

**TEACHERS' AND PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO
PUPILS' POOR PERFORMANCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING IN GRADE TWELVE
FRENCH EXAMINATIONS.**

BY

VERONICA NAMASIKU KALIMA

**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment for the Award
of the Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.**

LUSAKA

2012

**TEACHERS' AND PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO
PUPILS' POOR PERFORMANCE IN COMPOSITIONG WRITING IN GRADE
TWELVE FRENCH EXAMINATIONS.**

BY

VERONICA NAMASIKU KALIMA

**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment for the Award
of the Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.**

LUSAKA

2012

DECLARATION

I, Veronica Namasiku Kalima ,do here declare that this dissertation is a product of my own efforts and it has never been previously submitted to any University to merit a degree other than that of which I am candidate.

Signature of author.....

Veronica Namasiku Kalima

Date.....

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The University of Zambia here approves this dissertation by Veronica Namasiku Kalima as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.

Signed.....Date.....

Signed.....Date.....

Signed.....Date.....

COPYRIGHT

All rights Reserved. No part of this dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without a prior written permission of the author or the University of Zambia.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is a dedication to my dear husband Mumbuwa koota for his unconditional support. I also dedicate it to all my brothers, sisters and in-laws for being there for me always.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of this dissertation is owed to Dr P.C Manchishi, my supervisor. I am deeply grateful for his patience and tireless guidance from the beginning of the research to its completion.

I also would like to extend my gratitude to the faculty in the department of language and social sciences in the school of Education of the University of Zambia (UNZA), whose criticism contributed positively to this research.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the curriculum Development Center, Examinations council of Zambia and the Ministry of Education for providing me with information that was very necessary for the research.

Special thanks to teachers of French in Lusaka, the students at the University of Zambia and Alliance Française in Lusaka from whom I got the data that was needed in the research.

A LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

1. CDC-Curriculum Development Center
2. CPD-Continuous Professional Development
3. ECZ-Examination Council of Zambia
4. MOE-Ministry of Education
5. SESO- Senior Education standard officer
6. UNZA-University of Zambia
7. ZAFT-Zambia Association of French Teachers

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
Table1:Motivators.....	29
Table2: Level of beginning French.....	30
Table3: Highest grade obtained.....	30
Table4: Favorite component.....	31
Table5: Most difficult component.....	31
Table6: Attitudes	40
Table7: Frequency of Periods of French.....	40
Table8: Factors contributing to poor performance.....	41

ABSTRACT

Since 2000 the performance of pupils in French composition has been deteriorating. Research by Habimana (2010) revealed that the pupils who were studying French were finding composition writing most difficult among the four components of the French paper. The Examination council of Zambia's reports also indicated that the pupils' performance in composition writing was still poor (ECZ:2009;2010;2011). No attempt had been made to establish the factors contributing to the poor performance in pupils' in composition writing in French in Zambia. Hence the need for this study.

The research design was both a case study and survey. Face to face interviews and lesson observations were held, questionnaires were also administered as methods of data collection. The research population included all the former pupils of French who were studying French at UNZA and those at Alliance Francaise in Lusaka, all the teachers of French in Lusaka and the French specialist at the Examination Council of Zambia, the French Specialist at the curriculum development center and the language specialist (SESO) in Lusaka District.

The sample was 80 former pupils, 10 teachers and 03 officials. The data collected from the teachers and education managers as well as lesson observations. The data was transcribed and presented as raw data, it was later analyzed thematically. The data collected quantitatively was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) in order to come up with frequency tables.

The findings of the study of the factors contributing to the pupils' poor performance in composition writing in French were ; the basic-high school policy, insufficient time of learning, teachers' inadequate preparation, insufficient and unsuitable teaching and learning materials, lack of motivation, inadequate teachers and pupils' negative attitude towards French. Other factors were; lack of reading culture among pupils, lack of school of support from the education managers and the French Government.

In view of the above factors, some recommendations were made; The Ministry of Education should reintroduce French in basic schools. The schools that offer French should consider

increasing the periods for French to four per week of which one will be for composition. They should also enhance Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers of French. They should also provide a variety of teaching materials for composition. The curriculum development center should revise the syllabus for French so that it suits the Zambian child. The examination council of Zambia should revise the format for examining composition in French so that it is in line with what is obtaining in the class.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	page
DECLARATION.....	
CERFICATE OF APPROVAL.....	
COPYRIGHT.....	
DEDICATION.....	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Overview.....	1
1.1Background.....	1
1.2Statement of the problem.....	2
1.3Purpose of the study.....	2
1.4 Research objectives.....	3
1.5 Research questions.....	3

1.6 Significance of the study.....	3
1.7 Delimitation.....	3
1.8 Limitations of the study.....	4
1.9 Operational definitions.....	4

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview.....	6
2.1 conceptual framework.....	6
2.2 composition writing.....	10
2.3 Teaching composition	13
2.4 Studies done on composition writing in French.....	14

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview.....	20
3.1 Research design.....	20
3.2 Target population.....	20
3.3 Research sample and sampling procedure.....	20
3.4 Research instruments.....	21
3.5 Data collection procedure.....	21
3.6 Data analysis.....	23
3.7 Ethical consideration.....	23

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview.....	24
4.1 Question one.....	24
4.2 Question two	32
4.3 Question three.....	38
4.4 Question four.....	40
4.5 Question five	42

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0 Overview.....	45
5.1 Factors contributing to pupils' poor performance in composition writing.....	45
5.2 How composition writing was taught in schools.....	50
5.3The attitude of teachers towards teaching composition writing.....	51
5.4 The attitude of pupils towards learning composition writing.....	51
5.5 How composition writing is examined.....	52

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview.....	54
6.1 Conclusion.....	54
6.2 Recommendations.....	54
6.3 Recommendation for future research.....	55
REFERENCES.....	56

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for pupils.....	58
Appendix B: Interview guide for teachers.....	60
Appendix C: Interview guide for Education managers (SESO).....	62
Appendix D: Interview guide for Education managers(French Specialist).....	63
Appendix E: Interview guide for Education manager (CDC-specialist).....	64

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Over view

This chapter presents the research background, statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, the study's objectives and questions, delimitation, limitations of the study and operational definitions.

1.1 Background

Before independence, French was taught to white pupils in Northern Rhodesia. It was introduced into the schools for Africans in the 1950s. It was first offered at Munali boys' and Chipembi Girls'. (ZAFT Report:1990). After independence, French was taught in almost all the Government schools. The introduction of French in schools served commercial, social and economic purposes. The number of pupils taking French increased in the 1980s and 1990s (Machinyise:2009). The private schools began to teach French in the early 1990 after Zambia's liberalization and privatization of the economy. The performance of the pupils in French was generally good. A negative change in the performance of the pupils especially in Government schools became evident in 2000s. For instance the general performance in French in 2003 and 2007 had been less than 50%(ECZ:2008).

An analysis of the 2008-2011 grade twelve French results indicated that, there had been a considerable decline in the pupils' performance in French. The chief examiners' reports (ECZ: 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011) highlighted that the performance especially in composition writing had not been impressive.

The performance had been very bad. Most of the pupils were simply reproducing the question and most of them do not attempt answering the question. The teachers must spend more time teaching composition. Moreover, the teachers must guide the pupils on how to answer questions. Teachers should concentrate on teaching tenses especially the future and the past. It is very sad that our pupils fail to write a simple thing such as a letter. These teachers of French should pay more attention to letter writing (ECZ: 2011: 2010: 2009: 2008).

Habimana's (2009) study also revealed that of the four components of the grade twelve French paper, pupils found the composition part most difficult. A group of Eighty-two (82) pupils were asked in terms of what components they found most difficult. Four, representing 4.9% of the participants indicated that reading a passage was most difficult for them. Fifteen, representing 18.6% of the participants indicated that reading comprehension was most difficult. Twenty seven, representing 32.9% of the participants indicated that listening comprehension was difficult. The remaining thirty six, representing 43.9% of the participants indicated that composition and structure were difficult parts of the grade twelve French examinations paper. (Habimana: 2009). This report clearly shows that most of the pupils found the composition component most difficult. The question then was why poor performance in French composition writing?

1.2 Statement of the problem

Studies such as Habimana's (2010) and Machinyise's (2009) as well as the ECZ Reports (2008; 2009; 2010; 2011) have revealed that in the last four years, the performance of French in the public schools has declined. One of the indicators of the fallen performance was the low grades by pupils in composition writing in French grade twelve examinations. The composition component has been singled out as one of the components of the examination with list performance. Factors leading to such a scenario are not known. In a question form, our research problem was "What are the factors contributing to poor performance in composition writing in grade twelve examinations?"

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish the factors that were contributing to pupils' poor performance in composition writing in grade twelve French examinations.

1.4 Research objectives

This study sought to:

1. establish the factors that are contributing to the poor performance of grade twelve pupils in composition writing in French.
2. establish how composition in French is taught.

3. ascertain the attitude of teachers towards teaching composition.
4. ascertain the attitude of pupils towards composition writing.
5. establish how composition writing is examined.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are the factors that are contributing to the poor performance of grade twelve pupils in composition writing?
2. How is composition taught?
3. What is the attitude of the teachers towards teaching composition writing?
4. What is the attitude of pupils towards learning composition writing?
5. How is composition examined?

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of this research may be used by the specialists of French at the Examination council of Zambia and Curriculum Development Center to improve the performance of pupils. It is also hoped that teachers of French may use the research findings to introduce effective measures to improve teaching of composition writing skills. The study may contribute to the literature on teaching composition writing in French.

1.7 Delimitation

The study was conducted in Lusaka District because Lusaka district has the largest number of schools offering French.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The study was done in two schools in Lusaka District; hence, results on this aspect may not be generalized to others schools or districts because there could be other factors that may affect results.

1.9 Operational definitions

1. **Composition:** A composition is a carefully structured piece of written work whose aim is to communicate clearly some ideas.

2. **Continuous professional Development:** Program designed to provide an opportunity to teachers to share and discuss developments and problems they are facing in their profession.
3. **Examination:** A set or a set of tests in a given subject which could be compulsory or optional. It is normally conducted by an institution or a body. The examination is held at the end of an education cycle in order to confer a title, certificate or select a candidate against a given average into a higher level of an education system.
4. **Factor:** A fact or situation which influences the result of something.
5. **Foreign Language:** A language that has come from outside a particular country.
6. **Mother tongue:** A language that a child first acquires.
7. **Native language:** A language spoken by a group of people in certain region of a country.
8. **Second language (L2):** A language that an individual acquires after his or her first language.
9. **Literacy:** The ability to read, write and count.

Summary

This chapter has presented the introduction of the study. It has discussed the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation and operational definitions. The next chapter presents the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This section presents the literature review relevant to the topic of study. It is divided into four parts. The first part presents the conceptual framework. The second component describes composition writing, that is, the parts and types of a composition. The third part discusses the methods of teaching principles of composition. The last part reviews studies on factors contributing to pupils' poor performance in composition writing.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Literacy is the ability to read and write. Reading and writing are inseparable components of literacy (Baton:2007;<http://www.k12reader.com>). For anyone to be a competent reader and writer, he or she requires the fundamental literacy skills. Literacy skills are acquired even before pupils begin attending formal school. However, for most Zambian pupils learning to write composition in French, they begin acquiring literacy skills in French when they are already in secondary school. The more conversant they are with the skills, the better readers and writers they become for reading and writing are interrelated. This study has used the reading and writing interrelationship as a framework to explain what one needs in order to be able to write a composition in French. With this understanding, we shall be able to relate to the factors that are contributing to the pupils' poor performance in composition writing.

There are six literacy skills which make the building blocks of reading and writing. These skills include vocabulary, print motivation, print awareness, letter knowledge, phonological awareness and narrative skills (Clay:1991). Research such as Clay's, indicates that pupils with more of these literacy skills were better able to benefit from the reading instructions they receive when they are in school. It would be logical to state that such children would perform well in composition writing because they have the prerequisites for writing.

Vocabulary is the knowing of the names of things. It is an essential skill for learners of a language (Clay: 1991). The richer the pupil's vocabulary in French is, the better they are in expressing themselves in terms of composition writing .When pupils have a rich vocabulary,

they have chance to express themselves clearly and communicate whatever they want to whoever will read what the pupils write. The lesser the pupils' vocabulary is the more the pupils will struggle to write a composition in French.

Print awareness is the interest in printed materials such as books, news papers, advertisements, posters and magazine. This awareness involves learning basic rules of written language. Print awareness is not separated from print motivation. The later is triggered by having an environment that is rich in literature, posters, and advertisements written in French or people writing French. Such an environment will stimulate the pupils to learn to write. However without the pupils being aware and motivated their composition writing is likely to be of low quality.

The fourth and fifth skills are interrelated. The fourth is letter or alphabet knowledge. It includes learning that, letters have names and are different from each other; moreover, specific sounds go with each specific letter (Clay: 1999). An example of letter knowledge is a learner's ability to tell the names of the letters such as e, a and i, and tell what sound they make. The example given makes alphabet knowledge close to Phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the smaller sounds in words. It is the ability to put two word chunks together to make a word (Clay: 1999.)The pupils writing composition need to know the various letters and sounds so that they write the correct words, sentences and finally whole paragraphs which will make interesting compositions .If pupils cannot differentiate the various French sounds made by a certain combination of letters, the chances of them writing a sensible sentences are very slim. It also follows that they cannot write acceptable compositions in French.

The sixth of the essential skills is the narrative Skill. This is being able to understand and tell the flow of events, or describe things orderly. This skill enables pupils to write an organized compositions that flow orderly making the reader understand what the writer was trying to bring forward in a piece of written work. These basic skills play a big role in the pupils writing abilities for they are the foundation of learning to write composition in any Language. The skills they acquire in Grade ten or perhaps eight, are the ones they use in the examination when they are asked to write composition in French. If the pupils do not have the skills, they are likely to have some problems in writing composition in French.

Writing is a method of representing language in visual or tactile form. Writing systems use sets of symbols to represent the sounds of speech, and may also have symbols for such things as punctuations and numerals. ([http://owl.english.perdue.edu/owl/resource/685/1/.](http://owl.english.perdue.edu/owl/resource/685/1/)) In case of composition writing in any language, it means making a paragraph or words using letters, numbers, characters as well as writing materials. It is from this kind of writing where the composition in French originates. If this combination of words, sentences, paragraphs, numbers and other character are not done properly, the pupils' performance in composition writing may not be satisfactory and may affect the grade twelve French examinations results.

A composition is a carefully structured piece of written work whose aim is to communicate clearly some ideas. A composition has three parts, these include an introduction, the main body and the conclusion (Turk & Kirkman:1982). The introduction is intended to draw the reader into the body of material to follow. It should begin with a general statement or question followed by a quick narrowing down to the main theme to be developed in the body. It sets the stage quickly, gives appropriate background, and then moves right into a transition sentence that will set up the reader for the body of the composition.

The introduction begins with several general sentences without specific examples about what one will be discussing, each sentence being more specific than the preceding one, narrowing down the topic more and more until one comes to the main statement, which should announce in one sentence, and in order the three (or more) things that one is going to discuss (Warriner & Griffin:1997).

The body of a composition is where the writer elaborates, defends, and expands the statement introduced in the first paragraph. The body should support the main contention with supporting evidence and possible objections. A good body presents both sides of a case, the pros and cons. As one makes a case, they should save the best argument for last. When presenting contrary views, one should set forth the strongest arguments in order to avoid being charged with erecting a "straw man."(Lynn:2010)

Each body paragraph must start with a topic sentence that announces the topic of the paragraph. It also needs to link this paragraph to the one that preceded it with some sort of transition. Everything in this paragraph deals with the topic announced in this first sentence, and nothing else. ((Warriner & Griffin:1997 .)

The main body can be sub divided into three components. The first part spells out the details of the composition. It has definitions or clarification of terms used in the text. The second part of the body is the illustration which involves the painting of a verbal pictures that helps make or clarify the writer's point(s). Well illustrated pieces are easier to read and follow than abstract ones. The third part of the body of a composition is the argument .This is where the writer gives the reasons, justifications, and rationales for the position or view she or he has taken in the introduction (Lynn: 2010). It is here that the reader will draw inferences and find the significance of assertions or claims being made. When moving from one sub-point or argument to another, the writer should use connecting or transitional words and phrases that enable the reader to easily understand the writer's thinking. The following is a partial list of logical connectors that one can use. For exceptions - but, alas, however, etc. Illustrations - for instance, for example, etc. Conclusions - thus, so, therefore, consequently, etc. Comparisons - similarly, by contrast, etc. Qualifications - yet, still, etc and additions – moreover, furthermore, etc.

The last part of a composition is the conclusion .In this part the writer makes the final appeal to the reader, a finishing, all-encompassing statement that wraps up the presentation in a powerful or even dramatic fashion. Normally a single paragraph, brief and concise, will suffice. The purpose of the conclusion is to leave the reader with an idea or thought that captures the essence of the whole presentation or essay (Hedge:1988).

The last three paragraphs have illustrated what one expects to find in a written in composition. When a composition has the three parts well written, they provide a thread line explaining what the composition is all about. This is what is expected of the pupils writing composition in French at Grade twelve examination.

There are several types of compositions. These include narrative, argumentative, descriptive and exposition compositions (<http://www.ominglot.com/writing>) .A narrative composition tells what happened. A descriptive composition uses adjectives to give a picture of what something is like. An exposition composition gives detailed description of a theory or a problem. It could also be a commentary on a written text. An argumentative composition is characterized by argument. All in all, these compositions have a common structure. They have an introduction, the main body and conclusion. The pupils are supposed to be exposed to how to write these types of

composition so that they can express themselves in various situations and also prepare themselves for the examination which will demand them to write a composition in any form.

2.2 Composition writing.

For one to write a good composition they must consider the principles of composition writing (Colman: 1977). The principles of composition writing include clustering or brainstorming, outlining and organization. They guide the teachers or examiners of what they should expect in a pupil's written composition and therefore evaluate the pupils' performance.

When writers cluster, they find inspiration in the connections between ideas .They can group the ideas according to how the ideas relate. Properly organized ideas help the writer see parts that need additional work or supporting details in order to boost the main ideas. Proper organization also shows ideas that are too emphasized and may need toning down.

Other principles of writing a composition are sense of purpose, tone and language. Each composition is written for a particular purpose. (Cloman:1977) Some compositions are written in order to inform or educate people. Other compositions are written to entertain or persuade a particular group of people. It is therefore important for writers to remember the purpose of their composition.

The purpose of writing a composition is usually related to the tone and the language one uses as they write. The tone is the combination of the purpose of writing and the language used. One should mind the words they use because a single word can change the tone of a paragraph or the whole essay (Turk & Kirkman: 1982). One should remember the audience for whom he or she is writing, and use a suitable language. The Wikipedia encyclopedia defines language as the most powerful tool used to understand our world through listening, reading and communicating our feelings, needs and desires through speaking and writing. If a writer has strong language skills, she or he has much better chances of communicating clearly and being understood. The language used could be formal, informal, and colloquial or slang depending on the purpose of writing and the people one is writing for .This means that one should build a rich vocabulary and write logically.

When we talk about effective composition writing, we often think about elements such as word choice, grammar and mechanics, and content or evidence. However, the really important part of effective writing and effective thinking is clarity and logical organization of ideas. There are several ways of organizing an essay. These include chronological, spatial, climactic, psychological and topical orders (Cummings: 2011: Colman: 1977)

In chronological order or time order, items, events, or ideas are arranged in the order in which they occur. This pattern is marked by such transitions as next, after the following morning and so on. Chronological order can suit different rhetorical modes or patterns of exposition (Cummings: 2011: Colman: 1977). It naturally fits in narration, because when we tell a story, we usually follow the order in which events occurred. Chronological order applies to a process in the same way, because when we describe or explain how something happens or works, we usually follow the order in which the events happen.

Another principle of organization is spatial order. In this pattern, items are arranged according to their physical position or relationships. In describing a shelf or desk, one might describe items on the left first, and then move gradually toward the right (Barnett: 2011). Describing a room, one might start with what she or he sees as they enter the door, then what they see as they step to the middle of the room, and finally the far side. In explaining some political or social problem, one might discuss first the concerns of the East Coast, then those of the Midwest, then those of the West Coast. Describing a person, one might start at the feet and move up to the head, or just the other way round. This pattern might use such transitions as to the left, far East, to the right of and so on. Spatial order is pretty common in description, but can also apply to examples, to some comparisons, some classifications, some narrations and other forms of exposition as well.

The third common principle of organization is climactic order or order of importance. In this pattern, items are arranged from least important to most important. Typical transitions would include smaller, small, big and so on (Barnett:2011). This is a flexible principle of organization, and may guide the organization of all or part of an example, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and description.

A variation of climactic order is called psychological order. This pattern or organization grows from our learning that readers or listeners usually give most attention to what comes at the

beginning and the end, and least attention to what is in the middle.(Barnett:2011). In this pattern, then, one decides what is most important and put it at the beginning or the end; next one chooses what is second most important and put it at the end or the beginning (whichever remains); the less important or powerful items are then arranged in the middle. If the order of importance followed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, with 5 being most important, psychological order might follow the order 4, 3, 1, 2, 5.

The fourth broad principle of organization is called topical order and this is sort of a catchall pattern. It refers to organization that emerges from the topic itself(Colman:1977).For example, a description of a computer might naturally involve the separate components of the central processing unit, the monitor, and the keyboard, while a discussion of a computer purchase might discuss needs, products, vendors, and service. A discussion of a business might explore product, customer, and location, and so on. Topical order, then, simply means an order that arises from the nature of the topic itself. Transitions in this pattern will be vague-things like one factor that affects, the second point, additionally and so on.

The pupils are expected to show in their writing that they are using these discussed principles of composition writing. When pupils follow the principles, their work is organized and is easy to understand. Otherwise the compositions written are not organized and the performance is low.

2.3 Teaching composition

There are several strategies used to teach composition writing. The various strategies used to teach composition include the free writing, the paragraph pattern, the grammar syntax organization, the communicative and the process. All these strategies could be summed up in two models; the guided model and unguided composition model (Clark: 2003;Frerris &Hedgock:2005)

The guided model is also called the oral discourse based method. This method of class composition writing emphasizes on the relationships among the stimulus, the problem, the oral discussion and the final written composition (Golub: 1970; Owuondo: 2012).The stimulus maybe composed of living experience, picture, student narrative, literature, current news, or an actual object. The stimulus is the most urgent need of the students for any written or oral composition. It serves mainly to activate the flow of the discourse .A problem must accompany each stimulus to generate creative and critical thinking among the pupils. The teacher should give guiding

questions which are sequenced in such a way that the answers will produce and organized paragraph. The oral discussion is a consultative and deliberate register which is not found in the traditional composition method. This step clarifies possible connection between the stimulus and the problem, and the oral language activity. (Elmore: 2011)

Discussions may occur as a class dialoguing with the teacher or by small groups which discuss within themselves the stimulus and the problem presented by the teacher. Different small groups in the classroom may be given different stimulus and problems to have diversity in produced compositions after the writing.

The unguided model is also called the traditional method of teaching composition writing. Sometimes it is referred to as the write-correct-rewrite method. In this teaching model, the teacher ordinarily either assigns or suggests a topic which the pupils are to write about. The pupils would then write a rough draft which the teacher would correct. For example Gaudiari (1979) suggested that pupils write a composition every week. Each of them bring the composition to class where other students together with the teacher edit the vocabulary, grammar, structure, syntax and paragraphs.

The manner of checking the rough drafts varies from teacher to teacher as some teachers still simply mark the pupils' works with the symbols for correction while others make an outright correction on the draft. As soon as these rough drafts are checked, they are returned to the pupils so that it can be rewritten and resubmitted to the teachers for final grading. The problem with this kind of model is that some of the topics that are suggested or assigned to the students may be unfamiliar or even foreign to them. An alternative model of teaching writing should then be implemented (Elmore: 2011)

The most effective way of teaching composition writing would be using the oral discourse approach based on group work. The class could be divided into small groups depending on the number of pupils in that class. The pupils should be given time to discuss the topic, while someone in each group keeps note of what should be in the introduction, main body and conclusion parts of the composition. After the discussion, each group presents its findings

through one presenter while the teacher writes the main points on the board. Finally, the pupils are asked to write a composition based on the notes taken from the board.

This study will find out how composition is taught using the recommended approaches so that we verify if the method of teaching has a bearing on the pupils' performance in composition writing in French.

2.4 Studies carried out on Factors contributing to pupils' poor performance in composition writing in French.

Kenn & Schultz (1992) postulated that generally, the written compositions of most of the students are unsatisfactory. The low performance was associated with the pupils' evident lack of writing skills. For instance, in France, the average performance of French children in writing composition was below the average. The writing here refers to composition. The low performance was due to the centralized and uniform curriculum. The French schools do not have the autonomy in management and in curriculum design in order to respond more directly to the needs of pupils in a particular area.

In the United States of America the performance of pupils in writing composition had declined because of several reasons. These reasons have been classified into five classes. These classes were social development, school behavior, first language, family, learners' characteristics and academic progress. According to the American council on immersion education (ACIE Newsletter: 2004), Social development includes self esteem and confidence among other characteristics. Some students performed poorly in written composition in French because they had low self esteem and no self confidence. Such pupils did not have the confidence to speak so that they hear the French sounds that they produced. The production of sounds will make one able to represent the sound in form of words. This statement is based on the argument that there is a very close link between speaking and writing (Clay: 2004)

Concerning School behavior and family, the council established that some pupils did not perform well because of their poor attendance to lessons, poor working habits such as pupils' disorganization and inability to stay or complete tasks or assignments (ACIE News letter: 2004). To crown it all, the parents whose children were doing French, did know the benefits of

this subject and therefore did not support the pupils. These behaviors together, lead to pupils' frustration and poor performance in their final examination especially composition.

Another factor which contributed to poor performance in composition was the first language (L1) acquisition. Research (ACIE: 2004) has revealed that children who faced problems in acquiring the first language, faced more problem in acquiring the second language. During the research, the council established that most of the pupils who were performing poorly in composition writing in French had had difficulty in acquiring L1. For example they had weak verbal reasoning, poor articulation or phonological problems(ACIE News letter:2004). These difficulties lead to delayed oral expression and limited vocabulary, consequently negatively affect learners' writing abilities because of the link between speech and writing.

Academic progress, coupled with learners' characteristics also contributed to the poor performance of pupils in composition writing (in French examination). The ACIE (2004)postulated that the learners lacked basic skills of writing a composition. For instance, a number of the pupils could not organize their thought on paper, they did not have sequence mechanics such punctuations, spellings and grammar .Others had poor memories such that they could not recall and apply what they learnt. These factors all together made some pupils taking French in America to perform poorly in composition writing.

Some students associated their low performance in composition in French to the many grammatical rules in French (<http://wwwfrenchbroad>). In Haiti and England the low performance in composition writing in French was associated with the resistance of the Haitian/English French Language academy to change the mode of writing. The academy is a body that is responsible for standardizing the spoken or written French. (about-france.com/French/frenchlanguage.html) This body determines what is correct French. It insists that the existing and traditional form of the language is the correct French .The resistance by the academy has made the change in writing in French slower than the writing in English. The learners of French are therefore discouraged by the old form of writing. Hence, the poor performance in composition writing.

Brown(2007), had recorded that in England, the factor that was contributing to the poor performance of the pupils in composition writing was the lack of motivation. Most learners of

French do not get anybody to encourage them to study French. Hence, the poor performance in the composition component. Another factor associated to the poor performance was poorly organized methods of teaching (Van & Williams:2012). They suggested that if the learning was pupils centered, the performance in composition writing would improve.

The performance of pupils in composition writing in Africa, like in Europe, has also gone down. Generally, many African children fail to express themselves in form of composition because they do not understand what the teacher says; neither do they understand what they read in the books. They only hear French at school; at home each one speaks their mother tongue which is different from French. Therefore the African children find writing composition in French very difficult. For example the performance of the Senegalese students in composition had declined ([precarious-status-of-french-in-senegal.html](#)). In fact, in Senegal, English is now more useful as the lingua Franca than French despite the country being a former French colony.

The first language and the second language both contribute negatively to composition writing. Mukuka's(2010) analysis of the syntactic errors committed by Bemba pupils studying French in Lusaka, revealed that both first language (L1-Bemba) and second language(L2-English) interfere with the learning of French(speaking and writing). These pupils used L1 and L2 structures to construct French sentences as they wrote their compositions. For instance they translated sentences or phrases word for word. The pupils behaved in this manner because when they were at home they use L1 which is Bemba. When they were at school, they used L2 which is English. He recommended that these pupils needed to learn French from a francophone country.

Kaoma's study (1994) revealed that pupils, who learnt French after the age of twelve, normally had problems with French sounds because of neurobiological factors. Kaoma studied the difficulties that teenage Bemba pupils had with French sounds. He revealed that by the teen age, the neuromuscular coordination was already programmed. Moreover, the sounds regularly used in French were so dissimilar to the sounds used in Bemba or other Zambian language. Barrett (1999) contended that people who were above twelve years of age had difficulties in discriminating between pairs of similar sounds which do not form phonetic contrasts in their own language. He postulated that pupils with difficulties in sounds in French, had difficulties in writing those words or sentences during composition time.

Another country in Africa that has recorded a drop in the pupils' performance in composition writing is Liberia. In some schools, the learning and teaching materials were inadequate. For instance they did not have enough books, radios, television sets, and computers to mention but a few. The few learning and teaching material that were available did not relate to the daily life of the learners. As a result the students found it very difficult to learn and later on express themselves in form of composition in French (John: 2001.)

In Nigeria the poor performance of learners of French was associated with the lack of trained teachers (John: 2001). Most of the teachers had left Nigeria for Europe for greener Pasture. This brain drain impacts negatively on the learners of French. The few teachers that remain have too many pupils to attend to. Consequently, they become tired easily and quickly before they attend to each learner's needs in composition.

Still in Nigeria, another factor that is contributing to pupils' poor performance in composition writing in French is the age of the students. Most of the teenagers, who write the French examination, do not perform very well in written composition. However, the older candidates do well in their examination in Composition writing in French. Ogunbiyi (2007) has postulated that the teenage students have a negative attitude towards learning French, particularly composition. They also seem not realize the need to learn.

In Kenya, the pupils' poor performance in composition writing in French examination was associated with the school culture that does not favor the teaching and learning of French. A culture is a set of accepted school language and activities. "The performance of pupils taking French in Kenya is pathetic. To be specific most of their compositions were illegible and incomprehensible. That is why most of the students failed to attain a minimum of a c+ to enable them enter a university in their nation (Jay: 2003).

Another factor that contributed to the poor performance of pupils in writing composition in French was the teachers' lack of appropriate instructional methods (Owuondo: 2012). The teachers are not fully equipped with the methodology such that their teaching is below the expected standards. Lack of good methodology, coupled with the pupils' lack of interest in learning composition writing; together contribute negatively to the pupils' performance in writing composition.

On the issue of how French is examined, a study by Manchishi (1977) revealed that the teachers were not well armed with techniques of handling examinations. This might contribute to the poor performance in composition.

Siamujaye (1975) stated that there was need for pupils to be motivated to study French. The increased motivation could make the pupils change the attitude towards learning. The more motivated the pupils are, the better their attitude towards learning it. The less motivated the pupils are the more negative their attitudes. Siamujaye's study is in line with the management study guide that state that motivation and attitude go hand in hand in increasing work output. (www.managementstudy).

Summary

This chapter has discussed the literacy skills, the structure of a composition and principles of writing a composition as well as how to teach a composition. It has also presented the various studies on factors contributing to the poor performance in composition writing in French examination.

From the review it is clear that some of the factors contributing to pupils' poor performance include lack of writing skills, lack of teaching and learning materials, inadequate teachers as well as lack of motivation. Other factors were poorly organized methodology, poor attendance to lessons and lack of self esteem and the effect of first language on l2 learning. Other factors include rigidity of the French academy, French has many grammatical rules, French is difficult and it has no clear benefits (use).

From the review we do not know whether or not the factors identified in other studies cited from other countries could be the same with those that affect pupils' taking French in Zambia and writing composition in French. This is the gap that the study sought to fill. The next chapter discusses the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This section describes the methods which were used in collecting and analyzing data. It also describes the research designs which were used, the target population, sample size and sampling methods. The research instruments, data collection procedures and modes of data analysis that were used are also included in this chapter.

3.1 Research design

This research was both a case study as well as a survey .Cohen et al(2007)describes a case study as a specific instance that is designed to illustrate a more general principle.”It is the study of an instance in action”(Cohen et al 2007:253).According to Gay (1997),a survey is an attempt to collect data from a given population in order to determine the current status of a given population with respect to one or more variables. These designs were chosen because they were the most effective way of collecting data for this research

3.2 Target population

The population of this study involved all the teachers of French in Lusaka, and all former pupils who sat for the grade twelve French examinations in the last six years and were studying at UNZA or at Alliance Française in Lusaka. The study also targeted the education managers (Education Standard’s Officers-languages, Examination Officers-French and Curriculum Development Officers -French).

3.3 Research sample and sampling procedure

The sample was made up of ten teachers of French, eighty former pupils of French, and three education managers. That is one from the Ministry of Education (Senior Education Standards Officer-languages), the Curriculum Development Centre (French specialist) and Examination council of Zambia (French specialist).

The sampling procedure was done as follows; for former pupils, snowball sampling technique was used. This is a non probability sampling technique used to identify potential subjects who were not easy to find (Best & Kahn:2006). Snowball sampling procedure was used because it was not easy to get former pupils of French at the University of Zambia or alliance Française using another technique. Through this technique, the students who were studying French at the two institutions were able to identify their colleagues with whom they did French at secondary school, even though they were not doing French at UNZA.

Purposive sampling was applied to the education officials from MOE, CDC and ECZ as well as the teachers of French. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique where by a researcher chooses subjects who have the information that the researcher is interested in (Best & Khan: 2006). Purposive sampling procedure had been used because these respondents had the information that the researcher was looking for.

3.4 Research instruments

Data was collected through lesson observations guided by a checklist; face to face interviews were conducted to the teachers and Education Managers, while the questionnaires were administered to the former pupils. The justification for the choice of the mentioned instruments is in the data collection procedure.

3.5 Data collection procedure

Lesson observation:

Two lessons on composition writing were observed. Observation is a process of acquiring knowledge or information using the sense organs. During the observation, the researcher has a purpose and hence uses his or her senses in a regulated perception by taking only relevant information into consideration. (Young: 1949).The researcher used non participant observation where the researcher is part of the group but does not participate in the activity being observed. By not participating, the researcher has ample time to use his or her senses to take note of the data he or she is interested in. The observations were also controlled and the researcher used tools such as an interview guide. This method of collecting data gives first hand information as the researcher hears and sees the reality. Lesson observation was also another way of validating

data collected through other means such as interviews and questionnaires. This makes the data collected through lesson observation dependable than in other modes of observation.

During each observed lesson, the researcher took notes to keep record of what she was observing. The researcher also assessed the classrooms in order to ascertain whether the classrooms had sufficient learning and teaching materials patterning to composition writing in French. The researcher went on to check the pupils' exercise books to verify if they had written any compositions in French, if yes how often were the compositions written in a given period.

Interviews:

The researcher conducted face to face unstructured interviews with the Education Managers from the Ministry of education, Examination council of Zambia and Curriculum development center as well as teachers of French from various schools .Interviews are a verbal method of obtaining data. Ghosh (2011) defines interviews as a systematic way by which a researcher enters imaginatively into a life of a comparative stranger who has the data that the researcher requires. Through this method, the researcher gets direct and reliable data from the source. Apart from this fact, a researcher can verify the responses through cross examination. As a result, the attitudes, feelings and opinions of the respondent are revealed. Unstructured interviews also make the respondent free to bring out as much information as possible. In order to keep the obtained data, the interviews were recorded.

Questionnaires:

Questionnaires were administered to former pupils of French personally by the researcher. Questionnaires are a method of collecting data using a list of printed set of questions which are administered to respondents who has the information required (Young:1949).The type of questions were mixed; structured, open ended and closed questions. This mode of data collection was used because it services standardized results that can be tabulated and analyzed statistically.

3.6 Data analysis

Data collected using questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software. The SPSS analysis generated frequencies and percentages. The

data collected through interviews was put into categories depending on the emerging themes. (Constant comparative method).

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Permission was sought from the provincial education office and the District education Board Secretary's office before the research began. Consent was sought from the respondents and an explanation of what the research was all about was given to ensure that subjects participate voluntarily.

Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology used to collect data. It has explanations of the research design, target population, research sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical consideration. The next chapter presents the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the research findings based on the five research questions. The findings also include a component of lesson observation.

4.1 Question 1: what were the factors that were contributing to the pupils' poor performance in composition writing in French?

Findings from the teachers of French.

According to the teachers, there were several factors that were contributing to the poor performance. Most of the teachers contended that the main contributing factor to the poor performance of pupils in composition writing at Grade twelve French examinations was the basic-high school policy. For instance one of the teachers from one school stated that

The basic-high school policy has had a negative impact on the performance of pupils in composition writing. This policy was the separation of the junior secondary from the senior secondary. The pupils coming to high schools from basic schools find learning French rough because they have weak or no background in French. It is bad when these pupils are forced to take French by the school or parents. Other times, they do not have a better option among the subjects offered; as a result, they end up taking French.

Another teacher attributed the poor performance of pupils in composition to inadequate time to learn and teach French composition. She revealed that;

We have three or four periods of French per week, and one or two are lost every week to other school programs such as assembly.

Another teacher from the same school explained that;

We only have three periods to teach French because it is not a compulsory subject like English language or mathematics .It is an optional subject such as home management, history or religious education.

Some other teachers attributed the poor performance of pupils in composition to lack of teaching and learning materials in schools. For example, one of them stated that;

We do not have enough books in school; we have the old ones such as Pierre et Seydou and the like. One has to sacrifice to get books such as Tempo. Apart from that, those people from alliance Française have found a fundraising activity by constantly introducing new books. These pupils learning French need more than books. They need a television set, radio and other modern technological equipment in order to learn easily. These things are not there in our schools. How do you think anyone can teach?

In addition, another teacher lamented the lack of infrastructure;

We are supposed to have our own room where we can teach French from, just like our friends who teach music, art and home economics have their own rooms. We do not have these rooms. Sometimes we are asked to find somewhere else to teach and learn from when the laboratories are being used for science practical lessons.

Lack of support from the school administration and government was another factor that was raised as contributing to the poor performance. One teacher reported that;

The administrators (at all levels) do not give us the professional or social support that we need. We do not attend refresher courses in order to keep abreast with the latest teaching techniques. Just find out how many in-house trainings have ever been organized at school or district level. Find out how many of the Zambian teachers of French have been sponsored to go further studies. One in hundred! They do not buy the needed material for teaching or learning. Even our fellow teachers do not support us. In fact, non teachers of French discourage the pupils. They say that where will this French take them? They better take subjects such as Zambian languages, commerce or accounts. The home management pupils are better, may be they can work in a hotel one day.

One teacher who had been teaching French in the last fifteen years associated the poor performance to the type of examination. He had this to say;

We have told those people at ECZ that the examination they set is not friendly. We have also asked the people at CDC to modify the syllabus in order to suit the Zambian needs, I do not know what they are still waiting for.

When asked if they participated in the preparation and marking of grade twelve French examinations, most of them said that they neither prepared nor marked the examinations. For example one of them said;

I neither prepare nor mark the Exam. You know, it is better if one prepares the exam and mark it. In fact they are just a hand full of people there at ECZ who are involved in the preparation and marking of the French examinations.

A few teachers mentioned that the pupils were not doing very well in composition writing because there were very few teachers of French in the country. One teacher explained that;

We are very few teachers of French in the country. Even if we normally have fewer pupils when you compare a French class to a class of pupils of English, the pressure for us is more than those teachers of English. Anyway, we were very few in class at college because many students at the teacher training institutions did not want to take French for various reasons. Some teachers have left the teaching profession for greener pastures at the United Nations' offices.

Some other teachers said that the poor performance in composition writing in French was as a result of pupils' lack of interest. One of them stated;

These pupils do not have any interest in learning a foreign language. Some of them are forced by their parents; therefore, they attend French lessons to be at peace with their parents. The pupils themselves have not realized the need to learn French.

Another teacher mentioned that the poor performance in composition writing was because of the change of time .She explained that;

Times have changed. After independence French was the only foreign language that was taught in Zambia (apart from English). Nowadays, there are several foreign languages that are taught in both public and private schools. This situation has made French lose its earlier market.

Findings from Education Managers

According to the senior educational standard officer in charge of languages (SESOLanguages), the pupils' poor performance in composition in French grade twelve examinations was due to their poor reading culture. He stated that;

Today's generation has lost the reading culture. Technology, particularly the television and the computer has replaced the books that the older generation used to read. They would rather listen or dance to music than read an academic book. Alternatively, they would watch a movie in their leisure time than watch an academic program. Any child who cannot read cannot write either.

The French specialist at the examination council linked the poor performance in composition to lack of adequate lesson preparation by the teachers. She explained that;

The teachers of French do not prepare their lessons adequately because they are occupied with other personal business. For instance they go to teach in private schools and homes. Others teachers are constantly attending local and international conferences at the expense of pupils.

The education French (curriculum specialist) manager at CDC attributed the poor performance to basic-high school policy. She explained;

The pupils are not performing well especially in composition because most of them start learning French in grade ten. They are different from those that begin French earlier. The later have a bit more of foundation. With those that start French in grade ten, the teachers literally start from the scratch.

She also linked the poor performance to the unfamiliar syllabus. She stated that;

The syllabus for pupils doing French in Zambia does not suit the needs of a local child, this has always had a negative effect the performance. That is why we are working on a curriculum that will allow pupils to start learning French in primary school. All the teachers and stake holders have to move in, otherwise French will die out. (She handed a copy of the new syllabus to the researcher).

Findings from the former pupils

There were 80 former pupils of French who took part in the research. There were 22 males representing 27.5% and 58 females representing 75.2 % respectively. From the ratios one can deduce that there were more females who studied French than males. The age range of the pupils was from 18 to 25 years.

Table 1: illustrates the people who motivated the former pupils to study French.

Motivator	Frequency	Percentage
Parents	20	25.0
Teacher	04	05.0
Imposed by school	34	42.5
Friends	22	27.5
Total	80	100

The table shows that 25% were motivated by parents, 5% were motivated by teachers, 42.5% were forced to study French by the school and the remaining 27.5% got motivated by their friends.

Table 2: shows the levels at which different pupils began studying French.

Level of beginning	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	19	24
Grade 8	20	25
Grade 10	51	31
Total	80	100

The table indicates that 24% began studying French at primary school. 25% started doing French in grade eight and 51% began taking French in Grade ten.

Table 3: The table illustrates the final grades that the former pupils got in French

Grade	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfactory	11	13.8
Credit	28	35.0
Merit	33	41.2
Distinction	08	10.0
Total	80	100

The table shows that 13.8% got bare passes.35% got credits while 41.2% got merits and 10% got distinctions.

Table 4: shows the pupils' favorite components of the French paper.

Favorite component	Frequency	Percentage
Listening comprehension	23	28.8
Reading comprehension	34	45.5
Composition and structure	17	21.2
Reading passage	06	7.5
Total	80	100

The table above shows 28.8% stated that listening comprehension was their favorite, while 42.5% mentioned that reading comprehension was there favorite.21.2% preferred composition and structure and 7.5%indicated that reading was their favorite.

Table 5: shows what components of the French paper pupils found most difficult.

Difficult component	Frequency	Percentage
Listening comprehension	28	35
Reading comprehension	14	17.5
Composition and structure	36	45.5
Reading passage	02	2.5
Total	80	100

From the table 35% found listening comprehension.17.5% found reading comprehension difficult, 45.5% stated that composition and structure was most difficult, and 2.5% found reading a passage most difficult.

Table 6: Shows the factors contributing to poor performance in composition.

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
The basic and high school policy	18	22
French is an option subject.	02	2.5
Insufficient periods per week	14	17.5
Inadequate preparation by teachers	14	17.5
Lack of suitable teaching and learning materials.	06	7.5
Lack of motivation by teachers	02	2.5
Inadequate teachers.	01	1.2
Pupils negative attitude towards composition		
Pupils' loss of reading culture.	07	8.7
Unfriendly syllabus and the examinations	01	1.2
Unfriendly school environment	02	2.5
French is not useful	03	3.7
French is difficult	03	3.7
No support from the French Government	05	6.2
	02	2.5
Total	80	100

The table shows that the largest percentage (22%) associated the poor performance to the basic-high school policy and the smallest percentage (1.2%) associated the performance to the pupils' loss of the reading culture.

The pupils attributed the poor performance of grade twelves in composition writing in French to various factors. The factors included lack of background in French since most of them begin to learn French in Grade ten. Springing from the first factor was inadequate learning time. Instead of learning French for five years, they do the course in three years, besides, French is an optional subject which has three or four periods per week. Added to the list of factors was the negative

attitude of both the teachers and the pupils towards learning and teaching composition writing. The teachers' negative attitude was characterized by their inadequate preparation of lessons in composition writing in French and constant absence from lessons. Another factor that was raised was the lack of teaching materials coupled with lack of motivation from the teachers or the people in the community. The last factor makes the pupils think that learning French is not useful at all.

4.2 The second research question was, how was composition writing in French taught?

Findings from the teachers.

When asked how they were teaching composition, most of the teachers stated that they used the basic methods of teaching composition. These are the oral discourse based and the write-correct approaches. For instance one teacher had this to say;

Basically there is no difference between the methods used to teach composition writing in English and French. For the French students we normally use the oral discourse approach.

Another teacher stated that;

We first have to build their vocabulary and structure before we they start writing the composition. Even after that, we still give them some guidelines. For example when pupils just come to grade ten, they have to know each other. So they start by self identification. They tell who they are, how old they are, where they live, their likes and dislikes. We then give them an incomplete identity card, by feeling in this card they we would have come up with a composition. Instead of writing separate sentences, the pupils make paragraphs which make a composition.

Another teacher stated that she uses the discussion method to teach composition, although it was not very easy. She said that;

It's a bit difficult to teach composition to our Zambian pupils, however, we are trying. We first start with the simple things in order to suit their level. If there is a pupil from Congo or Ruanda in class, she or he normally does better than our own. All in all, we use the discussion based strategy to teach composition. In this strategy, we come up with a topic which pupils are familiar with. Together with the teacher, the pupils discuss the topic, they come

up with points which help them write a composition. Sometimes, we actually discuss which points suits in which paragraph.

One teacher stated that it was not easy to teach the pupils because most of them began Learning French in grade ten;

It is not easy to teach these pupils as you know most of them start learning French in Grade ten. This means that we start teaching the basics of general French before we actually start teaching composition writing.

Another teacher mentioned that the limited time restricted them to teach composition. He stated that;

We have limited time to teach and learn composition. You know, we basically, we have two or three periods of French per week. This means that one only teaches composition once in a while.

Findings from the Education Managers.

The three officials mentioned above stated that they had not been teaching for a long time. However, the SESO mentioned that the better method of teaching composition writing was using a guided approach;

Generally composition writing in any language is taught in the same way. The teacher presents the pupils with a situation which they are familiar with. He or she discusses situation with the pupils giving the pupils ideas of what is expected in the composition. Normally the teacher writes a few notes on the board.

The Specialist in French stated that;

Composition in French is taught not very differently from the way English is taught. Except In French, the teacher has to bring in images or jumbled sentence which must be arranged in order to make comprehensive paragraphs. Basically there is a lot of discussion done before the pupils write the composition by themselves.

Findings from the lesson observations

The lessons were observed in order to establish how composition writing in French was taught.

Observation 1

Class: Grade 12

Sex: Girls

Number: 03 pupils

Subject: French

Topic: Composition writing: Advantages and Disadvantages of a Boarding School

Time: 70 minutes

The teacher greeted the pupils in French as she entered the classroom. The pupils responded enthusiastically. She quickly told the pupils that the period was specifically for composition. The teacher reminded the pupils of the contents of a composition. Thereafter, she asked the pupils to mention the advantages and disadvantages of learning in a boarding school. Meanwhile, the pupils were busy with their English-French dictionaries, checking for English words or phrases, which they did not know in French. For instance, one girl could not find what boarding school was in French. She raised her hand and asked

Madam, what is a boarding school in French?

Before the teacher responded another pupil asked.

What is peer pressure?

The third pupil suggested to the teacher;

Madam, why don't we raise the advantages and disadvantages of a boarding school in English, and we let you translate the sentences for us? We can then copy the points and finally write the compositions on our own.

The teacher subtly refused and assured them saying;

Do not worry, will discuss as a class but each one will write a composition on their own.

With the help of the teacher, the pupils raised the advantages and disadvantages of a boarding school in short or incomplete French Phrases. The teacher repeatedly corrected the wrongly

pronounced words. She also corrected the grammar. Below are the advantages and disadvantages for learning at a boarding school according to the pupils.

Advantages

- *More time to study*
- *More time to socialize with peers*
- *More independence*
- *Chance to learn to live with different people*

Disadvantages

- *Poor diet*
- *Exposure to bad company*
- *Mockery*
- *Exposure to diseases*
- *Too much manual work*
- *Miss home*

All the points raised were written on the board and the pupils copied them in their exercise books. Finally, the pupils were given time to write the composition. A look at the pupils' written work indicated the following:

- Directly translated sentences from L1 to L2 and finally to French. For example:(Nyanja) Boarding imakulisa.(English)Boarding school makes you grow.(French)L'ecole avec internat grandir.
- Wrongly constructed sentences;For instance a pupil misplaced the subject, object and noun of the sentence. For example:Manques mes parents instead of mes ma parents me manquent(I miss my parents)
- Limited vocabulary; for example one pupil made a sentence that was a mixture of French and English words.For example: L'ecole avec internat is difficult.
- Mixed tenses;forexample Si tu vas a l'ecole internat, tu as mange.
- Wrong punctuation; For example some sentences began with small letters, words lacked accents and apostrophes

Other observations made during the lesson were:

- Pupils not very eager to speak French during the discussion
- Composition not often taught as required.

Observation 2

Class: Grade 12

Sex: boys

Number: 13 pupils

Subject: French

Topic: Composition writing: Effects of HIV and AIDS

Time: 80 minutes

The teacher greeted the pupils in French as he entered the classroom. The pupils responded reluctantly. When the teacher reminded the pupils that they were going to write a composition as earlier announced, they murmured in unison while one suggested that the composition should be home work. The teacher refused as he put up a number of pictures showing possible effects of HIV and AIDS .The teacher asked the pupils to mention what they were seeing in the picture. He encouraged them to speak in French. One of the pupils said

Ha! All that! How many words?

The teacher encouraged the pupils by saying;

Do not be lazy, hey! Just concentrate otherwise we shall not finish this today.

The pupils with the help of the teacher discussed the effects of HIV and AIDS. Below are the points that were raised during the discussion;

- *Long sickness*
- *Loss of body weight*
- *Loss of human resource*
- *Loss of employment*
- *Death*
- *Poverty*

- *Increased crime rate*
- *Child headed homes*
- *Street kids*

The above points were written on the board. The teacher then asked the pupils to use the points raised to write a composition entitled “Effects of HIV and AIDS.” A look at the compositions written revealed the following:

- Directly translated sentences from L1 to L2 and finally to French. AIDS yasilizabanthu (Nyanja), AIDS has finished people (English), Le SIDA a finni les gens.
- Incomplete sentences; Two or three pupils gave phrases as answers. For example; it kills
- Mixed sentences of English and French words. For example: Le SIDA is bad
- Wrongly constructed sentences; Wrong grammar. For example: Beaucoup de gens est malade(A lot of people is sick)
- Limited vocabulary; Replacement of French words with English words. Le SIDA is bad.
- Mixed tenses; For example; Il est malade et il sont mort.
- Wrong punctuation; for instance one pupil put an accent grave where he should have used an accent aigu.

Other observations made were:

- Negative attitude towards learning composition; for example unwillingness to learn as expressed in speech and action.
- Unwillingness to speak French during the discussion; Pupils’ not wanting to use French when responding.
- Few compositions written according to the pupils’ books.

From the lesson observations, the main findings are as follows;

- The pupils were not eager to learn
- They were not eager to speak French
- The teachers were ready

4.3 Question 3: What was the attitude of the teachers towards teaching composition?

Findings From the teachers

When asked if at all they liked teaching composition most of them said that they had no option but to teach it. For instance one teacher said;

I have no option but have to teach since the pupils need it.

Another teacher said;

I do not really like teaching that component because it is very demanding.

Others who were asked individually whether they liked teaching composition writing gave negative answers. For instance two shook their heads meaning no. Another teacher didn't just shake his head, he also made mn mn sound meaning no.

One teacher enthusiastically said;

Oh yes! I like teaching composition, it is really interesting.

From the ten teachers interviewed, only one said that she likes teaching composition. Four mentioned out right that they did not like teaching composition writing while the other five subtly gave a negative answer.

Findings from the Education Manager

When asked what his opinion was concerning the attitude of the teachers of French towards work. The Manager at ECZ had this to say;

The teachers have to double their effort.

Concerning the teachers' attitude, the manager at SESO mentioned that;

Some of the teachers had a negative attitude towards their work. That was why they leave their core business to do private work. There is need for change of attitude otherwise French will just die out.

Findings from pupils

On the attitude of teachers towards teaching composition, data from the questionnaires administered to the pupils indicated that composition was rarely taught as can be seen from the table here after.

Table 7: Shows the frequency of periods of composition.

How often	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	10	12.5
Often	29	36.2
Rarely	41	51.2
Total	80	100

The table illustrates that 12.5% of the pupils mentioned that composition was taught very often. 36.2% stated that composition was often taught. 51.2% stated that composition was rarely taught.

4.4 Question 4: What was the attitude of the pupils towards learning composition.

Findings from the teachers

The teachers stated that the pupils generally had a negative attitude towards learning composition. For instance one teacher had this to say;

These pupils do not have any interest in learning a foreign language. Some of them are forced by their parents; therefore, they attend French lessons to be at peace with their parents. The pupils themselves have not realized the need to learn French.

Another teacher mentioned that the pupils had a negative attitude because they did not know the benefit of learning French. He said;

Even our fellow teachers do not support us. In fact, non teachers of French discourage the pupils. They say that where will this French take them? They better take subjects such as Zambian languages, commerce or accounts. The home management pupils are better, may be they can work in a hotel one day

There is also no one to motivate these pupils. Those days the French Government used to send some people to France and give them some support to go for further studies, but now there is nothing like that.

Another teacher stated that they had a negative attitude because they were forced to take French by the school;

Some of the pupils are taking French against their will, the school has forced them to take French.

Findings from the Education Managers

The education managers mentioned that most of the pupils had a negative attitude towards learning composition. For instance the SESO mentioned that the pupils did not spend a lot of time reading;

Our pupils do not have a reading culture as we used to. They did not have interest in reading any literature. They spend their time watching television, on the mobile phone or on the internet. This factor results in them having very limited vocabulary in French. Apart from that, they also miss on other advantages that they are likely to get through reading. They have really lost it.

The education manager (French curriculum specialist) at CDC also mentioned that most of the pupils had a negative attitude because they did not take French out of their own will, the school forced them. She said;

The high schools are receiving grade ten who mostly have not done any French in junior secondary. Most of them are put in a class that will take French against their will. How do you expect them to have a positive attitude when they are forced?

Findings from the pupils

Table 8: shows the attitudes of pupils towards learning composition writing in French.

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	21	26.2
Negative	59	73.8
Total	80	100

From table it is indicated that 73.8% of the former pupils had negative attitude towards learning composition writing in French, while the remaining percentage had a positive Attitude towards learning composition.

Question five: How was composition examined?

4.5. Findings from teachers

Most of the teachers mentioned that the way the examination was set was not friendly to the Zambian pupils. One of the teachers said;

We have told those people at ECZ that the examination they set is not friendly. We have also asked the people at CDC to modify the syllabus in order to suit the Zambian needs, I do not know what they are still waiting for.

Another teacher mentioned that not many of the teachers were involved in the setting and marking of the examinations. He had this to say;

I neither prepare nor mark the Exam .You know, it is better if one prepares the exam and mark it. In fact they are just a hand full of people there at ECZ who are involved in the preparation and marking of the French examinations.

Findings from Education Managers

When asked about the grade twelve French examinations? The education manager in charge of French section at ECZ said that a group of teachers from different schools got together annually at ECZ to set the examinations. She said;

We have teachers who are trained to set the four parts of the French paper examinations. Most of the item writers also participate in the marking of examinations. The pupils are asked to write one compositions under given subject.

Summary

This chapter has presented the research findings from the different participants .The participants included the teachers of French, education managers and the former pupils who studied French from different schools. The findings have been presented according to the five research questions. Below is a summary of the factors that are contributing to the poor performance in composition.

- The basic and high school policy
- French is an option subject.
- Insufficient periods per week
- Inadequate preparation by teachers
- Lack of suitable teaching and learning materials.
- Lack of motivation by teachers
- Inadequate teachers.
- Pupils negative attitude towards composition
- Pupils' loss of reading culture.
- Unfriendly syllabus and the examinations
- Unfriendly school environment
- French is not useful
- No support from the French Government

From the lesson observations below are the main findings;

- The pupils were not eager to learn
- They were not eager to speak French
- The teachers were ready
- They used English
- Their French was poor

In this chapter, the main findings have been presented, the next chapter discusses them.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0 Overview

This chapter contains the discussion of the research findings. The findings are discussed according to the five research objectives of the study.

5.1 To establish the factors contributing to the pupils' poor performance in composition writing in French grade twelve examinations.

The main factor contributing to the pupils' poor performance in composition writing in grade twelve French examinations is lack of basic foundation in French. This point of the findings implies that most of the pupils who qualify to go to grade ten have little or no foundation at all in French since most of the basic schools in Lusaka do not offer French. It is from this same group of pupils where some pupils are chosen to take French. These pupils will have to do a five year course in three years. Since these pupils have little or no background of French, the teacher of French will then have to concentrate on the basics such as the vocabulary, and sounds before he or she starts to teach them composition writing in French. Meanwhile, time is not static; the pupils will be drawing close to the examination time. By the time they are in Grade twelve, they are not yet ready to write good compositions in French. They still lack the skill and knowledge needed to be good writers of composition in French. These findings are in agreement with Kenn & schulzt's (1992) study that stated that the pupils in France were not performing well in composition writing in, because they lacked the skills needed to write a good composition. The Zambian pupils' lack skills and knowledge needed to perform well in composition writing in French, that is why their performance in composition writing is poor.

It is clear from the findings that pupils begin learning French late. When pupils start learning a language earlier, they acquire sufficient basic reading and writing skills. The above statement is in line with Clay's (1991) study which postulates that, pupils with a rich foundation in literacy skills become better readers and writers. Literacy skills refer to vocabulary, print motivation, print awareness, letter knowledge, phonological awareness and narrative skills. Clay was

referring to primary school pupils learning English. The situation of the Zambian secondary school pupils who begin to learn French in Grade ten opposes Clay's study. It opposes in the sense that the Zambian pupils begin to learn a foreign language when their environment from which they are supposed to acquire French basic literacy skills is already set in an Anglophone one. For instance most of the time at home or indeed in school the people around them speak English, the literature placed around is written in English. Apart from the environment, The pupils are in their teen age, their physical features such as the brain, buccal cavity and the central nervous system, which play a vital role in language acquisition (of which writing is part) are fully developed. For instance the muscles and the tongue are already used to moving in a certain manner. When the environment is already set and the vital physical features are fully developed, learners tend to mispronounce new words. If French words are mispronounced, it follows that words will surely be misspelled making sentences wrong all together and this has an effect on composition writing.

The poor performance in composition writing is accelerated by the few periods allocated to French as a subject. In most schools French is allocated three or four periods per week. For a pupil to write a composition, she or he requires an hour. Apart from just writing time, the teacher must prepare them by explaining something about the composition to be written. Perhaps they have to discuss a certain situation or picture, or they have to write some notes that they will eventually use to write the composition (depending on the situation). This implies that two of the periods are already consumed for just one composition. It also means that the pupils may have to do the composition at home, which is not very encouraging for they may ask someone to write for them or may not do it at all. If the pupils spend two periods of three or four on composition, the possibilities of them writing another composition the following week are very slim. The teacher may decide to spend time on other components of French which are equally important. This situation may partially explain why the findings indicate that composition writing in French is rarely taught. The pupils are spending less time learning or practicing how to write good composition in French. This is in line with the Swedish report (Astrid,1975 report 22) that stated that time spent studying French as a foreign language is a vital factor in the pupils' performance (quoted in Habimana:2010). The time spent learning is directly proportional to the performance. The longer the time spent, the better the performance and the less time spent the lower the performance. The Zambian pupils are not spending sufficient time on learning

composition writing if they only have three or four periods per week. The limited time of learning explains the poor performance of pupils in composition.

Apart from the periods of teaching and learning being limited, some teachers of French are not committed to their work especially to teaching composition writing. While both the teacher's and the pupil's commitments are complementary, the teacher's input plays a pivotal role to a pupils' performance. When the teacher is not committed to his duty for instance he or she is absenting himself or herself from class in the name of attending international or local conference, the pupils get demoralized. This is what one of the Education Managers meant when she mentioned that the teachers must double their effort. Most of the pupils also tend not take their work seriously because the teacher is not there to monitor their progress. Moreover, the teacher's absence reduces on the already limited time of learning in a compressed course. Some teachers' lack of commitment partially explains why composition was said to be rarely taught, thereby making the pupils half baked and consequently performing poorly.

The findings also revealed that inadequate teachers of French, was another factor that was contributing to the pupils' poor performance in composition writing. Most of the schools had one, a few schools had two teachers. This situation implies that the few teachers of French are undergoing a lot of pressure because pupils taking French (especially composition writing component) require personal attention, despite the fact that the pupils are usually few in a class of French. After correcting the written composition, the teacher needs to sit and discuss with each pupil how to write a better composition .If the school has only one or two teachers and has to attend to all the pupils taking French, he or she will face a lot of pressure such that the time he attends to some classes he or she will be exhausted. If a teacher goes to class tired, his or her effectiveness is reduced. It would be safe to say that the inadequate number of teachers of French contributes to the poor performance of the pupils in the sense that the teachers face pressure which reduces their efficiency and effectiveness to teach especially composition writing.

Other findings indicated that lack of teaching and learning materials was another factor that was said to be contributing to the poor performance in composition writing. These findings are in agreement with Habimana's study (2010) that had stated that there had not been any book used to teach French produced in Zambia. This is a very unfortunate situation when there are qualified teachers and lecturers of French who are capable of producing literature that could be used in

schools. These revelations make one assume that the procedure of producing local material is very complicated and expensive. Perhaps the Zambian lecturers and teachers who are capable of producing literature on composition writing are not interested.

The above findings are also in agreement with those found in Liberia where the pupils' performance in composition writing is of low standard because of lack of suitable teaching and learning materials (aboutfranc.com/French/frenchlanguage.htm). For instance they did not have enough and suitable books, radios, television sets, computers and specific rooms to teach from to mention but a few. These findings suggest that the teachers are not being supported materially and professionally. The Educational Managers (the school managers) who are supposed to buy the needed teaching and learning materials generally have a negative attitude towards the subject. The findings also imply that the French Government is not supporting the schools in form of material as they were doing in the 1970s and 1980s. Lack of teaching and learning material reduces the teacher's effectiveness and consequently makes lessons uninteresting. An effective teacher and an uninteresting lesson reduces the pupils' performance.

Another contributing factor to the poor performance in composition writing was lack of motivation. The issue of motivation mentioned above, is in agreement with Brown's study (2007) that revealed that in England, the factor that was contributing to the poor performance of the pupils in composition writing was lack of motivation. The findings are also in line with Syamujaye's (1975) study that contends that pupils needed to be motivated in order for them to learn. He went on to state that even their attitude would be positive when they were motivated. Motivation here means that the pupils do not have role models in school or in their home environment who have studied French and are doing fine in life. For instance, the teachers could have been the first role models where the pupils could have gotten their motivation from. The guidance and counseling teacher could talk to the pupils about the importance of doing a second international language especially when they go to secondary school during the orientation week. Unfortunately, the pupils are not getting this motivation. Some teachers actually discourage the pupils to take French. They tell the pupils that it is difficult and it is not useful. They would rather urge them to take one of the Zambian languages. The other kind of motivation the pupils need are rewards coupled with suitable learning environment. For instance a language laboratory, field trips and awards after a test. These would encourage the pupils to learn French and finally

be writing good compositions. Lack of motivation generally indicates the importance attached to French. Given such a situation where French does not seem to be important, one does not expect the pupils to do well in any component of French.

French especially composition writing is difficult, was another factor that was raised as a contributing factor to the poor performance in composition writing in French. The pupils stated that there were so many rules to observe when writing composition. The above findings are in line with Habimana (2010) whose study revealed that the most difficult component of the French paper was composition and structure. Moreover, the chief marker's reports from ECZ (2010; 2009;2008), also revealed that the pupils found composition writing in French most difficult. The above findings are also in agreement with those from Haiti and England, where some students associated their low performance in composition in French to the many grammatical rules in French. (<http://www.frenchbroad>). French is said to be difficult because of the numerous grammatical regulations. For instance each noun is either masculine or feminine, adjectives and the gender in one sentence are all supposed to match. All the accents are supposed to be used accordingly. If any of these are misplaced or used wrongly, the sentences in a composition may be totally wrong or may lose their intended meaning. The wrongly constructed sentences make a composition of low standard.

The loss of a reading culture was another factor that was contributing to the poor performance of pupils in composition. According to one of the Education Managers, SESO languages the Zambian pupils do not have a reading culture. They do not read their notes; neither do they read any other literature for leisure in any language. Technology, particularly the television, and the internet have replaced the books that the older generation used to read. He explained that there was a very close link between reading or speaking and writing. Reading affects writing and writing affects reading. This revelation is in line with research (Clay: 1999) which asserted that when children read extensively they become better writers. Reading a variety of genres helps children learn text structures and language that they can then transfer to their own writing. In addition, reading provides young people with prior knowledge that they can use in their composition. One of the primary reasons that we read is to learn. A major portion of what we know comes from the texts we read. Since writing is the act of transmitting knowledge in print, one must have information to share before one can write it. Since the pupils taking French have

lost the reading culture, they miss learning text structures and vocabulary from the books that they would read. In this manner, pupils perform lowly in composition writing.

At the same time practice in writing helps children build their reading skills. This is especially true for younger children who are working to develop phonemic awareness and phonics skills (Goodman & Goodman:1983)It is also true that practice has the same effect on the teenagers in secondary schools who are beginning to learn French for they practically go through the stages of Phonemic awareness. For older children practice in the process of writing their own texts helps them analyze the pieces that they read. Therefore, any child who cannot read cannot write either and may not be able to write a good composition

5.2 To establish how composition writing in French was taught in schools.

From the observations made and the interviews, composition writing in French was taught using the discussion method. The methods the teachers used were in line with the recommended ways of teaching composition writing (Cummings: 1977). These findings imply that there are other factors other than the method of teaching composition writing in French that are contributing to the pupils' poor performance. From the observations, the pupils' attitude towards composition writing would explain the low performance. Even the question of limited time to learn and practice would also account for the poor performance of the pupils in composition writing.

5.3 The third objective sought to establish the attitudes of teachers towards teaching composition.

The findings suggest that some teachers of French had a negative attitude towards teaching composition writing. The negative attitude is indicated by their inadequate preparation of lesson and their absence from lessons in the name of attending conferences(where they do translation and interpretation for money), occupied with other personal business such as teaching in private schools and homes and the few compositions written in the pupils' books. While one appreciates the fact that there are other factors that affect the pupils' performance such as time located to learning, it is very important to note the teacher's attitude and input are very cardinal. The teacher's presence and commitment encourages the pupils to do their work especially if the compositions are corrected in time. In addition, teachers are role models to their pupils and the youths around them. It follows that pupils will copy their teacher's behavior towards a certain

aspect of life such as school. Besides, teaching composition writing requires a lot of time, if the teacher has a negative attitude; it is obvious that one does not expect the pupils of such a teacher to perform well. This negative attitude towards teaching composition writing could explain why pupils perform poorly in composition writing.

5.4 The fourth objective sought to establish the attitudes of pupils towards learning composition writing in French

From the two lessons observations, interviews and questionnaires the findings were that the pupils had a negative attitude towards learning composition writing in French. Despite the fact that the first group exhibited a positive attitude through their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn, they were only three. When one puts all the pupils together they were sixteen and three is less than a quarter of all the pupils observed. One would be safe to state that three quarters of the pupils despite not belonging to one school, were not willing to learn as expressed in their speech and action when the teacher mentioned that they were going to write a composition. They were not willing to speak French during the discussion.

In addition, 73.8% (table 8) the pupils through the questionnaires indicated that they had a negative attitude towards learning composition writing. Moreover, one of the Education Managers mentioned that most of the pupils had lost the reading culture. They did not read either for learning or for leisure. He added that if the pupils of French are falling in this same category of pupils without a reading culture, one does not expect them to write good compositions either in English or French, for reading and writing are two sides of one coin. Reading increases one's vocabulary which could be used to write a rich composition. A positive attitude towards a subject is key to good performance, and negative attitude foretells low performance for one is already psychologically defeated and is likely to make very little effort to improve the performance in composition writing. It is justifiable then to say that the pupils' negative attitude affects their performance in composition writing negatively.

5.5 To assess how composition writing in French is examined

The findings from the teachers and officials from ECZ were that the pupils are given one hour thirty minutes in which to write one composition of not more than one hundred twenty words. They are given a number of topics from which they pick one. The composition could be in form of a letter, a description, a narrative or an article. They are asked to write a composition without

any guidelines or discussions. The findings indicate that the pupils could only write a composition after a discussion or with guiding notes. It is difficult for them to raise the points on their own and later on write a composition because they are used to having guiding notes. The findings also imply that the pupils do not have enough vocabulary neither do they know enough French grammar to use to write a composition as required. The findings to some degree answer why the pupils rewrite the questions their by failing to write good compositions at grade twelve level.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings which were based on the research objectives. The next chapter presents the conclusion and the recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

The purpose of this study was to establish the factors that were contributing to poor performance in composition writing in Grade twelve French examinations. This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.

6.1 Conclusion

Generally, most of the factors contributing to the pupils' poor performance in composition writing in French for the pupils in Lusaka District were similar to the ones cited in the literature review. However, the new factors were; the pupils' loss of a reading culture which affected their composition negatively because reading and writing are interrelated. Another factor was that most of them did not decide to take French out of interest; they were forced to take it by their school authorities or parents while a few were under peer pressure. The examinations were also sighted as contributing factors in the sense that the pupils are asked to write a composition on their own without any guidance as done during lessons.

6.2 Recommendations

In view of the above, the following recommendations were made.

1. The Ministry of Education, Science, and vocational Training and Early Childhood Education should reintroduce French in basic schools. This will enable the pupils to develop strong foundations needed to write good composition in high schools
2. The schools offering French should increase the periods for French, so that the pupils can be given sufficient time for composition writing.
3. Schools should enhance CPD in composition teaching. This will make the teachers share teaching methodologies and any challenges with each other.
4. CDC should revisit the French syllabus so that it suits the Zambian child.

5. ECZ should revisit the format for the grade twelve French examinations so that it is in line with what is obtaining on the ground as regards the teaching of composition in high schools.

6.3 Recommendation for future research:

1. Need to establish how, teachers of French are prepared at the colleges or universities.
2. Cover a wider area with Grade twelve pupils studying French.

REFERENCES

- Barton, D (2007) *Literacy: A introduction to the Ecological of written language* .London. Blackwell publishing.
- Best, J. W, & Kahn, J.V(1992) *Research in education*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall.
- Cohen,L., Manion, .Morrison,K(2007) *Research methods in education*. New York. Routledge
- Chishiba,G(2003) Enseignement et Apprentissage du français en Zambie, Masters dissertation. Université of Besançon
- Clark,I.L.(2003) “Process “Concept in Composition. Theory and Practice in the teaching and writing. Lawrence Erlbourn.
- Clay, M.M. (1991). *Becoming literate: The construction of inner control*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Gandari,C (1979) The French Review. American Association of Teachers of French.vol 53,2
- Ghosh,B. N(2011) Scientific Method And Social Research. India: Sterling publishers private limited.
- Habimana,C (1988) Factors contributing to the poor performance of grade twelve pupils in French. Maters dissertation, University of Zambia.
- Hedge,T(1988) *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaoma,c(1994) Etude de certain Aspects des difficultés phonétiques rencontrées par les élèves de langue maternelle Bemba apprenant le françaisal ‘école secondaire.
- Kasanda,S.M(1984) Apprentissage du Français langue étrangère dans les classes expérimentales et non expérimentales de Zambie. PhD Thesis, Université of Paris III.
- Katongo,J. W (1981) Problématique de la mise en Pratique d’un Programme de Français dans un Milieu Militigue:Cas de Zambie. Phd Thesis, Université of Franche Compte.

Kombo,K.K &Tromp,L.A(2010) *Proposal and thesis writing. An introduction*. Kenya:Pauline publications Africa.

Lynn, S(2010) *Rhetoric and Composition :An introduction*. Cambridge: University press

Machinyise ,E(2009) Factors contributing to the decline of French in Zambian Public schools. Masters dissertation, University of Zambia

Manchishi, P.C (1977) Analyse des Tests Nationaux de 3eme et 5eme années en Zambie: UneRéflexion sur leur Validité et Objectivité. Mémoire de Maitrise, Université de Franche Compte.

Mukuka,J(2010) An analysis of syntactic errors committed by Bemba speaking high school pupils learning French.Masters dissertation,University of Zambia.

Nabuyanda,M.M (2010) Factors inhibiting promotion of a reading culture: A study of Basic school library in Lusaka.

Lubasi,D.M(1976) Enseignement du Français en Zambie au niveau II du secondaire et les problème des niveaux. Masters dissertation. University de Franchecompte.

Simwinga,J(1993) The relationship between cohesion and coherence in English based on some university of Zambia students' written discourse .Masters dissertation ,University of Zambia.

Syamujaye,S.K (1975) Enquête sur les Motivations et des Attitudes des Elèves Zambiens de la 3eme Année du Secondaire Apprenant le Français.

Turk,C and Kirkman,J(1982) *Effective writing*. London. Chapman & Hall.

Wariner,J &Griffith, F(1997) *Grammar and composition ;Complete course*. Harcourt .Brace Jovanivich.

Young, P.V (1949) *Scientific Social Survey and Research*. New York

ZAFT(1990) Annual report .Lusaka

WEBSITES

Precarious-status-of-french-in-senegal.html. Downloaded June 2012

<http://www.jstor.or> Down loaded July 2012

<http://www.esp-world.info-27> development of writing curriculum. pc Downloaded June 2012

<http://nadabis.tripod.com/writing/#appr> Down loaded June 2012

<http://french-property.com/news//french-life/school-lycee->Down loaded June 2012

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf-stands/-2009/baccalaureate>Down loaded June 2012

http://www.about_fench.com/French/French language.htmDown loaded July 2012

grammar.about-comp/od/c/g composition.htm. Downloaded June 2012

<http://www.omniglot.com/index.htm>Down loaded July 2012

<http://www.medwelljournal.com/abstract/?dol=pjssci>Down loaded July 2012

<http://wwwk12reader.com->Down loaded July 2012

<http://wwwgiftedkids.about.com/od/glossary/g/literacy.htm>Down loaded July 2012

www.person.kent.eduDown loaded July 2012

<http://www.multcolib.org/birthtosix/elitskills.htm> Down loaded July 2012

<http://www.owl.English.perdue.edu/ow/resource/685/1/>.downloaded may 2012

<http://wwwfrenchbroad> downloaded may 2012

<http://www.ominglot.com/writing> downloaded may 2012

<http://www.grammar.ccc.coment.edu> downloaded may 2012

<http://www.ajol.info./index.php/jolte/article/view/file/41789/37148>.downloaded may 2012

[www.bridge.edu/library/cabs- project/lthomson/webpage/rw connection.htm](http://www.bridge.edu/library/cabs-project/lthomson/webpage/rw_connection.htm) Down loaded June 2012

<http://etd-library.ku.acke/ir/handle/123456789/3597>

<http://b.scorecardresearch.com/> downloaded June 2012

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for students

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Science Education

**PUPIL S’ AND TEACHERS’ VIEW OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR
PERFOMANCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING IN FRENCH GRADE TWELVE
EXAMINATIONS.**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FORMER PUPILS

Dear Respondent, This survey intends to establish factors contributing to the poor performance in composition writing in French grade twelve examinations. Your views concerning this subject will help in achieving the objective. The findings of this research will help in improving the performance of students in composition in French.

Kindly fill in the form below.

1 .Sex(Female/Male)

2 .Age.....

3 .At what stage did you start learning French? -----

(Pre-school/ primary/ secondary/Tertiary)

4. Who motivated you to study French? -----

(Parents/ teachers /friends /Self/ imposed by school)

5. What was your favorite component of French?-----

(Listening comprehension/ Reading comprehension/ Composition and structure/reading passage)

6. What grade did you get in final examination French at grade twelve?
(Distinction/merit/credit/satisfactory)

7. How often was composition in French taught?(Very often/often/rarely)

8 .What was your attitude towards learning composition? ----- (Positive/negative)

9 .Which was your most difficult component in French?-----

(Listening comprehension/ Reading comprehension/ Composition and structure

Reading passage)

10. What do you think were the factors contributing to the poor performance in grade twelve French composition writing?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix B: Interview guide for teachers.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Science Education

**PUPILS' AND TEACHERS' VIEWS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR
PERFORMANCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING IN FRENCH EXAMINATIONS GRADE
TWELVE.**

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. Sex----- (Females/males)
2. Age-----
3. Where did you train as a teacher?----- (college/university)
4. What qualification did you get?----- (diploma/degree)
5. How long have you been teaching French?-----
(1-5 years/ 6-10 years/11-15 years/16-20 years/Over 21 years)
6. What grades do you teach?-----
(Grade 8/Grade 9/Grade 10/ Grade 11/ Grade 12)
7. How often do you teach composition?----- (very often/often/rarely)
8. Do you like teaching composition in French?----- (yes/no)
9. What is the general performance of pupils in composition? -----
(Poor/Average/Satisfactory/ Good)

10. What is the attitude of pupils towards writing composition?-----

(Negative/ Positive)

11. Do you participate in article writing for Grade twelve examinations.

12. Do you mark the grade twelve French examinations? -----(yes/no)

13. What do you think are the factors contributing to the low performance of pupils in composition in French at grade twelve level?-----

13. What do you think can should be done to improve the performance in French composition writing?-----

THANK YOU FOR TIME

Appendix C: Interview guide for Education manager -SESO

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Science Education

**PUPILS' AND TEACHERS' VIEW OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR
PERFORMANCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING IN FRENCH GRADE TWELVE
EXAMINATIONS.**

1. How long have you been working?
2. Are you or were you involved in preparing the French examinations?
3. Are you or were you involved in marking the grade twelve French examinations?
4. Is there a linkage between the syllabus and the examinations?
5. What is the general performance of pupils in composition in French?
6. What are the factors contributing to the poor performance of pupils in composition writing?
8. What is the attitude of the teachers towards teaching composition writing?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix D: Interview guide for Education Manager -French specialist

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Science Education

PUPILS' AND TEACHERS' VIEW OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR PERFORMANCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING IN FRENCH GRADE TWELVE EXAMINATIONS.

1. How long have you worked as a specialist?
2. How long did you work as teacher before you become specialist?
3. How is the French examination prepared?
4. What has been the general performance of pupils in French composition?
5. What is the attitude of the teachers towards teaching composition writing?
6. Do you think the French syllabus is related to the examination set for the grade twelve?
7. Do you think the syllabus is related to the pupils' daily life?
8. What would you say are the factors contributing to the poor performance in composition writing in French at grade twelve examinations?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

Appendix E: Interview guide for Education Manager-CDC (French specialist)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

School of Education

Department of Language and Social Science Education

**PUPILS' AND TEACHERS' VIEW OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR
PERFORMANCE IN COMPOSITION WRITING IN FRENCH GRADE TWELVE
EXAMINATIONS.**

1. How long have you worked as a specialist?
2. How long did you work as teacher before you become specialist?
3. What is the general performance of pupils in composition writing?
4. What would you say are the factors contributing to the poor performance in composition in French at grade twelve examinations?
5. Do you think the French syllabus is related to the examination set for the grade twelve?
6. Do you think the syllabus is related to the pupils' daily life? How?
7. What do you think could be done to improve the performance in composition in French?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME