

**THE USE OF CITONGA AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN EARLY GRADE  
TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CHIBOMBO DISTRICT**

**BY**

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**A Dissertation Submitted to The University of Zambia in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Literacy,  
Language and Applied Linguistics.**

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### **Declaration**

I, Mercy Katatisha do hereby declare that this study entitled the use of Tonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo district is my piece of work, that all resources used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references and that neither I nor anyone at this university nor any other Educational Institution submitted this study for degree purposes.

Signature of Author..... Date.....

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## **Approval**

This dissertation of Mercy Katatisha is hereby approved as partially fulfilling the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy Language and Applied Linguistics at the University of Zambia

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Above all, I wish to thank God for granting me good health of body, mind and soul. I am forever grateful. May the Lord God grant all the people who participated in this study a hundredfold reward in this and the next life.

## **Dedication**

This dissertation on “*the use of Tonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District*” is dedicated to my family who has walked every step of this journey with me.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to analyse the use of Citonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District in Central Province of Zambia. The study objectives were; to establish the effects of using Tonga as the medium of instruction in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo district, to analyze the stakeholders' views on the use of Tonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District and to determine challenges faced when learning Tonga in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo district. The study was guided by the qualitative approach and used a descriptive research design. Data was collected from 10 teachers and 5 parents through interviews and 50 pupils were observed through classroom lesson observations totalling to 65 participants. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and classroom lesson observation and it was analysed thematically. The study found that that using Tonga as a medium of instruction disadvantaged the learners in the following ways: learners struggled to develop linguistic and cognitive skills due to not understanding the language of instruction fully. The other findings were that parents preferred children to learn using the mother tongue (Lenje) alongside English as opposed to using Tonga because the native familiar language of play was Lenje. It was also found that it was challenging and problematic to implement the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) because schools lacked adequate literacy materials written in the regional language (Tonga) for use when teaching literacy. The study concluded that the use of Tonga as a medium of instruction in lower classes in primary schools of Chibombo District was not as effective as perceived by lower primary teachers. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education (MoE) revise the language zoning policy to accommodate translanguaging familiar language of play (native local languages) to be used as a medium of instruction in lower grades.

**Key words:** *familiar language; translanguaging, multilingual and instruction*

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter presents the background, statement of the problem, purpose, objectives, research questions, and significance, Delimitation of the study, limitation of the study and definitions of terms on the use of citonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District

### **1.1 Background**

Mother tongue or first language (L1) was explained as a language learned in childhood in the home environment, also referred to as home language, first language, or native language (SEAPLM, 2020). First, learning does not begin in school. Learning starts at home in the learners' home. The school system controls the content and teaching of a predetermined curriculum which is to be implemented by the teachers. In short, most learners enter school still using their home language. Through use of learners' home language at school, learners were more likely to engage in the learning process thus understanding the fact that learning begun at home in the learner's mother tongue language. The interactive learner-centered approach was attained as teachers implemented the curriculum. This learner-centred approach further made learners to thrive in an environment which they were sufficiently proficient in the language of teaching as they learn the literacy. Unlike when learners start learning in a school in a language that was still new to them, it was likely to lead to teacher-centred approach (Vermeulen and Kalinde, 2016).

Learning in mother tongue over a long period of time in school, with the gradual introduction of other languages and a culturally relevant curriculum with appropriate and adequate materials that bridge to the wider world meant a quality education was much more likely to be provided (Mkandawire, 2017; Nishanthi, 2020). When there were multiple languages in a community, care needed to be taken which languages would be chosen for schooling, particularly in sensitive areas (Olson, 2017; Iversen & Mkandawire, 2020). The community in such cases needs to be involved in the choices made, and dominant local

languages should not exclude others on political or ethnic grounds. It is not impossible to ensure that all languages are included in the educational process.

The language of instruction in Zambian schools were characterized by heated debates, unfulfilled resolutions, promises, procrastinations, lack of political wiliness and inconsistency. Basically, these challenges were attributed to multilingual characteristics of the Zambian society (Chamberlain, Rodriguez and Woodward, 2022).

Scholars and educationalists recognized and acknowledged the fact that Zambia is a multilingual nation with 73 indigenous groups and has no national lingua franca although it uses seven (7) regional languages (Chanda & Mkandawire, 2013; Nojea, 2018; Mkandawire et al., 2023). This situation necessitated the government of Zambia to settle on English as an official language, a choice that was enshrined in the constitution of Zambia in article 7 (1). However, article 7 (2) of the constitution of Zambia stipulate that any language, other than the official language, may be used as a medium of instruction in educational instructions or for legislative or judicial purposes, as prescribed by an Act of Parliament. True to the argument, however, the Zambian government revised the curriculum to sort for quality education.

In Zambia, the 1992 Focus on learning policy document which was a response to the 1990 World Conference on Education for All, for the first time, Zambia seriously tackled the issue of language in education. It was clearly stated in the document that using local languages in education would lead to better education gains (Gordon, 2014). Government through the Ministry of Education produced Educating Our Future policy document it was in this document that a separation was made between the medium of instruction and the language of initial literacy instruction. The document outlined that initial literacy and numeracy would be developed through a language which was familiar to children.

In addition, the status of Zambian languages was enhanced and a rationale for future initiatives was provided through the same policy. 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 the medium of instruction (Sampa, Ojanen, Westerholm, Ketonen, and Lyytinen, 2018). Literacy However, despite the implementation of the 1996 language policy, pupils continued

performing badly in literacy forcing government to revisit the language policy in 2001 through a new programme known as Zambia New Breakthrough to Literacy (ZNBTL) programme. This new language policy recommended the use of familiar or local languages to teach literacy skills and under this new arrangement, the seven official region languages are considered to be local or familiar languages in their zones (Lupele, 2014). Zimba (2012) observed by the use of official regional languages as language of instruction in schools overshadowed the actual mother tongues of particular areas such as Chibombo which is a predominantly Lenje area. The study therefore, sought to investigate the effects using Icitonga as a medium of instruction in primary schools of Chibombo a predominantly Lenje speaking area in Central Province of Zambia. The fact that initial reading skills are taught in and through a language that was unfamiliar to the majority of children was believed to be a major contributory factor to the backwardness in reading shown by many Zambian children. It was 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.

During monitoring of student-teachers on Teaching Practice (TP) in Chibombo rural primary schools, the researcher discovered that teachers taught the learners using Icitonga as a medium of instruction in lower grades of primary school. Despite all these earlier concerns, the Zambian Ministry of education, through the curriculum review framework of 2013, went ahead to make compulsory and introduce the use of a familiar local language as a medium of teaching in all Zambian schools at lower primary level (Ministry of Education, 2013). This study sought to examine the effect of employing the familiar language to teach literacy in grades one to four in a multilingual setting.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

There is an existing problem of low reading levels and illiteracy in primary schools in Chibombo District. It is however, observed and noted that Tonga is used as a medium of instruction when teaching literacy in primary schools in Chobombo District. What is known is that Chibombo District is a Lenje speaking area and the language of play is predominantly Lenje (Mwanza and Bwalya, 2019). However, what is not known is whether the use of Tonga which is an official regional language for Chibombo District as a medium

of instruction in Chibombo primary schools leads to poor reading level and illiteracy among learners in the area. In view of the foregoing, this study seeks to investigate the use of citonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of citonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

- i. To establish the effects of using Chitonga as the medium of instruction in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo district.
- ii. To analyze the stake holders views on use of Chitonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District.
- iii. To determine challenges faced when learning Chitonga in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo district.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. What are the effects of using Chitonga as the medium of instruction in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo district?
- ii. What are the stake holders' views on use of Chitonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District?
- iii. What are the challenges faced when learning Chitonga in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo district?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study might generate information on the effects of using a second language as a medium of instruction in literacy acquisition and it was likely to suggest applicable solutions to the Ministry of Education. Additionally, curriculum developers may also utilize some of the findings to improve on the provision of quality education in literacy. It is also hoped that the study might contribute to the existing body of knowledge, on the existing debate of mother tongue use in teaching at lower primary section.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The generalisability of the findings was limited due to the specific context of Chibombo District in Zambia. While the study provides valuable insights into language instruction practices in this particular region, caution should be exercised when applying these findings to other multilingual settings with different socio-cultural and linguistic dynamics.

Additionally, the research design and methodology may have inherent limitations that could affect the validity and reliability of the results. For instance, the study may face challenges in controlling for confounding variables that could influence literacy outcomes, such as socioeconomic factors, teacher quality, and access to educational resources. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from teachers, students, and parents may introduce biases and inaccuracies into the analysis.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study**

The study specifically targeted literacy instruction in grades one to four within the Chibombo District of Zambia. This geographical and grade-level delimitation allowed for a concentrated analysis of literacy practices within a defined educational context.

In addition, the study focused on the use of familiar languages, implying that it primarily investigated the impact of instructing literacy using languages that students are familiar with in their home or community environments. This delimitation excludes the examination of literacy instruction in languages that may be less familiar to students, which could have different implications for learning outcomes.

Moreover, the study was delimited to a multilingual setting, acknowledging the linguistic diversity present in the Chibombo District. By focusing on a multilingual environment, the research sought to explore how language choice in literacy instruction interacts with the linguistic landscape of the community and its implications for student learning.

Furthermore, the study's timeframe and scope are delimited to the specific period and conditions prevailing in Chibombo District at the time of the research. It does not account for potential changes in educational policies, socioeconomic conditions, or language dynamics that may occur beyond the study period.

## **1.9. Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework is a foundation review of existing theories that serve as a road map for the development of arguments you will use in your own work. It demonstrates the relevance of the study and the foundation of its ideas by outlining the current theories that underpin it (Vinz, 2022). This study was guided by translanguaging theory (Williams, 1996). The theory provides the construct of a pedagogical practice which sustains the development of language skills through the concurrent use of two languages in classroom activities thus learning taking place. Translanguaging theory describes teaching and learning as crafted activities in terms of input and output in two different languages. Translanguaging theory as a pedagogical practice is explicated on two principles these include cognitive and the social-cultural. The principles, therefore, elucidates as follows:

Cognitive principle explains that rebalancing the hierarchical ordering of languages within the classroom maximises understanding and develops skills in the weaker language. For example, reading of a lesson is deliberately in one language (i.e. English), while the discussion is in another one (i.e. Welsh) (Lewis, Jones and Baker, 2013). The focus is not on language itself, but rather on discursive practices of bilinguals that are readily observable in current times of increased mobility and super diversity (Blackledge, Baynham, Cooke, Goodson, Hua, Malkani, and Wei, 2018). This principle was used in the study to understand findings from the first research objective because cognition involves understanding using tangible activities (stories) and social contexts of learning (learner interactions) for example teachers read a story (English) that learners explained in their mother tongue languages. This calls for constructivist preparation and modeling in classrooms of the contexts in which real life was achieved through tangible activities for example, stories, to foster meaning- making in authentic context for learning to take place (Rutto, 2017).

The second principle is socio-cultural. This principle was used to understand the meaning of findings in the second and third objective of the research study because it bordered on cooperation and interaction and applied these teachings in a new context, thus helped to analyse teachers' implementation of classroom interaction between the dominant language

and language learners and stakeholders (parents) support of home-school cooperation and parental intervention in children's school activities.

Further research showed that current times were full of increased mobility and super diversity which have opened up intellectual spaces in which the traditional conceptualisations of languages, bilingualism and multilingualism have been challenged. From this perspective, language ceases to be a bounded, self-contained entity, embedded in static communicative activities, becoming a mobile resource working together with multimodal and multisensory signs to construct meaning (Arnaut, Blommaert, Rampton, & Spotti, 2016; Creese & Blackledge, 2018).

Vygotsky further postulated that social interaction promotes individual student learning and development when supported by familiar social constructs such as language. Through use of language in social interactions, children learn general concepts and principles that can be applied to new tasks and problems (Scott and Palincsar, 2013). Similarly, Chew, Nyimbili and Mwinsa (2023) echoed that learners construct knowledge in the social context that they already know.

#### **1.10. Operational Definition of Terms**

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Foreign language:</b> | A language that is not spoken in the place the school is situated for the learner.                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Immersion:</b>        | Using second language to teach literacy instead using the first Language.                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Multilingual:</b>     | Use of many languages in a given society.                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>L1:</b>               | First language, mother tongue.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>L2:</b>               | Non-native language, second language, foreign language; may refer to context where the language is widely spoken outside the home environment or even situation where it is little spoken at home. |

- Official language:** The language which is adopted by the government to be used when teaching the learners in school.
- Transitional:** schooling that shifts sooner or later from the L1 to L2.
- Zambian local languages:** these are indigenous local languages predominant in a Particular area.
- Medium of instruction:** a language through which learning in a school takes place and it is a chosen official language used in teaching and learning.
- Language of the community:** is the Language spoken by the majority of the children in a locality during or for purposes of social interaction/play.
- Second language:** a language that is not the mother tongue.
- Literacy:** is the ability to read and write.
- Mother tongue:** is the language that a person acquires first in his or her life and becomes his or her natural instrument of thought, communication and expression.

### **1.11 Summary of the Study**

This chapter presents the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study and operation of definitions of terms.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.0. Overview**

This chapter reviewed and presented related literature of various scholars to the study on the use of Tonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District. The chapter presented the reviewed related literature to this study under the following sub- headings: The Effects of using Tonga as the Medium of Instruction when Teaching Learners in Lower Grades in Primary Schools of Chibombo District; The Stakeholders Views on use of Tonga as the Medium of Instruction when Teaching Learners in Lower Grades in Primary Schools of Chibombo District and The Challenges Faced when Teaching Lower Grades in Primary Schools of Chibombo District. The chapter ends with a summary chapter. McCombes (2022) describes literature review as a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of current knowledge, allowing the researcher to identify relevant theories, methods and gaps in the existing research.

### **2.1. Effects of using local language as a medium of instruction in primary schools of Chibombo District.**

A study conducted by Trudell (2016) examined findings from the review, related to the role of English and local languages in current education practice in the region. Qualitative methods were used in examining the research problem. Data was collected through document analysis and analyzed using thematic themes and coding. The research findings showed that English was widely used as the language of instruction in primary classrooms of Eastern and Southern Africa, even where the pupils do not speak English. The reviewed study used document analysis in qualitative methods while this study used interviews and observations as data collection tools use qualitative methods thus a gap in methodology.

Duru (2022) in a study that looked at Mother tongue as an effective tool of educational instruction investigated the prospects in the use of mother tongue as an effective tool for educational instruction in a multilingual nature of Nigeria. The study used a sample of 16 participants to collect data through interviews, and classroom observations. Thematic analysis was used to code data. The findings of the study demonstrated that many scholars have continued to clamor for the use of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction

in Nigeria's schools. Mother tongue is valuable due to several reasons; Mother tongue is vital in framing the thinking and emotions of people; a child first comprehends what is around them through the language they hear their mother communicating in from before they are born and thought about their lives. The study was conducted in Early Childhood Education School while this study was conducted in primary schools.

A study by Nyimbili and Mwanza (2020) investigated Quantitative and qualitative benefits of translanguaging pedagogic practice among first graders in multilingual classrooms of Lundazi district in Zambia. The study aimed at assessing the pedagogical benefits of translanguaging using a quasi-experiment where two literacy classes with similar sociolinguistic composition were taught differently. The study used mixed methods and data was collected through interviews, experimentation and observation. A total sample of 82 pupils participated in the study with 1 teacher who taught both classes. Data was analyzed quantitatively using SPSS and a Levene's test of variance was used to analyze the test results while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study found that the performance of learners in the experimental class was higher due to translanguaging practices which were used to teach literacy. Additional results showed that as a result of translanguaging, there was increased learner classroom participation, multiliteracy development, cultural preservation and learners' identity affirmation. The study under review did not consider the grade one to four (lower classes) which this study considered and the study under review was restricted to one school while this study considered 5 schools.

In a study conducted in Sweden, Benson (2012) analyzed the importance of mother tongue-based schooling for educational quality. In the study data was collected through observation and document analysis. The study used a mixed method and data analyzed using thematic analysis. The results showed that bilingual programs use the learner's first language (mother tongue), known as the L1, to teach beginning reading and writing skills along with academic content. The second or foreign language, known as the L2, should be taught systematically so that learners can gradually transfer skills from the familiar language to the unfamiliar one (Mkandawire, et al., 2022). The study further established that bilingual as opposed to monolingual schooling offers significant pedagogical

advantages which have also been reported consistently in the academic literature by Baker 2001 and Cummins 2000. The study under review used mixed methods while this study used qualitative methods thus a gap in methods.

Dinh (2023) looked at Teacher-Generated Instructional Materials for Integrating Content and Language Learning: Actualizing the Translanguaging for English Language Learners in Singapore. The study was confined to three in-service secondary school science teachers who generated complementary learning materials for that pedagogical purpose. Data was collected through interviews and document analysis on a sample of three teachers. Data was analyzed thematically, and the study was based on qualitative methods. The study found that common emergent themes in the participating teachers' expertise for actualizing translanguaging pedagogy, characterized by reciprocating between content and language in all design manifestations, include seamlessly integrating interactional language and academic language, as well as translanguaging, for conceptual construction in the content area. The study was confined to In-Service Secondary teachers, which this study did not consider. This study considered lower primary school classes thus a gap in perspective.

Tembo and Nyimbili (2021) investigated the practicality of using Nsenga language in the primary schools of Petauke district. The study used a mixed methods approach and collected data from 30 teachers from five primary schools using interview guides and a questionnaire. The findings of the study showed that the teachers' perception on the implementation of the use of familiar language in selected Primary Schools in Petauke District was positive because the usage of Cinyanja as an instructional language was high in the primary schools due to the policy restriction while the usage of Nsenga as an instructional language was as high due to the sociolinguistic situation in the classrooms. The results further indicated that benefits of the use of Nsenga in the teaching to the Nsenga learners provided the learners with the practical understanding of the content the teacher was teaching about. The study under review used mixed methods while this study used qualitative methods thus a methodical gap.

A study conducted by Zimba (2021) examined school based management factors influencing implementation of local familiar languages as medium of instruction in selected primary schools in Chama District in Muchinga Province of Zambia. The main

objectives of the study were to establish views, roles and challenges faced by head teachers and teachers in the curriculum implementation of familiar languages as a medium of instruction from grade 1 to 4 in Chama District. The study was anchored on mixed methods. The study used a descriptive case study and data was collected using interview guide, questionnaire guide, document analysis and observation on a sample size of fifteen participants. Data was analysed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that school based management had negative views with the change of teaching learners in English to local familiar language as medium of instruction from grade 1-4. Additionally, findings revealed that roles of the head teacher were compounded with deficiency in training in the curriculum implementation of familiar languages as medium of instruction. The study under review was similar to this study in that it looked at grade 1-4 which this study did too. The reviewed study used mixed methods while this study used qualitative methods hence a methodical gap.

In a study conducted by Malambo (2016) in Zambia, the focus was on challenges of choosing the appropriate medium of instruction for initial literacy skills in Primary Schools Zambia being a multilingual country. Chitonga, as a Regional Official Language, is assumed to be mutually intelligible with Lenje, that is why it is used as a medium of instruction in the Primary Literacy Programme, a programme in which learners learn in vernacular from Grades 1- 4 (Mwanakatwe, 2013). The study used a qualitative approach involving a case study design. Data was collected through lesson observation and interviews on a sample size of 10 participants. Data was analysed using themes from research questions. The study results revealed that Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies were not completely mutually intelligible. The lack of mutual intelligibility hindered the learners' comprehension and consequently effective acquisition of initial literacy skills. The reviewed study was similar to the current study because it was conducted in Chibombo and it was confined to grades 1-4 which the current study was considered too. However, the reviewed study was used a sample population of 10 participants while this study used 65 participants thus a population gap.

## **2.2 Stakeholders' Views on the use of Local Language as a Medium of Teaching**

Hanzooma and Musonda (2024) looked at the relevance of Chitonga as a regional language of instruction from Grade 1 to 4 in multilingual schools of Livingstone. The study used a phenomenological design on the population sample of sixteen (16) participants of Livingstone District. Data was collected using interview guide and classroom observation guide from three primary schools who included three (3) head teachers, twelve (12) grade 1 to 4 teachers (four (4) from each selected school) and one (1) official from the district education board. The study findings indicated that Chitonga was not the language of play in multilingual primary classrooms of Livingstone. It was also revealed that there were differences between the Chitonga spoken in Livingstone District and the one used in schools and books. The reviewed study was similar to the current study because the study was conducted in grade 1 to 4 however, the study under review used phenomenological design while this study used case study design thus a in design methods.

Simachenya and Mambwe (2023) investigated language practices in multilingual classrooms in selected primary schools of urban areas of Livingstone city in Zambia among teachers and learners. The study was based on qualitative methods and data was collected through semi-structured interviews and direct observations of the twenty lessons using purposive sampling on a sample of twenty (20) teachers and twenty (20) pupils. The findings of the study showed that learners prefer using linguistic features drawn from the named languages as resources in making meaning and for the purposes of learning. The study also establishes that teachers use Nyanja and English as resources for linguistic inclusiveness in order to facilitate teaching. The reviewed study is similar to the current study in that it investigated language practices in multilingual classrooms in selected primary schools. However, the reviewed study was conducted in urban settings while the current study was conducted in rural settings thus a gap in perspective.

A study by Mwanza and Bwalya (2019) on democratization or symbolic violence: an analysis of teachers' language practice in selected multilingual classrooms in Chibombo District, Zambia. The study was anchored on mixed methods and data was collected through questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations on a sample of 10 classrooms. Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social

Sciences (SPSS) while lesson observation data was analyzed thematically. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of teachers were Bemba and Tonga and their mother tongue influenced the language they used in the classroom. Further the study findings showed that Nyanja was the familiar language of play for learners. The reviewed study used mixed methods while the current study used qualitative methods thus a methodical gap.

Maala and Mkandawire (2022) investigated factors contributing to low performance in English reading comprehension among Grade 8 pupils in three selected secondary schools of Lusaka District of Zambia. The study employed a descriptive research design under qualitative mode of inquiry to gather information from (27) participants who were selected using typical case and convenient sampling. Data was collected through comprehension lesson observation, interviews, and focus group discussion with in-service teachers and learners. Content analysis was used to analyze data by categorizing similar content, coded themes, and key words to emerging threads. The findings of the study revealed that there were multiple factors contributing to low performance in reading comprehension which included lack of knowledge by some teachers on the procedure for teaching reading comprehension and therefore, taught poorly. The reviewed study used a sample of 27 participants while the current study used a sample of 65 participants thus a population gap.

A study conducted by Doiz and Sierra (2014) on Language friction and multilingual policies in higher education focused on the tensions arising from use of prestigious international languages. The study used qualitative methods and Qualitative research design was utilized in the study because it focused on the experiences which were related to professional practices of stakeholders in implementing Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). Data was collected using focus group discussions on a total sample of 648 participants. The study results revealed language tensions among different languages in contact. Results further indicated parallelism and differences among the languages in question. The study was similar to the current study because it used qualitative methods which this study utilised. However, the study under review used an embedded single-case design while the current study used a case study thus a methodological gap.

A study conducted by Sam (2015) investigated stakeholders' views on teaching English language in Kiswahili and English medium in primary schools in Moshi District in Tanzania. The objectives of the study were to investigate stakeholders' views on availability of teaching and learning materials, teaching and learning methods, competence of teachers, and level of performance in English subject in both Kiswahili and English Medium Primary Schools. The study was qualitative in nature using interviews, and observation as data collection tools on a sample of 100 participants. The findings showed that, although English language was being taught in both English and Kiswahili Medium in Primary Schools, the application of the knowledge of English is ineffective. The study further recorded insufficient infrastructure, materials and overcrowding. The study used 100 participants to collect data while this study used 65 participants thus a population gap.

Mkandawire (2022) compared English and some Zambian languages with the aim of identifying some similarities and differences. Data was collected through author introspection and document analysis of existing literature. The documents collected were subjected to content analysis where key words, concepts and themes were picked and compared. Findings of the study revealed that English Language has an opaque orthography as there is no grapheme-phoneme correspondence while Zambian Languages have a transparent orthography where each grapheme corresponds to individual sounds and that the number of graphemes is almost equal to phonemes. The reviewed study used author introspection and document analysis while this study used interviews thus gap in methodologies.

In a study in Ghana, Tackie-Ofosu, Mahama, Vandyck, Kumador and Toku (2015) investigated the perceptions of parents and teachers on the use of the mother tongue and their preferred medium of communication and instruction for preschool children at home and in school. The study collected data using questionnaires on a sample of 40 participants and presented data that was analyzed by SPSS. The study findings indicated that both parents and teachers appreciate the importance of the mother tongue, with reasons including the promotion of cultural identity, the easy understanding of concepts and for effective communication. The study used a sample of 40 participants while the current study used a sample of 65 participants thus creating a population gap.

The reviewed study by Telli (2014) investigated the language of instruction issue in Tanzania. The purpose of the study was to explore how stakeholders in Tanzania express their perceptions and concerns regarding the use of English or Kiswahili as a language of instruction in Tanzanian Schools. The study used qualitative methods and data was collected using interviews on a sample of 27 participants. The findings of the study showed that education stakeholders differ in their perspectives regarding the use of English or Kiswahili as a language of instructions in Tanzanian schools. The study used a sample of 27 participants while the current study used 65 participants thus a gap in population sample.

### **2.3 Challenges Faced when using Local Language in Lower Primary Schools**

Review of the literature has noted another study in Zambia by Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021) on Translanguaging Challenges faced by Teachers and Learners in First Grade Multilingual Literacy Classrooms. A phenomenological design was used in one class for one term on a sample of 41 pupils and 1 teacher of literacy. Data was collected through classroom observations and interviews and was thematically analyzed. The study found that the teaching of literacy using translanguaging practices in a grade 1 multilingual class was associated with challenges like the mismatch between the language of instruction and dominant learners' familiar languages that existed in the classroom: rigidity of the language policy which was based on monolingualism throughout the learners' learning process: strict monolingual based assessment which only tested skills in the regional language and: inadequate teaching and learning materials which supported monolingual language learning. The reviewed study was underpinned by a phenomenological design while this study used a case study.

The aim of the study by Nyimbili and Mwanza (2020) was to establish challenges teachers and pupils faced as a result of teaching and learning using the translanguaging pedagogical practices in a multilingual grade 1 class of Lundazi District. A phenomenological design was used in one class for one term on a sample of 41 pupils and 1 teacher of literacy. Classroom observations and interviews were used to collect data that was analyzed thematically. The study found that the teaching of literacy using translanguaging practices in a grade 1 multilingual class was associated with challenges like the mismatch between the language of instruction and dominant learner's familiar languages that existed in the

classroom: rigidity of the language policy which was based on monolingualism throughout the learner's learning process: strict monolingual based assessment which only tested skills in the regional language and: inadequate teaching and learning materials which supported monolingual language learning. These challenges resulted in learning not taking place effectively in the primary schools. The study under review was conducted in a public university while this study was conducted in primary schools Zambia.

Xu and Krulatz (2023) conducted a study to establish the practice and the construct of dominant language constellations (DLC) using Farrell's framework. The study used qualitative methods to collect data through interviews and document analysis as an array of reflective tools. The findings of the study demonstrated that a reflective, DLC-based approach can be an effective and tangible model to support EAL teachers' CPD in Norway and other similar multilingual contexts. The study by Xu and Krulatz was similar to the current study because both studies were conducted using interviews and document analysis; however, the reviewed study was not conducted in Zambia while the current study was conducted in Zambia.

Mwanza (2012) investigated the language of initial literacy in a cosmopolitan in Lusaka District. The purpose of the study was to find out if Cinyanja was appropriate for use as a language of initial literacy in Lusaka considering the fact that Lusaka was a cosmopolitan environment. The study was based on a mixed method of data collection through interviews, lesson observations and used a case study design. Data was analyzed qualitatively, and it was grouped into identified themes according to research objectives. The results of the study showed that Cinyanja was the language of play in high and medium density areas and the dominant language of play in the low-density area was English. However, other languages such as Bemba, Tonga and Nsenga were also spoken by children during play. The study under review was similar to the current study in that the study used case study design. However, the reviewed study used a mixed method which this study will not use thus a methodical gap.

In another study in Tanzania, Anney, Mmasa and Ndunguru (2016) investigated the literacy teaching practices in Tanzanian classrooms in the provision of primary education. The study employed case study research design within qualitative research approach and

used a total of 582 respondents. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and documentary review. Qualitative data was subjected to thematic analysis. The study findings indicated that there were serious problems of literacy teaching in public primary schools where most teachers do not have adequate teaching. About 64% of standard two pupils cannot read, write and do simple numeracy while for standard three it is about 54% could not do that. The study under review was similar to the current study in that it was based on qualitative research approach and case study design. However, the reviewed study used 582 participants while the current study used 65 participants creating a population gap.

A study by Nzwala (2015) in Namibia looked at the challenges faced by student teachers when teaching through the medium of mother tongue during school-based studies. The study used an interpretive paradigm and is an intrinsic case study. Data was collected by using interviews and classroom observation on a sample of 2 participants. Data was transcribed into English. The results of the study showed that Pre and Lower Primary Bachelor of Education final year student teachers faced various challenges with regards to the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction during SBS. The challenges ranged from their inability to express themselves fluently in the target language (Silozi in this case) and lack of materials in line with topics, the study under review was confined to student teachers while the current study was not.

Elibariki (2017) investigated challenges facing primary school pupils in learning English as a foreign language in Tanzania. The study used a cross-sectional survey design which employed mixed approach research on a sample of fifteen teachers, one school inspector and three thousand students of standard three and six formed random and purposive sampling procedures were used in the selection of the sample. Questionnaires, observations and documentary reviews were used to collect data. The findings revealed that poor background of the English language for teachers, extensive use of the mother tongue in the teaching and learning process, large class size, inadequate teaching and learning materials, were the challenges faced by pupils in learning English. The study used quantitative methods while the current used qualitative method thus a gap in method.

Nkwiga and Brock-Utne (2022) investigated challenges faced by teachers when teaching using a language unfamiliar to pupils in rural lower primary classes in Tanzania. The study employed a qualitative research approach and a case study design. Interview and observation methods were employed to obtain the data. The study involved 58 participants of which 8 were teachers (three heads of schools, two standard one teachers and three pre-primary teachers), and 50 were standard one pupil. The study results showed that pupils use their ethnic languages in daily communication while teachers do not have knowledge and skills to teach by using the ethnic language of the community, a language usually unfamiliar to them. The study findings further revealed the massive use of local languages and few fluent speakers of Kiswahili in the local community. The reviewed study used a total sample of 58 participants while this study used 65 participants thus a gap in population sample.

A study conducted by Nyimbili, Sakala and Mungala (2022) investigated on the pedagogical practices teachers use to teach Nyanja to the Tumbuka learners of Chasefu district. The objectives were to ascertain the pedagogical practices that teachers use to teach Nyanja in the secondary schools of Chasefu district, establish the pedagogical challenges being faced by the teachers to teach Cinyanja in the secondary schools of Chasefu district, and how best Nyanja can be taught in Chasefu schools. The study was based on qualitative methods and descriptive phenomenological design was used on the population sample of 60 participants who comprised of five (5) deputy head teachers, five (5) heads of department for the department of Literature and Languages, ten (10) teachers of Nyanja, and forty (40) pupils in five secondary schools. The findings of the study revealed that there were inadequate teaching and learning materials, low literacy levels among learners, L1 interference causing code mixing in the works of the learners, negative attitude of the learners towards the subject. The study under review used a population sample of 60 participants while this study used 65 participants comprising of 10 teachers and 5 parents and 50 pupils.

## **2.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter has reviewed literature about effects of using local language as a medium of instruction in primary schools of Chibombo District., stakeholders' views on the use of local language as a medium of teaching and challenges faced when using local language in lower primary schools curriculum.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This section details the methodology that was adopted in the study. It highlights the procedure and techniques that were used in carrying out the research. This research methodology was organized in the following parts: the research approach, design, and target population, sample size, sampling procedure, instruments for data collection, data collection procedure, data presentation, data analysis, and concluding with a chapter summary.

### **3.1 Research Paradigm**

In educational research, the term paradigm is used to describe a researcher's 'worldview' and it defines a researcher's philosophical orientation (Riazi & Candlin, 2014). Research paradigms consist of ontology, epistemology and methodology as principles or pillars of research (Proofed, 2023). This study was based on constructivism paradigm. Constructivism research paradigm view knowledge to be socially constructed by people actively involved in the research process. Constructivism paradigm was used in this study because the researcher wished to understand particular experiences of lower primary teachers and stake holders' views on the use of Citonga in teaching and learning literacy in lower primary school classes of Chibombo District of Zambia in line with the aim of constructivism which posits that the researcher needs to understand particular situations or phenomena from the point of view of those who live in it, lower primary teachers use Tonga to deliver classroom instructions in literacy lessons. The study therefore, would sort clarity on the effect of using Tonga on literacy levels to learners in lower primary classes. The other reason was also to determine challenges faced when teaching and learning Chitonga in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District. This is because of the ability of constructivism paradigm to consider a wider array of views and concepts in order to attain validity and truth. Further, also the advantage of combined strength of in-depth interrogation to obtain best understanding of the research problem. This research paradigm would give rise to qualitative descriptive research design. That was to say the research employed qualitative methods.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

Creswell (2017) defined research as the systematic plan or strategy employed to conduct a study or investigation. It outlines the methods and procedures used to collect and analyze data to answer specific research questions or test hypotheses. Hence, the research approach chosen for this study was qualitative research method. Qualitative methods are used in research to gather a deeper understanding of underlying motivations, attitudes, and behaviors.

### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design was defined as a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Creswell, 2017). Qualitative method was employed to collect data as instrument. This method involves description research design and seeks to describe and analyses the culture and behaviors of humans and their groups from their point of view of those being studied. Description research design method enabled the researchers to investigate the already existing situation and acquire first-hand information from the respondents in order to interpret, discuss and report situations as they exist.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The term "target population" refers to the specific group of individuals or entities that a particular study, campaign, or intervention aims to reach or affect (Creswell, 2017). It's the group for which the actions or observations are intended. The researcher also targeted all teachers that teach literacy in grades 1 to 4.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

A sample was explained as a small portion of a target population. Sampling meant selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population, (Orodho, 2002). In line with the target population, this study was conducted in four primary schools in Chibombo district, which was randomly sample and the respondents' sample size, was distributed as follows; 15participants; 10 teachers and 5 parents.

### **3.6 Sampling Techniques**

Sampling was explicated as selecting a sub-set of cases in order to draw conclusion about the entire set (Creswell, 2017). All the teachers in the first four grades of primary school for each school were considered for this study because they were the ones who implement the curriculum at school level. Teachers were later stratified into two strata of male and female so as to have a good representation of both sexes. Using simple random sampling two (2) teachers were drawn from each stratum. Thus, two (2) teachers were sampled from each school giving a sum total of ten (10) teachers included in the sample. Parents were purposively sampled because of the representation purposes in the study. Therefore, two (1) parents were identified with the help the administration from each school giving the study a total number of five (5) parents for participation in this study.

### **3.7 Research Instrument for Data Collection**

Mkandawire (2019) defined research instruments as tools, guides, and schedules that guide the research in the data collection process. They help researchers to collect required information through interview guide and focus group discussion through verbal communication in order for the researcher to get extra information from respondents as well as classroom lesson observation.

#### **3.7.1 Interviews**

Three interview schedules were designed to conduct interviews by the researcher to collect information from the participants in order to supplement more valuable information from the teachers who were key respondents. This was effective in that it assisted the researcher to probe the respondents for supplementary valuable information for this study. Moreover, it was the right instrument to collect information from teachers and parents who may not know how to write and read in English. Thus, in such cases the researcher required to modify the instrument by using the local language in which most of the parents expressed themselves more clearly and comfortably.

### **3.7.2 Classroom Observations**

An observation was explained as a method in which the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site (Creswell, 2003). Baker (2001) considered observations to be one of the most important research instruments. Baker further noted that observation method was a more natural way of collecting data and data collected through observation was more real and true. This could be because it depicted what exactly happens on the actual ground than data collected from other methods. The researcher employed an observation schedule at each of the two selected schools. At each selected school a lesson was observed. Direct observation contributed profoundly to qualitative data.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher was given an introductory letter from the Assistant Dean (Postgraduate) of the School of Education, the University of Zambia (UNZA). The researcher then got permission to visit the schools from the Ministry of General Education districts offices in Chibombo district. This was done in order for the researcher to be given permission to freely interact with the selected respondents without abrogating any protocol. Consent was also sought from all participants. In four schools, data was collected on the first day of the visit.

### **3.9 Data analysis**

Creswell (2017) defined Data analysis as the process of inspecting, and modeling data to discover useful information, draw conclusions, and support decision-making. The data that was collected was analyzed thematically in line with the respective objectives of the study. The thematic data analysis was used because the study was qualitative in nature, and it involved reading through a set of data and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data.

Thematic analysis was explained as a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of text, such as interview transcripts (Kothari, 2019). Since the data obtained from the study was qualitative in nature, the researcher used thematic analysis to develop meaning from the collected data. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly

(Kothari, 2019). The researcher followed six important steps in thematic analysis as follows:

**Step 1 Familiarization:** This meant to get to know the data collected (Kothari, 2019). This involves taking a thorough overview of all the data collected before analyzing individual items.

This involved transcribing audio recordings, reading through the text in field notebook and taking initial notes, and generally looking through the data to get familiar with it.

**Step 2 Coding:** This meant highlighting sections of the text in the data - usually phrases or sentences and coming up with shorthand labels or “codes” to describe their content (Kothari, 2019).

**Step 3 Generating themes:** This involved looking over the codes created, identify patterns among them and coming up with themes. Themes are generally broader than codes (Kothari, 2019).

**Step 4 Reviewing themes:** This was done to ensure that the themes are useful and accurate representations of the data. Here, the researcher returns to the data set and compare the themes against it (Kothari, 2019).

**Step 5 Defining and naming themes:** Defining themes involved formulating exactly what we mean by each theme and figuring out how it helped us understand the data. Naming themes involved coming up with a succinct and easily understandable name for each theme (Kothari, 2019).

**Step 6 Writing up:** This involved writing up the analysis of data. Like all academic texts, writing up a thematic analysis requires an introduction to establish the research questions, objectives and approach (Kothari, 2019).

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

According to Wellington (2000), an ‘ethic’ was a moral principle or a code of conduct that served as a guide to what people do. In this research, the researcher took care of necessary ethical considerations such as consent of the respondents, benefits, risks, anonymity and confidentiality and voluntary participation in this study. Respondents were interviewed

with their permission and assurance in terms of anonymity and confidentiality was given, and in this way, their privacy of the respondents was protected by not reviewing their details in the research. Therefore, all respondents participated voluntarily with no form of coercion. Further, the researcher explained to the respondents the risks which would be involved in this study as well as the benefits and how the collected information was going to be used by the researcher.

### **3.11 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has outlined the research methodology, including the approach, design, target population, sample size, sampling procedure, instruments for data collection, data collection procedure, and methods of data presentation and analysis. This research methodology was organised in the following parts: the research approach, design, and target population, sample size, sampling procedure, instruments for data collection, data collection procedure, data presentation, data analysis, and concluding with a chapter summary.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **4.0. Overview**

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the use of Tonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District. Findings were presented using the research question as themes and further presented using the category of each participant who participated in this study.

### **4.1 What are the Effects of using Tonga as the Medium of Instruction when Teaching Learners in the first four grades of Primary Schools in Chibombo District?**

This research question was answered through interviewing teachers for lower primary school classes and classroom lesson observation. Teachers for lower classes were interviewed and observed them teaching literacy lessons in order to establish the effects of using Tonga as a medium of instructions in the learning process. These tools were used to guarantee satisfactory detailed data collection and validity in the study so that all the perceptions and descriptions participants used to explain the effects of translanguaging when teaching learners especially in the lower grades were presented in the study.

#### **4.1.1 Findings from interviews**

##### **4.1.1.1 Translanguaging in schools**

During the Interviews, teachers were asked to explain the effects of using Tonga in the early grades of primary school. Findings reviewed that teachers were able to use translanguaging and learners were able to express themselves, actively participate in the lesson process and fully understand concepts during the learning process as they were able to ask questions in their local language when not clear. In this regard teacher 1 said:

Learners have deeper understanding of the lesson because the lesson involves the use of local languages. Learners easily understand what is being taught.

Teacher 3 added that:

The benefit that the learner's get is being familiar with other languages and it helps those who do not understand certain words in target language to understand better in other languages like Bemba and Lenje.

From the foregoing, it shows that learners benefited a lot in understanding the concept taught in a classroom because teachers and learners were able to teach and learn in other languages. It also helps learners who do not understand more words in the instruction language which is target language as they are helped through another language.

The participants revealed that the use of Tonga in the teaching of literacy to a multilingual setting provided the learners with the practical understanding of the content the teacher was teaching about. In other words, using Tonga provided a way of making learners see the content being taught from their local environment point of view. Teacher 2 said:

I came to realise that when I use Nyanja in my teaching, learners were participating than when I used Tonga consistently. This then made me realize that my learners were more participating because the language of instruction was different from the language of play.

Teacher 4 said:

Language in class was a factor to the learning in this community. When I teach my lessons in Tonga my learners were not active and after giving them work, the performance was rather poor. But when I use Nyanja, they became active, and performance was actually better.

#### **4.1.1.2 Community language use**

From the foregoing, learners were comfortable to learn classroom content using their local language unlike the regional language. It was also established that teachers were forced to use other languages in their teaching of literacy because learners provided answers in other languages instead of Tonga which was not familiar to them. It was also learnt that when the teacher used Tonga to ask questions to the class, the learners would use other languages

to ask the teacher to rephrase the question in a simpler language they could understand. Teacher 8 said:

My learners are familiar with other languages and not Tonga. When I ask a question which needs their response, they respond in their language of choice giving me the correct answer. This shows me that Tonga was not easy for them in my class.

Teacher 10 added that:

At times, I ask the same question in two languages, Bemba and Tonga that is when they understand what I am talking about. Despite asking in two languages, the responses are always in their language of choice.

Participants also noted that when other languages were used in the teaching, learners became interested in their local language, and they wrote their language more than Tonga.

#### **4.1.1.3 Learner effects of classroom translanguaging**

Teachers were further asked on how well teachers lesson go for them when they are using translanguaging during their teaching. Teachers were able to explain how well their lessons were done and this was because learners were fully participating in the learning process. Teacher 5 responded that:

In my classroom the lessons go well because the learners fully participate, and they express themselves and they express themselves using other languages. They understand better which helps in meeting the objectives.

Teacher 7 said:

Lessons in my classroom are better than when I only use language of instruction.

Teachers were asked on the learners' participation when other languages are used in literacy lessons findings showed that there was full participation from the learners in the classroom as other languages were used during teaching and learning process. Teacher 4 explained that:

In my class of grade four, when teaching Tonga with other languages there is full participation from learners because everyone understands what is expected from them. Learners easily understand what is being taught.

Teacher 6 explained that:

The participation becomes very good because learners are able to use other languages which they are familiar with.

Findings in this study indicate that learners fully participated during teaching and learning process because they were allowed to use languages they were familiar with.

#### **4.1.2 Findings from the Classroom Observation**

With regard to the observed lessons, the teacher used translanguaging using Tonga as a medium of instruction when teaching learners in the lower classes. It was observed that teachers conducted their lessons and engaged with their students, aiming to corroborate their statements from the interviews regarding the use of multiple languages in the classroom. The teacher further allowed learners to express themselves in other languages familiar to them. This made the learners excited, vibrant and actively participated in the lesson as they code switched between English and other familiar local languages.

The teacher had content of the subject as they had an understanding that translanguaging was the process that makes meaning, shaping experience, gaining understanding and knowledge as it used two languages in a classroom. In lower classes, the teacher used translanguaging practices which included interpretations, translations and code switching as well as authentic teaching and learning materials. It was observed that translanguaging practices were effective in teaching and learning literacy in lower grades. In this class it was observed that learners were able to participate fully as they were able to express fully as they were able to express themselves in both English and their local language in one response. The lesson observation data comprises excerpts from transcribed lessons, offering insights into classroom language practices without presenting the entirety of each lesson verbatim.

Teacher 1: From the passage we have read who can tell as what they heard from the story?

Learner1: Michelo built a house on a hill then....

Teacher 1: Continue kwambamuchishobochohi.

Learner 1: Then kwakabola lion, yakabuzyakuti, nguninwayakangandaachulu? Then bana answered kutinguMichelo.

Learner 2: Michelo left the children home kutiaka the benkhuni.

Learner 3: I heard ati Lion yalisa then it killed abanabakwa Michelo.

Learner 4: Lion yakalyankukuzyonse.

Through observation it was observed that teachers were encouraging their learners to use the language they were familiar with when they got stuck with English when they were giving feedback.

For example teacher 1 said: what did the lion do?

Learner 1: Then kwakabola lion, yakabuzyakuti, nguninwayakangandaachulu? Then bana answered kutingu Michelo.

Learner 3: Lion killed abanabakwa Michelo.

This enabled a lot of learners to fully participate as they were able to interact and translate each other's views in both languages. From the dialogue, the teacher was able to demonstrate the classroom language by asking learners to explain using the language they were comfortable with. From this we can see that learners were able to code switch between English, and at times use a mixture of Tonga and English to explain, from the statement, "Lion killed banaa Michelo. It is evident that dealing with a multilingual class you cannot run away from translanguaging in such classes just as the learners have demonstrated.

#### **4.2 What are the stake holders' views on use of Tonga as the medium of teaching in the lower grades in primary schools of Chibombo district?**

To explore the teachers' views and perceptions on the use of Tonga as a language of teaching literacy, most teachers said it was okay to use Tonga as a medium of teaching at

lower primary school. This research question was answered by interviewing teachers teaching lower primary grades. Participants were asked their views about effect of employing the familiar language to teach literacy in grades one to four in a multilingual setting. This tool was used to guarantee adequate data triangulation in the study so that all possible views and perceptions about multilingual strategies are elicited by participants. Each category of participants presented its own views on the possible effect employing multilingual to teach literacy in lower primary school.

#### **4.2.1 Findings from interviews with teachers for lower primary school about the use of Tonga as a Medium of Teaching**

##### **4.2.1.1 Language attitude**

With regard to teachers' views on the selection of Tonga as a language of teaching literacy, most teachers said that it was okay that Tonga was selected as medium of teaching at lower primary school. They argued that Tonga was the language of play for most learners in this area, so it was the most appropriate language that learners knew and perceived well. In particular, teacher 1 said:

It is not a bad idea to select Tonga due to that we use Tonga in this area as you may know. Learners use Tonga as they play around with their friends. It would be bad if we said we choose Kaonde because most of us in this area use Tonga so I would say the selection of Tonga is just good.

Teacher 2 noted that:

I think it just okay because most of these pupils speak Tonga in their homes and the official language of this country, which is English, they can't speak it and understand. When these pupils are playing you hear them using Tonga and not Lenje so it is easy even as you are teaching them you are teaching them in a language they use always.

Teacher 3 postulated that:

On that one I think it's good that Tonga was selected as a medium of teaching literacy. You know pupils play around in Tonga I am sure it is due to the fact that Tonga may be similar Lenje even though it is a Lenje speaking area. To me it is fair since I am teaching using a language that the learners are very familiar with. Even those who are like the Lenje, or any language you find them playing around in Tonga.

Many other participants equally shared the same view that the selection of Tonga was good as pupils used it as a language of play in their homes. The following excerpt indicates what one participant claimed: Teacher 4 postulated that:

The same Tonga I think is just good because if we said Lenje we would disadvantage those pupils who come from where they don't speak Lenje. The majority of the learners we have come from homes where Tonga is used in homes and pupils play with it so since these are in the majority it is fine to use Tonga as a language of teaching literacy when teaching.

#### **4.2.1.2 Community language support**

To the contrary, the study established that some teachers choose to code switch when teaching learners because the learners were not familiar with Tonga in the schools. Some learners could only speak Lenje and not Tonga yet the language of instruction was Tonga. Teacher 5 said that:

For me I have to be very frank I don't like and support the use of Tonga as a language of teaching literacy. Unless only as a standalone subject. To me I think mixing of Tonga and Lenje would be better so that as a teacher you can explain well.

Furthermore, from another primary school a teacher opposed the use of either Lenje or Tonga but supported the use of English. Teacher 7 stated that:

There was confusion in class because not all learners could use Lenje and also not all learners could use Tonga hence the learners were caught wanting in both

languages. Therefore, it was important that the teaching of literacy should be done in English language which should be learnt by both groups of learners in class.

#### **4.2.2 Findings from interviews with Parents' about the use of Tonga as a Medium of Teaching**

##### **4.2.2.1 Language attitude**

Some parents made preference to the use of English as a medium of teaching literacy mainly because of its international status, grade seven exams being written in English and that children are more exposed to English because they watch TV programmes in English. Participants established that it was better for their children to learn in English due to fear of regional transfers and difficulties to switch to English. Furthermore, in preferring code switching, participants revealed that it would have been better to consider Lenje as a language of instruction for preserving culture other than Tonga because Chibombo is not Tonga land and most learners are Lenje. English would have been carried alongside Lenje for purposes of national unity. Parent 1 therefore suggested that:

I must be very honest with you madam that I am very negative about using Tonga to teach our children in the sense that when our children learn Tonga they have difficulties to change to English. If as a parent I am transferred to another region then my child is going to be delayed. So, me I think it is better children just learn using English.

Parent 2 said:

But for me personally I think I can go for English looking at the generation we are in now it is more of English. Children won't have problems to adapt to English as they go. Like myself I am Lozi but I don't really know how to speak Lozi frequently, so I use English. Besides everywhere you go even outside Zambia most people speak English so it's easy even for more communication if you know English.

In making preference for English, some parents indicated that children needed to use English because it was the language used for exams in grade seven hence it would be beneficial to them. Parent 4 said that:

For me I see a problem with the selection of Tonga as a language of teaching literacy in the first four grades of primary school because of the examinations that come ahead of the children in grade seven. English was better because even in grade seven they will still write exams in English and it is easy for children to read. So English is good you know because even as children watch TV they watch programmes in English.

Parent 3 said that:

I feel it is not all that good for children to learn in Tonga or any other local language. Some pupils once they switch to Tonga they will not be able to learn English. I would have loved my child to learn in English because everywhere in the world you can easily communicate in English. Even in employment with the coming of foreign investors if you talked to them in Tonga they will not employ you. In English, there is a very good job market because every employer can easily understand it and one can speak it anywhere in the world.

In agreeing with the views expressed above, parent 5 said:

For me the idea of selecting Tonga is not fair to some of us. Why not just use English instead of Tonga you know? Because using English at least children are learning a language that will help them in their future like to find a job and also as I feel proud as I feel they are learning unlike using Tonga which is someone else mother-tongue. This Tonga is just in some parts of Zambia after all.

#### **4.2.2.1 Community language support**

Some parents who opposed the selection of Tonga made preference for mother tongue use instead of Tonga because they see Tonga as an alien language to their children. They argued that it would have been better if their children were given an opportunity to learn using

their own mother tongue instead of teaching them using Tonga which is alien language. Parent7 echoed the following:

Even teachers are from different language backgrounds meaning in these schools all seven major languages are there. So why not divide the classes according to these major tribes so that each expert teacher teaches such a class. Divide and make a time table so that all children can benefit learning in their mother tongue. I hate this where children are forced. A child can do better when learning in mother tongue.

In expressing similar views, another participant from a different primary school said that he wished his children could just be taught using the mother tongue instead of learning using Tonga, a situation that he claimed was bad. Parent 6 said that:

For me I feel it is bad that Tonga was chosen. I wish my children could just learn in their mother tongue which is what we use at home. I don't just have anything to do that is why I just let them learn in Tonga which they force them to use. Us we learnt in our own language, so it is not fair to force children to learn other people's language.

Parent 9 suggested that:

For me obviously I would have wished that my child learns in my own language because if I send him to the village, he can be able to speak to the relatives. And also, English should have been a must to be used. We can't put English aside because where ever a child goes to learn even in other provinces or countries one can be able to communicate in English without any problem and it won't affect their performance. So, I think both my language and English are very important. Tonga is only in Southern Province.

Parent 10 said that:

My view is that the selection of Tonga in a mono-cultural setting like ours is a very bad idea because it undermines our culture. So, for me I look at two issues: culture and unity in our country. Lenje would have been the best culturally

since they are the owners of Chitambo district but when we look at the aspect of unity in the country, there is no doubt English is the best. So, for me we would have picked English and Lenje for purposes of culture and unity.

#### **4.3 What are the challenges faced when teaching Tonga in lower primary schools of Chibombo District?**

This research question was answered through interviewing teachers and parents about challenges they faced as a result teaching Tonga in lower primary schools of Chibombo District. The tool was used to ensure adequate detailed data collection in the study so that all the challenges faced by lower primary teachers when teaching Tonga in a multilingual setting. The participants presented their own views on the challenges faced by teachers in integrated planning and subsequent questions asked. The findings from these interviews revealed various challenges that the participants were facing.

##### **4.3.1 Findings from interviews with teachers for lower primary school**

###### **4.3.1.1 Lack of adequate materials**

The study established that there was lack of adequate materials for using when implementing teaching literacy. These materials included books for teachers and learners posing serious challenges as the new language policy were being implemented. Teacher 1 said that:

Materials I think are a very big problem. There are very few available books am telling you. learners don't have access to text books hence it is very difficult to explain what you are teaching to learners because they cannot see what you are trying to explain to them, this makes learners to be passive.

Teacher 3 said that:

It seems this new policy was just brought for teachers to implement without bringing books as well. As I am talking now, there are no books in our school. I think government was just interested in telling us to implement without

concern for materials. So, this has really been a challenge and it has made our work so difficult, and this has contributed to learner participation in class.

During another interview at a different primary school, it was mentioned that lack of materials was posing a challenge to the implementation of the policy. Teacher 5 said that:

I think in terms of challenges one big problem is that there are no books for us to implement the 2013 curriculum using learner-centered approach. You know it is sometimes difficult for us to teach in Tonga because you can't even make teaching and learning aids without materials. Yes, sometimes you can improvise but there is a limit to what one can improvise.

#### **4.3.1.2 Tonga language complexity**

The study further found that teachers bemoaned the complexity of Tonga language which is being taught to learners as the policy is being implemented. It was observed that the Tonga used in the curriculum was too complex compared to the Tonga which was used as a play language in the different communities of Chibombo district. Teacher 9 said:

One challenge also is that the language that is used in books is totally different with the Tonga we know in our community. It is actually deep Tonga because some words you really have to consult. The Tonga that we speak here is just on the surface.

Teacher 10 said:

The other challenge is that the written expressions used in school is not common among members of the community, therefore, it becomes complicated and confusing for the learners.

The study revealed that the participants expressed how parental, and pupil regional transfers were posing a challenge to the implementation of this policy. It was revealed that it was a challenge for pupils who moved on transfers across regions to adapt to a new language which is different from the one he/she was learning. Teacher 6 said:

Local languages affect learner performance due to regional transfers. Imagine a child who through lower primary was learning a certain local language and then he eventually comes here on transfer such a child will eventually fail. We have this problem of such pupils who come on transfer, and it is very difficult to help them.

Teacher 4 said:

It is very difficult to teach pupils who come on transfer from private schools and also from other provinces because they were using a different language where they came from. It is really proving to be a challenge to teach such children because whatever you say the child will just be looking at you, chorusing, copying activities for the day and talking less in a learning experience and this makes learners to passive participates.

Teacher 8 suggested that:

Again, absenteeism is another challenge we face. This is about those learners who are subjected to walk two and half hours to arrive at school fail to attend classes regularly. This makes the teacher to use the teacher-centered approach as the fail to participate in the learning experiences.

#### **4.3.1.3 Translation difficulties**

In the interview, the participants also said that challenges that have to do with difficulties in translating certain English words into Tonga were common. This was common especially in technical subjects such as Creative and Technology Studies (CTS) and in integrated sciences. Teacher1 said:

It is very difficult sometimes when you are teaching more especially when you are teaching certain subjects like CTS and integrated science you can't explain in Bemba because there are no words to use. Some words you will still just are forced to say them in English. Like the word vacuum how would you explain it in Tonga it is really difficult I am telling you and this affects their participation.

Teacher 2 said that:

You know when you talk about teaching science, we are completely relying on translating from English to Tonga which is very difficult and consumes a lot of time because of going from one teacher to another trying to find out what a particular word means. And you know there are even some words in science which even those teachers who come from Northern Province can't equally translate so you just remain stuck as a teacher and maybe you just teach the word in English as it is hence this encourages the use of teacher-centered approach.

Teacher 3 noted that:

Since the books are not available it means that as teachers, we have to rely much on interpreting words from English to Bemba and also from Bemba to English. But the problem is that some words in English we don't have them in Nyanja and also some in Tonga are not there in English. This problem is very common especially in science and CTS.

Teacher 4 said:

You know it is really difficult to teach especially mathematics and science concepts. In CTS the second topic is computers. Now how can you teach and even translate in Tonga? Like text alignment in computers, changing lines in computers when there are no computers programmed in Tonga. And you need to translate this from English to Tonga how can you just do it?

Teacher 7 said that:

One of the challenges this has posed is that there is limited vocabulary in local languages because some words are only available in English more especially in subjects such as science.

The findings in the study further indicated that there were challenges to do with word pronunciation and mother tongue interference. The teachers were not familiar with the

language used and feared this would affect how they taught the learners. Teacher 1 said that:

The other problem I have observed is about pronunciation of words due to mother tongue influence. You know like in my case I am Mambwe by tribe so I can't really pronounce like it should be pronounced in Tonga. For this reason, children may end up learning very wrong pronunciation which is very contrary to the original pronunciation.

Teacher 5 said:

You know there is one challenge I have observed about this language policy of using Tonga here. It is like pupils are getting confused with pronunciation of words. Imagine learners being taught by this teacher today with a different way of pronouncing words maybe because of his or her language background. Then what is going to happen to learners now? It seems we will end up having learners who speak like Nigerians or Zimbabweans.

#### **4.3.1.4 Over enrolment**

The study further revealed that the other challenges were over enrolment in classes as there were more than 82 learners a class. These entire learners have different mother tongue languages. Implementing the policy was not easy as the teachers and learners were found to be on different language fronts and failed to make sense in their classes and literacy lessons. Teacher 1 said that:

Over enrolment sir is another challenge in our classes. For example, government says that we should not deny any child a place in school. Now if you have one hundred pupils in class and they want you to implement this new policy in your class, is it possible sure? The government is expecting a teacher to implement and make all children breakthrough. How sir? The teacher to pupil ratio is just too high.

Teacher 2 said:

Over enrolment is also posing a challenge to classroom management anyway. The classes are very big you know, and this programme requires a lot of time because you have to take some time to explain word meaning to learners. So now how can you do all these effectively in overcrowded classrooms?

#### **4.3.2 Findings from interviews with parents whose children learn in grades 1 to 4.**

##### **4.3.2.1 Lack of adequate materials and language complexity**

The participants established the biggest challenge of using Tonga as a medium of instructions is that it had become difficult for them to teach and maintain their children's native language and culture. This was because their children had become more exposed to Tonga at the expense of their native language and culture. Parent 1 noted that:

Culturally, even my child's behaviour is now compromised because he is learning culture through language in a different way. I can't teach my child in terms of my culture any more.

Parent 2 said:

The other challenge is that it's like now we can't speak our own language in our home because as a family we also have our own language to speak with our children but now it is difficult because children have become more tuned to Tonga.

Parent 3 claimed the following:

One big challenge is that the children are forgetting so easily their own traditional language. My child can't speak our language any more at home and this is becoming a problem because how can a child not know his own traditional language?

Parent 4 said:

Our children lose a sense of belonging. They are lost and do not know who they are due to learning different language opposed to their mother tongue.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the use of Tonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District. Findings were presented using the research question as themes and further presented using the category of each participant who participated in this study. The next chapter presents the discussion of the findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.0 Overview**

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study while this chapter presents the discussion of findings. The discussion is presented in line with the literature presented in chapter two of this study. Themes from the research objective have been used to guide the discussion together with the theory guiding the study.

### **5.1 Effects of using Tonga as the medium of instruction when teaching learners in the first four grades of primary schools in Chibombo District.**

The collected data of the study uncovered that participants' views on the effects of using Tonga as the medium of instruction when teaching learners in the first four grades of primary schools in Chibombo District varied. The study established that most teachers said that it was okay that Tonga was selected as a medium of teaching at lower primary school. The study also established that teachers explained that using Tonga as a medium of instruction made learners to meaningfully understand the content and context of learnt concepts. Trudell (2016) supported the findings of the study by postulating that the choice of familiar language as the medium of instruction in early learning is a critical decision with far-reaching implications for the learning outcomes and linguistic development of young learners. He argues that the choice of familiar language as a medium of instruction, therefore, positively impacts the linguistic development of learners in multilingual societies where linguistic diversity is a hallmark henceforth, the selection of an appropriate medium of instruction becomes even more paramount. In this view, it is vital that teachers make a well informed choice on the language they choose to code switch with English in the process of teaching and learning. This is because language is an important tool in the process of teaching and learning.

The study established that the use of Tonga in the learning process enabled the teachers for lower primary school classes to utilize translanguaging in a multilingual setting. These findings are supported by Nyimbili and Mwanza (2020) who proposed that when the curriculum is decolonized and the classroom is liberated through recognition of learners' linguistic repertoires, learning outcomes improve. The study, therefore, established that

due to translanguaging practices teachers viewed using Tonga as a medium of instruction in lessons to be more effective as it impacted learners positively. From the study, it was concluded that the use of Tonga as a medium of instructions in class helped learners to actively participate, develop multi literacy, preserve culture and assert self-identity. The study therefore deduced that teachers positively perceived the effects Tonga had when used in class as a medium of instruction because they recognised that translanguaging provided learners with multi-skill development much needed for future learning.

The study further established that using Tonga as the medium of instruction has a learner-environment effect in that, learners have a connection with their environment. The findings of the study were in tandem with Benson (2012) whose findings showed that utilizing Tonga as the medium of instruction fostered a deeper connection between students and their learning environment. When students are taught in their native language, they feel more comfortable expressing themselves. From this, it is evident that Tonga as a familiar language positively affects learners by enhancing their confidence and engagement in the learning process thus making the learners to understand the content being taught with meaning and appropriate context.

The findings of the study also established that lower primary teachers were alive to the fact that using Tonga as a medium of instruction in class brought about challenges. It was discovered that teachers struggled with materials to use when teaching using Tonga. For example, books with text used to mean what is written in English. These results are in agreement with Cummins (2014) which showed that there may be a shortage of quality instructional materials available in native languages, which can limit teachers' ability to effectively deliver the curriculum. He added that access to diverse and comprehensive educational resources is crucial for ensuring high-quality instruction and student learning outcomes. In this regard it can conclusively be regarded that translanguaging is a resource not a difficulty.

The study further made known that the use of Tonga in the teaching of literacy to a multilingual setting by lower primary school teachers provided the learners with the practical understanding of the content the teacher was teaching about. In other words, using Tonga provided a way of making learners see the content being taught from their local

environment point of view. It was also discovered that learners were comfortable to learn classroom content using their local language unlike the regional language. These findings are in line with Tembo and Nyimbili (2021) who revealed that Nsenga was found to be used in the primary schools of Petauke district because it enables the teachers to explain the content and learners understood the lessons better than when Nyanja was used. This meant that the use of the learner's familiar language was advantageous to the learning process despite this not being supported by the literacy and language policy. However, it was the role of the teacher to be innovative and meet the needs of the learners if they were to learn in such a linguistically hostile environment.

The study established that teachers were forced to use other languages in their teaching of literacy because learners provided answers in other languages instead of Tonga which was not familiar to them. It was also learnt that when the teacher used Tonga to ask questions to the class, the learners would use other languages to ask the teacher to rephrase the question in a simpler language they could understand. The results were in line with Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021) whose findings demonstrated that the teaching of literacy using translanguaging practices in a grade 1 multilingual class was associated with challenges like the mismatch between the language of instruction and dominant learners' familiar languages that existed in the classroom: rigidity of the language policy which was based on monolingualism throughout the learner's learning process. This follows that lower primary school teachers should also use other learners' familiar languages which allow learners to freely interact, responding and asking questions in their language of choice. This also allows the teacher to ask questions using two or even more languages depending on the multilingual setting of the classroom. The study further demonstrated that when other languages were used in the teaching, learners became interested in their local language, and they wrote their language more than Tonga. This demonstrated that translanguaging works better in a multilingual setting despite having monolingual policies championing regional languages.

The foregoing discussions were in line with the first principle of the Socio-Cultural Theory of Vygotsky (1978) which states that language is an essential tool in the learning process. The principle further states that language is used for communication through social

structures and interactions, and it provides the basis for learning to take place. Vygotsky's logic was that language shapes the learners' cognition and only requires social structures as human action through mediated tools and signs for example, various systems of mnemonic (semiotic). These tools can be used across a variety of situations. Thus, teachers employed translanguaging through use of Tonga and other native languages to provide the expert to novice and peer to peer communication interaction in the classroom. From the discussion it was clear that lower primary school teachers incorporated the principle into the teaching and learning process despite the principle not being reflected in the 2015 national curriculum. This was done by way of using translanguaging of familiar native languages to learners when teaching. In this view, the principle therefore covers what the teachers were implementing in classrooms because they knew it was theoretically relevant; hence, they were able to implement the inclusion of the translanguaging approaches in the classroom.

## **5.2 The stakeholders view the use of Tonga as the medium of teaching in the first four grades in the primary district.**

The study findings established that Tonga was the language of play for most learners in Chibombo district hence it was the most appropriate language that learners knew hence it was appropriate that it was a language of instruction in Chibombo district. These findings are not supported by Bwalya and Mwanza (2019) who found that Tonga was not a common language of play in Chibombo district hence it was not appropriate to use it as a language of instruction. The findings are further supported by Hanzooma and Musonda (2024) who also indicated that Chitonga was not the language of play in multilingual primary classrooms of Livingstone. This was also echoed by Simachenya and Mambwe (2023) whose study shows that learners prefer using linguistic features drawn from the other languages as resources in making meaning and for the purposes of learning. The study also establishes that teachers use Nyanja and English as resources for linguistic inclusiveness in order to facilitate teaching. The use of Tonga in Chibombo can be seen as a deterrent to access education for learners who come from the Lenje community as these two languages are not the same. This brings about linguistic segregation even to the learners who are not both Lenje and Tonga speaking. Therefore, there was a need to provide effective language

policy guidelines which will help all speakers of different languages to have access to education.

The study established that some teachers choose to code switch when teaching learners because the learners were not familiar with Tonga in the schools. Some learners could only speak Lenje and not Tonga, yet the language of instruction was Tonga. The findings are in line with Mwanza and Bwalya (2019) who established that while the officially recognised regional official language is Tonga and the language of medium of instruction at grade 5 is English, the majority of the pupils in the sampled schools spoke Lenje, Bemba and Nyanja. This has shown that language zoning in Zambia is problematic as it does not reflect the actual sociolinguistic situation in some parts of the country such as Chibombo. Further, Hanzooma and Musonda (2024) revealed that teachers in Livingstone multilingual schools taught Literacy in Chitonga through translanguaging practices like translation and code switching. The study concluded that Tonga, despite being the regional language, was not relevant to the urban primary school learner of Livingstone town because the classrooms were multilingual hence translanguaging practices were used extensively. The foregoing meant that Tonga was not a relevant language of instruction in the primary schools of Chibombo district hence there was need for teachers to continue translanguaging to break the linguistic barriers and enable learners to have access to education.

Other findings revealed that there was confusion in class because not all learners could use Lenje and also not all learners could use Tonga hence the learners were caught wanting in both languages. Therefore, it was important that the teaching of literacy should be done in the English language which should be learnt by both groups of learners in class. These findings are in tandem with Lungu and Mkandawire (2022) and Kafusha et al. (2021) who indicate that there were multiple factors contributing to low performance in reading comprehension which included lack of knowledge by some teachers on the procedure for teaching reading comprehension and therefore, taught poorly. Some pupils had challenges reading comprehension text due to illiteracy, lack of understanding, limited fluency, low reading culture, limited vocabulary, poor motivation, limited reading time in class against long passages, inappropriate teaching methods by the teacher and lack of learning and teaching materials. These findings agree with multiple studies about low reading culture,

limited resources, limited of functionally illiterate people and vocabulary (Silavwe et al., 2019; Mkandawire et al., 2019; Chella et al., 2023; Mkandawire et al., 2022; and Chileshe et al., 2018).

The findings of the study indicated that some parents made preference to the use of English as a medium of teaching literacy mainly because of its international status, grade seven exams being written in English and that children are more exposed to English because they watch TV programmes in English. The findings are supported by Nojea (2018) whose results demonstrated that English is a necessity in a multilingual and multicultural country because of the highlighted unifying character of English and the prestigious position it is accorded by the government. English is not only an official language in Zambia but also a lingua franca spoken as a foreign language and just like a mother tongue.

The findings of the study revealed that English Language has an opaque orthography as there is no grapheme-phoneme correspondence while Zambian Languages have a transparent orthography where each grapheme corresponds to individual sounds and the number of graphemes is almost equal to phonemes. Literacy and language instructions would be much easier for learners in a transparent orthography than opaque. English has certain parts of speech such as articles (determiners) which are not there in Zambian Languages. The study recommended that teachers in early grade classes should understand the variation of English and select Zambian languages well in their regions to guide learners in schools. The findings are in line with Mkandawire (2022) who established that some similarities and differences between English and the Zambian languages have an implication on the teaching of literacy and in primary schools. Further results of the study revealed that some parents who opposed the selection of Tonga made preference for mother tongue use instead of Tonga because they see Tonga as an alien language to their children. They argued that it would have been better if their children were given an opportunity to learn using their own mother tongue instead of teaching them using Tonga which is an alien language. The study results are supported by Simachenya and Mambwe (2023) whose findings seem to counter the traditional expectation in education set ups in Zambia in which highly formalized monolingual languages are to be applied in teaching and learning processes. Therefore, the assumption which language policy formulators make regarding

the choice of language(s) to be used in a particular locality for a specific function is contested.

The findings established that the selection of Tonga made preference to the mixing of English with the mother tongue, Lenje. It was found that parents would have preferred children learning using their mother tongue alongside English. The findings are in tandem with the study of Tackie-Ofosu, Mahama, Vandyck, Kumador and Toku (2015) whose results showed that the use of mother tongue language is very vital in communication with the children and can leverage learning when used as a familiar language of instruction in school alongside English language in multilingual settings. It can therefore be concluded that using mother tongue alongside English gives the native people (parents) a sense of preserving culture through language being part of the education system.

Results of the study revealed that it would have been better to consider Lenje as a language of instruction for preserving their culture. English would have been carried alongside Lenje for purposes of national unity. The results of the study were supported by Fleschenberg, Holz and Waheed (2023) a study in Pakistan whose findings established that the lived reality of multilingualism in everyday practices used a colonial language as a unifier. In view of the foregoing, English seemed neutral for Chibombo District. It is therefore, concluded that translanguaging English and Lenje would make the stakeholders (parents) feel not robbed off the culture norms embedded in their language hence, fostering a sense of belonging and culture preservation and their language being part of the education system.

The foregoing discussions were not in line with the second principle of the Socio-Cultural Theory of Vygotsky (1978) which states that social interaction plays an important role in learning. Vygotsky postulated that social interaction promotes individual student learning and development when supported by familiar social constructs such as language. Through use of language in social interactions, children learn general concepts and principles that can be applied to new tasks and problems (Scott and Palincsar, 2013). Similarly, Chew, Nyimbili and Mwinsa (2023) echoed that learners construct knowledge in the social context that they already know. It was therefore clear that the Tonga language teachers used to facilitate learning in the classrooms (social interaction) did not promote learning

because the language was not known by most learners. From the discussion, it is concluded that teachers were unable to incorporate the principle of social interaction because the Tonga language hindered meaningful interaction that could have facilitated learning among learners.

### **5.3 Challenges faced when teaching Tonga in lower primary schools of Chibombo District.**

The study established that there was a lack of adequate materials for use when implementing teaching literacy. These materials included books for teachers and learners' posing serious challenge as the new language policy was being implemented. Xu and Krulatz (2023) supported the findings whose results showed that multilingualism lacked adequate teaching competences and systemic support. In view of the findings, it was established that the lack of multilingual teaching materials and teaching support can indeed affect the teaching and learning process. This concludes that there is need to develop more materials in native languages to ease implementation of the language policy.

The study found that teachers bemoaned the complexity of the Tonga which is being taught to learners as the policy is being implemented. It was observed that the Tonga used in the curriculum was too complex compared to the Tonga which was used as a play language in the different communities of Chibombo district. The findings of the study were supported by Hanzooma and Musonda (2024) whose results divulged that there were differences between the Chitonga spoken in Livingstone District and the one used in schools and books. Both teachers and pupils were not proficient in the standard Chitonga. Similarly, Mwanza (2012) argued that although generally most pupils could speak and understand Nyanja, the variety of Cinyanja spoken in Lusaka was remarkably different from the Cinyanja officially recognised in schools which is also the language of the text books. As a result, pupils in Lusaka could not function in Cinyanja according to expectation as the Cinyanja used was foreign to them. This is the reason why as argued earlier, there is need to relook at language zoning, and avoid the arbitrary association of one language to a wider locality without being sensitive to the language reality and practices of the people of the same area as is the case of Chibombo District where Tonga is a regional language but not the common native familiar and language play.

Findings of the study revealed that challenges that have to do with difficulties in translating certain English words into Tonga were common. This was common especially in technical subjects such as Creative and Technology Studies (CTS) and in integrated sciences. The findings are further supported by Nyimbili and Mwanza (2021) who also indicated that the teaching of literacy using translanguaging practices in a grade 1 multilingual class was associated with challenges like the mismatch between the language of instruction and dominant learner's familiar languages that existed in the classroom. With the foregoing, this can largely be caused by learners coming on transfer from other regions with different languages. The findings in the study further indicated that there were challenges to do with word pronunciation and mother tongue interference. The teachers were not familiar with the language used and feared this would affect how they taught the learners.

The study revealed further that the other challenge was over enrolment in classes as there were more than 82 students in the literacy classes coupled with a different language of instruction. Implementing the policy was not easy as the teachers and learners were found to be on different language fronts and failed to make sense in their classes and literacy lessons. The findings of the study were supported by Anney, Mmasa and Ndunguru (2016) whose study established the approach of teaching literacy in Tanzania is not implemented as intended because of the bigger number of enrolment of pupils in one class. It is evident and conclusive that translanguaging when well utilised by the teachers was able to enhance learner understanding and every learner would perceive classroom instructions in their familiar language provided the teacher carefully chooses to code switch among languages that are widely understood by learners.

#### **5.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented the discussion of finding in line with the literature presented in chapter two of this study. Themes from the research objective have been used to guide the discussion together with the theory guiding the study. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendation of the study.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.0. Overview**

The previous chapter presented the discussion of the findings. This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendation of the study on the use of Citonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District. It also gives the recommendations and the suggestions for further research.

### **6.1. Conclusion**

Conclusions of the study can be drawn from the previously presented discussion of findings in chapter five (5) on the use of Citonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District. The following conclusions are made:

The first objective established the use of Citonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District. The study established through interviews that teachers had positive perceptions about the effectiveness of using Tonga as a medium of instruction in lower primary school classroom however, the findings from the observed lessons, demonstrated that using Tonga as a medium of instruction disadvantaged the learners in the following ways: learners struggled to develop linguistic and cognitive domains due to not understanding the language of instruction fully. The learners also lost cultural pride and identity because they got entangled between the Tonga norms and that of their own native languages. Learners also struggled in effective communication and expression because they did not fully acquire the skills of language expression in Tonga and also lacked behind in their own native language due to code switching. Using Tonga in classroom lessons also did not promote inclusiveness and equity in the education process of learners in Chibombo District. The study concludes that the use of Tonga as a medium of instruction in lower classes in primary schools of Chibombo District was not as effective as perceived by lower primary school teachers. This was so because the study discovered that Tonga, though prescribed as a regional language in the curriculum, was not a familiar language of play to most learners in Chibombo District.

The subsequent objective sought to establish the views of the stakeholders on the use of Tonga as the medium of teaching in the lower primary school grades of Chibombo District.

The study established that the parents viewed Tonga not to be well placed in Chibombo District schools as a medium of instruction in the learning process of learners in lower primary school classes. The findings also established that parents preferred children to learn using the mother tongue (Lenje) alongside English as opposed to using Tonga because the native familiar language of play was Lenje. It was also found that parents viewed Tonga to be an alien language for their children hence, preferring to use Lenje as a medium of instruction in the teaching and learning process. The findings of the study further established that language zoning in Zambia is problematic because the sampled schools in Chibombo District evidenced that the majority of the pupils spoke Lenje, Bema and Nyanja as opposed to the official regional language, Tonga. This is seen to be a deterrent factor to quality access to education to learners who come from Lenje homes. From the findings, there was therefore, need to provide effective language policy guidelines which would help all speakers of different languages to have access to quality education. It can therefore be concluded from the foregoing findings, that Tonga was not a relevant language of instruction in the primary schools of Chibombo district hence there was need for teachers to continue translanguaging to break the linguistic barriers and enable learners to have access to quality education through effective communication and social interactions.

The last objective looked at Challenges lower primary school teachers faced when teaching Tonga in lower primary schools of Chibombo District. The study established that schools lacked adequate materials for use when teaching literacy. For example, books for teachers and learners written in Chitonga were very few if not none thus, posing serious challenges as the new language policy was being implemented. The study also found that the Tonga in the curriculum was too complex compared to the Tonga which was used as a play language in the different communities of Chibombo district. This still posed challenges of communication as both teachers and learners were not proficient in the standard Chitonga in the textbooks even when they are from Tonga language homes. The study also revealed that it was a challenge for pupils who moved on transfers across regions to adapt to a new language which was different from the one they were learning. With the foregoing, this came along with the associated translanguaging challenges like the mismatch between the language of instruction and dominant learners' familiar languages that existed in the

classroom. From the findings, it can be concluded that language zoning should be reviewed to eliminate the arbitrary association of one language to a wider locality without being sensitive to the language reality and practices of the people of the same area as is the case of Chibombo District where Tonga is a regional language but not the common native familiar and language play.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

Arising from the offered conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Ministry of Education (MoE) to revise the language zoning policy to accommodate translanguaging (native familiar languages) of play to be used as a medium of instruction in lower grades because children. This will help the speakers of such languages realise that their languages have a place in the education system, and they will work to develop the languages.
- b. Schools to encourage Code switching between English and language of play or mother tongue in lower grades of primary school for quality cognition and linguistic development. This will help the learners find their learning flexible and interesting since the knowledge barrier will be broken as well as the language barriers.
- c. Ministry of Education (MoE) to publish more literature in local languages. This will provide adequate literacy aids in native familiar languages and break the barrier of translating English words into native words.
- d. Ministry of Education (MoE) to build more schools. This will help to cab over-enrolment especially in rural districts.

## **6.3. Suggestions for Further Research The researcher recommended the following for further research:**

- i. Examining the Impact of Familiar Language Instruction on Literacy Development in Multilingual Settings: A Case Study of Chibombo District, Zambia".
- ii. "Exploring the Efficacy of Using Local Languages in Teaching Literacy: Insights from Grades One to Four in Chibombo District, Zambia".

#### **6.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the conclusion and recommendation of the study on the use of Citonga as medium of instruction in early grade teaching and learning in Chibombo District. It also gives the recommendations and the suggestions for further research.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Guide Teachers

Date.....

Sex: Male [ ] Female

[ ]

Time.....

Professional Qualification: Certificate [ ], Diploma [ ], Degree [ ]

Working Experience: ..... Years

Grade Currently Teaching: Grade [1], [2], [3], [4]

**Objective one:** To establish the effects of using Tonga as the medium of instruction in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District.

1. What is the familiar language spoken in this area?
2. What language do you use when teaching literacy in class?
3. How proficient are you in the language you use when teaching literacy in class?
4. How do you know that learners in your class, on average, understand the language of instruction used when teaching literacy?
5. How does the use of
  - a. Unfamiliar language of play as a medium of instruction when teaching literacy impact on the learners' learning process?
  - b. Familiar language of play as a medium of instruction when teaching literacy impact on the learners' learning process?
6. Explain the challenges teachers and learners face when teaching and learning using
  - a. Familiar language when teaching literacy to your class?
  - b. Unfamiliar language when teaching literacy to your class?

**Objective two:** To analyse the stake holders views on use of Chitonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District

1. What positive things have you experienced using Tonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District?

2. What negative things have you experienced using Tonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District?
3. Which language do most learners use in their everyday social interaction?
4. How do you compare using Tonga Vs other native familiar language in teaching literacy to lower grades in primary schools of Chibombo District?
5. How do you perceive other stakeholders views (parents and learners) on the use of Tonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District?

**Objective three:** to determine challenges faced when learning Chitonga in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo

1. What challenges do you face when teaching learners Literacy using Tonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District?
2. Are the materials used for planning literacy lessons written in the language of instruction (Tonga) used when teaching literacy lessons?
3. How best do you deal with learners who are not familiar with the language of instruction used in the teaching and learning process of Literacy?
4. How do you propose to resolve such challenges?
5. What kinds of support to you receive from other stakeholders about using Tonga to teach literacy lessons?

**Note:** Extension questions will be included as needed to elicit more information and clarity.

## Appendix 2: Interview Guide Parents

Date.....

Sex: Male [ ] Female

[ ]

Time.....

Occupation.....

Grade of child ..... Grade [1], [2], [3], [4]

**Objective one:** To establish the effects of using Tonga as the medium of instruction in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District.

1. For how long have you been staying in this area?
2. As a parent, are you aware of the policy on teaching in the familiar language?
3. How do you understand the policy and its implications?
4. Which language is the familiar language in your area of residency and your home?
5. How does teaching in familiar language benefit your child/children?

**Objective two:** To analyse the stake holders views on use of Chitonga as the medium of teaching in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo District

1. How do you understand literacy as a subject to be taught to learners or your children at school?
2. How does the use of Tonga when teaching literacy to your children affect you as a parent or guardian?
3. How would you describe the performance of your child/children in literacy from the time the policy has being introduced?
4. From your interaction with teachers and learners, what are their views on the teaching and learning in Tonga language?

**Objective three:** to determine challenges faced when learning Chitonga in grades one to four in primary schools of Chibombo

1. What challenges do you face as a result of teaching using Tonga as a medium of instruction when teaching literacy?

2. How do you propose to resolve such challenges?
3. From your interaction with teachers and learners, what are their views on the teaching and learning in Tonga language?
4. What kinds of support to you receive from other stakeholders about using Tonga to teach literacy lessons?
5. Lastly, in your opinion, do you think the policy of teaching in familiar language should be encouraged in schools?

### Appendix 3: lesson observation guide

#### Effects of using Tonga as the medium of instruction when teaching learners in their first four grades of primary school

1. How well does your lesson go for you when you use translanguaging during your teaching?
2. How beneficial is it from learners when you use other languages other than igitonga?
3. How do learners participate when other languages are used in literacy lesson?
4. What has been so interesting about integrating other languages in your lesson?
5. What have you learnt so far from the classroom teaching you have been conducting about using the learner's Language alongside the target language?

#### CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

##### A. BASIC INFORMATION

|                    |    |    |    |
|--------------------|----|----|----|
| DATE               |    |    |    |
| SCHOOL             |    |    |    |
| CLASS              |    |    |    |
| YEAR               |    |    |    |
| LESSON DURATION    |    |    |    |
| NUMBER OF STUDENTS | M: | F: | T: |
| SUBJECT            |    |    |    |
| TEACHER            |    |    |    |

##### B. GENERAL CLASS OBSERVATION

| INDICATOR                     | OBSERVATION | CLARIFICATION |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Learning environment          |             |               |
| Sufficient learning materials |             |               |

|                                  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Students mainly Spoken languages |  |  |
| Teachers' own language           |  |  |
| Teacher Pupil relation           |  |  |
| Language of instruction          |  |  |

### C. ON OBSERVATION INDICATOR OBSERVATION CLARIFICATION

| INDICATOR                                                     | OBSERVATION | CLARIFICATION |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Teacher effectively uses language of instruction              |             |               |
| Learners fluently uses language of instruction                |             |               |
| Teacher is strict in the use of language of instruction       |             |               |
| Teacher accepts feedback from learners in different languages |             |               |
| Translanguaging methods the teacher is using                  |             |               |
| Teacher stimulates learner interaction in the lesson          |             |               |
| Appropriate materials used in the lesson                      |             |               |
| Relevance and quality of examples                             |             |               |
| Quality of questions asked                                    |             |               |
| Learner participation                                         |             |               |
| Attainment of objectives                                      |             |               |

|                                    |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Teacher masterly of the<br>content |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|

**GENERAL OBSERVATION**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**COMMENT**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

#### **Appendix 4: Letter of Consent to Lower Primary Teachers and Parents**

My name is Mercy Katatisha and I am a student studying at the University of Zambia pursuing a Master of Education in Literacy, Language and Applied Linguistics, Lusaka, Zambia. The title of the research study is: *“The use of Citonga as a Medium of Instruction in Early Grade Teaching and Learning in Chibombo District of Zambia.”* You have been identified to participate in this research study because the research topic has a direct implication to curriculum interpretation and classroom instructional planning. To gather data, I will use the following data collection methods which will include you in providing contribution to my study. Thus, interviews will be used to solicit information from you.

#### **Audio recording**

The researcher will record all proceedings with your permission on the subject matter. All information collected will be secured.

Please note that:

- You will not be disadvantaged if you choose not to participate or if you chose to withdraw from the study at any stage.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, there is no financial benefit.
- Data collected will be used for research purposes only.
- Research findings will be discussed with you if you so choose.
- The supervisor for my research study is Dr. Friday Nyimbili. His contact details are as follows: 0967050978 (cell), email: [nyimbili2012@gmail.com](mailto:nyimbili2012@gmail.com)
- Should you have no objection with the conditions mentioned above, please fill in the space below.

I..... (Full names of participant) here by confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project. I consent to participate in the research study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time if I wish to.

### Appendix 6: Time Plan

| SCHEDULE OF<br>ACTIVITY                       | FEB<br>2023 | FEB-<br>MAR<br>2023 | JUN-<br>JUL<br>2023 | AUG-<br>DEC<br>2023 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Development of Research Topic and proposal.   |             |                     |                     |                     |
| Submission of proposal for approval.          |             |                     |                     |                     |
| Pretesting instruments (piloting interviews). |             |                     |                     |                     |
| Data collection.                              |             |                     |                     |                     |
| Data analysis                                 |             |                     |                     |                     |
| Report writing                                |             |                     |                     |                     |
| Submission of report for examination          |             |                     |                     |                     |

### Appendix 7: Proposed Budget

| S/N | Description of item           | Quantity | Unit price (ZKW) | Total (ZKW)    |
|-----|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|----------------|
| 1.  | Reams of paper                | 03       | 100              | 300            |
| 2.  | Pens                          | 04       | 5                | 20             |
| 3.  | Transport (Fuel)              | 4 trips  | 200              | 800            |
| 4.  | Printing of proposal          | 2        | 150              | 300            |
| 5.  | Binding of proposal           | 2        | 40               | 80             |
| 6.  | Printing research instruments |          |                  | 200            |
| 7.  | Printing of research reports  | 4        | 300              | 1200           |
| 8.  | Binding of reports            | 4        | 500              | 2000           |
| 9.  | Food/ snacks and drinks       |          |                  | 350            |
| 10  | Contingency money             |          |                  | 500            |
|     | <b>Grand Total</b>            |          |                  | <b>K5, 750</b> |

## Approval of study



## THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

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### APPROVAL OF STUDY

**IORG No. 0005376**

**HSSREC IRB No. 00006464**

**REF NO. HSSREC-2024-JAN-046**

31<sup>st</sup> January, 2024

Ms Mercy Katatisha  
The University of Zambia  
P. O. Box  
**LUSAKA**

Dear Ms Katatisha

**RE: “THE EFFECT OF EMPLOYING THE FAMILIAR LANGUAGE TO TEACH LITERACY IN  
GRADE ONE TO FOUR IN A MULTILINGUAL SETTING: THE CASE OF CHIBOMBO  
DISTRICT OF ZAMBIA”**

Reference is made to your submission of the protocol captioned above. The HSSREC resolved to approve this study and your participation as Principal Investigator for a period of one year.

| REVIEW TYPE               | ORDINARY REVIEW                                  | APPROVAL NO. HSSREC:-<br>2024- JAN - 046       |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Approval and Expiry Date  | Approval Date:<br>31 <sup>st</sup> January, 2024 | Expiry Date: 30 <sup>th</sup><br>January, 2025 |
| Protocol Version and Date | Version - Nil.                                   | 30 <sup>th</sup> January, 2025                 |

|                                               |                |                |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Information Sheet,<br>Consent Forms and Dates | □ English.     | To be provided |
| Consent form ID and Date                      | Version - Nil  | To be provided |
| Recruitment Materials                         | Nil            | Nil            |
| Other Study Documents                         | Questionnaire. |                |
| Number of Participants<br>Approved for Study  |                |                |

Specific conditions will apply to this approval. As Principal Investigator it is your responsibility to ensure that the contents of this letter are adhered to. If these are not adhered to, the approval may be suspended. Should the study be suspended, study sponsors and other regulatory authorities will be informed.

### CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

- No participant may be involved in any study procedure prior to the study approval or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated or Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) must be reported to HSSREC within 5 days.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to HSSREC within 5 working days.
- All recruitment materials must be approved by HSSREC prior to being used.
- Principal investigators are responsible for initiating Continuing Review proceedings. HSSREC will only approve a study for a period of 12 months.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to renew his/her ethics approval through a renewal application to HSSREC.
- Where the PI desires to extend the study after expiry of the study period, documents for study extension must be received by HSSREC at least 30 days before the expiry date. This is for the purpose of facilitating the review process. Documents received within 30 days after expiry will be labelled “late submissions” and will incur a penalty fee of K500.00. No study shall be renewed whose documents are submitted for renewal 30 days after expiry of the certificate.
- Every 6 (six) months a progress report form supplied by The University of Zambia Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee as an IRB must be filled in and submitted to us. There is a penalty of K500.00 for failure to submit the report.

- When closing a project, the PI is responsible for notifying, in writing or using the Research Ethics and Management Online (REMO), both HSSREC and the National Health Research Authority (NHRA) when ethics certification is no longer required for a project.
- In order to close an approved study, a Closing Report must be submitted in writing or through the REMO system. A Closing Report should be filed when data collection has ended and the study team will no longer be using human participants or animals or secondary data or have any direct or indirect contact with the research participants or animals for the study.
- Filing a closing report (rather than just letting your approval lapse) is important as it assists HSSREC in efficiently tracking and reporting on projects. Note that some funding agencies and sponsors require a notice of closure from the IRB which had approved the study and can only be generated after the Closing Report has been filed.
- A reprint of this letter shall be done at a fee.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by HSSREC by way of an application for an amendment prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk (but must still be reported for approval). Modifications will include any change of investigator/s or site address or methodology and methods. Many modifications entail minimal risk adjustments to a protocol and/or consent form and can be made on an Expedited basis (via the IRB Chair). Some examples are: format changes, correcting spelling errors, adding key personnel, minor changes to questionnaires, recruiting and changes, and so forth. Other, more substantive changes, especially those that may alter the risk-benefit ratio, may require Full Board review. In all cases, except where noted above regarding subject safety, any changes to any protocol document or procedure must first be approved by HSSREC before they can be implemented.

Should you have any questions regarding anything indicated in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at the above indicated address.

On behalf of HSSREC, we would like to wish you all the success as you carry out your study.

Yours faithfully,



*Dr. J. I. Ziwa*

**DR. J. I. Ziwa**

**CHAIRPERSON THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE - IRB**

CC: Director, Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies  
Assistant Director (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies  
Registrar (Research), Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies

Assistant