MORAY HOUSE COLLEGE

SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR EDUCATION OVERSEAS

PROPOSALS FOR TEACHING READING SKILLS
IN STANDARD 8 IN NAMIBIA

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ABSTRACT

Reading is central to all learning and should enjoy more attention than any skill associated with learning. Undoubtedly, reading difficulty has an adverse effect on learning and on acquiring of information in general.

This dissertation is a proposal of teaching reading skills which, I believe, enable students to read purposefully, to become self-reliant students and to have a beneficial effect on their command of the English Language.

Chapter One gives the historical background while Chapter Two identifies problems facing teaching reading in English in Namibian secondary schools in general and in standard 8 in particular. Chapter Three gives a review of the literature and Chapter Four the proposal itself. Chapter Five exemplifies the proposal by means of model lessons while Chapter Six focuses on implementation and evaluation.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the teaching staff, non-teaching staff and the students of Mwaala Secondary School between 1986 and 1989.
Acknowledgements

Firstly, I thank God whose clear guidance has been strongly felt at every step along the way of my life so far.

My sincere thanks are due to my wife, Maria, and children, Navula and Tom, who have given me unflagging moral support which sustained me during my study, and who had to make many sacrifices through my being away. I also thank my uncle, Chief J S Taapopi, for his parental advice during my stay at Mwaala and for standing in for me in so many ways while I was studying. I would like to record my thanks to all of my friends and colleagues at Mwaala Secondary School for the generosity of their gifts and their good wishes on my leaving for the UK to study.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Historical Background

Formal education in Namibia, as in most parts of Africa, was introduced by missionaries as a by-product of their evangelical work. During colonial occupations by Germany and later South Africa, education in general and English language in particular have experienced severe setbacks, because the colonisers used it as a tool, for securing docile, subservient labourers for whites. Despite these deliberate setbacks, education had been a key area of conflict in Namibia’s struggle against colonialism. With political ‘conscientization’, English became very popular because of its unprecedented status as an international language and more students started demanding English as medium of instruction instead of Afrikaans. The South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO), the only political organisation which had been fighting for the liberation of Namibia, adopted English as its official language and that contributed to most people’s realisation of the importance of English. The illegal government felt threatened by English due to its political
connotations. Both Afrikaans and English were official languages with Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in most schools. The government of independent Namibia did not only adopt English as the medium of instruction, but also as the official language.

Education in Namibia was divided along ethnic lines and provision of primary and secondary education, and primary teacher training was entrusted to the so-called 'representative authorities' or 'administrations'. These were Vambos, Damaras, Namas, Hereros, Whites, Coloureds, Caprivis, Kavangos and Tswanas. UNIN (1986) The actual payment of educational funds to the 'representative authorities' was determined by the Department of Finance, subject to the availability of funds and the needs of the authority concerned. With insufficient funds, the 'representative authorities' could not expand and bring education to any better level. Now that the country has attained her independence on the 21st March 1990, all these fragmentations will be done away with. As from the beginning of next year (1991) we hope to have a centralised education system which caters for the needs of all equally.
1.2 Namibian Languages

With an area of 824,295 square kilometers Namibia has an estimated population of 1.5 million people which falls into seven main local language groups scattered all over the country. These language groups are Oshiwambo 46%, Damara/Nama 13%, Otjiherero 8%, Kavango 7%, the Caprivian languages 3%, Khoi-San 3%, Setswana 0.6% and three groups speaking imposed languages; viz., Afrikaans, English and German. UNIN (1981) Some of the local language groups consist of various languages and dialects which may or may not relate to one another, but the above classifications are enough for the purpose of this project. Owing to bantustanisation or confining of local language groups to certain areas, inter-intelligibility amongst speakers of local languages and dialects was minimized. Very little attention was given to developing of local languages with the result that only Oshiwambo (Oshidonga and Oshikwanyama) have been developed as school subjects to standard 10 level. In most cases, local languages are the medium of instruction at primary level (first 4 years).

1.3 Attitude towards English in Society and Schools

The decision for English as the official language, and the language across the curriculum in schools, was wholeheartedly welcomed by people in general and by
students in particular. Most multi-racial companies and industries in Namibia have adopted English as an official language and this encourages employees to be conversant with English so that they can work for such enterprises. When the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) started adult education most specially in learning English in 1978, the Namibian population has proved beyond doubt their willingness to learn English when they enrolled for these courses in big numbers. Almost everyone knows that most information is stored in written form, and in most cases in English.

Through the years of struggle, the emergence of English newspapers, e.g., "The Namibian" and "Windhoek Observer", which have been reporting political events and have wide readership, have enhanced people's favourable attitude towards English. Many people realised the importance of English for gaining information from these newspapers. The fact that English is an official language of SWAPO makes most people like it as opposed to Afrikaans which is the language of the colonizer.

Students have demonstrated their willingness to learn English on several occasions, mostly during school strikes. Among the students, the realisation of the importance of English dawned on them due to the
activities of Namibia National Students Organisation, (NANSO) which was established in 1984. NANSO has been agitating for, inter alia, the adoption of English as the medium of instruction. In SWAPO schools in exile, English was the medium of instruction and it led to most students leaving the country in search of better education. One of the reasons for replacing Afrikaans with English as the medium of instruction in schools under the 'Administration for Owambos' was to discourage students from leaving the country each year for SWAPO schools in exile. UNIN (1981) As students they know very well that English is extremely important for further studies and communication with the outside world.

Needless to say, education plays a key role in transforming and redressing social imbalances prevalent in our society. Reading in general and in English in particular is indispensable if we are to benefit from modern technology which is written in English and without which we cannot survive as a nation.
CHAPTER TWO

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Given the language situation in Namibia as outlined in Chapter One and the attitude of the population towards English, this chapter focusses on problems facing teaching reading in English at secondary level and most specifically in standard 8.

2.1 Teacher Training

Teacher training has a bearing on education in general and on the actual classroom language teaching in particular. At present most teachers are trained in the country, apart from a small number of those who are trained at Colleges and Universities in South Africa. The Academy for Tertiary Education, the highest educational institution, was opened in 1980 and offers courses that are post and pre-standard 10. The entry qualification for these courses are standard 10 and standard 8 respectively. The Academy also offers other tertiary courses as can be seen from the following table.
Table 1: Teacher Training Courses at the Academy for Tertiary Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>No of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Tertiary (full-time)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Certificate (I)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSTC and PTC (phased out in 1981)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tertiary (full-time)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Diploma (Primary): 3 years</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Diploma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Primary): 1 year</td>
<td>not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Diploma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Secondary): 4 years</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Bachelor in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education : 4 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Diploma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Post-graduate)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source UNIN 1984

In addition to the Academy, there are pre-standard 10 teacher training courses offered at colleges under 'representative authorities' which train primary teachers only. Entry qualification for these courses is standard 8. Besides, these aspirant teachers do
their teacher training and standard 10 simultaneously within two years. But due to acute shortages of teachers, most of these teachers end up teaching at secondary level.

Let us consider the situation in one particular area (Owambo region) where English has been the medium of instruction for a number of years now. Although English was the medium of instruction, at the beginning the teacher trainers, most of whom were South African soldiers or the wives thereof, due to ignorance or unwillingness to teach in English, kept on teaching in Afrikaans, which added to the failure rate. Albeit there were students with standard 10 certificates, they could not enrol for the post-standard 10 course, because they needed a scholarship and money was difficult to come by. The result was that even those who had standard 10 qualification ended up being trained as teachers for primary level.

To put it in a nutshell, most teachers are unqualified in general or underqualified for the standards they teach. The seriousness of the problem is highlighted by an assessment made recently by the United Nations Development Programme in Namibia, which reveals that 88% of Namibian teachers are
unqualified or underqualified. ("The Namibian", May 18, 1990)

The general procedure of teaching a reading lesson, taught in the colleges, is as follows:

A teacher explains briefly to the students the content of a passage to be read. He/she reads the passage for the students to hear correct pronunciation. Thereafter difficult words are explained. One or two students are asked to read aloud, while the others boringly listen to him/her. Lastly, questions, normally provided, are dealt with. Textbooks are in general in line with this procedure and therefore encourage the approach. This methodology is hopelessly obsolete and deficient as we will see in Chapter Four.

In-service training, conducted by subject advisers from the Department of National Education, helps to keep teachers up to date with the latest developments and policies in different subjects. In the northern region (Owambo), in-service training enables teachers who had received their education in Afrikaans to teach in English. However, due to the lack of English on the part of the advisers or for other reasons only known to them, they end up teaching in
Afrikaans. I experienced this when I attended one of the courses where the adviser was speaking Afrikaans most of the time. Obviously one cannot expect poorly trained teachers brought up in such a system with such ineffective in-service training to produce good on the part of the students.

2.2 Problem with English in Schools

Education in Namibia, especially of black people, is crippled by deliberately insufficient funds allotted to various 'representative authorities'. Schools are characterised by overcrowded classrooms with insufficient resources and materials' and underqualified or non-qualified teachers. Students come in standard 8 with 6 years of experience in English as the medium of instruction or as an ordinary subject. These students can hardly read and in standard 8 they have to sit for external national examinations. Before we look at what the examination entails, let us first consider the aims for English Second Language Higher Grade for Senior Secondary course as reflected in the syllabus:

1. to foster a desire to learn English, and to assist pupils to meet the challenge of living in a multilingual society
2. to help pupils listen with accuracy, sensitivity and eventually with critical discernment
3. to help pupils speak fluent and acceptable English confidently and with an awareness of audience
4. to guide pupils towards reading with increasing comprehension, enjoyment and discernment
5. to develop pupils’ ability to write English appropriate to their purposes
6. to promote pupils’ control of English through a knowledge of its structure and usage.

These are broad aims and need to be translated into realistic teaching objectives for the learners and this is what many teachers are unable to do. The junior certificate which is obtained on successful completion of standard 8 is a key to both employment and further studies. Those who pursue further studies find it extremely difficult to keep up with the reading demands, whereas those who take up employment cannot cope with life demands due to lack of reading ability. One of the requirements of the junior certificate is a pass in two languages of which Afrikaans and English are the case in most
schools. The results of the past few years have shown that most students failed English, an indication of weak background in the subject. This is because the language is not widely spoken, so the students hear and practice it in classrooms only.

The examination consists of three papers. The first paper is about essays and letters which are normally on topics of wide range and can only be properly answered by those who read widely. The second paper consists of 2 - 3 passages which have to be read and understood before answering the questions. Again the passages can be on different topics, and only those who read a lot stand a chance of doing well. The third paper is about prescribed books which are normally two. Apart from these the students are expected to read a number of books on their own and be able to briefly give their reviews, something which counts for marks as well. I am sure you will agree with me in saying that the emphasis is on reading.

In schools where English is the medium of instruction the situation is even worse, because reading difficulties in English have an adverse effect on the performance in other subjects. To my mind the problem lies with the actual teaching reading in
classroom, bearing in mind the lack of reading strategies on the part of teachers concerned. They do not apply reading strategies to enable students to read purposefully. To them as long as students read aloud and answer some comprehension questions, such students can read. In the light of new methodologies in teaching reading such complacency is utterly unacceptable and does not encourage students to read widely for pleasure. Our aim in teaching reading should be to make students independent readers. In other words, teachers should prepare students to meet the challenges of life after leaving school. To this end scanning and skimming, inference and reference, to mention but a few strategies, should be taught. But as can be deduced from the methodology in current use in schools and taught at colleges, these strategies are highly unlikely to be developed.

We must not lose sight of the fact that most of the English teachers are trained for primary level and have standard 8 as their highest academic qualification, and in most cases with very limited knowledge of English. Inadequate language knowledge on the part of the teachers puts limits on their imaginative and explorative endeavours in teaching. Teachers’ initiatives in this regard are also hampered by big numbers in classrooms with a
teacher:pupil ratio of 1:50. The examination oriented syllabus places severe constraints on the teacher to try out other methods. The teacher is then bound to follow textbooks rigidly in order to cover what the syllabus requires.

The teaching of the official language and the language across the curriculum according to the methodology outlined above is doomed to failure. This is, I think, one of the reasons why we had catastrophically bad standard 8 results last year (1989). Of the 9,111 students who sat standard 8 examinations, only 1,760 students (19%) passed. According to the Department of National Education students failed because of a 'poor command of English'. "The Namibian" (February 8th, 1990) Students through the Namibian National Students Organisation (NANSO) accused the Education Department of attempting to discourage Namibians from accepting English as the official language in schools. Repetition and dropout both at primary and secondary level are indicators of the inefficiencies in the students' flow within the education system and contribute to large classes which have far-reaching economic and social implications.
We have a vicious circle in which schools blame colleges for producing incompetent teachers, while colleges put the blame on schools for producing incompetent teacher-trainees. The big question is where to start in putting wrongs right and place education on a solid foundation which ensures national unity which we desperately need. If the situation is like this now, how would it be next year (1991), when English will be the language of instruction in all schools? Albeit the change is well-planned for, with preparatory measures taken, it is not going to be an easy task, given the fact that most teachers received their training in Afrikaans. There are many ways of tackling the problem, but I thought it proper to look at it in the actual classroom teaching by showing teachers how they can use some of the reading skills to equip students better in acquiring reading proficiency. To this end we need to consider the current literature review in ELT in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

From the outset let us establish common ground of what we mean by reading. A great deal has been written about reading with the result that reading has become a broad term that needs some specification. The reading that we have in mind here is the one that has as its main purpose the extraction of meaning from written text. To put it shortly, we are concerned with getting the message from a text. As you might recall from Chapter Two, standard 8 students have mastered basic reading skills, but need reading strategies to be fully competent readers.

3.1 Psycholinguistic view

Reading is more than just deciphering written text or 'barking at print'. There is a cognitive process going on in the mind of the reader and this is what we want to look at in more detail.

"Reading is a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the text is often more important than what one finds in it" (Grellet: 1981). Smith (1978) says one needs to bring to the text both visual and nonvisual information and regards the latter of prime importance in getting meaning from it. He goes on to
say the more nonvisual information you have when you read, the less visual information you need and vice versa. Goodman (1967) shares the same idea and calls it a 'psycholinguistic guessing game'. The reader, according to Goodman, is involved in a selective, tentative, anticipatory process and his presuppositions are either proved right or wrong as reading progresses. The reader uses four kinds of information, namely, graphic input, syntactic, semantic and background information. Certainly without the four kinds of information one would not get any message from a text. However, a reader doesn’t need to understand every single word or sentence in order to get meaning. We know, for example, we might be able to tell the content of a newspaper without understanding every single word in it. But a complete lack of knowledge in one of the four kinds of information can impede understanding. This shows that a reader’s role is not a passive one to be filled with meaning from the text without his active participation. Figure 1 taken from Nuttall (1982) shows the active involvement of a reader in getting the meaning from the text.

Figure 1
The reader on the left (Reader A) has little difficulty in retrieving meaning from the text. The four kinds of information mentioned earlier don’t hinder his interpretation of the text and that is why the reading seems straightforward. To the reader on the right, however, the same text appears very difficult. To get the meaning involves an uphill struggle of clearing hurdles out of his way. These hurdles may be lack of the four kinds of information. The reader on the right is aware of his shortcomings and tries hard removing hurdles. I associate our standard 8 students with this reader to the right. As teachers our task is to equip students with reading skills which enable them to work their way to the meaning much easier. It is not our task to clear the way for them, but rather to show them how to remove hurdles for themselves.

Reading is not just an active involvement of a reader, but also an interactive process. The interaction in reading is rather different in the sense that the writer is absent. In most cases the writer doesn’t get feedback on his writing except in correspondence. The reader, however, constantly reacts to what he reads in many ways. He may agree, disagree or question what he reads; covertly as well as overtly. In an overt way a reader may frown,
smile or make notes whereas in the covert way he may inwardly be happy, sad or sceptical as he reads on. Widdowson (1978) says that readers actively work out what the text means as they go along, predicting what is to come by reference to what has preceded, when they read with understanding. In this sense reading is a kind of accomplishment whereby a discourse is created in the mind by means of a process of reasoning. We notice that our minds as readers are busy in the same way as the reader on the right in Figure 1. Our cognitive ability enables us getting meaning from reading by assimilating the four kinds of information. Readers require particular skills in using their ability to assimilate this information. It is these skills which teachers need to develop in learners.

3.2 The Role of the Teacher
Teaching of languages in general and of English as a second language or foreign language in particular, has experienced great change with the emergence of the communicative approach to language teaching. As a result of this change the role of the teacher has also changed accordingly. The communicative approach has as its overriding concern a general communicative ability which enables learners to cope with everyday situations. As you may recall the methodology in
current use in Namibian schools mentioned in Chapter Two is inconsistent with the current methodologies in English Language Teaching. The teacher is doing everything for the students with the result that the students become heavily depended on the teacher. According to the communicative approach, however, the teacher adopts the roles of controller, assessor, organiser, prompter, participant and resource, to borrow terms from Harmer (1983). The first important role of a teacher is to make sure students have opportunities to read interesting and suitable texts with suitable activities, including materials in the outside world. During silent reading the teacher actively helps individuals or a class if a general difficulty arises.

The teacher must teach students how they can get meaning by using references, rather than giving exact explanations. The teacher should give students techniques for approaching texts of various kinds to be read for various purposes, e.g., reading a TV programme, a history book and sports account from a newspaper. Reading aloud by a teacher to the students for pronunciation and the immediate correction of errors sometimes justified as 'providing immediate feedback', are both discouraging and interfering with students' reading. I don’t rule
out reading aloud completely, for it's good pronunciation practice and for the practice of students who would become news readers, teachers etc. However, in our schools reading aloud is at the centre of reading lessons. If reading aloud is so predominate as implied in our methodology, why don't we allow students to study by reading aloud, for example, during study-time? It is because reading in general is an individual silent practice.

The communicative approach aims towards teaching language in classrooms as it occurs in real life. Very few people, if any, read aloud in the real world. To prepare our students to cope with the demands in a literate society, we must teach them reading in the same manner as it is done in the real world. Maybe the following general aim for a reading development programme by Nuttall (1982) helps us (teachers) understand our role:

"To enable students to read without help unfamiliar authentic texts at appropriate speed, silently and with adequate understanding."

Since our standard 8 students are at the beginning of advanced level, we should help them towards accomplishing this general aim. Obviously our help
is far from doing everything for them. The best way of teaching reading is to create opportunities whereby students read a lot. The saying 'practice makes perfect' is justifiably applicable in this aspect. We practise uses to which we put reading in our daily lives outside the classroom in order to make students competent in life as adults of tomorrow. To this end we take a closer look at the following skills.

3.3 **Skimming and Scanning**

Both skimming and scanning are closely related reading skills necessary for quick and efficient reading. Grellet (1981) considers skimming as going through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it. She considers scanning as trying to locate specific information without following the linearity of the passage. In both skimming and scanning the reader is not reading in the normal sense of the word, but is forcing his eyes over the print at a rate which permits him to take in only what he is after. The aim of skimming and scanning is to make students better readers, that is, "... readers who can decide quickly what they want or need to read" (Grellet: 1981). Students learn to read various texts, books or magazines for various reasons differently determined by purpose of reading. These
are useful skills and are used in real life especially in reading newspapers. Nuttall (1982) in referring to skimming and scanning, says that they do not remove the need for careful reading, but they enable the reader to select the texts or portions of a text, that are worth spending time on. The two skills are also important in answering questions appended to comprehension passages. Our students waste time in reading texts at the same speed with a purpose of remembering all the details. To read in this way slows reading and affects it adversely. By teaching these skills to our students we will undoubtedly make them efficient readers and increase their reading speed as well.

3.4 Inference

"Inferring means making use of syntactic, logical and cultural clues to discover the meaning of unknown elements." (Grellet:1981) What Grellet implies is that any writer makes use of these clues and similarly a reader must be on the lookout for these clues to infer meaning of unfamiliar words. Put it the other way, a reader makes use of the context in which an unfamiliar word occurs to give a rough idea of its meaning. Grellet goes on to say, inability to infer the meaning of unknown words often causes discouragement and apprehension in students when they
are faced with a new text. To consult a dictionary or ask the meaning from an informant each time the student comes across a new word is not only cumbersome, but it also interrupts the thought processes of a reader which should be engaged in following the continued development of thought in the text. It is therefore expedient to develop ways of dealing with new vocabulary without a dictionary or an informant. The reason for doing this is best summed up by Nuttall (1982): "Training students to infer meaning from context gives them a powerful aid to comprehension and will ultimately greatly speed up their reading."

However, dictionary use remains indispensable in acquiring new vocabulary and cannot therefore be totally banned. In fact we can also make use of inference when consulting the dictionary to determine which is the most appropriate of the many explanations given under a word. One of the most useful aspects of analysing a word is the use of prefixes and suffixes; e.g. pseudo-name and nameless. If students are assisted to acquire as many meanings of prefixes and suffixes as possible, they would be able to elucidate the meaning of many unfamiliar words in context. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) list a number of prefixes and suffixes:
Prefixes:
1. negative un-, non-, in-, dis-, a-
2. reversative privative un-, de-, dis-
3. pejorative mis-, mal-, pseudo-
4. of time and order fore-, pre-, post-, ex-

Suffixes:
1. verb and noun -er, -or
e.g. driver and actor
2. adjective and noun -ness, -ity
e.g. happiness and sanity
3. verb -ify, -ize
e.g. simplify and popularize

Focus on word building is likely to pay dividends for the learner both receptively and productively - serve to widen the students' range of expression.

One more point to mention before we move on to the next skill. Inference does not refer to words only, but it can refer to clauses and sentences as well. In this sense we look for information which is not explicit in sentences and clauses. In order to infer implied meaning one has to have knowledge of functions and the system of sentences. We know very well that a sentence, just like a word, can have more than one meaning. The context in which they occur, as well as syntactic, logical and cultural clues,
enables us to infer the implied information and meaning of unfamiliar words and sentences. By teaching inference of meaning of words, clauses and sentences, we are in a way contributing to the general competence of a student in the target language.

3.5 Reference

Halliday and Hasan (1976) regard references as items which cannot be interpreted semantically in their own right, but they require reference to something else for their interpretation. What is implied by Halliday and Hasan is that these items are directives indicating that information is to be retrieved from elsewhere. Grellet (1981) says reference covers all the devices that permit lexical relationships within a text. It is important for the students to realize that a text is not made up of independent clauses or sentences, but that it is a web of related ideas that are announced, introduced and taken up again later throughout the passage with the help of references. Reference, therefore, can refer to something mentioned earlier in the text and also to something to be mentioned at a later stage. We call them anaphora and cataphora respectively.
Williams (1984) says reference words are simply words that refer to, or are used instead of, other words. According to him reference makes explicit the relationship between clauses, sentences and paragraphs. Although reference has much in common with all cohesive elements, it differs from the others in that in the case of reference information to be retrieved is the referential meaning to the identity of the particular thing or class of things that is being referred to.

A learner of a foreign language must have the ability to recognise the relationship between sentences for quick and better understanding. If he, however, fails to give an utterance its intended value, the message may be incomplete or misunderstood. As Williams (1983) puts it, reference operates like signposts on the road, giving the reader advance notice of:

- going straight on - additive
- changing direction - adversative
- the consequence of the part of the journey just completed - casual
- the time sequence and ration of part of the text - temporal.
Questions involving reference serve as comprehension checking devices, for they enable the teacher to see if the correct interpretation has been made. They can also serve to help comprehension if they draw the reader's attention to an interpretation that might otherwise have escaped him. This is one of the reasons why we need to have questions in the while-reading stage. In this way an unskilled reader is helped, as he reads, towards the direction of the text. However, the strategy of inference can best be practised through the use of nonsense words in the context or sentences.

3.6 Extensive Reading

The present acceleration of new knowledge and information in all fields demands that people cultivate the reading habit in order to keep themselves up to date. We know very well that the reading done in school subjects, commonly known as intensive reading, does not meet these demands. It needs to be supplemented by extensive reading. Extensive reading is the type of reading in which a reader reads widely for his own pleasure and interest and not necessarily for academic purposes. We are so engulfed by written words that it is almost impossible for an illiterate to lead a normal life.
The aims for English as reflected in the syllabus (see 2.2) cannot all be met by intensive reading only or within a school career. In order to cater for what the classroom fails to accomplish, we must inculcate in our students reading habits which enable students to read on their own for various purposes. It is an obvious fact that there are many problems in the world. Printed materials bring us news of today's problems and information, and also recount the problems of the past and their solutions.

"If problems can be solved through reading, it should be possible to improve problem-solving through improving reading proficiency." (Hafner:1974)

Hafner implies that for almost every problem that faces an individual there is a solution or partial solution in some piece of literature. Literature here means the entire range of writings. Literature is therefore a potential force for enlightening the individual, for enriching his life, and for aiding him in building confidence. Our aim in introducing extensive reading is to cultivate the reading habit in our students and to equip them better for meeting the challenges of life ahead as pointed out above.
Hafiz and Tudor (1989) have proven that exposing students to large quantities of meaningful and interesting reading materials will, in the long run, produce an effect on the students' command of the second language (English). And this is precisely what we are after by introducing extensive reading to our students. Nuttall (1982) rightly puts it this way:

"The best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it". Owing to the fact that we do not have many English speaking people in Namibia, the "next best way" of Nuttall is the only option we have.

We, teachers, must make sure that interesting reading materials are available for the students to read. But given the fact of economic constraints, not all the schools have libraries, and such reading materials are hard to come by. However, this does not mean that there is nothing we can do. The newspapers, magazines and books we buy for our personal reading can be used for the same purpose by the students. Such reading materials can be duplicated and distributed among the students for them to read. An English teacher must collect as
many reading materials as he possibly can. Another useful practice is to take some texts for extensive reading from the textbooks used in other subjects. This requires a healthy co-operation among teachers. In choosing reading materials we must make sure that they are authentic, appealing, easy, short and varied to make students want to read.

A stress-free and informal atmosphere where everyone (the teacher and the students) is free to relate to the others what he has read, is ideal. Where books are available, it is a good idea to let students give short reviews of books they have read. An alternative will be for the teacher to keep a record of how many books each student has read. As an English teacher you must set an example of reading a lot. It is a bit controversial to introduce extensive reading at the school level, while it is used for out-of-school practice. But the point is that if we do not introduce it at this level, the students may not learn it by themselves.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROPOSAL

In view of the current view discussed in the literature review and also in consideration of the students' needs in reading at standard 8 level, I therefore propose that reading skills should be improved through task-based interaction activities aimed at developing the skills. These skills (scanning and skimming, inference and reference) enable students to acquire sufficient proficiency in the language to be able to learn either formally or informally in the written mode, once they have left their secondary schools. To this end I propose the following methodology.

4.1 Proposed Methodology

In Chapter Two (see 2.1) the methodology in current use in teaching reading in Namibian schools was described and it was clear that the methodology is deficient in teaching reading skills as discussed under the literature review. It is highly unlikely that reading skills will develop through this obsolete methodology. The students understand a particular reading passage we present, but are unable to understand another passage of similar nature
without help from the teacher. If we are to make our students self-reliant competent readers, then we need to change the methodology. A self-reliant competent reader is one who finds his way round any piece of writing without relying too heavily on the assistance of another person. In other words, one who satisfies his purpose of reading in the quickest way. The methodology I propose consists of the following phases:

Pre-reading:
As the name implies this is the phase which prepares learners for what is to come. I am in full agreement with Williams (1984) who puts the following aims for the phase: to introduce and arouse interest in the topic; to motive students by giving a reason for reading; to provide some language preparation for the text. Obviously not all of these aims will be relevant for all texts. The overriding aim at this phase should be to create a positive attitude in the minds of students towards the text to be read. It does not mean, however, that it is only the teacher who is active at this stage. The teacher guides students through exercises or discussions to realization of the aims. The following questions will help the teacher to prepare for pre-reading work:
1. What do the students know already of the text topic and how can this knowledge be drawn out and used?

2. Why should anyone want to read this text, and can the same, or similar, reasons be generated in the students?

Undoubtedly the answers to these questions will give clues to ways of introducing the text and motivating the students.

**While Reading**

This phase is where the actual reading by the students takes place. At this phase the students have already reasons for reading the text. Sometimes it is very useful for the students to have questions before reading to help them read with a purpose. Williams (1984) presents the following aims for this phase: to help understanding of the writer’s purpose; to help understanding of the text structure; to clarify text content. I have said in Chapter Three (see 3.1) that reading is an interactive process and that is why while reading exercises are highly recommended. The students can complete diagrams, make lists or take notes while reading. The traditional comprehension questions at the end of the text can be used for while reading.
Group work is very important at this stage and should be encouraged. We know reading is a silent individual practice, but all we are saying here is that students should help one another in doing the exercises. The teacher should start with general or global understanding of the text, and then move to smaller units such as paragraphs, sentences and words. The reason is that larger units provide a context for understanding the smaller units.

Post-reading

This is a feedback session of what has been read, where both the teacher and the students are sharing their views of what they have read. The aims of this phase are: to consolidate or reflect upon what has been read; to find out whether the aims set for the text have been achieved; to relate the text to the students’ own knowledge, interests or views.

Post-reading exercises can best be done in pairs or groups where each pair or group discusses its own views and reports later to the whole class. The advantage of this is that students learn from one another and not only from the teacher. Nuttall (1982) regards this phase as the time to put questions of evaluation and personal response and to help students to relate the text to the world in
which it is placed. What Nuttall says underlines the importance of the authenticity and purposefulness of reading texts. Most of the work at this stage will be best done orally. This phase should serve as a link to other subjects and language skills, e.g., writing.

4.2 Material Selection

I propose to make use of the prescribed textbook, 'Advance with English', in current use in standard 8. This is a grammar book consisting of comprehension passages with appended questions. Williams (1984) puts the following guidelines for selecting reading materials:

1. materials should satisfy students' needs;
2. materials should be appropriate for the intended skill;
3. materials should be at the level of the student.

The textbook under discussion meets these guidelines fairly well in as much as it contains a wide range of interesting passages about African cultural background. The language used is at the level of the students and topics covered are about marriages, sports, money and modern technologies to mention but a few. These topics occupy most of their daily
discussions and therefore interest the students. The books is designed according to the communicative approach and combines reading and the other language skills with grammar exercises taken from the reading passages. But as we might recall from Chapter Two (see 2.1), the methodology taught at colleges and used in our schools is inconsistent with the communicative approach, and as one would expect the wrong approach results in difficulties in understanding the passages on the part of the students. The passages lend themselves to be used for developing most of the reading skills. However, the teacher must use his discretion in deciding which passage can best be used for which skill.

I will supplement the textbook passages with authentic materials for extensive reading lessons as discussed in Chapter 3 (see 3.6). The students are, in this way, introduced to actual uses to which reading is put in an out-of-school context. And as we have said, this is a way of whetting their appetite for reading widely.

4.3 Rationale

I have chosen to concentrate on four reading skills for their usefulness in reading. In our schools these four skills are the most neglected ones.
Furthermore, these skills should be developed at standard 8 level, since it is the level where the students need them the most if they are to cope with much reading at this level and the levels thereafter. Undoubtedly they will hardly cope with the reading if they do not apply these skills.

Many a student wastes time in choosing a relevant book or in reading the whole book with the same concentration whereas he only needs a chapter from the book. On the other hand, it only takes a student very few minutes to determine whether the book is relevant and what chapter to read if he applies scanning and skimming. If he does not apply inference, he may waste time in looking up unfamiliar words in a dictionary, but if he makes use of it, he infers the meanings of words from the context, and reads on. Inference helps the students in using dictionaries as it enables them to choose the most appropriate meaning from the many given in a dictionary by inferring from the context.

Understanding referencing, as we have seen in 3.5, connects ideas in sentences and paragraphs by recognising references. This is a very useful skill as it enables the students to follow the ramifications of a story or book. One of the common
setbacks in our students is that they lose sight of the thread of the book due to inability to make use of referencing. By teaching these skills, our students acquire valuable assets which enable them to become competent readers.

In Chapter Two I have pointed out that the teaching of reading is hampered by professional incompetence on the part of the teachers, overcrowded classes and acute shortages of textbooks. It is with these impediments in mind that I propose the teaching of reading skills. Due to shortages of reading materials in schools, teachers tend to neglect extensive reading completely. That is why I have included extensive reading to show how it can be taught even in the absence of libraries. By making use of pair and group work I hope to alleviate the problems, because the teacher can work through the syllabus much easier and quicker than is the case with conventional methods. Even in the case of book shortages, group work is recommended in that a group can work with one book at their disposal. I know, of course, that it is not an easy thing to administer, but it is the best one can do under such situations.

One would expect such a proposal to be introduced at teacher-training colleges and through in-service
training courses. My purpose for introducing it at a school level is to give some guidelines to standard eight English teachers as to how to teach these skills. I will do this by means of giving model lessons, using the textbook in current use. It is only by applying the necessary reading skills that one becomes an effective reader, and as we know, reading in English is indispensable in communication and further studies in this technological era we live in.
CHAPTER FIVE

EXEMPLIFICATION

This chapter exemplifies, by means of model lessons, what I have proposed in the previous chapter. The model lessons serve only as guidelines and should not be regarded as the only ways. As already pointed out the passages are from the textbook, Advance with English, in current use in standard 8. The first two lessons are based on the passage titled, The Olympic Games, on pages 28-29 (see attached extract).

5.1 Model Lesson 1

Skill involved: skimming

Aim: To prepare the students to skim by asking them to recognise the key sentences of each paragraph

Number of Pupils: 45-50

Time: 40 minutes

5.1.1 Pre-Reading

The teacher prepares the students for the text to be read by asking the following questions: Why do people participate in athletics? What do we call international athletic competitions? Who wants to reach the stage of competing in international
The Olympic Games

In ancient Greece, athletics played a very important part in the life of the people, and athletic festivals had an almost religious character. One of these festivals, held every four years at Olympia in honour of the God Zeus, won a particularly high reputation. No one knows how far back these Olympian or Olympic Games go, but official records were first kept in 776 B.C., and from that year the Greek calendar was often measured in "Olympiads" of four years each.

The exact sequence of events at the festival is uncertain. On the first day the competitors and judges took an oath of fair dealing, and this was followed by gymnastic competitions for boys, horse-racing and the pentathlon, a special contest proving each athlete’s ability in five different exercises: jumping, running, discus-throwing, javelin-throwing and wrestling. On the fourth day, which was the day of the full moon, sacrifices were made to gods and heroes. On the morning of the last day came the crowning of all the victors with garlands of wild olives from the sacred grove of Altis. Each victor was presented to the people, with an announcement of his name and country. So great was the honour that the winner of the foot-race even gave his name to the year of his victory.

The Games were at first purely a Greek affair, but later other nations, especially the Romans, took part, and for a time they took on the aspect of Mediterranean championships. Eventually, after an uninterrupted history of almost 1,200 years, the Games were abolished in A.D. 394 by the Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius because of their pagan origin.

In 1896, largely owing to the enthusiasm of a Frenchman, Coubercin, they were revived. As a tribute to Greece, the first meeting was held in Athens, when fifty-nine athletes from ten countries competed in a dozen track and field events. The performances were poor, but the idea of such an international contest gripped the world’s imagination, and nowadays there may be 6,000 competitors from more than seventy countries taking part in a large number of different sports, from running to pistol-shooting. The Games are held in different countries in turn, the host being chosen by the international Olympic committee. Women athletes first competed in 1928, and now play an important part in the programme.

The modern Games start with the arrival at the stadium of a runner carrying a torch ignited at Olympia in Greece by the sun’s rays and carried from there by a series of runners. This torch signifies the continuation of the Greek athletic ideal, and continues to burn throughout the Games until the closing ceremony. The Olympic flag carries the five interlaced rings, representing the five continents linked in a common concern.

Black athletes from America have played a prominent part in the Games for many years, the most famous being the great runner and jumper Jesse Owens, who dominated the Berlin Olympics in 1936. More recently, Africans from Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and elsewhere have been highly successful, winning many medals and establishing several new records.
athletics? When and where did this idea of competing at international level start?

5.1.2 While reading
The teacher explains what he wants the students to do. They must read, as quickly as possible, and write down the main idea of each paragraph in one sentence. He tells the students not to worry too much about difficult words. The point is to get the main idea of each paragraph. He gives a limited time in which the students must finish of, say, 10 minutes.

5.1.3 Post-reading
The students are given 5 minutes to compare their sentences with their immediate neighbours. Each pair must reach a consensus on the sentence acceptable to both of them for each paragraph.

After this the students work in groups. Four pairs form a group and they must reach a consensus on the acceptable answer. Each group must choose a member who, at the end, reports to the whole class. The lesson ends with the reporting of various groups.
5.2 Rationale for Model Lesson 1

5.2.1 Pre-reading

As it has been said under the proposals, the pre-reading aims at enkindling the interest and curiosity of the students. This phase also determines what the students know of the text to be read. The teacher asks the questions to initiate and lead the discussion. This is very important, because it makes the students actively participate in the discussion. At this stage every student wonders what the text will be about. This inquisitive attitude makes them read purposefully, because they read to find the answer to the questions they cannot answer. Prior knowledge of the text or topic is crucial to the understanding of the text. The more prior knowledge they have, the easier for them to understand. If, for example, a student knows a lot about the Olympic games, he/she will answer most of the questions and this encourages him/her to find out more. Such a student teaches the others and students remember what they learn from their mates more than what is taught by the teacher. The last questions are made difficult intentionally, to encourage the students to read with a purpose. If the students fail to give the answers, the teacher refers them to the passage for the answers. The students read with the aim of finding the answer and this is the case in real life.
5.2.2 While reading

The importance of explanation at any phase cannot be over-emphasized. The students must know what is expected of them. They must know that they have to read very fast, and what to do while reading. Reading in this way, the reader is not passive, but active and interactive. Moreover, skimming aims at speeding reading and that is why the students are given limited time.

By giving the central idea of the paragraph, the students will have the whole text summarised in a few sentences. To do it paragraph by paragraph is much easier than getting the gist of the whole text at once, but the ideal is to do it as a whole and we should aim towards that. The difficult words should not hinder the students understanding and the teacher points it out. We also note that, so far, the teacher does not explain difficult words. Getting the gist of any text does not require understanding of all the words and this is precisely what we teach our students to be able to do.

5.2.3 Post-reading

The students compare their answers in pairs in the first five minutes of this phase. They also have to reach a consensus on the acceptable answers to both
of them in a pair. This gives each student a chance to justify his/her answers and to learn from each other. The teacher moves around, listening to the discussions and gives help only when it is badly needed.

After pair work, group work follows where many pairs in a group have to reach a consensus. The students get answers from various pairs within their group and in this way they realise that the text can be approached from many perspectives. The students who have prior knowledge of the text will be of great help to the others who do not, in that they teach the others. The learning is not only from the teacher, but also from fellow-students. The students become less dependent of the teacher. The teacher's role becomes that of a supervisor and facilitator. Instead of listening to each and every student's answer which is time consuming, the teacher only listens to a few students who represent the whole class in reporting. We see here that group work helps the teacher in coping with big classes. The teacher must make sure that the reporters change each time to give chances to the other members of the groups. Also the groups should change regularly to avoid domination by able students.
5.3 Model Lesson 2

This model is about scanning and it is based on the same passage as the previous one. Skimming and scanning are closely related and it is only by teaching them from the same text that the difference will be conspicuous. Thus this lesson is subsequent to the previous one.

Skill involved: Scanning
Aim: To teach the students scanning for specific information
Number of Students: 45-50
Time: 40 minutes

5.3.1 Pre-reading

As the passages has been dealt with previously no long introduction is needed. The teacher elicits some details of the passage and explains that the following lesson is to practice the quickest method of locating the required information. The students must try to answer the questions as quickly as they possibly can.

5.3.2 While reading

The teacher gives a signal upon which the students start reading and answering the following questions:
1. In what country did athletic festivals have a religious character?
2. What are "Olympiads"?
3. What happened on the day of the full moon?
4. Who established the Olympic Games and why?
5. Who revived the Olympic Games and when?
6. What does the torch signify?
7. Name two events in which Jesse Owens took part.
8. When did women athletes first participate?
9. What would you say is the difference between modern Olympic Games and Olympian?

The teacher must stop the students from writing when the set time has lapsed. He asks who have answered all the questions and thereafter lets the students compare their answers in pairs.

5.3.3 Post-reading

In groups the students compare their answers. The teacher asks the students what they think of the exercise. He also asks when the next Olympic Games will be and whether they think that Namibia will be represented.
5.4 Rationale for Model Lesson 2

5.4.1 Pre-reading

This phase is to prepare the students what to expect next. The questions asked aim at reminding the students about the content of the passage and also at determining how much they can remember. By stating the limited time the teacher creates the positive attitude - competitive attitude - in the minds of the students. The students will tackle the next phase absolutely clear in their minds as to what is expected of them. The answers should not be in full sentences.

5.4.2 While reading

We notice that there are questions to be answered during while reading, an indicator that the reading is not a passive task. In this manner the students read with the purpose of getting answers to the set questions. However, the students do not have to read every sentence, but to look for the paragraph from which to get the required information. The questions are sequenced according to the sequence of ideas in the passage to facilitate the understanding of the passage.

After the set time the students must stop writing. As in every competition, there must be a winner or
winners, so the teacher asks who have answered all the questions to determine those who have finished the task within the limited time set. Since time is very important in scanning, a word of praise to those who have finished is recommended. However, it must not be done at the expense of those who have not finished. This phase is ended with pair work and we know from the previous lesson the importance of pair work.

5.4.3 Post-reading
The students work in groups in comparing their answers. For the first part the teacher must supervise the discussions by moving from group to group listening to their discussions. While supervising, the teacher must ensure that the able students do not monopolise the discussion. To ask for the students’ opinions is very important, because it reveals their appreciation or dissatisfaction with the lesson. I must point out that the emphasis is not on testing in the conventional way, but on how they feel and how they arrive at their answers. In the same way the misunderstandings on the part of the students will help the teacher in preparing for the following similar questions. The last two questions bring the passage more closely to the students. They realise that the passage concerns their country as
well. To them the passage is not just a story, but an invitation to their country to participate in the Olympic Games and it is up to them to see it.

5.5 **Model Lesson 3**

This lesson is based on the story, *The Death of Amadi's Father*, on page 77, of which an extract is attached.

Skill Involved: inference of meanings from the context

Aim: to teach the students to infer meaning from the context

Number of students: 45-50

Time: 80 minutes

5.5.1 **Pre-reading**

The teacher starts the lesson by asking the following questions: What do you think of the custom of parents choosing husbands and wives for their daughters and sons? What would you do if you found yourself in a situation where you were forced to marry according to your parents’ choice?
The Death of Amadi's Father

From the first novel of the Nigerian writer, Chukwuemeka Ike. It is about Amadi, a university student, who is in trouble with his father because he has decided to marry a "foreign" girl, and not the local girl that his father has chosen for him. Now his father is dying.

As they walked towards Amadi's father's house, Amadi, still in doubt, strained his ears for women wailing or the singing of church hymns for the dead. All was quiet. He dropped his suitcase and rushed into his father's room. His mother was sitting by the bamboo bed, tending the fire that warmed her husband.

"Papa!" he shouted, tears streaming from his eyes. His mother stood up and embraced him. She, too, was crying. "My son, you cannot imagine my joy to see you back. Satan has thrown a big temptation on us but, by the power of the Almighty God above, we shall conquer Satan. In the name of Jesus, we shall conquer."

When she released him, Amadi bent down to touch his sick father. His eyes were open. He was still alive. He stared at his son for a while as if he could not recognize him.

"Papa! It's me. It's Amadi."

His mouth slowly opened. "Amadi — when did you return?" He spoke in spasms.

"Just now, sir."

"Who asked you to return?" he continued.

Amadi's mother replied. "Do you forget so quickly? Don't you remember you asked the teacher to go to the university to bring him back?"

"Oh — it is true." The cough that followed frightened Amadi. It lasted for a full minute, and each time he coughed Amadi thought he would cough out his heart. When his breathing returned to normal, he opened his eyes again and looked at Amadi.

"Amadi!" he called.

"Sir?"

"How is your wife?" At this question his face became tense and his eyes more prominent.

"I am not married, sir; I did not marry that girl."

The tense face relaxed, giving way to a smile of relief.

Son and mother looked at the sick man in expectation.

"If I die now I shall be happy."

"You have started talking nonsense again", interrupted Amadi's mother. "I have told you, you will not die."

The sick man went on speaking, each word dragged painfully out between long pauses.

"Amadi, I am glad. I knew you did not do it. My own son could not do such a thing. But promise me that you will marry Nwakaego and I shall give you all my last blessing and die a happy man."

"Papa! what are you saying?"

"Have you promised?"

His mother looked at him pleadingly. "My son, please promise him. Do anything that will save his life."

"Yes, sir. I promise."

Again the words came slowly and painfully, with long rests between each word.

"I am now happy. Very happy. If I die now, I shall lie quiet in my grave and not worry to find out whether you have married a foreigner or a girl from the streets. Give me your hand. Your mother knows I am not owing anybody anything. She knows all my property, all my land. God will bless you and Nwakaego and give you many children. You will . . . ."

He stopped suddenly. His eyes bulged. He coughed violently again, groaned loudly and became limp.
The Death of Amadi’s Father

From the first novel of the Nigerian writer, Chukwuemeka Ike. It is about Amadi, a university student, who is in trouble with his father because he has decided to marry a "foreign" girl, and not the local girl that his father has chosen for him. Now his father is dying.

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“Amadi, I am glad. I knew you did not do it. My own son could not do such a thing. But promise me that you will marry Nwakaego and I shall give you all my last blessing and die a happy man.”

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“Have you promised?”

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Again the words came slowly and painfully, with long rests between each word.

“I am now happy. Very happy. If I die now, I shall lie quiet in my grave and not worry to find out whether you have married a foreigner or a girl from the streets. Give me your hand. Your mother knows I am not owing anybody anything. She knows all my property, all my land. God will bless you and Nwakaego and give you many children. You will . . . .”

He stopped suddenly. His eyes bulged. He coughed violently again, groaned loudly and became limp.
5.5.2 While reading

**Step 1:**

Before reading the students are given the following questions:

1. Who collected Amadi from the university and why?
2. Who was Nwakaego?
3. What did Amadi's mother hope would be the effect of his promise?
4. What happened after Amadi's promise to his father?

The students read the questions before reading. Then they try to find answers to the questions as they read.

**Step 2**

The following questions are given to the students after they have finished reading and answering the questions in the first stage.

1. Why did Amadi strain his ears as they approached his father's house?
2. How did Amadi's mother understand her husband's illness?
3. Why had the father sent for Amadi?

4. "You are talking nonsense again." What did Amadi's mother regard as nonsense here?

5. "Papa! What are you saying?" Do you understand by this that: a) Amadi could not hear his father clearly or b) Amadi did not expect his father to bless him or c) Amadi did not want to be asked to marry Nwakaego.

6. How can we tell that his father believed in some kind of life after death?

7. What is the motive behind parents choosing husbands and wives for their daughters and sons?

8. "He spoke in spasms." What is meant by this sentence?

5.5.3 Post-reading

The students work first in pairs in comparing their answers. By applying the snowball-technique, groups of 3-4 pairs compare their answers. The snowball technique is where a pair is joined by another pair at a time until there are many pairs in a group. The students must justify their answers.

5.6 Rationale for Model Lesson 3

5.6.1 Pre-reading

The questions asked at this stage aim at introducing the text to be read. Marriages occupy most of their
daily discussion and we expect the question to spark off a lively discussion, especially in that it is presented as a problem in which everyone of them is more likely to find himself or herself. As students read they compare their own perception of the problem with what happens in the passage. This is the interactive aspect of reading we aim at.

5.6.2 While reading
This phase has two stages. The first stage is where the students read the passage for general understanding. To help the students understand the passage better they are given the questions before reading which are "signposts" to direct them towards the direction of the passage. Inference can only be done once the whole passage has been read and understood. The questions set at this stage are a summary of the whole passage.

Since the students have a general understanding of the passages, they can now infer meanings from the context. But we have seen (see 3.4) that inference makes use of syntactic, logical and cultural clues. The first thing we notice is that the answers to the questions are not explicitly stated and therefore cannot be directly retrieved from the passage. In
other words, the students have to make use of the clues mentioned above to answer the questions.

Let us take the first question as an example. It is not directly stated in the passage why Amadi was straining his ears as they approached his father’s house. But in the passage it says that his father was sick and that is why he was summoned home. So, Amadi expected to find his father dead or alive (logical clue). According to African culture, people cry loudly when a beloved passes away (cultural clue). As to why he was straining his ears, he wanted to tell whether his father was dead or alive. Obviously loud cries would signify his father’s death. We see that there can be many interpretations to the questions, depending on what clues are used. The most important thing is for the students to be able to verify their interpretations. In other words, they must indicate the clues they have referred to. The teacher can answer one question for the students to indicate to them how they should go about it.

In 3.4 it was pointed out that reference can also be used in dealing with new vocabulary without referring to a dictionary. Let us again take the last question as an example and indicate how it can
be done. The teacher may explain it along these lines: we know that Amadi's father was seriously ill. Sick people don't speak normally. Moreover, it is stated that his mouth opened slowly. We can imagine what type of sound to expect from such a sick man. The students would have an idea, though not an exact one, of what type of spasms talking is. The rest of the questions can be dealt with more or less in the same procedure.

5.6.3 Post-reading

The students compare their answers in pairs. After some time, say five minutes, the teacher tells two pairs to combine and discuss their answers. The groups become bigger by adding a pair each time, hence the term snowball-technique. The advantage of this technique is that the students get exposed to many ideas. The students also realise that there is more than one interpretation to the questions. This becomes obvious as the pairs and individuals justify their answers. Again the groups must not be too big, because it becomes difficult to control their own discussion.

The teacher listens to the groups' discussions, but he must not intervene. However, if he notices a problem, it is better to make note of it and explain
it at the end of the discussions. It is also very important to give a chance to the students to express their feelings about the exercise in order to know how they feel. This is also a way for the teacher to detect shortcomings on his part or difficulties on the part of the students.

5.7 **Model Lesson 4**

Based on the passage, Unexpected Visitors, on page 95.

Skill Involved: Reference

Aim: To train the students to recognise and understand reference.

Number of students: 45-50

Time: 40 minutes.

5.7.1 **Pre-reading**

The teacher presents the following dilemma to the students: you went to church and after church the minister of your parish told you that he would come to spend the afternoon with you at your place. He would come later as he had other things to attend to first. Tell your neighbour what you would do and vice versa.
A. Unexpected Visitors

From an amusing short story, "The Truly Married Woman", by Abioseh Nicol of Sierra Leone, about the home life of a happy couple, Ajayi and Ayo, with three children.

Towards closing time, the chief clerk sent for him. Wondering what mistake he had made that day, Ajayi hurried along to the office. There were three white men sitting on chairs by the chief clerk. Heavens, he thought, what have I done?

"Mr Ajayi, these gentlemen have inquired for you," the chief clerk said formally.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr Ajayi," the tallest said, with a smile. "We represent the World Gospel Crusading Alliance from Minnesota. My name is Jonathan Olsen." Ajayi shook hands and the other two were introduced.

"You expressed an interest in our work a year ago and we have not forgotten. We are on our way to India and we thought we would look you up personally."

Ajayi tried desperately to remember any connection with WGCA (as Olsen by then had proceeded to call it) whilst he made conversation with them a little haltingly. Then suddenly he remembered.

Some time ago he had got hold of a magazine from his sub-tenant who worked at the United States Information Service. He had cut a coupon from it and posted it to WGCA asking for information, but really hoping that they would send some illustrated Bibles free, or religious paintings to decorate his walls. But nothing had come of it and he had forgotten. Now here was WGCA as large as life. Three lives. Instantly and recklessly he invited all three and the chief clerk to come to his house for a cold drink. They all agreed.

"Heavens, what have I done?"

"Mine is a humble abode", he warned them.

"No abode is humble that is illumined by Christian love", Olsen replied.

"His is illumined all right, I can assure you", the chief clerk remarked drily.

Olsen suggested a taxi, but Ajayi neatly blocked that by saying roads were bad. He had hurriedly whispered to a fellow-clerk to rush home on a bicycle and tell Ayo he was coming in half an hour with white men and that she should clean up and get fruit drinks.

Ayo was puzzled by the message as she firmly imagined all white men drank only whisky and iced beer. But the messenger had said that there was a mixture of friendliness and piety in the visitors' manner, which made him suspect that they might be missionaries. Another confirmatory point was that they were walking instead of being in a car. That cleared up the uncertainty in Ayo's mind and she set to work at once. She whisked off the wall all their commercial calendars with suggestive pictures. She removed the Wild West novels and romance magazines from the parlour and put instead an old copy of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and a prayer-book which she believed would add culture and religious force to the decorations. She remembered the wine-glasses and the beer-advertising table-mats in time and put those under the sofa. She just had time to change to her Sunday frock and borrow a wedding-ring from her neighbour when Ajayi and the guests arrived.
### 5.7.2 While reading

**Stage 1:**
The students read and compare their preparations with the ones mentioned in the passage. After reading the teacher asks what their findings are.

**Stage 2:**
At this stage the students read the passage for the second time and complete the table below. The first one is done for an example, but the teacher must do it with the class to ensure that everybody understands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>What it refers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. him (1st sent, 1st para)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Ajayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. these gentlemen (2nd para)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. our work (4th para)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. it (para 5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. it (3rd sent in para 6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. his (para 8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. that (1st sent, para 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. him (2nd sent, para 10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. which (6th sent, para 10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.7.3 Post-reading

In groups, students compare their answers. Each group must come up with the answers agreed upon by the members of that group. Each group must appoint someone who does the reporting to the whole class. After reporting the teacher asks whether anyone has completed a coupon and let him/her share his/her experiences with the others. Again let the students tell you (teacher) how they feel about the exercise.

5.8 Rationale for Model Lesson 4

5.8.1 Pre-reading

The dilemma sparks off a lot of suggestions which might include some of the preparations mentioned in the passage. The passage to be read is in this way introduced to the students. This facilitates the understanding of the passage to be read as the students relate the passage to their own preparations. By telling their neighbours and vice versa the students get exposed to the ideas of their neighbours.

5.8.2 While reading

The students read the passage before they start with the actual task. This is done so the students can get the general idea of the passage. At this stage what the students have to do is to see how close or
far their ideas of preparations are from those mentioned in the passage. It builds confidence in the students when their ideas are compared with those of the author.

The second stage of this phase is where the students complete the table while reading. It is very important that the teacher explains how it is done by means of the example given. This ensures that all the students know what is expected of them. Reference words are clearly indicated in sentences and paragraphs to avoid confusion. By doing this exercise, the students realise that some references refer to something already mentioned (anaphora) or to something which is going to be mentioned (cataphora). Reference is not restricted to words only but to phrases or sentences as well, for example, no. 9 refers to a prayer-book and Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress.

5.8.3 Post-reading

This is the phase at which a student compares his/her answers with those of his/her group members. The importance of this practice is that the students learn from one another and not only from the teacher as it is the case according to the conventional way of teaching. The teacher’s role in the phase is to
supervise these discussions, which gives him the chance to note down the contributions of individuals, especially of the weak students. Group work makes assessment on the part of the teacher much easier as he only listens to the reports of the groups and has a general idea of how the exercise is perceived. Care should be taken not to appoint the same students each time the students form groups, but to give a chance of reporting to the other students as well. By reporting the students practise speaking which is also a very important language skill. The last thing is to let the students share their experiences of this nature with the others. It helps build self-confidence in the students and they realise that their experiences are also appreciated. Moreover, the students might be encouraged to read a lot and compare their knowledge and experiences with those of the authors.
CHAPTER SIX

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

In this chapter I will discuss implementation and evaluation. It is a regrettably common pattern in educational innovations to put major effort into designing and disseminating the innovations, and to conduct evaluative postmortems (when it is too late), and to leave implementation to take care of itself. It is regrettable, because to do it in this way is to warrant failure for the whole innovation. How will the implementors (teachers) know precisely how to implement and by which means will they tell whether the innovation is on target? I shall try to answer these questions in this chapter.

In Chapter Four I pointed out that I intend to implement the proposal at the grass roots level (school level) and gradually disseminate it to other schools. Knowing how difficult and how long it takes to have one's proposal accepted at the top of the educational hierarchy and be implemented from there, one is left with the only option of introducing the proposals at the school level. In other words this will be the pedagogical innovation and by pedagogical innovation I mean the changes for which the teachers
are expected to change their teaching approaches as well as their behaviours and that of the students towards the new approaches. In stark contrast to this innovation, is the organisational innovation which is decided upon at the ministerial level and is power-coercive of nature. The latter is beyond the scope of this dissertation and consequently we focus on the former - the pedagogical innovation.

6.1 Implementation

I understand implementation as the translating of ideas for change into action. There are certain preconditions for innovations as well as constraints. Kerry (1985) gives the following as preconditions for successful school-based innovation:

1. an open attitude in the school
2. structures which facilitate innovation
3. trust among participants
4. change agent(s).

Duffy and Roehler (1986) distinguish the following constraints to changes: curricular constraints, instructional constraints, milieu-related constraints, and organizational constraints. Being aware of the preconditions and constraints and of the fact that the teachers particularly resist complex,
conceptual longitudinal changes. I will then implement the innovation as follows:

6.1.1 Problem Identification

Structures, as one of the preconditions, are very important because they provide vehicles, sequences and time-scales for innovations. The structures that we have at the school level are staff meetings and subject meetings which convene regularly to discuss school affairs in general and matters concerning a particular subject, respectively.

With the permission of both the principal and the subject head (English) I will address the English teachers at the subject meeting where I will introduce the innovation. My starting point will be highlighting the problem - high failure numbers. I will let the teachers discuss and tell me what they think are the factors contributing to the failure rate. By this they will feel that their perception of the problem is accorded value. I expect the teachers to come up with a list of factors which contribute to the failure rate. I will then point out to them that although failures in standard 8 can be attributed to many factors, it is a fact that reading is central to all learning and that difficulties in reading English have adverse effects
both on English and other subjects. The first step is thus teaching the reading skills which enable the students to read sufficiently, quickly and purposefully. Our motive behind this is to improve the students' academic performances in general and the standard 8 pass-rate in particular. In order to reach our aim we have to scrutinise our current methodology and see if it helps us in reaching our desired aim.

6.1.2 Observation of the New Approach

I first put forward the theory of the proposed methodology before putting it into practice. What the teachers have to do at this juncture is to compare the proposed theory and practice with those they have been using. I teach one of the model lessons while the teachers observe my teaching. Indoing this, most of the constraints as pointed out by Duffy and Roehler (1986) will be counter-acted. All that has been said under theory becomes clear and both the teachers and the students experience the new methodology in practical terms with the former in an observing capacity. In this way an exemplary behaviour of creating an open attitude in the school on the part of the teachers is cultivated. The teachers must have a critical mind and note anything
which is not clear or which they do not understand to raise it at the feedback stage which follows.

The demonstration lesson does not only hold good for the teachers, but also for the students. Their perception of the innovation is crucial to assess the impact of the innovation. The students, like the teachers, are exposed to the new experience and their first impression is as important as that of the teachers. Therefore it is important to create a positive attitude in the minds of the students towards the innovation by explaining the aims of the innovation. To both the teachers and the students the innovative ideas have been translated into realistic classroom practice.

6.1.3 Feedback Stage

After the lesson presentation the students and the teachers give their reactions to the innovation. For practical reasons it would be a good idea to get the students' feedback first and then release them. A few questions about how they feel will be enough. At this point the students may produce negative feedback as the innovation may be antithetical to what they are used to. They may, for example, not like the idea of the teacher not explaining the difficult words, but this should not discourage us at all. The
point is, and it should be made clear to them, we are trying out the method we think will be a solution to the appalling situation.

At this point in time there would be two questions to be answered by the teachers: will the new ideas presented, the novel approaches and procedures demonstrated, enrich the teaching-learning process or not? And, are there other better ways and means, not mentioned here, that the teachers can use and still reach the same aim? The teachers discuss in small group format and then submit their findings after peer-group discussion to the wider forum of the whole group. In my response to their questions and findings, I validate each step of my demonstration lesson. With regard to the second question I listen with interest to their suggestions. The motive behind this question is to lead the teachers towards teachers-as-researchers and reflective teachers. As already pointed out, this innovation serves as a guideline and must not be regarded as the only correct method.

"In particular,...analysis of participants responses, and swift and flexible corrective actions to help participants overcome unforeseeable disincentives and difficulties..." (Hurst (1983)
Hurst puts this as one of the guidelines for implementers of innovative projects and by adopting flexible corrective actions, the participants (teachers) realise that they also contribute to the innovation and in this way regard themselves as co-progenitors of the innovation. In this way, trust, which is one of the preconditions for innovation, is created in the teachers. So far, the four preconditions have been met and the innovation is more likely to be successful. But the complete success of it depends heavily on the corrective measures we are going to apply.

The teachers try the innovation in their respective classes for a number of days. Thereafter we come together again for further discussions and clarifications. If a teacher comes up with an alternative step, the whole group will be invited to consider it and see if they agree to it. In this way the flexibility of the innovation will be realised. Once the innovation has taken root at the school level and proved to be auspicious, immediate neighbouring schools can be invited to observe our teaching. If they find it useful, one of the English teachers at our school can introduce the innovation in the same way I introduced it. By this time we will have many change agents among the students and
teachers who will help to disseminate the idea. Since we have regular meetings in each school circuit, the innovation can be introduced at such meetings. In this way the innovation can easily be extended to the whole circuit and to other circuits as well.

6.2 Evaluation

6.2.1 Place of Evaluation

Evaluation aims at determining the effectiveness of a curriculum or an innovation and should be regarded as an integral part of such an innovation. Evaluation is thus as important as the innovation itself and without it the innovation is doomed. I hope you will agree with me in saying that learning is a co-operative venture between the students and the teachers. Nowhere is such co-operation more important than in the evaluation process which I consider to be an integral part of the innovation design, implementation and post-innovation reflection.

Need analysis is a necessary part of an innovation, because it helps in formulating the aims of the innovation. But very often we find that there is a mismatch between the actual outcome and the aims for which the innovation is intended. To prevent this
mismatch, there must be evaluation during the learning process (often termed formative evaluation) which helps to keep the innovation on target. Also there must be evaluation subsequent to learning (often termed summative evaluation) which determines whether the innovation has reached the intended aims and therefore satisfies the needs.

Both formative and summative evaluations are important to the students, teachers and innovator(s) as they all want to know how it is progressing and what the outcomes are. If the end product of the innovation is not the desired one, factors enabling and constraining the innovation may also be identified. Such evaluation can provide the students and teachers with information about what learning is still necessary to achieve intended goals. White (1988) sums it up as follows:

"What is new is the incorporation of evaluation as feedback and as a formative process within language curriculum development, whereby it becomes an extension and elaboration of needs analysis, sharing with such pre-planning the use of many of the same information gathering procedures and techniques, such as questionnaires and interviews."
6.2.2 Stages of Evaluation

The first stage of evaluation is when the innovation is introduced both to the students and to the teachers. By accepting or rejecting the aims we set for the innovation they give us an indication of whether the innovation is in line with their views or not. Communicating ideas and opinions is very important at this stage and should involve all parties concerned: teachers, students and innovator.

The second and most important stage of evaluation is where both the teachers and the students experience the innovation in practical terms. I have said that I will teach one of the model lessons to one of the classes while the teachers are observing. The discussion after the demonstration lesson with both the students and teacher is evaluative in nature. If I find that either of the two parties is sceptical about the innovation, I will try to find out why it is the case and think of another way of convincing them.

The third stage is where the teachers try out the innovation in their respective classes. I have pointed out that I will encourage them to have an open attitude. By this I mean that they should help one another by allowing their colleagues to monitor
their lessons. In addition to colleague-monitoring, they have to record all difficulties they encounter and bring them up during the subject meetings. Since we have an English subject head, he/she will, during class visits, monitor the teaching of the teachers. To this end some guidelines are given in Appendix A.

On the part of the students I will devise questionnaires (see Appendix B) which they have to fill in at regular periods of time. The answers to the questionnaires will be discussed during subject meetings. Informal as well as formal discussions of the students with either the subject head or the English teachers will also help in reflecting the students' opinions on the innovation. By giving the students task-based exercises, the teachers can easily tell whether the students are applying the reading skills or not. One of the aims of the innovation is to improve the standard 8 results and therefore an improvement in the results is an indication of the success of the innovation and vice versa. So, we see that both summative and formative evaluations are very important in determining the success or failure of the innovation. But the most important one is the formative since it navigates the innovation towards its desired aims. Hopefully teaching reading in the way it has been proposed is
more likely to promote better reading and learning in all the subjects.

6.3 Conclusion

In this project I have proposed ways of teaching some reading skills, but this was rather the tip of the iceberg. New methodologies emerge constantly in language teaching, due to research. As a result, a lot remains a challenge to the Namibian teachers and linguists, because even where we have empirical evidence of research done in other countries, they need to be contextualised in our country situation. The time is now for us, teachers and linguists, to do research, not only in a foreign language (English), but also in our native languages.

As long as the country succumbs to the psychological superiority of a foreign language, our mastery of which is suspect, so long will our thought processes continue to be blocked, distorted and falsified and our output mediocre. It is up to us to take up the responsibility of researching into both foreign languages and our native language.
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APPENDIX A

Some guidelines for a subject head during lesson monitoring.

1. Did the teacher explain the aim(s) of the lesson?

2. Was too much help or too little help given to the students?

3. Did the students actively participate in the discussions?

4. Was too much time spent on forming groups?

5. Did all the members of different groups participate or did certain individuals monopolize the discussions?

6. Would you say the lesson was a success or failure and why?

7. What recommendations do you have for the teacher?

8. What was your general impression of the lesson as a whole?
APPENDIX B

Questionnaire to be answered by the students.

Answer all the questions and only give your name if you so wish.

1. Was the lesson interesting or boring to you? ...........................................

2. Did you feel that the teacher was well prepared or not? ............................

3. Do you like working in groups? YES/NO ...........
   Why? .................................................

4. Did you contribute to the discussions in your group? YES/NO ....................
   Why? .................................................

5. In what ways did the other members of your group help you?
   ................................................................
   ................................................................

6. What did you particularly like during the lesson? .................................

7. What change(s) do you want to suggest to make the lesson more interesting?
   ................................................................

8. Between this new method and the one you are used