books and other reading materials were available in the classes. I also looked at how the school libraries were organised, which included the labelling of books, shelves, and general tidiness. This observation provided me with evidence of the type of reading materials available at schools and whether they were being used for reading, or whether they were just stored away without the learners being encouraged to use them. With the responsible teacher's permission, I took photographs to show what was observed.

The use of observations not only allowed for an in-depth understanding of how ESL teachers exposed their OL learners to reading, but also allowed for comparison of findings from other data collection methods used. Table 4.1 below presents a summary of the reading lessons observed in all four schools.

Table 4.1: Observation of reading lessons presented

School	Lesson	Details
A	1	Each learner received a handout from their teacher the previous day and learners were requested to read the story at home. In class the teacher asked learners to produce their handouts and asked a few questions about the story. Learners were taken to the laboratory to watch a video on the story read, and were asked to complete the questions based on the story on separate handouts.
B	2	The entire class had a copy of the same book in front of them (NAMCOL study guides). Learners read the text in Module 1 on page 127 silently and answered Activities Two and Three based on the passage they had read. The teacher asked the learners to present their answers one by one to the rest of the class.
C	3	The teacher instructed learners to sit in groups of five (cooperative-learning groups). The teacher distributed one novel to each group of learners. Each learner in the group was given an opportunity to read and share ideas about the book from which they were reading. Alternatively, each learner in the group got an opportunity to read a paragraph from the text out loud to other learners. In this way, each learner got a chance to participate in the reading session. The teacher asked questions orally as learners were reading. The teacher collected the books after the lesson.
D	4	The learners were sitting at their places. The teacher distributed handouts containing a reading text to every learner. The learners then read the story and answered questions about the text. The teacher asked learners to provide difficult words that they came across while reading. Learners divided into groups to provide meanings to the difficult words they had identified and each group provided feedback to the rest of the class.

The reading lessons observed provided insight into the reading practices and reading activities that ESL teachers employed in their ESL classrooms with OL learners. Using class observations, I found that the reading practices and exercises used by ESL teachers in all the participating schools to be similar. I observed instances of learners reading aloud, as indicated in Lesson 3, and silent reading as indicated in Lessons 2 and 4, and also silent reading in libraries. These findings correlate with the findings from the interviews and open-ended surveys, where teachers and learners indicated that they engaged in silent and aloud reading.

I observed the teacher-learner approach in Lesson 1 as one of interaction between the learners and the teachers. Lesson 1 was structured and planned around the use of the question-answer method. The teacher asked learners a few questions orally about the story that they had read from the handouts the previous day. I found that learners who were fluent in English answered the questions, while those who were not, just listened quietly. The teacher tried to discuss answers in order to create an opportunity for the silent learners to also engage in the discussion, but they remained silent, as I suspected that they were too shy to participate.

The teaching method of Teachers 3 and 4 was to create activities that allowed learners to work in groups. This was done when learners identified difficult words and got into groups to discuss/find their meanings. The purpose of placing learners in groups was to engage every learner in the lesson and to enhance their comprehension. This allowed learners to help one another and share ideas.

It is worth noting that of all the classes observed, only T1's class was multimodal because she played videos after reading. The other teachers relied on print materials and used no modern tools such as an overhead projector in their classes. They relied on speaking and writing on the chalkboard throughout the lesson. I believe that if teachers integrated multimedia in their lessons, such as the use of videos by T1, learners would possibly become more interested in reading.

During my observations I observed the surroundings of the classes before I proceeded to observe the libraries. As summary of these observations, as outlined in the observation checklist (Appendix B) is presented below.

Of all the classrooms visited, only one teacher's class was decorated with ESL materials on their whiteboards. The rest of the classes did not have any materials on their whiteboards. In some classes only cleaning lists and classroom rules were posted on the whiteboards. Although these materials were displayed in the ESL classes, they had nothing to do with reading, but rather with other language aspects, such as grammar. Apart from materials on the whiteboards, I observed that there were no reading corners available in any of the observed classes, as there was no space in the overcrowded classes. Learners' desks occupied most of the space from the back walls right up to the front of the blackboard, so classrooms were filled to capacity and there was no unutilised space available. In addition, no reading books were available in classes. Every learner was responsible to carry his/her books to and from school every day. ESL teachers indicated that

learners were required to do so as no lockable cardboards were available in classes and sometimes criminals broke into classes. Learners thus either had to carry their books to and from school, or stand the chance of losing them.

I observed the reading materials that ESL teachers use in their lessons. Most ESL teachers provided handouts to their learners. T3 explained that the fact that no prescribed books were available for OL forced teachers to make copies of the reading texts that they wanted to use on specific days. T3 indicated that sometimes the school did not have enough paper, and that teachers had to make a few copies of the handouts for learners to share. The few books available at schools were not enough for all the learners, hence learners had to sit in groups and share books. The sharing was indeed observed in T3's classroom.

Another interesting observation involved the use of textbooks in ESL classrooms. I observed that the reading texts used by teachers were taken from various sources. Almost every teacher provided their own reading texts from various sources depending on the teacher's interests. Some English textbooks provided to learners contained content based on the United Kingdom (UK).

After the classroom observations I observed the libraries at all the participating schools. Most libraries at the schools were small and had been allocated to a teacher who was also responsible for teaching other school subjects. I observed that these libraries contained out-dated textbooks, encyclopaedias, newspapers, and magazines. The information obtained from the classroom observations concurred with the data obtained from the open-ended surveys and semi-structured interviews. The availability of out-dated reading materials at schools was found to be one of the main factors contributing to poor reading habits among learners.

I was also interested in how learners accessed the libraries. I found that BIS (Basic Information System) appeared on all learners' timetables once every seven-day cycle. This subject was regarded as the library subject, and learners had to go to the library during that period. The library teacher had to supervise learners and allow them to borrow books during that period. Mention can be made here that learners only accessed the libraries once in a seven-day cycle. Apart from that, only a few interested learners visited the libraries after school, so learner access to libraries was minimal. One of the elements that caught my attention during the library observation was the general organisation in libraries. Here, I focused on labelling, shelves, and general tidiness of the

libraries. The organisation of some libraries was poor. Some shelves were not packed properly and I observed that in some libraries learners were allowed to re-shelve books. As a result, they did so haphazardly. Newspaper sections in some libraries were a mess creating visual pollution, and this deterred learners who wanted to read. Figure 4.3 represents the lack of organisation in some of the libraries I visited.



Figure 4.1: Library shelves in one of the participating school's library

Figure 4.1 clearly indicates how books were not neatly shelved in one of the libraries.



Figure 4.2: Newspaper sections in a school library

Figure 4.2 is a photograph of the newspaper section in one of the visited libraries; it clearly shows newspapers simply stacked, making it difficult to find a specific newspaper.

4.3.2 Findings from the semi-structured interviews

The following section presents findings from semi-structured interviews with ESL teachers. I interviewed each of the four ESL teachers after the class observations. Interviewing ESL teachers enabled me to obtain necessary information about their experience of the role of reading in ESL learning. In the interview schedule, items that related to how ESL teachers exposed OL learners to reading in their classrooms focused on the type of reading exercises learners were engaged in, the frequency of reading in ESL lessons, teachers' views on their learners' reading culture, learners' access to reading materials, promotion of reading among OL learners, reading strategies, as well as the use of textbooks in the ESL classrooms.

(a) Reading exercises

In order to establish the reading exercises that ESL teachers used in their ESL lessons, the first question in the interview schedule was: What kinds of reading exercises do you engage your learners in class?

T1 stated that reading aloud and silent reading were the two strategies learners most engaged in in her ESL lesson. The exercises were a mixture of simple to more detailed reading activities and were taken from various sources, ranging from textbooks to magazines. T2 indicated that he mostly used reading exercises from the NAMCOL modules or prepared his own passages from various sources. T3 stated that she used reading texts from various sources too, and usually concentrated on activities pertaining to reading for comprehension. T4 explained that she used reading for determining either facts or opinions in a text, as well as reading for comprehension.

In Table 4.2 I present a summary of each of the ESL teachers' responses to the above question. I indicate the phrases of the responses as given by the teachers verbatim in the first column, and I use the key words from the extracts as codes in the next column and constructed a category in the last column of the table. Based on what I derived from the teachers' responses, I arrived at the themes derived from the categories as presented in section 4.5.

Table 4.2: Summary of ESL teachers' responses on reading exercises that they used

ESL teacher	Extract/response	Code	Categories
T1	Learners do silent reading and reading aloud of specific reading texts. The texts vary in length and content depending on the theme covered in the unit. The exercises could also range from simple to more detailed reading activities. Reading exercises are also taken from a different number of resources: textbooks, newspapers, brochures, pamphlets, magazines, etc.	Silent reading, Reading aloud Simple and detailed reading exercises Exercises taken from different sources	Silent reading and reading aloud that can be simple or detailed from different sources
T2	Mostly the ones found in the NAMCOL study guides; sometimes I prepare passages from other sources for their use.	NAMCOL study guides Other sources	Exercises are taken from different sources
T3	We don't have such selected pieces. I select texts from various sources: books, and internet to teach specific skills. Specifically for reading, we usually read for comprehension and I give them appropriate texts from any source that I found appropriate.	Various sources and the internet Read for comprehension	Reading is usually for comprehension from various sources and the internet
T4	Reading for specific information. Reading for facts and opinions. Reading for comprehension.	Reading facts for comprehension	Comprehension or specific information

(b) Reading frequency

The second question was about the frequency of learners' reading in ESL lessons. T1 and T4 stated that their learners read more often since reading was a required skill in every ESL lesson. T2

explained that his learners did not read often, since reading was not part of the OL syllabus. However, T3 reserved Fridays for reading since there was limited time for lessons and she decided to allocate a specific day for reading to expose learners to reading components. According to T3, the fact that reading was not part of the OL syllabus also made it difficult to incorporate reading in every ESL lesson. Table 4.3 presents the participating teachers' responses to this question.

Table 4.3: Teachers' responses on learners' reading frequency in ESL lessons

ESL teacher	Response	Code	Categories
T1	Learners read every day, every English period.	Learners read every day	Reading in every period
T2	Not often, since there is no provision for this skill in the syllabus, unlike other skills, which are provided space for. The other thing, there are too many formal assessments that need to be done within a short period of time. Again, teachers are required to have up-to-date files (preparation, subject, question paper files). Most of the times the advisory teachers require all these from the teachers upon their visit to schools. Sometimes one loose the interest of teaching, let alone reading if you have to complete all those tasks. Most of the times these advisory teachers are more interested in the files and nothing on reading at all.	Learners not reading often	Reading is not part of the syllabus
T3	Not many times that we have to really engage them with reading. But what I do with them is that Fridays are for reading and vocabulary boosting. Sometimes I let them select reading texts as I guide them, and they report to class individually. I have to see their reading texts and I have to get the list of new words they find from such texts. Otherwise we don't have enough time, because I have to do lots of tasks. I have to teach other skills and guide them on how to write longer pieces.	...not many times ...not enough time Reading not part of the OL curriculum	Reading is not part of the syllabus Reading on Fridays There is not enough time to do proper reading Reading is not properly outlined in the ESL (OL) syllabus

	Another thing is that the fact that reading is not prescribed in OL, so it is difficult sometimes to find enough time to read. Reading is not part of what they really should do but invented in what they do. We teach language in context so reading has to be part of it, you can't teach reading without reading texts.		
T4	Very often, most lessons comprise of reading texts from various sources including newspaper articles and books.	More often	Reading texts from various sources

(b) Reading culture for OL learners

Data on the perceptions of ESL teachers on the reading culture of their OL learners were sourced to illuminate an understanding of the reading culture of OL learners. The following data were sourced from the ESL teachers' responses to the following question: How is the reading culture of your learners?

Most ESL teachers indicated that there was no reading culture among their learners. ESL teachers pinpointed the excuses that learners gave for not engaging in reading. These reasons range from reading being boring to a lack of money to buy data to be able to download online reading materials. However, some teachers stated that a few learners slowly developed a passion for reading as a result of teachers' emphasis on the importance thereof. Table 4.4 below presents each of the ESL teachers' perceptions of the OL learners' reading culture.

Table 4.4: ESL teachers' perceptions of the OL learners' reading culture

ESL teacher	Responses	Code	Theme
T1	Unfortunately, the majority of our learners do not place a high value on reading, nor is it regarded as a priority with them. However, there are a few exemptions, a small number of learners are avid readers and show good reading habits.	Majority of learners do not place a high value on reading	Reading is not a priority
T2	Not commendable. Most of them claim that reading is boring and do not understand why they have to do it, regardless of how much I explain and demonstrate to them the importance of doing so.	...do not understand why reading has to be done	The importance of reading
T3	The reading culture is slowly developed and enhanced since the learners read often on their own. They read novels from the library and sometimes even the newspapers.	Reading culture is slowly being enhanced	Evidence of good reading habits
T4	Lucky we are in town, there are public libraries but many learners do not even know where libraries are situated. We have a library at school and I always tell my learners to read. Few will tell you that they read internet sources, but others will complain about data. The library here at school is not well equipped so some learners are not interested to go.	Encourage learners to visit libraries	Libraries not well equipped.

(d) Access to reading materials

Through Question 4 I sought to understand how OL learners gained access to the reading materials. The findings indicate that ESL teachers provided most of the reading materials in their ESL lessons. Teachers encouraged learners to download online reading materials as well, since sometimes the classes were overcrowded and often teachers could not provide enough handouts for all the learners. School libraries did provide reading materials, and sometimes learners borrowed books from such libraries. Learners who could afford to, often bought books from shops and those who could not occasionally borrow books from their peers. Table 4.5 presents teachers' responses to this question.

Table 4.5: Teachers' responses to learners' access to reading materials

ESL teacher	Responses	Code	Categories
T1	The school library gives them the opportunity to borrow books. As a teacher, I too provide reading materials in class. The more fortunate learners have access to the internet and even download books for their pleasure. Activities that require learners to read up on the topic give them opportunity to find materials on the internet or use the reference books in our library. There is also a tendency of borrowing books from their friends.	...from school library ...provide learners with access to internet to download... ...borrowing from friends	ESL teacher provides reading materials Learners sometimes download reading materials from the internet or borrow reading materials from friends
T2	They can get from the school library or shop for own books from local book stores. As a teacher I also provide them with reading materials. At times I encourage those who can access online materials to read from there, but they usually do not do so.	...school library ...teacher provides	ESL teachers encourage learners to download
T3	I teach both HL and OL so I provide reading materials to my OL as well. Sometimes I use the same materials I used with HL.	...teachers provide	Teachers use same materials they used with HL
T4	They borrow from library. Windhoek express newspaper is delivered free weekly at school.	...borrowing from the library ...newspaper delivered free	

(e) Teachers' promotion of a love of reading among learners

The teachers' responses on the question: How do you promote a love of reading among your learners? are presented below. According to the findings, most ESL teachers tried to promote reading at their schools through hosting debating competitions and other language-related competitions. As ESL teachers are responsible for motivating learners to read widely, schools host reading competitions during the Readathon week, which is annually celebrated in September. Table 4.6 presents teachers' responses to this question.

Table 4.6: teachers' responses on ESL teachers' promotion of reading among learners

ESL teacher	Responses	Code	Categories
T1	Our language department hosts debating competitions, public speaking and spelling bee sessions.	...debating, public speaking and spelling bee	Departmental competitions require them to read widely
T2	By motivating and explaining to them the importance of reading. I also give them practical examples of the outcomes of reading. I thus give them reading tasks to complete as prerequisites for the given lesson.	...practical examples of the reading outcome	Motivating learners to read
T3	Every day I encourage them to read so much that they call me Ms Reading. It is a struggle, because what is in their head is that reading is for a specific level (HL) and they are just required to understand the basic language. So I told them that the reason why they are producing poor quality work is because they lack exposure to written English; the more they read and read critically, the more their language will improve.	...it is a struggle ...motivating them to expose themselves to written English	Motivating learners to read
T4	By reading (modelling) in reading lessons Readathon/reading competition	...modelling	Reading competitions during Readathon

(f) Responsibility towards developing learners' passion for reading

ESL teachers were asked to respond to the question: Whose duty is it to develop the learners' passion for reading? Most ESL teachers felt that it was all stakeholders' duty to develop a passion for reading among the learners – this included the community. Other teachers acknowledged that it was the Ministry of Education's duty to develop learners' passion for reading through incorporating reading in the OL curriculum. Table 4.7 below presents teachers' responses to the questions and the themes and subthemes derived from the teachers' responses.

Table 4.7: Responsibilities towards learners' passion of reading

ESL teacher	Responses	Code	Categories
T1	Teachers, parents, the community at large. Media institution and the Ministry of Education	Community MoE Media	All stakeholders
T2	Teachers, parents and society. The curriculum should also encompass this aspect.	Teachers Parents Society	All stakeholders
T3	I think it is the system.	The system.	MoE
T4	Learners themselves, but with the help of the stakeholders in education including teachers and parents.	..learners themselves	...stakeholders

(g) Teachers' perceptions towards reading culture in Namibia

According to the findings, ESL teachers indicated that the overall reading culture in Namibia was poor. This was because reading was not generally promoted in society. The majority of the Namibians were not exposed to reading, and thus lacked understanding of the benefits of reading. Table 4.8 represents ESL teachers' perceptions of the reading culture in Namibia.

Table 4.8: Teachers’ perceptions of reading culture in Namibia

ESL teacher	Responses	Code	Categories
T1	The reading culture varies. It is largely influenced by the area in which the children are raised; their background; stimulation or lack of stimulation that they are exposed to. On the whole, lots need to be done to uplift the culture of reading among the learners.	...varies depending on the situation ..lots need to be done	Influenced by the environment Stimulation
T2	It is bad.	...bad...	Reading is bad
T3	Bad. The culture around us is not promoting reading even in universities as students’ reading is not really being promoted. It is a developing thing to those that were exposed to reading and learnt the benefit of it, but the majority don’t understand.	...bad	The culture around us does not promote reading
T4	Not advanced. Many people don’t read at all, they don’t buy books; only a few buy newspapers.	Not advanced...	Majority of people do not read

(h) Teachers’ views on how reading influences learners’ ESL performance

Question 8 on the interview schedule was: Would you attribute your learners’ failure in your subject to the nature of reading? Half of the participants (50%) stated that reading was not the only factor contributing to the high failure rate, but other factors included a lack of early exposure to English, and learners’ inability to express themselves. The remainder of teachers indicated that poor reading habits contributed towards learners’ failure in ESL, because it was through reading that learners come across new words and enhanced their vocabulary, which helped them to understand any other subject-related materials. Table 4.9 presents the teachers’ responses on the above question.

Table 4.9: Teachers' views on how reading influences learners' ESL performance

ESL teacher	Responses	Code	Categories
T1	No, not solely. Other factors too contribute to the failure. We should also acknowledge the fact that many learners have a backlog when they reach secondary school level as English is possibly their third spoken language. They are not exposed after school hours to the language as at home the mother tongue is still predominant.	No... other factors too	Lack of early exposure to English language
T2	Not entirely, but it is one big contributing factor.	...it contributes too	Poor reading contributes to learners' failure
T3	Somehow, because the reason that many learners fail is the ability to express themselves in English properly; but while that is true, I go back to the system. Of course, there are other factors contributing to the failure, the Readathon programme introduced in schools is not properly done.	Inability of learners to express themselves in English	Poor implementation of Readathon Education system not supporting reading
T4	Yes, while reading, learners come across new words and enhance their vocabulary making it easier for them to read and understand subjects-related materials.	...yes, learners come across new words	Lack of exposure to vocabulary

- (i) Reading strategies that ESL teachers can use to develop a strong reading culture among OL learners

Question 9 requested teachers to suggest reading strategies that they could use to develop a strong reading culture among their OL learners. Through the interviews I learnt from the ESL teachers how best they thought they and the Ministry of Education could develop strategies to develop a strong reading culture among OL learners. Their opinions included that the Ministry of Education needed to prescribe reading materials specifically for OL; expose OL learners to literary language

studies; introduce classroom libraries; establish book clubs in schools; encourage learner authors; make reading materials local; introduce timetabled reading; and strengthen the Readathon programme. Table 4.10 presents the teachers' responses to question 9.

Table 4.10: Reading strategies ESL teachers can use to develop a strong reading culture

ESL teacher	Responses	Code	Categories
T1	The Ministry of Education could develop the strategies to develop a strong reading culture among OL learners	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education should develop strategies
T2	The MoE needs to prescribe reading materials specifically for OL	Prescribed reading materials for OL	MoE should prescribe reading materials for OL
T3	Expose OL learners to literary language studies Introduce classroom libraries Establish book clubs in schools	Literary language study Classroom libraries Book clubs	Introduction of classroom libraries and book clubs in schools
T4	Strengthen the Readathon programme and make reading materials local Encourage learner authors	Readathon Local reading materials Learner authors	Encourage learner authors and localise reading materials

(j) The use of textbooks to enhance reading

How are textbooks used to enhance reading? Most teachers stated that the available textbooks were not helpful to OL learners because they either contained difficult language and/or unfamiliar content. The teachers further indicated that the NAMCOL modules in the Namibian context contained simple reading texts that did not challenge learners' thinking abilities. Thus, teachers expressed their struggle about choosing a reading text appropriate for the learners' level. Table 4.11 presents the teachers' responses.

Table 4.11: Textbook use regarding the enhancement of reading

ESL teacher	Responses	Code	Categories
T1	Learners are compelled to read the comprehension pieces to answer the set question. There are many themes/articles in the textbooks that capture the learners' interests and are learner-friendly.	...read comprehension pieces	Textbooks used are learner-friendly
T2	OL learners have no prescribed textbooks. They use NAMCOL guides that are not very helpful.	No prescribed textbooks in OL	NAMCOL guides
T3	As I said earlier, the textbooks we are using especially for OL are not helpful. They either contain difficult language or content that learners are not familiar with. The Ministry of Education need to come up with books with the Namibian content and neighbouring countries content instead of UK content textbooks that are currently used.	...difficult language Unfamiliar content	Textbooks in use are not helpful
T4	The textbooks we use are not really good. There are no prescribed textbook for OL actually. We use NAMCOL study guides but they have very simple reading texts. It is difficult to choose reading texts, sometimes because some of the textbooks are USA content based and sometimes learners are not familiar with the content. So NAMCOL study guides are not helping much either.	Textbooks not really good	NAMCOL guides

4.5 Document analysis

This section presents the document analysis, which was the last strategy used to collect data for this study. I used the NSSCO syllabus published by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the NSSCO English Modules 1 and 2 published by the Namibia College of Open Learning (NAMCOL), which most participating schools used as prescribed textbook for Grades 11 and 12 Ordinary Level learners. This analysis enabled me to clearly discover the components taught at OL that promote reading among Grades 11 and 12 OL learners. This method provided answers to secondary question 2, i.e., How do the curriculum and textbooks model reading for OL learners?

Based on this analysis I gained insight into the quality of the content and reading skills taught at OL, from which my conclusions and recommendations have been drawn.

4.5.1 The analysis of Grade 11 and 12 ESL syllabus

A syllabus is a document, which outlines what should be learnt and what the successful learner will know by the end of the course. Furthermore, it places on record the basis on which success will be evaluated (National Institute for Educational Development, 2003b). ESL teaching in Namibia for Grades 11 and 12 is divided into two levels, namely, Higher Level and Ordinary Level. The two syllabi are focused on the four main language skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, the HL syllabus expands reading skills by adding a literature component, which does not form part of the OL syllabus. This study only provides the analysis of ESL Grades 11 and 12 Ordinary Level syllabus, focusing on one language skill, which is reading. This is because, as outlined in the previous chapters, this study focused on the role that reading can play to enhance ESL learning at OL.

By viewing the ESL (OL) syllabus I came to realise that the syllabus contained a number of aspects that were unclear. For instance, one of the specified aims of the syllabus is: "... enjoy the reading of literature and explore areas of universal human concern" (Ministry of Education, 2010b:9). I believe that the learning competency: "... read, understand and enjoy various texts from different genres such as novels, short stories, plays and poetry" (Ministry of Education, 2010b:9), is linked to the above aim. Perhaps it can be mentioned that the above aim does not explicate why learners need to enjoy reading texts from different genres. Based on what I perceived in the field, ESL teachers lacked knowledge about how to teach the learning competency outlined in the syllabus. Perhaps this was the reason why ESL teachers did not use genres such as poetry and drama in their lessons. Having undertaken a close and critical analysis of the learning competencies throughout the syllabus, one can tell that there are no clear guidelines regarding how reading ought to be integrated in the ESL lessons. Perhaps the syllabus should be clearer why learners need to read, understand, and enjoy texts from different genres. In addition, I believe that the fact that reading is not assessed at OL at the end of the year contributes to why ESL teachers do not emphasise the importance and significance of reading novels, short stories, plays, and poetry. Currently, the OL Grade 11 and 12 paper incorporates the skill of reading in Paper One, which is a reading and

directed writing paper. The reading texts included in this paper are short texts, such as notes and advertisements, with questions designed to test learners' skim-reading abilities, or texts with questions testing detailed comprehension. Paper One seems to lack the critical reading skills component through which learners are supposed to analyse texts constructively and logically.

Another aspect in the syllabus that I found unclear was how learners were to achieve different learning competencies. It is worth mentioning here that the syllabus clearly states the objectives and competencies to be achieved by learners. However, the syllabus does not provide suggestions/directives on how teachers should help their learners achieve specific competencies. For example, one of the competencies reads: "learners should be able to analyse texts constructively and logically" (Ministry of Education, 2010b:9). Yet, it is not clear how learners are to achieve this competency; it is left to individual teachers to ensure that learners achieve this. This paucity of direction is likely to pose a challenge to beginner teachers, and as a result, there might be no effective learning taking place, which contributes to learners' general poor performance in ESL.

When it comes to reading skills, the HL syllabus exposes learners to the common application of a range of reading skills, such as scanning and skimming. At this level, learners are expected to respond actively to key aspects of texts, such as the main theme, or the author's intention and story line, which does not feature in the OL syllabus.

Furthermore, the syllabus outlines a well explained marking grid for spoken and written work (Ministry of Education, 2010b:26–27), however, nothing of the same nature is provided for the reading component. Perhaps this is the reason why teachers ignore reading, because there appears to be no guidance regarding its assessment. Such guidelines would create better understanding and appreciation of reading among learners and teachers.

Overall, the ESL (OL) syllabus needs immediate attention regarding reading. One of the ESL teachers indicated that the syllabus contained no directions on how it ought to be used, or how scaffolding should be applied. This is a challenge, especially to beginner teachers, since they do not receive any training on how the syllabus should be used. The responsibility to implement the syllabus to teach effectively is entirely left to the teachers.

In addition, the ESL NSSCO syllabus does not provide a list of reading materials or textbooks to be used for reading in the classroom. When it comes to reading resources, the HL syllabus makes it clear that “a list of poems and prescribed texts will be announced in a circular at the beginning of each cycle” (Ministry of Education, 2010b:3). However, the OL syllabus leaves ESL teachers to choose the materials they want to use. The latter is explained under the textbooks and resources section: “teachers may consult textbooks catalogues for suitable literary texts” (Ministry of Education, 2010b:3). This foregrounds the question of uniformity, as every teacher chooses books according to his or her choice or preference. As a result, the fact that the syllabus does not prescribe reading materials needs to be addressed to prevent teachers using any materials, including those that might be inappropriate for teaching and learning.

The following section presents an analysis of the ESL textbooks used by the teachers who participated in this study.

4.5.2 The analysis of ESL NAMCOL study guide

A textbook is one of the media used in ESL learning, and in some classrooms, it is used as the only source of language input that learners receive. It is also used as the basis for language practice that occurs both inside and outside the classroom (Richards, 2015). Despite their role, most, if not all textbooks, are professionally designed to fit the curriculum and correspond with the aims of the language programme and the needs of the learners (Kirchner & Mostert, 2017). The data from the interview with ESL teachers indicates that teachers were aware that no textbooks were prescribed for English OL. Some teachers indicated that they used reading texts from various sources and some indicated that they often only used NAMCOL study guides in their ESL lessons. I therefore decided to analyse the ESL study guides published by NAMCOL to evaluate their suitability as materials used for teaching and learning in ESL (OL) classrooms.

Two study guides, namely English NSSCO Modules 1 and 2 are used by learners for both Grades 11 and 12. The modules were analysed employing the criteria of a good English textbook as proposed by two experts, Sheldon (2007) and Miekley (2005). I decided to include only three criteria in my analysis that fit the purpose of this study, namely: aims and objectives, the teaching of language skills, and vocabulary.

(a) Aims and objectives

Rahmawati (2018: 28) summarises the following as criterion of a good textbook: the objectives in the textbook should be clearly stated and related to the objectives in the syllabus. Module 1 is divided into 14 units while Module 2 contains nine units. The learning objectives are clearly stated at the beginning of each unit. However, some learning objectives are repeated over and over throughout the modules. For example, the learning objective “skim and scan a text” appears in units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 of Module 1, and in units 4, 5, 7 and 8 of Module 2. “Summarise a text” appears in units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, of Module 1 and units 2, 3, 4 and 7 of Module 2. The objectives in the analysed modules (1 and 2) are found to relate to the OL syllabus. For example, on page eight of the syllabus, the learners’ competency reads: read intensively for understanding. The modules also make reference to reading for understanding on page 1 of Module One. By looking critically through the modules, there is a clear indication that the learning objectives provided for that specific unit correspond to the content found in that unit. Therefore, it can be concluded that the NSCCO English module published by NAMCOL has met the criterion of a good textbook from the aims and objectives characteristic.

(b) The teaching of language skills (reading)

Under this section, I only focus on reading as a language skill, which is the main focus of this study. The reading sections in NAMCOL Modules 1 and 2 are structured according to the conventional stages of a reading lesson. The first is pre-reading activities, which are aimed at introducing learners to the topic and link the text to their prior knowledge. The pre-reading activities are then followed by a short text, which learners are expected to read before they complete the activities using strategies such as scanning, skimming, and guessing meaning in context. There are, on average, one quite short reading text per unit. It should be mentioned that one short reading text is reasonable for the limited lesson time, which is just about 40 minutes, during which all language skills ought to be covered. The length of the text suggests that the common type of reading required for OL learners is more intensive than extensive in nature.

By critically analysing the reading component in the above-mentioned modules, it is evident that the reading texts are not rigorous. The texts are claimed to be adapted from various sources; short stories, magazines, newspapers, TV programmes, and advertisements. It is understandable that the

OL learners do not need to be overloaded with too many stylistic varieties at their level, but texts should create enjoyment and at least familiarise the learners with different genres, which will enhance their reading experience. The reading texts found in the current modules are mostly simple, unchallenging texts, which may cause boredom for secondary school learners, especially if they are not highly motivated to read widely.

As outlined earlier, each reading text contains around four activities to help learners develop reading skills. The pre-reading exercise is followed by while-reading exercises, and Activities 1–3 in each unit of both modules, which mainly take the form of open-ended or true and false questions. The after-reading activities often require learners to summarise the text either orally or in written form.

As a demonstration of the aforementioned types of activities, Figure 4.3 shows an example of an after-reading activity found in Activity 4, in Module 1 (National Institute for Educational Development, 2003b:5).

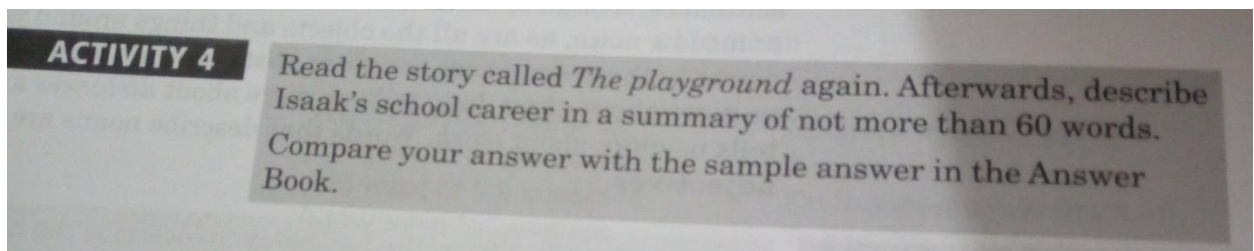


Figure 4.3: An example of an after-reading activity

The analysis of the NAMCOL modules concurred with the findings from the semi-structured interviews, in which ESL teachers indicated that the reading passages and activities in the modules were not challenging enough to improve learners' language. A close look at the skills and strategies developed through the while-reading activities indicated that these activities mostly focused on reading for specific information which only required a surface understanding of the text, and not deeper processing. Other important skills, such as making inferences, identifying the author's intention, and detecting bias (National Institute for Educational Development, 2003b:9) are underrepresented in these modules. Moreover, a critical analysis of the comprehension questions indicated that most of them were simple, straightforward, and factual in nature, requiring a very basic understanding of the text. For example, all activities numbered 2 across all modules required of learners to answer by scanning and skimming the text. Many of these activities could be

answered by copying phrases or sentences straight from the text. One could therefore conclude that the modules lacked questions that required higher-order thinking and processing of the text on a deeper level, for example inferring and understanding the author’s intention and bias. The above is another indication that OL learners are limited to only some aspects of reading, where reading exercises merely involve the literal understanding of factual information.

(c) Vocabulary

In both modules, vocabulary is represented in terms of focused activities, as indicated through activities such as matching definitions with words and filling gaps. Such activities mostly appear as Activities 5 and 6 under the heading, Vocabulary, in both modules. Having done a close examination of these vocabulary activities, one could conclude that the teaching of vocabulary in these two modules focused more on denotative meaning than connotative meaning. Most of the vocabulary activities did not promote higher-order thinking skills, because they focused on the direct use of the dictionary to find meaning.

In the following section I present a discussion of the main themes that emerged from the findings.

4.6 Discussion of the main findings

The discussion of the findings is organised into five main themes that crystallised from the data set. These main themes emerged from the categories that emerged from the participants’ responses and the document analysis. Table 4.12 indicates how the original codes, as mentioned in 4.1, dissolved into categories and later emerged as the main themes.

Table: 4.12 Main themes that emerged from the findings

Original codes	Emergent main categories	Emergent main themes
The nature of reading culture at OL (open-ended surveys)	Reading practice Reading materials	Reading experience of learners

	<p>Factors that motivate OL learners to read</p> <p>Current reading culture at OL</p> <p>Improvement for reading</p> <p>Challenges encountered by OL</p>	
The learners' exposure to reading at OL (classroom observations and semi-structured interviews)	<p>Reading exercises</p> <p>Reading frequencies</p> <p>Reading culture for OL</p>	Reading experience of learners
	<p>Lack of reading materials</p> <p>ESL teachers provide reading materials</p> <p>Reading texts from various sources</p> <p>Introduce classroom libraries and book clubs in schools</p> <p>Encourage learner authors</p> <p>Localise reading materials</p>	Access to reading materials
	<p>Promoting a love of reading is a struggle</p> <p>Reading is not part of the OL</p> <p>Poor implementation of Readathon</p> <p>Ministry of Education should develop the strategies</p> <p>MoE should prescribe reading materials</p>	Inadequate curriculum support
	<p>Libraries not well equipped</p> <p>Overcrowded classroom</p>	Inadequate infrastructure
The role of textbooks in ESL learning	<p>No prescribed textbook for OL</p> <p>Textbooks in use are not helpful</p> <p>The use of NAMCOL guides/modules</p>	The use of textbooks to enhance reading

	Textbooks in use are based on UK content	
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4.6.1 Learners' reading experiences

Most learners could identify the positive role of reading in ESL learning. Six of the participating learners indicated that they loved reading because it helped them to improve their vocabulary and their writing ability. This was a surprising finding, because prior to this study I had assumed that Namibian learners lacked an understanding of and a love of reading. My assumption was based on my experience that I rarely noticed OL learners actively engaged in reading. Contrary to this assumption, the reality was that some learners regarded reading positively. Learners who indicated that they loved reading clearly showed how often and how actively they engaged in active reading (Kirchner & Mostert, 2017).

Two of the participating learners who stated that they hated reading felt that they did not have any interest in books at all. They pointed out that nobody had told them about the importance of books or reading or motivated them to love reading apart from reading to pass examinations. A lack of interest in reading among OL learners has also been observed by some ESL teachers. ESL teachers highlighted that reading in Namibia was not sufficiently advanced because the culture in Namibia, as is common in developing countries, did not actively promote reading (Ronaldo et al., 2014; Mungambi, 2015). Based on the findings by Snyman (2016) it may be understood that the context and not only the content of the reading material was important in understanding it. A triangular relationship should exist between the reader, the text, and the interaction between the two, which must benefit the reader.

The perception among a few learner participants was that reading was meant for school tasks alone, especially to pass exams, and that reading for pleasure was not quite essential. Perhaps it could be mentioned here that if the participants (L) were under the impression that reading was for examinations only, it was an indication that ER was lacking in the ESL classes. Considering the characteristics of ER (cf. 2.2.3.2c) this was a clear indication that learners with such perceptions were not exposed to cognitive reading (cf. 2.2.1) and the end result was that their CALP skills would remain poor (cf. 2.3.4). This result from a lack of awareness about the importance of reading from parents, who are likely still trapped in a traditional mind-set. I found that most ESL teachers

blamed tradition for the poor reading culture in Namibia. In the past parents did not read stories to their children, but instead related stories to them orally. Due to such a strong oral background, most parents still do not understand the value of reading as a separate activity.

It is necessary, therefore, for ESL teachers to explicate the benefits of reading to enhance appreciation and encourage learners to pick up a book on their own. People stop reading at the completion of formal schooling, as they divert to other things like singing and socialising, rather than reading (Mulindwa, 2001). Namibia is no exemption to the above scenario.

Four of the learner participants highlighted that an interesting title and the desire to learn new things would make them want to read a book, while one of the learner participants stated that illustrations on the book cover played a fundamental role in motivating them to pick that specific book to read. Three learner participants indicated that they were only interested in reading a book when it was recommended by a friend. The relevance of the reading material depended on the context and the learner identifying with it. Indeed, the best judges of what manner of reading material was stimulating and relevant to the learners were the learners themselves. The above findings emphasise that eye-catching titles and illustrations play a fundamental role in attracting learners to read, because learners become curious about what the books are about. This is in line with the saying, a picture is worth a thousand words.

With regard to the reading exercises that ESL teachers used in their ESL lessons, OL learners highlighted that learners would take turns to read aloud to the whole class. This was done due to the limited number of books. T1 also acknowledged that she used silent and aloud reading in her ESL lessons. According to T1, reading silently improves learners' understanding, because it helps them concentrate on what they are reading, rather than the pronunciation of individual words. She further urged ESL teachers to encourage learners to read silently, as this would help learners develop strategies needed for reading fast and with better comprehension. Reading aloud, on the other hand, helps learners acquire language skills. Most ESL teachers indicated that reading aloud developed word-sound awareness. Reading aloud also helped learners develop positive associations with books, and a passion for reading.

The above results concurred with the observational findings. I observed that in almost all participating schools learners were reading silently, which entailed that learners read individually

during ESL lessons, or in the libraries. Reading aloud was more common in classes where learners were given a chance to read aloud from shared reading material used on that specific day.

During the interviews it was noted that T3 and T4 used reading comprehension as a strategy. T3 explained:

Reading comprehension means that learners should be able to read and then be able to go and look for the answers to questions in the given reading text. It is the ability to understand the meaning of each word in a text, which later leads you to be able to understand the meaning of the whole story (T3).

In light of the above, learners may not be expected to comprehend a text if they are not exposed to varied use of English in different reading texts (Ahmed & Rajab, 2015; Chew & Krashen, 2017). ESL (OL) learners may not perform well in their reading comprehension exam if they are not used to reading comprehension activities similar to those found in the examinations. However, with the use of NAMCOL modules (the only prescribed textbook currently in use), the question remains whether reading comprehension is successful, since this study found that these modules contained simple reading passages and activities that did not promote higher-order thinking skills. The use of NAMCOL modules is an indication that only IR is taking place in ESL classes. Although the ESL teachers were aware that the NAMCOL modules only contained simple reading passages and activities, the fact that no books were prescribed for OL forced them to use the modules anyway (cf. table 4.11). It is therefore the task of ESL teachers to train learners to read widely, and answer both lower and higher-order thinking questions in order for them to excel in their examinations. Despite this, T3 felt that reading comprehension was not receiving enough attention, as reading was not prescribed in the OL syllabus. As a result, too much time was spent on teaching other aspects of language, such as parts of speech. More time needed to be spent on reading for learners to acquire the other skills through reading. Reading cannot simply be practiced once or twice in ESL lessons under the assumption that learners would continue reading by themselves. Reading should instead be encouraged continuously – whether at school or at home. Although no reading materials are prescribed in OL syllabus (cf.2.2.3.2a), I believe that teachers should be encouraged to devise creative ways on how to teach reading effectively.

Mention can be made here that T3 used cognitive reading in her lesson because she explained that she allowed her learners to choose their own reading texts (cf. table 4.3). In addition, the application of social constructivism was also evident in T3's lesson as learners were seen interacting with one another when they were given the opportunity to share their ideas about the books they were reading. Through interaction, learners' language development was enabled (cf.2.3.2).

Regarding the challenges that OL learners encountered regarding reading, the majority of learner participants stated that household chores hindered their desire to read, as learners were tired after cooking and cleaning. Another challenge mentioned by the participants was a lack of support from parents. Half of the participants indicated that they did not receive reading support from their parents. One of the learners explains that:

My parents never encouraged me to read, they rather let me watch TV with them (L2).

This challenge is more complex than it seems. One should remember that parents were not necessarily exposed to reading during their own school career, thus they might not understand the importance of reading for their children. As a result, they do not encourage their children to borrow books from libraries, nor are they willing to buy reading books for their children. My field notes strongly support the argument made by one of the teachers who suggested that the majority of parents were not aware of the role of reading in their children's education. It was recommended that parents should be informed and motivated at school meetings to create opportunities to share stories from books with their children.

I learnt from various participants how best they thought their schools, teachers, libraries, and parents could develop strategies for engaging learners in reading. One of the significant strategies outlined by the participants was readers' clubs. Half of the participants acknowledged that the formation of readers' clubs in their respective schools would motivate learners to read, because they would be able to share their different experiences based on the information they have read. One of the participating learners stated that:

Schools should have readers' clubs where learners meet to read together (L1).

OL and HL learners attending the same reading club might lead to a better understanding of texts because of the interaction among readers. Hence, readers' clubs would expose learners to a variety of reading materials, as well as ideas that they could share with fellow learners or learners from other schools. This might arouse the inquisitiveness to read and make reading a more frequent habit (cf. 4.3.6).

Mention was made of reading materials on youth issues. Learners need to identify with the themes in the books. Most learner participants felt that they needed to be provided with materials addressing youth issues so that they could learn more about social issues and how to overcome them (cf.2.2.2.2).

The final strategy that the participants (L) pointed out was online reading materials. The majority of the participants acknowledged that online reading materials interested young readers more than printed books. The internet enables learners to access more materials to read in a shorter period of time compared to expensive printed materials. Schools need to strengthen ICT and encourage learners to develop their passion for reading by prompting them to read electronically. I believe that if OL learners used online reading materials, they would be exposed to a variety of challenging texts that would serve as rich, comprehensive input (cf. 2.3.3.1).

4.6.2 Access to reading materials

Regarding access to reading materials, the majority of the participants (L) indicated a lack of appropriate reading materials at OL. Almost all the participating ESL teachers acknowledged that they took their reading exercises from various sources ranging from textbooks, newspapers, magazines, and the internet (cf. table 4.5). The above finding concurred with the responses to the open-ended surveys in which half of the learners indicated that they got storybooks only from their ESL teachers (cf. 4.3.3). In the classroom observations I observed that some teachers brought books or other reading materials that they used that day and again collected these after the lesson. The fact that no reading materials are prescribed for OL and that there are not enough books in classes, means that ESL teachers constantly go the extra mile to present good and interesting reading materials to their learners (Busari, 2014; Kirchner & Mostert, 2017). Since the Communicative Language Approach (CLA) is the recommended approach for ESL teaching (cf. 1.2), it is not surprising that ESL teachers are trying their best to use authentic materials in their

classrooms. T1 highlighted that a number of reading materials were inappropriate for the learners because of the language used, how reading materials were prepared, their content, and their cultural relevance to Namibian OL learners. The ESL teachers further claimed that some articles from newspapers or magazines lacked an appropriate academic level and intention (cf. table 4.11). These materials did not aid in the development of language skills (Snyder, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2014). Another criticism regarding these materials was that there was no uniformity in the selection of materials, as teachers chose texts based on their own preferences. The above findings clearly indicate why it is important for the OL syllabus to include prescribed reading materials specifically for OL.

In order to deliver quality lessons despite the lack of proper reading materials, T1 and T3 encouraged their learners to download reading materials from the internet. Reading materials from the internet are found to boost learners' interest in reading since they enhance comprehension through pictures and other modes, such as sound and video (Kaur, 2015; Yi & Crowder, 2016). However, the challenge is that not all libraries are equipped with technology and not all learners have access to devices like cellphones (Jacobs, 2013; Töttemeyer et al., 2014). This once again highlights the role of multiliteracies in modern-day teaching. The principles of the multiliteracies approach advocate the undeniable role of not only the internet, but of all electronic devices and technological meaning-making opportunities. The foregoing is supported by authors such as Yi (2014), Schoeman (2011), and Bonche (2014) who emphasise the unfamiliar strategy to let learners choose their own texts, share them, and actively engage in collective meaning-making.

In relation to the above, some participants (L) revealed that difficult words and the unfamiliar settings used in books challenged them to fully comprehend the reading text (cf. 4.3.5). The participants (L) argued that books with familiar content and less complicated language that related to Namibia's culture, history, and lifestyle were likely to stir an interest in reading, especially for OL learners (Early et al., 2015; Stein & Newfield, 2006). The use of unfamiliar content and difficult word would prevent learners' language development. This is in line with Rygiel's (2016) emphasis that comprehensive input should not be confused with providing learners with very difficult texts, as this might frustrate and demotivate learners from reading (cf. 2.3.3.1) Other participants outlined the sharing of reading materials as another aspect that discourages reading. The above findings concur with those obtained through class observations and my reflective

journal. Almost all of the participating schools had too few available reading materials. In some of the ESL classrooms, just a few copies of reading materials (handouts) were supplied by teachers for learners to read for pleasure. Some classes were large, so certain learners did not receive handouts and were told to share with those who had received (cf. table 4.1). As a result, learners get discouraged to read because not all had the opportunity to read from the handouts in class, nor were they allowed to borrow them to read at home. The above implies that comprehensive input is not well applied in these classes (cf. 2.3.3.1).

4.6.3 Inadequate curriculum

In this theme, the participants firstly mentioned the influence of the inadequate curriculum (teaching, learning, and assessment) that emphasised reliance on reading for examination purposes only (cf. table 4.3). The lack of assessment strategies pertaining to reading of different literature genres was also mentioned (Namundjembo, 2016). T2 and T3 explained that they did not expect of their learners to read more often, because reading was not prescribed in the OL syllabus. Due to the omission of prescribed ESL reading texts, teachers opted for reading texts from different sources of their own choice, which were not scaffolded in terms of appropriateness, density, length, or text type. This did not lead to cognitive reading (Kekhana-Mhoney., 2015), which is a form of purposeful reading that deliberately increases comprehension and language skills. Although the Ministry of Education is aware of the SAQMEQ report on the countrywide state of learners' reading and writing, the curriculum still does not incorporate reading requirements in the ESL OL syllabus.

The main purpose of the syllabus is to outline what should be taught in specific subjects. However, ESL teachers are left with the burden of how best to deal with reading in their lessons, since the OL syllabus does not provide any guidance in this regard. One participating teacher stated as follows:

Learners do not read more often since there is no provision for this skill in the syllabus like other skills (T2).

ESL teachers had high hopes that with the curriculum changes implemented in 2016, reading at OL would change, but unfortunately this was not the case. This is a clear indication that a reading

culture is not being promoted at OL. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that reading is allocated sufficient time in the syllabus.

T3 explained that even if teachers wanted to pay more attention to reading, there was not enough time to do so, because teachers had to concentrate on other tasks, which were crucial in preparation for the examinations, such as the writing of longer pieces. Most ESL teachers indicated that it was a challenge to divide teaching time to components that were examined and those that were not. Therefore, since reading was not an examinable component in OL, a lower priority was placed on it. One of the ESL teachers stated as follows:

Teachers mainly focused on examinable components in their classes. Learners normally are interested to read on what is going to be asked in the examination. I think it is a policy, which needs to be established by the Ministry of Education, where reading component is also tested in OL like what is being done in HL. Due to the fact that reading is not an examinable component in OL, teachers tend to turn a blind eye on it too (T4).

Furthermore, some ESL teachers felt that the syllabus prescribed too many formal assessment tasks that needed to be completed within too short a period of time. Therefore, they needed to rush to finish these as required by the Regional Office (RO) (cf. table 4.3). These tasks put pressure on the teachers, who are already battling to cope with reading for ESL learning and acquisition. Teachers indicated that the RO sometimes pressured them to such an extent that they lost interest in teaching. For example, teachers were expected to write out lesson plans based on the syllabus and keep these in a preparation file. A subject advisory from RO was then supposed to visit schools to check the teachers' files and learners' books. Apart from the preparation file, teachers were also expected to keep an up-to-date administration file, a subject file, and a question paper file. ESL teachers felt that too much administrative work diverted their time from teaching to administration, with little or no time left to concentrate on teaching. Teachers indicated that whenever the English advisories visited, none of them asked anything on reading practices or strategies. All the above findings support my assumption that the Namibian education system does not promote a reading culture (Kirchner & Mostert, 2017), especially as far as Ordinary Level learners are concerned.

The high failure rate in ESL at OL could be a result of learners' poor reading habits. This corresponds with the finding by Töttemeyer et al. (2014), namely that a poor reading culture results

in poor academic performance. T1 felt that poor reading, combined with other factors, contributed to the learners' failure in ESL. She explained that the fact that English was a third language to many Namibian learners was also a challenge. The majority of learners were not exposed to English at an early age, that is, not until they were enrolled in school. As in the South African education system, the policy of the Namibian Ministry of Education makes it compulsory for learners from Grades 0 to 3 to be taught in their mother tongue, and ESL was only to be taught as one of the subjects. It is only in Grade 4 that learners are introduced to English as language of learning and teaching (Joubert et al, 2014). When learners get to Grade 4 it seems as if their school careers start all over again as learners cannot read, speak, or understand English. Communication between teachers and learners is not effective, because learners are used to being taught in their vernacular. Learners are not exposed to English after school hours, but to their different mother tongues. Such minimal exposure to English is found to adversely influence ESL acquisition (Hautemo & Julius, 2016). Although the above is not the focus of this study, it might have played a role in the poor interest in reading and ESL acquisition, especially among OL learners.

Some ESL teachers indicated that OL learners failed because they were not exposed to the written language, that is, to reading (cf. table 4.9). This resulted in the learners lacking the ability to express themselves properly in written and spoken language (Cummins, 1984; Nikolov 2009). T2 therefore explained the need for exposure to different language forms as follows:

The Ministry of Education should make reading a priority to all learners at all levels. If they do not introduce full reading texts, there must at least be some longer pieces and poems that learners must complete at the end of Grade 12, so that they can have exposure to the different written language forms (T2).

The reading of various sources is found to benefit learners in terms of gaining vocabularies that later help them to produce good written pieces (Shapaka, 2015; Adam & Babiker, 2015).

Furthermore, ESL teachers felt that Namibian learners failed ESL due to poor reading, and that one of the contributing factors to this was the poor implementation of the Readathon programme. One of the interviewees explained:

Readathon is spearheaded by the library teachers, but not the Department of Languages, so in many schools it is not successful. If it was an activity of a language department, I feel it was to be done in a different way. Also, I believe the Ministry of Education did not clarify exactly how the Readathon was supposed to be done. A number of us did not know what to do. Learners get the reading passages and questions to answer after reading, exactly what they do in class. It is supposed to be done in a creative way, instead of repeating what is already being done in class (T3).

The above provides an indication that Readathon might not be implemented according to the Ministry's purpose. Perhaps there should be follow-up visits at schools to see whether the programme is fully implemented in the way they planned it to be.

On the question of how ESL teachers could promote a love of reading among OL learners, T3 explained that it was a struggle to instil a love of reading among OL learners, because they were aware that reading was not an integral part of the OL syllabus. This aligns with what I observed in one of the ESL classes. Some learners complained about having had to read novels that would not be assessed in the final examination, and that more attention should be paid to examinable content (Busari, 2014; Simataa, 2014). Since the curriculum did not include reading as an assessed component, teachers struggled to get learners to prioritise reading.

T4 indicated that the parents' role in nurturing learners' reading habits could not be emphasised enough, as parents were best placed to develop a passion for reading in their children. Parents, as primary caregivers, are learners' first teachers, therefore, learners should be introduced to reading very early in life – even before being enrolled in school – so that they can assimilate reading as a means of self-development and enjoyment. In this regard, parents should take on the vital role of promoting reading to their children at home (Namupala, 2013; Nkandi, 2015; Shapaka, 2015).

Teachers, on the other hand, should be passionate about reading, and act as model readers for their learners. Schools should organise reading competitions with attractive prizes for successful competitors, and media institutions should feature in such competitions. These competitions should not only be presented during the Readathon week but should rather be presented throughout the year (Hambunda, 2014). From the above it is clear that if all stakeholders worked together as a team, there is no doubt that learners would develop a passion for reading.

Almost all participating teachers highlighted that it was the Ministry of Education's responsibility to develop learners' passion for reading. They all felt that this could only be achieved if reading was to be made part of the OL syllabus. T3 explained:

As a teacher, I can do my part, but if those who develop the curriculum do not place reading among the priority areas, then it becomes a challenge, because I will be talking my own language. And remember, learners socialise with others from different schools, so if it is only in our school that I emphasise reading, learners will start to think that I want to do my own things but if it is made part of the syllabus like in HL, then all the learners will practice (T3).

The latter is a clear indication that teachers were eager for reading to be included in OL syllabus to develop countrywide uniformity regarding reading in ESL classrooms.

4.6.4 Inadequate infrastructure

The findings finally indicate that poor infrastructure impacts on a good reading environment. Poor infrastructure was a real problem at participating schools. At almost all participating schools libraries were available, but were poorly equipped. They contained very old materials that did not interest the learners at all. Half of the participating learners indicated that their school libraries did not contain any recent/contemporary books. Through observation, I found that libraries were small, and that books were not orderly shelved. Often books recorded in the catalogue could not be found on the shelves. In some libraries, the shelves were not properly packed, which resulted in an uninviting environment for reading as it discouraged those learners who genuinely wanted to read. Furthermore, most of the libraries at participating schools contained old books and magazines that were not of interest to the learners. These materials often contained information on subjects foreign to the Namibian context. Apart from this, there were far too few books available for the number of learners. Due to the size of the libraries there was no space available where learners could sit to read quietly for enjoyment. To make matter worse, I found that in some libraries the library teachers would not allow learners to borrow books for fear that they would lose or mishandle the books. This is not the way to inspire learners to read. To instil a love of reading in ESL learners, school libraries ought to have available collections of up-to-date reading materials, both fiction and non-fiction, based on Namibian contexts, as well as multimedia sections for multiliteracies

purposes (Crawford, 2013; Yi, 2015). From the above it is clear that the schools' library infrastructures could not support the actual learner population.

The lack of infrastructure was also emphasised by the classroom facilities. I observed that most of the classrooms were overcrowded, leaving no space available to create reading corners or classroom libraries, which are essential in teaching ESL. The overcrowded classroom was also one of the reasons why T3 used group work as there were not enough books for each learner to have one.

4.6.5 The use of textbooks to enhance reading

Almost all participating teachers indicated that no textbooks were prescribed for OL, and that this made it difficult to select reading texts to enhance reading. As teachers were required to select their own reading texts from various sources, this raised questions about the uniformity of reading materials used in ESL classes. ESL teachers explained that as no textbooks were prescribed in OL (cf. table 4.11), they were forced to use available textbooks that were not always based on local content. I observed that some schools used textbooks donated by other countries, mainly from the United States of America (USA). Volunteer teachers from such countries realised the need for textbooks in ESL and arranged such donations. Although welcome, such books were found to be less than helpful, because of the difficult language and unfamiliar content used.

The fact that most ESL textbooks used in Namibian schools are imported from outside Namibia confirms the lack of the availability of relevant reading materials (Lundahl, 2014; Kirchner & Mostert, 2017). As explained earlier (cf. 2.2.4.1), imported books are written for a global market, and do not reflect the interests and needs of the Namibian learners (Töttemeyer et al., 2015). All participants highlighted that there was a need to produce reading materials with familiar content to develop a passion for reading among OL learners. The above means that the Ministry of Education ought to ensure that relevant reading materials are produced and supplied to Namibian schools (cf. table 4.10). This will go a long way to making reading interesting, which is vital for the development of a reading culture.

Schools that do not benefit from USA donations use NAMCOL study guides/modules. T2 highlighted that NAMCOL study guides were the only available textbooks of which the numbers

were sufficient and also represented the Namibian context. However, the same ESL teachers were of the opinion that these NAMCOL study guides were not helpful, as they contained very simple reading passages and activities that were not advanced enough to help learners improve their language competencies.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I present data collected from the four participating schools through open-ended surveys with OL learners, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with four ESL teachers, and document analysis of ESL textbooks currently used at OL, and the ESL OL syllabus. I analysed the reading experiences of OL learners and ESL teachers at OL level, and I looked at how ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in their ESL lessons. The challenges met by both teachers and learners regarding reading at OL were also revealed. The findings reveal that the overall reading habit of OL learners is worrisome. Through an open-ended survey, OL learners indicated that they read more for school purposes than for fun. ESL teachers acknowledged that the above situation was fashioned by the Ministry of Education itself, having not undertaken to construct standardised assessment criteria for reading as it has done for writing, speaking and listening.

Furthermore, OL learners do not engage in frequent reading due to the fact that the OL syllabus does not allocate time for reading, leading to a lack of interest and engagement in reading, as ESL teachers struggle to make time for it. The fact that the ESL syllabus does not provide proper guidance on reading could also be a contributing factor to the above situation. Both ESL teachers and OL learners provided strategies for developing a reading culture at OL level, such as localising reading materials, establishing readers' clubs, and making reading a part of OL syllabus. In the next chapter I discuss the implications of the findings outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I answer the research questions posed in chapter 1, present final conclusions and implications of the study, and outline recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of reading and its contribution to ESL learning and acquisition at OL. The focus was to assess the nature of the reading culture of OL learners in Namibian secondary schools and how teachers and textbooks expose learners to reading. I also sought to identify the challenges experienced by teachers in promoting reading. I used open-ended surveys, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to collect data. From the literature reviewed for this study it became clear that reading could and should play a significant role in ESL learning, especially pertaining to OL learners. This was also supported

by the findings of this study, which show consensus amongst the participants pertaining to the significant role reading plays in ESL learning in Namibian OL classrooms.

This study found that learners who are good readers are more likely to perform well in their examinations than learners who are not good or active readers. The fact that OL learners perform poorly in ESL examinations might correlate with the fact they are not constantly exposed to reading, and are thus struggling to comprehend ideas, detect implications, and find meaning in the texts. Hence, the Ministry of Education needs to develop and implement a clear policy regarding OL reading to ensure that OL learners thrive in ESL in Namibia.

5.2 Methodological reflections on the study

A qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design was used in this study. The sample, which was purposively selected, consisted of eight OL learners and four ESL teachers from four secondary schools in the Khomas education region in Windhoek. Open-ended surveys, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to collect data.

Field notes were particularly helpful in answering these questions. I constantly wrote down everything that I thought and noticed about the process, as well as contradictions and comments of the teachers after the interviews. My field notes helped me to keep track of not only the process, but also to manage adaptation.

My intention was initially to conduct this study in two educational regions, namely the Khomas region, representative of urban areas, and the Oshana region, representative of rural areas. However, according to what I observed during the pilot study, and the findings I obtained from literature on previous research done in rural areas, I was obliged to adjust this goal. For example, in a pilot study done by Töttemeyer et al. (2014), it was revealed that rural learners provided answers based on what the researchers wanted to hear. This phenomenon is called social desirability bias, as explained by Frey (2018). I experienced the same situation while conducting the pilot study in the Oshana region – learners were struggling to autonomously complete open-ended surveys during the pilot study. This wasted too much time as I had to explain questions one by one. Most of the questions, especially those that required explanation, were also left unanswered. I could not be certain that the data would have been valid or reliable. As a result, I

decided to exclude the Oshana region from the actual study and regarded that research as a pilot study. Therefore, the findings are not generalisable to be representative of all Namibian contexts, which I had originally planned to achieve. However, the study does generalise among urban schools and urban learners to a certain extent. Due to the small sample and its nature as a qualitative study, generalisation was not the ultimate aim of the study.

5.3 Personal reflections on the study

I started this PhD study a few months after completing my master's qualification and found this to be an exciting academic journey through which I developed my research knowledge, skills, and competencies. What I found most challenging was adapting the topic, which originally dealt with the role of literature in enhancing ESL learning. I changed the focus of the study to reading, as it was difficult to prove the causal relationship between prescribed literature and language learning. After the research proposal was accepted by the University of Pretoria, the suggestion was made that the scope of the study be broader to include reading, rather than merely literature.

I experienced the review of literature as particularly challenging, as it took me a full year to complete. Writing a literature review was an overwhelming task but it taught me scholarly writing and developed my critical reading and thinking skills. Through distilling literature and collecting and analysing data my perspectives have been moulded to a more complex understanding of the research problem. All children in Namibia will not miraculously start reading –many factors need to be considered to make this happen. It is not only a question of reading/not reading. I learnt that intellectually, a puzzle has many pieces and that to effectively synthesise these pieces testify to a timeous and a complex journey.

Through this study, I also learnt the importance of the lenses used when conducting research. In particular, the pedagogy of multiliteracies provided me with an understanding to view the use of digitally mediated resources such as cellphones as dynamic aids through which reading could become more than just preparation for examinations or, on the other hand, distractors from learning. Social constructivism provided me with an understanding of how struggling readers can learn from their fluent counterparts through scaffolding during group readings. The input hypothesis made me aware that learners needed comprehensive input which was a bit beyond their current level of competence, without being too difficult for their level of development. BICS and

CALP provided me with an awareness that individuals learn a second language in the same manner as they learn their mother tongue, hence OL learners needed to be encouraged to read more in their mother tongue if they were to become effective readers in ESL (cf.2.3.4).

Through this research journey I moulded a new identity as researcher. In July 2018 I presented my research to an academic audience for the first time at the BOLESWANA Conference held in Windhoek. That experience provided a steep learning curve and I was able to benchmark my work with academics from other African countries. I realised that most African countries experienced similar challenges regarding education. It was enlightening to listen to other academics, some of whom I quoted in my study. I also had the opportunity to discuss my study with a student from Swaziland who had just completed her PhD in the same field. Presenting at the conference was a positive experience. When I started this journey I was shy as a presenter, but after taking part in an intellectual discourse on my study my confidence improved so much that today I am a proud and confident presenter. This research experience also improved my time management skills immensely. Being a full-time lecturer, it was challenging being a student at the same time. However, the overall experience was positive and helped me grow as researcher, academic and meaning-making individual.

5.4 Review of the study

5.4.1 Overview of the study

In chapter 1 I present the background and orientation of this study and contextualise it within the ESL learning at Ordinary Level in Namibia. I mention the methodological choices and discuss the analysis employed in the study. Chapter 1 is concluded with an outline of the study.

Chapter 2 provides an extensive review of literature relating to the role reading plays in ESL learning. I start the chapter by describing the phenomenon of reading and the importance of reading in the ESL classroom and beyond, moving from a global to the local perspective in Namibia. Chapter 2 concludes with the description of the conceptual framework of this study, namely the pedagogy of multiliteracies approach by the New London Group (1996), social constructivism by Lev Vygotsky (1978), the Input Hypothesis by Stephen Krashen (1985) and the distinction

between BICS and CALPS by Jim Cummins (1985), which were the different lenses that I chose to engage with the data.

In Chapter 3 I present the research design and methodology used. I describe the significance of using an epistemological paradigm, drawing on interpretivism. An interpretivist paradigm allowed me to interpret and assign meaning to my data. I describe the reasons for my choice of a qualitative case study design, and I explain how data were collected, captured and analysed. I also indicate how I complied with the ethical principles required. Chapter 3 concludes by discussing trustworthiness considered in this study.

In Chapter 4 I present the data analysis, how data were categorised, and how themes were developed, after which I present the interpreted the data. I conclude the chapter by linking the data to the literature review and the conceptual framework used in the study.

In Chapter 5 I summarise the study by presenting a personal and methodological reflection, answers to the research questions, and implications, and recommendations for further research.

5.4.2 Addressing the research questions

In this section I deal with the research questions individually to confirm how they were answered. The main research question guiding this study was: **How can reading enhance English Second Language learning of OL learners in Namibian school?**

The secondary research questions formulated to operationalise the main research question were:

1. What is the nature of the reading culture for OL learners?
2. How do the curriculum and textbooks model reading for OL learners?
3. How do ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in the classroom?
4. What are the challenges pertaining to reading for OL learners?

In the following section I summarise the findings of the study in light of the outlined research questions above.

What is the nature of the reading culture for OL learners?

By using open-ended surveys, OL learners were able to reveal their reading experiences and describe their reading habits. The findings of this study indicate that most of the OL learners were aware of the benefits that reading can offer towards ESL learning; however, the study revealed that the reading habits of OL learners were worrisome. The participants revealed that various factors hampered their ability to build a firm foundation for reading, which included insufficient reading materials, inappropriate reading materials, poor library facilities, a lack of parental involvement, and an examination-oriented educational system.

How do the curriculum and textbooks model reading for OL?

This study revealed that the curriculum did not sufficiently promote the reading culture for OL learners. This was because it was found that the Namibian education system was more examination oriented, and the OL syllabus did not prescribe specific intensive reading materials. The reading passages that the OL learners received, either in their ESL classrooms or during examinations, were usually short essays that were solely aimed at testing their abilities to answer specific, lower-order and direct questions about the content. The reading materials and textbooks commonly used in schools did not represent the real-life worlds of Namibian learners and learners subsequently did not identify with the texts. The study found that most of the reading materials used at OL were from imported textbooks, which were mainly procured to support academic achievements of learners, rather than providing interesting reading materials that would encourage learners to read.

How do ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in the classroom?

Through classroom observations I was able to see how and what kind of reading materials ESL teachers integrated for reading in their ESL lessons. ESL teachers were found to not expose OL learners to reading sufficiently, because they were still entrapped in mono-modal teaching habits. The ESL teachers who participated in this study also revealed that it was challenging to find appropriate reading materials to use in the classrooms, since, in contrast to HL, no textbooks were prescribed for OL. As a result, ESL teachers were obliged to find reading texts from any available source. This resulted in some inappropriate texts used in the ESL classrooms, because the language

used was too advanced for the learners' level of proficiency, or the content was considered to be morally harmful. Such inappropriate reading materials discouraged learners from reading.

The study found that a great deal was required to instil a love of reading in OL learners, to bring them in line with HL learners. The reasoning for introducing a literature component for the HL was based on the fact that literature was found to contribute to learners' intellectual development, and to increase the level of interest in linguistic acquisition, which in turn enhanced their degree of linguistic competence (Simataa, 2014). The above implies that the constant exposure to different reading texts through literature would provide HL learners with the necessary awareness about the target language. The fact that it is offered to HL learners only suggests that the OL learners are deprived of the same skills, since a literature component is not part of the OL syllabus.

What are the challenges pertaining to reading for OL learners?

Based on the findings, numerous challenges regarding reading at OL exist. Like in other African countries, the main challenge was strong oral traditions as opposed to a reading tradition. Namibia was found to be a conversational society, rather than a reading society. Another major challenge was the lack of prescribed reading materials, as well as a lack of formal assessment strategies for OL. The lack of parental support due to traditions and socio-economic reasons was also a problem. Poorly equipped libraries in Namibian schools also did not promote a conducive reading environment, because they contained old reading materials and textbooks that were not based on Namibian content.

5.4.3 Implications and recommendations of the study

This study points to a number of implications for further research. Much still needs to be done concerning poor reading habits among OL learners. This study has established that, according to the participants, some causes of a poor reading culture among OL learners are a lack of reading materials, poor library content, and the use of mono-modal teaching approaches regarding reading. Furthermore, this study indicates that ESL teachers do not expose OL learners sufficiently to

constant reading, as they are still trapped in a traditional way of textual reading. Accordingly, it is suggested that the multiliteracies approach ought to be introduced in ESL classrooms. The use of the multiliteracies approach will mean that learners will be able to not only read textual sources, but also be competent in interpreting symbols, images and technological tools, such as the internet, all of which allow OL learners to read and construct meaning in different ways. Generally, most learners surf the internet every day. Learners may read while online without considering it as reading because they consider reading as something done from a book. Therefore, the internet, which is generally available in Namibia, ought to be utilised to enhance reading of a greater variety of content by Namibian learners.

In addition, the study indicates that ESL teachers are still caught up in the traditional teaching approach, with learners reading to the rest of the class, or learners reading silently, and answering teachers' questions based on the text thereafter. It was observed that sometimes the teachers' approaches were teacher-centred, especially when teachers dealt with learners who were not fluent. In these instances teachers found themselves answering their own questions. Additionally, this study acknowledges that ESL teachers indicated that the OL syllabus lacked direction on how it should be used, especially regarding reading. It is therefore suggested that comprehensive research should be carried out to investigate how novice teachers are being prepared to teach reading in ESL at OL. The proposed research ought to establish the types of workshops and in-service training that novice teachers receive from the advisory teachers to be ready to teach ESL at OL effectively.

This study also shows that the Namibian education system views reading as an examination-oriented assessment, as opposed to developing critical reading skills (cf. 2.2.3.3c). The above has created a situation where many Namibian learners stop reading when they finish Grade 12, because they failed to acquire the habit of reading fiction or non-fiction for pleasure or as a means of improving their lives. It is therefore suggested that the Ministry of Education ensures that the promotion of a reading culture go hand in hand with the promotion of the understanding of reading as a pleasurable activity from the primary education phase.

This study has specified that the current ESL Ordinary Level syllabus is not clear regarding the reading component (cf. 4.5.1). The analysis of the syllabus revealed that the syllabus does not indicate how OL learners are to achieve different reading competencies and does not include

implementation guidelines for ESL teachers. Furthermore, the OL syllabus does not list the reading materials to be used during the reading sessions/classes as opposed to the HL syllabus. It is thus recommended that the current OL syllabus be reviewed to accommodate reading in the same vein as in the HL syllabus. This will allow reading in OL classrooms to be effective and more rewarding.

Moreover, the study indicates that ESL classrooms in the Khomas region are overcrowded (cf. 4.6.4). This is not encouraging, as learners are sometimes obliged to share reading materials, which in turn detracts learners' interest in reading. It is therefore recommended that the Directorate of Education in the Khomas region ought to consider reducing the numbers of learners in ESL classes. This will ensure that ESL teachers are able to pay adequate attention to reading, and indeed pay attention to individual learners.

In addition to overcrowded classrooms, the study has also found that the ESL classrooms are not multimodal (cf. 4.4.1). The latter means that ESL teachers still rely on speaking and writing on the chalkboard during lessons. It is recommended that ESL teachers move away from traditional teaching strategies and introduce different facets of the principles of the multiliteracies approach in their classrooms. This is to ensure that interactions are not merely based on spoken and written language, but on semiotic resources such as audio-visuals that make reading more enjoyable and beneficial to OL learners. Active interventions and critical reading of texts should lead to transformed practice and transformed classrooms.

The study has also shown that most of the textbooks used in ESL classrooms were imported. Imported textbooks were found to be written for global markets and did not reflect the needs of the Namibian learners. It is recommended that ESL textbooks be indigenised.

Lastly, there is a need to strengthen reading practices among OL learners to help them develop a reading culture. Schools should set up reading activities that involve all learners. This can be done through the establishment of different reading activities, such as readers' clubs, classroom libraries, and many more. Once learners realise that they do not have adequate knowledge as they share ideas with their fellow learners through reading activities, they will begin to understand the benefits of reading.

5.4.4 Limitations of the study

The first limitation of this study is that it was confined to four schools from the Khomas education region in Namibia. Therefore, the results do not reflect a national phenomenon and cannot be generalised. Another possible limitation was that respondents did not always answer the interview questions truthfully. It is possible that they answered the questions to appear impartial, rather than responding honestly. Another possible limitation was that teachers might have provided inaccurate information for the sake of appearances, or merely to prove that they understood how to integrate reading in their language teaching.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

The following is suggested for further research:

- Appropriate training on the teaching of reading should be incorporated into teacher training, both at educational institutions and at school level, or through teaching workshops on reading in the ESL classrooms.
- Each school should have enough English reading materials to meet the learners' reading needs. Schools should provide the required reading materials, for example newly published books and supplementary reading books.
- Another study of the same nature could be conducted after the year 2020 when the new curriculum will have been fully implemented at Grade 11. Such a study could determine whether the new curriculum introduced improvements regarding reading at OL, or whether the situation is still the same as with the current curriculum.
- A similar study could be conducted to explore the different avenues for using current technologies in ESL classrooms, such as bring-your-own-device initiatives.
- Lastly, more research should be conducted on other factors affecting reading habits of Namibians. Such a study could be extended to review, for example, the role of ICT policies, disposable income, and culture on reading. The scope of such research could be widened to include participants like graduates, tertiary students, employees, and curriculum developers.

5.6 Contribution of the study

Proponents of ESL studies have argued that reading in ESL classrooms can improve other ESL language skills. The findings in this study support that argument. As discussed earlier, several studies have been carried out regarding factors that contribute to the poor performance of learners in ESL. However, I have not come across studies about the enhancement of reading in ESL learning, specifically regarding OL learners and teachers in Namibia. It is in this regard that this study contributes to the body of knowledge by reminding involved stakeholders in the education fraternity that reading is food for the mind and indeed could contribute not only to ESL learning and acquisition, but to people's minds. This study has shown initiatives that education stakeholders and curriculum developers could implement to promote a love of reading among OL learners. The study further explored ways to enhance reading in Namibian schools at the OL.

Furthermore, a poor reading culture has been reported in many developing countries, of which Namibia is one. This study therefore adds to the existing literature and knowledge on the poor reading culture in other developing countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa (Samtin & Maniam, 2015; Fahlepi, 2018; Ronaldo et al., 2014; Nandimo, 2015; Awe, 2014; Kavi, 2015; Joubert et al., 2014, PIRLS, 2016, Le Roux, 2017). These authors all report that a reading culture becomes well established in a society that values and has an interest in books and reading (cf 2.2.3.2).

5.7 Conclusion

This study sought to understand, explain, and clarify the role of reading in ESL learning among Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibian secondary schools.

The study has shown that effective and focused reading of a variety of texts arouses and reinforces proficiency in language aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing (Simataa, 2014). The study suggests that for a reading culture to emerge and be visible in Namibian schools, pleasurable reading should be more emphasised starting at the primary school phase, and instructional methods should be more interesting in all phases. Similarly, programmes promoting reading meant for the whole community could be reinforced, as reading should eventually be part

of all aspects of life and be available to the whole population, not only to teachers and other educational stakeholders.

Therefore, I contend that fostering a love of reading should start at home at an early age. A positive attitude towards reading from all stakeholders in the education environment (parents, teachers, and the government) is likely to ensure that learners grow up reading for fun and enjoyment, which in turn will lead to reading for knowledge acquisition and information to solve social problems that directly affect learners' livelihoods. Hopefully this study will result in the enhancing of a reading culture among Namibian learners. I concur with Ruterana (2012) who paraphrased the old African saying: "it takes a village to raise a child". Indeed, it takes a nation to develop a reading culture.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: OPEN- ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

OPEN-ENDED SURVEY

I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria undertaking a study on a topic: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language**. I am kindly requesting you to respond to the following questions regarding this topic. All your responses will be treated with outmost confidentiality.

Personal identification (please tick)

- 1. (a) Gender: Male Female
- (b) Grade: 11 12

The nature of the reading culture for OL learners)

1 (a) Could you please tell me why you love/hate reading?

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.....

(b) When did your interests in reading/books start?

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.....

(c) How often do you read and where do you read from?

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2. What do you usually read during your leisure time?

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3. What attracts you to read?

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4. What reading materials do you read?

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5 (a) What story books have you read so far?

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(b) Where did you get them?

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.....

6. What is the reading culture like in your school?

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7. What reading activities do you normally do in class?

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8. What do you think of the reading culture in Namibia?

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9. What challenges prevent you from reading?

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10. What problems do you face when reading?

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11. How does the library at your school help you with reading?

Improvements

1. What kind of reading materials can be used to develop the love of reading among learners in your class?

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.....
2. What type of reading materials do you think can attract learners to read?

.....
.....
3. How the library plays a role in promoting learners' love for reading?

.....
.....
4. How have the following people encouraged you to develop the love of reading?

(a) Teachers

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.....

(b) Fellow learners

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.....

(c) Parents

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.....

Thank you very much for your time!!!

APPENDIX B: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Observation schedule

Participant _____ Grade ____ Subject _____ Length of period ____
Date _____ School _____ Time _____

How ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in class?

- 1. Materials on whiteboards

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- 2. Reading corners in class

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- 3. Reading books available in class

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- 4. Types of reading materials learners read

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- 5. Reading practices learners engage in

.....
.....

- 6. How learners acquaint themselves to reading materials

.....
.....

- 7. How are the textbooks used to enhance reading?

.....

- 8. Library available at school?

.....
.....

9. Types of reading materials in the library

.....
.....

10. How learners access the library?

.....
.....
.....

11. Organization in the library (labelling, shelves, tidiness etc.)

.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview guide protocol for teachers

I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria undertaking a study on a topic: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language**. I am kindly requesting you to respond to the following questions regarding this topic. All your responses will be treated with outmost confidentiality.

Gender_____

Position_____

Qualification_____

Teaching experience_____

Grade taught_____

Date _____

How do ESL teachers expose OL learners to reading in the classroom?

- 1. What kinds of reading exercises do you engage your learners in class?

.....
.....
.....

- 2. How often do your learners read in English lesson?

.....
.....

- 3. How is the reading culture of your learners?

.....
.....
.....

- 4. How do learners get access to the reading materials?

.....
.....

- 5. How do you promote the love of reading among your learners?

.....
.....

- 6. Whose duty is it to develop the learners' passion of reading?

.....
.....
7. What do you think of reading culture in Namibia?

.....
.....

8. Would you attribute your learners' failure in your subject to the nature of reading?

.....
.....

9. What reading strategies should be encouraged by teachers to build a firm reading culture among learners?

.....
.....

10. How are the textbooks used to enhance reading?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for your time!!!!

APPENDIX D: LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

P.O.Box 21679

Windhoek

4th September 2017

Attention: Ms. Sanet Steenkamp
The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education
Windhoek
Namibia

Dear Ms. Steenkamp

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A PHD STUDY IN KHOMAS AND OSHANA EDUCATION REGIONS.

I, Sylvia Ndapewa Ithindi, a PHD (Humanities Education) student at the University of Pretoria hereby wish to request permission to conduct a research study in the Khomas and Oshana Educational Regions which will serve as fulfilment of the requirements of a PHD degree at the University of Pretoria.

The study's title is: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning.** The study will investigate the contribution that reading can make towards learning English as a second language in Namibian secondary schools. Some research has been done on this topic in overseas countries, but I hope to find out what the situation is in secondary schools in Namibia. The study will include the analysis of Grade 11 and 12 ESL Ordinary Level teachers and learners by means of interviews, open-ended surveys, observations and document analysis. This study will assist in

enlightening ESL teachers and other stakeholders of the significant role that reading plays in improving learners' language skills.

The study is scheduled to take place between 1st February 2018 and 31 March 2018 (depending on the ethical clearance from the University). Care will be taken to avoid interruptions of normal school program. Therefore, interviews and open ended survey will be administered at conveniently suitable times that will not disrupt teaching. Interviewing teachers and observing their lessons will take approximately **forty minutes**, while it will take learners **thirty minutes** to complete the open-ended surveys. Participation in the study will be entirely on a voluntary basis and all data collected will be treated confidentially. The findings and conclusions of the study will be made available to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education.

Attached please find the copies of research permission letter and the Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of Pretoria. If there are any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below or via E-mail.

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APPENDIX E: LETTER TO KHOMAS EDUCATION DIRECTOR



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

P.O. Box 21679

Windhoek

4th September 2017

The Director
Khomas Education Region
Windhoek

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A PHD STUDY IN KHOMAS EDUCATION REGION.

I, Sylvia Ndapewa Ithindi, a PHD (Humanities Education) student at the University of Pretoria hereby wish to request permission to conduct a research study in the Khomas Educational Region which will serve as fulfilment of the requirements of a PHD degree at the University of Pretoria.

The study's title is: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning.** The study will investigate the contribution that reading can make towards learning English as a second language in Namibian secondary schools. Some research has been done on this topic in overseas countries, but I hope to find out what the situation is in secondary schools in Namibia. The study will include the analysis of Grade 11 and 12 ESL Ordinary Level teachers and learners by means of interviews, open-ended surveys, observations and document analysis. This study will assist in enlightening ESL teachers and other stakeholders of the significant role that reading plays in improving learners' language skills.

The study is scheduled to take place between 1st February 2018 and 31 March 2018 (depending on the ethical clearance from the University). Care will be taken to avoid interruptions of normal school program. Therefore, interviews and open ended survey will be administered at conveniently suitable times that will not disrupt teaching. Interviewing teachers and observing their lessons will take approximately **40 minutes**, while it will take learners **30 minutes** to complete the open-ended surveys.

Participation in the study will be entirely on a voluntary basis and all data collected will be treated confidentially. The findings and conclusions of the study will be made available to Khomas Education Regional Office.

Attached please find the copies of research permission letter and the Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of Pretoria. If there are any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below or via E-mail.

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

P.O.Box 21679

Windhoek

4th September 2017

The Director
Oshana Education Region
Oshakati

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A PHD STUDY IN OSHANA EDUCATION REGION.

I, Sylvia Ndapewa Ithindi, a PHD (Humanities Education) student at the University of Pretoria hereby wish to request permission to conduct a research study in the Oshana Educational Region which will serve as fulfillment of the requirements of a PHD degree at the University of Pretoria.

The study's title is: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning.** The study will investigate the contribution that reading can make towards learning English as a second language in Namibian secondary schools. Some research has been done on this topic in overseas countries, but I hope to find out what the situation is in secondary schools in Namibia. The study will include the analysis of Grade 11 and 12 ESL Ordinary Level teachers and learners by means of interviews, open-ended surveys, observations and document analysis. This study will assist in enlightening ESL teachers and other stakeholders of the significant role that reading plays in improving learners' language skills.

The study is scheduled to take place between 1st February 2018 -31 March 2018 (depending on the ethical clearance from the University). Care will be taken to avoid interruptions of normal

school program. Therefore, interviews and open ended survey will be administered at conveniently suitable times that will not disrupt teaching. Interviewing teachers and observing their lessons will take approximately **forty minutes**, while it will take learners **thirty minutes** to complete the open-ended surveys.

Participation in the study will be entirely on a voluntary basis and all data collected will be treated confidentially. The findings and conclusions of the study will be made available to Oshana Education Regional Office.

Attached please find the copies of research permission letter and the Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of Pretoria. If there are any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below or via E-mail.

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APPENDIX F: LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Dear Principal

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A PHD STUDY AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am enrolled for my PHD in the faculty of Education. I hereby wish to request permission to conduct a research study in your school.

The topic of my research is: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning.** The study will investigate the contribution that reading can make towards learning English as a second language in Namibian secondary schools. Some research has been done on this topic in overseas countries, but I hope to find out what the situation is in secondary schools in Namibia. The study will include the analysis of data from the Grade 11 and 12 ESL Ordinary Level teachers and learners obtained by means of interviews, open-ended surveys, observations and document analysis. This study will assist in enlightening ESL teachers and other stakeholders of the significant role that reading plays in improving learners' language skills.

If you agree to allow me to conduct research in your school, I will interview two Grade 11-12 ESL teachers for the duration of **40 minutes**. I attached a copy of the interview schedule for your information. Interviews will be conducted at a venue and time that will suit the teachers, but it may not interfere with teaching time. It will be audio taped and transcribed by me for analytic purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information. Teachers will administer the open ended survey to the Grade 11-12 Ordinary learners that will be completed by learners at their own convenient time. It will take learners approximately **30 minutes** to complete the survey. I attached the open ended survey for your perusal. Again, only my supervisor and I will have access to the information from the open-ended survey.

Document analysis of the ESL syllabus and the prescribed textbooks for Ordinary Level will also form part of this research. I will require a copy of the ESL syllabus as well as prescribed ESL

textbooks that are used at Ordinary Level. This information will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor and will be treated as confidential.

I would also like to observe one Grade 11 and one Grade 12 ESL teachers' classes for the duration of **40 minutes**. These observations will be conducted during the English teaching time, and the researcher's role will remain objective during this process. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information. A copy of the observation schedule is attached for your information.

The learners and parents/guardians will receive a letter to inform them about the research that will be conducted. Teachers and learners participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time. The identity of the school and all participants will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know which schools were used in the research and this information will be treated as confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for your school and teachers during data collection and analysis. The information that will be collected will only be used for academic purposes. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. After completion of the study, the materials will be stored at the university's Humanities Education Department according to the policy requirements. In my research report and in any other academic communication, pseudonyms will be used for the school, teachers and learners and no other identifying information will be given.

If you agree to allow me to conduct this research in your school, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor at the numbers given below or via e-mail.

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APPENDIX G: LETTER TO ESL TEACHERS



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Dear teacher

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am enrolled for my PHD in the faculty of Education. I hereby wish to request you to participate in this research.

The topic of my research is: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning.** The study will investigate the contribution that reading can make towards learning English as a second language in Namibian secondary schools. Some research has been done on this topic in overseas countries, but I hope to find out what the situation is in secondary schools in Namibia. The study will include the analysis of Grade 11 and 12 ESL Ordinary Level teachers and learners by means of interviews, open-ended surveys, observations and document analysis. This study will assist in enlightening ESL teachers and other stakeholders of the significant role that reading plays in improving learners' language skills.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about this topic. The interview will take place at a venue and time that will suit you, but it may not interfere with school activities or teaching time and will not take longer than **forty minutes**. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed for analytic purposes.

Document analysis of your ESL syllabus and prescribed ESL Ordinary Level textbooks will also form part of this research. I will require a copy of syllabus as well as all the prescribed textbooks from you. This information will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor and will be regarded as confidential and anonymous.

I would also like to observe your Grade 11 and 12, English class. These observations will be conducted during your choice of English related teaching time, and the researcher's role will remain objective during this process. **I will observe the entire lesson of your choice from the beginning till the end (forty minutes).** The observations will be audio taped and transcribed for analytic purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information.

The learners will also form part of the research. They will be required to complete an open-ended survey during their own convenient time, and submit their completed surveys to you, their English teacher. It will take learners approximately **30 minutes** to complete the open-ended survey. Learners and their parents/guardians will receive letters to inform them about the research. You do not have to participate in this research if you do not want to, and you will not be penalised in any way if you decide not to take part. If you decide to participate, but you change your mind later, you can withdraw your participation at any time.

Your identity will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know your real name, as a pseudonym will be used during data collection and analysis. Your school will not be identified either. The information you give will only be used for academic purposes. In my research report and in any other academic communication, your pseudonym will be used and no other identifying information will be given. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. After completion of the study, the material will be stored at the university's Humanities Education Department according to the policy requirements. If you agree to take part in this research, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via Email.

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APPENDIX H: LETTER TO THE PARENTS/GUARDIAN



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Dear Parent,

I would like to express my deepest appreciation on having agreed to your child to participate in the research project being undertaken at your child's school. My research topic is "**The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning**". This research will entail the observation of your child inside the classroom during English lessons.

Your child will be part of the children in the class I will be observing for a period of two weeks. I will not be teaching your child but I will be present in class when his/her teacher teaches them. The observation will last for **40 minutes**. Your child will also be required to complete the open-ended survey regarding his/her nature and culture of reading, during the child's own convenient time and submit it to their English teacher. It will take your child **about 30 minutes** to complete the open-ended survey.

I would like to promise you that the information obtained from this study will be treated in the strictest confidentiality possible, and it will be used for this research purposes only. Your names and the child's names will not be revealed instead pseudo names will be used.

The information obtained from this research will be made available to your child's school and can be used by the teacher to help your child in being proficient in learning English Second Language. In conclusion I would like to thank you most sincerely in your assistance in this research, and I hope that this research make a contribution of some value in helping teachers understand the role of reading towards the English Second Language Learning .

Yours sincerely,

SN Ithindi

Researcher

Supervisor

Sylvia Ndapewa Ithindi

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Dr. Alta Engelbrecht

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Consent form

If you are willing to allow your child to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent, i.e. that your child participate in this project with your permission and that you understand that he/she may withdraw from the research project at any time. Under no circumstances will the identity of your child be made known to any parties/organisations that may be involved in the research process.

Parent's signature/on behalf of the participant:

Date:.....

Researcher's signature.....:

Date:

APPENDIX I: LETTER TO THE LEARNERS



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Dear learner

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am enrolled for my PHD in the faculty of Education. I hereby wish to request you to participate in this research.

The topic of my research is: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning.** The study will investigate the contribution that reading can make towards learning English as a second language in Namibian secondary schools. Some research has been done on this topic in overseas countries, but I hope to find out what the situation is in secondary schools in Namibia. The study will include the analysis of Grade 11 and 12 ESL Ordinary Level teachers and learners by means of interviews, open-ended surveys, observations and document analysis.

If you agree to participate, you will be required to complete an open-ended survey about this topic. You will have to complete the survey at a venue and time that will suit you, but it may not interfere with school activities and will not take longer than 40 minutes. You will have to submit your completed survey to your English teacher. You will also be part of the learners in the English class I will be observing for a period of two weeks. I will not be teaching you but, I will be present in class when your teacher teaches.

You do not have to participate in this research if you do not want to, and you will not be penalised in any way if you decide not to take part. If you decide to participate, but you change your mind later, you can withdraw your participation at any time. Your identity will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know your real name, as a pseudonym will be used during data collection and analysis. Your school will not be identified either. The information you give will only be used for academic purposes. In my research report and in any other academic communication, your pseudonym will be used and no other identifying information will be given. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. After completion of the study, the material will be stored at the university's Humanities' Education Department according to the policy requirements.

If you agree to take part in this research, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via email.

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Consent form

I, _____ (your name), agree/ do not agree (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research proposal titled: **The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning.**

I understand that I will complete the open-ended survey about this topic for approximately 40 minutes at a venue and time that will suit me, but will not interfere with school activities and learning time.

I understand that, the researcher will be observing our English classes about this topic for the duration of a period according to my teacher's teaching time and the role of the researcher will remain objective and non-invasive. The observations will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.

- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: _____