

AN ANALYSIS OF SPEECH TEACHING IN
ZIMBABWEAN SCHOOLS WHERE THERE ARE NO
SPEECH THERAPISTS

Phillipa Mutswanga¹ & Barbara Mapuranga²

*¹Snr Lecturer, Department of Disability Studies and Special Needs Education, Zimbabwe
Open University, +263, P.O. Box MP 1119, Mt Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe,*



*²Snr Lecturer, Department of Disability Studies and Special Needs Education Zimbabwe
Open University, P.O. Box 758 Marondera, Zimbabwe.*

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the experiences, ideas and proposals on teaching speech in Zimbabwean schools where there are no speech therapists or correctionist. It revealed that speech was a learned process which was largely enhanced by a functioning auditory system but where audition was absent its acquisition and teaching was reported disabled. With a view to address the problem the study qualitatively investigated selected cases from teachers with special education training from Open and Distance Learning institutions (ODL); block lease; United College Education (UCE) special education plus conventional teacher education training and conventional training plus wide experiences only in speech teaching. Point of saturation was used to determine the sample for the study. The principles of counselling and theory framework underpinned the study. The findings found teachers with UCE training background better equipped to address the language and speech disorders of learners. It also found that teachers without speech teaching training ignored the speech problems of their learners thus they proceeded with untaught speech/language challenges. That was reported to negatively influence the performance of the learners and result in them resisting to make attempts to communicate for fear of name calling and being laughed at by peers. However, the study recommended that all teachers colleges and universities should consider language and speech teaching and as core course and that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education should recommend speech teaching as one of the special education matters of concern in the education field.

KEY WORDS: Speech teaching; Zimbabwean Schools; no speech therapists

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study is based on the experiences, ideas and proposals on teaching speech in Zimbabwean schools where there are no speech therapists or correctionists. Speech is a learned process which is largely enhanced by a functioning auditory system. Van Riper (1984) describes it as the audible manifestation of a language. Speech therapists are trained speech clinicians or professionals but the definitions differ from country to country and this is subject to debates. Speech therapy is the treatment of communication and speech disorders or problems. It is considered essential in the education of learners who are deaf and other acquired speech conditions that may affect a child's speech who may not necessarily be deaf. As observed and experienced by the researchers of this study there are very few speech therapist in Zimbabwe resulting in the noted few minority to be found at health centres and never or rarely available at schools. That does not imply that the services of speech professionals are not required. In fact their services are highly required but they are a scarce human resource. Against this background, the study investigated how speech could be taught in Zimbabwean schools where there are no speech therapists. Furthermore, the system claims to have speech correctionists whose services are unclear and under utilised as observed by the researchers. Speech and language disorders may affect the way children talk, understand, analyse and process information. Some of the speech problems include voice clarity, quality and fluency. However, problems of cleft palate may also contribute to speech problems. Speech development proceeds in sequential stages namely, vocalisation; vowels; consonants and consonants blends. Any disturbance to one of these processes is likely to affect the way a person talks or articulates. It then, becomes a worse of situations when one is deaf. Learners who are deaf have hearing losses that range from mild to profound.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study addressed the following research questions with a view to solicit possible solutions to the topic understudy:

- 1) To what extent do specialist teachers understand the concept speech?
- 2) What challenges are faced by educationists and learners in speech teaching and learning?
- 3) What are the benefits of learning speech and also advantages of skilledness in speech teaching?
- 4) What could be done to enhance the teaching and learning of speech?

2.0 RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is underpinned by the counselling and theory framework. Theory according to Cormier and Hackney (2001) is another way of describing counselling. Theory is generically a way of explaining a phenomenon or issues which are not directly observable. In view to that, the same authors consider counselling theory as an effort theory that explains the process by which a set of activities begins, develops and ends.

Considering the diversity of learners' speech problems, the authors recommended the counselling theory as the most appropriate theory that could provide a framework for this study. The counselling theory can serve as a set of guidelines that explains how human beings develop and articulate their speech, learn, change and develop it. The theories may also propose ways in which human dysfunctions such as speech problems may be mapped out to improve them.

A speech disorder affects one's ability to speak words making it difficult to be understood. That caused speech unintelligibility. Many people with speech disorders have no problem understanding or reasoning (Ildephonce, 2013). For example, a person with cerebral palsy may have a speech disorder but have no problem with his or her processing and understanding of ideas. Speech disorders may also involve disorders of the voice which includes pitch, loudness, or quality as already alluded. Stuttering is a common speech disorder which is marked by repetition and a struggle to get words out. Many speech disorders have no known cause.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed the qualitative research because it allows participants to construct and generate meaning out of their experiences. The qualitative research has earned popularity and legitimacy as an appropriate form of inquiry into issues and concerns in the field of applied Social Sciences as equally noted by (Woods, 2006). This was further supported by Chataika's (2010) study which asserts that, qualitative research also offers the opportunity of closing the gap between the science of discovery and the implementation of such discoveries. One of the characteristics included studying participants in their natural setting. This helped to harvest rich and even unrequested information which was presented verbatim reflecting natural responses and how the participants made sense of the phenomenon under study in relation to lived experiences.

A Case study design was used as a resource method to collect data from the study participants who were purposively selected after their informed consent to participate was sought. The sample was determined by the point of saturation of received data. With a view to gather data from the various professionals who dealt with the education of learners with disabilities, the researchers purposively selected specialist teachers as key informants to help investigate the speech challenges and suggest what could be done to mitigate the issue. The settings included specialist teachers with an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) training background only; block release experience only; United College of Education special education plus conventional education experience and teachers with an ordinary conventional training but had gained experience in teaching learners with mixed speech problems through exposure. Using the point of saturation criteria, 2 participants were selected to represent each category resulting in in-depth semi structured interviews with 8 participants.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As mentioned already, this study sought to spell out the goodness of speech teaching as much as possible, especially to those who show that they could benefit from it or had signs of improving in

it. Although the topic is still being debated it does not follow that speech teaching the deaf is a waste of time, energy and money. We should not be influenced by debates of school of thought to speech teach learners who are deaf. Findings from this study proposed that the majority of participants felt that, attempts to teach speech to such learners should be done but could only be abandoned for particular individuals who may not benefit from it. Calvert and Silverman (1983) assert that to reduce or abandon our best effort in teaching speech to persons who are deaf is to deny them the opportunity for an achievement unique to man. These authors further proposed that, the development of an acoustic code that enables a human being to communicate with his/her fellow human being in a distinctive way is very necessary. Using the following research questions this study addressed the findings of the study. Discussions were equally addressed under these research questions. Relevant literature also supported the collected data.

4.1 To what extent do specialist teachers understand the concept speech?-

The findings revealed that, the majority of educationists could not differentiate teachers for learners who are deaf from speech therapists and speech correctionist. This failure led to expecting teachers for the deaf to be skilled in speech teaching thus, some responsible school authorities took speech teaching to be the full responsibility of the specialist teachers. That implies that there is need to draw clearer responsibilities for specialist teachers depending on their areas of specialisation and clearly state who speech teachers, therapists and correctionists are and their responsibilities. This is evidenced by the excerpt:

I am a teacher who specialised in deaf education. Besides learners who are deaf there are also learners with severe speech problems. These learners are in ordinary classes and their teachers always come to me to complain that these learners belong to the resource unit for the deaf (Case, 3).

In this case when the specialist teacher tried to explain to the workmates how they could help such learners they openly suggested that it was not their duty to help the child but her duty. The participant reported that the arguments went on and on without solutions and this class teacher left the learner's speech problems unattended. The researchers of this study took that to relate to negative attitudes. Thus, they suggested that the small numbers of pupils prescribed for resource units could be another reason why the above described teacher thought it was the specialist baby. That implied a great need for educating schools and explaining the responsibilities of specialist teachers and how the schools could exploit the availability of specialist teachers in their schools as resource persons for further learning.

Another study participant seasoned and experienced in teaching in special classes but did not have special education training echoed:

I am a special class teacher but I am not a specialist. I have a learner who is autistic in my class who is has severe speech problems and I do not know how to address her problems [Case, 7].

In view to the above, Cases, 1; 5 and 6 who respectively had obtained special education training from various disciplines, such as, ODL; block release; conventional plus UCE specialist training reported that they had learners with mild to severe communication and speech problems in their classes but because of the workloads they did not have time to address these problems although once in a while they tried to do. As observed by the researchers lack of skilled school heads could possibly influence the described incidents. It demonstrated that school heads and their administration staff needed basic training in different disciplines of special needs education so as to encourage the address of diversity of learner needs in their schools.

Furthermore, Cases, 1; 5; and 6 pointed out that the Zimbabwean education systems overlooked the impact of speech problems amongst learners. As a result learners with speech problems were less regarded. It is for this reason that the researchers

considered speech challenges as one of the paradoxes affecting the implementation of the Education for all (EFA) philosophy. The same participants questioned why the systems of the country's education preached and encouraged inclusion of learners with disabilities without their provisions including learners with speech problems who are the focus of this study. Thus, the researchers equally questioned the philosophy behind the inclusion of learners with speech problems whom the system seemed to ignore as if they did not belong to SNE yet they were equally obstacles to learning.

4.2 Obstacles faced by educationists and learners in speech teaching and learning

On the other hand, participants revealed that

Speech problems have always affected the learning of many children and I am saying this from my primary and secondary education and to date experience where I am a specialist teacher. I have children with speech problems in my classroom that I cannot find solution to their problems. I have asked the school head to refer them to the speech correctionist. My school head continues to tell me that they relocated to better paying countries and organisations. I therefore propose that the education system should exploit the specialism of specialist teachers from the United College Special Education Unit [Case, 2].

The same participant echoed:

Since I joined the ministry I have heard about speech correctionists but I have never seen them visit our schools to attend to children's needs and even to workshop us. In staff meetings the school head speaks of the impact of the brain drain as having 'stolen' speech correctionists and experienced specialist teachers in the area [Case, 2].

These excerpts demonstrated that some teachers fail to get support even though they may be interested in addressing the speech problems of learners in their classrooms. Case, 4 reported a very interesting incident below:

The majorities of teachers are less or not even equipped in basic speech training. Thus, some children with or without deafness's speech problems are under-identified in some classrooms and even in obvious cases nothing is done about them because the teachers do not know how to manage them. The teachers just ignore their speech problems. I have witnessed one boy at our school who had severe stammering challenges whose academic performance were lowered by this problem because any attempt to communicate made a bad day in his secondary education and that resulted in him receiving strange names that described his stammering and that in turn lowered his self-esteem and attempts to contribute in class. The learner made silent long blocks in between his speeches. Although he could hear that affected his learning and participation as classmates laughed at him [Case, 4].

The findings in this section demonstrate that learners are victims of double circumstances as both their peers and class teachers sometimes respond negatively to their speech problems and even their families and society at large. This disappointing status in functional speech acquisition is partially explained by the failure to properly identify the actual problems/challenges of learners; failure to properly refer and educationally plan for learners with hearing impairment or speech problems (Subtelny, (1980). Scarcity of speech teaching literature and human resources were also other contributing factors. Although Subtelny (1980) equally supported by suggesting that current shortage of personnel contributes to a high incidence of speech failure other explanations have been projected. The same author further on proposes that, recent surveys indicate clearly that the quantity and quality of speech training are largely responsible for failures in achieving intelligible speech.

In fact some professionals closely involved with the task of teaching speech to learners who are deaf contend that the training of personnel has

not been adequate for the task and probably increases the complexity. This is supported by Case, 8 who said:

My curriculum did not have activities on speech teaching, so I do not need to pretend that I am skilled when I am not. In addition to that my workload does not allow me to give individual treatment to learners in my class [Case, 8].

Another participant reported:

I am a specialist teacher in deaf education. My school holds mixed sentiments to speech teaching depending on the school head. At one we had a head who did not want us to teach deaf learner speech because he said that by so doing we would be traumatising them. On the other hand, the next head encouraged its teaching as these learners operated in a world where speech was the main means of communication. I am not a speech therapist or correction but I attained basic skills from UCE training [Case, 1].

Other challenges are related to professionally unprepared teachers to undertake the task. According to Subtelny (1980), that made it very apparent that there was considerable heterogeneity in programmes providing speech services and in programmes training personnel to provide speech services. The study revealed lack of teacher skilled-ness as an obstacle to speech teaching. Background of education the learners were exposed to also contributed to their preferences and the school of thought adopted by the institution also played a part in blocking speech teaching or considering speech teaching as an essential activity in the education of learners who were deaf and that equally contributed to little or no diagnosis of speech problems of learners who were deaf in particular. It resulted in some educationists not taking seriously in-service speech training workshops and conferences. It revealed that some learners had their future spoiled by mismanaged speech challenges which ended up compromising their performance because of attitudinal factors.

The specialist teachers in the country were under-skilled in speech teaching with the exception of specialist teachers from United College of Education (UCE) in Bulawayo whom this study find to be better equipped in basic speech teaching than the specialist teachers without the UCE training experiences. It implies that, all institutions offering Special Needs Education and Disabilities Studies needed to re-look at their curriculum and consider basic skills in speech teaching as done at UCE. Conventional colleges were recommended by this study to also consider a course in basic speech teaching in order to holistically address the needs of the diversified learners they are receiving. Furthermore, the study revealed that, speech challenges equally affected learners who were not deaf.

4.3 Some of the Highlighted Speech Problems

The study identified the following speech problems to be affecting many ordinary children. These included stuttering; confusing pronouns, mixing up tenses; stammering and unintelligible speech due to deformation of some speech organs, such as the teeth; enlarged tongue; cleft palate and many others. Lack of speech due to deafness and deformation of speech organ were also pointed out as major speech problems. In support, Dougherty (undated) also considered articulation; hearing loss and apraxia [mouth coordination] as other causes of speech problems. The author emphasized on teaching how to say it right.

Vorce (1974) sights common errors in the speech of the deaf include; unpleasant voice quality; inappropriate pitch (both fundamental and variations); slow and labored speech; poor rhythm and juncture; inappropriate stress patterns; excessive nasal emissions; omission or condition of syllabuses; improper functioning of releasing and arresting consonants and surd-sonant errors. Stereotyped errors often considered as characteristics of deaf speakers may be overcome by careful guidance of developing phonological systems.

Learners especially those who are autistic have no speech and in our classes teachers fail to assist them because of lack of resources. They need to use picture exchange systems (PECs) but teachers have no knowledge of how to use it and it is not available in our communities. Because these learners are intellectually challenged they fail to understand the signed systems used for communication by peers who are hearing impaired. As a result specialist teachers end up resorting to the use of body language; observing the child's actions. In most instances such learners alert their teachers that they want to say something or have issues that need the teacher's attention through tapping the teacher for attention. When the teacher is then alert they may point at the objects they want or alert teacher of any anomaly about the object, their needs and problems [Case, 6].

4.4 What are the benefits of learning speech and also advantages of skilledness in speech teaching?

The study participants had mixed sentiments on the benefits of speech teaching. The majority of the participants agreed that speech teaching was necessary for both learners with or without deafness. It was reported to improve the communication of learners who had speech problems. They further proposed that all colleges and universities responsible for training teachers needed to retool their curriculum to make sure that all teachers received some basic skills in speech teaching in its diversified forms. However, the minority felt that only those specialising in deaf education should do the speech teaching course. They also proposed that teachers interested in being peripatetic teachers could join the training. Their reasons for that, was that the teachers workload was too heavy so it was better for schools to have cluster speech teachers as was the case with sport teachers.

In support to the above, Subtelny (1980) asserts that, through a revised training systems that equips its trainees with basic speech teaching skills, it is hoped that professionals will be motivated to

close the gaps in preparing future teachers and open doors for interdisciplinary exchange and cooperative efforts to help learners with hearing impairment reach their full potential in cognitive, linguistic and communicative development through multiple means of gaining information. A skilled professional is likely to enjoy identifying and providing solutions to speech problems amongst his/her scholars. To enable them to utmost function in the mainstream life of their peers Vorce (1974) proposed that educationists needed to be skilled in speech teaching. The general educational plan takes speech as the spoken language or way of societal accepted life. It assumes that speech development and/or maintenance is an integral aspect of all teaching/learning and that all parents and teachers are thus speech teachers. It implies that besides skilling classroom professional parents are equally counted in this bracket as enhancers of what the teachers teach, thus work-shopping them may be necessary for continued learn using recommended approaches for particular individuals. This should help boost early intervention strategies in speech training to promote the child's linguistic, motor and psychological patterns on which speech teaching may be developed.

The auditory channel is the primary modality for the intake of language since it creates good base for the syntactical and semantic aspects of language and that knowledgeable and sensitive teachers can supplement and build the phonological skills (Vorce, 1974). Furthermore, Ildephonce (2013) urges educationists not to slow down or start over a person who stutters as that tends to make the stuttering worse. The author forewarns educationists not to dwell on the causes of the disorder but to support both the individual and the caregivers by providing appropriate ways for the individual to participate in learning activities. Another important issue is that, the educationist should speak clearly and distinctly but naturally. There is also need to do your utmost to understand and focus on **what** the individual is saying rather than on **how** he/she is saying it.

4.5 What could be done to enhance the teaching and learning of speech?

Institutions that train educationists should consider speech training as a core course to which Case, 1, proposed that:

It should be a stand alone module where both theory and practical aspects are taught by clinical speech therapists with knowledge on rudimental speech teaching too, to equip specialist teachers with basic speech teaching education. Speech teaching should be a mandatory exercise to learners with speech and language pathologies [Case, 1].

The authors of this study felt equally the same and proposed that, on the job training through workshops and shared views through call for papers conferences on speech teaching and learning could help teachers in sharing and supporting each other in speech teaching.

Vorce (1974) suggests that, speech teaching could provide an environment where children develop the habit of communicating their thought, feelings and ideas orally with sufficient accuracy to be understood where they learn to use auditory signals for the perception and monitoring of speech and develop confidence in speech as an effective social tool rather than as an academic subject. Learning to speak is a complex process which involves development of neurological, linguistic and motor patterns for use in social situations. Speech then, is a major factor in the child's preparation for full participation in the world around him. Speech skills developed during specific speech periods must be reinforced in daily spontaneous vocal communication both at home and at school so that good patterns develop. Learners habitually needed to use their hearing/audition to monitor their speech. Shy to speak to people not accustomed to their speech thus, counselling should be robed in clear such issues.

4.6 Key Issues in Speech Teaching

It was deduced from the study that, the teachers or speech professionals needed to establish or identify the individual child's speech problems and also address them as an individual education

learning plan (IEP). The majority of study participants proposed that counselling should be highly considered as a helping tool that assists parents come to terms with the situation of their children. They further proposed that it should also help learners with speech problems come to terms with their conditions. All these facts supported the theory that guided this study. The findings emphasised that Zimbabwean teachers needed to be exposed to rudimental speech teaching skills on each area of speech difficult. Radin (undated) suggested that teachers needed to find out what their learners could and could not do in speech learning. Then the information could be used to develop their speech IEPs. Summarising it from the study findings, teachers needed to be aware that, some children could make meaningless sounds; monotonous sounds or not be aware when making sounds, as evidenced by Case_1:

Teacher may manage speech problems of their learners through speech training them. For example, the tactile method could be used to teach the sounds /gr/, /br/, /fr/. Here a mirror can be utilised to help the learners see the mouth shapes, facial cues and use of a mirror would further promote understanding the vocal organs used and their place of production to produce particular sounds. However, speech teaching is likely to be enhanced through auditory training where learners who are deaf are encouraged to use their available residual hearing as much as possible. This would train the learners to develop interest and understanding in listening to sounds through identification of various instruments, such as, drums, whistle, calling one's names, talking and extra. Other issues included encouraging inclusive practices, cultural belief of the tongue-tight and/or the cleft palate and religious beliefs and miracle healing [Case,1].

The researchers could not commend on cultural and miracle healing beliefs since that was subject to debates and was beyond the focus of this study. Another participant felt that:

The specialist teachers for the deaf could help improve speech challenges of their learners through using speech charts which show how the sound are produced; breathing exercises; use of a mirror; differentiating voiced sounds from voiceless sounds and teaching speech rhythms such as, rrrr, vvv, and extra. Teachers who take children for speech training should continuously attend workshops; listen to advocates groups on speech teaching and schools should improve acoustic devices of their speech rooms [Case, 5].

According to Radin (undated) the teacher should always alert the learner to watch him/her whenever carrying out speech lessons through tapping him/her. It is because through watching, the learner may receive cues on the manner and place of productions. Let the learner repeat the sound after you while you note down that he/she could and could not or omissions/additions. The teacher is expected to use that information to start from what the child knows to unknown. To make the lessons meaningful Radin (undated) recommends that teachers should introduce speech as a functional skill to help learners meet their day-to-day needs, such as, ordering food from a restaurant and extra.

According to Calvert and Silverman (1983) and Radin (undated) training learners to whisper and saying sounds loudly could be a good base for further learning. Here, the teacher would need to make learners aware of the differences in manner and place of production in a whisper and in loud voice sounds. For instance, in a whisper one use little voice, a bit of air, a bit of mouthing and chest movement. As already suggested by participants speech chart could help learners identify the manner and place of production which could further be augmented by the mirror. Thus, to articulate vowels mouth shapes and voiced-ness could act as cues, such as, mouth rounding, oval shaping of mouth and ask learners to identify the produced sound and also repeat saying it.

Consonants are made in the same way exact that one is voiced and the other is voiceless or visible and invisible vocal organ are used so as to help reproduce the sounds correctly with a view to go to the next step of producing sound blends and words. You may ask the learner to feel the throat and at the same time listen while producing /b/ sound, let the learner feel the throat move and vibrate showing that it is a voiced sound [popping sounds]. Here, sounds /b/ and /p/ could be taught where there is no throat movement or vibrating indicating that /p/ is a voiceless sound. The teacher may need to explain vocal organs used for the two and that they are bi-labial sounds using both lips for place of production while they are stop sounds because their production is an interruption of the breath stream by a closure within the oral cavity as noted by Calvert and Silverman (1983). Thus, for that reason they are sometimes called plosives and aspirates. As observed by the researchers the teacher should give the learners chances to practice the sounds and identify them as many times as possible. Then, words like 'banana' may be taught and related to pictures or the actual banana fruit.

Another good example of sounds is what Radin (undated) called lip coolers or labio-dental sounds because they blow air across the closed teeth like a fan. Examples of such sounds include /v/ which is a voiced fricative and /f/ which is a voiceless fricative. Other clues to consider may include the amount of air breathed in and out. That could also be demonstrated using birds feathers or a thin strip of ruled paper to compare how the different amounts of air produced during the production of the different sounds differs. Also distinguishing the temperatures of the air which may be cool or warm when producing certain sounds could be other helping indicators. Touch is another way of differentiating one sound from the other. The teacher may develop many other exercises such as, between letters /b/, /m/ and /p/ which letter did I say or which picture shows a person producing the sound /v/ or /ch/.

Speech teaching could also be enhanced through tongues exercises such as, rolling, up and down and in and out movements. Breathing and

chewing exercises are other good examples. There is no formula to speech teaching since every individual brings to the speech room diversified speech challenges. Thus, speech teaching techniques used on learner A may not successfully improve learner B's speech problems.

4.7 Teaching Tips

The findings revealed that educationists should maintain eye contact especially when dealing with learners with speech/language disorders. That was evidenced by cases 1, 5 and 6 who respectively echoed, "*attention giving makes speech-impaired learners feel comfortable; teacher's body languages promises understanding; and, it gives the learner assurance of being listened to like any other learner.*" The researcher's experiences also equally supported this by suggesting that educationists should not give preferential treatment to learners without speech problems but display an encouraging body language and respect for all learners. By so doing, that made peers realise them as partners with equal potential and capabilities, that is, they are intelligent persons who could share valuable insight and ideas too despite their conditions. That, in some instance resulted in some attempts to present uniform learning behaviour where every individual's contributions were respected and it minimised teasing and name calling but uncalculated a desire to assist each other (<https://www.lds.org/topics/disability/list/speech-and-language-disorders?lang=eng>).

4.8 CONCLUSIONS

Schools and educationists vary considerably in the emphasis they placed on the teaching of speech to learners with speech pathology or those who were deaf/hearing impaired. Due to that the teaching of speech to individuals varied from one school to the other depending on the school of thought held by the school, parents, speech therapists/correctionist and even the believe held by the learner mattered. Counselling and teacher skilledness in speech teaching were reported by the findings to be necessary in managing the speech problems of learners. It is some of these schools of thought which either encouraged or discouraged teachers to spend more time on teaching speech

and some of the views have contributed to the denigration of speech teaching. In such environments there is very little reinforcement of attempts in classrooms, clinics and homes (Calvert and Silverman, 1983).

4.9 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were deduced from the study findings:

- ✓ That the government through its various Ministries needed to identify gaps in its special education training curricula in comparison with international education with a view to address speech challenges and other projected shortfalls
- ✓ That colleges and institutions of higher education needed to lobby to have qualified speech therapists as a package of their training staff members
- ✓ That the government needed to revisit their policies and circulars to emphasise the relevance of speech teaching in education
- ✓ That the government needed to develop programmes to support learners with language/speech disorders
- ✓ There was need for the government to seriously consider and make it compulsory for every school to have counsellors who attended to learners and parental issues
- ✓ That colleges and institutions of higher education should produce special education trainees with basic skills [rudimental skills] in teaching speech where there are no speech therapist.

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Appendix 1: Authors' Bio data

1) Phillipa's Bio Data

Ms Phillipa Mutswanga is a senior lecturer teaching at Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) in the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, in the Disability Studies and Special Needs Education department. She holds a Masters degree in Educational Psychology and Bachelor of Education in Special Needs Education. She specialised in Deaf Education and has high interest in Disability Studies and Sign Language issues. She is currently a final year Doctor of Philosophy candidate. Phillipa has authored and co-authored a number of course modules published by ZOU in Counselling, Disability Studies and Special Needs Education and Early Childhood Education programmes. She has content reviewed a number of modules too. Phillipa has also developed New Programmes for the university. She has also published and co-authored a number of research articles in referred journals.

2) Co-author's Bio Data

Mrs. Barbra Mapuranga is a senior lecturer teaching at the Zimbabwe Open University in the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences. She is the Regional Programme Coordinator responsible for Special Needs and Disability Studies programme. She holds a Master's degree in Special Education. She has co-authored a number of research articles, and course modules published by the Zimbabwe Open University. She has authored and contributed to both primary and secondary literature and set-books.

