Analysing Strategies used by Teachers in the English Reading Instruction for Grade Three Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners at Selected Special Needs Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia

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Abstract:
This paper sought to analyze the pedagogic strategies teachers used to teach grade three deaf and hard of hearing learners to read English language. The objective of the study was to analyze pedagogic strategies teachers use in the English reading instruction for deaf and hard of hearing children at selected special needs schools in Lusaka district, Zambia. This research adopted two learning theories, which included constructivism and multimodality theory. As a descriptive qualitative research design, data was collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom lesson observations. The study sample consisted of seven (7) teachers and twenty-five (25) pupils totaling to thirty-two (32) respondents. To analyze the data thematic analysis was used. The findings established that teachers teaching deaf and hard of hearing learners reading in English employed a number of strategies in their reading instruction. The pedagogic strategies included picture reading, picture and word matching, lip reading, repeated class reading, fingerspelling, look and say, storytelling, translanguageing, sandwiching, interactive whole class reading, role play, language games, demonstration, miming, letter or word matching, question and answer, teaching using concrete or real objects and teaching learners Zambian sign language. The study concluded that while relevant strategies were used, teachers needed more capacity building in teaching deaf learners. The study therefore recommended refresher courses for in-service teachers in inclusive education practices.

Keywords: Pedagogic, strategies, reading, deaf and hard of hearing, multimodal.

Introduction
The ability to read and write is essential and a fundamental skill to all academic success in all areas of study (Mkandawire, 2022). This means that literacy is fundamental in the educational progress of a child. Thus, children who lack or are delayed in the development of literacy skills find it difficult to participate freely in a classroom learning environment (World Bank Group, Making Inclusion Work: Module 5). This assertion applies to children who are hard of hearing or born deaf and are usually delayed in language acquisition through multiple challenges in communication skills. In most cases, the delay is as a result of not detecting the disability early, having hearing parents or parents’ denial of the child’s condition and not enrolling the children in school which is very common in Zambia. This alone greatly affects and disadvantages deaf...
children in early reading and other literacy skills. Below the National Literacy Framework (2013) clearly states the importance of teaching early grade reading:

Unlike learning to speak a language, learning to read is not a naturally-developing skill; it requires an adaptation of the brain to be able to recognize letters and words (Wolf, 2007). Carefully planned instruction is necessary; reading must be taught as a subject in schools; and time on task is essential if learners are to develop the cognitive processes to become fluent readers (2013:9).

The foregoing statement shows the importance of teaching learners to read in a particular language. Unlike hearing children who acquire a language naturally and already have great exposure in a particular language at the beginning of formal education, deaf and hard of hearing children on the other hand are delayed in language acquisition which later affects their language and literacy skills. According to Tongwa and Atemnkeng (2019) citing Matkin (1999), a delay in the development of a language in the early stages of a child at preschool level causes comprehension, expressive communication and learning problems. Since reading is a language-based activity that requires one to be fluent and understand the language, deaf and hard of hearing children face a lot of challenges in learning how to read because they do not know the spoken language and have been exposed to a different language which uses signs. In addition, literature has shown that children learn to read better when taught reading in a language they know and are familiar with or can speak fluently in (Matafwali, 2010).

More so, as argued by Marschark and Harris (1996) sign language is a language on its own with its own vocabularies, morphologies, and syntax. Thus, teaching deaf and hard of hearing learners as observed by Megawati (2020), requires a lot of effort and persistence on the part of the teacher because of the learners’ innate characteristics like short memory, unstable emotions, and differences in hearing levels. For this reason, teaching reading in English to deaf pupils is a challenging and complex task that requires careful consideration of their unique needs and learning styles. English teachers are required to know how to use the appropriate strategies in teaching reading to deaf learners and hard of hearing learners. In addition, appropriate instructional methods and resources, could help deaf learners to develop strong reading vocabulary and written vocabulary skills which could enhance language proficiency in English. Hence, the teachers are encouraged to be creative and innovative in their lesson preparation and lesson delivery in the classroom especially that some strategies used to teach hearing impaired learners will be different from those used when teaching learners with no hearing impairment (MOE, 2021).

Language is a prerequisite for literacy for all children, and, therefore, teaching a child who is deaf how to read requires specific knowledge and skills on deaf pedagogy. Research has shown that when children who are deaf or hard of hearing have skilled teachers who have mastered sign language and appropriate teaching methods, can be successful in developing language and literacy skills which are critical to achieving academic success (USAID ‘Lets Read’ project, 2021:2).

Wolf (2007) supports the aforementioned argument by stating that deaf or hard of hearing learners do not learn words incidentally; but do so by receiving explicit instruction from the teacher. This means that the instruction of teaching reading should be carefully planned by teachers. Teachers need to carefully consider using appropriate strategies, activities and develop or choose teaching and learning materials that will benefit all the learners during instruction. In addition, as argued by Akpan and Beard, (2016: 396) “the major responsibility for today’s educators should focus on providing a realistic learning environment for their students by modeling, through experimentation, leading questions and scaffolding to elicit student’s knowledge.” It is for this reason that the present study sought to investigate strategies teachers of deaf and hard of hearing learners used to teach reading in English. Therefore, the present research sought to analyze the pedagogical strategies teachers use to successfully teach grade
three deaf or hard of hearing learners to read English language. When deaf or hard of hearing learners learn to read English fluently, they would not struggle to learn other subjects, and like any other child, they would be reading to learn instead of learning to read in their academic progression. The study focused on the grade three deaf learners because it is in this grade that learners start learning how to read and write in English.

Statement of the Problem

Zambian literature reveals that a number of studies conducted on early literacy of the deaf or hard of hearing learners have focused on general teaching methods and experiences, reading comprehension, strategies used to help deaf learners comprehend text materials and factors or challenges faced by deaf learners in the learning process (Banda, 2019; Banda, 2021; Chikopela, 2013; Chikopela and Ndhlovu, 2016a; Chikopela and Ndhlovu, 2016; Mumba, Kasonde-Ngandu and Mandyata, 2022; Muzata & Mahlo, 2019; Ndonyo, Matafwali, and Chakulimba, 2017). From these studies conducted, it is clear that instruction for the deaf and hard of hearing needs further studies. Furthermore, the studies conducted so far have not focused on the language pedagogical practices to scaffold learning. Thus, it was unknown what language pedagogical strategies teachers used to teach the deaf and hard of hearing. Therefore, as a question, the statement of the problem in this study was: what pedagogical strategies did teachers use to teach grade three deaf and hard of hearing learners to read in English language?

Research Objective

The objective of the study was to analyze pedagogic strategies teachers use to teach reading to deaf and hard of hearing children.

Methods and Materials

This study adopted a qualitative approach (Milingo, 1999; Milingo, 2004; Milingo, Changwe and Hara-Zulu, 2021) to collect and analyse data on pedagogic strategies teachers use to teach grade three deaf learners to read in English language. According to Bryman (2008) a qualitative research methodology is a strategy that usually emphasizes words instead of quantity in the collection and analysis of data. Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The research was a descriptive study because the objectives of the study were meant to describe, explain and interpret the collected data with information about teachers’ views on the strategies used to teach deaf and hard of hearing learners to read in English language. The researcher considered the importance of the teacher’s role in the child’s reading ability. In other words, the purpose of a descriptive research design as defined by Kothari (1985), is to examine a phenomenon that is occurring at a specific place and time. Therefore, a descriptive research design was used in this study because it focused on uncovering the pedagogic strategies teachers employed in the reading instruction to teach learners who are deaf and hard of hearing to read in English language. The targeted population included all teachers of English for grade three (3) deaf learners and all deaf and hard of hearing learners in grade three from all the three special needs primary schools in Lusaka District. To come up with the study sample, purposive sampling technique was used. The three schools and participants were selected using homogeneous purposive sampling because of the research’s focus on teachers teaching grade three deaf and hard of hearing learners to read in English language in special needs schools in Lusaka district. This procedure was chosen because it helped the researcher to pick only teachers who taught deaf and hard of hearing learners’ English language in the selected special needs schools. The study sample included one administrator from each school, making a total of seven (7) teachers and twenty-five (25) pupils totaling to thirty-two (32) respondents. The sample size was small as the importance was on what makes the experience unique rather than generalizability (Bradshaw, Atkinson, & Doody, 2017). For data collection semi – structured interview and structured classroom observations were used. Semi-structured interviews were used
because they are flexible and adaptable. The collected data was analysed thematically. Thematic analysis was used in this research because it allowed the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences in the dataset. The collected data was identified, organised and interpreted in order to uncover meaningful insights on the pedagogic strategies teachers use to teach deaf learners to read in English language. In addition, the researcher used this method because it makes one’s data analysis more valid due to its accessibility, transparency, and flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data Presentation

Pedagogic Strategies Teachers Use to Teach Reading to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners: Interview Data

The researcher sought to find out the pedagogic strategies teachers of deaf and hard of hearing learners used to teach reading in English language. There was need for the researcher to confirm from the teachers if they did teach deaf and hard of hearing learners to read English language before asking them about the strategies used in teaching reading. The data showed that in all the selected schools, teachers taught reading in English language to deaf and hard of hearing learners. Teachers explained that English language is taught so as to allow deaf and hard of hearing learners to progress in their academic journey and be able to communicate with others. The fact that English language is the medium of instruction from grade five and beyond allows teachers to put in their best in teaching these learners to read in English language. Teachers explained that the challenge of not knowing how to read in English could be a very big problem to deaf and hard of hearing learners both in academics and social circles of life. They reported that if deaf and hard of hearing learners fail to read in English it could be difficult for them to communicate with others and understand the content across all subjects in the school syllabus. The teachers’ responses also revealed that deaf and hard of hearing learners’ reading levels and attitude towards reading in English varied according to schools. Two schools stated that learners reading levels was very good while one school reported that it was average as most of them struggled and found it difficult to read English words.

When asked about the strategies employed in an English reading lesson, the teachers’ responses during the interview were as follows;

One teacher said that;

There are so many strategies, I use picture matching, picture reading and picture sign matching which help them to interpret the message. I also use lip reading so as to accommodate those who are able to understand when a person is talking by reading the lips. Class time reading is another strategy I use were I give learners simple books with a lot of pictures to read so that they see what they are reading and interpret the text. They also do role plays or try to act out what has been read (drama).

The teacher went on to say;

I use story telling by creating a simple situation like a family issue or what happened at home so as to allow the learners to narrate to their fellow learners. I also use play groups and group discussions; I create words for each group and allow learners to compete reading the words. I also teach them reading everyday by making them go through the simple words learnt. And I have made this a daily routine for my class. I also make them to finger spell their names and make the correct sign of their names daily in front of the class.

Another teacher added that;

I use a lot of concrete objects and picture where I show the object first write the word and sign it then show the object again when teaching vocabulary in my class. My learners understand better when they interact with the objects, this also helps them to internalise the words being taught and their meanings.

Another teacher said;

I teach reading in English by first telling them what the word is in local language. So, I use the local language then bring in the English language. When we start teaching with the local language it
makes it easy for them to break through to reading in English.

Another teacher commented that;

In my class I find it easy for learners to understand when I first explain in the local language then say it in English. When am teaching them vocabulary for example, I first say and sign the word in cinyanja then say and sign the same word in English language. This strategy makes it easy for my learners to master the word and its meaning.

Another teacher said;

When explaining or teaching during my lesson I use both sign language and verbal language, for me to accommodate all the learners because some learners are able to read the movement of the lips to help them understand what is being taught. Our school also makes home visitations where we interact with parents and try to orient them on the language used in school and why it is important for them to help and ensure that their children do the home work.

Assessment was also another strategy mentioned as one teacher started that;

I use assessment to evaluate the learners’ reading abilities and providing feedback for myself and learners. Learners are assessed through tests, homework and the national assessment programme.

Another teacher said that;

The national assessment being implemented in schools allow me to have a one-on-one interaction with the learners and this helps me to know which learner is doing better, moderate or struggling. This information helps me a lot during lesson preparation because am able to accommodate and use appropriate materials during teaching.

Teachers also mentioned that there were a lot of programmes being implemented in the ministry to improve the literacy levels of the learners. One of such programmes at national level was the catch up programme, where learners are made to read after lessons to improve their reading abilities with the teacher’s guidance and support.

Teachers were also asked on which pedagogical strategies was more effective when teaching reading to deaf learners. The following were the answers from the teachers;

One teacher said;

Using of both cinyanja and English when teaching English makes my learners to understand what I am teaching. So, I depend so much on using more than one language. I have also made reading corners in my class for learners.

Another teacher said;

I teach effectively through shared reading, picture reading, group work or play games and revision of taught words by making my learners read them every day. As an experienced teacher I use a lot of gestures, body language and any other gaze I see fit to make my learners understand.

Another teacher added that;

Storytelling and interactive reading of simple stories helps me a lot when teaching. I have also observed that parental involvement in some school activities work well too. Sometimes I ask my learners to ask their parents or any adult from home to read for them or tell them stories which they later share in class.

From the above responses it can be concluded that teachers employed a variety of pedagogical strategies in teaching and learning of reading in English to deaf learners. The study identified; picture reading, lip reading, repeated class reading, look and say, storytelling, translanguaging, interactive whole class reading, role play, demonstration, language games, miming, letter or word matching, question and answer, and teaching using concrete or real objects. And from the strategies used during the reading instruction above, teachers were able to identify the most effective ones. For instance, language or literacy games allowed learners to take control of their learning. As the learners were playing the teacher monitored progress and provided appropriate help with the language use. What was interesting about using literacy games were the results at the end of the game and the way they collaborated. Since, for every game there is the winner and loser, to learners this means a lot to both parties because the winning
group gains confidence while the losing group strives to improve their overall performance so as to win next time.

Data Analysis

The study established that teachers teaching grade three deaf and hard of hearing learners used a variety of pedagogic strategies including picture reading, picture and word matching, lip reading, repeated class reading, fingerspelling, look and say, storytelling, translanguaging, sandwiching, interactive whole class reading, role play, language games, demonstration, miming, letter or word matching, question and answer, teaching using concrete or real objects and teaching learners Zambian sign language.

The incorporation of pictures in reading lessons revealed very good results in helping the learners’ conceptualization of the learnt words through hands-on and manipulative activities. Chikopela & Ndhlovu (2016b) reported that deaf pupils learn through picture and word association hence making it easy for them to remember the letters shown to them. The results of the present study agree with the foregoing statement since teachers used a variety of strategies that used pictures like, picture and word matching, picture and word substitution, picture-sign-matching, matching pairs like; word-sign-matching and word-fingerspelling matching as well as look and say activities. These strategies stress the importance of using pictures when teaching the deaf or hard of hearing learners for purposes of enhancing comprehension and vocabulary development. This finding is further supported by Herrera et al. (2014) when they state that deaf learners if taught using appropriate strategies based on visualization have a higher achievement level in literacy and language. Based on these results, the study recognizes the fact that this strategy is also multimodal in that it puts into consideration learners diverse learning preferences and styles, and addresses them through use of sign language, print, visual cues, visual storytelling techniques, facial expressions and other sensory-rich experiences. In addition, Chikopela and Ndhlovu (2016a) reveal that materials which learners could see and touch proved to be very effective in teaching sound awareness, rhyming and reading to deaf learners. This finding agrees with the findings of this study that use of concrete resources is appropriate when teaching deaf or hard of hearing learners because it enhances learners’ understanding of the taught concept with less difficult. It can therefore, be concluded that deaf and hard of hearing learners need enough time to conceptualize what is being taught so as to allow them to process information sequentially rather than simultaneously because they rely so much on the visual representation in the classroom for effective and successful learning. For this reason, teachers need to be creative and innovative when creating or choosing the teaching and learning materials.

It was evident from the findings that teachers used a variety of language games to teach reading by allowing learners to work as pairs or in small groups. Games are important as they allow learners to take control of their own learning as they play. This strategy helps learners to improve their linguistic skills through practice and collaboration. Collaboration involves skills of teamwork, working in groups and allowing individuals to cooperatively work with others (Handsley, 2011). It is evident in the findings of this study that use of language games during the reading instruction promoted collaboration and learners had plenty of opportunities to practice what they had learnt amongst themselves with minimal control from the teacher. Games further gave learners a sense of satisfaction and motivation when working on a given task because they expected a reward of some kind in terms of academic achievement at the end of the game (Duyilemi & Bolajoko, 2014; Lord, 2001). This strategy allowed the use of language as much as possible, which eventually helped learners to maximize their learning and language use. The purpose of using games in lessons is to enable learners to work independently and learn by doing, as they begin to use language own their own. Learners also become responsible for their own learning as they use and practice the knowledge acquired by interacting with the content instead of imitating or just repeating and
relying entirely on the teacher (Mogashoa, 2014). Stavin, (2000) as cited by Duyilemi & Bolajoko, (2014) state that constructive learning allows learners to work in mixed ability groups and get rewarded on the basis of the success of the group as a whole. As learners work in mixed ability groups, small groups or as a pair the teacher facilitates and the classroom activities are organized so that learners can interact with and learn from each other as well as the teacher and the world around them.

Storytelling was another strategy used to teach reading in English language to the deaf or hard of hearing learners. Storytelling is another way of teaching shared reading. This strategy is not only appropriate to grade three deaf and hard of hearing learners, but also helps them to consolidate the vocabulary and structures they have already learnt. Young children enjoy stories and through stories they begin to realize that English language too has stories and that the language they are learning could be as fun as their mother tongue. This finding is in line with the ‘fifteen principles for reading to deaf children’ Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center (Gallaudet University, 2023) that suggests re-read stories on a ‘storytelling’ to story reading continuum because deaf learners enjoy listening to the same story over and over. It is important to note that most stories contain elements of repetition which the learners remember subconsciously as they listen to the story over and over again. This is evident in the findings where teachers revealed that when the learners hear the same story for some time, they are able to tell it with the teacher. In line with this finding, Girgin (2013) contends that stories read to the deaf learners should be appropriate and according to the learners reading levels not forgetting the aspect of being engaging by including repetitive elements that could facilitate reading and support children’s motivation. For this reason, teachers need to consider the age, language use and level of learners when choosing a story. This strategy reinforces the language learners have already learnt. It is enjoyable and involves the learners directly in the process of storytelling. The teacher asks open ended questions and gives learners enough time to construct meaning and respond accordingly to the questions asked, thus, the teacher promotes higher-order thinking skills in learners (Akpan and Beard, 2016).

Demonstration was another strategy popularly used by the teachers and it was done through different classroom activities. Teachers reported that demonstrations made learning a bit easy and allowed learners to get the concept a bit faster because it allowed learners to first observe the teacher perform the task, then learners taking charge of their learning by practicing and using the language more creatively as they performed the language tasks given either in groups, pair work or independently. In this strategy the teacher acts as a facilitator and scaffolds learning by encouraging students to express their problems and then facilitate ways to aid students with appropriate solutions to their problems by using what they already know to go beyond what they already think. Furthermore, Baker and Pi-burn (1997), and Akpan and Beard, (2016) claim that knowledge is built in social contexts, where learning instruction must encourage student-to-student interactions and collaboration. This is further supported by Jothula, Ganapa, Sreeharshika, Naidu and Abhishek (2018) who perceived demonstration as the best method of teaching which emphasizes importance of active learning methods. It is important to mention here that, demonstrations could either be verbal with action or nonverbal through actions only, hence multimodal and creation of a free atmosphere for learners to participate freely. Therefore, the study conclude that demonstration is an effective strategy that keeps learners active participates and sometimes employs the use of nonverbal language in the lesson. More so, because children lose interest if teachers do not use multiple means of communication like animated face, eye contact, body language and facial expressions that help children understand a teacher better. From the findings, body gestures were also used to enhance learners’ understanding of the vocabulary words taught. The study thus establishes the use of a combination of the visual resources with other modes of communication by the teacher when
teaching the deaf or hard of hearing learners. In support with these findings is the study by Tahang et al. (2023) who posits that repetition strategy could be used as an effective strategy in teaching the deaf or hard of hearing learners where the teacher teaches by repeating what is said several times or explaining the material more than once using signs or lip language, visual aids, and one on one interaction with an individual learner. This finding also aligns well with Prasetya et al. (2023), who revealed that to get the deaf student’s attention when learning English vocabulary, the teacher needed to use pictures as a media, sign language to communicate, as well as using drilling in learning process. This finding is also in line with the principles of multimodal approach when teaching deaf or hard of hearing learners, as the teacher uses pictures as a media, sign language to communicate, as well as use drilling in lesson delivery.

It is also evident in the findings that teachers used fingerspelling as one of the pedagogic strategies. Herrera et al. (2014) contends that fingerspelling enables a learner to establish a more reliable link between sign and writing which aids the process of learning, and that it may also help to provide a phonological link with the written text. In addition, Tongwa and Atemnkeng (2019) results revealed that fingerspelling had a broad range of advantages and meant differently for individual students. In their study deaf learners reported that fingerspelling helped them a lot in learning English better. When fingerspelling, learners receive support that is within their Zone of Proximal Development from the teacher. Similarly, Reitsma (2009) as cited in Chikopela and Ndhlovu (2016a) add that fingerspelling provided a phonological link to the print that deaf learners encounter every day. The strategy enabled learners an opportunity to think and rethink about their own spelling skills in English language.

Repeated reading strategy of the same text as stated by the National Literacy Framework (2013) enables learners to ‘...increase their retention of words, and develop reading fluency, which in turn, is a necessary step to reading with comprehension (NLF, 2023:17). The study concludes that reading of the same words, passage or text every day was an effective strategy for deaf or hard of hearing learners since it enhanced learners’ fluency and correct signing of the words when reading to their peers in the classroom. This strategy also enabled both the teacher and learners to provide immediate feedback to each other during reading. In addition, this strategy of making learners go through what they have learnt over and over again enabled learners to acquire automaticity in reading by recognizing the over-all-shape of the word and read it even when used in different contexts instead of only chanting words from their memory (Florida Reading Centre).

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that repetition strategy was also used in the daily routine reading of what has been taught, were learners read the same words or texts every day before the start of the lesson until the teacher was satisfied. This strategy encouraged memorization or rote learning because learners read the same things over a period of time until they were able to recognize and read the words automatically. This view is supported by the above statement by the National Literacy Framework (2013), because learners were made to repeat reading of things they had been taught and not just reading words or texts they had not learnt before. This point of clarification on the use of memorization or rote learning to deaf or hard hearing learners is crucial for purposes of differentiating instruction in the learning process with other strategies as the lesson progresses. In this case, learners were made to repeat and practice reading previous words or text every day before the introduction of a new topic.

Translanguaging was used as a teaching strategy in the lessons. Sign language is a medium of instruction for deaf learners and teachers teaching deaf learners incorporate sign language alongside written English and learners’ home language in a reading instruction. It was evident in the findings that Zambian sign language serves as a bridge that is connecting learners’ existing language skills with the new language (English) they are acquiring. Translanguaging allows both the teacher and learners to make use
of multiple languages and modes of communication so as to enhance the teaching and learning process. This view is supported by Banda and Mwanza (2017) who argue that the nature of translanguaging is both bilingual or multilingual and multimodal. According to the present study’s findings, teachers of the deaf or hard of hearing learners were bilingual when teaching reading of words in the classroom where both sign language and written language were used. Agreeing with this finding, Pinar et al. as cited by Herrera et al. (2014:2) points out on deaf learners being bilingual in sign language and written language. They state that this approach acknowledges the importance of both languages and recognizes that each plays a critical role in the education and development of deaf learners. This enabled deaf or hard of hearing learners to make connections between the written and signed forms of language. The visual representation of both languages in this case enhanced comprehension and vocabulary development of the learners. However, as observed by Banda and Mwanza (2017), we need to note that, translanguaging is said to be multimodal because it recognizes and utilizes multiple modes of communication and enhances the overall learning experience. So through this strategy the teacher could also say the word in local language (chinyanja) and allow learners to say the same thing in their preferred languages hence enabling learners to express their own views in the language of competence. Banda (2019) supports these results when she explains that the pedagogic alternation of languages in the lesson allow learners regardless of their linguistic abilities or background to feel involved and become active participants in the teaching and learning process (see also Banda and Mwanza, 2020; Nyimbili and Mwanza, 2020; Mashinja and Mwanza, 2020; Mwanza, 2020).

Translanguaging in this study, was seen to encourage interactive discussions during instruction where the teacher facilitated the discussions and allowed learners to express themselves in a variety of languages like their mother tongue, sign language from both home and school, and written English and for learners who could lip read verbal language. In addition, as argued by Alegria (2004) children have a chance of acquiring phonological representation, when lip reading and cued speech are used in the teaching instruction. Therefore, translanguaging as a pedagogic strategy helped to instill confidence in the students and removed the fear of poor performance because learners were allowed to be themselves as they interacted with each other (Duyilemi & Bolajoko, 2014; Mubita and Mwanza, 2020; Banda and Mwanza, 2020; Mwanza and Bwalya, 2019). The teacher engaged learners in whole class interactive discussions where he or she promoted learners’ expressive skills and encouraged active participation hence implementation of a learner-centered driven pedagogy during instruction. The findings also revealed that teachers were able to provide an enriched language environment that promoted a wide range of meaningful experiences through receptive, expressive and written language opportunities for the deaf or hard of hearing learners. Banda (2019) supports this finding when she argues that teachers use verbal, sign language and written form of language so as to recognize linguistic repertoires of learners in their classroom. In addition, citing Simpson and Warner (2010), Banda (2019) states that children with special needs benefit a lot from socialization with their developing peers because their peers are able to model appropriate social interactions for them and provide the opportunity for participating in such interactions.

The findings further established that the daily reading routines before start of the lesson every day; of words that have been taught and texts that has been read before, helped learns to memorize and remember words being read on their own. Teacher’s use of repetitions, routines and multi modal teaching techniques helped to enhance the learner’s memory, so was the teaching and re-teaching of the same concept to the learners in a variety of context for accuracy. This finding is similar to Nisak et al. (2019) who contends that memorization is an appropriate strategy that aids learners to memorize some vocabulary words or obtain information. It was observed that teachers taught the content to the
learners through repetitions, for example when explaining or demonstrating something the teacher would do the same activity more than once or explain something over and over again; the teacher only proceeds after assessing that the learners have understood. This view is in support with Alasim (2018) who also suggested that teachers must give deaf or hard of hearing pupils enough time to understand and respond through re-explaining the concept more slowly by speaking slowly and clearly. In line with this argument, Tahang, et. al. (2023) contends that deaf or hard of hearing learners require more time in the learning process so the teacher needs to recognize their learning pace and accommodate them by speaking slowly and clearly, and re-explaining the material using multiple modes such as sign language, lip reading, visual aids, and by re-explaining the material to individual learners who need more scaffolding. It is important to note at this point that when the teacher uses the repetition strategy and re-explains the content using different means of communication modes to accommodate all the learners; the principles of multimodal approach are being effectively applied in the teaching and learning process. This view aligns well with the research done by Prasetya et al. (2023) who stated that teachers needed to use multiple means of communication in order to get the deaf student’s attention and employ strategies like use of pictures as a media, using sign language to communicate, as well as using drilling when teaching English vocabulary and during the teaching and learning process.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is important to note that most of the strategies employed in the English reading instruction for the deaf or hard of hearing learners as established from the findings were; learner- centered and multimodal thus enabling learners to be active participants throughout the lesson and make use of a variety of communication forms to effectively express themselves or construct meaning from the read words or texts. Therefore, the findings established that teachers teaching deaf or hard of hearing learners, were able to choose teaching strategies which arouse the unique interest and curiosity to learn in the deaf or hard of hearing learners. By providing instruction in multiple modalities, including use of sign language, teachers were able to create a more accessible and equitable learning environment which accommodated the learners’ different learning styles or conditions. The incorporation of Zambian Sign Language as a pedagogic strategy further reflects the commitment to recognize the unique needs of deaf or hard of hearing learners. Furthermore, it is important to note that these strategies not only engaged learners in the learning process but also provided opportunities for language immersion and application in real-life contexts. And in line with the principles of constructivism, the inclusion of interactive whole-class reading, language games, and demonstration techniques reveal the importance of active engagement. These strategies promoted a participatory classroom culture by encouraging learners to collaboratively explore language and meaning.

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