

## **LEARNER READING PROBLEMS: A CASE OF KHOE LEARNERS AT JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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### **Abstract**

This article is part of a larger tracer study that investigated Khoe learners' reading ability of English at junior secondary school in Botswana. The research was carried out at Motshegaletau Primary School and Mothamo Junior Community Secondary. The purpose of the study was to examine whether the reading problems identified among Khoe learners at primary level persisted to higher levels of education. The study, which was qualitative, used questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, students' artefacts, and teachers' schemes and records of work to explore the subjects' reading skills. The findings indicate that Khoe learners lack comprehension strategies, have difficulties understanding implicit reading instructions, lack requisite vocabulary to facilitate reading and writing, do not actively participate in class and are generally slow readers. It is worth noting that some of the problems have persisted from primary level and resulted in poor performance in reading tasks at higher levels of education. The study recommends reading programmes that can empower students and alleviate at least some of these problems. Further, it suggests that teacher training programmes be revamped to equip teachers with necessary skills to handle complexity and diversity in the reading classrooms.

**Keywords:** reading, diversity, empowerment, comprehension strategies, transformative, independent readers.

### **1.0 Introduction**

An earlier study conducted by Mokibelo and Moumakwa (2006) observed that Khoe learners at Motshegaletau Primary School had significant problems in their reading skills. The study showed that the learners lacked effective reading skills in English, a deficiency which was attributable to both academic and social problems. For instance, during reading sessions Khoe children could not, among other things, comprehend the texts they read, meet specific reading objectives, pronounce English words or failed to pronounce them completely; they could not infer meaning from the texts and could not identify the words they were reading. Poor reading, therefore, inhibited effective communication in the reading classroom. To aggravate the situation, the learners could not supplement their reading at the hostel or home because the environment was not conducive to reading. Also, the learners did not have access to reading materials due to the school policy which did not allow learners to take books to the hostel or home. This policy was instituted by school management after observing that learners had a tendency not to return the

books and also handled the books poorly once they borrowed them from the school library. The current study is a follow up on the Mokibelo & Moumakwa (2006) study. It is a tracer study that follows up former Khoe students of Motshegaletau Primary to junior secondary level, and examines the reading problems they encounter in reading texts in English.

### **1.1 Reading as a Skill and the Teaching of Reading**

Reading is recognising words in print and constructing meaning from them (McEwan, 2004). It is a way of interacting with the writer's thoughts, ideas and opinions. It is therefore important in the reading process to interpret, analyse, evaluate, make decisions, solve problems, critically analyse what has been read and apply it to real life situations. Teachers need to organise the teaching of reading and writing skills into thoughtful units and apply a variety of cutting edge teaching and learning styles because one size does not fit all. Learners have different learning styles and interests in reading depending on their background. It is also important to use relevant and up-to-date teaching materials.

The skill of reading influences literacy development in the learners and also impacts on learning other basic skills such as writing, listening and speaking, as well as learning other subjects in the curricula. McEwan (2004) believes that reading can be taught to learners at all levels especially if explicit instruction is used. In addition, Glendinning & Holmstrom (1992) point out that students need reading skills to be able to identify what is important in the text, compare different sources, study how grammar carries meaning and how best to deal with vocabulary problems. This indicates ample interaction between the text and the reader.

### **1.2 The Education System in Botswana**

The education system in Botswana aspires to improve and develop literacy skills for the benefit of the citizens of the country. The system is, therefore, guided and influenced by the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) (1994), Botswana's Vision 2016 and the Millennium Development Goals. The Botswana Vision 2016 is ambitious, and states that Botswana should be educated and informed by 2015 (Botswana Vision, 2016, 1997). Being educated means being able to read and apply reading strategies where necessary. This could enable the literate citizenry to be an informed nation. However, such an ambition poses a serious challenge not only to the Ministry of Education but also to the teachers and learners, such as the Khoe learners, in working towards the realisation of the national vision. The learners, especially from rural areas, are more than likely, going through a bumpy road due to, among other things, the languages of instruction (Mokibelo & Moumakwa, 2006), teaching pedagogy and learning styles that do not address their language needs. The RNPE of 1994 emphasises the importance of all children to have access to quality education. For this reason, accessibility was quantified and the government also increased enrolment in primary schools without taking much consideration of the difficulties learners faced or could face in the reading classrooms. The Millennium Development Goals of 2004 also foster universal



education for all children. The above mentioned policies form a good basis for researchers in determining what the education system of Botswana has achieved, how it was achieved and the challenges thereof.

## **2.0 Background Information**

The current study was conducted at the government funded Mothamo Community Junior Secondary School (CJSS) at Moiyabana Village in the Central District. The school had sixty four teachers and offered various subjects depending on the areas of specialisation of the teachers. In addition, there were ancillary members of staff such as a boarding master, matron, kitchen staff, gate keeper, driver and craft improver. The learners came from different villages in Botswana such as Motshegaletau, Mosolotshane, Thabala, Mogorosi, and Moiyabana and from neighbouring cattle posts. This has necessitated the provision for boarding facilities that accommodate 544 students. Motshegaletau Primary School is one of the catchment areas, and between 40 and 50 students from this primary school are admitted at Mothamo CJSS annually, although not all students honour the admission. Some of the admitted students decide to disengage from school while others drop out at a later stage. In 2008, the year that research for this study was conducted, there were about 85 former Motshegaletau Primary School students in forms 1, 2 and 3 at Mothamo CJSS. It was reported that this number was low compared to the numbers of students from other neighbouring primary schools.

## **3.0 The Objectives and Research Questions of the Study**

The current study sort to address the following questions:

- a. What problems do Khoe learners encounter in reading texts in English?
- b. What could be the cause of such reading problems?
- c. What are the challenges faced by both teachers and students in teaching and learning the reading skill?
- d. How can the reading problems be addressed?

In terms of objectives, the study sort to:

- a. examine the problems that Khoe students encountered in reading texts in English;
- b. identify the root causes of these problems;
- c. identify the challenges faced by both teachers and students in teaching and learning the reading skill; and
- d. find the solutions to the problems.

## **4.0 Theoretical Framework**

The Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), advanced by Gay (2000), was used as the theoretical framework for this study. Gay (2000), firstly, argues that CRT utilises the cultural knowledge, prior experiences and performance styles of the

diverse students. It therefore addresses diversity that exists in classrooms, fills the gap between home and school and uses a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate all students. CRT also helps students to take pride in their own cultures while accepting the differences between the cultures. Secondly, Gay (2000) points out that CRT explores the students' intellectual ability and social norms to impart knowledge skills. As such, culturally appropriate situations should be designed specifically for students hence maintaining cultural heritage and identity. Thirdly, CRT is multifaceted because it involves content, learning context, classroom climate, students teacher relationships, instructional techniques and assessment strategies. This mixed bag helps to take everyone on board. Fourthly, the cultural background of the students is used as a resource in the classroom because children learn with what they know and live. Besides, it appreciates the existing strength of the students and develops them further, hence thus empowering them.

Banks (1994) supports this idea by acknowledging that for education to empower the students it must be transformative. This means CRT should develop the students' knowledge, skills and attitude. Thus, along with others, the Khome culture is important in the reading classroom because it reflects their lives. It should be incorporated in the reading classroom as a resource. Lastly, Gay (2000) argues that CRT also empowers the students to take responsibility of their learning by strengthening their weaknesses. Students should be able to demonstrate academic performance, initiative, and self efficacy. In view of the latter, students must believe they can succeed in learning. It is the responsibility of teachers to avail the resources, motivate and celebrate individual and collective achievements. In sum, CRT solicits for change, inclusiveness, exploring students' potential and as well as empowering them.

## **5.0 Methodology**

As mentioned above, this is a qualitative study, and is specifically a case study. Questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, students' artefacts, teachers' schemes and records of work and hostel inspection were used to collect data. Open ended questionnaires were administered to the students. The questionnaires focused on the linguistic background of the learners and their attitude towards reading, as well as on how, from the learners' perspective, the teachers delivered instructions for reading. The interviews tapped on the learners' lives at junior secondary school; solicited information on their performance in reading; on what they thought of their performance, and on life in the new hostel as compared to Sehunou hostel where they had stayed whilst studying at primary school and the effect of this on their reading. Observations were conducted in the classroom to see how students responded to questions, made comments and how they read texts in English. The students were examined for regularity and frequency of reading tasks given to them for practice and how they were responding to the assignments. In addition, a comprehension text with specific reading objectives was administered to



the students. The purpose of the text was to gauge the learners' comprehension skills.

The teachers were also interviewed to solicit information on their experiences in teaching especially Khoe students from Motshegaletau Primary School and the problems they encounter during reading sessions. Classroom observation was done to observe the methods and learning styles teachers use for reading lessons. In addition, teachers' schemes and records of work were examined to see how they planned for the reading lessons. Members of the administration were also interviewed about the learners' background, reading programmes and the outcomes from reading classrooms. The classrooms where reading was taking place were also examined. The seating arrangements, teaching aids, exercise books, learners and teachers behaviour during reading lessons as well as the hostel was inspected. Data was systematically categorised into thematic statements and analysed qualitatively. The other data, especially the students' comprehension answers, was quantified.

## **6.0 Findings of the Research**

The findings of the study are presented in three sections. The first part (Section 6.1) deals with reading problems. The second (Section 6.2) examines causes of reading problems, while the third section (Section 6.3) proposes solutions to the reading problems.

### *6.1 Reading Problems Identified*

#### **6.1.1 Lack of comprehension of English texts**

The comprehension problems that former Motshegaletau Primary School Khoe students were experiencing at Mothamo CJSS are summarised in Figure 1. This was based on reading novels prescribed for their level.

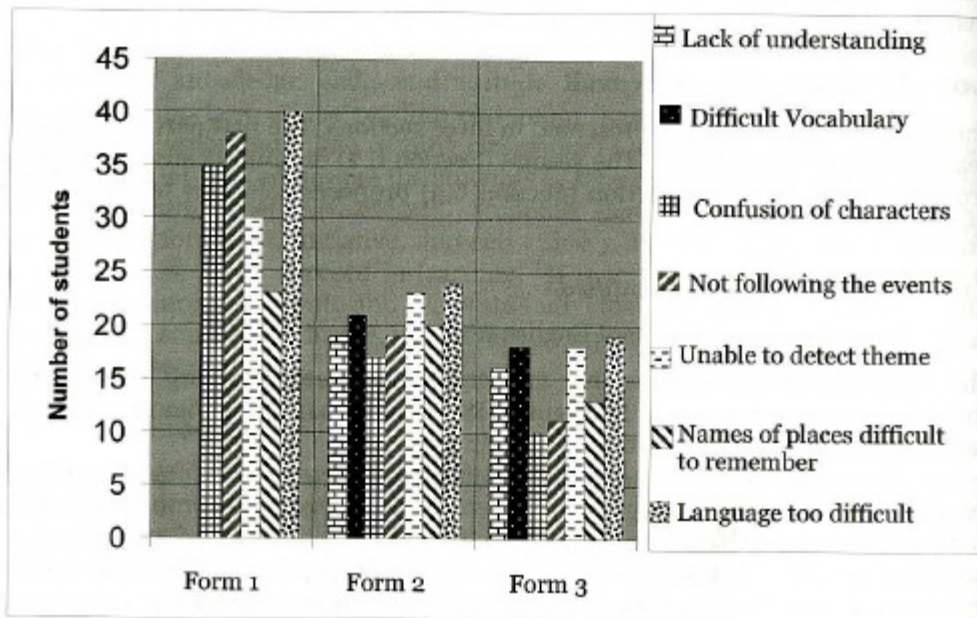
According to Figure 1, the Form 1 students seem to have fewer problems than the Form 2s and 3s. They did not complain about two of the problems that the Form 2 and 3 classes faced namely, difficult vocabulary and lack of understanding as they read English texts. However, in a class of 40, the whole Form 1 class complained that English was too difficult. Thirty seven (37) Form 1 students reported that they could not follow the story when they read an English text. About 35 students confused the characters in the story. Because they could not follow the story, this led to, at least 30 of them, not being able to detect the theme of the story. Lastly, about 23 of the students said they could not remember the names of places in the story because they were places they did not know and had never heard of.

In a Form 2 class of 25 students, almost all of them, except one student, complained about language difficulties. Another 23 students reported that they could not detect the theme when they read; 21 students complained that the vocabulary used in English texts was difficult; 19 of the students could not follow the events in the story. Some 20 students complained that they found it difficult to

remember the names of places in the story. About 19 of the students reported that they did not understand when they read the story on their own. Lastly, 17 students confused characters in the story as they read.

Among the Form 3s, 19 students (out of a class of 20) complained that English was too difficult; 17 students complained about being unable to detect themes as they read and also of difficult vocabulary used in the texts. Again, about 16 of them reported that they did not understand the text if they read on their own. About 11 students complained that they confused characters as they read. About 13 of the students found it difficult to remember the names of places in the story. Lastly, 10 students reported that they confused characters in the story as they read. The trend in the three classes is that there are serious reading problems that need to be addressed.

Figure 1: Comprehension Problems of some Khoe Learners at Mothamo CJSS

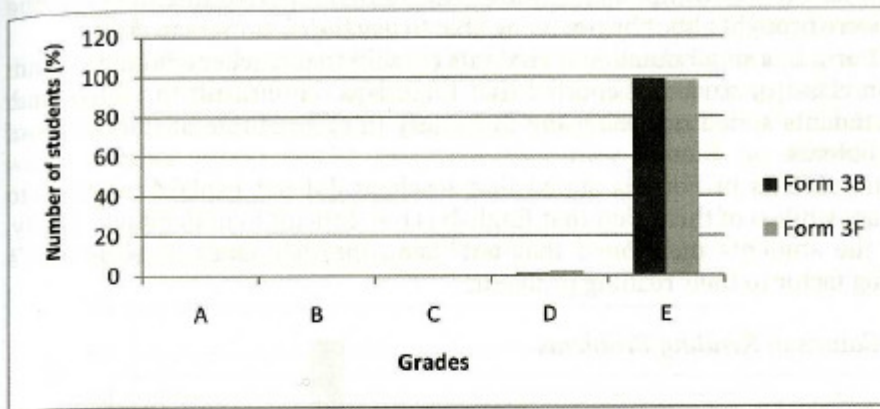


### 6.1.2 Students' performance in reading tasks

Figure 2 presents marks for a literature test administered to students in two Form 3 classes in May 2008. There were 10 Khoe students from Motshegaletau Primary School in each of the classes. It is evident from Figure 2 that in both Form 3B and 3F, the grades for Khoe students are clustered around E which is the lowest grade. In Form 3B, almost 99% of Khoe students scored grade E, while in Form 3F, 98% of the Khoe learners scored E. About 10% of the students in 3F scored grade D while 3% scored grade D. None of the students scored grades A, B or C.



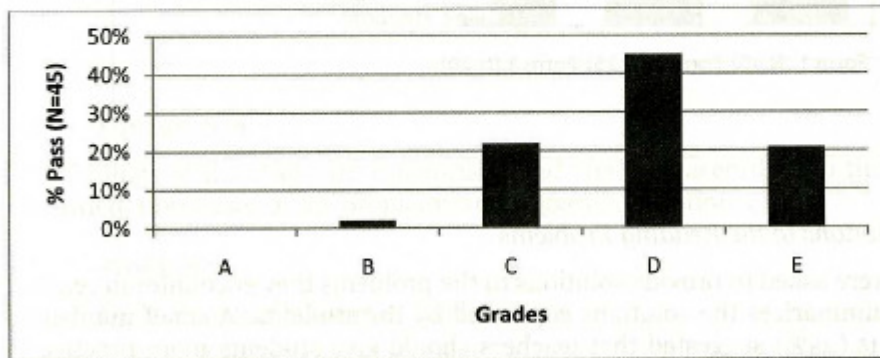
Figure 2: Students' Comprehension Marks



### 6.1.3. End of year examination marks for English for Form 2B for 2007

Figure 3 presents results of the 2007 end-of-year examinations for Form 2. A total of 45 students sat for the English examination. About 45% of the students scored grade D; about 21% scored grade E; whereas 22% scored grade C; and 2% scored grade B. The students who scored grade A, B and C were from other ethnic groups and not Khoe.

Figure 3: 2007 End-of-Year English Examinations for Form 2



### 6.2 Causes of Reading Problems

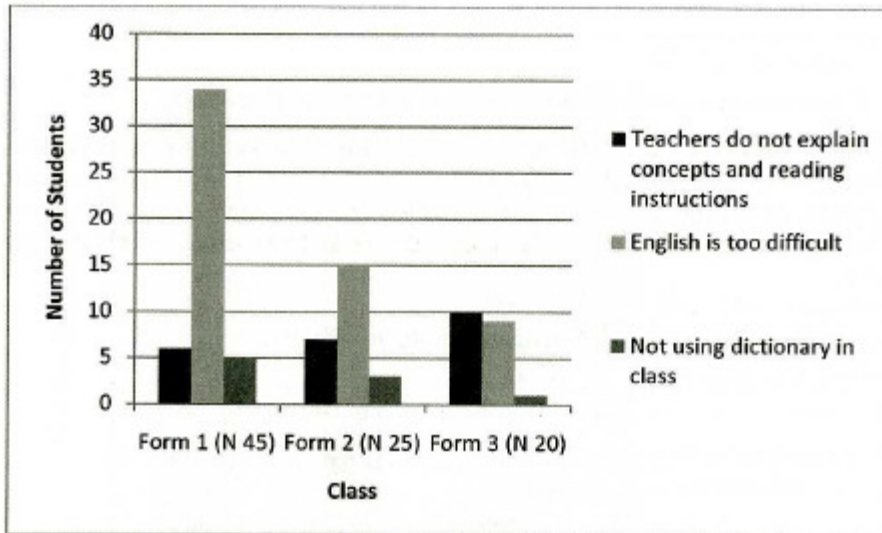
The learners indicated that there were several problems which were the causes of their reading problems. There were three major causes which the students identified and these are summarized in Figure 4. In Form 1, 5 students believed that one of the causes of their reading problems was that teachers did not explain concepts. Another group of students (34) thought that the other cause of concern

was the medium of communication itself, English. They complained that English is too difficult for them to comprehend. Some students (3) reported that their reading problems were brought about by not being able to use the dictionary in class.

In Form 2, a small number of students (7) said that teachers did not explain concepts in class; 15 students reported that English is too difficult to understand. Lastly, 3 students stated not using the dictionary in class as one of the causes of reading problems.

Ten students in Form 3 stated that teachers did not explain concepts to them in class while 9 of them said that English is too difficult to understand. Lastly, only 1 of the students mentioned that not using the dictionary in class was a contributing factor to their reading problems.

Figure 4: Causes of Reading Problems



### 6.3 Solutions to the Reading Problems

Students were asked to provide solutions to the problems they encounter in reading. Figure 5 summarizes the solutions suggested by the students. A small number of the Form 1s (23%) suggested that teachers should give students more practice to improve their reading. A sizeable majority of Form 1s (63%) said that teachers should give students clear reading objectives, instructions and clearly explain concepts. None of the Form 1s mentioned that their teachers should be changed. A small group of students (11%) suggested that they should be allowed to bring dictionaries to class to look up word meanings.

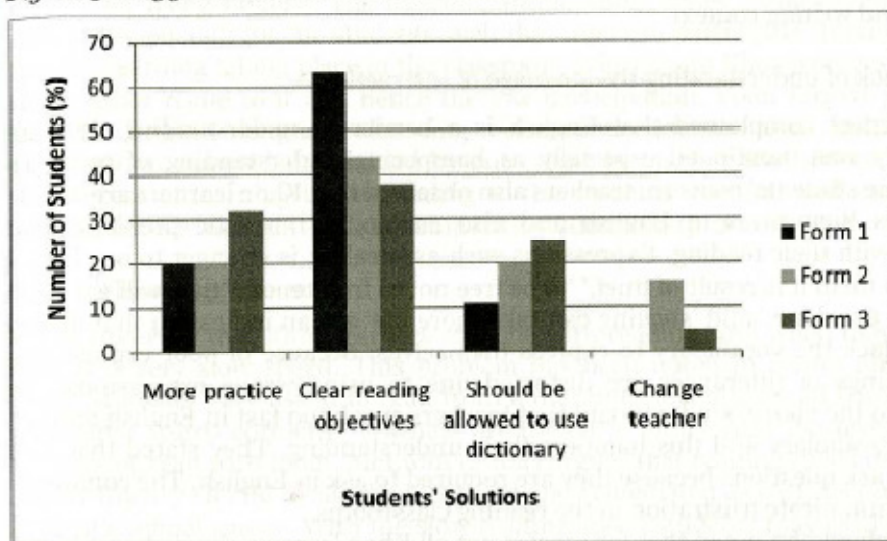
Among the Form 2 students, 20% mentioned that they should be given more practice in class, while 42% believed that teachers should give them clear reading instructions and explain concepts. A small group of Form 2s (16%) stated



that their teachers should be changed, while 20% said they should be allowed to bring dictionaries to class to look up meanings of difficult words.

With regard to solutions from the Form 3s, 30% of them mentioned that they needed more practice, while 35% stated that teachers should give them clear reading instructions and explain concepts for them to comprehend. A small number of these students (5%) suggested that their teachers should be changed, while another group (25%) proposed that they should be allowed to bring dictionaries to class.

Figure 5: Suggested Solutions to the Problems



## 7.0 Discussion

The findings of the study are categorised and analysed according to the problems identified, the causes of the problems and suggested solutions.

### 7.1 Problems

#### 7.1.1 Lack of comprehension of English texts

Figure 2 above shows that students lack adequate vocabulary to understand texts in English. Students in Forms 2 and 3 show deficiencies in vocabulary which hinder them from understanding the texts. Lack of understanding essentially means that learners cannot follow the plot of the story and are unable to detect its theme. According to Greenwood & Flanigan (2007), the size of an individual's vocabulary is a powerful predictor of how well the person comprehends what he or she is reading. It is also important for instruction to be explicit because if students are unable to use vocabulary in context, it will be difficult for them to understand the text. Context clues are transportable and, therefore, it is important for students to

learn that authors choose their words carefully. Learners, therefore, need a lot of practice in reading to learn vocabulary and how it has been used in context.

Again, Greenwood & Flanigan (2007) point out that if students learn the meaning of words in isolation, it might be difficult for them to connect the meanings back to the context of the passage. Vocabulary can increase in highly controlled conditions. An environment has to be created that includes reading independently and even reading aloud (Baumann, Ware & Edwards, 2007). In addition, daily writing exercises can provide students with opportunities to develop expressive vocabulary. This can be done through explicit vocabulary instruction, hence lessons should be provided to teach students words and connect them to reading and writing context.

#### 7.1.2 Lack of understanding the language of instruction

Khoe learners complained that English is a barrier to understanding. Difficult vocabulary was mentioned especially as hampering understanding of texts. To support the students' concern, teachers also observed that Khoe learners are unable to express themselves in English and also encounter linguistic problems that interfere with their reading. Expressions such as 'stealing is stranger to our life', 'I can say to them it is result of thief,' 'to be free not to frightened,' 'they will get out if their ears are done,' and 'stealing can take there life' are an indication that indeed students lack the vocabulary to express themselves. Because of poor expressions, the meanings of utterances are distorted due to using wrong expressions. In addition to the above, students said that teachers speak too fast in English and use difficult vocabulary and this hampers their understanding. They stated that they could not ask questions because they are required to ask in English. The comments above communicate frustration in the reading classrooms.

It should be noted that for most if not all Khoe learners, English is a fourth or fifth language. This means that pedagogy, learning styles and materials used to teach them necessarily needs to be adapted to the foreign language problem. Students engage in complex cognition when they read, and this is extremely demanding. Perkins (1992) argues that students get uncomfortable and disoriented if they struggle to get their heads together as they learn difficult concepts and the language of instruction at the same time. It will therefore be difficult to process information read. McEwan (2004) points out that interaction with the text is important. Students have to solve problems, analyse and answer specific questions. Hence if language acts a barrier to the process of reading they may not cope with reading objectives. Yopp and Yopp (2007) believe that if students do not understand the words in a text they will have difficulty comprehending the ideas in the texts.

Keiffer and Lesaux (2007) state that many students struggle with comprehension and that the problem is compounded by difficulty in their academic vocabulary and their failure to express themselves. Tumusiine (2003) argues that in Uganda the reading problems were partly attributed to poor guidance from teachers, parents and peers. Hence, the development of reading requires concerted



effort from teachers, students, parents and peers. The pivotal role played by the reading skill cannot be undermined. Excellent reading ability which is driven by understanding the language of instruction is vital for success in the academic world. Teachers are critical in fostering students' success in reading.

### 7.1.3 Lack of participation in class

Lack of participation by the learners was attributed to lack of vocabulary to express themselves, hence excluding them from participating in the reading lesson. Due to this language problem students are not able to communicate or interact with each other using English. The teaching and learning styles employed may not be motivating enough for the students such that they can participate. It could also be that the learning taking place in the classroom is foreign to Khoe learners such that they cannot relate to it and hence the low participation. Yoon (2007) points out that in English language learning classrooms, factors that influence low participation cannot be explained by one single factor, but teachers can promote the process of learning by responding to the students' cultural and social needs, and this means building a relationship with students (Gay, 2000).

### 7.1.4 The struggle to read

It was observed that Khoe learners struggle with reading, and when they did, they read at a very slow speed. This problem has been noted in lesson observations where students were asked to read from a literature text and could barely read or pronounce words correctly. Teachers are forced to either read the texts for Khoe learners or read with them. McEwan (2004) argues that reading speed deficits that impair fluency should ideally be identified and remediated as early as possible in a student's school career. With the slow reading speed students may read but would not grasp the information being communicated (Tovani, 2000). Slow reading could be a result of lack of word recognition. This could lead to lack of understanding of texts because students dwell on trying to pronounce and recognise words correctly than comprehending the text. Silvaroli & Wheelock (2004) point out that vocabulary contributes to reading comprehension. Reading a lot is known to accomplish three learning goals for students: increase vocabulary, develop fluency, and add to readers' domain knowledge, especially if they are encouraged to read expository texts (McEwan, 2004).

Further, Rasinki & Lenhart (2008) state that overly slow and halting reading is a marker of fluent reading and poor comprehension. However, true fluency in reading is more than reading fast, it involves expression with meaning. The reader could use intonation, volume, emphasis, phrasing, pausing and adjusting pace. This means that repeated readings or rehearsals are necessary to inject life to texts read. In view of the foregoing, Carle (2008) believes that reading is thinking about the text, more than saying the words correctly. Hence, it is important to be able to read and think at the same time.

#### 7.1.5 Poor performance in comprehension and examination results

As observed in Figure 2, former Motshegaletau students performed poorly in reading literature texts. All the ten students from Motshegaletau scored grade E, which is the lowest grade. It is worth noting that at the time of the current research the Form 3s were preparing for their final examinations in the months starting from September to November. Given this situation, their anticipated performance in the examination therefore remained a cause for concern.

Further, the end of year English examination marks for form 2B class in 2007 was another concern in terms of quality. Figure 3 above indicates that students are not doing well in English generally. The grades D and E have the highest percentages of students. This could stem from lack of reading skills. The assumption is that they do not understand the language of instruction; they do not understand the reading instructions; they do not comprehend when they read and cannot apply comprehension strategies; hence the poor performance. Although Botswana's Vision 2016 articulates that by 2015 Botswana will be an educated and informed nation, this vision cannot be achieved if at junior secondary the scores for reading in English indicate poor performance. Essentially, students attend school but no effective learning takes place. It is also important to look into the teaching pedagogy, the materials provided for reading and the assessment procedures because they all contribute towards the students performance. The issue to be looked into is that Khoe children should be given reading tasks and literacy programmes that touch directly on their lives. All reading should be devoid of all forms of bias. Reading and literacy programmes should go hand in hand with improvement in living standards, skill enhancement, economic, political and social empowerment (Obanya, 2003).

#### 7.2 Causes of the Reading Problems

Figure 4 shows that students articulated three causes of their reading problems. The causes reflect on teacher pedagogy, learning styles, instructions and the resources used for teaching and learning reading. Firstly, they blame teachers for not explaining difficult concepts for them. Brown (2008) asserts that teachers have to teach students comprehension strategies and model them before they can transfer responsibility to students. As students move towards becoming independent readers, the teacher has to provide many opportunities for students to learn more about when and where to apply a strategy. Further, students have to be helped to use multiple strategies when reading and teachers have to coordinate their use of several strategies. Teachers may also promote opportunities for collaborative learning and also create forums for interpretative discussions. Duffy (2003) argues that explaining reading is an important component of literacy instruction as this might lead to better understanding. This means that teachers play a pivotal role in learners' acquisition of reading skills.

Secondly, the results of the investigation show that reading is compounded by the language problem. Research has shown that Khoe learners do not understand English as a language of learning and teaching and hence this results in



underperformance in English and other subjects (Mokibelo & Moumakwa, 2006; Bolaane & Saugestad, 2006). This problem has bred other problems such as truancy, absenteeism low self esteem and lack of participation (Mokibelo & Moumakwa, 2006).

Thirdly, students indicated that one of the causes of their reading problems was their inability to use the dictionary adequately to look for meanings of words and their spellings. Although only two Khoe learners reported this problem, it is a crucial factor and should not be ignored. It is important to provide students with dictionaries to look up difficult words, spellings and pronunciations.

### 7.3 *Solutions to the Reading Problems*

Suggested solutions to the problems presented in Figure 5 indicate that, firstly, teachers must give students clear reading objectives and instructions. The Form 1s have a high percentage concerning this solution, probably because they are new to the environment and are still acclimatizing themselves with the teaching and learning styles used at secondary school. Secondly, students need to be given more practice. The Form 3s have the highest percentage, about 63%, in this regard, which can be attributed to the fact that they were about to write the final examinations. This means that the teachers have to provide opportunities for practicing reading in the classroom, hence a variety of reading genres are necessary. Again, reading could be integrated with other skills such as writing, speaking and listening, for better comprehension. Thirdly, the issue of the dictionary is important. Dictionaries can help students learn more vocabulary if used effectively and with the correct reading strategy. For teachers to maximize students' ability to engage in higher level of thinking, teachers need to address ways to scaffold comprehension strategies. An effective instruction fosters learning through support and assistance (Bass & Woo, 2008).

Secondly, when teachers work collaboratively to develop the reading skill it opens opportunities for students to engage in predicting, questioning, visualising, activating prior knowledge, self monitoring, seeking clarification and summarising (Pressley, 2006). These strategies will facilitate comprehension in English texts read. Again, it is crucial to expose students to as many reading materials as possible. The more the child reads, the better the reader the child becomes (Hoffner, Baker & Quinn, 2008). In Tanzania, after realising that students had poor reading skills, the government decided to promote the culture of reading by putting in place readership programmes (Dumea, 2003). Teachers were trained, the programme was monitored, reading competition and reading tents and library establishment were implemented to upgrade the standard of reading in schools (Dumea, 2003). This could be explored in Botswana to promote reading among Khoe learners. The success in reading can work with concerted efforts from various stakeholders working collaboratively. More practice could be given to students using materials that motivate and reflect Khoe culture. This way the Khoe will be learning but at the same time not losing their identity. With more practice using CRT materials, the students could explore their potential (Gay, 2000). Lastly students believe that

their language teachers should be changed. This suggestion was not explored further and needs to be researched on.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

Reading problems that were prevalent amongst Khoe learners at Motshegaletau Primary School have persisted with them to Mothamo CJSS. These students show lack reading comprehension strategies, exhibit slow reading speed, show lack of participation in class, have a lack of vocabulary and language to express themselves. Again, English could be acting as a barrier to comprehending concepts; therefore, teachers need to give students adequate skills to enable them to acquire the reading skill. Equally important is the learners' culture. It should also feature in the reading classroom. In addition, teacher training programmes should be expanded to include topics that are crucial to the teaching and learning process such as culturally responsive teaching, multicultural education, multilingualism and reflective teaching. The latter could be coupled with teachers being regularly upgraded to refresh their teaching strategies. If teachers have been empowered they could give learners more practice as deemed necessary. This would assist students to get used to reading. Furthermore, teachers could expose students to as much reading materials as possible from different disciplines. As the status quo demands that reading programs should be implemented with explicit reading instructions from primary to secondary school to improve the performance of students in reading and across the curricula. This will enable the learners to achieve the Revised National Policy on Education, Millennium Development Goals and Botswana's Vision 2016 goals.

## **9.0 Recommendations**

In the light of the discussion above, the following recommendations are made to ameliorate the problems of reading among Khoe learners:

- Teacher training programmes should be expanded to include topics that are crucial to the teaching and learning process that involves reading such as culturally responsive teaching, multicultural education, multilingualism and reflective teaching.
- More practice in reading is required for students to get used to reading. Students should be exposed to as much reading materials as possible from different disciplines.
- Reading programmes should be implemented with explicit reading instructions from primary to secondary school to improve the performance of students in reading and across the curricula.
- Teachers need to be regularly upgraded to refresh their teaching strategies.



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