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TOPIC TITLE: FACTORS AFFECTING ACQUISITION OF READING SKILLS IN LEARNERS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT: A CASE OF SELECTED PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN DAR-ES SALAAM REGION, TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Pupils with Hearing Impairment (HI) are experiencing challenges in most learning institutions in Tanzania. Most schools that enroll them in the majority of cases do not cater for their special needs. Some of their challenges are not detected until too late as a result the hearing losses in these pupils become a hindrance to their learning process. This study attempts to highlight the challenges faced by pupils with hearing loss in reading skills acquisition in Ilala, Temeke and Kinondoni district. It relates to parents' factors, school factors as well as pupils' factors, and attempts to suggest how best teachers, parents and pupils can handle this challenge. The study used a descriptive case study method to extract information from pupils with HI, Head teachers, parents and teachers and discuss through focus group discussions the challenges the teachers grapple with when teaching pupils with hearing loss. The respondents were 90 pupils, 30 teachers, 10 parents and 4 Head of school that makes a number of 134 of all respondents. The results show that, acoustics are often a problem in the classroom, but luckily there are several ways to solve this challenge. Deaf or hard-of-hearing students need full visual access, so the best seating arrangement for full participation, engagement and access by these students is to arrange desks in a "U" shape. This will allow the students to see who is speaking, and participate fully in the conversation. Deaf students often lag behind their hearing peers when it comes to number concepts, language and problem-solving skills. Hearing students constantly absorb new information and knowledge through the daily noises, conversations and language that is spoken around them. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students do not have that luxury. Teachers can bridge this gap by being flexible in the way that they respond to the educational concerns of their deaf students. There is inadequate knowledge and awareness among teachers.