

To establish the impact of teaching in local languages to pupils and teachers in selected schools in Chipata district Eastern Province of Zambia

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Abstract

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 in Zambia. 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 primary education 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 would give more valid reasons as to why using local languages as a medium of instruction is better than using English as a medium of instruction from grades one to four, respectively. The paper recommended that in order to help implement teaching in local languages, the government through the Ministry of General Education should train teachers in colleges on how to teach in local languages, the government through the Ministry of General Education should retrain teachers in local languages so that they can teach effectively, the teacher should be able to speak three to four languages so as to help implement local languages in schools.

Keywords: local languages, teaching and learning, Impact on academic performance

1. Introduction

Chapter one presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives including the research questions, the significance of the study, the theoretical framework as well as the operation definitions.

1.1 Background to the study

The education system in Zambia has undergone some changes which have roots in the pre-colonial era. According to Chondoka and Manchishi (1999) ^[8], western education was first introduced to King Lewanika's territory of the Lozi people by the white missionaries in 1883. These architects of the education system encouraged the use of a local language to teach pupils from Sub A to Standard four (4) by teaching vernacular as a subject and using it as medium of instruction. Snelson (1974) ^[27] states that there was no formal training for teachers though some natives who had learnt the three Rs took up the challenge to teach their fellow indigenous people. English was however, introduced in higher classes as an additional subject. This language policy scored considerable success as the teaching of initial literacy was conducted in children's mother tongue which enhanced learning gains and cognitive development in learners, faster.

The colonial period commenced in 1924 and extended up to 1963 during which period Northern Rhodesia was directly ruled by the British government. The Phelps-Stocks Commission was setup by the latter in order to examine the educational systems in its colonies. The commission visited East and Central Africa and the following were its specific

objectives: 'to investigate the educational needs of the people in the light of their religious, social, hygienic and economic conditions, to ascertain the extent to which their needs were being met, and to assist in the formation of plans to meet the educational needs of the native races, (Snelson, 1974:134) ^[27]. The Phelps-Storks Commission recommended that primary education in the colony should be relevant to the practical needs of rural Africans and in particular Northern Rhodesia. In the same vein, it irrevocably recommended the use of vernacular languages in the lower primary years of school. Shana (1980:5) ^[26] reports that, 'the board proposed that four vernacular languages, Tonga, Bemba, Lozi and Nyanja were to be taught in schools for Africans.' He further states that the Advisory Board by 1930, noticed that there was no single vernacular in Northern Rhodesia which could be used as a lingua franca for Africans. Most white missionaries continued running their schools while maintaining their curriculum and language policy towards the natives. By 1953, the language policy was that from Sub A to Standard two a local language most familiar to learners (mother tongue) was used as medium of instruction whilst teachers used the most dominant local language to instruct learners from Standard three to four. English was later introduced at Standard five through to upper levels. Kelly (1999) ^[13], states that vernacular was used as medium of instruction and was accorded more periods per week on average and taught at lower primary school more than any other subject. Northern Rhodesia (1930:3) ^[24] supports this argument that, Mother tongue-instruction would be used to teach the mechanics of reading and writing and that English instruction would replace the use of mother tongue

thereafter. In the same way, it can be argued that the use of indigenous languages to prepare teachers to deliver initial literacy during the early years of lower primary education was recommended.

After independence, however, there was a drastic turn in as far as language policy was concerned as political and national unity was prioritized by new African political leaders. The 1966, Education Act, pronounced English as the sole official language in Zambia. Kelly (1999) ^[13], reports that English was used as medium of instruction to children in all grades who hardly used it at home and if they did it was imperfect. The outcome of this language policy shift was quite predictable because there was minimum improvement in pupil performance in numeracy and literacy.

The majority of citizens from various sections of the Zambian society have expressed their concern about the declining levels of reading and writing. It was clear that though pupils were physically in school, they had no access to learning due to their inadequate reading ability (Ministry of Education, 1999) ^[20]. The Ministry of Education in 1995, initiated a major research study under the auspices of Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring of Educational Quality (SACMEQ). The report for SACMEQ was published in 1997 and its main findings indicated that, 'only 25% of grade 6 pupils could read at minimum levels and only 3% could read at desirable levels.' It was clear that pupils could not read materials of their grade levels.

The Ministry of Education in its efforts to improve the literacy levels among Zambia's school children convened a National Reading Forum (NRF) in 1995, it led to the development of a Primary Reading Program. The Ministry of Education (1996) ^[21], education policy 'Educating our Future' revived the use of a familiar language to teach initial literacy to grade (1) one pupils.

Despite all these efforts by the government, not much has been achieved in terms of raising literacy levels among primary school pupils. Matafwali (2005) ^[18], in her studies in four randomly selected schools in Lusaka Province confirmed low reading levels among grade three pupils. She states that only 23% out of 106 pupils were able to read at a level expected for their level. Matafwali (2010:161) ^[10], also indicates in her findings that while reading is at the center of educational experience, however, a good number of Zambian children reading was below the expected grade level. She concluded that, children's poor oral language abilities were been identified as the underlying factors explaining the challenges in the development of literacy skills observed among Zambian children were powerful effects of intelligence, alphabetic knowledge and background factors were taken into account.

"One Zambia, One Nation" was the motto adopted when Zambia gained independence from the British in 1964. This motto highlighted the people's desire to become a unified nation after being disintegrated during the colonial period (Marten and Kula, 2007) ^[17]. Following the belief that "one nation equals one language," Zambians adopted English as their only official language. Although Zambia has identified seven national local languages, English still remains the official language and was the only language recognized in the 1991 Constitution. English is used in official governmental activities and has been the main language of instruction in Zambian schools. The majority of Zambians, however, are multilingual. Banda and Bellononjengele (2010) ^[3], argue that

complex multilingualism is an essential part of Zambian identity and communication. In order to not lose the linguistic resources available to Zambians, the roles of local languages play a very important need to be examined more carefully and protected. In particular, the role of local languages in education is crucial since schools are a primary site for the implementation of language policies and can have a strong effect on the overall vitality of a language. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the impact of teaching in local languages on pupils and teachers in Zambia's education system.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Although the issue of teaching initial literacy in local languages has been under discussion and extensively researched for some time, it was not known which initial learners read better, those taught by indigenous or non-indigenous speaking teachers of the local language that is used in teaching initial literacy. There was a general concern raised in Zambia regarding the quality of education being offered to young learners. This was evidenced by low achievement levels in reading and writing skills among learners. Schools should not produce functionally illiterate pupils. There are some unknown factors leading to the problem which need empirical research. The problem, therefore, is as little as it is known about the impact that teaching in local languages has brought into Zambia's education system to both the teachers and pupils.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out the impact that teaching in local languages has brought into Zambia's education system to both the teachers and pupils.

1.4 Research Objective

1.4.1 General Research Objective

To establish the impact of teaching in local languages to pupils and teachers in selected schools in Chipata district Eastern Province of Zambia.

1.4.2 Specific Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To evaluate the effect of teaching in local languages among teachers' performance in schools.
2. To establish the status of teaching in local languages among teachers training in schools or colleges.
3. To investigate the pupils performance as a result of teaching in local languages in schools.
4. To assess the literacy levels among pupils as a result of teaching in local languages in schools.

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 General Research Question

What are the impact of teaching in local languages to teachers and pupils in the Zambian education system?

1.5.2 Specific Questions

1. How has teaching in local languages affected teachers' performance in schools?
2. Has teaching in local languages improved on teacher's training?
3. How has been the performance of pupils as a result of

- teaching in local languages in schools?
- How are the literacy levels among pupils as a result of teaching in local languages in schools?

1.6 Research Variables

Table 1

Dependent variables	Independent variable
Pupil’s performance	Teaching in Local languages
Teacher’s training	Teaching in Local languages
Teacher’s performance	Teaching in Local languages
Pupils’ literacy Levels	Teaching in Local languages

1.7 Significance of the study

The study was of great significance for it seeks to generate information on how adequate pre-service trainee teachers are prepared to handle initial literacy in indigenous [local] languages. The findings of this study, therefore, would be of importance to the main stakeholder, the Ministry of Education which runs primary education and in fact it is the main custodian of education provider in the country. The findings of this study might also be used to improve upon the policy pertaining to the teaching of initial literacy in the first grades, that is, one to four, through local languages during pre-service training. This could improve pupils’ literacy skills. This might in turn have a positive impact on education standards because literacy is a cross-cutting issue in all subjects in the lower primary school. The findings of the study might also inevitably contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of initial literacy.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Global perspectives

Over the past two decades, there have been a growing number of researchers who have provided convincing support for the promotion of mother tongue education in the early years of schooling (Williams 1995) [31]. These researchers make the case that knowledge and skills gained in the mother tongue can transfer across languages, they also argue that multilingual children perform well at school when the school teaches the mother tongue effectively. Literature on literacy development attests to the benefits of using a child’s mother tongue even when the goal is learning a second language. Further, research in second language acquisition has shown that the level of proficiency in the first language has a direct influence on the development of proficiency in the second language. For example, in two experimental studies of bilingual education in Guinea-Bissau and in Mozambique (Benson, C. 2004-2005) [4], the students in the bilingual programme performed better when tested in the second language than their monolingual counterparts.

Research in Africa suggests, however, that multilingual language policies have met with limited success, partly due to a lack of appreciation of the context in which such policies are implemented. For example, many African parents assume that mother tongue policies have been imposed for political rather than sociolinguistic or demographic reasons (Baker, 2001). In addition, parents want their children to master the official language, or the language of wider communication (LWC), early in the education process. There is a common (though mistaken) belief that African languages are not equipped to deal with scientific and technical concepts.

Like many African countries, Uganda, which gained independence from Britain in 1962, has been struggling to develop and implement effective multilingual policies in its 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.

More recently, Senegal, is yet another country that has launched a scheme to revive local languages and, since 2002, school year, children in 155 classes throughout the country have been taught in Wolof, Pulaar, Serere, Diola, Mandingo and Soninke, which were chosen from among the twenty-three languages spoken in Senegal. Children are to be taught entirely in their mother tongue at pre-school, 75 per cent of the time, during the first year of primary school and 50 per cent of the time, during the second and third years of primary. After that, French would become dominant.

2.2 Zambian Perspectives

The government in 1996, produced a comprehensive policy statement for education, called *Educating Our Future*, which incorporated the recommendations of the Reading Forum, stating that initial literacy and numeracy would be developed through a language which was familiar to children. This policy positioned further and enhanced the status of Zambian languages and provided the rationale for future initiatives. It should be noted, however, that 1996 was an election year in Zambia and political considerations were to the fore when the policy document was being drafted. The initial debates that preceded this change took place within educational circles, with always the threat of a political veto overhanging the process. Up to the penultimate draft of the policy document, certain senior politicians insisted on the retention of the status quo and only agreed to limited change in the final draft after sustained interventions by senior Ministry officials. The separation of medium of instruction from medium of initial literacy allowed *Educating Our Future* to set down initial literacy in a familiar language as a child’s right while maintaining English as official language of the medium of instruction.

A number of measures taken by the Ministry of Education since 1995, have been in support of the above objectives. The status of local languages was raised by including them among subjects that counted towards selection to Grade Eight, formerly Lower Secondary, but now Upper Primary. Previously, although Zambian languages were taught up to Grade Seven, they were not part of the selected subjects for the limited places at secondary school level. This policy change greatly boosted the status of local languages and the morale of local language teachers and curriculum experts.

In Grade one, the *New Breakthrough to Literacy* (NBTL) course, which is taught for one hour per day, is a version of the original *Breakthrough to Literacy* that has been modified to better suit the Zambian environment. This fast-track one-year initial literacy course in each of the seven official Zambian languages has had significant success. The evaluation report on the pilot programme carried out in Kasama during 1998 states. ‘The programme was an unqualified success; children in *Breakthrough to Literacy* (BTL) classes were reading and writing at a level equivalent to Grade four or higher in non-BTL classes’ (Kotze and Higgins, 1999, page 4). The review team further claimed at oral

presentations of their findings to the Ministry of Education, that children in pilot schools in Kasama were performing in literacy tests at a level above what they would expect of children of similar age in South Africa, the UK, and Ireland – areas with which they were familiar.

The first challenge for Zambian educators was to work within an ambivalent language policy. As previously stated, 1996 was an election year in Zambia, and it proved not possible, for political reasons, to go as far as changing the medium of instruction to a local language without the threat of derailing the impetus towards familiar language literacy. As the policy document, *Educating Our Future* went through its final drafts, it was made clear to senior education officials that unless a non-contentious formula could be found, the political preference would be for maintenance of the status quo, with English remaining in the same position as it had done since 1965. The compromise position that had been anticipated by the National Reading Committee therefore came into focus.

In reality, local languages have been predominate in the early grades, particularly in the rural areas. In a new departure, *Educating Our Future* states clearly that children must have the right to be introduced to literacy and numeracy through a familiar language: ‘The fact that initial reading skills are taught in and through a language that is unfamiliar to the majority of children is believed to be a major contributory factor to the backwardness in reading shown by many Zambian children. It is, therefore, also a major factor in fostering rote learning, since from the outset the child has difficulties in associating the printed forms of words with their real underlying meaning. On the other hand, 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 ease to English or another language’ (*Educating Our Future*, 1996:39).

2.3 Previous Studies

Many studies have shown children do better if they get a primary education in their own language. This is important because about 476 million of the world’s illiterate people speak minority languages and live in countries where children are mostly not taught in their mother tongue. In New Zealand, in the most recent study showed that, Maori children who received primary education in their own language performed better than those educated in English only, notes Don Long, who produces books and teaching materials in the country’s minority languages.

In the United States, a research unit at George Mason University in Virginia has monitored results at twenty-three primary schools in fifteen States since 1985. Four out of six different curricula involved were partly conducted in the mother tongue. The survey shows that, after eleven years of schooling, there is a direct link between academic results and the time spent learning in the mother tongue. Those who do best in secondary school have had a bilingual education. ‘Learning in the mother tongue has cognitive and emotional value. Minority pupils feel more respected when it is used,’ says Dutcher. Clinton Robinson, an education and development consultant and former head of international programmes at the Summer Institute of Linguistics in the United Kingdom, says ‘children who learn in another language get two messages that if they want to succeed

intellectually it won’t be by using their mother tongue and also that their mother tongue is useless.’

Rea-Dickins and Yu, who have very recently conducted a large-scale study in Zanzibar on the dynamics of language in student performance as assessed at the end of primary education, concluded that the reality on the ground frequently runs counter to this ambition for international language proficiency, as the majority of children cannot cope with being taught and tested in a foreign language (p.16). They argue that policy makers often look for quick and simple solutions language is a major gatekeeper for the majority (p.15–16).

Scholars such as Rea conclude from his research that learning in one’s mother tongue allows for better learning of all subjects including the learning of a second language. The language that a child masters best is the language used at home and in the local surroundings. However, a choice of language for a local school is complicated by the fact that in many African contexts there are several languages used in the community. There is not always an obvious choice of local language and this has led to many local debates on whether one of the local languages should be used or whether a pan-African language such as Kiswahili should be used as a L1[first language]. The cost of using multiple mother tongues in differing regions is high and there are also debates on whether this separation is feasible. I acknowledge the importance of this debate and the difficulties involved in the choice of a local or pan-African language, but derive from the literature that due to the fluency of Zanzibari and Tanzanians in general in Kiswahili, and because it is a locally constructed language that is related to the vast majority of East African languages, that it is an obvious choice for primary schooling in Zanzibar.

2.4 Comparative Studies

In Uganda after a period of political turmoil in the 1970s and 1980s, the government appointed an education review commission to carry out a comprehensive analysis and suggest a blueprint for the future. The report of the commission culminated in the publication of a Government White Paper (GWP) on education (Government White Paper, 1992). One of the major curriculum-related changes introduced by the GWP was the language education policy, which distinguished between policies in rural and urban areas. It was noted that the majority of the Ugandan population (90 per cent) is rural based, such that extensive areas may have people who speak the same language living together. However, the increasing rural–urban migrations in search of a better life have resulted in a growing number of urban centers with populations that are highly mixed linguistically. Therefore, against this background, the GWP stipulated that, in rural areas, the ‘relevant local languages’ would be used as the media of instruction from Primary 1 to Primary 4. English then becomes the medium of instruction in Primary 5. Primary 4 is a transition year, in which teachers use both the local language and English. In urban areas, English would be the medium of instruction from Primary 1 onwards, with the ‘local language’ taught as a subject. Kiswahili, ‘as the language possessing greater capacity for uniting Ugandans and for assisting rapid social development’ (GWP, 1992:19), would be taught as a compulsory subject in both the rural and urban schools from Primary four to Primary seven.

One major study commissioned in 1993, by Britain’s Overseas

Development Administration (ODA), and conducted by the University of Reading, looked at reading levels in a sample of Zambian schools in both English and the selected Zambian language, Chi Nyanja, at Grades three, four and six. The study indicated that, on average, pupils could not read texts two levels below their own grade level (Williams, E., 1993) ^[31]. Williams study included tests of reading levels in Malawi, where the medium of instruction was Chichewa from Grades one to four. Here reading in Chichewa, even under a more challenging physical school environment than Zambia's, was progressing at an acceptable level, with no impact on progress in English, whose level was broadly similar to that of Zambia. A baseline study was conducted for the Primary Reading Programme in 1999, and revealed that students in grades 1-6 were still reading at an average of two grade levels below their own level in both English and local languages. Muyebea (2009) ^[23], believes that this is partially due to the fact that English and Zambian languages do not pair well together, initial literacy skills in a local language do not necessarily transfer to literacy skills in English. He claims that Zambian languages are phonetically based whereas English is not. Furthermore, the syllabic method of teaching local languages does not work so well with English. Students will be left confused if they are forced to transfer new literacy skills in such an ineffective manner as early as grade one. He and others, like Mwila (n.d.) and Tambulukani and Bus (2004) ^[28], believe that 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" (Muyebea, 2009:11) ^[23]. Other Zambian linguists, such as Mubanga Kashoki, argue that African languages should be the sole language of instruction and should be associated with modernity since they can serve all national needs. He believes that English should serve only international needs as a second language (Marten and Kula, 2007) ^[17].

In Zimbabwe it is noted that Shona, Ndebele, or any of the other indigenous [local] languages are, currently, not acceptable substitutes. On the teaching of Shona as a subject, Corson (1998) ^[7], has noted that, even in the teaching of Shona subjects, some teachers prefer to use English as the medium of instruction and some Shona students prefer to write their essays about Shona in English when they are given a choice. However, research has revealed some degree of code switching between English and indigenous languages in classrooms of grades and forms beyond grade three. The significance of this practice is yet to be determined. There is also an added problem. In Zimbabwe, as well as elsewhere in Africa, bilingualism has tended to be subtractive because the socio-cultural attributes of indigenous languages have been denigrated in favour of those of the colonial language, which is considered to be more prestigious. This has even resulted in some Africans, educated through the medium of a colonial language, shunning their mother tongues (Makoni, 2007) ^[16]. It is not surprising, therefore, that, in Zimbabwe, English continues to dominate the education system. There has been, in many cases, little or no conscious effort to promote student's cognitive skills (memory, ability to generalize, ability to grasp relationships such as cause and effect, ability to predict consequences, ability to grasp the essential message of a text); their affective skills (positive attitude to work, loyalty to one's country, tolerance for diversity); and their

social skills (ability to work together with, communicate, and support others) in their mother tongue. Consequently, there have been no efforts to promote the use of the mother tongue in technological and intellectual discourse.

2.5 Personal Critique Summary

The child's home language should be used for teaching purposes, so that students will acquire cognitive skills and avoid academic retardation. English should be taught as a second language only until the student becomes proficient in English, at which time native-language instruction should end. In theory, attention would continue to be paid to the child's heritage and culture. But the primary purpose, at least of federal legislation, was to get students to transfer into all-English classrooms as fast as possible, without falling behind in other subjects.

A lack of familiarity with the language of teaching is blamed for illiteracy rates beyond 40% among people who live in nations in Africa or Asia in which dozens of languages are spoken. For a critical test of the importance of familiarity with the language in which initial reading is practiced, take the Zambian situation as a natural experiment and test effects of a fit between the local language spoken in the homes and playground and the language officially designated as language of instruction. A study was conducted which selected 12 state-funded primary schools from three districts likely to differ in match between children's language and language of instruction. From each school it took at random 10 high- and 10 low achievers, in all 240 pupils, and tested them after 18 months of instruction. Pupils make more progress in word reading fluency in a Zambian language and English when primary reading skills are practiced in the children's most familiar Zambian language. Research into other facets of reading instruction is required to balance various possibilities for increasing efficacy of reading instruction.

Less space and time devoted to instruction in the international languages of wider communication will result in lower proficiency and performance in these languages it appears to be clear that an unfamiliar language is learned best when the learner has maximum contact with it in terms of time and space. Therefore, many people would support the idea that a child should learn a second language as early and as intensely as possible. Ideally, the child should be immersed in it. From this perspective, there seems to be no objection when instruction in school is done as soon as possible through the second, usually unfamiliar, language. The underlying assumption, however, is that the child is already or simultaneously acquiring instrumental knowledge in the first known language/s. Many international schools work with the immersion approach. However, students learning in these schools belong to the elite and start with an advantaged educational background.

The Ethiopian education policy stipulates that the mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction for the first eight years of schooling. In the decentralized Ethiopian education system, some regions apply this rule and others, such as the capital, Addis Ababa, introduce a foreign language, English, as the medium of instruction as early as year six. A comparison of the learning achievements in year 8 showed that students with stronger mother-tongue education performed better in all subjects, including English (Heugh K., *et al.*, 2007) ^[12]. It could be argued that each experiment is

unique and rests on a range of factors to undermine the significance of these results. In any case if they do not constitute solid evidence in support of late exit of the first languages they dispel the fears put forward by those claiming the contrary.

When discussing language use in schools, we need to be aware of the highly specialized types of language use that are learned and required in school settings. School education is characterized by learning and using abstract concepts transmitted through written and oral language in a classroom. Consequently language learning takes place in all subjects, not only language classes. The highly abstract concepts and their acquisition through and by language learning render the first language indispensable. Schools should build on the skills and expertise in the first language/s as language learning takes place in all subjects, not only in language classes.

Most African teachers have not received training in language acquisition theory and practice. Coupled with a lack of mastery of the language of instruction, this results in a serious teaching barrier. "Often teachers equate lack of adequate proficiency in the language of instruction with laziness, lack of intelligence or an uncooperative attitude on the part of the students. This type of attitude can seriously inhibit students and create anxiety related to language learning and learning in general. To avoid being shamed in front of their classmates, some students refrain from volunteering to answer in class. This attitude is commonly observed among girls in Africa. Female pupils try their best to avoid being ridiculed in the classrooms. Therefore, girls often avoid speaking if the language of instruction is unfamiliar to them" (Cooper, 1989:87) [6].

2.6 Establishment of the gap

Many projects meet resistance from parents and teachers when they plan to introduce mother-tongue-based bilingual education. Many parents argue that what they expect from school is that their children be taught in the official language so that they will have better chances on the job market. They are worried that with an African language as the medium of instruction their children will be left behind and receive a second class education. Many teachers who are prepared by and for mainstream education in a foreign language are not convinced of the benefits of using African languages because they are of marginal value to the mainstream education system.

A number of scientific reports on bilingual education programmes disprove the argument that parents are against mother-tongue-based multilingual education such as in Burkina Faso (Alidou H. *et al.*, 2008) [1]. The main reasons for this refutation are the following:

- Parents are not a homogeneous group. Their opinions depend on many factors, and often they lack information about language in education.
- The questions used in research are sometimes misleading. When asked whether they would prefer mother-tongue education or education in the official language, parents often select the official language option. When asked whether they would prefer (i) mother-tongue education and education in the official language, or (ii) monolingual education in the African or (iii) monolingual education in the official language, parents in most cases select (I) the mother-tongue and official language option.

- Mother - tongue - based education schools which have convinced parents that they have made the right choice take parents seriously by keeping them well-informed.
- Usually parents are convinced when they see children in multilingual programmes (mother tongue or familiar language plus official language) out-performing children in monolingual schools.
- Children who learn to read and write in the mother tongue inspire and encourage their parents to learn it themselves. The parents often go on to participate in (mainly bilingual) adult literacy courses.
- Schools that recognize and value the culture and knowledge of the local community will be able to involve parents more and close the language barrier between school and out-of-school life.

Resistance by teachers is mainly met where they are not trained or inexperienced in the field of language in education and learner-centred teaching methods (language acquisition, literacy learning and teaching methodologies). In the case of the Bilingual Education Schools in Burkina Faso where teachers and heads of school are well-trained and the learners performed very well, all teachers and heads of school appreciate the programme and wish it will be mainstreamed (Alidou H. *et al.*, 2008) [1]. Furthermore, experience, for example in Malawi, shows that teachers need textbooks that are written in the language of instruction of the respective subject so that they can develop the appropriate meta-language required for teaching.

Teachers also need teachers' guides in the medium of instruction. For example, a teachers' guide in all the national languages has been developed by the Ministries of Primary Education of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in cooperation with INWENT and GTZ (Fanon, 1967) [11]. In Africa, good teacher training models are available; one of the best models has been developed for the Ife project in Nigeria.

In most African classrooms, teachers already practice a form of bilingual education: they switch constantly between the official medium of instruction and the language that is most familiar to the learners. Teachers resort to language switching in order to help the students to understand the subject matter. In some countries, teachers even call for revisiting the language in education policy and adapting it to the reality of the classroom. In the framework of a survey in Uganda, teachers and pupils had an open choice for the language used in a literacy and numeracy test in primary four. In all the eight districts where the survey was carried out, teachers and pupils in rural as well as urban areas chose the local language because they felt more comfortable with it (Ogechi, 2005) [25].

3. Methodology

In chapter two, there was a presentation on the literature related to the study. And in this chapter, highlights show the methodologies that were used in the collection of data and how the data analysis was done. The chapter presents the research design, the target population, the sample size, sampling procedures as well as the data collection procedure and analysis and the instruments that were used.

3.1 Research design

The study used a case study that qualitative and quantitative methodologies were functional. The qualitative method allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth information about

the phenomenon under investigation while the quantitative method ensured high levels of reliability of the gathered data. Case studies are concerned with a rich and clear description of events relevant to the case. They also strived to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation (White, 2003) ^[30]. Therefore, the researcher conducted a case study in order to get in depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3.2 Target population

According to Moulton (1998, p.134) ^[22], “a population is a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristic that the researcher is interested in studying”. Central statistical office (CSO) 2010, shows that there about 1,592,661 people in eastern province but Chipata district alone has about 455,783 people. In this study the target population comprised of pupils and teachers in selected schools in Chipata district, in Eastern Province of Zambia.

3.3 Sample size

A sample is a subset of a population that is used to represent the entire group as a whole (White, 2003) ^[30]. The sample size of this study consisted of a total of fifty (50) participants distributed as follows: 20 teachers, 20 head teachers, 5 pupils and 5 Education officials.

3.4 Sampling technique

Selection of the schools was done using the simple random sampling technique. This will give all the schools in Chipata District an equal chance to participate in the study. Kombo and Tromp (2006:79) ^[14], argue that simple random sampling ‘it is a procedure in which all the individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample’. In this study, two sampling techniques were employed, namely, a simple random sampling was used to draw teachers, pupils and purposive sampling was used to select education officials in sampled schools and districts to complete the questionnaires.

3.5 Instruments of data collection

The main research tools used in the study were questionnaires. According to (Kombo and Tromp (2006:125) ^[14] research instruments include questionnaires, interview schedules and observation. Furthermore, it is argued that questionnaires are used to gather data over a large sample and should have both open-ended as well as closed questions. Semi-structured questionnaires were used in the study to capture information from the pupils, teachers and the education officials concerning the impact of teaching in local languages in Zambia’s education system. The questionnaires were of two types, one targeted directly to pupils and the other one type targeting the teachers and education officials.

3.6 Data analysis

The researcher started the process of data analysis as soon as the research was accomplished. In this study both cases, that is, qualitative and quantitative data analysis was done, respectively.

3.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

In line with qualitative data analysis, Kombo and Tromp, (2006:118-119) ^[14], argue that, ‘The responses can be categorized into various classes which are called categorical

variables,’ and adds that, ‘in qualitative research, data can also be analyzed mathematically. Themes refer to topics or major subjects that come up in discussions. This form of analysis categorizes related topics.’ The qualitative data will be analyzed through the identification of common themes from the respondents’ description and presentation of their experiences. Later, conclusions will be made and analyzed with reference to research questions on which the study is based on. This helped to reduce the researchers’ biasness due to the fact that phenomenon was primarily interpreted from the respondents point of view.

3.8 Quantitative Data Analysis

In this particular study, quantitative data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and STATA to generate descriptive statistical information in form of frequencies as well as percentages. ‘Statistics are a set of mathematical methods used to extract and clarify information from observable data. Statistics generate simple numbers to describe distributions’ (Kombo and Tromp, (2006:125) ^[14].

3.9 Triangulation

One technique that is common in qualitative research is triangulation, in which the researcher relies on multiple sources of data (Creswell, 1998) ^[9]. In view of this, the technique has gained a wide acceptance among qualitative researchers as a mean to strengthen the research rigor through the combination of multiple methods, measures, researchers, theories and perspectives (Denzin, 1979) ^[10]. Denzin (1979) ^[10], indicates that there are four types of triangulation techniques used to strengthen the rigor of qualitative research. This researcher used the first type of triangulation in which the researcher used a variety of sources to collect data. This is because the researcher used this technique in the collection data from the distribution of questionnaires to respondents. It also used another type of triangulation, which is the application of multiple theories and perspectives in interpreting the data. This researcher also attempts to another type of triangulation, which is the use of multiple methods to study the problem under investigation. This was through the use of other literatures and also the use of primary data through which data was collected from the respondents.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethics as defined by (Strydom, & Ogechi (2005) ^[25] are a set of moral principles suggested by an individual or group, is widely accepted and which offers rules and behavioral expectations towards respondents and other stakeholders in research. During the study, the researcher would observe the ethical considerations by respecting the rights and views of the participants. The researchers seek written informed consent from the Information and Communication University in order to conduct their search. White (2003) ^[30], cites the relevance of the information to the participants’ decision as one of the most important elements in informed consent. Permission to conduct research in schools were required from the head teachers who allowed the researcher to engage the teachers and learners in the study.

3.11 Scope of study

The project looked at the impact of teaching in local languages

to pupils and teachers in the education system. It specifically looked at the impact of teaching in local languages in Chipata district as the target area, that is, in pupils and teacher’s performances and on teacher’s training. The research only targeted Eastern province, specifically, Chipata district because it’s the only feasible area in which the project can be done by looking at the time frame and the level of funding of the researcher.

3.12 Limitation of study

- Since the study focused in the Eastern province, Chipata district and some randomly selected schools in the district, the findings of the study may not be generalized to all the schools in the Republic of Zambia.
- The other possible limitation of the study lies in the sample size of the study which was too small to be generalized to the findings to the general population of Zambia.
- The purposive sampling procedure decreases the generalization of the findings.
- In qualitative study the findings could be subjected to other interpretations.
- The case study used as the research designs, the findings cannot be generalized because they are not representative, as they are not specific.

4. Presentation of the finding

4.1 Respondents’ background characteristics

Table 2: Respondents by institution

Name of school	Frequency	Percentage
Chisitu	2	4%
Chipata	2	4%
Damview	2	4%
DEBS CHIPATA	5	10%
Hillside	3	6%
Hope	2	4%
Kanjala	3	6%
Katopola	3	6%
Lunkhwakwa	3	6%
Lutembwe	2	4%
Magazine Academy	2	4%
Magazine Community	2	4%
Mchini	2	4%
Mpezeni Park	3	6%
Munga	2	4%
Nadalitsika	2	4%
Nyakutwa	2	4%
St. Annes	2	4%
St. Betty	2	4%
Umodzi	2	4%
Walela	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 2 above shows the institutions where the respondents were found. It shows that 2(4%) of the respondents were from CHISITU, 2 (4%) were from CHIPATA, 2 (4%) were from DAMVIEW, 5 (10%) were from DEBS-CHIPATA, 3 (6%) were from HILLSIDE, were from HOPE, 3 (6%) were from KANJALA, 3 (6%) were from KATOPOLA, 2(4%) were from LUTEMBWE, 2(4%) were from MAGAZINE ACADEMY, 2(4%) were from MAGAZINE COMMUNITY, 2(4%) were from MCHINI, 3(6%) were from MPEZENI

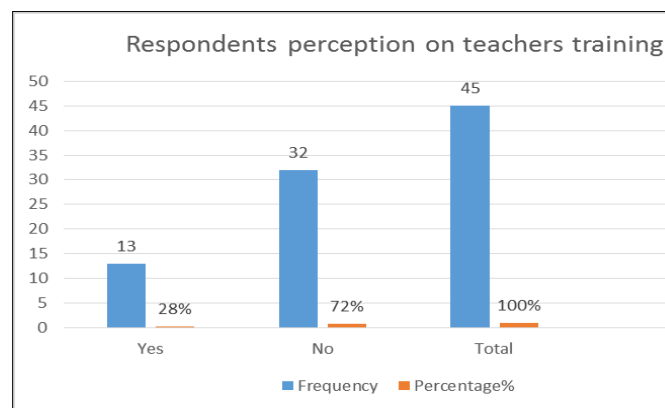
PARK, 2(4%) were from MUNGA, 2(4%) were from NADALISIKA, 2(4%) were from NYAKUTWA, 2(4%) were from ST. ANNES, 2(4%) were from ST. BETTY, 2(4%) were from UMODZI, 2(4%) were finally from WALELA.

Table 3: Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage%
08TO 30	07	14%
31TO 40	23	46%
41TO 50	10	20%
51TO 60	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field data 2017

Following the analysis of the respondents’ ages, the study revealed the ages were between 07 and 60 years and broken down as follows; Participants who were between 07 and 30 years represented 07 (14%) of the total sample. Those who were between 31 and 40 years represented 23(46%), those who were between 41 and 50 years represented 10(20%) and those that were between 51 and 60 years represented 10(20%).

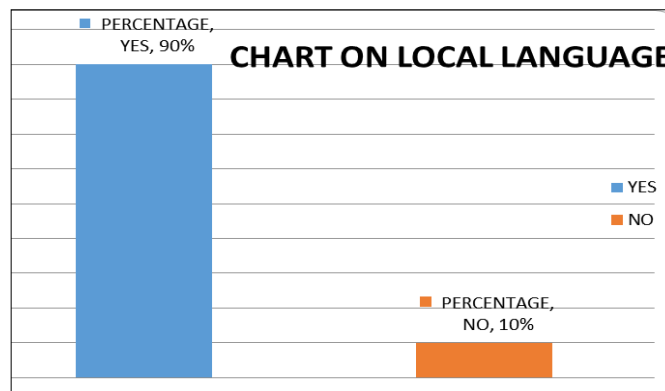


Source: Field data, 2017

Fig 1: Teachers training at college

Figure 4. 3. 1 revealed respondents views on teachers training at college concerning using local language as a medium 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 adequately prepared to use local language as a medium of instruction from grade one to four.

4.2 Effect of local language on pupils performance



Source: Field data, 2017

Fig 2: The influence of Local Language on pupils’ performance

Figure 2 displays the respondents' views on the influence of teaching in local languages on pupils' attitude toward learning. The table clearly shows that, 45(90%) of the respondents said that teaching in local languages influenced pupils' attitude toward learning, only 5(10%) of the respondents refuted teaching in local languages influence pupils' attitude toward learning.

4.3 The effects of teaching in local language on pupils' academic performance in schools.

The study pointed out a number of perceived effects of teaching in local language on pupils' academic performance which include easy understanding, participation has increased 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.

Table 4: shows the perceived effects of teaching in local languages on Pupils' academic performance in schools.

Effects
easy understanding
Participation
increased focus on education or good of concentration
High academic standards
Increase in learners confidence
pupil centered
good academic performance
easy to clarify things

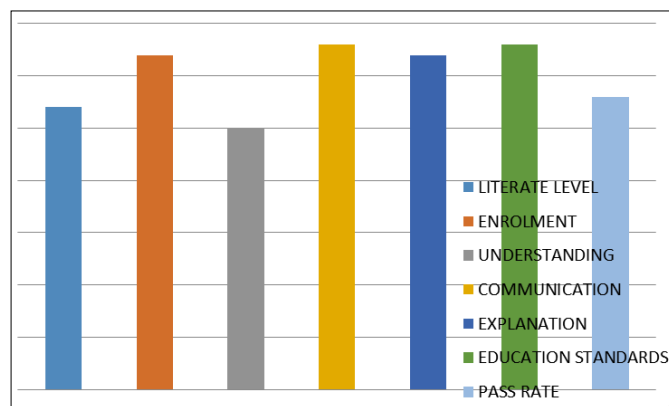
Source: Field data, 2017

Impact of teaching in local languages in chipata schools

Table 5: Positive and negative responses on impact of teaching in local languages

Response	Percentage		Respondent	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
Literate level	46%	54%	23	27
Enrolment	36%	64%	18	32
Understanding	50%	50%	25	25
Communication	66%	34%	33	17
Explanation	36%	64%	18	32
Education standards	34%	66%	17	33
Pass rate	44%	56%	22	28

Source: field data, 2017

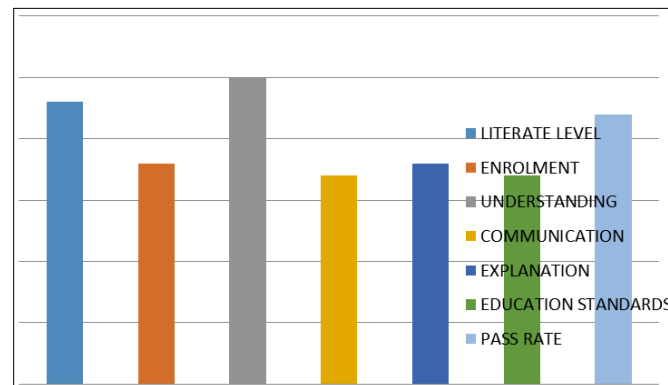


Source: Field data, 2017

Fig 3: Showing positive responses on impact of teaching in local languages

Summarised findings on teaching in local language for primary education from the chart above

- 54% of the interviewees said teaching in local languages in Primary Education has increased literacy level.
- 64% of the interviewee said teaching in local languages in Primary Education has increased enrolment.
- 50% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has made understanding by pupils easy.
- 34% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has helped to improve relationship among pupils who could not communicate in English in class.
- 64% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has helped reduce teaching problems in class as teacher explain their lessons easily.
- 66% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has improved education standard in Chipata district
- 56% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has helped to increase pass rate as many pupils qualified to grade eight.



Source: Field data, 2017

Fig 4: Showing negative responses on impact of teaching in local languages

Summarised findings on teaching in local language for primary education from the chart above

- 46% of the interviewees said teaching in local languages in Primary Education has not increased literacy level.
- 36% of the interviewee said teaching in local languages in Primary Education has not increased enrolment
- 50% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has made understanding by pupils not easy.
- 66% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has not helped to improve relationship among pupils.
- 36% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has not helped reduce teaching problems in class.
- 34% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has not improved education standard in Chipata district
- 44% of the interviewees said that teaching in local languages in Primary Education has not helped to increase pass rate.

4.4 Literacy levels as a result of using local language

Table 6: Respondents views on literacy levels

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

Source: Field data, 2017

The table above shows 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.

4.5 Effect of local language use on teachers performance

4.5.1 Teachers performance

From the study, it explains that using local language as a medium of instruction has got its own advantages and disadvantages, for the teacher who knows the language very well it may be easy to explain the concepts in science for example but for those that are not familiar with the given language it is a challenge to explain certain concepts. Some respondents had this to say

Teaching in local language affect teachers performance since not all the teachers

Are familiar with the language where they are serving.

4.5.2 Enrolment levels

The study indicated that enrolment levels have increased since parents now appreciate education and some teachers said *“Enrolment levels have increased such that pupils are able to appreciate education which is a key in development, with adequate background knowledge and skills, they make teaching easy because they have much value for education.”*

4.5.3 Understanding

The study further showed that since the local language is used as a medium of instruction most pupils easily understand what is taught. They said

“Pupils easily understand what is taught now that teaching is done in local language.”

4.5.4 Communication

From the study it was revealed that teacher to pupil communication was now good since teachers can easily express themselves and most of the respondents said this, *“Science subject is now easily understood because our science and mathematics teachers explain clearly in Chewa language and if I am not clear I ask freely this is very good and it has helped us improve in all the subjects.”*

4.5.5 Participation

From the study, the attention is drawn showing that participation had also increased as there is no language barrier in classroom activities. Most of the pupils said,

“I enjoy learning these days and I always participate because I am allowed to speak in my local language. Previously they were always punishing me for speaking in a local language.”

4.5.6 Summary

In this chapter, the findings were discussed based on teaching using the local language in all subjects from grade 1-4 in primary schools. The study gives the picture that using local language as a medium of instruction helps pupils to understand what is being taught since they use the same language at home. It enhances concentration, participation and literacy levels have improved respectively. However, some pupils do not enjoy these benefits since they may be living at a place where they are not familiar with the language being used. This also may apply to the teachers. Materials used by the teachers are written in English but they expect the teachers to teach in a given local language. This is a serious challenge to the teachers who are not well prepared by the college to teach in local languages.

5. Discussion and Interpretation of the findings

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. In this chapter, the presentation is focusing on the discussion and interpretation of the findings of the study. Mainly, as the purpose of study is to investigate and establish the impact of teaching in local languages in Primary Education from grade one to four in Eastern province, Chipata district of Zambia. In addition, it discussed the effect of teaching in local languages on the pupils' academic performance.

5.1 literacy level

Teaching in local language follows the firm education principle of teaching from the known to the unknown. In this case, the language is known while literacy skills are the unknown. Literacy skills are at the most primary 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.

A set of symbols called letters are used, so the alphabet is a group of symbols which stands for speech sound. While phonics are the relationship of sounds and letters. It helps the learner 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, that is, 1-4 of medium 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.

5.2 Enrolment Levels

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.

5.3 High Academic Performances

This was another consequence of using local languages in teaching which respondents talked about. For instance, respondents said teaching in local language had improved learners performance in examination because they had self-confidence and also improved their attention. 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.

5.4 Understanding

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 to 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 spelt 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. Students will be left confused if they are forced to transfer new literacy skills in such an ineffective manner as early as grade one. Hence, more time is needed to teach literacy in the local languages, “Let us allow the local languages enough time of two to four years in order to consolidate initial literacy. Thereafter, English can take over as medium of instruction”.

5.5 National Educational Standard

Teaching in local languages has improved the country’s standards of education due to some of the aforementioned positive effects such as easy understanding, student confidence, increase in pass rate, pupil centered teaching, and improve in educational performance.

5.6 Communication

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.

5.7 Pass Rate

The respondents also said that the pass rate has tremendously improved from the time local languages were introduced to teach in classes. The examination results have improved greatly with effect from the introduction of teaching in local language.

5.8 Participation

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.

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, respectively.

5.9 Increases in learners confidence

Teaching in local language has made the learning easy where learners enjoy participating during 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. Some words and concepts may not easily be understood by both teachers and pupils.

5.10 Increased focus on education

Since local language is 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 were taught skills in local language. For instance, at Chipata School for continue education pupils and adults are given the opportunity to learn carpentry, auto mechanic in the afternoons in local language.

5.11 Transition

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 idiosyncrasies of English can be taught more easily once learners are familiar with primary 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.

5.12 Summary

The study pointed out a number of perceived impact 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 has increased. It has also been 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 language 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.

6. Conclusion

The study pointed out a number of issues regarding the impact 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 been 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 but will sound differently. The Zambian language phonetic are regular hence gives an advantage for fast reading. Children enjoy participating during

the lessons 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 as well. If only the local language could be used to teach reading and writing skills not used 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. The colleges must prepare the teachers very well on how to use local language as the medium of instruction.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are recommendations emerged from the study:

- The government through the Ministry of General Education should build many schools to cope with this increase in enrolments
- 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.
- The government through the Ministry of General Education should increase the funding to primary schools to meet the needs of the primary schools.
- The government through the Ministry of General Education should train teachers in colleges on how to teach in local languages.
- The government through the Ministry of General Education should retrain teachers in local languages so that they can teach effectively.
- The teacher should be able to speak three to four languages so as to help implement local languages in schools.

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