

The challenges of using local language as a medium of instruction in a multilingual setting in selected school of zone five in Kitwe

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Abstract

This article is an extract of one of the objectives from the Master study entitled “The challenges of teaching in local languages: a case study of selected primary schools in Kitwe District, copperbelty province of Zambia”. The background of this study is anchored on the poor literacy levels of primary schools from grade one to four as a result of using a foreign language (English) as a medium of instruction. Now that primary schools have introduced local language as medium of instruction, this study assessed the academic performance of pupils in primary schools especially from grade one to four in selected primary schools of Chipata District. In achieving this task the study employed a case study research design which adopted both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Data was collected through semi-structured questionnaires for all respondents. The sample comprised of 50 participants. A simple random and purposive sampling procedure was used to select pupils, teachers and administrators respectively. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data while STATA and excel was used to analyse quantitative data. The study therefore revealed that an African child learning to read in English will face the same problems as an individual who is learning a new language. Language divergence is a crucial factor in learning and reading failure among school going children. The more divergence there is between the dialect of a learner and the dialect of the learning the more difficult will be the task of learning. The vernacular speaking child has to make correspondence between the forms he already controls both receptively and productively and the forms found in primers as well as those used in teaching and reading instructions by the teacher. These differences in forms may be the most crucial for beginning literacy instructions during which the child is supposed to learn how to “crack the code”. Therefore, this study gave more valid reasons as to why using local language as a medium of instruction is better than using English as a medium of instruction. The following recommendations emerged from the study.

(1) The government through the Ministry of General Education should build many schools to cope with this increase in enrolments. (2) The government through the Ministry of General Education should print the books and other materials in local languages for easy teaching and proper use of words. (3) The government through the Ministry of General Education should increase the funding to primary schools to meet the needs of the primary schools. (5) The government through the Ministry of General Education should train teachers in colleges on how to teach in local languages. (6) The government through the Ministry of General Education should retrain teachers in local languages so that they can teach effectively. (7) The teacher should be able to speak three to four languages so as to help implement local languages in schools.

Keywords: academic performance, literacy, local language, teaching, learning

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

The role of languages as a medium of instruction in promoting an effective teaching and learning is an issue that has to be tackled with the seriousness it deserves. Zambia’s education system has undergone some changes which have roots in the pre- colonial era. It was envisaged that the changes would bring about effective teaching and learning. To have a clear understanding of the language policy obtaining in schools, this chapter will look at language policy from pre-colonial to the post-independence. It highlights the education policies before the existing one. Finally, the chapter concludes by looking at the problem statement, purpose of the study, the objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. It also looks at the hypothesis delimitations of the study, and limitations.

1.2 Background

During the period 1882 to 1905, there was a lot of missionary activity which led to the establishment of several mission stations throughout Zambia. These mission stations established western education. The first school was introduced in the territory of King Lewanika of the Lozi people. The providers of this education system encouraged the use of a local language as a medium of instruction to teach pupils from Sub A to Standard Four (Chaondoka, 1999). Snelson (1974)^[33], states that there was no formal training for teachers by then. The natives that learnt the three Rs took up the challenge to teach their fellow indigenous people. However, English was introduced in higher grades/classes, starting at standard five as an additional subject. It was the missionaries who first reduced some local languages to written form and translated the Bible into a number of local languages. The translated Bibles and

other texts written in local languages served as the first teaching and learning materials for teaching literacy in local languages. The local African languages were used as media of instruction as well as school subjects (Snelson, 1974) [33]. By 1924 when the British Government assumed direct responsibility for the administration of the protectorate, a fairly widespread education system had been established. Kashoki, (1978) [13, 26] explains that, before then, Zambia had no clear language policy since pre-colonial days. The policy on language has been somehow experimental ever since. This has led to the challenges against the fight for illiteracy among primary school children who fail to break through to literacy in a Zambian language and English by the time they are in grade two. The British Government set up the Phelps-Stocks Commission in 1924 in order to examine the educational system in its colonies. The commission conducted a study of the education system of East, Central and Southern Africa and made some recommendations on the way educational institution should be run. Among these recommendations some were made specifically to do with language teaching (Ohannessian, 1978) [26].

- i) It stressed that the ways of preserving the African Cultural heritage ideas, ideals and the self-identity was by teaching of African languages. As such the commission saw language as a right. African languages were to be taught in lower grades at primary schools starting with a mother tongue and then moving into an African lingua franca.
- ii) A lingua franca of African origin be introduced in middle grades in the area occupied by large native groups speaking diverse languages.
- iii) The commission also stressed the importance of teaching European languages; English inclusive. They saw this as offering many opportunities and advantages to the Africans. European languages were seen as a means of acquiring information and uniting Africa with the great civilisations of the world (Ibid, P278). These were to be taught in upper grades of primary school.

In 1927, following these recommendations, the advisory Board of Native Education of Northern Rhodesia, made a decision to use four local languages as media of instruction in the first four years of primary school which were Sikololo (Lozi) in Barotseland, Chitonga-chila in North-Western Rhodesia, Cibemba in North Eastern Rhodesia West of Luangwa River and Chinyanja North – Eastern Rhodesia east of the Luangwa (Ohannessian, 1978) [26]. The Advisory Board by 1930 noticed that there was no single vernacular in Northern Rhodesia which could be used as a lingual Franca for Africans. It was decided wherever there were teachers qualified to teach in English it should be used as a medium of instruction after the learners had acquired the mechanical skills of literacy (ibid, 288-189). There was basically, no departure from the practise of the missionaries, in that a mother tongue was used in the first two years of primary schools and then a dominant regional lingua franca (Silozi, Chitonga, Chinyanja and Icibemba) was taught up to the fourth year, in a case where the mother tongue was different from the lingua franca. This practice continued into the Federation years after 1953. Schools for Africans which were referred to as unscheduled schools, used English as a medium of instruction after the fifth year of primary education while scheduled schools for Europeans, Asians and Coloureds used it from first year of primary school. The scheduled schools

were under the Federal government and the unscheduled schools were controlled by the Northern Rhodesia government. There was however, increased calls for the introduction of English much earlier in primary schools such that by 1956, English was being taught as a subject in the second year of primary school in some unscheduled schools. So, by 1962, it had found its ways into the first grade (Mwansa, 2013) [24]. Just before independence, the demand for English especially by the settler community become more insistent and as a result UNESCO was requested to study the educational system and make recommendations. The Commission led by Dr W.C. Radford, recommended that English be introduced as medium of instruction from the first grade of primary schools, thus the English Medium Policy (UNESCO, 1964:105). This policy was, in 1961 considered in Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council after a motion was moved that English should be the main teaching medium in African schools from standard one (now grade 3) on wards. In response, the then Minister of African Education stated that the ideal medium of instruction in the first four (4) years of primary school is the mother tongue, while the main African languages of the territory. (Citonga-chila, Chinyanja, Cibemba and Silozi would continue to be used as a medium of instruction (Ohannessia, 1978) [26]. In 1965, the newly independent Zambia introduced English as a language of instruction in all schools from grade one on the advice of the then Minister of Education Mr J. M. Mwanakatwe, though it allowed for continued use of the Zambian languages mediums of instructions for Grade 1-4 in all unscheduled schools. It was finally enacted into the 1966 Education Act. This act which according to Kelly (1999), just ‘schooled’ illiterates graduated from primary schools because initial literacy was done in English, a language complete alien to most pupils. The outcome of this language policy shift was quite predicable because there was minimum improvement in pupil performance in numeracy (Zambia National Assessment Survey Report, 2003) [43]. After realising that the 1966 language policy was leading the education system into problems, the drafters of the revised Reform document re-stated in their submission to the ministry of education:

“In the first four (4) grades of primary school, the seven (7) official Zambian languages will be the language of instruction, but the teachers will be encouraged to use any other language familiar to the child for purposes of communication and better teaching and learning”. (MOE 1997:9).

To the surprise of the policy drafters, when the final document was published in 1977, it contained a complete reversal of the proposed policy. The reforms acknowledged that:

“It is generally accepted by educationists that learning is best done in the mother tongue, this situation is found to be impracticable in the case of every child in multi-lingual societies, such as Zambian society.” (MOE. 1996:22) [20].

The English medium policy continued for 30 years from 1965 to 1995. The thirty year period saw a number of moves to reverse the use of English back to the local language). (MOE, 1996; 30) [20]. States that “for over 30 years, since 1996 the children who have very little contact with English outside school, but have been required to learn concepts through

English medium have had unsatisfactory experience”. Grade 1-4 failed to exhibit expected basic reading, writing and numeric skills thus the introduction of the 1996 policy: ‘Educating our Future’. This policy explains that initial reading skills taught in and through a language that is unfamiliar to the majority of children is believed to be a major contribution factor to the backwardness in reading shown by many Zambian children. Thus the introduction of the 1991 Education Policy. Shay, (2004) in her report explains that the Zambia Education Policy of 1991 was a response to the 1990 World Conference on Education for all called ‘Focus on Learning’. The Jomtein Conference ‘Focus on Learning’ was to tackle the issue by clearly stating that the arguments for local languages in education were proven that, despite the administrative difficulties the major Zambian Languages (Icibemba, Chinyanja, Icitonga, Kikaonde, Luvale, Lunda and Silozi) would be the basic languages of education from grades 1 to 4. The Zambian Cabinet formally adopted this policy in October, 1992, replacing the 1977 policy. However, no attempt was made to implement this new policy till 1995, despite a number of studies that were showing increasing signs of reading disability in primary schools in both English and local languages. The 1996 policy, according to Mueybaa (1998), was concerned with the falling standards of education in the schools, which had been brought about by a wrong medium of instruction. MOE, (1996) ^[20] agrees to this by the general opinion that:

“There is strong evidence that children learn literacy skills more easily and successfully through their mother tongue and subsequently they are able to transfer these skills quickly and with easy to English or another language. Successful first language learning is, in fact, believed to be essential for successful literacy in the second language.”

‘Educating our Future’ separated the medium of instruction from medium of initial literacy. It set down initial literacy in a familiar language as a child’s right while maintaining English as the medium of instruction. Meaning teaching of initial literacy was done in the familiar language. This led to the designing of the Primary Reading Program (PRP). The PRP involved inventory in all the seven primary grade levels. This program was implemented in 1999. The initial literacy program was called the New Break through to Literacy (NBTL) course. NBTL was brought in the local language. It moved with another PRP called Pathway to English which was taught orally in English. This strategy was fast track reading and writing skills while building up to a level of spoken English that would allow the skills developed in the local language to transfer to English at Grade 2 (Sampa, 2003) ^[31]. In Grade 2, the development of oral English continued by using Pathway to English Program and new English literacy course was developed by PRP called ‘Step in To English’ (SITE). It covered much that was covered by NBTL in grade 1. This strategy was to transfer literacy skills from Zambian language to English. (For Grades 3 to 7, the PRP developed a course called ‘Read on’ which provided bilingual literacy development and consolidation in grades 3 to 7. The Primary Reading Program was a systematic attempt to improve reading and writing in all primary schools within a seven year time-scale. The program ran from 1999 to 2005 (Kotez and Higgins, 1999) ^[15]. It was clear that NBTL was successful at

its inception. There were some other factors that contributed to the coming up of the new policy though. “The Zambia Education Curriculum Framework 2013” which advocates for a different pedagogical approach in teaching of the local language. This will be discussed in the next chapter. However, the study seeks to find out the challenges that the teachers and pupils are finding as the teaching and learning takes place in local languages in a multilingual setting.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

“A language of instruction is the language in which basic skills and knowledge are imparted to the population and the medium in which the production and the reproduction of knowledge take place” (Prah, 2005) ^[29]. Using local language as medium of instruction has been re-introduced in Zambia Primary Schools with a different approach. This has helped in improving literacy levels. However, the teachers and pupils face many challenges in the process, hence this study.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out what challenges the teachers and pupils are finding as local language is used as a medium of instruction in a multilingual setting in Kitwe selected primary schools.

1.5 General Objective

To investigate the challenges teachers and pupils in Zambian Primary Schools face as local language is used as a medium of instruction in a multilingual setting in Kitwe selected primary schools.

1.6 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To establish the effect of using the local language as a medium of instruction in Kitwe.
- To find out the challenges that teachers pupils face when the local language is used as a medium of instruction in Kitwe.
- To establish the effect of using the local language as a medium of instruction on pupils’ academic performance in Kitwe.

1.7 Research questions

- What is the effect on both the teachers and pupils when the local language is used as medium of instruction in the teaching and learning process?
- What challenges do teachers and pupils face when the local language is used in the teaching and learning process?
- How does the use of local language affect pupils’ academic performance in a multilingual setting?

1.8 Significance of the Study

- The study provides the empirical research findings on the challenges teachers and learners face in the use of local language as a language of instruction in a multilingual setting.
- Educational practitioners, educational administrators, policy makers, curriculum developers, politicians and other stakeholders interested in language policy may utilize the findings of this study.

- The findings of this study may also provide an insight on what the shortfall the policy may have.
- The study may stimulate further research on challenges in the use of local language in a multilingual setting.
- The study may also contribute information to the existing body of knowledge on the use of local language as a language of instruction in a multilingual setting.
- The findings may be useful to various stakeholders in Zambia and beyond.

1.9 Hypothesis

Using a local language as a medium of instruction in a multilingual setting has an impact on both teachers and learners.

1.10 Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted at the following schools Itawa Primary School, kansenshi, Ndeke, Kabushi, Masala, and Lubuto in Zone Five of Ndola. The other schools in the Zone were not included due to limited resources in terms of transport.

1.11 Limitation of the study

The study could not meet the target number of pupils due to the differences in their timetable. The time the study was conducted was when pupils were preparing for their end of year tests and examinations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter gives detailed review of the available literature on the key aspects of the study. First the language policies on studies done outside Africa regarding the local language as medium of instruction are looked at. It then looks at language policies in Uganda and Mali, regarding local language as a medium of instruction and how the policies are implemented. Then, the chapter looks at the new language policy in Zambia and how it is implemented. The advantages of using local language as a medium of instruction are explained there in.

2.2 Language Policy in Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea has 850 languages with different dialects (Sumbuck, 1993) ^[34], spoken by 7 million people (World Bank, 2011) ^[41]. 85 percent of the population lives in rural areas as subsistence farmers, hunters and gatherers. The 850 languages are used in schools extensively especially in elementary school level. Papua New Guinea has five levels of education, namely: Elementary (Preparatory to Grade); Lower Primary (Grades 3 – 5), Upper Primary (Grade 6 – 8); Lower Secondary (Grade 9 – 10) and Upper Secondary (Grade 11 – 12). All schools before the mid – twentieth were run by the church and were used extensively. Papuan vernaculars differ quite considerably and belong to a number of unrelated linguistic groups. Inclusive to the many languages is Tok Pisin, an English based expanded pidgin and Hiri Motu a Motu – based lingua franca. When the country gained its independence on 16th December 1975, the two lingua francas gained recognition as national languages and English became the official language (Sakarape, 2000). However, before then (1975) the people of Papua New Guinea (PNG) were not satisfied with the education policy that was in place. The community worried that the system was not effective and

it was not relevant, therefore a community based non formal pre-school education movement called Tok Ples Pri Skul was introduced in 1970. This movement encouraged teaching literacy and numeracy in the local language. The formal education system was still going through a rough phase where it became to appear to the communities that it was contributing to the alienation of the nation's youth (Litteral, 2004) ^[18]. The government noticed this and encouraged the communities to establish more non-formal pre-school programs. By 1994, more than 2,300 such programs existed in over 200 languages with nearly 80,000 students. Wroge (2002) ^[42] explains that while the non-formal education system was going through a reform, the education sector in formal education was going through a review. This review was carried on in 1991. It was recommended that national languages would be used as medium of instruction in the first three years of formal schooling. This came about because of the evaluations of the Tok Ples Pri Skul that had shown that children who became literate in local languages before entering the formal education system had a learning advantage over their classmates, and transition to English was easy than those who had not been enrolled in the local language pre-school. This education reform was enacted in 1995. It aimed at restructuring an education system that was not responding to the educational needs of the country. One of these needs being the introduction of national languages in the formal education system. The reform process took about twenty years being conceptualized. It involved significant national and international input. Which meant that when it got implemented, it was agreed by many stakeholders at all levels? Parents and communities were crucial to the success of the reform because they were consulted on the relevance of the then existing education system and on the possibilities of the system that integrated local languages into the curriculum. As already mentioned, the communities had fears that the existing education system was alienating children from their cultures and communities, as well as failing to prepare them to live and be active in their communities after schooling, caused them to look favourably on the proposed alternatives which means the use of indigenous language in formal education was a response to popularly perceived needs (Litteral, 2004) ^[18].

The 1995 education reform had positive effects such as:

- Appreciation of this kind of education by the population – the education where learners have to use the local language in their learning process.
- The means were developed for creating materials and curriculum in local languages.
- Personal experience in local language education issues were in place at the national and provincial level and there was a network of cooperating communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and provincial governments were already in place (Barbara, 2008) ^[5].

By 2000, the national formal education system was providing education to kindergarten and Grade 1 and 2 in 380 national languages in addition to Papua New Guinea Pidgin and English and by 2003, Papua New Guinea was providing Preparatory Year and Grade 1 and 2 in over 430 languages. The goal was to introduce such education in more languages (Litteral, 2004, P, 2) ^[18]. Just like the Zambian new curriculum the new education system in Papua New Guinea provides three years initial period of mother tongue based education, in which reading and writing are taught in the local language and

English is taught as the as a second language. In Grade 3, children move into English as medium of instruction while in the Zambian curriculum. English as a medium of instruction is taught in upper primary grades.

The current language education system begins at the elementary school where mother tongue education is practiced. Tok Pisin or vernacular are used in the transition period. The purpose of the use of local language and Tok Pisin in the three year initial period is to establish strong cultural bonding between children and their community (Waiko, 2003). Local language education and Tok Pisin allows students to use what is already known to learn new skills such as reading, writing and numeracy in familiar contexts, enhances active interaction and communication in schools from the first day, and enables learners at a later time to gradually transition to education in that language when they are ready.

2.2.1 How local language is implemented

The learners begin school with the mother tongue. As they enter lower primary school (Grades 3 – 5), they are introduced to the transitional bilingual program in Grade 3 which uses one of the Papua New Guinea's vernacular languages or Tok Pisin with English. The bridging period is expected to continue up to the end of Grade 5, when learners go to upper primary school (Grades 6 – 8), the emphasis is on English language of instruction; however the use of local languages and Tok Pisin is still encouraged. The same applies in the Zambian context where English is emphasized in Upper Primary and the local language is taught as subject.

2.3 Language Policy in Uganda and its Implementation

Uganda is a multilingual country with 43 indigenous languages spoken alongside English and Kiswahili (Gordon, 2005) ^[10]. Just like Zambia where only seven languages are chosen as regional medium of instruction in schools, Uganda has five out of the 43 languages used as mediums of instruction in primary schools especially lower primary. These are Luo, Luganda, Lugbara, Runyakitara and Ateso (Ward, Penny and Read, 2006) ^[39]. English is an official language.

Uganda like other African countries was under colonial government. During colonial administration, the medium of instruction was local language. After independence the government white paper on education recommended that local language be used as a medium of instruction in all educational programmes up to primary four (4); and that an area language be taught as a subject in primary schools. English was to be used after third or fourth primary school grade (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2005). The Government White Paper on Education (1992) considered from a scientific point of view the argument concerning the ease with which learners learn when taught in their local language. On the other hand in urban areas, English is recommended throughout primary due to the multiplicity of languages in these areas. English is also targeted as the language of examination. Temba and Norton (2008) in their dissertation stated that Uganda like many African Countries had been colonized by Britain. In 1962, they gained their independence. Since then they have been struggling to develop and implement effective multilingual policies in their schools. English is the official language of the country, but there is yet no national language, because none of the Ugandan languages has been considered demographically

strong enough to take on this role. The same applies to Zambia where English is the official language of the country but yet no national language.

After the political disturbances or uncertainty in 1970s and 1980s, the Ugandan Government appointed an Education Review Commission that would carry out a comprehensive analysis and make a blue print for the future. The report of the Commission resulted in the publication of a Government White Paper on Education (Government of Uganda, 1992). The noted curriculum changes that was introduced by the Government White Paper was the Language Education Policy that distinguished between policies in urban and rural areas. It was noted that the majority of Ugandan population lived in rural areas. A context in which people who speak the same language live in the same proximity. As such, the GWP stipulated that in rural areas the local languages be used as a medium of instruction in all educational programs up to primary 4 and English was to be taught as a subject until primary 5. From Primary 5 English was to be used a medium of instruction. In Urban areas English would be a medium of instruction from Primary 1, with the local language taught as a subject until primary 5. From primary 5, English was to be used as a medium of instruction. In urban areas English would be a medium of instruction from primary 1 with the local language taught as a subject (GWP, 1992:19) ^[11]. The same policy applies in Zambia except that the use of a local language as a medium of instruction in lower grade applies to both urban and rural schools. Uganda policy also has Swahili that is taught as a compulsory subject both in rural and urban schools from primary 4 to primary 7 because it is thought to be a language possessing greater capacity for uniting Ugandans and for assisting rapid social development (GWP.1992:19) ^[11].

The 1992 Education Review Report was implemented between 2000 and 2002. The curriculum comprised language, mathematics, science, social studies and eight other subjects. Unfortunately it did not pay much attention to the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing in the first 3 years (Penny et al, 2008) ^[27]. The approach was teacher centred. Writing involved copying, from the board, taking dictation. The learners and teachers mostly interacted through choral responses repetition, cued response and role learning – the approach that was used in Zambia during the Zambia Primary Course. Such an approach was realized to have not helped much in the proficiency in reading and writing (Draku, 2011) ^[9]. This called for another curriculum review in 2004 that brought in the Thematic Curriculum.

In 2007 the Government of Uganda introduced the Thematic Curriculum to be taught in local languages from grade one to three. The Thematic Curriculum was meant to improve the proficiency in reading and writing, which was thought to have been a barrier to the right to Education, (NCDC, 2006; UNESCO 2005) ^[25, 35]. All learning areas are taught, expect English, in the language that is familiar to the learner. The local language is taught as a medium of instruction from P1 – P3 and as a subject from Primary four to tertiary level.

The Thematic Curriculum seeks to develop the basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) for lifelong learning. It is based on the following principles:

1. Development at literacy, numeracy and life skills at lower primary school level.

2. The treatment of concepts holistically, under themes as of immediate meaning and relevance to the learner and
3. The presentation of learners experiences in languages in which the learners are already proficient (NCDC, 2006) [25].

2.3.1 How the Curriculum is implemented

NCDC (2006, 9) [25] explains on how the new curriculum approach is child centred. The teaching methodology emphasises activities of the learners than the teachers. Child participation in all learning activities is encouraged. Activities such as songs, games, acting, and drawing are much emphasized. Much time has to be taken on group work. Pairs and individual working independently are some ways a teacher should approach the lesson. The teacher adopts a child centred approach by putting the child interests, experiences and needs at the centre of the curriculum in order to increase interest in learning the different subjects they are to study in later years (Draku, 2011) [9].

2.3.2 Benefits of Teaching in Local Languages in Uganda

- Pinnock et al is quoted that the medium in (LABE, p18) where he explains that the medium of instruction in lower primary, improves learning outcomes. It reduces grade repetition and dropout rates. The language used in delivering instructions to the learners in class is an important factor that determines the success of learners in education.
- When the learners are given instruction in the language they understand, it reduces the teachers' time spent on explaining difficult content and concepts. As such, use of instruction time is made effective.
- Learners centred methods such as debates, pair work and small group discussions are enjoyed by learners and they participate confidently.
- It leads to better learning outcomes especially in reading and writing, which form the core of children's future academic goals.
- It creates good rapport between learners and channel of communication is very easy because the language is familiar to both teacher and learners.
- Learning is enabled to progress from familiar to unfamiliar, known to unknown, hence respecting a basic sound pedagogical principle.
- It facilitates the integration of the children's culture into the school curriculum. Because of this, the learner develops a positive perception of the culture and promotes involvement in school activities, thus making the school part of the community.
- According to the Ugandan Government White Paper (1992 section 32), local language education helps to develop a genuinely rich national culture, achieve national unity and rapid development.
- Development of greater patriotism, nationalism and Pan-Africanism among citizens is enhanced. This leads to the achievement of increased and beneficial communication and co-operation among various ethnic groups in the country and beyond.
- Rapid achievement of permanent developmental function literacy is enhanced.
- Increased and solid sense of African and international solidarity is promoted and it also leads to the creation of an integrated national and regional economic market

needed for social production in support and enhancement of an independent integrated, and self-sustaining national economy (LABE, FAWEU, UNATU Pg18).

2.4 Language Policy in Mali and its Implementation

Mali as any other African Country, was a colony of the western world. Its challenges in education and in the development of the African language can be contributed to the legacy of French Colonial policy. French is dominant in the formal education despite the lack of is French fluency amongst most of the African population and this has led to some challenges. In 1979, the Government of Mali took a decision to introduce the use of a national language in formal education in order to solve the challenges the education system was facing. The bilingual education that was introduced started on an experimental basis. The national languages were used as a medium of instruction from Grades 1 to 6. Although the policy worked so well and produced positive results, there were some limitations in terms of difficulty transferring skills acquired in the mother tongue after Grade 3. Thus, a new pedagogical approach in 1987 called Converging Education (AFDA. Newsletter, Vol. 17, No. 2). This also was done on experimental basis. Starting in 1994, it was extended to other schools. Of late eleven out of thirteen national languages, have been introduced to formal education Convergent Method (UNESCO, PP10-11)) by 2005. The approach leads learners to use some skills acquired in the mother tongue to acquiring other languages (Ibid, page 17).

The notes in the report of EWB (2005) explains that:

"The term convergence describes a pedagogy that emphasizes interactive learning and links teaching methods of the first and second languages. The child's mother tongue is used as the language of instruction throughout primary school and the second language is taught in such a way that the learners become functionally bilingual. The goals of this model are to improve school access and learning outcomes for students, to integrate the school into the social and cultural environment of the students and to produce functionally bilingual learners".

The convergent method uses the student's mother tongue as medium of instruction in the first year. They learn to read and write in it before starting to learn French. The second language (French) is introduced during the second year. This is taught orally and it takes 25% of the learning time. (AFD/MEALN, 2010) The same applies to the new curriculum in Zambia, where the first year is in local language as a medium of instruction and in Grade 2 when English is taught orally and instruction is in locally language. In Mali, grades 3 and 4 uses French for reading and speaking. Meaning three quarters of the learning time in grades 3 and 4 is in French and a quarter in local language. Subjects such as mathematics, history, geography, science, physical science and social studies are taught in the mother tongue till grade 4. In Grades 5 and 6, time for learning is divided equally. Half for mother tongue and the other half for French. Subject such as mathematics, history geography, science physical science and social studies are taught in French but can also be taught in the national language as need arises to consolidate learning (ADEA newsletter, vol. 17, no.2, page 17). At this stage learners are expected to be able to learn subject's content in each of the

two languages. By the end of the six years of the primary school, both languages are used equally and learners sit for the same primary school leaving exam as the learners in French only classrooms. Though those in convergence education are examined in subjects specific to converging education. The advantages of the convergent learning can be summarized as follows:-

- Rapid learning; easier facility in acquiring basic skills in reading, writing and calculations; easy socialization, greater autonomy, development of team spirit for work, active participation in group work; easy oral expression; freedom of expression, taking of initiative, reduced downtime, strengthened family – school relations and validation of the child mother tongue (ibid).

2.5 Zambian Language Policy and its Implementation

The new education curriculum of 2013, has its main focus areas such as: review the language of instruction in the early education and lower grades as well as review the literacy teaching approaches and methodologies. Early childhood education has been included in the primary school curriculum. Before independence, early childhood education was provided within the mainstream of the education structure. It was offered as sub-standards A and B. Every new entrance into formal schooling had to start with pre-school education before proceeding in standard 1. Meaning, a standard curriculum was there which all primary schools followed. Because of the restructuring of the education system in the 1960s, pre-school education in primary schools was removed from formal schools. Formal schooling started at grade 1. Early childhood education and development became the responsibility of local government and was provided in community social welfare centres. The local governments had to design their own curriculum. Such a trend resulted in uncoordinated, fragmented and substandard early childhood education. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Education decided to review and standardize the provision of early childhood education by developing a national curriculum (MOE, 2013) [23].

The new education curriculum of 2013 has its main focus areas such as review of the language of instruction in the early education and lower grades as well as to review the literacy teaching approaches and methodologies. The policy recognizes the use of familiar Zambian languages as the official languages of instruction in the pre-schools and early grades (Grades 1 – 4). The teaching and learning in all the learning areas at the lower Primary level was to be familiar Zambian languages. This is because there is evidence that children learn more easily and successfully through languages that they know and understand well. English is offered as a subject, beginning at Grade 2. It is thought that after the children have acquired sufficient literacy skills in Zambian languages, it would be easier for them to transfer the skills quickly and with ease to literacy in English in grade 2 (MOE, 2013) [23]. In view of this consideration, learners in pre-schools and lower primary (Grades 1 – 4) are given an opportunity to learn not only the initial basic skills of literacy and numeracy in a language of play but, also all knowledge, skills and values in the other learning areas. The seven (7) zone language: Cinyanja, Chitonga, Icibemba, Kikaonde, Lunda, Luvale and silozi as well as widely used community language in specific school catchment areas are used for this purpose. English

remains as the official medium of instruction beginning at Grade 5 up to tertiary.

2.5.1 How Reading Is Conducted Using the Systematic Phonic Approach

The literacy frame work clearly illustrates methods on how to approach the teaching of initial literacy. Up to and including Grade 4, when the appropriate Zonal language is the language of learning, literacy is taught using a systematic phonics approach. The first thing that is developed in the learners is ‘phonemic awareness’. In this first stage children become aware of different minimal meaningful sounds in the language unrelated to letters. It is done through stories to develop listening. The teacher and children make the minimal sounds and recognize how spoken words are made up to separate sounds (MOE 2012:30) [22]. Secondly it is ‘phonics’. The children learn to march the sound with the letter and letter with the sound using letter cards including letter combinations that make a sound. They also learn the letter names using the alphabet and phonic charts. Combination of letters at this stage to form syllables is emphasized. Syllable cards are encouraged to help in building words. Thirdly is the ‘word decoding and sight word recognition’. It is envisaged that at this stage the learners are able to decode a word by sounding out the letters and that they can also learn to recognize common and often phonically irregular words on sight. This is all done with the help of letter cards that can form words, word cards for sight recognition, for decoding and for forming sentences. Picture cards that they can match (ibid.). Then, the children start ‘reading with fluency’. They read short passages aloud with confidence. Instant recognition of words, phrases and their meanings start to be noticed. Short story cards, picture and sentence cards are used to enhance reading. Last is, ‘comprehension’. The teacher uses stories with activities such as questions, matching, completing and re-ordering pictures. Sentences strips to match and re-order. The learners by then are expected to perform tasks that show comprehension.

In parallel to this reading program, the learners learn to write. They learn the letters, how to form them correctly and how to write words and sentences. They learn to punctuate and to spell as they master reading with fluency. Once fluency with comprehension has been achieved, children start to read for real. For instance, reading comprehension, reading widely and reading to acquire knowledge. They then start to read silently to themselves. All this should be achieved in the local language within the first or a year and a half before they start English. Then as long as they have developed some oral language in English, these same skills can be easily transferred to the new language English (MOE 2012:30) [22]. With such a strategy this study will seek to find out what challenges the learners and teachers are facing in a situation which is multilingual.

2.5.2 Significance of using local language as medium of instruction

When learners enter school, they enter with their home language. As such using the local language in early education could lead to better understanding of the curriculum content and a more positive attitude towards school. The reason being that learning does not begin in school. Learning starts at home in the learners’ home language. As the child starts school, it is just a continuation of learning. School just presents a great

change in the mode of education such as the structure, control of content and delivering of a pre-determined curriculum, when previously the child was learning from experience (Angeline, 2015) [2].

- Local language literacy is more successfully taught than English literacy.
- local language literacy may provide support for subsequent English literacy because the learners move from the known (oral home language) to the unknown (reading), rather than confronting two unknowns (English language and reading) simultaneously, and
- Local language literacy is in harmony with the “child-centred” policy in education (William, 1998) [40].

Some research findings by Barker (2001) [4], Cumming (2000) [8], CAL (2001) [6] provides pedagogical advantages which are:

- Using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction does not slow down the learning of the second language.
- When the mother tongue is used to teach the subject matter and beginning literacy, students gain knowledge they comprehend. This knowledge helps students better to comprehend and learn the second language, particularly the subject matter with which they are already familiar, because they have learned related matters in the mother tongue.
- Using the mother tongue helps in learning the national language and developing reading skills in that language.
- Learning to read is easier and faster when learners understand the meaning of what they are reading. This can only be done through the mother tongue.
- This is because in the mother tongue it is easier to understand basic processes involved in reading, such as sounds and symbols. The learners can write fast in their mother tongue as soon they are taught how the writing system works.
- The learned linguistic and cognitive skills are easily transferred to other languages
- Jim Cummings (1991) explains that once learners are literate in their mother tongue and have learned sufficient oral skills in the second language, the literacy skills transfer easily to language two, as well, as there is usually no need for re-learning the same subject matter.
- When teachers and pupils have the common medium of communication, it becomes easier for teachers to assess whether the pupils have actually learnt the content areas.

3. Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter focuses on the methodology of the study. It discusses the following research methods:

- Research Design
- Target Population
- Sample Size
- Sampling Techniques

The discussion also includes data collection techniques, data processing techniques, ethical consideration and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Design

A descriptive survey design was used to carry out the study. In the study both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in order to collect detailed information on the challenges of using local language in a multilingual setting. The design

involved the use of questionnaires, semi-structural interviews, in depth interviews and focus group discussions.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study were school teachers and pupils. The researcher targeted teachers that teach Grades 1 to 4 who as predicted provided rich and professional information about using a local language as medium of instruction. The pupils targeted were from Grades 1 to 7 though the largest number was from Grades 1 to 4.

3.4 Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the school, teachers and pupils to ensure that the sample of pupils was representative. The school was purposively selected because it represented the intended purpose of the study.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

3.6 Data Processing Techniques

Data was analysed using the qualitative and the quantitative data collected. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. Using the across-case approach, the researcher was able to organize multiple responses from different respondents and generate given thematic areas.

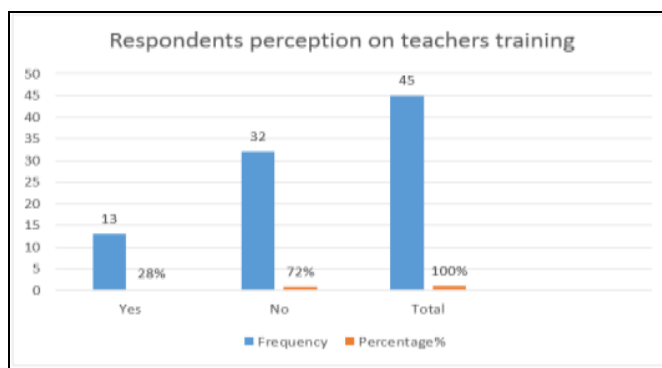
Tables and charts were used to summarize numerical data.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

All ethical considerations in this study such as: seeking permission from school authorities, issues of confidentiality were taken into account as well as other basic research.

4. Findings and Discussions

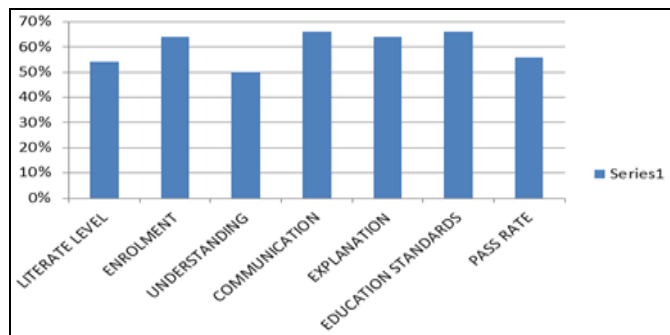
In establishing the impact of teaching in local language on pupil’s academic performance, the teachers were asked if they were trained to teach in local in their colleges. The responses are shown in the table below:



Source: Field data, 2016

Fig 1: Teachers training at college

Figure 1: revealed respondents views on teachers training at college concerning using local language as a midium of instruction in primary schools. Out of hundred percent, 13(28%) said teachers are adequately prepared to teach in local language while 32(72%) said teachers are not adequqtely prepared to use locl language as a medium of instruction from grade one to four.



Source: Field data, 2016

Fig 2: Showing Positive Responses on Impact of Teaching in Local Languages

The study pointed out a number of perceived effects of teaching in local language on pupils’ academic performance which include easy understanding, participation Increase by learners, teaching has become pupil centered, high level of concentration, easy to teach, easy to clarify things, performance has increased, higher academic standards, and learners’ confidence has increased.

4.1 Literacy levels as a result of using local language

Table1: Respondents views on literacy levels

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	1	4%
Very good	5	20%
Good	18	72%
Bad	1	4%
TOTAL	25	100%

The table above reveals respondents views on literacy levels as a result of using local language as a medium of instruction from grade one to four in primary schools. Of the 25(100%) administrators interviewed 1(4%) said the literacy levels were excellent, 5(20%) said that the literacy levels in schools were very good, while 18(72%) said that literacy levels were good and 1 (4%) said that the literacy levels were bad.

The outcome of this study seems to suggest that teaching in local language follows the firm education principle of teaching from the known to the unknown (M.O.E, 2001) [19]. In this case the language is known while literacy skills are the unknown. Literacy skills are at the most basic level about understanding the sound, symbol relationships that form the phonic rules of a given language. This is much easier if these sounds and symbols make up words with which a learner is familiar. Literacy skills are at the most basic level about understanding the sound, symbol relationships that form the phonic rules of a language. This is much easier of these sounds and symbols make up words with which a learner is familiar. A set of symbols called letters are used so the alphabet is a group of symbols which stands for speech sound. While phonic is the relationship of sounds and letters. It helps the leaner to make the link between what they hear and what they see in print. Phonics is one way in which we teach children how to read. Children learning to read must be taught the major phonics rules in the first years (1-4) of instruction. Each language has its own rules for this. If learners know these rules then they can sound out new words they have not seen before and they can try to write words without having to

remember all the words by sight (Fry, 1965) Zambian languages are phonetically very regular much more so than English. For example once a child knows how to read aloud a word with the letter “a” in it, he will know how to read the letter a in any other word as well. English is different; vowels can combine with each other or with consonants in different ways tom give at least twenty (20) vowel sounds. For example the “oo” sound in the word book sounds quite different from the “oo” sound in the word door although both words are spelled with oo. English has irregular forms as well, like the words bed and bird have the same vowel sound but have different vowels. For this reason learners will find it easier to learn and apply phonic rules in Zambian language in the first instance.

Since Zambian languages are phonetically based whereas English is not, the syllabic method of teaching local languages does not work so well with English. Pupils will be left confused if they are forced to transfer new literacy skills in such an ineffective manner as early as grade 1. Hence more time is needed to teach literacy in the local languages, “Let us allow the local languages enough time of 2 to 4 years in order to consolidate initial literacy. Thereafter, English can take over as medium of instruction”. Prediction based on picture and meaning cues is an important teaching and reading skill. Therefore, a learner cannot use these cues unless they are familiar with the language they are using as the medium of instruction. Learners feel more confident and therefore, respond better to learning if that learning is taking place in a language with which they are familiar. They easily communicate to each other and to the teacher teaching them. This helps both teachers and pupils to express themselves fully and clearly. Learning should be a fun process that learners choose to engage in but learning and reading for enjoyment will not take place if the learners cannot understand the language being used as the medium of instruction (M.O.E, 2001) [19]. Parental support will be more forthcoming when learning is taking place in a familiar language. Even illiterate parents can support their children learning development if they understand the language in which the child is reading and writing. Parents can also participate in their children by helping them in home work, assignments and projects.

Teaching in local language has made the learning easy where learners enjoy lessons and have confidence which lead to good results at the end. Though this may not always be the case since not all pupils are familiar with the language that is being used and some words and concepts may not easily be understood by both teachers and pupils. Since local language is now being used as a medium of instruction there is high concentration by the learners in classes thus improving the academic standards of learners in the nation. Many people are now educated because they are taught skills in local language. The enrolment levels have also increased during this period when using local language as a medium of instruction was introduced. The learners appreciate school because they are able to learn effectively and participate in many academic activities. Teaching is done from known to unknown and there is no language barrier. Furthermore, high performance during examinations leaves the teachers not only proud but also happy because the gap between pupils who normally performed badly in class and those who performed very well was reduced. Once sound foundations for literacy are laid, it is much easier to move from the known to the unknown again,

this time literacy is known and English language is relatively unknown. The phonetic indosynarases of English can be taught more easily once learners are familiar with basic phonic rules. Additionally, teaching and learning materials must be printed in local language for all grades unlike the situation at hand there are no books printed in local languages for grades 3 and 4 so teachers use English books which makes it more difficult for them to teach especially those that do not know the given language.

5. Conclusions

The study pointed out a number of perceived impacts of teaching in local language on pupils' academic performance which include easy understanding, participation increase by learners, high level of concentration, easy teaching, good performance, higher academic standards, and learner's confidence increase. It has also being revealed that learning in local language has more advantages than learning in English. This is so because English has irregular forms and some words with the same spelling sound different. The Zambian languages phonetic are regular hence gives an advantage for fast reading. Children enjoy learning and reading something they can easily understand. Stakeholders can give support to learners if they learn in a language that they too understand.

However, serious challenges have been reviewed on the implementation of the local language policy. They include congested classrooms, limited physical facilities and shortage of qualified teachers, which negatively impacted on the quality of teaching and learning on one hand and contributed to indiscipline in schools on the other. Zambia is a multilingual country, so teachers teaching in one part of the country may not be very conversant with the language being used hence have a negative effect on their teaching. While on the other hand some pupils may also not know the language that is used as a medium of instruction so it has a negative impact on their academic performance. If only the local language could be used to teach reading and writing skills not used as the medium of instruction to teach in all subjects because it has serious negative impact for example some words have no proper translation more especially when the teacher is using an English text book as it is the case now since books are not written in local languages.

6. Recommendation

The colleges must prepare the teachers adequately to teach in local languages. Based on the findings the following recommendations emerged from the study.

1. The government through the Ministry of General Education should build many schools to cope with this increase in enrolments.
2. The government through the Ministry of General Education should print the books and other materials in local languages for easy teaching and proper use of words.
3. The government through the Ministry of General Education should increase the funding to primary schools to meet the needs of the primary schools.
4. The government through the Ministry of General Education should train teachers in colleges on how to teach in local languages.
5. The government through the Ministry of General Education should retrain teachers in local languages so that they can teach effectively.

6. The teacher should be able to speak three to four languages so as to help implement local languages in schools.

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