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**Teachers' Strategies to Promote Reading in English First
Additional Language: A Focus on Challenges and Approaches in
Language Transitioning in a South African Context**

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Abstract

In many countries there is support for learners learning in their mother tongue and then in later years transitioning to English. This transition takes place sooner or later, depending on the language in education policy of a particular country and has implications for language teaching strategies. Transitioning from mother tongue instruction to English as a medium of instruction is an international practice, found in amongst other countries, South Africa. According to the Language in Education Policy (Act 27 of 1997), the transition period is in Grade 4 where English (which is in most cases not the mother tongue of learners) becomes the medium of instruction. This comes with challenges as highlighted in the paper, with a particular focus on reading, presented both in an international and South African context. A theoretical discussion on the implications of transitioning from mother tongue to English (first additional language in a South African context) highlights the challenges to both learners and teachers, and reviews approaches to reading to facilitate the language transition. The paper draws on both the international and South African context, contextualising the Language in Education Policy and implications for transitioning techniques in reading.

Keywords: South African Language in Education Policy, transition, English as a language of learning and teaching, medium of instruction

Introduction

South Africa has a rich language heritage with 11 official languages. However, during the first four years of formal education in primary schools that is Grade R up to Grade 3, learners need to use one Home language of instruction. Subsequently, the Language in Education Policy Act 27 of 1997 says beyond Grade 3, all learners choose one language of teaching and learning (LoLT) and one additional language (Department of Education, 1997). Pretorius (2002) states that the transition from Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase marks a period of hardship to most learners since in Grade 4 the LoLT is English taught to non-mother tongue speakers. Pretorius is of the view that the grade 4 learners at this stage have not yet mastered reading comprehension skills in the mother tongue let alone in English. Introduction of content subjects taught in English by different teachers exacerbates the problem. Taylor (2005) and Graddol (2010) highlight challenges related to English as a language of learning and teaching, a result of the legacy of apartheid (separation) in South Africa, prior to 1994, which promoted English as a Language of Learning and Teaching for all, including English non-mother tongue speakers. This has formed a detrimental environment for reading ability attainment and progress in South African schools.

Literature Review

Challenges: An International Context

Blanton (2007) together with Exley (2007) cited in Westwood (2008) submit that in the United Kingdom (UK) as well as the United States of America (USA) approximately 30% to 35% of learners have difficulties with reading. The American Federation of Teachers (2010) asserted that reading problems are the cause of the high rate of learners leaving secondary school, as they cannot cope with the school curriculum. In 2000, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi estimated that there were 6,000,000 of the 48,000,000 learners registered in schools in the USA with reading problems. Up until 2014, as reflected in an analysis of statistics of reading proficiency by the National Centre for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2014), reading problems of the African-Americans and Hispanics with regard to fourth graders, indicated poor levels of reading aptitude compared to white learners who scored 25 points more in reading. The report further states that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) discovered that fourth graders' reading attainment lags by one or more years in reading accomplishment.

In Zambia learners also use their home language for the first three years of schooling, after which they shift to English as LoLT from grade 4 (Vuzo, 2012). Vuzo is of the view that the transition in grade 4 impacts negatively on learners' reading and writing skills, as they have not adequately developed reading and writing competences. Wilson and Peterson (2006) propose that learning to

read and write proficiently is the groundwork for successful academic achievement across the curriculum. Subsequently it is the goal of education that all learners should be adequate in reading and writing. Conversely, a vast number of learners are still unable to achieve this goal.

Other African countries that reflect challenges due to transitioning include Zimbabwe and Namibia. Of the 172,698 learners who sat for the “O” level examinations in 2012 in Zimbabwe, only 31,767 (18.4%) passed with at least five subjects. English was amongst the three subjects at the bottom of the rank (Gonda, 2013). Makuwa (2004) cites a UNICEF Report (2004) that reflects that in Namibia, only one child out of fifteen is able to read before they reach Grade 6 or Grade 8.

The South African Context

In 2001 a report by the South African Department of Education confirmed that Grade 3 learners in African schools performed poorly in literacy with 39% of Grade 6 learners achieving 35% for language (DoE, 2001). Statistics from the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring between 14 African countries in 2000 to 2002 reflected that South African learners managed to get merely 36.7% in reading at Grade 6 (Mothibeli, 2005). The 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) indicated that almost 80% of South African learners in primary schools in grade 4 do not have basic reading skills. South African Grade 4 learners achieved the lowest mean scores compared to other countries who participated (Mohlala, 2012). The Annual National Assessment (ANA) is one of the initiatives by the South African Department of Basic Education to improve literacy and numeracy in South African schools. The findings of ANA in 2014 revealed that progress of Grade 4 EFAL language learners nationally was still unsatisfactory in both literacy and numeracy (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2014). The poor results were attributed to learners’ inability to read with comprehension (DBE, 2014). Naledi Pandor the former Minister of Education launched a campaign on the 8th March 2008 to improve learner performance in reading of all South African learners (DoE, 2008a). In addition, the National Reading Strategy launched a campaign in 2008 to promote reading across the curriculum, with the intention to instill a reading culture amongst learners and teachers by a way of providing support and resources, and to promote a nation of lifelong readers (DoE, 2008b). Consequently, the Department of Basic Education’s Action Plan for 2014 described 27 national goals that deal with the attainment of better school results. Despite these initiatives, reading is still a problem especially in schools where learners transition to English as a language of learning and teaching in grade 4. The current Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga stated that it was obligatory for learners in the Foundation Phase to acquire appropriate reading skills in order to be successful for the rest of their school careers (Motshekga, 2010).

Many Black South African grade 4 learners face language barriers since they experience cognitive difficulties in understanding English (Probyn, Murray,

Botha, Boyta, Brooks and Westphal (2002). For many African learners, English is not used at home. They predominantly use their mother tongue in their homes and environments since they have little direct contact with English home language speaking people (Probyn et.al, 2002). Owen-Smith (2012) echoed that learners in Black South African schools are struggling with reading because they use English in the classrooms only. Owen-Smith further states that learners in the classroom situation do not perform well especially in their reading and literacy tasks. Foncha (2013) concurs that those learners who are not familiar with the language of learning and teaching in the classroom scenario (that is English) in South African schools or non-mother tongue learners are unlikely to perform well. Foncha also argues that the capability to read is imperative for personal, social, and economic well-being.

The question of mismatch between the mother tongue and LoLT poses a challenge with specific reference to South Africa (Vuzo, 2012). Motala (2013) in his research established that language is one of the obstacles to a learner's success. Hill (2012) declares that the quality of education in South Africa raises concerns since non-mother tongue learners use English as LoLT in schools.

The Importance of the Ability to Read

Teale and Yokota (2003) postulate that reading is one of the four language skills in which learners need to be proficient in their earliest years in informal schooling in order to prepare for formal learning in school and to thrive well in life. Read Educational Trust (2010) asserts that in any nation, the preliminary years of primary school are critical, since it is the time to develop reading. Read Educational Trust (2010) further states that the learners are still excited with everything they read which allows them to have a level of literacy and numeracy by the time they start formal schooling. Therefore, the capability to read plays a crucial role in all areas of learning in the school curriculum. Literacy skills do not only define school success but also influence an individual's chances of getting a better job that is satisfying beyond school that will endorse self-assurance with financial stability (Westwood, 2008). The ability to read which forms the basis of all learning is an indispensable component in the improvement of countries and their inhabitants during the era of a globalized world (Modisaotsile, 2012). The teaching of reading has been an issue with many researchers

Approaches to the Teaching of Reading

Raven (2003) and Wheldall (2006) cited in Westwood (2008) suggest explicit and direct teaching of phonic decoding skills for beginning readers in order to become confident, independent readers. Berninger (2003) observed that explicit and direct teaching of phonic decoding skills, concurrently with

explicit instruction produce the best results especially when teaching low achieving learners.

Reading Approach

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) states that reading instruction focuses on five basic skills, namely: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and text comprehension. These are discussed.

Phonemic Awareness

Brooks (2013) defines phoneme as a distinctive speech sound, which makes a difference to the meaning of a word. Brooks (2013) further says phonemic awareness assists the child to master the alphabetic principle in order to be able to understand that the visually denoted letters of the alphabet represent the phoneme segments in words thus making the child the best predictor of early reading skills. The teachers should teach phonemes clearly with an endeavor to enhance the promotion of developing literacy skills. Adams (1990) believes that lack of phonemic awareness leads to learning difficulties associated with reading and spelling. Center (2005), asserts that one-third of foundation readers show difficulty in reading since they have poor level of phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness plays an essential role in the development of reading.

Reading is a comprehensive assignment; hence, it entails a large number of cognitive abilities in its development. According to Louis, Kroog, Zuk, Winner and Schlaug (2011) phonological awareness is the way learners observe, hear and understand how the different patterns and sounds of spoken language and oral language are broken down into patterns in order to separate sounds and syllables. For example, the word “cat” is made up of three individual sounds or phonemes: /k/ /a/ /t/.

The sounds of words help the learners to be able to recognize written words from what the learners know from the spoken form Yopp and Yopp (2009) say phonological processing is imperative for linguistic purposes and academic success for efficient phonological processing. Learners should be able to use phonological information to process oral language as well as written language at school and beyond school level. However, Yopp and Yopp (2009) further state that phonological processing is the ability of how learners relate to phonological awareness and phonic developments that are the essential elements to imminent reading and writing accomplishments.

Phonics Instruction

Torgerson (2003) states that phonics teaching uses sounding-out of words. For reading, this refers to the letters in printed words followed by blending the sounds to produce a spoken word, which the learner should recognize. For

example, when sounding out the word *bake* as /b/ and /ake/ rather than /b/ /ā/ /k/. Grade 4 learners would have to remember that /a/ sound is long and the /e/ is silent (Hines, 2009). Ehri (2005) says phonics instruction within a broad literacy curriculum have a statistically significant positive effect on reading accuracy. Eldredge (2005) agrees that learning and using phonic skills as the ability to associate letters with sounds for decoding words in print rely entirely upon good phonemic awareness and good teaching. Teachers should teach phonics thoroughly to enhance reading skills.

Reading Fluency

Basaran (2013) states that one of the components of reading is fluency, which is the rate of how text is read with accuracy and expression. Samuels (2007, 564) concurs that reading fluency is composed of word identification accuracy, pacing, and prosody to encourage reading comprehension. Paige, Rasinski, Magpuri-Lavell and Smith (2014) state that fluency has an impact on reading with comprehension of a text. In the same vein Kuhn, Rasinski and Zimmerman (2014) say irrespective of the best instruction, a number of grade 4 EFAL learners still have trouble with fluency.

Reading of words in a text with accuracy suggest that the learner is fluent in reading and has the skill of matching letters and blending them correctly to sounds in order to pronounce words. Paige et.al. (2014) state that the recognition of fluency in reading can start with accuracy in identifying words, which is the basis for appropriate pacing, and thereafter the reading with comprehension of text as reflected in prosody.

Glavach (2011, 1) says prosody is the “emotional part of speech,” which includes rhythm, intonation, and patterns of language. Deeney (2010) defines prosody as a reader’s ability to read smoothly, with appropriate phrasing and expression that entails the elements of tone, rhythm, parsing and inflection. Deeney (2010) states that appropriate phrasing is the illustration of reading with comprehension. Roll, Lindgren, Alter and Horne (2012) concur that prosody is the putting together of the text into significant phrases in order to enhance the learners’ reading with comprehension. Kuhn, Lindgren, Alter and Horne (2012, 234), explain prosody as the art of the development of reading skill. It suggests that the learner is competent enough to gain further knowledge in terms of number of words (Paige et al, 2014). Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton and Johnston, (2012) are of the view that learners who are fast readers are in a position to remember what they have read. Consequently, learners who have acceptable pace while reading tend to have good flow while reading. Prosody while reading plays a vital role hence reading with expression forms the cognitive framework showing that you understand what you read (Raynor, Pollatsek, Ashby and Clifton Jr., 2012). Paige et.al. (2014) assert that learners who make use of applicable prosody are likely to comprehend what they have read.

Vocabulary Instruction

According to Gove and Cvelich (2010, 5) vocabulary refers to oral and written knowledge of words and their meanings. It has been observed that English First Additional Language learners make vocabulary mistakes repeatedly, three times more as compared to grammatical errors. Further, vocabulary errors might lead to the miscommunication of what the learners want to say, as this will lead to semantic interference (Gass and Selinker, 2008). Vocabulary errors affect meaning, unlike grammatical errors. An example: “Can you with me come?” Whereas the sentence is grammatically incorrect, the intention is understood. The vocabulary error in the following sentence impacts on the communication, in the sense that the opposite of the intended meaning is related: “I don’t like the silence.” Siren is substituted by silence, which gives the opposite meaning. The examples emphasize that vocabulary instruction is important so as to promote reading with comprehension to Grade 4 EFAL learners (Hall, Burns and Edwards, 2011). It involves explaining word meanings to children and enlarging their word knowledge.

The lack of knowledge of vocabulary not only affects reading comprehension but oral comprehension is also affected since it relies on vocabulary knowledge (Gass and Selinker, 2008). Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007), suggest strategies for acquiring knowledge by using vocabulary instruction to promote reading skills in the intermediate phase with reference to Grade 4 EFAL learners. These include mnemonic, as well as the direct instruction of word meanings. Learners can make use of dictionaries and thesauruses to find the meanings of words. This enhances their vocabulary since learners are able to analyze the word parts such as prefixes, suffixes and roots. Hall et.al. (2011), concur that building of vocabulary is essential for learners since they learn new words to promote reading with comprehension. Learners can enhance their vocabulary whilst listening to the others when narrating stories they have read from the storybook reading (August & Snow, 2007).

Text Comprehension Instruction

Center (2005) contends that the development of reading depends on the effective use of language. Usually, there are three substantial functions of language namely; telling, thought development, and comprehension. The aim of reading comprehension is to obtain information, relate the information while communicating fruitfully in order to accomplish academic success (Cain & Oakhill, 2007). Learners need to read with comprehension in order to be proficient readers and progressive in the society they live (Cain & Oakhill, 2007). Reading comprehension involves inferences, linking ideas coherently, scrutinizing the validity of claims with a critical stance, and sometimes understanding the motives of authors (McNamara, 2011). Learners learn the skill of reading that affects most of their future learning practices, during their elementary education. Subsequently, intermediate phase teachers have a major

role to play to enhance reading and comprehension skills to the learners (McNamara, 2011).

There is a relationship between reading and listening comprehension. In order to read a language with comprehension, learners need to understand the spoken form of the language (McNamara, 2011). Teaching reading comprehension entails discussions in the classroom to improve learners understanding of what they have read. The teacher needs to ask questions from the text so that active participation of learners into rich discussion is taken into consideration to improve teaching and learning (Duke & Martin, 2008).

Whole School Reading

Huber and Muijs (2010) promote a whole school reading strategy for motivating learners to establish a reading culture. This involves the setting up of support structures with the intention to assist learners who are struggling with reading. Resources such as libraries with books appropriate to the learners' age, together with reading clubs and periods specifically set aside for reading are part of the whole school reading strategy. Literature reflects that whole school reading should involve everybody in the school so as to improve reading and reading comprehension among learners at schools. This is not only the responsibility of the English teacher (Scott, 2010). Principals, heads of department and teachers should work as a team in order to cultivate a school culture that values reading (Fitzgerald, 2010).

Challenges Influencing Reading: South Africa

South African teachers face many challenges when it comes to teaching and promoting reading in Grade 4. These challenges impact negatively on learners' educational progress, including reading competency. These are discussed in this section.

Big Classroom Size

Over crowdedness of classrooms is not uncommon in South Africa schools, especially in the rural areas which are also poorly resourced. As a result of the large number of students, the most common teaching method used by most teachers whilst teaching reading is chorus reading, where learners do reading simultaneously (Kewaza, 2013). This impacts negatively on the learners' reading development. The lesson becomes social rather than academic learning in purpose. The teacher is not in a position to identify learners who cannot read as they read at the same time (Gibbons, 2006 as cited in Marshall 2015). The questions a teacher asks in a chorus group are a set of "yes" or "no" questions which signal the participation of a learner without understanding. The teacher will raise the tone when asking the question, which emphasizes the accented syllable. The learners will complete the stressed syllable of the given word. For

example, if the answer to the question is the word “complete”. The teacher will raise his/her tone by saying (com-) to the learners who will chorus the rest of the word (Chick, 1996 as cited in Marshall 2015). The teaching and learning process in overcrowded classrooms in the lower classes impact negatively in reading as big classes are not conducive to teaching and learning. Teachers are unable to apply individualization in order to assist those learners who are struggling with reading, thus limiting the learner–teacher interaction as well as pupil-pupil interaction. Undoubtedly, reading is vital to enhance effective language learning in order to expand one’s proficiency to acquire new skills and knowledge. However, this is difficult to achieve in a big classroom setting, as the teacher is limited to provide individual motivation and monitoring learner’s attendance and helpful feedback to individual learner’s needs.

Lack of Textbooks and Learning Materials/Lack of Resources

As indicated previously, South African schools, especially in rural areas, lack resources. This contributes to the difficulty in improvement of reading in schools. Goldenberg (2008), as cited by Spaul (2013a) confirms that lack of resources can hinder the development of reading. The Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE) (2013, 3) cited in Spaul (2013b) concurs that South African learners lack improvement in reading, including in Grade 4, stating that the “South African education system is grossly inefficient, severely underperforming and egregiously unfair.” In a National School Effectiveness Study (NSES, 2007) for Grade 3-5 as cited by Taylor (2011), the mean scores for Grade 4 EFAL learners in English were 27%.

Perry (2008) confirmed that some schools in rural areas teachers experience challenges in gaining access to books on time, and they are not enough. Perry further purports that the limitation of books cause the learners to have less opportunity to read for enjoyment. In the same vein Pretorius and Currin (2010) submit that South African schools are still lacking in resources, especially storybooks and classroom readers. Kewaza (2013) says Grade 4 teachers usually use the traditional learning materials in the classes since they normally use chalkboards and wall charts. Many schools also do not have modern technology, which may assist in alleviating the problem. Failure of delivery of textbooks to school was identified in the PIRLS (2011), observing that Grade 4 EFAL learners in rural schools lagged as compared to those learners schooling in urban areas where books are mostly delivered on time. Howie, van Staden and Zimmerman (2012) echoed that learners who are in the rural areas lag in their reading competence as compared to children in township schools which are situated in urban areas.

Lack of Infrastructure

Lack of infrastructure impacts not only on reading in English, but on education in general. Without adequate learning infrastructure, the teaching of English in general and of reading and writing in particular can be very difficult.

In some areas, classrooms are in a state of dilapidation. Classrooms are made of pre-fabricated materials, rather than bricks and mortar. These classrooms are therefore cold during the winter and very hot in summer. This environment is not conducive to teaching and learning. Poor classroom infrastructure is shown in the Figure 1 and Figure 2 below. Infrastructure contributes to the quality of the learning and teaching physical environment.

Figure 1. *Poor Classroom Infrastructure*



Source: Adapted from Bungula incubator (2013): Eastern Cape darkest heart (de Waal 2013 cited in Khumalo & Mji, 2014)

Figure 2. *Poor Classroom Infrastructure*



Source: Adapted from Bungula incubator (2013): Forgotten schools of the Eastern Cape left to rot (John, 2013 cited in Khumalo & Mji, 2014)

The pictures depict the conditions of infrastructure in some rural schools

Cultivating a Reading Culture

Reading underpins other academic skills (Nssien, 2008). It equips learners with understanding, balanced information and knowledge. The environment plays a role in the learners' reading development therefore; home or school, peers, parents and classrooms are persons and places influencing the development of a child's reading culture (Nwabueze & Iwekpeazu, 2011). Cultivation of a reading culture in schools necessitates learners' identification as readers who are capable and prepared to involve themselves in reading beyond school-enforced readings, thus going an extra mile on their own. Studies have shown that there is a relationship between leisure reading and reading achievement (Samuels, 2007). Subsequently, Nwabueze and Iwekpeazu (2011) concur that despite the cultural backgrounds and situation, different learners need to enjoy reading for pleasure thus enhancing their reading skills. Learners will be able to motivate themselves without the intervention of teachers. A reading culture should be cultivated amongst grade four learners so that they will become better-educated citizens.

Role of Parents in Promoting Reading Culture

As previously indicated, learners need to be encouraged to develop a reading culture, as part of their reading development. Parents have been identified as an influence in this regard (Mohlala, 2012). Pretorius and Machet 2004 cited in Singh (2009, 103) concur, "Reading bedtime stories to children enables them to develop an interest in reading". Parents have the task to instill the culture of pre-reading to their children at home by reading stories. Home is a place where primary education takes place. Subsequently, children will learn sharing of reading amongst peers at home and at school (Mohlala, 2012). Mohlala believes that learners will develop the love for reading if parents expose them to reading at an early age. Children who develop a culture of reading books for fun and pleasure become enthusiastic readers. Mohlala (2012) suggests that parents should have home libraries to enhance their children's reading skills. However, there is a lack of parents' involvement in their children's education due to many factors. Illiteracy especially in poorer and rural areas and long and exhausting work hours are two such factors. Children are often left in the care of grandparents or others.

Poor-economic Background

South African families have both advantaged and disadvantaged economic backgrounds that contribute to the difficulty in progress of promoting a reading culture in the home. As previously indicated, some homes have illiterate or semiliterate backgrounds where parents are unable to read to their children. These homes also lack resources such as home libraries. Children from more

advantaged economic backgrounds perform better at school especially with regard to English reading (Howie et.al, 2012). Howe is of the view that learners from a more advantaged economic background find it easier to read as they are exposed to the reading of books at an earlier age. Pretorius and Machet (2004) concur that learners who are from well –resourced backgrounds are liable to attain better reading skills than learners who are coming from homes with high levels of poverty.

Strategies to Promote Reading

Extensive Reading

Learners need to understand the meaning of words in order to realize how the letters and sounds fit together. The learners have to acquire both appreciation and literacy skills, which are essential to learning how to read so that they will be able to understand the connection between letters, words and print. Extensive reading encourages learners to read at their own pace. Extensive reading allows learners to do reading even outside the school in order to enhance their reading skills (Noltemeyer, Joseph & Kunesh, 2013)

Reading outside school helps the learners to keep contact with English whilst they are not at school. Van der Walt (2010) believes that an English reading programme that is tailored to suit the learners' individual needs should reinforce learners' intensive reading. Extensive reading should be supported by the whole school in order for proficient readers.

Phrase Drill-reading Strategy

Phrase drill allows the teacher to do an error- correction in a way that will not offend the. The teacher has to repeat the reading so that the learner can be in a position to repeat reading of the relevant text correctly. An error-correction procedure should be deployed when reading is repeated. The teacher should listen to learners while reading a passage aloud, thereafter, look for the words pronounced incorrectly by the learners while reading (Noltemeyer et al, 2013). The teacher should correct the pronunciation of the words and allow the learner to repeat the correct word three times. Subsequently, the teacher should allow all the learners to repeat the whole reading passage once they have mastered the pronunciation of the word. Noltemeyer et al. (2013) believe that phrase drill is effective and efficient with learners who find difficulty in word recognition hence, it will help them to learn more words in less time.

Prompting and Error Correction Strategy

Teachers should use of verbal prompts in order to assist learners to read words accurately. Verbal prompts afford the opportunity of scaffolding. Learners will be able to correct the errors until they become proficient readers. Learners

will apply the prompt and error correction strategy up until they are able to read and comprehend what they are reading (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui and Tarver, 2004).

Shaping/Reinforcement Reading Strategy

In order to strengthen the right behaviours teachers need to reinforce it, therefore, teachers should reinforce reading behaviours so that learners can become proficient readers (Carnine et.al, 2004). In order for the grade 4 learners to learn how to read with comprehension should provide reinforcers so that learners should be able to make accurate responses so that they will finish the tasks correctly (Carnine et al, 2004). Teachers should explain clearly the correct aspect of the response so that learners focus their attention on the aspect.

Modeling/Demonstration Reading Strategy

Teachers need to model appropriate reading to the learners. Learners are good in observing; teachers have to read first so that the learners can imitate the reading behaviour. Teachers should try making one-to-one letter–sound correspondences while modeling reading the words that are difficult. For example, the word “run” is made up of three individual sounds or phonemes: /r/ /u/ /n/ (Ahmadi, 2013).

Paired Reading Strategy

Brock (2007) believe that pairing a learner who is having difficulty in reading with a talented reader motivates learners to read with friends hence they are able to talk about the book as they take turns. Teachers should allow learners to choose easy and interesting material that are age appropriate so that they will examine the book together and guess what the book is likely about just by looking at the pictures. This strategy boosts the ego and confidence of learners whilst on the other hand instills the culture of reading and promoting fluency in reading together.

The Shared Reading Strategy

In shared reading, the teacher reads together with a group of learners. Smith (cited in Siyave, 2011) believes that shared reading is a non-threatening way to learners and it enhances the language skills of those who are having reading problems. It is the duty of the teacher to read the story to the learner whilst they both look at a book together. The same applies to parents at home where they will read the storybook to their children (Wessels, 2011). Wessels further recommends that it is the teacher makes school reading lessons interesting and exciting. Teachers need to motivate learners to do more reading by rewarding the ones who are progressing well. The learners will develop the

love of reading and ultimately they will read for enjoyment whilst developing fluency in reading and enhancing vocabulary at the same time. Msimango (2012) concurs that shared reading makes learners to become confident and believe in themselves. Msimango further states that learners become highly motivated as they learn more words.

Peer Mentoring Strategy

The peer group plays a major role in supporting culture of reading (Foncha, 2013). Learners become comfortable when they relate to other peers. Hence, they develop friendship with others once they come to school so that they have a sense of attachment and belonging (Foncha, 2013). Grade 4 learners can develop a reading club to enhance reading amongst them where they exchange books among themselves in a way to acquire knowledge through their interactions and language usage (Foncha, 2013). Peers can develop the habit of bringing books from their home libraries to school so that everybody can have access to reading and relate the stories they have read to their peers. Paired reading is encouraged, hence it is a well-evaluated method recommended to improve reading skills (Brooks, 2013). Proficient reading will occur that later develop to dependent reading (Foncha & Sivasubramaniam, 2014).

The Teacher

In addition to the child's home, the school environment is the second home for the child. Therefore, teachers are instrumental in the life and developmental stages of the child. The school must provide a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning in order to promote reading to Grade 4 EFAL learners. Teachers must encourage learners to read by motivating them hence, the duty of the teachers is to promote love and instill the culture of reading as a means to overcome the challenges and obstacles that learners could encounter in the process (Trelease, 2006). Westwood (2008) says each school has the duty to ensure high standards and implement effective teaching methods with relevant resources. The classroom environment must cultivate a climate of providing room for promoting reading. Nel and Muller (2010) believe that if the knowledge from the teacher's side is incomprehensible due to the limitation of English proficiency this can hamper the progress of learning to read. Lemmer and Manyike (2012) suggest strategies to improve English language proficiency.

The reading tasks given to learners need to be carefully selected by the teachers. The tasks need to be age appropriate as they can have a negative impact on the learner's ability. Wray and Medwell (2002) believe that the nature of the tasks set for the learners can influence their reading achievement. Teachers need to see to it that the contents of the tasks given to the learners match the learners in order to promote the teaching of reading. DuToit (2009) states that teaching should involve the activation of relevant ideas already known to learners in order to assist them to construct new knowledge. Brock (2007) concurs that teaching relies on the current knowledge and ideas learners

have already acquired. Consequently, the teachers have to detect the way learners think in order to channel their thinking towards the objective knowledge accessible in the curriculum. If the teacher fails to channel the thinking of the learner towards the target knowledge, a variety of things can go wrong (DuToit, 2009). Taber (2009) believes that when teachers are dealing with abstract concepts they should devise means to assist learners to make connections that could be relevant to the lesson by using simulations, correlations and metaphors. Subsequently, effective constructivist teaching will take place by focusing on how knowledge building takes place in the mind of the learner whilst the teacher guides and supports the learner through knowledge construction process. Vygotsky (1978) states that meaningful learning takes place when teaching is inclined beyond the knowledge that is currently known and understood but within the reach of existing knowledge and understanding in order for the learners to be able to learn new material in their lives. Vygotsky (1978) believes that in each class teachers should consider different existing levels of development and different capabilities.

Constant Reading

Hinkel (2005) says learners who read constantly acquire new reading skills in their lives as they learn new vocabulary in order to be able to use complex grammatical structures. Krashen cited in Hinkel (2005) believes that learners who read a lot become fluent readers as they acquire and develop linguistic structures.

Reading Aloud

Minskoff (2005) says reading aloud helps to improve reading comprehension whilst assisting learners to explore new strategies. Reading aloud is a common practice among primary schools hence; there is a need for the learners to read at an early stage in their lives (Little & Hines, 2006). The grade 4 learners need to spend time with their teachers and peers so that they can read stories aloud in the classroom. Trelease (2006) believes that teachers in the classroom should model reading and support learners while they are reading aloud together. Trelease further states that teachers should model reading for enjoyment, fun, more of an entertainment and arouse learner's curiosity in the process in a way to inspire learners. Learners will therefore be eager and be motivated to read on their own.

Classroom Procedures for Teaching Reading

Pre-Reading/Before Reading

Moreillon (2007) says in pre-reading it is where learners activate prior knowledge in order to be able to predict what is going to come in a text.

Therefore, learners need to identify the type of text. Gee (2004) states that socio-cultural context can influence the reader in the classroom. A child who is coming from a community where reading is not their culture becomes a problem as the child will show poor reading skills. The school should take responsibility to instill reading culture to the child.

During Reading

During reading learners should make inferences of what they read. Learners should guess meanings of the words while reading from the text. During reading learners should identify the main and supporting idea in a paragraph. Monitoring of reading should take place where a teacher should guide the learners and peer mentoring should take place. Paired reading should be encouraged under the supervision of the teacher in charge.

After Reading

After reading, the teacher should clarify the missing points and the words the learners did not understand during reading. The time for questions from both teachers and learners should be set aside. Thereafter learners should summarize what they have read from the texts to indicate that they have read the text with comprehension.

Discussion

The paper has focused on the challenges that teachers and learners are faced with in the context of South Africa. The implementation of Language in Education Policy Act 27 of 1997 to facilitate transitioning from Home language to English First Additional Language in Grade 4 is a challenge to both learners and teachers given the context as outlined. Although various reading approaches on promoting the teaching of reading are presented, literature reflects the existence of poor levels of English first additional language reading comprehension amongst Grade 4 learners globally as well as in South Africa. For teaching and learning of English reading in grade 4 to be successful and for learners to become proficient readers, learners need to be able to read well in EFAL as it is the LoLT for most learning areas in South African schools. Reading is viewed as an important aspect to the acquisition of knowledge and for successful integration into a technology-enhanced society.

Conclusion

For the effective implementation of the Language in Education Policy Act 2 of 1997, towards the transitioning from Home Language to English First Additional Language as Language of Learning and in the South African

Educational context, various areas for critical redress have been identified in this paper. Teachers, parents and peers should be in a position to cultivate a culture of reading by establishing reading clubs, motivate and encourage leisure hours for reading for fun and enjoyment in order for learners to sharpen their intellect so that grade 4 learners will reach a point where they will be able to analyze, synthesize and have critical thinking. Reading at home is encouraged in the development of the culture of reading. This calls for interventions at home levels in order to implement a culture of reading. Parents are the best teachers, and need to practice early reading stories to their children. This paper recognizes this challenge, though it does not directly address it. Teachers at schools should promote an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning so that reading should take place. Teachers should be adequately trained to employ teaching strategies to enhance reading skills to learners. Schools need to be resourced, inclusive of school libraries, to provide functional educational environments to facilitate teaching and learning. This speaks to government intervention in the enhancement of school environments. Peer mentoring is another important area that requires focus. Teachers should be trained to encourage and facilitate peer-mentoring, so that learners form reading groups where they will be able to discuss what they have read and ultimately once exchange reading material amongst themselves. The transitioning of learners and the promotion of reading in English cannot be adequately addressed without interventions, some of which are highlighted in this paper.

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