

**MUTUAL INTELLIGIBILITY BETWEEN CHITONGA VOCABULARY IN
INSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND LENJE TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE
LEARNING OF INITIAL LITERACY SKILLS: THE CASE OF SELECTED
SCHOOLS OF CHILUMBA AREA OF KAPIRI- MPOSHI DISTRICT, ZAMBIA**

**BY
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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial
fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Master of Education
in Literacy and Learning**

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DECLARATION

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by Mulunda Malambo is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.

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ABSTRACT

Zambia, being a multilingual country has had a challenge in choosing the appropriate medium of instruction for initial literacy skills in Primary Schools. Regional Official Languages, (ROL's) are used as MoI because of the assumption that they are mutually intelligible with the dialects they represent, (Mwanakatwe, 2013).

Chitonga, as a Regional Official Language, is assumed to be mutually intelligible with Lenje, that is why it is used as a medium of instruction in the Primary Literacy Programme, a programme in which learners learn in vernacular from Grades 1- 4. The study was motivated by Kashoki's (1978) and Simwinga's (2006) suggestion to test the assumption that Regional Official Languages are mutually intelligible with the dialects they represent, on linguistic grounds. The study sought to establish whether the use of mutual intelligibility of Chitonga vocabulary in the instruction materials could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills in the learners who are predominantly Lenje speakers.

The study was conducted in five schools in Chilumba area of Kapiri- mposhi district. The study used a qualitative approach involving a case study design. The sample size was 10, comprising 5 teachers and 5 parents while the pupils were observed indirectly during lessons due to their cognitive level which could not allow them to give in- depth understanding of the phenomena. Data was collected using semi- structured interviews and lesson observations. Results were categorized and analyzed thematically.

The study found that Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies were not completely mutually intelligible. The lack of mutual intelligibility hindered the learners' comprehension and consequently effective acquisition of initial literacy skills. Due to lack of intelligibility, the teachers translated Chitonga to Lenje to enable the learners comprehend the texts. The parents did not find it easy to help their children with their home work using Chitonga because of lack of mutual intelligibility.

Recommendations include use of Lenje as medium of instruction for Lenje speaking learners for easy acquisition of initial literacy skills; teachers who are conversant with the language to be given the Grade 1- 4 classes; parents to be given some guidelines on how to help their children and adult literacy programmes to be reinforced.

Key words: *mutual intelligibility, vocabulary, comprehension, medium of instruction, literacy, Chitonga, Lenje, multilingual.*

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DEDICATION

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BSAC:	British South African Company
CFW:	Conceptual Frame Work
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
HLGM:	High Level Group on Multilingualism
LoI:	Language of Instruction
MoE:	Ministry of Education
MoI:	Medium of Instruction
MESVTEE:	Ministry of Education Science Vocation Training and Early Education
MT:	Mother Tongue
NLF:	National Literacy Framework
PLP:	Primary Literacy Programme
PRP:	Primary Reading Programme
ROL:	Regional Official Language
TFW:	Theoretical framework
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UNESCO:	United Nations Education, Scientific, Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter gives a background to the study. It shows what led to the conception of the study. It also provides the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, the research objectives and the research questions, the significance of the study, theoretical and conceptual framework, the limitation and delimitation of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The policy of language in education was straight forward in Zambia throughout colonial and much of the Federal period. In Federal schools, the language of instruction (LoI) was English. This was because the learners were English or they came from homes where English was spoken. Such children had no difficulties learning through English language, (Kelly, 2010). This policy was mainly concerned with children of the white settlers. Their children had to learn in English because they understood the language. Therefore they had their own separate schools.

Kelly (2010) observed that the language in education policy for the Africans was three-tier. It was in three phases. The first phase was from grades 1- 2. In the first phase, the MT was used. However, if the learners' MT was not the main vernacular, they used any of the four official vernaculars, Silozi, Ibibemba, Chinyanja or Chitonga. The second phase was from Grades 3- 4. During this phase, the learners used one of the ROL's. The choice of using either the MT or the official vernacular was based on evidence that learning initial literacy skills was best achieved through a language that the learner understood easily. It was also based on the pedagogical knowledge of moving from known to unknown. The last phase, from Grade 5 upwards, the LoI was English.

Mwanakatwe (2013) observed that, before independence, the Colonial Government chose the ROL's for administrative and educational purposes because they were assumed to be closely related to the dialects they represented. The problem with this assumption was that, the language planners took this closeness for granted. The degree of their closeness and affinity had not been tested as much as was required. Scholars needed to conduct some studies on particular ROL's and the dialects they represented in order to establish the degree of their closeness.

Manchishi (2004) observed that the policy of using local languages was borrowed from the missionaries. The missionaries used local languages for evangelization. They translated the bible, other Christian literature and hymns into the local languages. The translation made their work successful because the people understood the message so easily, through the language which they knew. The missionaries went further by using the local languages as LoI, also known as medium of instruction (MoI) in their schools. Local languages were used at least from grade one to grade five. The use of local languages as MoI enabled the missionaries to make progress in initial literacy. This marked the beginning of the language in education policy, although not yet constitutionalized.

The language planners saw that it was important to emulate the policy which the missionaries used if the African child was going to learn successfully. They decided to use the language which the learners were familiar with. This was going to enable the learners to understand the content easily and faster. It is because of this reason that the language in education policy seems to be revolving around use of familiar languages as MoI. This is why even throughout the education reforms; there has been emphasis on using the learners' familiar language. MoE's (1977) first education reform, allowed the teachers to explain difficult concepts in the familiar vernacular language. MoE (1996) also acknowledged that use of a local vernacular language was the best medium that would facilitate easy acquisition of initial literacy skills, by the learners.

During the reign of the British South African Company (BSAC), the company established a school at Kanyonyo in 1907. This school, called the Barotse National School, was established after an agreement between the Litunga and the company. Like the missionaries, the company followed the policy of using the local language, Silozi, as MoI at this school (Manchishi, 2004). It was clear that the company could not impose an alien language on the people. The company, like the missionaries, used the local language that the people were familiar with, in order to teach the learners and consequently develop the much needed human resource.

The first Education policy in the then Northern Rhodesia was passed in March, 1925, by the Advisory Committee on Native Education. The policy memorandum was based on the principle that education was to be adapted to the local needs of the people. The content and methods were to be adapted to the local conditions. Text books were to be

suitable for use and the study of the educational use of the vernaculars was to be implemented, (Snelson, 2012). From this statement it was clear that the education policy considered the language in education policy. It was from this declaration that legal instructions guiding which language must be used as MoI were found, that is, vernaculars which fit the local conditions. Preparation of suitable text books which were adaptable to the local people was paramount. The language that was used in the text book was very cardinal. It was in light of this principle that the current study identified a knowledge gap; the need to establish whether the instruction materials addressed the needs of the people of Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi. The gap was married with Kashoki's (1978) suggestion to test whether the assumption that ROL's were actually mutually intelligible with the dialects they represented and Simwiinga's (2006) suggestion that Tonga fairly catered for Lenje, Ila and Sala.

Since independence, Zambia has been challenged with the development of the appropriate language to use as the MoI, in primary schools. This is because of her being a multi lingua country, having over forty vernaculars spoken by her people living in various regions. These vernaculars have some dialects which are similar because they belong to the Bantu language group. For the sake of peace and unity, none of these languages could be chosen as lingua franca (Mwanakatwe, 2013).

Of concern to the current study from the above quotation was the fact that; 'local languages and dialects were similar'. It could be true that some dialects were similar to the ROLs which represented them, while others were not. For instance, Chitonga was believed to be similar to Lenje, Ila and Sala (Simwinga, 2006). In linguistics, the similarity of languages is called mutual intelligibility. It seems there have not been any empirical linguistic studies conducted to establish the degree of the mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje, although some scholars like Simwinga (2006) assumed that Chitonga adequately represented Lenje, Sala and Ila. This assertion also led to the conception of the current study.

Further, the choice and use of the ROL's as MoI in schools could be interpreted as signifying an underlying principle that they were mutually intelligible. Kashoki (1978) advocated for the need to subject the policy to the field of test, in order to assess the extent to which it could be justified on linguistic grounds. This was what prompted the current study, to establish whether the assumed mutual intelligibility between Chitonga

and Lenje vocabulary, particularly in the instruction materials could facilitate effective acquisition of initial literacy skills.

This was not the only source of the knowledge gap of the current study, but also there were four other sources. The first came from the Native Authority's recommendation to prepare text books that were adaptable to the local community's needs; secondly, Mwanakatwe's (2013) suggestion that the ROL's were chosen because of the close affinity of languages; thirdly Simwinga's (2006) assumption that Chitonga adequately represented Lenje and fourth, Kashoki's (1978) call to put the policy to a test. All these four knowledge gaps provoked the need to establish the viability of using Chitonga in a predominantly Lenje speaking area as a MoI in initial literacy skills.

The language in education policy states that, the ROL that was intelligible to the local language of the area should be the one used as MoI. Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi District is inhabited by people who are predominantly Lenje speaking. Lenje is assumed to be mutually intelligible with Chitonga. Therefore, Chitonga was chosen to be used as MoI. When languages are mutually intelligible, they are conventionally assumed to be related in syntax, phonology and lexicon. Being an assumption, it could either be true or false, to some degree. The current study sought to establish whether mutual intelligibility of languages could effectively facilitate the acquisition of literacy skills in a multi- lingual set up where Chitonga was taught in a predominantly Lenje speaking area of Chilumba in Kapiri- Mposhi District.

Therefore, in agreement with other scholars, like Manchishi (2004) and Snelson (2013) it could be true to say that, clearly, the policy during the pre- colonial and colonial period was consistent: mother tongue was used for the first two years of primary education, followed by a dominant vernacular up to standard 5, thereafter, English was introduced. The mother tongue, as mentioned earlier on, was chosen for empirical reasons, the principle of moving from known to unknown. After acquiring the initial literacy skills in the mother tongue, then it would be easy to transfer the skills to other languages and content subjects.

The dilemma was in the post- independence period. This was because the policy was not very clear. At first English was used as MoI. The problem with using English as the MoI was that the learners could not understand English. As a result, there was

communication break- down between the teachers and the learners. The consequence was that the learners were not able to learn the initial literacy skills effectively. Later, in the MoE (1977) education policy, teachers were allowed to use Zambian Languages to explain difficult concepts. Despite that arrangement, literacy levels remained low.

According to MoE (1996), the MoE, in an attempt to improve the literacy levels of the learners, revised the curriculum. This new curriculum was called the Primary Reading Programme. It had three components: the New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL) for the Grade 1's; the Step into English (SITE) for the Grade 2's and the Read on Course (ROC) for Grades 3 to 7. The MoI in the NBTL programme was the familiar language or the language of play used within the school community. The SITE programme introduced the learners to English. The whole course work from NBTL was translated into English. The ROC course was aimed at enabling the learners to continue reading in both the Zambian Language and English.

Despite these interventions, the literacy levels of the learners did not improve, (Gordon, 2014). MESVTEE (2013) also indicates that the Grade 5 National Assessment Survey for 2006 and 2008 showed reading levels of as low as 35.3% in English and 39.4 % in Zambian Languages. In 2010, the repeated Grade 5 National Assessment which was conducted together with the Early Grade Reading Assessment survey showed that the reading and writing abilities among the learners were still very low. In the same year 2010, South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ III) also indicated that only 27.4% of the Grade 6 learners could read at basic competence level.

The MoE after conducting consultative meetings decided to increase the number of years in which the learners used local languages as MoI. The argument was that the one year period of NBTL was not enough for the learners to acquire the initial literacy skills. It was observed that learners needed at least four years of learning the initial literacy skills in and through a familiar local Zambian Language before they could be introduced to reading in English Language, (Tambulukani and Bus, 2012 ; MESVTEE, 2013). This led to the introduction of the programme of using vernacular for four years, also called the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) which commenced in the year 2014. This means that, the government has gone back to the old language in education policy, starting with the familiar ROL, then English. This policy on education recognizes the use of familiar local languages from early education to Grade 4.

Teaching and learning in all content subjects will be in the familiar languages, (MESVTEE, 2013).

The current language in education policy is similar to the old policy in that, the learners begin learning initial literacy from pre- grade to grade 4 through their familiar ROL. It is also similar in that, it acknowledges the fact that learners learn easily through their familiar Zambian languages (ZL). Apart from that, the learners do not labour much when learning literacy skills in their familiar ZL. This is because the Bantu orthography, unlike the English orthography, is transparent while the latter is opaque.

A transparent orthography has consistent consonant sounds and vowels. The phoneme-grapheme relationship is consistent. The spelling rules are consistent. Contrary to this, the opaque orthography does not have consistent consonant and vowel sounds. For example, the consonant 'c' could either be sound /s/ as in the word 'centre' or sound /k/ as in the word 'cat'. The same applies to vowels; for instance, the vowel 'u' sounds differently in the words 'cup' - /a/ and 'rule' - /u/. This inconsistency could confuse the learners. This was the reason why learners had problems to break- through to literacy when English was used as MoI from Grade 1.

Therefore, learning initial literacy skills through a familiar Zambian language has more advantages than learning in English. Consequently, teaching and learning initial literacy skills could be done through the familiar ROL's. But the effectiveness of these ROL's, in facilitating initial literacy skills need to be established, particularly the aspect of mutual intelligibility.

The only significant difference between the Language in Education policy used by the missionaries and the PLP is that the Language in education Policy used by the missionaries (though not constitutionalized) begun with the learners' MT from G1- 2 and then moved to the ROL from G3-4. The ROL was used from G1- 4 if the learners' MT was not the ROL.

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE SYUDY

The study sought to establish whether or not mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary that was used in the instruction materials and Lenje vocabulary spoken in

Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi could effectively facilitate acquisition of initial literacy skills.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The MoI in Chilumba area of Kapiri-Mposhi District is Chitonga. Chitonga was chosen because it was assumed to be mutually intelligible with Lenje, the language that is spoken in the area. It was not known whether or not this mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in the instruction materials could effectively facilitate the learners' acquisition of initial literacy skills. It was not known also whether the pupils could comprehend Chitonga so well that it could effectively facilitate the acquisition of the initial literacy skills.

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to the mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary used in instruction materials and Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area and so might not be generalized to other areas, but was interpreted within the confines of the area under study. The instruction materials under study were the Grade 1 Chitonga pupils' text books, being used under the current language in education policy, called the PLP. The study did not investigate vocabulary outside the instruction materials because the study was purely educational, in particular, the language in education policy. It was confined to the Grade 1 instruction materials because the study was particularly focusing on initial literacy skills. The MoI, in instruction materials was the case under study. The study sought to establish whether the pupils were able to easily comprehend the vocabulary, since Chitonga was assumed to be mutually intelligible with Lenje. Mutual intelligibility in this case meant the ability by the Grade 1 pupils, from Chilumba area, to understand Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials when reading and during the learning process.

Vocabulary, oral reading fluency and comprehension were among the five skills emphasized under the PLP. The other literacy skills emphasized under PLP were: phonemic awareness, phonics, print awareness and writing. This study limited itself to the skills of vocabulary reading fluency and comprehension. These two skills were seen to be vital to this study because they would help to establish whether Chitonga

vocabulary was actually mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabulary, as assumed by the policy makers.

1.5. MAIN RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To establish whether or not the mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in the instruction material could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills in learners who were predominantly Lenje speakers.

1.6. SPECIFIC RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To establish whether or not the Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials was mutually intelligible with Lenje, in Chilumba area of Kapiri-Mposhi District.
2. To establish whether or not the learners, who are Lenje speakers, could effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials, in Chilumba area of Kapiri-Mposhi District.
3. To explore how the Grade 1 teachers, interacted with the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials, in order to facilitate effective learning of initial literacy skills to learners who were Lenje speakers.
4. To determine whether the parents who are Lenje speakers found it easy to help their children with their home- work, using the Chitonga vocabulary in the instruction materials, in Chilumba area of Kapiri-Mposhi District.

1.7. MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How effective is the mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary used in instruction materials and Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area in facilitating the acquisition of initial literacy skills?

1.8. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How mutually intelligible is the Chitonga vocabulary, used in the instruction materials with Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi District?
2. How effectively do learners who are Lenje speakers in Chilumba area of Kapiri-Mposhi, comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials?

3. How do the teachers of Grade 1's, interact with the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials, in order to facilitate effective learning of initial literacy to the learners who are Lenje speakers?

4. How do the parents who are Lenje speakers, find Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials, when assisting their children with their home- work policy in initial literacy skills?

1.9. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study may provide information to stakeholders concerning the appropriate language in education policy for the learners of Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi. It may also enable the Lenje learners to learn effectively through an appropriate language and breakthrough easily and quickly if it is implimanted. It may also add to the body of knowledge, the information required for initial literacy skills required especially on the aspect of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje.

1.10. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study used the theory of Benjamin Lee Whorf's (1956) theory of linguistic relativity that states that, 'Language moulds habits of both cognition and perception and different languages point speakers towards different views of reality'. The study used this theory because it aimed at establishing whether the assumed mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary in the instruction materials and Lenje spoken in Chilumba area truly moulded habits of cognition and perception, of the learners' during literacy lessons. The theory was going to prove whether it was true that the Lenje speaking learners would have a similar view of reality as the Chitonga speakers since the two languages were assumed to be mutually intelligible.

The study also used Dowley's (1980) theory of compositional semantics, where meanings of larger units such as phrases and sentences are derived from compositional rules applied to the meanings of smaller units like morphemes and words. The theory further postulates that true learning is really to learn the meanings of the words appropriately and then apply them to all syntactic forms,(Dowley, 1980). This theory was relevant to the study in that it helped to identify the ability for the learners to derive meaning from the vocabulary and the phrases. The study was mostly interested in the second part of the theory which deals with meaning of words. Mutual intelligibility,

being the ability to understand another language without prior translation, in this case meant that the learners were expected to understand the meaning of the words and sentences without any translation. Having known the meaning of the words, the learners could use them appropriately in the sentences written in the text books, either as cloze exercises or comprehension passages. This helped to determine whether mutual intelligibility of Chitonga vocabulary in the instruction materials would enable the Lenje learners to derive meaning of the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. Ultimately, this would determine whether the learners would be able to learn effective comprehension skills through Chitonga vocabulary.

1.11. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study was informed by the concepts which are used in teaching and learning of initial literacy skills as stipulated in the National Literacy Framework (NLF) of 2013 (MESVTEE, 2013) and the National Reading Panel (2000). There are five skills that are used for teaching initial literacy skills. These five skills are phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (MESVTEE, 2013). These skills, if used properly, should provide effective initial literacy skills in the learners. Not all of these skills were relevant to this study, although they were mentioned just to clarify some points. It was the skills of vocabulary, oral reading fluency and comprehension which were vital for this study. These two skills were important because they showed whether there was actually mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary used in the text books and the Lenje vocabulary which the pupils came with from their homes.

Mutual intelligibility in this case means the ability for the learners to understand Chitonga without any translation. The study of how the learners use the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials enabled the researcher to find out whether the assumed mutual intelligibility between the two languages could facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills in the Grade 1 learners. Mutual intelligibility, as the cardinal aspect under investigation was also considered as a concept that should be addressed in the study.

(a) Phonemic awareness

This is the ability to hear sounds and manipulate them orally, (MESVTEE, 2013). The learners should be able to identify the individual sounds in the

words. Through this skill the learners are expected to blend the sounds to form words or even to identify rhyming words, similar or different words.

(b) Phonics

This is the ability to match written letters to their respective sounds, (MESVTEE, 2013). Learners are expected to identify and match the sounds of the letters without any difficulties. This is also called phoneme- grapheme association. This skill is an important pre- requisite to learning how to read. If the learners are able to identify the sounds of the letters then they will be able to blend the sounds to form words and then read.

(c) Oral reading fluency

This is the ability to read orally with accuracy, speed and expression, (MESVTEE, 2013). Accuracy means the learner is able to both encode and decode the written text, effortlessly and automatically. Speed means the learner is able to read at a good pace. This enables him or her to have sufficient time to think about and digest what he or she is reading. As the learner is doing this, s/he understands what s/ he is reading. Reading with expression means the learner is able to observe the punctuation marks, and apply them appropriately, as s/he reads.

Fluency is the ability to read text accurately and smoothly, (National Reading Pannel, 2000). A learner can only read fluently if s/he has enough working vocabulary. This will enable the learner to have ample time to recognize the written vocabularies and read them automatically. When this happens; the learner spends more time in comprehending the read words than in decoding the word. The implication is that if learners are struggling to decode individual vocabularies, they fail to concentrate on understanding the text being read.

(d)Vocabulary

The ability to understand the meaning of words and use them appropriately in speech and in written, (National Reading Pannel, 2000). Children acquire vocabulary of a language which they are exposed to. For them to do so, they must understand (receptive vocabulary) and use (expressive vocabulary). It is

only when they are able to understand and use the vocabulary appropriately, that they are said to communicate meaningfully. Vocabulary in this case is the focal point of reading comprehension.

Further, vocabulary is important for the learners in learning to read because they begin to understand that the words on the page are representative of the spoken word, (National Reading Panel, 2000). It is for this reason that the written words must be part of the learners' working vocabulary. They need to tag the written word to the referent in the real world. That is why a text which has a lot of new words in it becomes difficult for the learners to understand. New words must be introduced gradually with the increase of the learners' oral working vocabulary.

(d) Comprehension

The ability to understand the meaning of what is spoken or written, (National Reading Panel, 2000). Comprehension means the learners are able to derive meaning from the spoken or written vocabulary. The learners in this study were expected to understand the meaning of the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. Having understood the Chitonga vocabulary, they were expected to derive meaning of the vocabulary that they read.

Text comprehension is the interaction that happens between reader and text. More than merely decoding words on a page, comprehension is the intentional thinking process that occurs as we read – it is what reading is all about, (National Reading Panel, 2000). The learners need to use the knowledge they possess to understand the word from the written text. They need to connect the written text to the actual word, that way they are reading with understanding and application. The learners are therefore expected to search for answers and derive answers from the text. The skill of comprehension, being the focal point of reading should be taught and learnt as early as possible.

(e) Mutual Intelligibility.

This is the ability by the speaker and the listener to understand each other when they are speaking in their respective languages, without any translation. It can

also be called receptive multilingualism, (Golubovic & Gooskens 2015). In this case, the study sought to establish whether the Grade 1 learners were able to understand Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials such that they were able to learn the literacy skill of comprehension easily without any translation.

Gooskens (2013) suggested two main ways of measuring mutual intelligibility. These are using opinion tests and using functional tests. In opinion testing, the participants are asked their opinion of how well they think they understand a language. Tang and van Heuven (2007) used this method to test the mutual intelligibility of the Chinese dialects using the recordings of the fable of the North wind and the Sun as text samples.

In functional testing, the level of intelligibility is tested by having the listener prove that s/he recognizes the linguistic units (word recognition task) or grasps the meaning (speech understanding task) of some textual unit (sentence, paragraph or story), (Gooskens, 2013). She further suggested types of functional tests:

- i. Recorded text test; where the recorded speech is played in sections and participants are asked to retell what they heard after each section. This was first used for Natives American languages, (Voegelin & Harris, 1951). The disadvantage of this form of testing is that it is not done in a real life context and so scoring is difficult because the participants only retell the content.
- ii. Sentence translation task; which involves participants reading or listening to a text or sentence. The participants are then told to translate every single word that they heard or read, (Gooskens, Beijering and Heeringa, 2008);
- iii. Word translation task; in which participants are asked to translate the words, (Kurschner, Gooskens & van Bezooijen, 2008). This method is easy to use but the disadvantage is that it does not test the syntax and morphology as factors which significantly influence intelligibility.
- iv. The cloze test; in which a number of words in a text are deleted and blank spaces left for the participants to fill in with the correct words, (van Bezooijen & Gooskens, 2005). Alternatively, lists of target words are provided for filling in the blank spaces. This kind of test captures the understanding of the individual words as well as the general context. It is also easy to score automatically.

As mentioned earlier on, the study limited itself to the concepts of mutual intelligibility, vocabulary, oral reading fluency and comprehension. The combination of these concepts will enable the learner to effectively acquire initial literacy skills. In view of this, figure 1 presents an integration of the conceptual framework.

DIAGRAMATIC REPRESENTATION OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

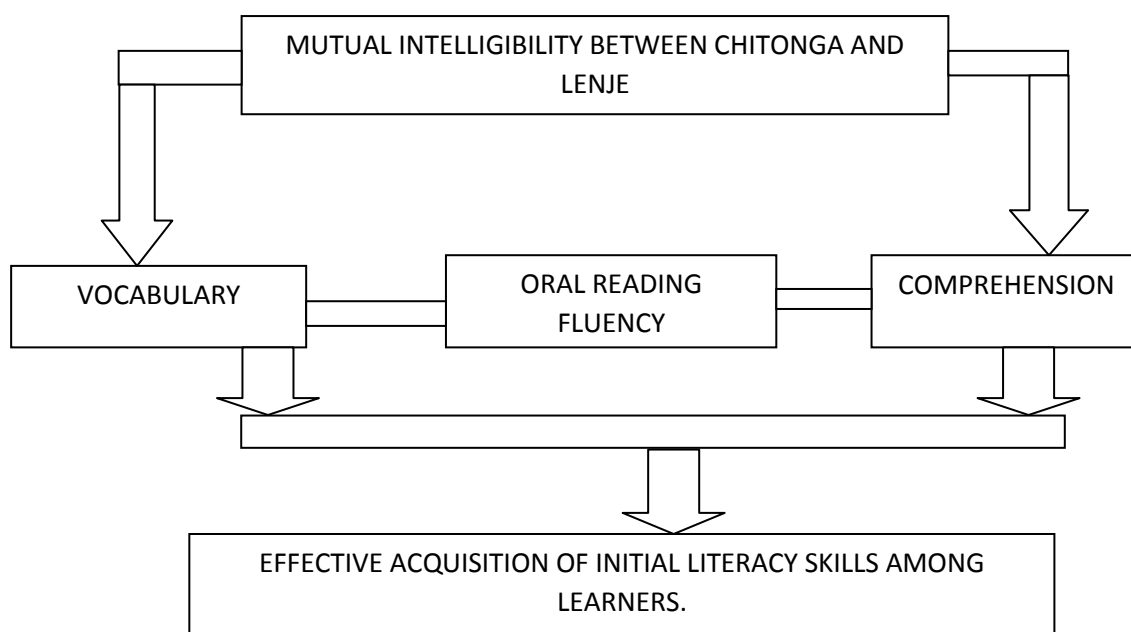


Figure 1: Integrated Conceptual Framework (designed by the researcher)

1.12. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the study used a case study, the research findings might not be generalized to other parts of the country. Results of the research were interpreted within the context of the area and would in no way be taken as the actual reflection of what would be obtained elsewhere in the other languages. The research interviews were limited to the teachers and parents. The pupils were not interviewed because the phenomenon under study required some advanced detailed cognitive analysis. By nature, children's level of analyzing issues was still low. It was because of their low cognitive level, that it was assumed that the pupils were not able to provide detailed answers. The children in this study were considered to have low cognition mainly because they were in the age bracket of between 6- 7 years, (MESVTEE, 2013). At this age children were not

expected to have the ability to analyze the phenomena under study. This could have affected the validity of the research. Therefore, the objective dealing with pupils' comprehension was not only answered by the teachers and parents through interviews, but also through lesson observation.

1.13. DELIMITATIONS

The study was conducted in Chilumba area of Kapiri-Mposhi District. Chilumba area was chosen for the study because the area is predominantly Lenje speaking and the MoI used for initial literacy in most of the schools in the zone, is Chitonga. There was another zone called Kabwale where Chitonga was used for initial literacy. Kabwale was not chosen for the study because the area was not predominantly Lenje. The area is inhabited by Lenje and Lamba – speaking people. Participants were chosen from the five schools in Chilumba area. The other remaining schools in Kapiri – Mposhi District used Icibemba as MoI for initial literacy.

1.14. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Cognate: Words that are related historically.

Grapheme: The smallest unit that is used in writing. It could be alphabetic letters, typographic figures, Chinese characters, numerical digits, punctuation marks and other symbols of any world's writing systems.

Initial literacy: The ability for children to read and write with understanding in grade 1.

Intelligibility: The ability for the speaker and the listener to understand each other when they are speaking in their respective languages.

Language in education policy: An official pronouncement of language to be used at national, regional, minority or foreign level, either in their written or spoken form, for educational purposes.

Levenshtein Algorithm: A measure of string edit distance based on the smallest string number of operations necessary to map a given string to another string.

Levenshtein Distance: Measure used to establish distances on sound level.

Lexical meaning: The meaning of an individual word.

Lexicon: Mental concept expressing a referent in the real world

Lingua franca: A language which is commonly used by a speech community, country or group of states whose mother tongue may be different in order to facilitate communication between them.

Literacy: The ability to read and write with understanding.

Morphemes: An abstract linguistic element that functions as a minimal unit of grammar.

Morphology: The study of the internal structure of words in a language.

Mother tongue: The language that a person acquires first in his or her life from his or her parents. It becomes a tool for communication and natural expression of thoughts.

Multilingualism: A country or society where many languages are spoken or a person who is able to speak more than one language.

Mutual intelligibility: Ability for people from different languages or dialects to understand each other even when they speak to each other in their respective languages.

Official language: A language chosen by government to be used for its business in the judiciary, legislature and executive; in education, health, and many more.

Orthography: Conventional system of representing sounds words and concepts of a language. These can change over time.

Phoneme: The smallest sound unit that can distinguish words.

Phoneme- grapheme relationship: Sound- letter relationship, in alphabetic writing. Graphemes (letters) represent the phoneme (sound) of the language.

Phonetics: The study of sound as the linguistic medium of speech.

Phonology: The study of speech sounds of a particular language and how they are organized into words.

Predominant language: A language commonly used in a community. It has an influence on the people.

String of sound: Phonetic symbols from one variety mapped to a corresponding string in another variety.

Syntax: The sentence structure.

Translation: To give the meaning of one language in another language.

Tribe: A group of families that are closely linked by factors such as social, cultural, economic and political ties.

Vernacular language: The ordinary, everyday speech of a particular community

1.15. SUMMARY.

This presentation began with the historical background to the study. It identified the knowledge gap. The problem under investigation was presented. The main objective and the specific objectives of the study were presented. The main question and the specific questions to address the research objectives were presented too. The theoretical frame work and the conceptual frame work were given. The limitations and delimitations of the study were presented. The chapter finally gave a summary and conclusion.

The next chapter presents the literature review. The literature reviewed was that which was related to the current study. Not only did it enrich the current study but also justified it by placing it in the context of similar studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. OVERVIEW

This chapter reviewed relevant literature that was available, related to the study. The relevance of this literature was to place the investigation within the context of similar studies. It did not only enrich the study, but also provided a justification for it. The reviewed literature specifically focused on studies on mutual intelligibility of some languages around the world. The review commenced with the European perspective, followed by the Asian perspective, then the African perspective and finally the Zambian perspective.

Globally, the concept of mutual intelligibility of closely related languages had been of concern, particularly in terms of educational matters. Of great concern had been the use of the assumption of mutual intelligibility of closely related languages, as MoI, especially in multi-lingual communities. These assumptions have greatly affected the acquisition of initial literacy skills in the learners. Until now, scholars have tried to investigate what could be the easiest and best way of teaching initial literacy skills to children living in these multi-lingual communities. This is because literacy levels of both the young and the old are still low.

2.1. EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

Europe, as a multilingual continent, has a large number of languages spoken across the continent. Some of these languages enjoy high status and so they are called official languages, while others do not, therefore they are called minority languages. In respect to linguistic diversity; the European Union (EU) endeavored to establish ways of reconciling this language situation. In 2007, the EU, through the High Level Group on Multilingualism (HLGM), published research topics that sought to investigate how to improve communication within Europe, while preserving multilingualism. The HLGM discovered the need to investigate the mutual intelligibility between closely related languages in Europe and the possibility of communicating through receptive multilingualism. Receptive multilingualism entails the ability for people from two different language groups to understand each other when they speak using their respective languages. The HLGM also realized the need to evaluate the potentials and limitations of using English as a lingua franca at the European level. Since then, the

issue of intelligibility of languages has posed a need for investigations by scholars, especially for education purposes.

Following the HLGGM's publications, Gooskens and van Heuven (2007) investigated the mutual intelligibility of closely related languages within the Germanic, Slavic and Romance language families. They investigated both the linguistic factors (phonetics, lexicon, morphology, syntax and orthography) and extra- linguistic features (attitude towards languages and familiarity with different languages). Their study had three main questions:

1. What is the level of mutual intelligibility in closely related languages in Europe?
2. What factors play a role in mutual intelligibility?
3. How well do speakers of closely related European languages understand each other in non- native English compared to semi- communication?

The methodology used was the quantitative, experimental set- up. Two variables were tested; intelligibility as the dependent variables while the non- linguistic predictor was the independent variable. Language Intelligibility was tested through translation of texts for both the written and spoken language. The texts were short sentences written within the level of the participants' difficult, derived from their daily life experiences. The mutual intelligibility of the languages within each of the languages was tested using cloze tests. Statistical analysis was used to explain the mutual intelligibility of closely related languages. To find out which non- linguistic factors affected mutual intelligibility, they used questionnaires. The participants had to answer questions concerning their familiarity and experiences with the test languages. They were also given a task of translating the non- cognate words.

Gooskens and Van Heuven's (2007) findings suggested that the level of intelligibility depended not only on the amount of experience with the other languages, but also on formal instructions. The other finding suggested that non- linguistic factors, which includes; negative attitudes or social stigmas attached to languages affected mutual intelligibility. If a person liked the language, s/he would speak it while the opposite was the case. The linguistic factors, which include lexical and phonetic distances, syntactic and morphological levels also affected mutual intelligibility. They suggested that lexicons which were related to the participants were intelligible to them while those

which were not related were not intelligible. Unknown lexicons affected the participants' ability to translate the text and to complete the cloze tests successfully. They agreed with Luce and Pison's (1988) suggestion that lexicons called neighbours (words that are similar to the stimulus words) do not only compete in responses but also hinder communication. Some lexicons' phonological make up were different and so hindered intelligibility. Morphological and syntactical distance between the participants' MT and the test language also affected intelligibility. The other finding suggested that pronunciation and word meaning were cardinal to mutual intelligibility.

The Gooskens and van Heuven's (2007) study was relevant to the current study because both studies were concerned with mutual intelligibility of vocabularies between and among languages. Chitonga as a ROL has been believed to be closely related to Lenje. It was also believed that the speakers of the two languages were able to communicate without any barriers. Like Gooskens and van Heuven's study, the current study sought to establish whether the assumed mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary and Lenje vocabulary could effectively enable the learners to acquire initial literacy skills.

However, the current study differed from Gooskens and van Heuven's in the methodology in that the current study used the case study not only because the researcher wanted to understand the phenomena in depth but also because the phenomena seemed not to have been investigated in Zambia, before. It seems the previous study used experimental design because studies on mutual intelligibility had been conducted before in Europe. The previous study seemed to be responding to the HLGM's request to investigate the mutual intelligibility of the closely related languages in Europe, Gooskens and van Heuven (2007).

Further, the current study also used the cloze exercises to determine the mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies. The cloze tests used in the current study were not prepared in advance as in Gooskens and van Heuven's (2007) study. Since the current study was based on the instruction materials, the cloze exercises used were from the text books. The researcher did not impose the cloze exercises on the learners, but observed them from the normal daily routine. Besides that, the previous study requested the participants to translate some texts. This was possible because the participants were within the age bracket of 16 years and they were

students at universities. The current study did not use translation as a task to test intelligibility because the learners were Grade 1's in the age bracket of 7 years and so the researcher felt they were still below the cognitive level of reasoning abstractly. The learners in the current study could not even give their opinion of the two languages. The researcher used the Grade 1 instruction materials because initial literacy skills are introduced in Grade 1. The other reason was that, like Gooskens and van Heuven's (2007) study, Grade 1 pupils were assumed to have had no contact with Chitonga vocabulary prior to starting school. It would be a good idea for future researchers to do a translation task with older participant's in order to find out the degree of mutual intelligibility.

However, the only similarity between the learners in Gooskens and van Heuven's (2007) study and the current study was that they were both assumed to have had no contact with the test language. In this case, while the participants from the previous study were picked from schools which were not close to boarder areas, the learners in the current study were Grade 1's who were coming from homes where they had little or no contact with Chitonga. This could be explained by the fact that Chilumba area being a rural set- up, houses are scattered and so chances of children meeting with the other children are rare. It should be mentioned here that it is also possible that the learners could have come into contact with Chitonga from their neighbours either at church or clinic since there were some Tonga speaking people living within the area, for farming purposes.

Gooskens, Beijering and Heeringa (2008) investigated phonetic and lexical predictors of intelligibility among seventeen Scandinavian language varieties and standard Danish. Gooskens et al (2008:65) was guided by three questions:

1. What is the relative contribution of lexical and phonetic distance to the intelligibility of Scandinavian language varieties to standard Danish listeners?
2. What is the relative contribution of aggregate consonant and vowel distances to the intelligibility of Scandinavian language varieties to standard Danish listeners?
3. What is the relative contribution of subclassified consonant and vowel distances (insertions, deletions, substitutions, lengthening, shortening) to the intelligibility of Scandinavian language varieties to standard Danish listeners?

The sample size used was 351 native speakers of Standard Danish. The age range of the participants was between 15 and 20 years. They were taken from eighteen high school classes in Copenhagen. The respondents had no contact with any of the Scandinavian dialects.

Gooskens et al's (2008) study was relevant to the current study because both were investigating mutual intelligibility between languages. However, while the previous study investigated predictors of mutual intelligibility at phonetic and lexical levels, the current study limited itself to the lexicons used in the text books. It therefore justified the current study because there is a relationship between the two studies. The current study, unlike the previous one, used a small sample size because of the nature of the research design employed, the case study, which used a descriptive reporting of findings. The previous study used a bigger sample size because it used quantitative research design which used statistical report.

Apart from that, the current study's sample comprised teachers and parents because the learners were not old enough to give in depth answers which would have provided understanding of the phenomena. Gooskens (2013) suggested that the best sample for intelligibility among high school pupils was in the age range of 17 and 18 years of age. The current study was based on Grade 1 primary school pupils. As a result the learners were indirectly observed during the lesson to establish whether they understood Chitonga vocabulary. Their comprehension skills were further established through the written cloze test which Gooskens (2013) considers as a functional way of measuring mutual intelligibility. The teachers and the parents gave their opinion of whether Chitonga vocabulary was intelligible with Lenje vocabulary and whether it facilitated the learning of initial literacy skills in the learners.

Gooskens et al's (2008) study used the correlation design to find the answers to the questions. They used the recordings and transcriptions of the fable of 'The North Wind and the Sun', in eighteen different language varieties. The fable comprised six sentences which were translated into each of the eighteen Scandinavian dialects. The participants were given the task of translating each word into Danish.

In order to establish the relevance of each linguistic distance, Gooskens et al (2008) correlated the intelligibility scores with lexical and phonetic distances. Intelligibility scores were based on how many words the participants translated correctly. To find the phonetic distances the Levenshtein algorithm was used. The words were aligned to find out the phonetic distance. The lexical distance was expressed as the percentage of non-cognates in the 17 language varieties. The current study, however, did not consider the phonetic and the lexical distances. Nevertheless, future researchers could carry out studies to find out the phonetic distance between Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies using the Levenshtein algorithm. Further, unlike the previous study, the current study was limited to two languages. Perhaps it could be necessary to investigate all the dialects represented by Chitonga to establish their degree of intelligibility as suggested by Kashoki (1978).

The findings of Gooskens et al's (2008: 76- 78) suggested that:

1. Phonetic distance is a significant predictor of intelligibility. It was also found that the lexical distance also predicted intelligibility because a non-cognate word in a sentence could hinder the intelligibility of the entire sentence or phrase.
2. There was a strong correlation between consonant distance and intelligibility than between vowel distance. The suggestion here is that consonants play a major role in intelligibility than vowels.
3. The last finding seemed to suggest that consonant substitution, lengthening, shortening or deletion significantly predicted intelligibility. This is because doing so changed the entire word form.

The current study, unlike Gooskens et al's (2008) study, did not go into details of finding out if phonetics affected mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary. The study limited itself to lexicons or vocabularies in the instruction materials. It could be of equal importance to conduct studies on the lexical distance and phonetic distance between Chitonga and its dialects-Ila, Lenje, Toka- leya, and Sala. This could help to establish how closely related they were to each other. Consequently, this would determine if the ROL's could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills.

Ciobanu and Dinu (2013) investigated the similarity of Romanian, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese languages in respect to their written intelligibility. Written intelligibility is the ability of people writing in different languages to understand each other without prior knowledge of the other language. The previous study is relevant to the current study because they were both concerned with intelligibility between languages in the written texts.

Ciobanu and Dinu's (2013) study was more inclined to lexicons than the orthography. They suggested that a person was able to understand a written word because it was either an etymon or a cognate. Etymons are words which are either inherited from the MT or share the same ancestor. Cognates are words from different languages having the same ancestor. Like Ciobanu and Dinu's (2013) study, the current study considered the lexicons of Chitonga vocabulary, whether they were intelligible to the Lenje learners. The current study, however, did not consider calculating the linguistic distance of the words from Chitonga and Lenje; this could be done by future researchers.

Further, Ciobanu and Dinu's (2013) study used both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The quantitative approach was used to quantify the lexical similarity while the qualitative approach was used to understand the relationship of lexicons. The case study design was employed as the study compared the lexicons among the Romanian, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese languages. The current study only used the qualitative approach employing the case study design, because the study seemed not to have been investigated before. The previous study used quantitative approach because it considered the lexico- statistics as it quantified the difference in number of etymons and cognates, a case which the current study did not do.

The methodology employed in Ciobanu and Dinu's (2013) study was more complex than that suggested by Gooskens (2013) in that, while Gooskens (2013) used the Levenshtein algorithm only, Ciobanu and Dinu (2013) used an advanced algorithm which compared the similarity of lexicons through identifying their relationships and quantifying their string similarities. They also processed the texts by data cleaning, removing stop words and lemmatization. They identified relationships between the etymons and the cognates using dictionaries, historical and comparative linguistics, respectively. They calculated the linguistic distance using three different processes; the

levenshtein algorithm, the longest common subsequence ratio and the rank distance. The current study only considered whether the learners understood Chitonga vocabulary or not. It did not go into details of lexical differences between Chitonga and Lenje. This could be a suggestion for future research.

Ciobanu and Dinu (2013) further concluded that Romance was the least intelligible of the test languages. They found that the closest languages were Spanish and Portuguese, followed by Italian and Spanish. It seemed that Spanish was more intelligible to both Italian and Portuguese. They also suggested that the languages which were highly unsimilar were Romania and Spanish. They also suggested that the Romance language seemed to be more accessible to the other languages because of its development. They suggested that use of an automatic method should be employed to determine the intelligibility of natural languages.

Kaivapalu (2013) investigated symmetrical intelligibility between Estonian and Finnish written texts. Symmetrical intelligibility in this case means does language group A understand language B more than language group B understands language A. She wanted to find out whether the Finish understood the Estonian text as much as the Finish did. Kaivapalu's (2013) study was relevant to the current study because they both sought to investigate the intelligibility of two languages in their written form. However, they differed slightly because Kaivapalu's (2013) study investigated the symmetrical intelligibility of the test languages while the current study only sought to find out whether the Lenje speaking learners could effectively understand Chitonga in the initial literacy skills. The main reason the researcher did this was because Chitonga, as a ROL, is the MoI and so there was need to establish how effective it was to be used in the acquisition of initial literacy skills. At the moment, there was no need to investigate the symmetrical intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje because Lenje was not used in education as a MoI. Perhaps this could be done in future research, outside education circles.

Further, Kaivapalu's (2013) study used a total sample of 78 respondents broken as follows; 39 students from the Universities of Jayvaskyla and Eastern Finland and 39 students from the University of Tallinn. The samples, like in the other related studies had neither prior knowledge nor experience of the test language. The current study might differ slightly from Kaivapalu's (2013) study, on language contact because some

of the learners in the current study could have had contact with the target language, since there were some Tonga speaking people living within the same community. The other difference was that the students used in the previous study were older than the learners in the current study and so there was no direct interview with them except through their teachers, parents and lesson observation and the cloze exercise and comprehension task.

Kaivapalu's (2013) study, unlike the current study which was purely qualitative, employed the quantitative approach to address the problem. She also used the text intitled 'A Bridge over the Sea' to test the comprehension of the students, while the current study used texts from the instruction materials to find out the teachers' and parents' opinion on the mutual intelligibility of Chitonga and Lenje and to observe comprehension skills in the learners . Kaivapalu's (2013) study had the texts translated into both of the languages, but the current study did not have the texts translated.

Kaivapalu's (2013) study concluded that, the Finns understood the Estonian written text better than the Estonians understood the Finnish text. She suggested that this was because the Finish vocabulary and structure were more similar to Estonian vocabulary than the Estonian vocabulary was to the Finish vocabulary. Secondly, she found that, although the students used their general knowledge of the historical events to understand the comprehension text, sometimes the general knowledge made them make wrong conclusions. She also found that the major contributing factor to mutual comprehensibility and fluent understanding of the target language was practice of and contact with the target language.

Reed (2014) investigated the mutual intelligibility of listening and speaking skills from the practical point of view. She sought to find out factors which contributed to listening and speaking skills. Reed's (2014) study was relevant to the current study because both studies were looking at mutual intelligibility. It was also relevant to the current study because apart from reading and writing, the learners in the study were expected to exhibit speaking and listening skills. The only difference is that Reed's (2014) study was looking at the general aspect of listening and speaking while the current study was concerned with the intelligibility between the written Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials and Lenje spoken in Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi District.

The main purpose was to establish if the assumed intelligibility could enable the learners to learn initial literacy skills easily or not.

She considered accent, comprehensibility and intelligibility as factors which affected listening. To establish this she looked at the syllable structure of words, phonological processes and morpho- syntax structure, orthographic mapping and lexical stress. The current study did not consider these factors from Reed's (2014) study as they were not aspects under study except for intelligibility.

Reed (2014) concluded by suggesting that, intelligibility was a basic requirement in human interaction. The basic factor was how much the listener understood what the speaker said. It was the listeners' task to strive and understand the speakers' speech easily. As a result, the listener sometimes makes inferences from the speeches s/he hears implied by the speaker. This whole process is what she called comprehensibility. The sole purpose of conversation is to be able to understand others and in turn to be understood.

Golubovic and Gooskens (2015) investigated the level of mutual intelligibility among the West Slavic (Czech, Slovak and Polish) and South Slavic languages (Croatian, Slovene and Bulgarian). The purpose of the study was to establish the HLG's knowledge gap of receptive multilingualism. The relevance of the previous study to the current study was the fact that both were looking at mutual intelligibility between languages. The only difference was that the previous study sought to find out the level of mutual intelligibility among six language groups with the view of creating a model for mutual intelligibility, while the current study dealt with two language groups for educational purposes.

Golubovic and Gooskens' (2015: 353) study was guided by three questions:

1. What is the level of mutual intelligibility between Czech, Slovak, Polish, Croatian, Sloven and Bulgarian?
2. Is the level of mutual intelligibility always symmetrical?
3. How reliable and suitable are the word translation task, the cloze test and the picture task?

To address the research questions, Golubovic and Gooskens (2015) used three methods; the word translation task, cloze test and picture task. These three methods, unlike in the studies mentioned above, were used not only to optimize the results but also to establish their reliability and suitability in measuring intelligibility. The tasks were done using both the written and spoken modality. The written modality was based on four texts which were translated into all the six test languages. They used cloze test and the picture task which had 200 words while the translation task was based on 100 most frequent words. The cloze test was based on 4 nouns, 4 verbs and 4 adjectives. The picture task was based on a written text which was read and the participants' task was to identify the correctly described picture. The spoken mode was recorded by 6 female natives of the target languages. The experiment design was done online through a custom web made application.

In contrast to Golubovic and Gooskens' (2015) study, the current study did not compare the reliability and suitability of the the cloze test, picture task and translation task to measure intelligibility. Instead, the current study used the cloze test to measure intelligibility. The current study was a case study conducted on direct contact with the participants and not the experimental design conducted online as in the previous study. The spoken modality was conducted directly by the teachers during the lesson, contrary to the previous study which used recorded instructions. This means that the current study was conducted in a more natural and real situation than the previous study.

Golubovic and Gooskens' (2015) sample was in the age range of between 18- 30 years. The sample size was 5,965 of which two thirds were females. They were chosen from those who completed the high school education and had no experience with the test language. The sample size for the current study was by far less than that of the previous study and so was the age range and educational levels. This was because the current study was a case study and so needed a small sample size which could provide an in depth of understanding of the phenomenon through open ended questions by interviews. The teachers and parents were used as the sample instead of the learners because the age range of the Grade 1 learners was below the cognitive level which could not provide in depth answers through interview and so they were observed in the lesson.

Golubovic and Gooskens' (2015) finding to their first question suggested that receptive multilingualism was possible among the languages, although the Bulgarians expressed

the least intelligibility due to the fact that they used a different alphabet called Cyrillic. The results also revealed that there was a division between West and South Slavic languages and that, the West Slavic languages were more intelligible to speakers of West Slavic languages than among the South Slavic languages. The finding to their second research question suggested that there was asymmetrical intelligibility between Croatian and Sloven languages. The third finding suggested that the cloze test and word- translation task produced similar results and so they were reliable and suitable methods for measuring mutual intelligibility of the Slavic languages. The picture task was not reliable as the results were not similar to the other tasks.

Gooskens, Bezooijen and van Heuven (2015) investigated the mutual intelligibility between German and Dutch cognates by children. The study sought to establish roles played by extra- linguistic factors in intelligibility, particularly the phonetic-phonological factors in the two languages at word level, for speakers who are meeting for the first time. Gooskens et al's (2015) study used a sample size of 28 Dutch and 34 German respondents. The sample comprised children between the ages of 9 and 12 years. The Dutch respondents were all in the last grades of Primary education, in Oldenburg town. The German respondents were in the first year of gymnasium in the town of Spijkenisse. Children were used in order to control the factor of attitude towards languages, assuming that childrens' attitude towards other languages was neutral. The Dutch school was 160 kilometres away from the German boarder, while the German school was 80 kilometres away from the Netherlands boarder. This was meant to ensure that the sample selected had no contact with the test language.

Gooskens et al's (2015) study was relevant to the current study in that both studies sought to establish the mutual intelligibility between two languages. The only difference is that the current study only considered establishing whether mutual intelligibility could facilitate initial literacy skills without considering linguistic and non- linguistic factors. Future researchers could investigate these factors. The other difference is that the age range of the samples was different. The educational level of the Dutch children was different from that of the current study because they were in the last grades of Primary education while the latter were in their first grade. It was only the learners in the German sample who were in the same grade level with those of the current study.

Gooskens et al's (2015) study used translation and dictation of highly frequent cognate nouns from both languages. The Levenshtien algorithm was used to calculate the lexical distance. They also borrowed the Perceptual Assimilation Model from Best, McRoberts and Goodell (2001), which helped them to identify the sounds which challenged the learners. The current study, unlike the previous study, did not use these methods but suggests that probably in future this could be done.

Gooskens et al's (2015) findings suggest that, Dutch children understood German cognates better than the German subjects understood the Dutch cognates. The other finding suggested that lexicons called neighbours and different perceptions of sounds making up the lexicons affected asymmetric intelligibility.

2.2. ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

Van Heuven and Wang (2007) investigated the potential and limitations of using English as a lingua franca at the European level. This study was a response to the HLGGM second research question. They tested the mutual intelligibility of American, Chinese and Dutch accented English. Their findings were that listeners understood English better when the accent of the speaker was similar to that of the listener. This is called the inter language speech intelligibility benefit. This therefore means that 'accent' affects intelligibility. For the speaker and listener to understand each other properly, their accent should be the same. This study is relevant to the current study in that both studies sought to find out the mutual intelligibility between languages. The only difference is that the previous study was concerned with the accent among languages, while the current study was not. It is possible that accent between Chitonga and Lenje speakers could affect their intelligibility. However, this was not part of the study and so it was not investigated, but could be investigated. It has been mentioned to show that accent is one of the many aspects that affect mutual intelligibility.

Chujo (2012) studied the development of curriculum and materials designed to enhance learners' oral communication skills through a focus on established mutual phonological intelligibility standards for English as Lingua Franca (EFL) communication. The conclusion of his research was that, introducing and acknowledging the prevalence and validity of using English as a lingua Franca and achieving the goal of establishing mutual intelligibility would contribute to a change in learners' attitude towards English language, leading them to be more comfortable and more confident when using the

language. Chujo's (2012) study also suggested that, with the revision of curriculum materials, students would be more confident and think more highly of themselves as English speakers. Moreover, this meant that they could be models of English as international language if they practiced enough to acquire a level of mutual phonological intelligibility.

The relevance of Chujo's (2012) study to the current study was that both studies were investigating the intelligibility of the curriculum material for the learners. The most important fact is that intelligibility is cardinal if learning should take place. Other than that, there could be no communication in the absence of intelligibility. The current study however, did not consider phonological aspects between Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies used in the instruction materials. Mutual phonological intelligibility is important because it enables the learners' ability to both pronounce the words and write them easily.

Phonology is paramount to reading and writing, particularly in languages that have shallow orthography like Bantu languages. In shallow orthography, the phoneme-grapheme relationship is consistent. This consistence could enable the learners to learn to read faster if they are properly introduced to the phonetic attack skills. The phonetic attack skill depends on the ability of the learner to pronounce the words correctly, in the native way. This is the reason why mutual phonological intelligibility of ROL's and the languages they represent in Zambia should be studied. This study however, will not delve into this aspect but would suggest that future researchers could venture into it.

Tang and van Heuven (2009) tested the mutual intelligibility of fifteen Chinese dialects functionally at the level of isolated words (word intelligibility) and the level of the sentence (sentence intelligibility). The method they used to measure mutual intelligibility was the function tests. They correlated Tang's and van Heuven's (2009) findings on opinion test of Chinese dialects with the findings from the functional test. For the word intelligibility test, the respondents were made to complete a semantic categorization task where they classified nouns into categories of body parts, plant, animal and others. Sentence intelligibility was tested by having respondents translate a target word in each sentence into their own dialect. They also compared the results obtained from the opinion and functional tests with the traditional dialects taxonomy to find out which tests agree with the traditional Chinese dialects.

Unlike Tang and van Heuven's (2009) study, the current study did not look at the semantic aspects of Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary but only concentrated on establishing whether Chitonga was intelligible enough to enable the learners to acquire initial literacy skills, through opinion tests and functional tests. The current study obtained opinion measures of whether Chitonga and Lenje were mutually intelligible, from the teachers and parents while the previous study got the opinion measure from another related study by Tang and van Heuven (2009). The functional measures that were used in the research were the comprehension and cloze exercises, from the instruction materials.

Tang and van Heuven's (2009) study concluded that the degree of mutual intelligibility can be determined by both opinion and functional tests, although functional intelligibility measures gave better classification of Chinese dialects.

2.3. AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

The role of African languages for education and development was examined through a critical review of international and national languages policies whose aim was to promote the use of African languages as a means of instruction in formal and non-formal education. The Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS) has been involved in the development of glossaries, wordlists, monolingual dictionaries as well as developing and testing text books, (Prah, 2007).

It was important for the continent to be concerned about language policies. Good language policies could facilitate effective initial literacy skills. The entire continent has been affected by the use of languages that are alien to the learners because education has been affected by the political will. Imposition of languages as MoI has greatly affected the acquisition of literacy skills. Instruction materials must be tested to establish if the vocabulary used could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy. It was for this reason that the current study intended to examine the effectiveness of the Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials in the facilitation of initial literacy in a predominantly Lenje speaking area of Chilumba.

Gooskens and Bezooijen (2006) investigated how comprehensible written texts were to Dutch and Afrikaans in South Africa. They wanted to find out whether the South

Africans understood Dutch as much as the Dutch understood Afrikaans. They also tested the participants in their own MT.

Gooskens and Bezooijen's (2006) study had two sample groups. The sample for the Dutch consisted of 32 pupils comprising 11 boys and 21 girls. They were in the age range of 16 years. The sample was drawn from the students who were in their pre- final year of university education. They spoke Dutch as MT and had no prior knowledge of Afrikaans. The sample for the South Africans consisted of 33 pupils broken down as 20 boys and 13 girls. Like their counterparts they were also in the age range of 16 years. They spoke Afrikaans as MT and had no prior knowledge of Dutch.

Gooskens and Bezooijen's (2006: 4) study was guided by three questions:

1. How well did Dutch subjects with no knowledge of Afrikaans understand written Afrikaans?
2. How well did South African subjects with no prior knowledge of Dutch understand written Dutch?
3. Can a possible asymmetry in comprehensibility be explained by asymmetrical attitudes?

The method used was the experimental design. The experiments were divided into three blocks. The first block consisted of using questions on which subjects completed their personal details. The second block dealt with the subjects' attitude towards and experience with the language under investigation. The last block was concerned with the cloze test for testing intelligibility.

The difference between Gooskens and Bezooijen's (2006) study and the current study is that Gooskens and Bezooijen's (2006) study used the experimental design while the current study used the case study. The other difference between these two studies is that, the previous study investigated the asymmetrical intelligibility. Asymmetrical intelligibility is when one language group A is able to understand the other language B or dialect while language B cannot understand language A. The other difference was that the previous study tested the respondents in their MT as well, while the current study only restricted itself to Chitonga, the test language because testing the learners in Lenje would have been a comparative study.

Further, Gooskens and Bezooijen (2006) investigated the level of intelligibility using the cloze test. Unlike the current study, the texts used in the previous study were derived from the news paper articles, while the current study used texts from the Chitonga pupils' text books. The texts in Gooskens and Bezooijen's (2006) study were based on 5 nouns, 5 adverbs and 5 verbs which were selected randomly. The current study considered all the vocabularies without isolating adverbs, adjectives or nouns. The texts in Gooskens and Bezooijen's (2006) study were translated into Afrikaans and Dutch. The current study did not translate Chitonga vocabulary into Lenje. Perhaps future research could do so in order to compare the learners' performance in the two languages.

The findings to Gooskens and Bezooijen's (2006) study suggested that the Dutch did better than the South Africans in the intelligibility tests. This suggested that Dutch was more difficult for the South Africans than Afrikaans was for the Dutch. This result was attributed to attitude and linguistic similarity between Dutch and Afrikaans. The Dutch had a positive attitude towards Afrikaans that was why they got high scores. On the contrary, the South Africans had a negative attitude towards Dutch that was why they scored lowly. It was also found that Dutch had more linguistic similarities with Afrikaans, and so the Dutch subjects found it easier to understand Afrikaans than did their South African counterparts.

The other finding to Gooskens and Bezooijen's (2006) study was that, only the words which were either related or similar in meaning were intelligible while those which were different were unintelligible. Therefore, lexical meaning also contributed to intelligibility. The South Africans failed to understand the meaning of the lexicons and the texts so they failed to correctly complete the cloze tests because they could not understand the meaning of most of the words as they were neither similar nor related to their MT. The other contributing factor to unintelligibility of lexicons was attributed to differences in spellings. The lack of grammatical intelligibility was attributed to differences in the morphological systems. The other finding was that the Dutch orthography was a major factor which hindered intelligibility to the South Africans.

Van Bezooijen and Gooskens (2007) investigated the intelligibility of written Afrikaans and Frisian by Dutch speaking subjects. This study was relevant to the current study in that both of the studies were looking at the intelligibility of written vocabularies,

although van Bezooijen and Gooskens' (2007) study compared three languages while the current study only compared two languages.

The study was guided by three questions (van Bezooijen & Gooskens, 2007: 3):

1. Which language is more difficult to understand for Dutch- speaking readers, Frisian or Afrikaans?
2. Can the difference in intelligibility, if any, be explained by different attitudes towards the two languages?
3. Can the difference in intelligibility if any, be explained by differences in the linguistic distances to the two languages?

The sample size used was 20 university students, consisting of 2 men and 18 women. They were in the age range of 23 years. They had no active knowledge of either spoken or written Afrikaans or Frisian but they had passive knowledge of hearing and reading.

Van Bezooijen and Gooskens (2007) used the experimental design to address the research questions. Two newspaper articles of average levels of difficult were used as texts for testing linguistic intelligibility. The texts were translated to Frisian and Africans. A cloze test was prepared based on 5 adjectives, 5 adverbs, 5 verbs and 5 nouns. The words which were correctly completed were deemed intelligible.

Van Bezooijen and Gooskens (2007) first investigated whether the Frisian and Afrikaans texts were intelligible to the Dutch speakers, through the cloze tests administered. Their finding was that Frisian, as compared to Afrikaans, was more difficult for Dutch- speakers as a result they concluded that Afrikaans was more intelligible to the Dutch speakers than Frisian.

Van Bezooijen and Goosken's (2007) second task was to investigate the attitudes of the Dutch speakers towards Frisian and Afrikaans texts. The respondents were asked their opinions on what they felt about the Frisian and Afrikaans language, about the people and their countries. This was done in order to rebut the other scholars' argument that attitude towards a language could affect intelligibility of another language. Van Bezooijen and Goosken's (2007) finding was that there was no relationship between attitudes of the Dutch subjects towards Frisian and Afrikaans which could have influenced their intelligibility. The current study did not consider finding out whether

attitude had any impact on the intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary and Lenje, future researchers could venture into this.

Van Bezooijen and Gooskens' (2007) third task was to measure the linguistic distance. This was done at three levels. The first being to establish the number of non- cognates between Frisian and Afrikaans; the second was to find out how transparent the lexical meanings were and thirdly to determine the linguistic distances using the Levenshtein algorithm. The findings suggested that non- cognates, the transparency of the lexical meaning and the spellings affected the intelligibility between languages.

Van Bezooijen and Gooskens' (2007) study therefore concluded that linguistic factors affected intelligibility of written Afrikaans and Frisian more than attitude. They found that meaning was cardinal for intelligibility and so failure to understand a single word or phrase could affect comprehension.

Dokotum, (2012) conducted a study in Uganda to determine the mutual intelligibility between Lango and Acholi. The findings suggested that the two languages were linguistically independent and shared different degrees of intelligibility. He also suggested that probably the different historical and socio- cultural contexts from which the two languages operated from also affected their intelligibility. He also found that there were distinct differences between Lango and Acholi in lexicon, phonology, grammar and usage. He argued that mutual intelligibility did not mean sameness. He argued that mutual intelligibility of languages was not a basis on which the language of education should be dictated. He suggested that learners learnt better, faster and easily in their MT than in and through a second language.

The relevance of the above study to the current study was the importance of determining the mutual intelligibility of Chitonga which was assumed to be mutually intelligible to Lenje. Like the previous study, the current study sought to find out whether Chitonga vocabulary was actually mutually intelligible to Lenje vocabulary as espoused by some scholars such as Kashoki (1978) and Simwiinga (2006) and language in education planners.

Raga and Adola (2012) investigated homonymy as a barrier to mutual intelligibility among speakers of various dialects of Afan Oromo in written texts, in Ethiopia. The

study intended to scrutinize how homonymous lexical items in Afan Oromo resulted in misunderstandings and confusions among speakers from different dialect areas.

Raga and Adola's (2012) study used a sample size of 30, comprising 20 teachers from high schools and 10 native speakers. The 20 teachers were familiar with the media and the different varieties of Afan Oromo. The 10 other participants were indigenous to the area and they had no contact with any variety of Afan Oromo. The sample used in the previous study differed with the sample of the current study, especially the teachers, in that; the sample in the previous study was very familiar to the test language. The sample in the current study also comprised the parents, who, unlike those in the previous study, had contact with the Tonga speaking people within their community.

Raga and Adola's (2012) study used elicitation to collect data, while the current study used the case study. Elicitation method is a method where the researcher gets information from the participants through verbal or non- verbal stimulation, (Stalpers, 2007). The whole idea of elicitation is to make the participant give his or her irrational views on a subject matter. The case study on the other hand seeks to understand the phenomenon in depth and so the participants are interviewed exhaustively through probing using open ended questions.

Raga and Adola's (2012) study established that homonymy, which resulted from lexical variations among dialects of Afan Oromo caused misunderstandings between speakers from the various dialect areas. It also established that, the phonological and morphophonemic differences among the dialects of the language and the convention in the writing system of the language which allowed the speakers to write expressions as they pronounced also contributed to the communication problem by creating an ambiguous homonymy- like lexical items.

Raga and Adola's (2012) study was relevant to the current study in that both studies sought to determine the mutual intelligibility between two languages in written texts. The only differences were the purposes of the study and the methods employed in the two studies. While the previous study sought to determine whether homonymy affected lexical understanding among people of different dialects, the current study sought to establish whether mutual intelligibility of Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies could

facilitate acquisition of initial literacy skills. Raga and Adola's (2012) study used elicitation, while the current study used the case study.

2.4 ZAMBIAN PERSPECTIVE

In Zambia, several studies have been conducted related to the teaching of literacy, particularly the MoI. However, it seems none has been conducted on the mutual intelligibility of Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary, in the instruction materials. There has not been much study that has investigated the mutual intelligibility of any particular language in Zambia. However, some scholars have mentioned the aspect of mutual intelligibility in their studies, thereby providing knowledge gaps that required further research. It was from these knowledge gaps, particularly Kashoki (1978) and Simwinga (2006) that the current study was conceived.

Kashoki (1978) conducted a study to predict the degree to which speakers of seven ROL's could understand languages other than their own MT without prior exposure. The findings indicated that most Bantu language groups, despite sharing borders have not influenced each other in any significant way. Therefore, linguistically, intelligibility between pairs of languages would not be reciprocal. In a related study, he argued that the assumption that the choice of the seven ROL's was based on mutual intelligibility should be subjected to linguistic study. This assertion led to the conception of the current study.

Commenting on minority languages in his study, Simwinga (2006), observed that minority languages were languages which did not enjoy the status of English and the ROL's. He went on to say some of these languages were mutually intelligible with the ROL's while others were not. He argued that Lenje, Sala and Ila were to a very large extent mutually intelligible with Chitonga and so were fairly adequately catered for by Chitonga, in the zoning system. On the contrary, Ohannessian and Kashoki, (1978) suggested further investigation to establish whether the ROL's were mutually intelligible with the dialects they represented. Simwinga (2006) further argued that, Namwanga, Mambwe and Lungu were not mutually intelligible with Bemba; therefore, they were not catered for in the current language zoning system. He attributed this lack of mutual intelligibility to their origins, as being the reason why they did not share vocabulary items.

The phrases 'to a very large extent' and 'fairly adequately catered for' are contradicting each other. The former suggests a very big percentage of the languages were catered for while the latter suggested that the languages were only catered for by a small percentage. The two phrases provided a knowledge gap for the current study. The current study sought to determine whether the assumption that Chitonga was mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabulary could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills.

Zimba (2007), studied the effect of using Nyanja in initial literacy in a predominantly Tumbuka area. Among five of the objectives to his study, was the objective which sought to determine the mutual intelligibility between Nyanja and Tumbuka languages. To answer this objective, he used questionnaires. His population included: teachers, Head teachers, Standard officers, student teachers, lecturers, parents and pupils. He used the experiment design, whereby, Lundazi was the experiment sample while Katete was the control. To test mutual intelligibility, he administered mutual intelligibility tests on: (a) plurals in noun classes, (b) meanings of words, and (c) sentence making from four general questions. The findings suggested that Katete pupils did better than Lundazi pupils because Chewa of Katete was mutually intelligible with Nyanja while Tumbuka was not.

Zimba's (2007) study was relevant to the current study because it justified the need to study the importance of relevant language of instruction in the teaching of initial literacy skills. The previous study, however, studied the effects of using a language which was not predominantly spoken in an area, while the current study sought to understand whether the mutual intelligibility of languages could help in the acquisition of initial literacy skills.

While Zimba's (2007) study used the experiment, the current study used the case study in order to understand the phenomena in depth. The sample in the current study was restricted to 10 participants, being teachers and parent's only. Being a case study, only a small sample was needed. This was because a case study dealt with interviews and interviews required enough time for transcription in order to understand the phenomena under study. Pupils were indirectly observed during the lesson study, to establish whether they comprehended the vocabulary, easily and effectively during initial literacy lessons.

Gordon (2014) noted that the ROL's could have some negative effects when indiscriminately used even in their linguistic zones because they might disadvantage some pupils and not others. The pupils whose MT was the ROL had an advantage of learning in the language which they understood. On the other hand, pupils whose MT was different from the ROL would be disadvantaged because the ROL was their second language. Scholars (e.g. Banda, Mostert & Wikan, 2012) have strongly suggested that learning initial literacy skills was best achieved in and through a language one was fluent in. In this case the MT was the language in which many pupils were comfortable both to think clearly and to express their ideas. The implication was that, the assumption of mutual intelligibility, the principle on which the choice of ROL's was built, needed further investigation. The current study sought to establish whether the assumption of mutual intelligibility could facilitate effective initial literacy skills as the learners comprehended the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials.

Mwanza (2012) conducted a case study on the use of Nyanja as a language of initial literacy skills in a cosmopolitan environment. In his implications for future studies he suggested studies to establish mutual intelligibility levels between the Chinyanja spoken in Lusaka and the standard Nyanja which was recognized in schools. The relevance of this study to the current study was that it justified the need to investigate the mutual intelligibility of Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in the learning of initial literacy. However, Mwanza's suggestion has not yet been fulfilled and so future scholars need to attend to it.

It appears not much has been done in terms of studying the mutual intelligibility between closely related Zambian languages. Languages were put in regional zones either because of their geographical distance or closeness in lexicon. It was this assumption that was used to select the seven ROL's that Kashoki (1978) suggested needed justification. The current study sought to respond to the request of subjecting the assumption of mutual intelligibility of languages to a field test to assess the extent to which it could be justified on linguistic grounds. The study endeavored to establish whether the assumption of the mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in instructional materials could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills in Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi District. It was limited to Chitonga and Lenje only and specifically the instructional materials. The future scholars need to conduct research in other ROL's to determine their degree of mutual intelligibility.

2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter provided literature related to the current study. It also provided justification for the study by placing it in the related context. It showed that there had been some research conducted on the degree of mutual intelligibility of languages in Europe, Asia and in some parts of Africa, but it appears not much has been done in Zambia. It could be true to suggest that seeking empirical evidence on the level and degree of mutual intelligibility between languages could help language in education policy planners when planning for the MoI in schools. Considering the vast number of languages worldwide, there was need to conduct these investigations in order to enable learners to effectively acquire initial literacy skills easily. Mutual intelligibility of languages needs to be established.

The next chapter presents the methodology employed in the study. The presentation will take you through the entire process of the methods used to answer the research questions and collection of data.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0. OVERVIEW

This chapter explains procedures and techniques adopted in the study in order to answer the research objectives and the questions raised in the first chapter. It discusses the general methodology that was used in conducting the study from the beginning. It involves research design, population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, and data collection procedure and data analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study used the qualitative approach involving a case study design. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a project, policy, institution, programme or system in a real life situation, Simon (2009). In this case, data is collected, analyzed and the results are reported as fully and accurately as possible. Creswell (2003: 18) defined a case study as one in which, “The researcher explores in depth, a programme, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals”. In this study, the case study was used to explore in depth whether the assumption of mutual intelligibility of Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies could facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills in the programme of initial literacy in the new curriculum called the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP). In this programme, the learners must learn initial literacy skills through a ROL which is familiar to the language spoken in the community. The ROL in this case is assumed to be mutually intelligible with the language spoken in the community. In this study, the language spoken in the area is Lenje. Lenje is assumed to be mutually intelligible with Chitonga that is why Chilumba area uses Chitonga as MoI in the Schools.

There was need to fully understand whether Chitonga vocabulary in the instruction materials could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy among children who were predominantly Lenje speakers. The case study allowed an in depth description of this study. It helped not only to have an in depth description of the language used in the school by the learners, but also to established whether or not it could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills. This was mainly because the language in education policy emphasized the fact that the MoI should be the familiar language or the language of play that the children used in the school premises. Therefore the case study helped to understand the phenomenon of the language in education policy, of using the ROL's in the zones where they were believed

to be mutually intelligible to the languages commonly spoken in the school community. In this particular study, Chitonga was considered to be mutually intelligible with the Lenje spoken in Chilumba area.

The qualitative research approach, is descriptive and mostly it is story telling. The descriptions are based on observations derived from inquiry through interviews and observations. The basis of qualitative research is to explain concepts in order to understand and clarify the phenomena. By so doing, it justifies or repudiates the conventional knowledge, (Gnosh, 2013). The qualitative research approach was used in this study because it sought to describe the notion of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials and Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi. It tried to verify whether the conventional belief that the mutual intelligibility of these two languages could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills among the Grade 1 pupils. This was done through interviewing the Grade 1 teachers and the parents and through lesson observations.

Further, according to Marshall and Rossman (1995:111), “The general purpose of doing a qualitative research is to search for general statements about relationships among categories of data, it builds grounded theory.” This particular study used the qualitative research approach to understand the general statement about the phenomena of language in education policy, particularly whether the supposed mutual intelligibility of Chitonga and Lenje could effectively facilitate acquisition of initial literacy skills among children who were predominantly Lenje speakers.

3.2. POPULATION

Kasonde – Ng’andu (2013: 35) defined a population as “A group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement”. The target population was all the teachers and parents in Chilumba area. The study used teachers and parents from five different schools. Teachers were respondents because they were the ones who taught the learners. They were the users of the instructional materials in the teaching process. Parents helped to provide information based on the home- work policy. They provided information concerning how they interacted with the Chitonga vocabulary when helping their children in the home- work policy. The learners were only part of the population during the lesson observation. Since the study used the case study, which required an in- depth understanding of the phenomena, children could not be

interviewed because they were in the age bracket that was too young to critically analyze issues. The stipulated age for children to be enrolled in Grade 1 was seven (7) years, (Education Act, 1995). Interviewing Grade 1 learners could have affected the validity of the research findings. The Grade 1 pupils' text books were used as the objects in the research.

3. 3. SAMPLE SIZE

The study sample size was ten (10); divided as follows; five (5) parents and five (5) teachers. There were five schools involved in the research. From each of these schools one teacher and one parent were interviewed. In qualitative research design, there are no specific rules to determine sample size. Sample size depended on what one wanted to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what was at stake, what would be useful, what would be credible and what could be done with the available time and resources (Patton, 1990). Robson (1993: 217) supported Patton's view by stating that, "Sample size in qualitative research is small. The purpose of selecting case or cases is to develop deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied." Qualitative research uses open ended questions in order to allow the participants to explain their experiences in detail.

3. 4. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Samples could be chosen either on a probability or a non- probability basis. A probability sample is selected according to mathematical guidelines whereby the chance for the selection of each unit is known, (Patton, 1990)

A non- probability sample on the other hand, often relies on the fact that respondents are available, convenient to access and prepared to participate. Patton (1990) suggests two systematic forms of non- probability sampling techniques. These are purposive sampling and quota sampling. A purposive sample is one where respondents are selected according to a specific pre- determined criterion. Samples selected purposefully are rich with information. They provide vital information to the study. A quota sample is a selection procedure where participants are chosen to match a pre-determined percentage or numerical distribution for the general population.

The parents and teachers were purposively selected as they were the ones who had the rich information that was needed in the study. Parents were sampled because they were directly involved in the homework programme of their children and so they had an

encounter with the vocabulary used in the instruction materials. Teachers were purposively selected because they taught the initial literacy skills from selected schools in chilumba area of Kapiri-Mposhi District; hence they helped to establish whether Chitonga vocabulary could or could not effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills.

The five schools were purposively selected because they used Chitonga as MoI, while other schools were reported to have stopped using Chitonga due to lack of Chitonga pupil's books. They resorted to using Ibibemba because the books were available at the District Education office.

3.5. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH SITE AND THE LANGUAGE USED IN THE RESEARCH SITE.

Stake (1995) identified the need to give a detailed description of the research setting in a case study. The research site was Chilumba Zone of Kapiri- Mposhi District in the Central Province of Zambia. Chilumba Zone is one out of the fourteen Zones in Kapiri-Mposhi District. The other Zones are Chibwe, Mukonchi, Kakwelesa, Likumbi, Mulenge, Luanshimba, Mpunde, Chipepo, Mafwasa, Lukomba, Kapiri, Kabwale and Lunchu. Chilumba zone was declared a Zone in 1996. There are fifteen (15) schools in the Zone. Thirteen (13) of these schools are government schools, while two (2) are community schools.

Geographically, Chilumba is found in the South- Western direction of Kapiri- Mposhi District. It is about 102 kilometers away from Kapiri- Mposhi District Education Board Secretary's office. The Zone is closer to Kabwe District, the Provincial Headquarters of Central Province, about 35 kilometers, than it is to Kapiri Mposhi District.

According to the linguistic distribution of the people of Zambia, Central province is occupied by the Lala, Swaka, Lenje, Sala, Soli and Kaonde- Ila. The Lenje speaking people are found in Kabwe, Kapiri- Mposhi (Western direction), Chibombo, Chisamba and Mumbwa districts. Chilumba Zone is in the western direction of Kapiri- Mposhi, as said earlier on, and so the language used in the area is Lenje.

Lenje and Chitonga are considered to be mutually intelligible. This was the reason why, under the language zoning system, Chitonga was considered to be the MoI, in areas where Lenje was spoken. Since Chilumba area was occupied by Lenje speaking people,

Chitonga was declared the MoI in the schools. Therefore since 1957, Chitonga has been used in Chilumba Zone as MoI.

3.6. PILOT STUDY

Taylor, et al (2011) suggested that the importance of pilot testing was to get a feedback on whether the questions would yield the required responses. For this reason, the researcher piloted the interview guides and the lesson observation guides in two schools. These two schools were not the schools under study. They were other schools within Chilumba zone having similar characteristics to those under study. Four respondents were interviewed and lessons were observed. Results revealed that both of the instruments were easy to follow and use. There was no need of making any changes.

3.7. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The study used semi-structured interview guides for teachers and parents; and the classroom observation guide. Semi- structured interview guides were used because by their nature they provided open- ended questions. Open- ended questions in qualitative research enable the participants to express their views (Creswell, 2003). Use of open-ended questions enabled the respondents to talk freely as they gave their experience of the phenomena in question. The views of the participants helped the researcher to develop an in- depth understanding of the case under study.

In order to triangulate the responses from the participants, lesson observation guides were used. Lesson observation guides were used to record the situation that prevailed during the lesson process. The observations were guided by the research objectives and questions. The researcher also observed the learners' participation and interaction with the instructional materials. The researcher observed how the teachers' interacted with the vocabulary from the instructional materials.

3.8. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The study involved both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data was obtained from the interviews and lesson observations conducted during the study. Secondary data was obtained from review of relevant literature. Secondary data collection involved gathering data that has been collected by others. This was done by reading some text books and journals, (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

The study used the participant observer method to collect and analyse primary data. Two main methods were used, these are; interviews and lesson observations. Both the teachers and the parents' interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and transcribed. The lessons observed were also recorded and later transcribed. Important points were noted down as the lesson progressed. The researcher also took note of the language which was commonly spoken both in the classrooms and within the school premises. Lenje was commonly spoken and not Chitonga.

The researcher, being Tonga by tribe and a conversant speaker of Lenje, translated the interview questions from English into Lenje, for the parents and the teachers who were not conversant with Chitonga. The researcher also used her knowledge of both Chitonga and Lenje to transcribe and translate the recorded interviews

Data was collected from five (5) different schools over a period of two weeks. The study began with interviewing the teachers and the parents. After the interviews, lesson observations followed. Lesson observation was one way of proving what the teachers and parents said in the verbal interviews. Through lesson observation, the researcher also had direct contact with the learners who could not be interviewed due to their age-bracket (6-7 years), they lack critical thinking. The observation method is supported by Kothari and Garg (2014: 91) who said that "Observation method is suitable in studies which deal with subjects who are not capable of giving verbal reports of their feelings for one reason or the other". Lesson observation also provided the researcher an opportunity to experience the actual proceedings of the learning process. It unveiled the phenomena in their raw nature as it were, without any secondary information.

3.9. DATA ANALYSIS

Under all research circumstances, it is advisable to start analyzing data in the light of research questions, (Silverman, 1993). The research questions were used to address the objectives of the study. The answers derived from the questions were analysed according to emerging themes.

Creswell (2003) also observed that qualitative research design is constructivist in nature because it allows the researcher to construct meanings from the experiences given by the respondents. It can also be a platform for advocating for change, depending on the findings from the data collected. Apart from that, qualitative research design allows

participation of the participants. The researcher used open- ended questions in order for the participants to explain the questions to the fullest as the researcher asks more probing questions to get the phenomena in depth. The findings were then categorized into emerging themes. In this study the researcher used the qualitative approach to construct the actual meaning of the assumption of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials and the Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area. The researcher further derived themes based on the findings as experienced by the participants from their experiences with Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. The findings of the research have been used to advocate for the use of appropriate MOI for the learners of Chilumba area.

The researcher analyzed the responses given by the teachers and parents and data collected from the lesson observation, whether or not the Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials was mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabulary. The data was categorized into themes as they emerged. The emerging themes on mutual intelligibility were considered as a theme.

The researcher also analyzed responses given by both parents and teachers to establish whether or not the learners who were Lenje speakers could effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. This was triangulated by observing the learners during the learning process. The emerging responses based on comprehension were categorized as a theme.

Further, the researcher sought to understand how the Grade 1 teachers interacted with Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. Their responses were analyzed based on the research questions and the observations made during teaching and learning process. The emerging responses based on how teachers interacted with Chitonga vocabulary were categorized as a theme.

Finally, the researcher analyzed the responses from the parents to determine whether they found it easy to help their children who were predominantly Lenje speakers, doing the homework. The emerging responses based on the parents' encounter with Chitonga were categorized as a theme.

Detailed description of the findings provided answers to the research objectives and questions. Each of the questions was answered thematically. The themes were further

put in analytical categories in order to provide an in- depth understanding of the phenomena.

3.10. ETHICAL ISSUES

The researcher first sought ethical clearance to carry out the research from the ethical committee of the University of Zambia. This was granted, (see appendix 9).Permission was sought from institutions and individuals involved in the study (see appendices 11). Consent and anonymity was maintained. For the sake of confidentiality of the respondents, their names remained anonymous. Participation was voluntary and participants were free to withdraw whenever they wanted to.To conduct research from the respective schools, permission was sought through the District Education Board Secretary. Permission was sought from the Head teachers to interview and observe the class teachers. Permission and consent was sought from the identified parents for them to be interviewed.

3.11 SUMMARY

The chapter presented the methodology that was used to address the research questions. The presentation began with an introduction to the chapter. The research design was presented, being qualitative design using a case study. Then the population, sample size, sampling techniques and the research site were presented. The methods of how data was collected and analyzed were provided. The ethical issues observed were presented before the chapter was concluded.

The next chapter will present the findings of the study. The findings were generated from the research questions. They will be presented from the emerging themes.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.

4.0. OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the findings on whether or not the mutual intelligibility of Chitonga vocabulary in the instruction materials could effectively facilitate

acquisition of initial literacy skills. Data was gathered through interviewing the teachers and parents and through lesson observations. The teachers and the parents gave their opinion of what they thought about mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje and whether the learners acquired initial literacy skills through Chitonga as a MoI. The learners' ability to understand Chitonga was observed in the lesson, their interaction in class and their performance in the written tasks from the instruction materials. The lesson had three main tasks; the phoneme, the comprehension exercise and the cloze exercise. These three tasks provided the functional basis for assessing mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje.

The researcher did not go in the field with a pre- planned lesson but depended on what was obtaining on the ground. Therefore, the first lesson, taught by teacher A became the basis for all the lessons in the five schools. The decision to use the same lesson was for uniformity purposes.

For the sake of anonymity and confidentiality, the names of the schools and the respondents will not be mentioned in the presentation. Instead, pseudonyms will be used. The schools, teachers and parents will be identified as school/ teacher/ parent A, B, C, D and E respectively.

Four key findings emerged from the study's research questions. These findings were categorized into emerging themes. The first finding was that Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies in the instruction materials were not completely mutually intelligible. The second finding was that lack of mutual intelligibility hindered the learners' comprehension and consequently effective acquisition of initial literacy skills. The third finding was that due to lack of intelligibility, the teachers translated the Chitonga vocabulary to Lenje in order to enable the learners to comprehend the texts. The fourth finding was that the parents did not find it easy to help their children with their homework using Chitonga because of lack of mutual intelligibility.

The chapter will be presented according to the research questions, beginning with the first question through to the fourth question. The chapter will conclude with the summary of the corroborated findings from the interviews with the teachers and parents and the lesson observation.

4.1. RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: HOW MUTUALLY INTELLIGIBLE IS THE CHITONGA VOCABULARY USED IN THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS WITH LENJE VOCABULARY SPOKEN IN CHILUMBA AREA OF KAPIRI- MPOSHI DISTRICT?

The findings are presented from the opinions given by the teachers and parents and the functional results obtained from the cloze and comprehension exercises, during the lesson observations.

4.1.1. Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies are not completely mutually intelligible.

The general finding on this question was that Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies were not completely mutually intelligible. The main reason was because some vocabularies were similar while others were not. It was these different vocabularies which posed a challenge to the learners.

4.1.2. Findings from teachers.

All the teachers said that some Chitonga words were mutually intelligible with Lenje, while others were not.

Teacher A said, *“Not all the Chitonga vocabularies were understood by the Lenjes, some vocabularies were understood while others were not.”* The lack of mutual intelligibility was attributed to words that were completely different. Some words which were not mutually intelligible had same spelling but different meaning. The words which were mutually intelligible were almost similar or similar both in spelling and meaning.

Teacher C however, said, *“Some vocabularies were common except for the pronunciation.”* He attributed lack of mutual intelligibility to pronunciation. He said this hindered the pupils’ effective comprehension.

Two teachers, who were Tonga by tribe, teachers B and D, also confirmed that Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies were not similar. Teacher D said, *“Chitonga*

vocabulary from the instruction materials was not very similar to Lenje vocabulary because the learners could not understand some of the vocabulary.”

All the five teachers even went further to say that they have to translate from Citonga to Lenje in order to help the learners understand what is written in the text book.

Teacher E said, *“I have to translate the words from Chitonga to Lenje inorder to enable the learners to understand.”*

Examples of vocabularies that were considered different (not mutually intelligible) by the teachers, from the instruction materials (see Appendix 6 for more examples.):

<u>English</u>	<u>Chitonga</u>	<u>Lenje</u>
Foot	Cituta	Mweendo
Fist	Ntuku	Makofi
Nice	Manono	Kubota
Water	Meenda	Manshi
Bush	Musokwe	Muluundu

Examples of vocabularies that were considered to be similar or almost similar (mutually intelligible)

<u>English</u>	<u>Chitonga</u>	<u>Lenje</u>
Today	sunu	sunu
Yesterday	jilo	chilo
Good morning	mwabuka buti	mwabuka buyani

The above Chitonga vocabularies were got from the Grade 1 instruction materials, (Hachoon, Lumang’ombe, Muuka & Machinisye, 2014). They were translated into English and Lenje by the researcher.

4.1.3 Findings from parents.

All the 5 parents said most of the Chitonga vocabularies were similar to Lenje vocabulary while few were different.

Parent A said, "*Cilenje a Chitonga cilipalene, koma maswi yamwi yalipusene.*" (*Chitonga and Lenje are similar, although some words are different*).

Parent B also said, "*Mwana tanyumfwi maswi ya muChitonga yapusene amaswi ya mucilenje.*" (*The learner did not understand the vocabulary which was different from Lenje*).

Concerning mutual intelligibility of the vocabulary Parent B said, "*Mwaana alabwesamo maswi yakonshenye a Cilenje, yapusene a Cilenje ta nyumfwio. Ulanyumfwabo na ndamupilibwita kuswa muChitonga kutola mucilenje.*" (*The learner is able to understand vocabulary that is similar to Lenje, but he does not comprehend the words which are different. He can only comprehend after I translate from Chitonga to Lenje*).

The parents observed that their children could only understand the vocabulary which was similar to Lenje. The Chitonga vocabulary which was different from Lenje was not comprehended at all, unless it was translated into Lenje.

Parents C also said, "*Maswi yamwi yalipalene, yapusenebo mukwaamba.*" (*Some words were similar except for differences in pronunciation*). The parents also observed that there were some vocabularies which were similar in spelling but differed in pronunciation and some prefixes and affixes. Parent A cited an example of vocabularies such as 'jilo (yesterday) - Chitonga' and 'cilo- Lenje' and 'kumunzi (at the village) - Chitonga' and 'kumushi- Lenje'.

The parents further mentioned that the greatest challenge was with the Grade 1's because they were coming straight from home where they only spoke Lenje.

Parent C said, "*Pakutalika nga balashupikwa kwaamba Chitonga. Mukuya kwa ciindi, pakuya kung'anda nobasekana ababiyabo baTonga, nga baiya Chitonga. Lyalo nga batalika kunyumfwa Chitonga.*" (*In the beginning the learners have difficulties to understand Chitonga. With the passing of time, as they play with their friends who are*

Chitonga speakers on their way going home, they learn Chitonga. It is only then that they can understand Chitonga).

All the five parents said Chitonga was difficult for the Grade 1's to understand because it was a second language to them. However, the parents acknowledged that as the learners progressed through other grades, and as they interacted with friends who were Chitonga speakers, they gradually learnt Chitonga.

4.1.4. Findings from the lesson observation.

During the lesson observation, the researcher observed that the learners were not able to understand all the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials because some of the vocabularies were not mutually intelligible with Lenje. For instance, the learners were unable to understand the sentences that they read or were read to them (in some schools).

Three lesson proceedings are presented from three different schools. Below are the cloze exercise and comprehension sentences that were used from the instruction material:

(a) Cloze exercise

Bamba twaambo (Complete the sentences)

Ntali (thread) ntuku (fist) buntele (pounded groundnut powder)

1. Basika bonse. (All of them have clenched their)
2. Ulasuma a (S/He is sewing with a)
3. Wamana kubika (She has finished putting)

Learners were unable to correctly complete the sentences. Below are the errors that were made by the pupils, as observed during the lesson delivery:

1. Basika ntali bonse. (All of them have clenched their thread.)
2. Ulasuma a buntele. (S/ He is sewing with groundnuts powder.)
3. Wamana kubika ntuku. (She has finished putting fists.)

The correct sentences were supposed to be:

1. Basika ntuku bonse. (All of them have clenched their fists.)
2. Ulasuma antali. (S/He is sewing with a thread.)
3. Wamana kubika buntele. (She has finished putting groundnut powder.)

These errors were an indication that there was no mutual intelligibility between the Chitonga vocabularies and Lenje vocabulary that the learners were subjected to, in the instruction materials. In an effort to help the learners to understand the sentences, the teachers asked the learners for the meaning of the sentence, word by word. However, this method could not help either.

One pupil, unfortunately, made a literal translation of the word '*ulasuma*' (*s/he is sewing*), to Icibemba '*alesuma*' (*s/he is biting*). These two words sound similar, but have different meanings; hence they caused confusion and ultimately affected mutual intelligibility.

(b) Comprehension Exercise.

The comprehension section had three sentences as shown below:

1. Sunu basa ntante mukatobo.
2. Matobo manono ntolele Masowe.
3. Lino tatanti uliciside cituta.

(Hachoon, Luumang'ombe, Muuka & Machinisye, (2013: 13))

4.2.0. RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: HOW EFFECTIVELY DO LEARNERS WHO ARE LENJE SPEAKERS IN CHILUMBA AREA OF KAPIRI-MPOSHI COMPREHEND CHITONGA VOCABULARY FROM THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS?

FINDINGS

4.2.1. Lack of mutual intelligibility hindered learners' effective comprehension of Chitonga vocabulary from instruction materials, consequently initial literacy skills.

The general finding was that the learners were not able to effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials because Chitonga and Lenje are not

completely mutually intelligible. The findings were obtained from the teachers' opinions and the functional results from the vocabulary used for the phoneme of the day, cloze and comprehension exercises during lesson observation.

All the 5 teachers said there was no effective comprehension by the pupils. The teachers expressed themselves as shown below:

Teacher B said, *"Learners did not comprehend the vocabulary, as a result, they missed the concepts. Their mother-tongue, Lenje, would be the best medium of instruction"*.

Teacher E said, *"When reading the comprehension sentences, I have to translate into Lenje in order for the pupils to understand."*

Teacher D said, *"When the pupils are asked questions in Chitonga, only few of them would raise their hands and attempt to answer, but after translation, the whole class would raise their hands and answer correctly."*

At school A, where pupils were able to read, teacher A said, *"The pupils could read quite alright, but they could not understand what they were reading. This affected the comprehension exercise."*

When asked how they helped the learners to understand the vocabulary from the instruction materials, (if there was need), all the teachers said they often translated the Chitonga vocabulary into Lenje. Teacher A, whose pupils were able to read, said, *"The pupils could understand some simple sentences but not the complex ones."* She went on to say, *"Sometimes they tried to make sense of what they were reading through associating the Chitonga vocabulary to the Lenje vocabulary."*

Teacher C said *"I give the pupils homework in form of vocabulary, so that they consult the meaning from their parents. Sometimes I retain pupils for an hour after classes."*

On the other hand, teacher B said, *"I use concrete objects to introduce the vocabulary. I use the approach of moving from known to unknown, from Lenje to Chitonga and give the learners remedial work."*

4.2.2. Findings from the parents on how lack of mutual intelligibility hindered the learners' comprehension and effective acquisition of initial literacy skills.

When asked what their children said about their comprehension of Chitonga vocabulary, all the five parents said that their children had challenges in understanding Chitonga vocabulary. Some of the parents' expressions are as indicated below:

Parent A said, "*Mwanangu alicishi kubelenga cimushupa nkunyumfwa, mulandu wacitundu.*" (*My child is able to read but cannot comprehend what he was reading due to language barrier*).

Yet parent D said that, "*Mwanaangu alanyumfwa Chitonga pantu wakali kwikala abaTonga.*" (*Her child found it easy to comprehend Chitonga vocabulary because he grew-up among the Tonga's.*)

4.2.3. Findings from the Lesson observations on how lack of mutual intelligibility hindered the learners' comprehension and effective acquisition of initial literacy skills.

The report from the findings on the lesson observation will be presented from the three sections of the lesson. These are; (a) the vocabulary used to teach the phoneme of the day, (b) the cloze exercise, and (c) the comprehension exercise. These three tasks provided the functional measure of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje.

(a)Vocabulary for the Phoneme of the Day

From the lessons which were observed, the learners had challenges to understand the Chitonga vocabulary. During introduction of the phoneme of the day, /nt/, the teachers used the picture that was in the pupils' book. The word that was used in the instruction material was '*ntuku*'. In all the 5 schools, the pupils were unable to understand the meaning of the word until the teachers translated for them. Unfortunately, the teachers also gave different meanings to the same word. Below are two variations of the meanings given from two different schools.

Teacher A told the pupils that the word '*ntuku*' meant '*being half- naked*', since the picture was showing a boy who was not wearing a shirt. The lesson went as follows:

Teacher: Mwamubona musankwa ooyu? (Have you seen this boy?)

Pupils: Ee. (Yes)

Teacher: Sa alifwete? (Is he dressed?)

Pupils: Tafwete. (He is not dressed.)

Teacher: Natafwete balamba aayi ali ntuku, (when a person is not dressed, we say he is naked).

It should be mentioned that this teacher was not Tonga. She was a Lozi. For the purpose of communication, she was using Lenje. The flow of the lesson was smooth as the learners and the teacher conversed in Lenje. She only used the Chitonga vocabulary from the text book to teach the phoneme of the day. The translation of the same word was actually wrong. This misled the learners.

At another school, teacher B described the picture from the point of view of the clenched fists, as intended by the author of the text book. The lesson went as follows:

Teacher: Ncinzi eeci ncaacita ooyu musankwa? (What has this boy done?)

Pupils: Wafunga makofi. (He has clenched his fists).

Teacher: MuChitonga twaamba ati 'ntuku'. MuciLenje mwaamba atinzi? (In Chitonga we say 'ntuku', how do you say it in Lenje?)

Pupils: Makofi.

Teacher: Uyanda kutyani ooyu musankwa? (What does this boy want to do?)

Pupils: Alisuni kulwana. (He wants to fight.)

Teacher: MuChitonga twaamba ati uyanda kulwana. (In Chitonga we say he wants to fight.)

It should be noted that this teacher was Tonga. As you followed the conversation, you saw from the conversation that the teacher was using Chitonga while the learners were giving answers in Lenje. The teacher kept on asking the pupils the meaning of the words in Lenje. The teacher insisted on the learners using Chitonga but all was in vain.

After the learners responded in Lenje, the teacher translated into Chitonga. This went on throughout the lesson.

(c) Cloze Exercise.

Below is the cloze exercise used from the instruction material:

Bamba twaambo

ntali ntuku buntele

1. Basika..... boonse.
2. Ulasuma a.....
3. Wamana kubikka.....

(Hachoon, Luumang'ombe, Muuka & Machinisye, (2013: 13)

When teaching completing the cloze exercise, the learners again showed lack of understanding of the Chitonga vocabulary and sentences. Examples will be drawn from three schools. The lesson proceedings from the three schools are given below:

SCHOOL A

Teacher: Tutobamba twaambo. Basika..... bonse. (Teacher giving pupils cues)
Sa basika a ntuku/ a buntele nambi ntali? (We are going to make sentences. They have all clenched their..... Have they clenched their fists/ groundnut powder or thread?)

Pupils :(silence).

Teacher: (Teacher continued giving pupils cues) Basika taku masheti boonse, te mbocibete? (They have all come without their shirts on, have they?)

Pupils: Eee.

Teacher: (on question 2) Kusuma nkucita buyani? (What is to sew?) Nabaamba ayi tulasuma, nkucita buyani? (Teacher giving cues to pupils).

Pupils: Nkuluma. (It is to bite).

Teacher: So tulasuma anshi? A ntali. (What do we use for sewing? We use thread.)

Pupils: (Silence)

Teacher: (question 3) Buntele ninshi, ayi?

Pupils: (silence)

Teacher: Wamana kubika buntele. (S/He has finished putting groundnut powder.)

In this school, the pupils were able to read, but they could not comprehend what they were reading. In spite of being given cues, the pupils could not provide the correct answers because they did not understand Chitonga vocabulary since it was not mutually intelligible to them. The learners failed to complete the cloze exercise correctly. Out of frustration, the teacher was compelled to tell the learners the answers. The researcher also observed that the teacher and the learners conversed in Lenje throughout the lesson. This was because the learners did not know Chitonga.

SCHOOL B

The teacher led the pupils in reading the vocabulary. This was because the pupils could not read. In this case therefore, the researcher relied on receptive intelligibility, since the learners were only using the listening skill as the teacher read on their behalf. The pupils repeated the words after the teacher. The teacher then led the pupils into explaining meaning of the vocabulary, as follows:

Teacher: Ntali, ntuku, buntele. (Thread, fists, groundnut powder).

Pupils: (repeat after the teacher) Ntali, ntuku, buntele (thread, fists, groundnut powder).

Teacher: Mulizyi ntali? (Do you know a thread?)

Pupils: Awe. (No).

Teacher: Ntali nceciya ncobasumya cisani anyeleti. (A thread is used for sewing clothes with a needle.)

Pupils: Oo. (Okey)

Teacher: Buntele ninzi? (What is groundnut powder?)

Pupils: (Silence).

Teacher: Buntele mbobuya na mwatwa nyemu, mwabika mucisyu.

Pupils: Oo. (Okey).

Teacher: Ntuku mulizyi? (Do you know fists?)

Pupils: Awe. (No)

Teacher: Te na mwacita so, (If you do like this... (Teacher clenched fists).

After explaining the vocabulary the teacher guided the pupils into completing the cloze exercise. The teacher explained the vocabulary into simpler terms and illustrations, since he was not conversant with Lenje. The exercise went as follows:

1. Basika boonse.
2. Ulasuma a.....
3. Wamana kubika.....

Teacher: Ndibbala nzi njotunga twabika awa? (Which word can we put here?)

Pupils: (Silence)

Teacher: Ncinzi ncindacita awa? (What have I done?) (Teacher demonstrates clenching fists).

Pupils: Makofi. (Fists)

Teacher: Ndaamba kuti muChitonga ni ntuku. (I said in Chitonga it is 'ntuku' (fists))

Pupils: Ntuku. (Fists) (Repeating after the teacher).

Teacher: Ulasuma anzi? (What is s/he sewing with?). Yes, Boscow.

Boscow: Ulasuma a buntele. (S/he is sewing with groundnut powder.) (Wrong answer given)

Teacher: Ndaamba kuti buntele mbwakubika mucisyu. (Teacher retorted)

Teacher: Wamana kubika nzi? (What has s/he finished putting?)

Pupil: Wamana kubika ntali. (S/he has finished putting the thread) (Wrong response given).

Teacher: (helping pupils) Wamana kubika buntele. Ndaamba kuti buntele mbwakubika mucisyu. (S/he has finished putting groundnut powder. I said groundnut powder is for putting in relish.)

The teacher literally assisted the pupils to complete the cloze exercise, but pupils continued failing to give the correct responses. Following the conversation, you could see the wrong responses given by the pupils. This showed lack of comprehension on the part of the learners because the Chitonga vocabulary was not mutually intelligible to them.

SCHOOL C

The most striking feature about this school was that there were more Tonga learners than in the other schools. However, the learners were only able to correctly answer one question. The correct response came from a Tonga pupil.

Teacher: Tulasuma anzi? Ulabelesya nzi kusuma awa? (What do we use for sewing? What are you going to use for sewing?)

Pupils: A ntali. (With a thread). (Correct response, coming from a Tonga pupil).

Teacher: Wamana kubika nzi? (What has s/he finished putting?)

Pupils: Ntuku. (Fists). (Wrong response)

Teacher: Ino ntuku ncinzi? (What is ntuku (fists)?)

Pupils: (silence).

Teachers: Mukabuzye bazyali benu kung'anda mbolyaamba bbala lya 'ntuku'. (Go and ask your parents for the meaning of the word 'ntuku'.)

The teacher was Tumbuka by tribe. He did not know the meanings of some vocabularies. He could not help the learners to understand the meanings of the vocabularies. He had to give the pupils the task of finding out from their parents. Perhaps, had the vocabulary been mutually intelligible with Lenje, the learners could have been able to give the correct responses.

(c) Comprehension Exercise.

The comprehension section had three sentences as shown below:

1. Sunu basa ntante mukatobo.
2. Matobo manono ntolele Masowe.
3. Lino tatanti uliciside cituta.

(Hachoon, Luumang'ombe, Muuka & Machinisye, (2013: 13))

The teachers varied in the way they handled the comprehension exercise. The report will be given from the same three schools.

SCHOOL A

In this school, most of the pupils were able to read the words and sentences correctly, but without understanding. The teacher asked the pupils to read the sentences from the text books. After reading each one of the sentences, the teacher asked the pupils some questions to test their understanding. The lesson went as follows:

1. Sunu basa ntante mukatobo. (My friends today am going to climb the matobo tree. (a kind of fruit)) (A pupil read the sentence)

Teacher: Batokwambanshi apa? (What are they saying here?)

Pupils: (Silence)

Teacher: Tamutonyumfwa ncobatobandika? (Don't you understand what they are saying?)

Pupils: (Silence)

Teacher: Mukatobo munshi? (What is mukatobo?)

Pupil: Mubbotolo. (It is a bottle.) (Wrong response- pupil related the word to 'Kantobo', a common brand of beer that was bottled).

Teacher asked pupils to read second question;

2. Matobo manono ntolele Masowe. (Matobo are nice, I'll take some for Masowe).

Teacher: Ano batoambanshi apa? (What are they saying here?)

Pupils: (Silence)

Teacher: Oke, atubale namba 3. (Okey lets read number 3).

3. Lino tatanti uliciside cituta. (Now he cannot climb because he has hurt his foot).

Teacher: Sa taku ncomutonyumfwa? Lino cilaamba nshi? Ati lino tatanti, nkwaamba ainshi? (You mean you do not understand anything? What does it mean when they said, “Now he cannot climb?”).

Pupils: (Silence)

Teacher: Ano kutanta, nkukwela te? (Teacher translated for the learners into Lenje) (They mean climbing don't they?)

Pupils: Ee. (Yes)

Teacher: Tantanti alicisite cituta. Cituta ncinshi? (He is not climbing because he has hurt his foot. What is ‘cituta’? (The foot?)

Pupils: (silence).

Teacher: (repeats) Cituta ncinshi? (What is ‘cituta’(the foot?)

Pupil A: Cuulu. (An ant- hill)

Pupil B: Cinga matuta. (It is a matuta)

Teacher: Cinga matuta nchinshi? (What is matuta?)

Pupil: Nimbeba. (A mouse).

From the flow of the lesson, the researcher observed that the learners were quiet when asked most of the questions. They were only able to respond where they inferred the meaning. These inferences were realized by the association of vocabularies which were similar from their Lenje lexical memory. This was a clear indication that Chitonga vocabulary was not mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabulary. As mentioned earlier, the inferred vocabularies were confused with the words which the learners knew from Lenje. These words, called homonyms, had different meanings, altogether. The implication here is that the first language (MT) and oral language have a great bearing on the acquisition of comprehension skills, as a vital component of initial literacy skills.

SCHOOL B

At this school, the pupils were not able to read. The teacher read the sentences and the pupils read after him. There was one sentence which the teacher read one word wrongly; as a result the sentence was misinterpreted. He read it as, “*Lino tatenti uliliciside cituta.*” After reading the sentences, the teacher asked the pupils some questions to test their understanding. The lesson proceeded as follows:

(Teacher reading the sentences):

1. Sunu basa ntante mukatobo. (Today, my friends I am going to climb the matobo tree.)
2. Matobo manono ntolele Masowe. (The matobo fruit is nice, I’ll take some for Masowe)
3. Lino tatenti uliciside cituta. (Now Tatenti has hurt his foot)

(Teacher asked questions):

Teacher: Nguni ngobali kutolela matobo? (To whom were they taking matobo fruit?)

Pupils: (Silence).

Teacher: Ndoolole alimwi na temwamvwa? (Can I read again since you have not heard?) (The teacher read four times, but even then, the pupils did not understand, and so could not give the correct response).

Teacher: Ndizina nzi lyaambwa mucibalo omu? (What name is mentioned in this sentence?)

Pupils: (Silence.)

Teacher: Ncinzi ncobali kutolela Masowe? (What were they taking for Masowe?)

Pupils: (Silence)

Teacher: Nguni wakaliciside cituta? (Who hurt his foot?)

Pupils: (Silence)

Teacher: Ncinzi ncakaliciside Tatenti? (Where did Tatenti hurt himself?)

Pupils: (Silence)

Upon seeing that the pupils were not responding to any of his questions, the teacher told them the answers, as follows:

Teacher:

1. Ngobali kuyanda kutolela matobo ngu Masowe. (They wanted to take matobo to Masowe.);
2. Wakalicside cituta ngu Tatenti. (The one who hurt his foot was Tatenti.)
3. Ncobali kuyanda kumutolela Masowe matobo. (They were taking matobo for Masowe).

After telling the pupils the answers, his comment was, “So ncomwali kwalilwa eci!” (So this is what you were failing!). Like in the first school, at this school pupils could not provide the answers to the comprehension exercise. The reason, as stated earlier on was lack of mutual intelligibility between the two languages.

SCHOOL C

At this school, the teacher used the word ‘*ntobolo*’ (*Gun*) to introduce the phoneme of the day, /nt/. He substituted the word given in the text book ‘*ntuku*’ because he did not know its meaning. He went further to use the vocabulary ‘*ntobolo*’ for the comprehension story, in Chitonga. He composed his own story in which the word ‘*ntobolo*’ was frequently used. The sentences from the text book were given to the pupils as homework, so that they could go and find out the meaning of the vocabularies. The story was as given below:

Teacher’s story

Kwakali muntu wakali kuunka musokwe. Ooyu muntu wakalijisi intobolo. Wakajana aumwi muntu izina lyakwe ngu Kabwe. Kabwe awalo wakalijisi ntobolo. Nibakasika musokwe, bakaswanganya Mutinta. Mutinta wakali kuunka ku Lusaka. Mutinta awalo wakalijisi ntobolo. (Once upon a time, a person went into the bush. This person had a gun. As he was going, he met Kabwe. Kabwe also had a gun. When they reached the bush, they met Mutinta. Mutinta had a gun too.)

Teacher's questions:

Teacher: Oyu muntu wakajisi nzi? (What did this person have?)

Pupils: Wakajisi ntobolo. (He had a gun)

Teacher: Ntobolo ibeleka ncito nzi? (What is the purpose of a gun?)

Pupils: Njaku jaila banyama. (It is for killing animals.)

Teacher: Ino Kabwe wakali kuunka kuli? (Where was Kabwe going?)

Pupils: Wakali kuunka ku Kabwe. (He was going to Kabwe)

Teacher: Nguni wakali kuunka ku Lusaka? (Who was going to Lusaka?)

Pupils: Ngu Mutinta. (It was Mutinta.)

As said earlier, there were a good number of Chitonga speaking pupils in this class. This could be seen from the oral questions and answers; the pupils were able to answer correctly. When it came to reading, most of the pupils were not able to read. The teacher read the comprehension sentences and the pupils read after him. The teacher did not ask the pupils any questions from the sentences, instead, he asked them to copy the sentences so that they could go and ask for the meaning of the words from their parents. The fact that the teacher did not ask the comprehension questions meant that the learners were not learning any comprehension skills. Comprehension is a skill that needs to be taught. Comprehension skills are taught in order to equip the learners with the skill of understanding what they are reading either for pleasure or academic purposes.

The teacher deliberately avoided committing himself to the comprehension exercise from the text book because he did not know some of the vocabulary. This was discovered during the interview held with him. This suggests that the learners risked the opportunity of receiving quality instruction, if the teacher was capable of avoiding some essential components of literacy, such as comprehension skills.

4.3.0. QUESTION THREE: HOW DO THE TEACHERS OF GRADE 1'S INTERACT WITH CHITONGA VOCABULARY FROM THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS, IN ORDER TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE LEARNING OF INITIAL LITERACY TO THE LEARNERS WHO ARE LENJE SPEAKERS?

FINDINGS

4.3.1. Lack of mutual intelligibility made teachers translate Chitonga to Lenje to enable learners to comprehend the texts.

The general finding was that teachers had challenges in teaching using Chitonga vocabulary to Lenje learners because the two languages are not mutually intelligible. Therefore, in order to enable the learners understand the concepts, the teachers had to translate Chitonga to Lenje. The findings were obtained from the teachers' opinions and the researcher's observation from the lesson's proceedings.

4.3.2. Findings from interviews with the Grade 1 teachers.

The first finding was that differences between Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies were the causes of lack of mutual intelligibility between the two languages. As a result of this lack of mutual intelligibility, all the teachers said they had to translate the vocabulary in order for the learners to understand the lesson. Below are the teachers' expressions concerning their interaction with Chitonga vocabulary in order to enable the learners understand the Chitonga vocabulary.

Teacher A said, *"I am failing to teach properly because some Chitonga words are difficult. The learners cannot understand Chitonga unless I translate into Lenje."*

Teacher B said, *"I use concrete objects and ask the learners what it is in Lenje, then I translate the word into Chitonga."*

The examples of the words such as; 'cituta' (foot), 'ntuku' (fists) and 'manono' (nice), were drawn from the lesson.

All the 5 teachers said that they had challenges in dealing with Chitonga vocabularies which were completely different from Lenje vocabularies. Teacher E said that, *"The words which are completely different give me dual roles. Firstly, I have the task of translating the words, if am able to, or secondly, I have to consult from those who were conversant with the language, if I am unable to do so."*

The teachers also said time was wasted in translation. Teacher B said, *“Time was wasted the most when I consult from other people because I have to suspend the work until I have consulted”*.

The researcher also observed that the teachers differed in their translation of the Chitonga vocabulary to Lenje. Teachers who were non-Tonga speakers wrongly translated the words. For instance, they did not know the correct meaning not only to the three words, but also of several other words in the text book. For instance, teacher A misinterpreted the word ‘*ntuku*’ (*fists*) to mean ‘*half-naked*’. She inferred this from the picture that was given in the pupils’ text book as an illustration to aid the learners.

Teacher C misinterpreted the word ‘*manono*’ (*nice*), to mean ‘*manini*’ (*small*). The error committed by the teacher was that he borrowed the word from Ibibemba language, where ‘*icinono*’ means ‘*something small*’. He translated the sentence, ‘*Matobo manono ntolele Masowe*’ (*These matobo are nice, am taking for Masowe*) to mean, ‘*Matobo manini ntolele Masowe*’ (*These matobo are small, am taking for Masowe*).

The researcher also observed that the vocabularies used in the text books were not those used in every day conversations. This was discovered from the teachers who were Tonga speakers. They had varying interpretations of the word; ‘*ntuku*’. One of them said the word ‘*ntuku*’ meant ‘*fists*’, while the other one said it meant ‘*power*’. These variations in the interpretation of the word had two implications; firstly that the vocabulary used in the text book was not frequently used in everyday speech and secondly that the teachers were not very familiar to their language. The teachers concurred with the first assertion, that the vocabulary was not frequently used in everyday life. Both of the teachers who are Tonga speakers, teachers B and D said, *“The word ‘mfwaindi’ was commonly used in everyday life, to mean ‘fist’”*.

However, three of the teachers who were not Tonga speakers said some homonyms which had different meanings to the stimulus words sometimes confused them too.

Teacher C said, *“When am confused by the meaning of the word, the confusion also affects the learners.”*

Teacher E said, *“The differences affected comprehension skills because it was difficult to make the pupils to assimilate the intended concepts.”*

4.3.3. Findings from lesson observations on how teachers interacted with Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials.

The first finding was that the teachers mostly used Lenje during the lessons. They only used Chitonga when they were reading from the instruction materials. After reading the sentences or words from the text books, they code-switched to Lenje. As a result, their interaction with Chitonga was only when they read from the text books and not the oral language. Only one teacher, who was Tonga by tribe used Chitonga and kept on encouraging the learners to speak in Chitonga. He would say to the pupils, “*Kamuvwila muChitonga. Mutani kuvwili mucilenje,*” (*Answer in Chitonga and not in Lenje*).

It was noted that the teachers who spoke Chitonga had to translate into Lenje in order for the learners to understand what the teachers were saying. Consequently, this led to teacher- to - pupil rapport and pupil- to – pupil rapport to be in Lenje. It was only at school C where rapport was in Chitonga because some of the learners were Chitonga speakers. However, even there, the Lenje speaking pupils had some problems to interact with either the teacher or fellow pupils using Chitonga. They used Lenje for communication.

The second finding was that the teachers had challenges using Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. The first challenge being that of translating the vocabulary from Chitonga to Lenje. The teachers struggled to translate the vocabulary to the learners. They were affected by two factors. The first factor, for those who did not know Chitonga, was to understand the Chitonga vocabulary before they could translate it into Lenje. The second factor affected the Chitonga speaking teachers, because they had to translate the Chitonga vocabulary into Lenje. Their major complaint was that the two languages were not mutually intelligible and so it was not very easy for them to understand the vocabularies. Their interaction with the vocabulary was affected by the lack of mutual intelligibility between the two languages. This was not easy for them since some of them were neither conversant with Chitonga nor Lenje.

The third finding was the variation in meaning of the word ‘*ntuku*’ (*fist*), by the teachers. This variation suggested that the vocabularies that were used in the instruction materials were not easily understood by the teachers. The assumption was that, if the teachers could not easily understand the meaning of the vocabulary, then the pupils

risked being misled by the teachers. On the other hand, if the language used was mutually intelligible to the learners, this would not occur.

The fourth finding was that the teachers did not use the Chitonga vocabulary innovatively. The classroom walls were bare. The teachers solely relied on the text books. Apart from the text books, the teachers did not use any teaching and learning aids to facilitate learning of the vocabulary. This finding suggests that the teachers did not innovatively use the vocabulary beyond the text books. They limited their interaction with the vocabulary which was in the text books. They did not display the vocabulary on the walls to enable the learners' access to the vocabularies from the classroom environment. It was only school A that had only one word list chart, which was also out- dated.

4.4.0. QUESTION FOUR: HOW DO THE PARENTS, WHO ARE LENJE, FIND CHITONGA VOCABULARY USED IN THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS, WHEN ASSISTING THEIR CHILDREN WITH THEIR HOME WORK POLICY IN INITIAL LITERACY SKILLS?

4.4.1. Parents did not find it easy to help their children with their homework using Chitonga because of lack of mutual intelligibility.

The general finding was that lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje challenged the parents from effectively helping their children during their home work programme. The findings were obtained from the teachers' and parents' opinions.

4.4.2. Findings from the teachers on whether the parents found Chitonga easy when helping their children with their homework.

The first finding was that, all the five teachers said the parents were in two categories; the literate parents and the illiterate parents.

Teacher D said, *"The literate parents were able to assist their children, although they complained that some words were difficult for them. On the other hand the illiterate parents were unable to assist their children because they could not read. Hence such children were not able to do their homework because they had no one to assist them."*

The other finding was that some parents were able to understand Chitonga because they lived with the Chitonga speaking people in the community. Teacher C said, *"Some Lenje speaking parents were able to understand Chitonga because they lived near*

Chitonga speaking families and went to the same churches. Their only complaint was that not all words from the text books were mutually intelligible with Lenje. These words made it difficult for them to assist their children, unless they consulted from the Tonga's and then translated for the children."

The teachers said they helped the parents to cope with Chitonga vocabulary by encouraging them to consult from their neighbours who were Chitonga speakers.

Teacher A said, *"The parents were encouraged to consult from the Tonga neighbours to help them with the vocabulary which proved difficult for them. This was not easy for them, because of the geographical distance between their homes."*

Three teachers said their schools formed adult literacy classes in order to improve the literacy levels of the parents. Teacher B said, *"We have formed a literacy club to improve the literacy levels of the parents so that they are able to help their children."*

The implication of this move would in turn enable the parents to help their children in an effective way.

4.4.3. Findings from the parents on whether they found it easy to use Chitonga when helping their children with their homework.

The first finding was that the parents were challenged by the vocabularies which were not mutually intelligible between Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies. Below are some of the parents' expressions:

Parent B said, *"Kubelenga nda belenga nambi maswi yamwi yalashupa kunyumfwa."* (I am able to read although some words are difficult to understand.)

The second finding was that the parents had to consult from their neighbours when they were challenged with the vocabulary which challenged them.

Parent C said, *"Nandashupikwa kunyumfwa, nda ipusha ba biyesu ba Tonga ndyonga nda londolweta mwana mu Cilenje."* (When I do not understand I consult from my Tonga neighbours and then I translate the vocabularies to my child.)

The third finding was that parents found it difficult to help their children because some children could read but without understanding while others were not able to read at all. They attributed the childrens' lack of comprehension to the language barrier.

Parent A commenting on his child's level of reading with comprehension said, "*Kubelenga ala eleshako, ano tanyumfwi nsha tobelenga. Cilengesha nkutanyumfwa cishobo.*" (He can read, but without understanding what he is reading. This is because of not understanding the language).

Three of the parents said it was difficult to help the children with their homework because their children could not read.

Parent E had this to say, "*Cilashupa kucafwa mwaaana pantu tacishi kubelenga, alimwi tanyumfwi Chitonga.*" (It is difficult to teach my child because he does not know how to read and he does not even understand Chitonga.)

The fourth finding was that 3 of the parents; parents B, C and D said it was easy to read Chitonga because the two languages used the same orthography. They said the phonemes were the same in both of the languages. The only challenge was that they could read but without understanding some of the Chitonga vocabulary. They used their reading skills to help their children, although they were challenged with some Chitonga vocabularies which were not intelligible to them. Below are the verbatim from the three parents:

Parent B said, "*Nebo ndicishi kulemba a kubelenga. Ndasebensesha mano ngondakaiya kucikolo, ku cafwa mwaanangu.*" (I am able to read and write so I use the knowledge I obtained from school to help my child.)

Parent C said, "*Kwisha mwaana tacishupi pantu tuvumina ntomwibo. Kavuumina 't/ m' nkomwe mu chitonga a mucilenje. Cishupabo nga maswi yamwi yamu Chitonga yapusene aya mucilenje.*" (It is not difficult to teach a child because the phonemes are the same. The sounds /t/ or /m/ are the same in Chitonga and Lenje. The only challenges are the Chitonga vocabularies which are not similar to Lenje vocabularies.)

Their only complaint was that some of the vocabularies and pronunciations were different. They had challenges with vocabularies which were different.

Parent D said, “*Maswi yamuChitonga yamwi yalipusene ayamuciLenje mukuyacita ‘pulonounsi’ alimwi yamwi yalipusene mukwamba.*” (Some Chitonga words are different from Lenje words by pronunciation and intonation).

The fifth finding was that 3 parents said they were able to read Chitonga because they also learnt in Chitonga. However, they had a challenge of understanding some of the vocabularies which they encountered from the text books. Their concern, however, was that the Grade 1 learners were not able to understand Chitonga because they must first learn Chitonga from the school environment. Below is the verbatim from parent D:

Parent D said, “*Nebo ndakonsha kubelenga akunyumfwa Chitonga panini nambi maswi yamwi yalanshupako, pantu ndakaiya mu Chitonga. Ba Giledi 1 abalo na bakaiye Chitonga mucikolo, bananonyumfwa akubelenga.*” (I am able to read and understand some Chitonga vocabulary because I learnt in Chitonga. The Grade 1’s will also learn Chitonga from school. Then they will be able to read and understand).

4.4.4. Summary

This chapter presented findings of the study. The findings were based on the four research questions which were derived from the four research objectives. The findings were presented under the four emerging themes.

The first theme was that Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials and Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area are not mutually intelligible. There were three sub- findings under this objective.

The first finding was that some vocabularies were mutually intelligible while others were not. The mutually intelligible vocabularies were similar to the Lenje vocabularies while those which were not intelligible were not similar to Lenje vocabulary. The second finding was that the mutually intelligible vocabularies were comprehended by the learners while the vocabularies which were not mutually intelligible to the learners were not comprehended. The third finding was that the lack of mutual intelligibility of the vocabularies in the instruction materials affected the comprehension of the learners. This ultimately affected the effective acquisition of initial literacy skills.

The second theme was that lack of mutual intelligibility hindered the learners’ comprehension, consequently effective acquisition of initial literacy skills. Three sub-

findings emerged. The first was that there was no effective comprehension of some of the Chitonga vocabularies. The second finding was that pupils could read the Chitonga vocabulary, but they could not comprehend what they read. This was evident in the errors which the learners made. The third finding was that the learners could only understand Chitonga vocabulary after the teachers had translated the Chitonga vocabulary into Lenje.

The third theme was that due to lack of intelligibility, the teachers translated Chitonga to Lenje in order to enable the learners comprehend the texts. There were four findings. The first was that the teachers had challenges in their interaction with the Chitonga vocabularies. Two great challenges the teachers faced were; firstly the lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabularies and Lenje vocabularies and secondly some vocabularies used in the text books were not the vocabulary frequently used in everyday speech. As a result of this, they were compelled to translate the vocabularies to Lenje. The second finding was that the teachers sometimes made wrong translations of the Chitonga vocabularies because they did not know the correct meaning of the word. The third finding was that the teachers were confused by some homonyms. This led them to make wrong inferences and wrong translations.

The fourth finding was that of the five teachers in the study, only two of them used Chitonga while the three used Lenje when teaching. Of the two who used Chitonga, only one encouraged the learners to speak Chitonga, while the other teacher allowed the learners to speak Lenje and sometimes he would also code- switch Chitonga to Lenje.

The fourth and last theme was that the parents did not find it easy to help their children with their homework using Chitonga because of lack of mutual intelligibility. The first finding was that the parents found some Chitonga vocabularies difficult to understand because they were not mutually intelligible with Lenje. They had to translate for their children in order for them to understand the words or sentences.

The second finding was that the parents found it difficult to help their children with the reading tasks because the children could not understand some of the Chitonga vocabularies. The third finding was that some parents were able to read because the two languages used the same orthography; the only challenge was that they could not understand some Chitonga vocabularies which were not intelligible with to them.

The third finding was that the parents found it easy to help their children because they also learnt in Chitonga. Their only complaint was that their children were not able to understand some Chitonga vocabulary, but they believed that they would gradually learn from school.

Corroborated findings from the interviews with the 5 teachers and the 5 parents and lesson observations indicate that all the teachers and parents suggested that Chitonga and Lenje were not mutually intelligible. This lack of intelligibility prevented the learners from comprehending the texts from the instruction materials; as a result they did not effectively acquire the initial literacy skills.

Both the parents and the teachers indicated that they had to translate from Chitonga to Lenje to enable the learners to understand the written tasks. The researcher also observed from the lesson that the learners were unable to answer the comprehension exercise and the cloze exercises correctly because they did not understand the meaning of the vocabularies. The researcher observed that the teachers had to translate the vocabularies to enable the learners to understand.

The other corroborated finding was that due to lack of mutual intelligibility some learners were able to read without understanding while some learners were not able to read at all yet that was the end of their grade 1 course, November, 2015.

The next chapter presents the discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0. OVERVIEW

The purpose of this study was to find out whether or not the mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials and the Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area could effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills in learners who are predominantly Lenje speakers.

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. The findings were based on the questions of the study. The answers to the questions were derived from the interviews conducted with the Grade 1 teachers and the parents. The discussions were based on the research objectives. The chapter was presented according to the objectives from the first object through to the fourth objective.

Research Objectives

- (a) To establish whether or not the Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area of Kapiri- mposhi district?
- (b) To establish whether or not the learners who are Predominantly Lenje speakers effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials?
- (c) To explore how the teachers for Grade 1's, interact with Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials, in order to facilitate effective acquisition of initial literacy skills in learners who are predominantly Lenje speakers?
- (d) To determine whether the parents who are Lenje speakers find it easy to use Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials, during the homework policy?

Four themes emerged from the findings. These themes were used as analytic categories.

Analytic Categories

(1) Chitonga vocabulary used in instruction materials was not completely mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabulary spoken in Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi.

(2) Lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary used in the instruction materials hindered the learners' comprehension and consequently effective learning of initial literacy skills.

(3) Lack of mutual intelligibility made teachers to translate Chitonga to Lenje to enable the learners comprehend the texts.

(4) Parents did not find it easy to help their children with their homework using Chitonga because of lack of mutual intelligibility.

5.0. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ONE: TO ESTABLISH WHETHER OR NOT THE CHITONGA VOCABULARY USED IN THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS WAS MUTUALLY INTELLIGIBLE WITH LENJE VOCABULARY SPOKEN IN CHILUMBA AREA OF KAPIRI- MPOSHI DISTRICT?

5.1. ANALYTIC CATEGORY 1: CHITONGA VOCABULARY USED IN THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS IS NOT COMPLETELY MUTUALLY INTELLIGIBLE WITH LENJE SPOKEN IN CHILUMBA AREA OF KAPIRI- MPOSHI

This report presents interpretations and discussions on the theme that the Chitonga vocabulary that is used in the instruction materials is not mutually intelligible with Lenje. Seven themes emerged from this analytic category. The themes are a representation of what the parents and teachers said. These themes are first listed and then interpretation and discussion for each one of them is presented later. The following themes emerged from the respondents:

(1) Similar words were mutually intelligible;

(2) Different words were not mutually intelligible;

(3) Some words bear similar spellings and pronunciation but different meaning;

(4) Some words have different pronunciation;

(5) Use of translation;

(6) Use of inference;

(7) Grade 1 pupils learnt Chitonga gradually.

5.1.1. Interpretation and discussion of the themes.

5.1.1.1. Similar words were mutually intelligible.

The first finding suggested that some Chitonga vocabularies were similar to Lenje vocabularies. This similarity seems to suggest the reason for intelligibility. This finding agrees with Gooskens and van Heuven's (2007) suggestion that lexical distance as a linguistic factor affected mutual intelligibility. This means that, if the lexical distance was close, then there could be intelligibility between the two languages. If on the other hand the lexical distance was large, then there could be no intelligibility.

In this case Chitonga lexicons which were close or similar to Lenje lexicons were intelligible to the learners. These words were easy for the learners to comprehend, suggesting that the vocabularies were mutually intelligible. Such words would make comprehension of the spoken and written tasks easy. It would have been better if all the vocabularies were mutually intelligible because there would not have been any gaps in the comprehension process by the learners.

The similar vocabularies made receptive and expressive comprehension easy as the two skills (receptive and expressive comprehension) are cardinal to mutual intelligibility. Receptive comprehension being the ability to understand the spoken words when speakers from two different language groups are talking to each other. With respect to this study, the learners were expected to understand the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials without any problems at all. Expressive comprehension entails the ability for two people from two different language groups to talk to each other in their respective languages with understanding. In this case, the learners were expected to speak to each other with understanding. When this was lacking, then there was communication break-down. Learning should be holistic and not in bits.

5.1.1.2. Different vocabularies were not mutually intelligible.

This finding suggested that some Chitonga vocabularies were different from Lenje vocabularies. These Chitonga vocabularies which were different from Lenje vocabularies were not mutually intelligible to the predominantly Lenje speaking learners. This finding seems to concur with Gooskens, Bezooijen and Heuven's (2015)

finding which suggests that non- cognates between languages affected mutual intelligibility. Non- cognates are vocabularies which do not share the same ancestral roots. This means that the vocabularies such as ‘*buntele, ntali, and matobo*’ to mention but a few, were non-cognates since they were unintelligible to the learners.

The vocabularies which were not mutually intelligible had a negative implication in the learning of initial literacy skills. Teacher B said “*These differences in the vocabularies affect the learning process because the learners do not comprehend the intended concepts.*” The concept of vocabulary as stated in the conceptual framework entails that the learners must tag the printed vocabulary to the referant in the real world. When they read the Chitonga vocabulary, they were expected to realize that the printed word referred to the words that they spoke. This could have been possible if the written vocabulary was part of the working vocabulary for the learners.

However, the learners in the study could not do so because the Chitonga vocabulary was not mutually intelligible to them. The effective learning of initial literacy skills, especially comprehension skills, was affected because there was communication breakdown. As a result the concepts of vocabulary and comprehension were not met, according to expectation of the conceptual frame work. This therefore implies that lack of mutual intelligibility of the Chitonga vocabulary hindered the learners from tagging the Chitonga vocabulary to the correct referant from the written text to the real world and so there was no effective learning of initial literacy skills. This also proved Whorf’s (1956) theory of linguistic relativity that language determines a persons perception and cognition and that it shapes a persons point of view. In this case Lenje learners had a completely different reality of life as far as the Chitonga vocabulary was concerned.

Comprehension of the vocabulary is key to literacy. Literacy, in this case means the ability to read and write with comprehension. Comprehension means understanding the written or spoken texts. Comprehension also involves the reader to interact with the text by relating the vocabulary to the real life situation. The learners were expected to relate what they read or heard to their real life situation. The basis for comprehension is background knowledge. In this case the learners were expected to relate the sentences they read to what they knew in real life. The learners in the current study failed to do so because the Chitonga vocabulary was not intelligible to them. Reading and writing

without comprehension is not reading at all. Literacy involves understanding the content of the text. The absence of understanding means lack of effective literacy.

The researcher observed that the learners were not able to comprehend the written texts and so they could not complete the cloze sentences correctly. They filled the blank spaces with wrong words. For example, '*Ulasuma a buntele*' (*S/He is sewing with groundnuts powder*). The vocabulary '*ulasuma*' in Lenje is '*atotunga*', while '*buntele*' is '*nyemu shakutwa*'.

The two vocabularies are completely different. Their differences pointed the learners to different realities, as stated by Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity (Whorf, 1956) which suggests that language moulds habits of both cognition and perception and different languages point speakers to different views of reality.

The teachers tried to help the learners to understand the vocabularies by direct translation of the entire sentences word by word, but this could not help either. This made the learners even more confused as was observed in one lesson where one learner related the vocabulary '*ulasuma*' (*to sew*), to the Bemba vocabulary '*alesuma*' meaning '*to bite*'. These errors were necessitated by the fact that the vocabularies were not only different in both languages, but also because these vocabularies were not mutually intelligible to the learners. This finding is similar to Raga and Adola's (2012) finding that homonyms can cause confusion to speakers of different dialects.

The learners were not able to understand the meaning of the vocabularies from the actual context because the vocabularies were absent from their lexical memory. For instance, the vocabulary which was present in that learner's lexical memory was from the Bemba vocabulary which had a different meaning altogether, '*to bite*'. This mismatch pointed the learner to a completely different view of reality. On the other hand, the silence from the other learners indicated that the learners were completely lost and confused. This confusion also affected the effective learning of initial literacy skills. In order for learning to be effective, vocabularies must be mutually intelligible.

Further, this finding is supported by Dowley's (1980) theory of Compositional Semantics which postulates that real learning is to understand the meaning of a word and using it correctly in a sentence. The learners could not use the vocabularies

correctly because they were not intelligible to them. As a result, they used guess work to complete the cloze exercise, hence making errors.

Written language truly requires the reader to abstractly relate the referent to the real world. In this case the learners in the study got lost because they did not only fail to comprehend the Chitonga vocabulary, but also they could not tell the referent from the real world. The task of literacy, therefore, which was meant to enrich the learners with skills of reaching high levels of thinking, was not achieved by the learners in the study. This could only be achieved if the MoI was mutually intelligible to the learners. Lack of intelligibility hindered the learners from achieving this goal.

The CFW suggested that vocabulary, one of the concepts of literacy, was cardinal to the learning of initial literacy skills. If the vocabulary used was not mutually intelligible to the learner, learning of literacy skills would be jeopardized.

Neuman (2011) supports this finding by suggesting that the important role of vocabulary in early literacy was to promote language proficiency because vocabulary was related to literacy development. Vocabulary was a vehicle through which ideas were communicated in the learning of initial literacy skills.

Learning, as an active process where learners construct meaning of what they are learning, calls for pupils' active involvement in learning. The learners needed to interact with the vocabulary freely and fluently. However, in this case where they were forced to use Chitonga vocabulary, which is different from Lenje vocabulary, the learners failed to express themselves as freely as they would, given an opportunity to speak in Lenje. Learners speak more fluently and originally in their MT than in a second language. Chitonga could be called a second language to the Lenje learners. These findings seem to suggest that the learners were not able to learn constructively because the vocabulary they were exposed to was not mutually intelligible with the vocabulary from their MT.

Learners came to school with oral vocabulary from their MT and homes. It was this vocabulary which must be used to help them learn to read and write. Unfortunately for the learners of Chilumba area, this was not the case. They were taught in Chitonga, a language which was alien to them, simply because it was assumed to be mutually intelligible with their MT, Lenje. It was for this reason that scholars (e.g. Bamgbose,

2000 and Klu, Odoi, Mulaudzi, Gudlhuza, Makhwathana, Maluleke & Neela (2013)) suggested that learning of initial literacy skills must be done in and through the learners' MT because they will learn naturally and easily.

As discussed above, this assumption of mutual intelligibility was not yielding any good results because the learners were not able to learn the initial literacy skill of comprehension effectively. It is a known fact that every learner comes with a bank of vocabulary from home which s/he must use for learning initial literacy skills. The learners in Chilumba area are not an exception.

As seen above, the learners had from their lexical memory the vocabulary '*alesuma*' (to bite). They came with a Lenje bank of vocabulary which they could use for their initial literacy skills. Subjecting them to vocabulary which was not only alien, but also not mutually intelligible to their vocabulary would not help them in their learning of initial literacy skills.

It appears that Simwinga's (2006) assertion that Tonga fairly represented Lenje and Ila could not completely be accepted to justify the use of Chitonga as MoI for initial literacy in Chilumba area. Probably, his assertion could be justified on the basis of his use of the verb 'fairly'. Fairly means not absolutely. As such, this could be suggesting that Chitonga is not absolutely mutually intelligible with Lenje. This language barrier hinders the effective learning of initial literacy skills.

This study has tried to provide a justifiable test of whether Chitonga was mutually intelligible with Lenje as suggested by Kashoki (1978). The study found that some Chitonga vocabularies were not mutually intelligible with Lenje. This affected the effective learning of initial literacy skills and comprehension of the sentences.

Comprehension and vocabulary are cardinal to literacy. If the learners must learn effectively, they need to learn using the vocabulary they know very well. Comprehension skills must be taught to the learners through and in a language which they understand, without which learning would be in vain.

Teachers and parents suggested that learning in a language which they understood would make their learning easier.

Teacher A said, “*The learners could learn quickly and easily in Lenje because they understood it. Chitonga was foreign to them that was why they did not understand it.*” The teacher seemed to suggest that Chitonga was not mutually intelligible with Lenje as a result it was not a good MoI to the learners and that the correct MoI was Lenje.

Parent E also said, “*Chitonga cilamushupa mwaana, koma na waiya mucu Lenje kwalo nga wanyumfwa bwangu.*” (*My child has difficulties in understanding Chitonga, but if he was taught in Lenje, he would understand quickly*). Like teacher A, parent E seemed to suggest that Chitonga was not mutually intelligible with Lenje and so his child was not able to learn quickly. In order for his child to learn initial literacy skills quickly, the MoI should be Lenje, a language in which the child thinks naturally, quickly and easily.

5.1.1.3. Some words bear similar spelling and pronunciation but different meaning.

It was also found out that there were some words in the instruction materials which had similar spellings and to some extent pronunciation, but had different meanings. These words are also called homonyms. Examples of such vocabulary are; ‘*banene*’ (*grandmother in Chitonga*) and ‘*banene*’ (*an adult in Lenje*).

For the sake of discussion we shall consider one vocabulary, ‘*cituta*’ (*foot in Chitonga*) while in Lenje it means ‘*a big rat*’. This was observed at school A. During the lesson one learner said ‘*cituta*’ was a rat.

This finding is supported by Raga and Adola’s (2012) suggestion that, ‘homonymy is a barrier of mutual intelligibility among speakers of different dialects’. As seen in the example given above, the vocabulary ‘*cituta*’ was homonymous in Chitonga and Lenje. The vocabulary ‘*cituta*’s’ homonymous element influenced the learner’s reality, pointing him to think in his language because the vocabulary ‘*cituta*’ existed. The vocabulary ‘*cituta*’ in this case referred to ‘*a rat*’ as opposed to the ‘*foot*’ in Chitonga.

Further, this finding is supported by Gooskens and van Heuven’s (2007) suggestion that mutual intelligibility at Lexical level is affected by neighbour’s (words that are similar to the stimulus words) and false friends (words that are similar to the stimulus words than the correct response). They suggested that these words hindered communication since they gave wrong responses.

In this case, the word '*alesuma*' (*S/He is biting*), is a neighbour to '*ulasuma*' (*S/He is sewing*) because it is similar to the stimulus word, phonetically. Similarly, '*cituta*' (*foot*) was confused with '*cituta*' (*rat*). As seen above, the learner confused the words with different words from the other language, as a result getting a wrong meaning or response altogether, since the learners' views were directed by their world of reality.

The learners were unable to understand the vocabulary from the instruction materials because the vocabularies were not mutually intelligible. The learners' cognition and perception were directed towards different realities. This is because, in their respective language, the vocabularies meant different realities, in this case '*biting*' and not '*sewing*' and '*rat*' not '*foot*' as in the target language. Below are elaborations of the terms cognition and perception as implied in the study, based on the TFW.

Cognition, as espoused in the TFW, involves the process of retrieving a word or word meaning from the mental lexicon each time we want to use it, (Brandimonte, Bruno & Collina, 2006). Therefore, if the word in question is missing in the mental lexicon, the learner is bound to face a problem. In this case, therefore, since the learners are exposed to two languages which are assumed to be mutually intelligible, they are expected to relate the vocabularies without difficulties.

However, the result indicates that the learners could not retrieve the correct meaning because it was absent from the mental reservoir, instead they got the word which was related to the stimulus word, thereby having a false response. This limitation of the learners' language is the limitation of their world, as stated by Wittgenstein, (1961).

Sapir, (1921), Whorf's (1956) teacher, also agrees with the TFW that what people see and hear is to a large extent influenced and interpreted by the experiences and habits they encounter and form from their communities. This has been proven in the study as stated above, because the learners made responses which were limited and correct in their own community and reality. The study is further strengthened by Whorf's (1956) suggestion that it is easier to recognize a word which is available in the target language than which is absent.

Language is a vehicle through which habits are moulded and reality is faced. As mentioned above, language influences cognition and perception. Cognition and perception are inter- dependent upon each other. While cognition is a mental process,

perception is the interface between the outer and inner worlds (Bodenhause & Hugenberg, 2004). It is through perception that we are able to take in information about the words we hear and interpret the meaning. Through perception we are able to cognitively use the existing knowledge to accommodate the new knowledge.

In this case, the learners were unable to cognitively perceive the Chitonga vocabularies because some of the words were not mutually intelligible with Lenje. The vocabulary that is in the instruction materials (the outer world) is not part of their mental lexicon (inner world). Therefore, this proves the TFW that different languages point speakers and listeners towards different views of realities.

5.1.1.4. Some vocabularies have different pronunciations.

It was found that some Chitonga vocabularies were similar to Lenje vocabulary except for different pronunciations. Parent D said “*Maswi yamwi yalipalene, yalipusenebo kupulonaunsi.*” (*Some words are similar they only differ in pronunciation*).

This finding agrees with Gooskens’ (2015) suggestion that pronunciation affects intelligibility. Pronunciation of words is basically the phonological and phonetic make up of the word. Therefore, two languages may differ in the way words are pronounced in their respective languages, consequently affecting intelligibility.

Words are made up of letters or graphemes. These letters are associated to sounds, called phonemes. It is the variations of these phonemes in the two languages which affect intelligibility.

For instance, Chitonga vocabularies in the instruction materials have the following phonemes, which are absent, in Lenje:

<u>CHITONGA</u>	<u>LENJE</u>
zw	sw
zy	shi
dw	tw
dy	ty
jy	cu
jw	cw
vw	fw
h	0

Many Chitonga vocabularies used in the instruction materials have the phonemes /z/ and /h/ which are absent in Lenje. Lenje vocabularies use the phonemes /sh/ which is equivalent to /z/ and /h/. These phonemes sound like glottal sounds. It is for this reason that the vocabularies bearing them sound deep. That is why the respondents said Chitonga vocabulary is deeper than Lenje vocabulary.

Parent B said “*Chitonga cilalema kucaamba, maswi yamwi mbuli ‘inzoka’ mucilenje njoobu pantu tulaamba ai ‘insoka’.*” (*Some Chitonga vocabularies are deeper in pronunciation, for example the word ‘snake’ in Chitonga there is a phoneme /z/ while in Lenje the phoneme /s/ is used*).

5.1.1.5. Use of Translation.

The study found that translation was used by both the parents and the teachers in order to enable the pupils to understand the Chitonga vocabulary.

Teacher A said *“The learners do not understand Chitonga when they read from the books. I have to translate to Lenje for them to understand what they have read.”* Pupils at this school were able to read, but they did not understand what they were reading. The teacher, though a Lozi by tribe, struggled to understand Chitonga vocabulary and translate it to Lenje. The researcher, being a Tonga by tribe and conversant with both languages, observed how the teacher struggled amidst some mistakes she made during the lesson.

Teacher B also said, *“I teach the learners in Chitonga, but because they do not understand Chitonga, I have to translate into Lenje for them to understand.”* This teacher was Tonga by tribe and he was the only one who was talking in Chitonga throughout the lesson, but the learners responded in Lenje. He had to struggle to translate Chitonga to Lenje because he was not conversant with Lenje.

Translation is a process where a piece of message from one language is transferred into another language. This was done in order to help the learners to understand the Chitonga vocabulary. This was evident enough to show that Chitonga vocabulary was not mutually intelligible with Lenje. Had Chitonga vocabulary been mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabulary, the learners would have understood without any translation.

The researcher also observed that the learners were not able to answer questions in the Chitonga vocabulary. They were only able to answer after the teachers translated the Chitonga vocabulary into Lenje, for them. This was a clear indication that there was no mutual intelligibility between the two languages. As said earlier on, if the Chitonga vocabulary was mutually intelligible to them, they would have shouted out the answers.

Teacher D had this to say, *“When I ask them in Chitonga, only few hands would be raised, but if I translate the words into Lenje, almost all the pupils would raise their hands, shouting; ‘Me!Me!Me!’”* When we compare the way learners responded to the questions asked in Chitonga and to those asked in Lenje, we could clearly conclude that Chitonga is not mutually intelligible with Lenje and so could not effectively facilitate learning of initial literacy skills for the Grade 1’s.

Further, the teachers complained about the disadvantages of translation. This perception was explained by teachers as indicated below:

Teacher B said, *“Translation is not a good thing because it wastes time and learners also miss the concepts. I have one hour in which to teach literacy, this hour could be utilized fully if the MoI was Lenje. Concepts are missed because sometimes I do not explain the way it is supposed to be because I am not conversant with Lenje. At times I use illustrations and concrete examples, which contributes to the delay.”*

The teacher clearly said translation did not only waste time, but also led to learners missing the concepts. Time was wasted when seeking for the meaning of the vocabulary in the target language, Lenje. Use of illustrations or examples in order to clarify the point led to spending more time than would have been spent if the learners understood Chitonga.

Besides that, as the teachers went round giving illustrations and examples, the learners missed the concepts and got the wrong ideas. This was all because of lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies.

Apart from that, translation exposed the learners to two languages; the learners' first language and the target language. In the first language, the learner thinks naturally, while in the target language the teacher had to think for the learners and help them to understand the target language through translation. As the teachers code-switched from one language to the other, the learners struggled through the two languages.

This finding was supported by UNESCO (2003) which recognized that learning in a language other than one's MT compels the learner to learn a new language and form concepts through that language. The study has shown that, the learners had no idea of the meaning of some Chitonga vocabularies. They had to learn the new vocabularies and their meanings, in the context of Chitonga. The learners' reality was based on the Lenje vocabulary. Through translation, the teachers helped the learners to think in the Tonga reality, yet naturally, the learners think in their first language. All this happened because the two languages were not mutually intelligible.

Translation also diminished creativity in the learners. Learning is an active process, where learners are expected to think creatively and construct meaningful sentences. However, when the learners are subjected to translation, their vocabulary is limited and so they could not think beyond the vocabulary presented to them.

In the current study, the researcher observed that during the lesson the pupils were not able to creatively use the Chitonga vocabulary that they were introduced to. Teacher C commented to the class that, “*Samwakakilwa kupanga twaambo kusebensesha maswi yali pabodi?*” (*Have you failed to make sentences using the vocabulary from the board?*). Suggesting vocabularies bearing the phoneme of the day and making sentences using the new vocabulary is a requirement of the curriculum, (MESVTEE, 2013). Unfortunately, the researcher observed that the learners in all the 5 schools failed to do so because of language problem. It was also observed that most of the vocabularies which the learners suggested on their own were Lenje vocabularies. This was because their lexical access was only limited to the Lenje vocabulary that they were exposed to from home. That was their world of reality, as postulated by Whorf (1956).

5.1.1.6. Use of Inference

The study found that the teachers and pupils used inference in situations where the meaning of the vocabulary was not known. In the study, the teachers inferred the meaning of the word ‘*ntuku*’. Three different meanings were given for the same word; *half-naked*; *fists* and *power*. These inferences were based on the picture given in the text book.

The picture did not help the teachers at all. The word was wrongly inferred because it was not commonly used in everyday speech and above all, it was not mutually intelligible with Lenje. The commonly used word for fists, in Chitonga is ‘*mfwaindi*’. In Lenje fists are called ‘*makofi*’.

The two words are not similar in spelling. They are not mutually intelligible to the Lenje speakers. This suggests that, inference, as a skill could not be relied upon as a means of deriving meaning of words in languages which are assumed to be mutually intelligible.

This finding seems to concur with Gooskens’ (2013) suggestion that the picture task is not a good method of measuring intelligibility. Although the picture in this study was not used as a task to measure mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje, it was used in the instruction material to illustrate the meaning of the vocabulary ‘*ntuku*’. The researcher observed that the picture was misinterpreted, therefore agreeing with Gooskens’ (2013) findings.

5.1.1.7. Grade 1 pupils learn Chitonga vocabulary gradually

The study found that the teachers and parents said that the Grade 1 pupils did not know Chitonga when they first came into school until after they were exposed to it.

Teacher D said, *“The pupils are coming straight from home and they have not been exposed to any language. They must be taught through Lenje, the language which is familiar to them. After exposure to Chitonga from the few friends who were Tonga speakers, they would learn Chitonga.”*

Parent C also said, *“Bagiledi 1 nibatalika cikolo tabanyumfwio Chitonga. Ano mukuya kwaciindi baleeya ndyonga batalika kunyumfwa Chitonga.”*(At the commencement of school the Grade 1's do not understand Chitonga. With the passing of time after learning Chitonga, they begin to understand Chitonga).

During lesson observation, the researcher also observed that the learners were speaking in Lenje in class and not Chitonga. It was true that the learners were coming straight from home where they were only exposed to Lenje vocabulary. This meant that the only language they knew was Lenje. Since Lenje was not mutually intelligible with Chitonga, there was communication break-down caused by language barrier. It was also true that after being exposed to Chitonga vocabulary, through the instruction materials and a few Chitonga speaking friends, the learners learnt some Chitonga vocabulary. This Chitonga vocabulary was learnt as gradually as they learnt their MT. It should be emphasized that Chitonga was not the language spoken within the school premises or community in the research site, but Lenje was common. Therefore exposure to Chitonga was very limited, as compared to Lenje which was widely spoken.

Many scholars have suggested that the MT is an integral part of the learner and is the only way learners communicate fluently and freely with their families and friends (e.g. Ball (2010); Chuo & Walter (2011) and Walter & Dekker (2011)). In the current study, the learners had a wide range and natural exposure to Lenje, from home. They learnt Lenje naturally. On the other hand, when they came to school for the first time, they were introduced to a new language, Chitonga. They began learning this language in a very artificial way, from the text books, through translation. Translation, as seen already was not a good media through which learners learn a language, because sometimes teachers made wrong translations. Eventually, this affected the learners.

Other than that, at home they have many native role models. In the current study, only two of the teachers were native Tonga speakers, while the rest were not. The native Tonga speaking teachers had challenges with Lenje because they did not understand it well enough to make good translations. The non- Tonga speaking teachers could neither understand both of the languages perfectly well nor could they make good translations.

Thomas and Collier, (2002), suggested that, despite the age, learning a new language in school was a demanding experience. Some scholars have suggested that this might take about 5- 7 years, (e.g Cummins (1979); Thomas & Collier (2002)). This study found that the learners, by the end of their first year in school, could not understand Chitonga vocabulary because it was not mutually intelligible to Lenje. Although the Grade 2 class was not part of the study, it appeared they too were not yet conversant with the Chitonga vocabulary. This meant that, for the learners to actually understand Chitonga, they had to be exposed to the language for a much longer period of time.

Further, no matter how much the learners strive to learn Chitonga as a language, they could not acquire enough vocabulary to enable them to learn initial literacy skills effectively in Grade 1. Cummins (1980), differentiated language used for basic social interaction and language used for academic purposes. He called the first type of language, Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and the second type Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS). When learners come to school for the first time, they will learn BICS. Research shows that the learners could be competent in BICS within six (6) months to two (2) years. This means that the learners could learn Chitonga for BICS within six months and two years. However, BICS is only competence for interpersonal communication and not for academic competence. The language used for academic purposes, CALPS needs more exposure and time to be learnt.

The language for academic competences, CALPS, involves skills which are needed for academic purposes such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Cummins (1979) and Thomas and Collier (2002), suggested that learners would take five(5) years or more to be academically competent in the new language both orally and in writing as compared to native speakers. This means that if these Lenje learners used Lenje, their native language for initial literacy, they would have acquired CALPS, which would have made them to effectively acquire initial literacy skills. The fact that they were

using Chitonga, a second language, has disadvantaged them, as they had to wait for at least five years in order for them to be academically competent in Chitonga. Thus, the findings from Teacher D that “*After exposure from their friends who were Tonga speakers, the learners would learn Chitonga,*” and parent C that, “*Mukuya kwaciindi baleeya Chitonga kubabiyabo, lyalo ndyonga batalika kunyumfwa Chitonga.*” (After sometime, they learn Chitonga from their friends and that is when they begin understanding Chitonga), concur with Cummins (1979) and Thomas and Collier (2002).

Thomas and Collier (2002) further suggested that learners who have no prior schooling or no primary language support might take as much as 7- 10 years to acquire academic skills in the new language. If the learners took so much time to learn the new language (Chitonga), for academic purposes, the assumption could be that, the languages were not mutually intelligible. Had Chitonga and Lenje been mutually intelligible, the learners would not have taken such a long time to learn Chitonga because they would easily understand Chitonga. It should also be mentioned that during this period, the learning of initial literacy skills could not be effective because the learners did not have the ability to use the language proficiently. The language which they had was just for communication purposes, BICS. Thomas and Collier’s (2002) suggestion fits the learners in the study in the sense that none of them ever went through pre- school. Pre- school provides children with BICS. After acquiring the BICS, they could easily achieve the CALPS. This means that if the learners had an opportunity of going to pre- school, they could have developed the BICS in Chitonga which they could have been using in Grade 1. But because this was not the case, the learners had to learn the BICS in Grade 1.

In summary, it has been argued in the foregoing that most of the Chitonga vocabularies in the instruction materials are not mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabulary and it has been shown how lack of mutual intelligibility between the two languages adversely affects the acquisition of initial literacy skills. This view is posited in line with the TFW which proposes that different languages point speakers to different views of reality and that true learning is to learn the meaning of words appropriately. The study has also shown how the concepts in initial literacy could not be achieved if the vocabularies used in the instruction materials were not mutually intelligible with the learners’ MT.

The finding concurs with Gooskens and van Heuven (2007) that mutual intelligibility was affected by lexical and phonetic distance. The study found that similar vocabularies were mutually intelligible while those different were not mutually intelligible to the learners. It was also discovered that there were homonyms which affected mutual intelligibility because they made learners to give wrong responses. The study also found that pronunciation affected mutual intelligibility. This was because some Chitonga vocabularies were pronounced more deeply than the Lenje vocabulary and also some phonemes such as /z/, /h/ and /vw/, to mention but a few, were not present in Lenje vocabularies (see Appendix 11 for more examples of phonemes which are not present in Lenje).

Further, it was found that to enable learners to understand the Chitonga vocabularies, translation was used by both the teachers and parents. This suggested that the two languages were not mutually intelligible. It was also established that translation was not a good resort as it did not only confuse the learners with the two languages, but also hindered creativity. Besides that, translation wasted time and teachers sometimes translated the vocabulary wrongly. In line with translation was inference, which also was not used properly. Teachers and pupils made wrong inferences of some words and the picture from the text book.

The findings of the current study agrees with TFW that different languages point speakers to different views of reality and that true learning is learning the meaning of words and apply them appropriately, (Whorf, 1956; Dowley, 1980). The findings also agree with the CFW which suggests that vocabulary knowledge is cardinal to effective acquisition of initial literacy skills. Vocabulary is the vehicle through which ideas are communicated and comprehended.

The current study also found that the Grade 1 learners learn Chitonga vocabulary gradually. This was because the two languages were not mutually intelligible. It also argued from Cummins' (1980) point of view that BICS are learnt within six months and two years of the learners' entrance into school, while CALPS take as long as five to seven years or as long as ten years. The implication is that no effective learning of initial literacy skills takes place during this period because of language barrier. The learners will only learn effectively if they have attained CALPS, according to Cummins (1980) and Thomas and Collier (2002), this will be when they are in Grade 7. It will be

necessary to carry out a study to establish this assertion. This is the reason why most of our Zambian learners are not able to read in the early grades until the latter grades when they have mastered the language of instruction, if they are fortunate. The unfortunate part is that the majority of the learners, who are not successful in learning to read in the early grades, do not catch up and they continue lagging behind until they drop- out of school, as observed by Tambulukani and Banda (2015). Chall (1983) called this drop-out rate, the ‘fourth- grade slump’ while Stanovich (1986) called it ‘the Matthew Effect’.

The next section will discuss the second research objective which sought to determine whether the Lenje learners were able to effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials.

5.2.0. Research Objective Two: To establish whether or not the learners, who are Lenje speakers, could effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials, in Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi District.

5.2.1. Analytic Category 2: Lack of mutual intelligibility hindered the learners’ comprehension and consequently effective learning of initial literacy skills

The perception of the majority of the participants in the current study suggested that the learners did not effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary because there was no mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje. As a result of this, there was no effective learning of initial literacy skills. Four sub- themes which emerged from this objective are listed below, while discussions follow.

(1) There was no effective comprehension among the learners due to lack of mutual intelligibility.

(2) The learners were reading without understanding.

(3) The teachers were helping the learners to complete the exercises.

(4) Teachers and learners used Lenje and not Chitonga during lessons.

5.2.2 There was no effective comprehension among the pupils due to lack of mutual intelligibility.

This section will be discussed from two perspectives. This is because the study collected data from interviews and lesson observations. The first part will discuss the

findings from the interviews from the teachers and parents. The second part will discuss findings got from the lesson observations. The lesson had three main parts; the phoneme of the day, cloze exercise and comprehension exercise. A conclusion will be given to synthesize the findings in this section.

The first findings from the interviews seem to suggest that both the teachers and parents acknowledged that the pupils did not effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials.

Teacher B said, *“The learners do not comprehend the vocabulary as a result they miss the concepts.”*

Teacher A observed that, *“Pupils could understand simple sentences but not complex sentences.”*

Parent A also said, *“Kubelenga alabelenga ano tanyumfwi nshatobelenga. Cilengesha kutanyumfwa ngumushobo wa Chitonga.”*(He can read but he cannot understand what he is reading. This is because he does not understand Chitonga).

The reason given was that the Chitonga vocabulary in the instruction materials was not mutually intelligible with Lenje spoken in Chilumba area of Kapiri- mposhi. Language barrier affected effective communication and so the learners were not able to comprehend the vocabulary from the text books.

This finding is in agreement with Gooskens’ (2013) suggestion for using opinion testing to determine the mutual intelligibility of languages. In opinion testing, the participants are asked their opinion of how well they think they understand the language. In this case the teachers and parents were asked what their experience with the Lenje speaking Grade 1 learners was. They gave their opinion based on whether the learners understood Chitonga from the instruction materials. Their opinion was that the learners did not understand Chitonga because it was not mutually intelligible with Lenje. They said this affected the learning of initial literacy skills.

This finding is also supported by Bloch (2010) who observed that language is fundamental for understanding and knowledge. For learning to be effective the language used should be familiar as the learners can comfortably think in and use it. Dowd, Ochoa, Alam, Pari and Afsar Babar(2010) also supported this finding as they

suggested that learners do not understand what they are reading if the text is written in a language which is foreign to them. In this case Chitonga could be considered to be strange to the Lenje learners as it was not mutually intelligible to them.

MESVTEE's (2013) goal in comprehension skills is that, by the end of Grade 1, the learners should be able to derive meaning from the words and the concepts they convey in written texts. The learners in the study were unable to derive meaning from the Chitonga vocabularies. MESVTEE (2013) further observed that learners should understand (receptive) and use (expressive) words correctly and convey meaning. It also emphasized the place of vocabulary knowledge being key to reading comprehension. The learners in the study did not exhibit this knowledge, suggesting that there was a problem with the language. If these learners were to benefit effectively from the school programme they needed to use a language which they knew very well.

The finding of the current study is further supported by Hirsch (2003) who suggested that there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. He alluded to the fact that a learner should at least know 90- 95% of the vocabulary in the sentence and text for him/ her to comprehend the sentence. This background knowledge will enable the reader to guess the meaning of the unknown vocabularies. If on the other hand the learner did not know 90% of the vocabularies, s/he will not understand what s/he is reading. Kaivapalu's (2013) study also suggested that mutual comprehensibility and fluent understanding required enough practice and exposure to the language being read.

Further, the current study also found that the learners were not able to answer Chitonga questions, unless the teachers translated the Chitonga vocabulary into Lenje. Teacher D said, *"When you ask a question in Chitonga, only few pupils would raise their hands. When the same question is translated into Lenje, almost all the pupils would raise their hands."* This seems to indicate that the learners were not able to comprehend Chitonga vocabulary except for Lenje. Comprehensibility is the ability for the listener to understand an utterance. Lack of comprehensibility means that the listener has not understood the utterance, in this case, the learners were not able to understand the utterances in Chitonga, but were able to understand the utterances in Lenje. Failure for the learners to understand Chitonga in preference to Lenje suggests that the two languages are not mutually intelligible.

Findings from the lesson observations suggested that there was neither effective comprehension of Chitonga vocabulary nor development of comprehension skills. The findings were derived from three sections of the lesson; the phoneme of the day, the cloze exercise and the comprehension exercise.

Findings from the phoneme of the day suggested that the learners could not effectively learn the initial literacy skills because Chitonga was not mutually intelligible to them.

The learners were not able to comprehend the vocabulary used, '*ntuku*', to introduce the phoneme of the day /nt/. To help the learners to understand the meaning of the vocabulary, the teachers had to translate the vocabulary into Lenje. As mentioned earlier on, sometimes words were translated wrongly.

For instance, at school A, the teacher wrongly translated the word '*ntuku*' to mean '*half naked*', yet the word meant '*fists*'. She said, "*Na muntu tafwete balaamba ai ali ntuku (when a person is not dressed, they say s/he is naked).*"

Whorf's (1956) theory of linguistic relativity supports this finding as it postulates that language moulds habits of cognition and perception, and that different languages point speakers to different realities of life. In this case, the learners' perception and cognition were in Lenje, their thought pattern was controlled by what they knew in Lenje. They could not even correct the teacher for the wrong translation because they did not know what the word '*ntuku*' meant.

Dowley's (1980) semantic compositional theory also supports that true learning is learning with meaning. In this case, the learners did not learn effectively because they did not understand the actual meaning of the vocabulary. To make matters worse, the teacher gave the learners wrong translation of the vocabulary.

The concept of vocabulary was not correctly met as stated in the CFW. The concept 'vocabulary' in the current study indicates that the learner must know that the vocabulary in print represents the oral vocabulary they use every day. Owing to the lack of mutual intelligibility, the learners were not able to relate either the printed vocabulary or the oral vocabulary '*ntuku*'. As a result the lesson on phoneme of the day was learnt with difficulties because the learners were confused, they did not know what was going on, they only relied on the teachers' translation.

During the interviews, teacher A indicated that she consulted Chitonga speakers for words she did not know. She said, “*I always consult from Tonga speakers for the words which I do not understand.*”

The researcher took time to inquire from the Deputy Head Teacher of the same school, to confirm whether she also had the same meaning for the word and just to confirm whether the teacher often consulted. She said the word ‘*ntuku*’ meant ‘*fists*’. This showed that it was not true that the teacher always consulted where she was not sure.

The implication was that, if the teacher did not consult, then she made wrong translations, consequently, misled the learners. It is important to note that translations were not reliable. The best way to help the learners is to teach them in a language which they understand. Languages which were alien to them would point them to different realities of life (Whorf, 1956) and so would not help them in the development of literacy skills, since they will not be learning meaningfully (Dowley, 1980).

Findings from the cloze exercise show that the learners were unable to comprehend Chitonga vocabulary and sentences. Despite the teachers giving the learners the cues, the learners could not provide correct answers. For instance teacher B asked the learners, “*Mulizyi ntali? Eciya ncotubelesya naatuyanda kusuma.*” (*Do you know what a thread is? That which is used for sewing*).

In most cases the learners were silent when the teachers asked the questions. The silence was an indication that the learners did not know the meaning of the vocabulary. Naturally, young children shout out the answers if they know them. In the study, the learners were only able to shout out the answers when they were asked in Lenje while they remained quiet in Chitonga. This suggests that they were not able to comprehend Chitonga vocabulary because it was not mutually intelligible to them.

The other finding from the cloze exercise was that the learners gave wrong responses because they did not comprehend Chitonga vocabulary. They were filling the blank spaces with wrong answers because they did not understand the meaning of the sentences. They would have completed the blank spaces with correct words if they understood the meaning of the words and sentences. The Chitonga words and sentences did not provide any reality to them because they did not understand what they meant.

This finding concurs with Dowley's (1980) suggestion in the TFW, that true learning is knowing the true meaning of a word and using it correctly in a sentence. Doing so would show that the learner has acquired literacy skills. To be literate means to read with comprehension and completing the cloze sentences with the correct and relevant answers. The errors committed by the learners indicated that Chitonga was not mutually intelligible with Lenje, which was the reason why they did not complete the sentences correctly.

Findings from the comprehension exercise suggested that the learners were not able to comprehend the Chitonga vocabularies, accordingly. The learners either remained silent for vocabularies they did not understand or they inferred to vocabularies (homonyms) they knew in Lenje or from the community.

When teacher A asked the learners, "*Mukatobo munshi? (What is mukatobo?)*" One learner said, "Mubotolo (In a bottle)".

Teacher B asked the learners "*Lino tatanti uliliciside cituta. Ino cituta ncinzi? (Now he is not climbing because he has hurt his foot. What is the foot?)*" One learner said "*Cuulu (an ant hill)*," yet another learner said, "*Cinga matuta (It is a matuta)*." The 'matuta' is a kind of big 'mice' in Lenje while in Chitonga it means a foot.

This finding was similar to Raga and Adola's (2014) finding that homonyms caused confusion to speakers of different dialects. The implication is that the learners gave wrong responses because they retrieved the existing vocabulary from their Lenje lexical memory. Little did they know that these words had different meanings. This is because that was their true and natural world of reality, while the Chitonga world of reality was absent to them.

This finding was also similar to Kaivapalu's (2013) who found that sometimes general knowledge can be used to tell the meaning of the word which is not known. The use of general knowledge sometimes led to learners making wrong conclusions that were not based on the text. The learners in the study used the general knowledge they had in Lenje to determine the meaning of the Chitonga vocabulary. This led the Lenje learners to make wrong conclusions because their thinking was aligned to Lenje reality of life.

The above finding also concurs with the TFW because the learners' exhibited the fact that language determines the way people think (Whorf, 1956). It has also proved that true learning means understanding the meaning of the vocabulary and using it appropriately, (Dowley, 1980). Looking at the above examples, one learner thought the word '*mukatobo*' meant '*bottle*'. Probing further, the researcher found that the learner related the vocabulary to '*Kantobo beer*'. This is a common bottled beer sold in the vicinity. Also, one learner thought the word '*cituta*' meant an '*ant hill*' while another learner thought it was 'a big mice'. This was derived from their Lenje vocabulary. The learners' realities of life pointed to what they knew in their Lenje vocabulary, stored in the lexical memory. They retrieved these meanings because they were readily available while the meanings in Chitonga were absent in their lexical memory. Their perception and cognition were moulded in the Lenje realities of life and not in the Chitonga ways.

Further, this finding concurs with the CFW which suggests that knowledge of the vocabulary was necessary for comprehension, (MESVTEE, 2013). The learners in the study were not able to understand Chitonga vocabulary as a result they did not comprehend the texts, showing that Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies are not mutually intelligible.

The findings also agree with the CFW that a literate person should derive meaning from a speech or written text. Cloze exercise is a functional method of testing the mutual intelligibility as suggested by Gooskens (2015). By completing the exercise with the correct vocabulary, the learners would have demonstrated that Chitonga was intelligible to them. On the contrary, failure to complete the blank spaces with the correct vocabulary meant that Chitonga was not intelligible to them.

The study was supported by MESVTEE (2013) whose goal was that every average learner should be able to read, deriving meaning from the words and concepts from written texts. The learners under study were not able to do so. At the time of data collection, in November, 2015, the majority of the learners in the schools under study were not able to comprehend the vocabulary from the instruction materials. The learners were not able to exhibit comprehension skills because comprehension correlates with language performance and lexical access to isolated words. This finding is similar to Zimba's (2007) study which indicated that the learners could not read by the end of the the second term, 2007.

5.2.3 Learners were reading without understanding.

The second finding was that the learners were reading without understanding. Some learners were able to read but could not understand what they were reading due to lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje. In the interviews, all the participants indicated that some learners were able to read but without understanding. Below are some responses from the teachers and parents:

Teacher E said, *“Some pupils are able to read but they do not understand what they are reading. I think it is because of the language, Chitonga, which they do not know.”*

Parent C said, *“Mwana alaeleshako kubelenga ano kumwipusha kwambai asansulule nshaabelenga alakakilwa pantu tanyumfwio Chitonga.”* (My child tries to read but when he is asked to explain what he is reading, he fails to do so because he does not understand Chitonga).

Dokotum (2012) supports this finding by saying that if learners cannot comprehend what they are reading, they will not develop literacy skills. The learners' ability to read and understand simple texts is the most fundamental skill that they could be equipped with. It is important to understand what is being read because that is the only way one could be deemed literate. Gove and Cvelich (2011) also support this finding when they suggested that learners who read in foreign languages do not understand the meaning of what they are reading.

Tambulukani and Banda (2015) commenting on ability to read without understanding said, *“You can decode what you can't comprehend but you can't comprehend what you can't decode.”* This statement simply means that as long as a person has acquired the skills to decode words, especially the phonetic attack method (synthetic method), s/he can read any word in any language without necessarily understanding its meaning. On the other hand, a person who cannot decode or transcribe a piece of writing cannot understand the piece of writing even if it was written in a language s/he understood.

Therefore, it is possible for the learners to read without understanding because they used the phonetic attack method to read the Chitonga words and sentences from the text books. True learning, however, is when the learner understands the written text as postulated by Dowley's, (1980) semantics compositional theory.

However, in this study, the learners were unable to understand what they were reading because of language barrier. Had the language been mutually intelligible, the learners would have comprehended the texts. Therefore, what these learners need is a MoI which they understand naturally. As indicated by both the teachers and parents, the learners would learn easily in Lenje. This was expressed by the teachers and parents as shown below:

Teacher E said, *“The learners here can only understand Lenje and not Chitonga. It is better if they were taught in Lenje so that they learn without any difficulties.”*

Parent A said, *“Mukwinga Chitonga cilamushupa mwaana kunyumfwa, ndaboona nga cooba nawaiya mucilenje pantu ncanyumfwa kabotu.”* (Since my child has difficulties in understanding Chitonga; it would be easier if he learnt in Lenje because that is the language which he understands well).

During the lesson observation, when the teachers tested the learners for understanding, the learners were not able to answer the questions.

Teacher D asked the learners, *“Batokwambanshi apa? Tamutonyumfwa ncobatobandika?”* (What are they saying here? Do you not understand what they are saying?)

The teacher’s question indicated that the learners did not understand what they were reading. The silence exhibited by the learners also indicated that they did not understand what they read. The teacher read through the vocabularies and the entire sentences, but even then, the learners could neither tell the meaning of the vocabularies nor the sentences.

The learners were only able to answer correctly when the teachers translated the vocabularies into Lenje. This contrast suggested that, despite their ability to read, the learners were not able to comprehend Chitonga vocabularies because they were not intelligible to them.

Reading with understanding will encourage the learner to have interest in reading. This will foster a reading culture in the learners because they will be reading both for academic purposes and for pleasure. This is the reason why the learners need to learn to read early.

The study found that early reading was not achieved in the schools under study. The researcher observed that at the time data was being collected, in November, 2015, most of the Grade 1 learners in the schools under study were neither able to read nor understand Chitonga. At school A only 20 out of 100 pupils were able to read, School B no learner was able to read out of 50; learners; School C only 10 out of 40 learners were able to read; School D only 5 out of 50 learners were able to read and only 5 out of 60 were able to read at school E. The main reason attributed to poor literacy levels was that the MoI used, Chitonga was not mutually intelligible to Lenje. It is important for early reading to be achieved because if it is not, the gap widens further and the learners may or may not catch- up, (Gove & Cvelich, 2011).

One teacher, teacher C expressed concern over this; *“Many children cannot read now, but some will catch up maybe when they are in Grade 2, while others may not.”*

This finding is supported by MESVTEE’s (2013) indication that ‘early’ reading instruction was extremely significant. Delay in acquiring early reading skills means that the gap in reading ability and achievement widens over time. Besides this, the learners who cannot read remain backwards in all the subjects. The effects of this are that such learners may repeat grades; some may never catch- up at all and end up dropping out of school. Tambulukani and Banda (2015) also share this sentiment.

Reading with understanding is what is called literacy. The learners in the study were not able to understand the vocabulary because it was not intelligible to them. This seems to suggest that, had Chitonga been mutually intelligible to Lenje, the learners would have understood what they were reading. This finding was supported by Zimba’s (2007) study in which he found that the Tumbuka learners could not understand Chinyanja because it was not mutually intelligible with Tumbuka.

The CFW clearly states the importance of oral language, phonics, vocabulary and comprehension in the effective acquisition of initial literacy skills. MESVTEE (2013) supports the study’s finding that an effectively literate person needs to combine all the abilities namely; phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension mentioned in the CFW. The only way this can be achieved is by having a MoI which is intelligible to the learners.

The CFW further emphasizes the importance of oral language, because the learners need to have a working vocabulary for them to learn literacy skills. They should use the vocabulary they know to communicate ideas. Scholars suggest that the number of words a child has in the working vocabulary determines his reading success or failure. Matafwali's (2010) study concurs with this finding as she found that the learners' lack of oral proficiency in the MoI hinder them from breaking through to literacy.

In this study, the researcher observed that the learners' working vocabulary in Chitonga seemed to be absent. As a result of this, the learners were not able to use Chitonga orally or for reading. The learners could not understand the oral sentences spoken to them in Chitonga. They could not understand the written Chitonga vocabulary, either. They could not identify and express the ideas in the Chitonga sentences because their working vocabulary, in Lenje, was not intelligible with the Chitonga vocabulary which was in the instruction materials. They were not able to exhibit any comprehension skills in Chitonga except in Lenje. This suggested that the learners did not learn effective comprehension skills and so they could not be deemed literate at this point.

As mentioned earlier on, this data was collected in the third term and yet Grade 1 learners could not read with understanding while others could not read at all. Poor readers and learners who could not read were affected by lack of mutual intelligibility between the two languages. It is important for the learners to learn foundational skills because these will enable them to accomplish more complex skills, later in their schooling life. The question one could ask is "Why are these learners in Chilumba area either reading without understanding or not reading at all?"

This question is answered by Kosenen (2005) and UNESCO (2011) who observed that many children in primary schools are taught in languages that are different from their home languages. MESVTEE (2013) also observed that, the language of classroom instruction affects the child's ability to read and learn. Teaching children in a language they do not hear or speak makes teaching of reading difficult.

The children of Chilumba area were not an exception of the above educational barriers. The learners were subjected to Chitonga, a language which was not used at their homes. They neither heard nor spoke Chitonga at home. This affected their ability to read. Few learners in the study were able to read without understanding while the majorities were

not able to read at all. They could not understand Chitonga vocabulary because it was not intelligible to them. The teachers found it difficult to teach reading comprehension because the learners did not understand Chitonga vocabulary. They complained that they had to translate Chitonga vocabulary to Lenje in order for the learners to understand. The findings of the study seem to suggest that Chitonga vocabulary and Lenje were not mutually intelligible, as the policy planners assumed.

5.2.4 Teachers were helping the learners to complete the exercises.

The fourth finding was that the teachers were helping learners to complete the exercises. They did so because the learners gave wrong responses because they could not understand Chitonga vocabulary. They could not complete the exercises and so the teachers helped them to complete the tasks. Below are examples of the sentences which the teachers provided answers for the learners;

- (a) *Wamana kubika buntele. “Ndaamba kuti buntle mbwakubika mucisyu.”(S/he has finished putting groundnut powder. “I said groundnut powder is for putting in relish.”)*
- (b) *Ngobali kuyanda kutolela matobo ngu Masowe. (They wanted to take matobo to Masowe.)*
- (c) *Wakaliciside cituta ngu Tatenti. (The one who hurt his foot was Tatenti.)*
- (d) *Ncobali kuyanda kumutolela Masowe matobo. (They were taking matobo for Masowe).*

After telling the pupils the answers, his comment was, “*So ncomwali kwalilwa eci!*” (*So this is what you were failing!*).

The teacher was frustrated to see that the learners were not able to provide the correct answers. Out of desperation the teacher provided answers to the learners. Probably this was to show the parents that the learners were getting the written exercises correct, yet the case was different. It was wrong for the teacher to give the learners the answers. This was a clear indication that the learners were not able to understand what they were reading and what was being read to them. These are the learners who end up falling backward, never catch- up and eventually drop- out of school. Zimba (2007) also found that the teachers were assisting the learners to read and write their work because Tumbuka was not intelligible with Chinyanja.

The teachers could have assisted the learners through scaffolding them to levels where they should work alone. Scaffolding was necessary in situations where the learners needed the more knowledgeable others to assist them. The assistance is needed to enable the learners to understand the content being taught after which the learners are left to work alone. Many scholars (e.g. Azevedo, Cromley, & Seibert (2003); Hmelo-Silver, Duncan & Chinn (2007)) support the suggestion that learners should be scaffolded to a certain level and then left to work by themselves. However, the situation in the study was that the teachers went all the way providing answers to the learners. The reason why they went this far was because the learners could not understand Chitonga as such they could not go any further. Probably this was the reason why the teachers had no option but to tell the pupils the answers.

What the learners needed was to be equipped with the necessary literacy skills to enable them to read and learn meaningfully on their own. The literacy skills which will enable them to comprehend what they read across curriculum. In such situations, the learners did not learn the literacy skills as expected. The CFW clearly indicates that a literate person needs to comprehend the vocabulary and express the ideas in the sentence orally or in writing. It further states that if Chitonga is mutually intelligible with Lenje, then the learners should be able to understand the Chitonga vocabulary fluently and hence comprehend the sentences from the instruction materials.

These children arrived in the school with Lenje vocabulary which they should have used to develop their linguistic skills. Instead of them using the Lenje vocabulary which they readily had, they were compelled to do so in Chitonga a very strange language, strange because they were hearing it for the first time. Chitonga was assumed to be mutually intelligible, but the study has shown that the learners were not able to understand it. If it were mutually intelligible, the learners would have understood Chitonga.

In conclusion this section discussed the findings that teachers were helping the learners to complete the exercises. All the five teachers in the study assisted the learners to complete the exercises. This was because the learners gave wrong responses because they did not understand Chitonga used in the text books. As a result, the learners could not complete the exercises correctly. Out of frustration the teachers completed the exercises for the learners.

The learners needed to be equipped with the necessary literacy skills that could enable them to read and complete the exercises on their own. Failure to meet this requirement means that the desired literacy skills and the goals of the PLP as indicated by MESTVEE (2013) were not effectively achieved. The findings also agree with the two theories used in the study; Whorf's (1956) and Dowley's (1980) theories which suggest that *'language moulds the perception and cognition of a person, that different languages point listeners to different realities of life and that true learning is understanding the meaning of the words and using them correctly in all syntactic forms'*, respectively.

The next section will discuss the finding that teachers and learners used Lenje instead of Chitonga during the lesson.

5.2.5 The teachers and learners used Lenje instead of Chitonga during lessons.

This section discusses the fourth finding which was that, the teacher's and learners used Lenje and not Chitonga during lessons. When asked which language the teachers used frequently during teaching and learning process, four of the teachers, except teacher B said they used Lenje. Teacher C, for instance said, *"I use Lenje because when I use Chitonga the learners do not understand."* The teachers used Lenje in order to enable the learners to understand Chitonga vocabularies which they read from the text books. The learners used Lenje because they did not know Chitonga.

Teacher B was the only one who was using Chitonga and he was the only one who encouraged the learners to try to speak Chitonga. He was not using Lenje because he did not know Lenje as he was new to Chilumba area. He said, *"The language I use is Chitonga. I do not know Lenje, but am learning from the children and the community."*

The researcher also observed that throughout the lessons, the language which was used was Lenje. Chitonga was only used when the teachers or pupils read from the text books. The researcher also found that Lenje was commonly used in the school premises and not Chitonga.

This situation is similar to the MoE's (1977) education policy, which allowed the teachers to use Zambian Languages to explain difficult English concepts (MoE, 1977). Despite that arrangement, literacy levels remained low. The situation at hand is

that, Chitonga, like English, has become a foreign language to the learners. This has affected the literacy levels of the learners in the schools under study. Of what use was Chitonga as a MoI if it remained a barrier to effective learning of initial literacy skills?

Further, the finding was at variance with MESVTEE (2013) which suggested the learners' need to develop enough oral language vocabulary because this contributed to literacy. It further acknowledged that learners were coming from different language backgrounds and so teachers ought to teach oral language lessons in order to expand the learners' working vocabulary in the MoI.

The MoI in Chilumba area was Chitonga, but the teachers and learners were using Lenje throughout the lesson except when they read from the text books. If the learners were to learn and develop enough Chitonga vocabulary, the teachers should have been talking to them in Chitonga. The learners should have been encouraged to speak in Chitonga during the lessons and all the time when they were in class and within the school premises. It seems that the learners were not able to speak Chitonga because the two languages were not mutually intelligible and so they preferred their language because they had more working vocabulary in it, they could also communicate creatively and with a lot of confidence in it.

In conclusion, this section interpreted and discussed the second analytic category, which was based on whether the learner's effectively comprehended Chitonga vocabulary. Four major findings emerged. The first was that there was not effective comprehension; the second was that the learners read without understanding; the third was that the teachers helped the learners to complete the exercises and the fourth was that the teachers and learners used Lenje instead of Chitonga during lessons.

The next section will discuss how the teachers interacted with the vocabulary from the instruction materials.

5.3.0 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE THREE: TO EXPLORE HOW THE GRADE 1 TEACHERS INTERACTED WITH THE CHITONGA VOCABULARY FROM THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS, IN ORDER TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE LEARNING OF INITIAL LITERACY SKILLS TO LEARNERS WHO ARE LENJE SPEAKERS.

5.3.1 Analytic Category 3: Teachers translated Chitonga vocabulary to Lenje to enable the learners to comprehend the texts.

The third research objective sought to find out how the Grade 1 teachers interacted with Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. Five sub- themes emerged from the findings.

- (1) Translation due to lack of mutual intelligibility.
- (2) Teachers using Lenje instead of Chitonga
- (3) Variation in meaning of vocabularies.
- (4) The vocabulary used in the instruction materials not used in every day speech.
- (5) Teachers not using Chitonga vocabulary innovatively

5.3.2. Translation due to lack of mutual intelligibility.

The findings revealed that all the 5 teachers in the study indicated that they used translation in order to enable the learners to understand the texts from the instruction materials.

Teacher D said, *“When I read from the text book, the learners do not understand Chitonga. I have to translate the Chitonga sentences into Lenje in order to help the learners to understand.”*

When asked why they had to translate Chitonga into Lenje yet the two languages were assumed to be intelligible and so the learners were expected to understand the sentences without translation, they said the two languages were not mutually intelligible. For instance, Teacher E said, *“Chitonga seems to be similar to Lenje but it is not easy for a Lenje to understand Chitonga. Some words are similar while others are not. I have to translate from Chitonga to Lenje for them to understand.”*

The difference between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary, affected mutual intelligibility, and so made the teachers to struggle with translation of the Chitonga vocabulary into Lenje.

They had to translate in order to help the learners to understand the comprehension and cloze exercises. Teacher A said, *“If I do not translate from Chitonga to Lenje the learner swill not know which word should be filled in the blank space. To make them understand, I have to translate for them.”*

It may appear that translation was not necessary since Chitonga was assumed to be mutually intelligible to Lenje. On the contrary, translation was an alternative way to enable the learners to understand the concepts which were written in Chitonga, in the instruction materials. As seen above the teacher had to struggle to translate the vocabularies. She also had to learn Chitonga vocabulary in order for her to translate and teach effectively.

This finding was supported by Macizo and Bajo (2004) who observed that translation involved processing the target language inorder to come up with a similar representation of the target language in the second language. The challenge however, is that during translation sometimes the messege is not translated exactly the way it should be.

The suggestion is that the teachers were expected to understand exactly what was meant in the Chitonga text, and tell it in exactly the same way in Lenje. Unfortunately, sometimes the teachers failed to translate correctly because they were not conversant with both Chitonga and Lenje. What worsened the situation was the lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje.

The process of translation on its own was tasking on the part of the teachers. As observed in the study, the teachers complained that they had challenges with Chitonga.

Teacher B complained that, *“There are some words which I do not understand as a teacher. These words are difficult for me to translate into Lenje.”*

The worst part was that the teachers had to code switch between three languages; Chitonga the source language which they had to understand first in order to translate into Lenje, thier MT in which they had to think naturally and understand, then Lenje the first language for the learners.

Farahani and Siyyari (2015) also agreed that in order for the teachers to translate effectively, cognitive processes are at play. The process begins with language

comprehension which includes speech processing, lexical access, sentential processing and discourse processing. They are also engaged in code- switching between two languages in order to produce the desired concept in the target language.

The teachers in the study had to strive to comprehend Chitonga vocabulary, the entire sentences and then interpret to the learners what the text required of them. The teachers found themselves code- switching between Chitonga and Lenje in order to help the learners to learn the literacy skills.

For instance teacher D said, *“Translation makes me deal with two languages, I have to read in Chitonga and repeat the same things in Lenje.”*

The lack of mutual intelligibility between the two languages necessitated the use of translation and code- switching between the two languages. Mallikamas (1997) supported the use of translation as a means of communication and as a strategy for helping students to understand and use the target language more clearly and accurately. He further said it was a means of transferring meanings and conveying messages. The reason why translation was used in this case was because, the target language Chitonga, was not intelligible to the learners. In order for the learners to be assisted to understand the language, translation was the only resort.

However, the teachers also indicated some disadvantages of translation. They said that time was wasted as they had to use several illustrations in order to make the learners understand. They said this could be avoided if the language of instruction was intelligible to the learners.

Teacher B said, *“When translating Chitonga words into Lenje, more time is spent in order to make the learners understand. To translate one word, many words and illustrations will be used. For example, for the word ‘buntele’ (groundnut powder), I had to say ‘nyemu shakutwa shakubika mubuyani’ (groundnuts pounded for putting in relish).”*

Pflepsen (2011) supports the above finding that time was wasted when an unfamiliar language was used as language of instruction. He considered the fact that more time was spent in teaching the learners to understand the language, speak, read and write it. He further acknowledged the fact that learning in a second language was difficult for

learners and led to the learners wasting valuable years in the early grades which they could have spent profitably if they were taught in the language they knew and understood. He further observed that the language used in the classroom affects the childrens opportunity to learn.

5.3.3. Teachers used Lenje instead of Chitonga.

The second finding was that the teachers were using Lenje instead of the officially recognized MoI, Chitonga. The teachers said they were using Lenje because the learners neither knew nor understood Chitonga. For the sake of smooth communication, they opted to use Lenje. They only used Chitonga when they read from the text books.

This finding is supported by MoE (1977) education reforms which allowed the teachers to use the language which the learners understood to explain concepts which were difficult in English. It also acknowledged the fact that learning was best achieved in the learners' MT. This assumption was based on pedagogical knowledge that learning is based on movement from known to unknown.

Teachers have always used the language which the learners are able to understand. Therefore, this case is not different. The teachers used Lenje because the learners were not able to understand Chitonga. The teachers also based their use of Lenje on the same principles. They did so because they found Chitonga unintelligible to the learners and so they had to use Lenje for easy communication.

Teacher E said, *"The learners do not usually understand Chitonga words. When teaching I have to use Lenje in order for them to understand Chitonga. For instance, when I say 'musokwe', they will not understand unless I say 'mulundu'".*

Teacher B said, *"I use Chitonga, but when I see that learners have problems in understanding, I ask them the meaning of the word in Lenje."*

The teachers' use of Lenje is supported by Fillmore and Snow (2000) who assert that for proper teaching of literacy to occur, the teachers must understand how language affects teaching and learning and so they need to use language which is appropriate to the learners. They also observed that there is better communication and understanding, which yields learning, when the teachers and the learners are using a mutually

intelligible language. The teachers in the study used Lenje in an attempt to help the learners to acquire initial literacy skills.

MESVTEE (2013) also supports the use of familiar languages. It observed that children learn easily and successfully through languages which they knew and understood well. It further suggested that apart from the ROLs, schools could use languages which were widely used in the community for the purpose of learning. The idea for this was to foster better initial learning and to integrate schools more meaningfully into the life of the local communities.

The teachers in the study used Lenje because unlike Chitonga, it was well known and understood by the learners and it was widely spoken in the community. Chitonga was not even mutually intelligible with Lenje as assumed that was why the teachers used Lenje since the learners understood it very well.

5.3.4. Variation in meaning of vocabularies.

The study found that the teachers gave varied meanings of the vocabularies. It should be mentioned that the teachers in the study were not Lenje speakers; two were Tonga's, two were Lozi's and one was a Tumbuka. The fact that they came from different ethnic groups posed a challenge to their perception and cognition. This is in agreement with Whorf's (1956) theory of linguistic relativity, which posits that, language moulds habits of perception and cognition and that different languages point speakers to different realities of life.

Looking at the aspect of cognition and perception, for example, teacher C who was Tumbuka translated the word '*manono*' (*nice*) to mean '*manini*'. He translated the sentence as "*Matobo manini ntolele Masowe.*" (*The matobo fruits are small, am taking for Masowe*). This wrong translation misled the learners. The correct meaning of the sentence was, "*The matobo fruits are nice am taking for Masowe.*"

It was for this reason that the teachers said if they did not understand Chitonga correctly, then they made wrong translations, consequently, this affected the learners. They also said some homonyms confused them a lot, especially when they did not know the correct meaning in Chitonga.

Raga and Adola's (2012) finding that homonymy was a barrier to mutual intelligibility among speakers of various dialects of Afan Oromo in Ethiopia concurs with the finding of the current study. Raga and Adola's (2012) study found that homonymous lexical items in Afan Oromo resulted in misunderstandings and confusions among speakers from different dialect areas. The current study also found that some Chitonga vocabularies which are homonymous with vocabularies from other languages also caused confusion among speakers of different ethnic groups. In this case the teachers misled the learners since the learners did not understand Chitonga also.

As shown above, the ability to translate correctly depended on whether the teacher comprehended the written vocabulary correctly. Translation in this case depended on the teacher's point of view. The point of view, as mentioned in the TFW is also controlled by one's language, because naturally, people think in the MT before they interpret the message to the target language. The teacher above wrongly translated the word, because to him '*manono*' (*nice*) meant '*small*' in his world of reality.

To clarify the point of Whorf's (1956) theory of the fact that language moulds habits of cognition, the study found that teacher A, who was Lozi speaking, had a different perception of the word '*manono*' (*nice*). She simply identified it as a word which was not intelligible to the learners because it was completely different from the Lenje equivalent '*kubota*' (*nice*). She said, "*There is no connection between the word 'manono' and Kubota. For words which are almost similar the learners could make sense out of them, but for such words, aa, it is not easy.*" It appears that this teacher could not relate the word '*manono*' to any word in her world of reality. This made her to consult from Tonga speakers for the meaning of the word '*manono*'. As a result, she translated it correctly in Lenje.

Further, the teachers also used inference to interpret the meaning of the vocabulary which they did not know. Inference, as seen in the study did not always provide the correct answer.

For example, teacher C used inference to determine the meaning of the sentence '*Wamana lino kukama*'. (*He has finished milking now.*) He inferred the sentence as, '*Wamana sunu kukama*' (*He has finished milking today*). He thought '*sunu*' meant the same as '*lino*.'

The teacher had difficulties in dealing with Chitonga vocabulary, as seen. These difficulties could have been lessened if the MoI was Lenje because the learners would not have been misled by the teachers' wrong translations and inferences.

5.3.5. Vocabulary used in the text books was not used in every day speech.

The Tonga speaking teachers agreed that some of the vocabulary used in the text books were not used in every day speech; for example the phrase '*basika ntuku*'. This led the teachers to vary in the translation of the vocabulary.

Teacher D translated the phrase as, "*They have arrived with power.*" She translated the words individually; '*basika*'- '*they have arrived*' and '*ntuku*'- '*power*'. As said earlier on homonyms can be confusing. The word '*basika*' in every day speech means '*they have arrived*', while in the context it was used it meant '*they have clenched their fists*'. Therefore, this teacher understood the phrase to mean, '*they have arrived with power*'.

In a similar manner, teacher A translated the phrase as; '*they have arrived half naked*'. She said, "*Bashika tabafwete.*"

On the contrary, teacher B translated the phrase correctly. He translated it according to context, '*Basika ntuku bonse.*' (All of them have clenched their fists). This teacher even used the illustration of the picture, by clenching his fists and he asked the learners to do the same. He even asked the learners, "*Oyu musankwa wacita nzi? (What has this boy done?)*" The learners answered, "*Wafunga makofi.*" The teacher told the learners that, "*MuChitonga twaamba kuti wasika ntuku.*" (In Chitonga we say, '*He has clenched his fists*').) That way the learners were able to understand the meaning of the words. It should be mentioned that this teacher was a Tonga by tribe. That was the reason why he understood Chitonga very well. However, his challenge was that he did not understand Lenje. This was a further indication that Chitonga and Lenje were not mutually intelligible.

The vocabulary '*ntuku*' was translated differently mainly because the vocabulary was not used in everyday speech. Teacher D who was Tonga said, "*In every day speech the sentence should be 'bavunga mfwaindi bonse.'*" At least the word '*bavunga*' was more intelligible to the learners than '*basika*'. If the word '*kuvunga*' was the one used in the instruction materials, the learners could have understood it because it is closer to the

Lenje word '*kufunga*'. The only differences between the two words were the phonemes /v/ and /f/ respectively.

The CFW considers vocabulary as one of the five components of literacy instruction which are needed for successful teaching of literacy. Vocabulary knowledge means all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas, communicate effectively and learn about new things, (Sedita, 2005). The study found that there was a knowledge gap between the vocabulary which was used in the text books and that which was used in everyday speech. This affected reading comprehension, and so the learners were also misled, since they relied on the teachers.

Mwanza (2012) supports this finding as he too found that the Grade 1's in his study could not break through because there was a mis-match between the MoI used in the text books and that language the learners used in their daily speech. Chall and Jacobs (2003) concur with this finding, as they too observed that reading comprehension is affected when the learner has limited vocabulary knowledge. Hart and Risely (2005) also agree with the finding that the differences between vocabularies used in the text books and the spoken vocabulary possess challenges. This is because the readers try to make sense of what they read, with great efforts. The teachers in this case had a challenge and that was why they interpreted the vocabulary from their own point of view, thus, proving the theory that language moulds habits of perception and cognition.

Juel and Deffes (2004) had a different view with this finding by suggesting that teachers need to know the words which are not common in everyday speech but recurrent in the text books. The teachers in the study seemed to have limited knowledge of the vocabulary probably because there are no Chitonga dictionaries to consult from. The teachers guide did not provide meanings for such vocabulary. The authors seem to assume that the vocabulary used was known by all the teachers and learners.

5.3.6. Teachers not using Chitonga vocabulary innovatively.

The researcher observed that teachers did not use Chitonga vocabulary innovatively. The teachers were expected to expose the learners to the Chitonga vocabulary in various media so as to enable the learner's access the phonemes and the vocabularies easily. All the five teachers under the study did not use Chitonga vocabulary creatively.

It was only at school A where only one word list chart was stuck on the wall. Even then, it was for term 1 and had out- lived its usefulness.

They did not use any teaching aids other than the text books. There were no phoneme charts, word cards or word list charts bearing the phonemes or vocabulary taught in the course of the term. Probably if these were used, they could have assisted the learners to read on their own. Print knowledge is cardinal for the learners' development of initial literacy skills. This should have been displayed in the classroom to facilitate learning.

Bloch (2010) concurs with this finding. He said that a '*print scarce*' environment challenges the learners. '*Print scarce*' environments are classrooms where there is little evidence of various print being available, used or displayed in one or more languages.

Probably the learners were challenged because they had nothing to remind them of what they learnt during the lesson. After closing the books, every print they saw in the book was shut in the book. The learners could not associate what they learnt to the real world experiences because the print was not displayed in the classrooms and it was not related to any real things in the classroom.

The importance of exposing print to the learners is supported by Tambulukani and Banda (2015). They observed that environmental print not only made the learners access phonemes from the environment (phonological access), but also enabled the learners to be aware that print reflects the spoken words. As they read and practice the phonemes and words from the environment, they could be acquiring the initial literacy skills. Constant practice could have enabled the learners to be literately better than what they were at the time of research.

Giles and Tunks (2010) further support that kindergarten and primary school classrooms should feature word walls to exhibit a variety of familiar words. Children who are surrounded by print develop good literacy skills and succeed in education. This is because the learners could use the phonemes and vocabulary with understanding due to constant interaction with the print. They could also realize that print was a real part of their lives. The teachers could have assisted the learners greatly if they used the phoneme and word list charts.

Environmental print in the classrooms could have enhanced the Chitonga vocabulary even if it was found not to be mutually intelligible with Lenje. The learners could have been constantly reading through the words. Ultimately they could have benefited from them. The importance of displaying the words was to make the learners familiar with the symbols and words and most importantly to make them aware that print carries meaning.

In conclusion, this section has discussed how the teachers interacted with the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. Five themes which emerged were that teachers translated Chitonga into Lenje because there was no mutual intelligibility between the two languages; teachers were using Lenje instead of Chitonga; there was variation in the meaning of vocabularies; the vocabularies used in the instruction materials was not used in every day speech and that the teachers were not using Chitonga vocabulary innovatively.

5.4.0. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE FOUR: TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PARENTS WHO ARE LENJE SPEAKERS FOUND IT EASY TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN WITH THEIR HOME WORK, USING THE CHITONGA VOCABULARY IN THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS, IN CHILUMBA AREA OF KAPIRI- MPOSHI DISTRICT.

5.4.1. Analytic Category 4: Parents did not find it easy to help their children with their home work using Chitonga vocabulary because of lack of mutual intelligibility.

All the 5 parents said it was not easy to help their children with their home work because it was not mutually intelligible with Lenje. This was the key finding to the fourth research question. There were five sub- themes under this finding which are listed below and discussed later.

- (1) Some parents were literate while others were illiterate.
- (2) Vocabularies which were not mutually intelligible posed challenges to the parents.
- (3) Parents had challenges with children who could read without understanding and those who could not read.
- (4) Similar orthography made it easy for parents to help children with their home work.
- (5) Some parents found it easy to teach their children using Chitonga because they also learnt in Chitonga.

5.4.2. Some parents were literate while others were illiterate.

The first finding from the teachers was that some parents were literate while others were illiterate.

Teacher A said, *“Literate parents were able to read Chitonga and so they helped their children. They signed their childrens’ books as evidence that they assisted them. Pupils whose parents were illiterate did not have their homework signed.”*

Teacher D said the children whose parents were illiterate would report to her that, *“Bama tabacishiwo kubelenga.” (My mother does not know how to read.)*

This finding is supported by Ogoye- Ndegwa, Mengchi and Abidha (2007), and Harris and Goodall (2007) who also found that the educational level of the parents determined their involvement in their childrens homework. They found that while literate parents were assisting their children, illiteracy was a strong factor which hindered some parents from assisting their children.

This finding suggests that for the homework policy to effectively benefit the learners, the parents must be literate. There is no way the learners could be assisted with the literacy programmes if their parents are not able to read and write. The other suggestion is that the parents who were not literate needed assistance so that they too could help their children.

To that effect, teacher B said, *“Parents need to be assisted with literacy lessons. This will commence in January, 2016.”*

It is important to involve parents in their childrens literacy activities because there is strong evidence that parental involvement has a great impact on their childrens acquisition of literacy skills and cognitive development. Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein and Lloyd (2013) found that parents’ involvement in their children’s early literacy activities predicted their ability to read by the end of Grade 1 through to Grade 3.

It should be mentioned here that if the parents were involved in their childrens home work, then the learners were expected to be able to read. The fact that the learners were not able to read seems to suggest that the language barrier hindered efficiency in the parent- pupil sessions. Close (2001) also suggested that literacy, being a complex skill

needed a very supportive environment and that the parents must be encouraged to be involved in their childrens' language and literacy activities.

Teachers B and D showed concern over the need to help the illiterate parents with literacy skills so that they are able to help their children.

Teacher B said, *"As a school we intend to form adult literacy classes so that the illiterate parents are equipped with the needed skills for assisting their children."*

Teacher D said, *"We encourage the parents to attend the open day to see how they can help their children. We also encourage the illiterate parents to attend the adult literacy classes formed by the social worker."*

These findings suggest that the parents should be encouraged so that they are able to assist their children once they are literate. If the parents remain illiterate, the cycle of illiteracy will not be easy to eradicate. The only way to achieve this is through adult literacy clubs, as suggested by the teachers.

5.4.3. Vocabularies which were not mutually intelligible posed challenges to the parents.

All the five teachers said that the parents complained that they were challenged with some Chitonga vocabularies which were not mutually intelligible with Lenje.

Teacher D said, *"Parents complained that some vocabularies were difficult to understand because they were not similar to Lenje vocabularies."*

The parents also said they had challenges with Chitonga vocabularies which were not similar to Lenje.

Parent C said, *"Yamwi maswi yalashupa kuyanyumfwa pantu tayapalene aciLenje."* (Some Chitonga vocabularies were difficult to understand because they were different from Lenje vocabularies).

Parent B said, *"Kubelenga nda belenga nambi maswi yamwi yalashupa kuyanyumfwa."* (I am able to read although some words are difficult to understand.)

These vocabularies which were different from the Lenje vocabularies were also not intelligible to the parents as a result they were a challenge to them.

Harris and Goodall (2007) also found that language barriers affected the parents' effective involvement in their childrens' homework. He further observed that some parents were not only unable to understand the content of the homework, but also they got frustrated when they failed to help their children as they should. Due to lack of mutual intelligibility parents had to struggle to translate the Chitonga vocabularies into Lenje in order to help their children to understand their homework.

The other finding was that the parents had to consult from their neighbours when they were challenged with the vocabulary which challenged them.

Parent C said, "*Nandashupikwa kunyumfwa, nda ipusha ba biyesu ba Tonga ndyonga nda londolweta mwana mu Cilenje.*" (*When I have not understood, I consult from my Tonga neighbours and then I translate the vocabularies to my child.*)

This was taxing for the parents. It could be assumed that it may not be true that they always asked their neighbours for the meaning of vocabularies which were not known to them, considering the geographical distances between their homes and their busy farming schedule.

5.4.4. Parents were challenged with children who could read but without understanding and those who could not read.

The third finding was that parents found it difficult to help their children because some children could read but without understanding while others were not able to read at all. They attributed the childrens' lack of comprehension to the language barrier. This finding was supported by Dowd, Ochoa, Alam, Pari and Afsar Babar (2010) who suggested that children cannot read early in a language different from their MT.

Three of the parents said their children could read but they could not understand what they were reading.

Parent A said, "*Mwaanangu alicishi kubelenga, ano tanyumfwi nshatobelenga, mulandu wakwambai tanyumfwi Chitonga.*" (*My son can read but he does not understand what he is reading. This is because he does not understand Chitonga.*)

Parent C also said, "*Kubelenga alaeleshako, ano tanyumfwi nshatobelenga. Nandamwipusha ai asansulule nshaabelenga cilamwalila. Cimwiciindi ninga nciLenje ninga ulanyumfwa, ano Chitonga nciyumu.*" (*He tries to read although he does not*

understand what he is reading. When I ask him to explain to me what he read he fails to do so. Probably he would have understood if it were Lenje because Chitonga is difficult for him.)

The parents associated their childrens' failure to comprehend what they were reading to lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies. Parent C observed that her son could have been able to read with comprehension had the MoI been Lenje.

To that effect three of the parents said it was difficult to help the children with their homework because their children could not read.

Parent E had this to say, "*Cilashupa kucafwa mwaaana pantu tacishi kubelenga, alimwi tanyumfwi Chitonga.*" (*It is difficult to help my child because she does not know how to read and she does not understand Chitonga*).

Parent B said, "*Mwaana wangu tacishiwo kubelenga. Cilanshupa kumwiisha anebo mukwiinga nshinakwiya bwakwisha, acalo Chitonga cilashupa kunyumfwa. Bayi mbonga bamucafwa pantu njoncito yabo.*" (*My daughter does not know how to read. I do not know how to teach her because I am not trained for that and I do not know Chitonga very well. It is the teacher who can help her because that is his job*).

Parent B said he had challenges when helping his child because the child could not read. He associated this to language barrier. As said earlier on, language could delay the learners' learning of initial literacy skills. The parent complained that he lacked the skills for teaching and he did not even know Chitonga very well. He felt it was the teacher's task to teach his daughter to read.

The parent could be right and wrong. He was right in the sense that the teacher's task is to ensure that the learner is treated as an individual who needs to know how to read by the end of Grade 1. MESVTEE (2013) supports the parent's view by suggesting that teachers need to provide learning opportunities for each learner to engage in meaningful and successful learning.

The parent could be wrong because as a parent he has a responsibility to spare some time to teach his daughter. However, since he said he did not have the skill for doing so, this suggests that he needed to be guided on how to teach his child at home. He blamed

the MoI as another factor which contributed to his daughter's failure to acquire reading skills. Flouri and Buchanan (2004) do not support Parent B's opinion as they suggested that parental involvement is very important in Children's learning of literacy. The parent's involvement is so important that it enables the learners to attain initial literacy skills early.

Further, MESVTEE (2013) supports the finding of the current study that the children are not gaining the basic skills because of the language of instruction. It reports that the 2010 South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ III) only 27.4% of the Grade 6 learners who were tested for reading were able to read at basic level.

If the MoI was seen as a hinderance in 2010, this study's findings seem to suggest that even now, the language aspect still affects the learners' ability to read early. The study has established that lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje has hindered the Lenje learners' ability to learn reading early.

MESVTEE (2013) further acknowledges that learning in local languages is based on empirical grounds that learning is best achieved through the learner's first language because that is the media through which s/he thinks naturally and confidently. It also acknowledges that learners learn faster in their first language than in another language.

This implies that given an opportunity to learn in Lenje, the Lenje learners would learn more confidently, easily and faster than the way they are struggling with Chitonga. A confident learner is able to learn with understanding. This can be achieved in the first language which is not only intelligible but also provides the learner with the working vocabulary.

5.3.5. Similar orthography made it easy for parents to read Chitonga vocabulary

The fourth finding was that three of the parents; parents A, B and D said it was easy to read Chitonga because the two languages used the same orthography. They said the phonemes were the same in both of the languages. The only challenge was that they could read but without understanding some of the Chitonga vocabulary. They used their reading skills to help their children, although they were challenged with some Chitonga vocabularies which were not intelligible to them. This is what they said:

Parent A said, “*Nebo ndicishi kulemba a kubelenga. Ndasebensesha mano ngondakaiya kucikolo ku cafwa mwaanangu.*”(I am able to read and write so I use the knowledge I obtained from school to help my child.)

Parent B said, “*Kwisha mwaana tacishupi pantu tuvumina ntomwibo. Kavuumina /t/a /m/ nkomwe mu chitonga a mucilenje. Cishupabo nga maswi yamwi yamu Chitonga yapusene aya mucilenje.* ” (It is not difficult to teach a child because the phonemes are the same. The phonemes /t/ or /m/ are the same in Chitonga and Lenje. The only challenges are that some Chitonga vocabularies are not similar to Lenje vocabularies.)

Parent D said, “*Ndicishi kubelenga Chitonga pantu malembo ngotusebensesha ngomwibo. Kavumina /m/ nkomwibo muChitonga amucilenje.*” (I know how to read Chitonga because the phonemes used are the same. The phoneme /m/ is the same in Chitonga and Lenje).

They had no difficulties with reading Chitonga because the phonemes were the same in both languages. The only complaint was that some of the Chitonga vocabularies were different from Lenje. These different vocabularies challenged them because they were not mutually intelligible to Lenje.

This finding is similar to Gooskens and Bezooijen’s (2008) and Golubovic and Gooskens’ (2015) findings that orthography contributes to intelligibility between languages. The fact that Chitonga is written in the same alphabetic orthography with Lenje makes it easy for the parents to read easily. Their own complaint was that they did not understand Chitonga. This finding agrees with Tambulukani and Banda (2015) that it is possible to read without understanding.

The parents also said there are some phonemes which are not used in the Lenje vocabularies such as /h/, /z/, /v/, /vw/. They said these phonemes give them problems when reading.

Parent E said, “*Maswi yamwi yalashupa kuyabelenga pantu yacite malembo yatamo mucilenje. Kuli malembo yacite /h/, swebo twaamba ai /sh/.*” (Some words are difficult to read because they have phonemes which are not present in Lenje. The phoneme /h/ in Lenje is /sh/).

Parent C also said, *“Maswi yamuChitonga yamwi yalipusene aya mucilenje mukuyacita ‘pulonounsi’ alimwi yamwi yalipusene mukwamba.”* (Some Chitonga words differ from Lenje words by pronunciation while others differ by intonation).

The parents were right because different phonemes affected the intelligibility of the vocabularies. In this case we expect the parents to have challenges in pronouncing the vocabulary correctly.

5.4.6 Parents found it easy to teach their children using Chitonga because they also learnt in Chitonga.

The fifth finding was that three parents said they were able to read Chitonga because they also learnt in Chitonga. However, they had a challenge of understanding some of the vocabularies which they encountered from the text books. Their concern, however, was that the Grade 1 learners were not able to understand Chitonga because they must first learn Chitonga from the school environment.

Parent D said, *“Nebo ndakonsha kubelenga akunyumfwa Chitonga nambi maswi yamwi yalanshupako, pantu ndakaiya mu Chitonga. Ba Giledi 1 abalo na bakaiye Chitonga mucikolo, bananonyumfwa akubelenga.”* (I am able to read and understand some Chitonga vocabulary because I learnt in Chitonga. The Grade 1’s will also learn Chitonga from school. Then they will be able to read and understand).

Parent A also said, *“Ndakonsha kubelenga Chitonga pantu ndakaiya muChitonga, cinshupa- bo ngamaswi yapuseneko acilenje.”* (I am able to read Chitonga because I learnt in Chitonga; the only problem is with the Chitonga vocabularies which are different from Lenje).

Parent E said, *“Kubelenga muChitonga tacishupi ano kunyumfwa maswi yamwi nkokushupa.”* (Reading Chitonga is not difficult but understanding is a problem).

The parents’ responses seem to suggest that although they are able to read, understanding what they were reading was a challenge. This lack of understanding is mainly because the two languages are not mutually intelligible. They could have learnt through Chitonga during their school days, but they still found that Chitonga vocabulary was not intelligible to them.

This finding agrees with Whorf's (1956) theory of linguistic relativity that language moulds cognition and perception. The parents' could not understand the Chitonga vocabulary because their minds and thoughts were determined and controlled by the Lenje vocabulary. Of course they could understand some Chitonga vocabularies which were in their lexical memory, but that which was absent posed a challenge.

Hirsch (2003) found that there is a strong relationship between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension. This means that the reader should know most of the vocabulary in the text for him to comprehend the text. If the reader has a challenge with some vocabularies, comprehension is compromised. The parents said they had challenges with some Chitonga vocabularies, implying that their comprehension of the texts was affected due to lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje.

5.4.7 Summary

The foregoing chapter discussed the findings of the study. Four analytic categories were discussed derived from the themes. The first finding was that Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies were not completely mutually intelligible. This was because some vocabularies which were similar were mutually intelligible while those which were different were not mutually intelligible. Some words bore similar spellings and pronunciation but different meaning. These vocabularies also called homonyms caused confusion. Some words have different pronunciation and so they were not intelligible to the learners. The teachers and learners used inference to try and understand vocabularies which are not mutually intelligible. The teachers and parents used translation in order to make the learners understand the Chitonga vocabulary. It was also found that the Grade 1 pupils learnt Chitonga gradually.

The second analytic category was that lack of mutual intelligibility hindered the learners' comprehension and consequently effective learning of initial literacy skills. There was no effective comprehension among the learners due to lack of mutual intelligibility. This was because the learners were reading without understanding. As a result of this the teachers were helping the learners to complete the cloze exercises. The teacher's and learners used Lenje and not Chitonga during lessons because the learners did not know Chitonga and because Lenje was the familiar language in the classroom, school and community.

The third analytic category was that the teachers translated Chitonga vocabulary to Lenje to enable the learners to comprehend the texts. Translation was used because the learners could not understand Chitonga due to the fact that there is no mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje. Teachers used Lenje instead of Chitonga because the learners did not understand Chitonga. The teachers varied in the explanation of the meaning of vocabularies. This was because the vocabulary used in the instruction materials was not used in every day speech. The teachers did not use Chitonga vocabulary innovatively; they only used the vocabulary which was in the text book.

The fourth analytic category was that parents did not find it easy to help their children with their home work using Chitonga vocabulary because of lack of mutual intelligibility. All the 5 parents said it was not easy to help their children with their home work because it was not mutually intelligible with Lenje. This was the key finding to the fourth research question. There were five sub- themes. Some parents were literate while others were illiterate. Vocabularies which were not mutually intelligible posed challenges to the parents. Parents had challenges with children who could read without understanding and those who could not read. Similar orthography made it easy for parents to help children with their home work. Some parents found it easy to teach their children using Chitonga because they also learnt in Chitonga. The next chapter will present the conclusion of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0. OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the conclusion and the recommendations of the study. The conclusion and recommendations are based on the findings of the study.

6.1. CONCLUSION

The study has established that Chitonga does not effectively facilitate the acquisition of initial literacy skills because it is not absolutely mutually intelligible with Lenje. Intelligibility is the cornerstone of comprehension. Mutual intelligibility entails that speakers of two different language groups should be able to understand each other without prior knowledge of the other language.

The study has shown that the Grade 1 Lenje learners could not comprehend Chitonga as was assumed by the language in education planners. Since they came home with a working vocabulary of Lenje, they were expected to understand Chitonga. However, this was not the case. The learners were completely lost because they found an alien language, Chitonga, being introduced to them in the instruction materials.

As a result of this, all the participants indicated that Chitonga was not mutually intelligible with Lenje and that Lenje would be the suitable MoI for the learning of initial literacy skills. They felt that if Lenje was used, the learners would learn easily and faster because that is the language they are able to express themselves in freely and confidently. Besides that, the Lenje parents would be able to understand Lenje vocabulary easily, too. Using Lenje would prevent communication break-down.

Chitonga has been found to hinder the learners' effective comprehension of the texts. This has made the learners to read without comprehension. The main reason they fail to comprehend the Chitonga vocabulary is because the vocabulary is not mutually intelligible to them. Intelligibility and comprehensibility of the content of any given text is the cornerstone of reading. The equivalent of reading without comprehension is illiteracy. When learners do not comprehend what they are reading or they cannot read they lag behind and eventually they drop out of school. This is because school becomes meaningless to them. It is therefore important to provide a language which is

appropriate for learning initial literacy skills, in this case Lenje. If the learners successfully acquire the initial literacy skills, they will be able to read for learning. They will remain in school through to tertiary education.

The study also found that teachers and parents faced challenges with Chitonga vocabulary. They were both compelled to code-switch between two languages, Chitonga and Lenje. In most cases they had to translate Chitonga to Lenje just to ensure the learners at least understood the content. If Lenje was used, the teachers and parents would have less challenges of code-switching. Code-switching was seen to confuse the learners as they were exposed to two different languages.

Translation was seen to have its own disadvantages. One of the disadvantages was that the information sometimes was misinterpreted because the translators made wrong inferences because they were speakers of different languages. It is for this reason that, Lenje, the appropriate language, should be used in order to avoid misinterpretation of the content through translation.

The teachers in the study belonged to different ethnic groups; Lozi, Tumbuka, Bemba and two were Tonga's. All the parents were Lenje speakers. The problem that was observed was that the non-Tonga speaking sample had challenges of trying to reconcile their understanding of Chitonga vocabulary in their language first and then translate it to Lenje. This was a tasking activity. The same was the case for Lenje parents. Tonga speaking teachers equally had the challenge of translating to Lenje because they were not conversant with Lenje. It was because of these challenges that the participants felt it would be better if the Grade 1 classes were handled by a teacher who was conversant with the MoI.

Therefore, the study has proved that different languages point speakers to different realities of life as espoused by Whorf's (1956) theory of linguistic relativity. Language indeed determines a person's cognition and perception. The teachers' and the parents' wrong inferences proved that they had different points of view guided and controlled by their languages. The errors committed by the learners also proved that their reality was divergent from the Chitonga reality.

The study has also proved Dowley's (1980) compositional semantics theory which postulates that true learning is understanding the true meaning of a word and using it correctly in a sentence. In this case, the learners were not able to do so because they did not know the meaning of the Chitonga vocabularies because Chitonga was not mutually intelligible to them. As a result they failed to learn the initial literacy skills effectively.

The study has also shown that the concepts of vocabulary, oral reading fluency and comprehension could have facilitated the learners' easy acquisition of initial literacy skills if there was mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje. However, since there was no mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje, the learners in the study could not effectively acquire initial literacy skills. The study also established that a learner should know at least 95% of the vocabulary in the passage being read, in order to comprehend it. If a lot of words are not known, a knowledge gap is created as a result, comprehension gets affected too.

In view of the foregoing, the participants view was that Lenje should be used as the MoI. The parents felt that Lenje was ideal as they themselves had no challenge in reading and understanding Lenje vocabulary written in the Lenje Bible and other Christian literature. The teachers wondered why the pupils' text book written by Lupindula, Phiri, Muyoba, Musumpuka, Ntaulo, Msango, Chikatula, Kasonkomona, Kabolesha, Loloma and Chitambala (2001) could not be used. They suggested this could be of good use and would enable the learners to understand and learn initial literacy skills easily and quickly.

6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Basing on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations:

(1) All the participants in the study suggested that the learners could learn initial literacy skills quickly and effectively through Lenje. Following this finding, the study recommends that the government should allow Lenje to be used as a medium of instruction in Chilumba area and other Lenje speaking areas if initial literacy skills are to be acquired easily. They wondered why the Grade 1 Lenje book written by Lupandula et al (2001) could not be used.

(2)The study established that the teachers had challenges with translation from Chitonga to Lenje. They struggled through three languages, their MT, Chitonga and Lenje, since none of them was Lenje. This also affected their ability to translate correctly as a result the confusion affected the learners. The study therefore recommends that the Headteachers should ensure that the Grade 1- 4 classes are assigned to teachers who are conversant with Lenje.

(3)The study also found that some parents had challenges with how to assist their children with their homework. Some children were not assisted by their parents. The study recommends that the Headteachers should organize programmes in which parents are given some guidelines on how to help their children.

(4)The study also found that some parents were illiterate as a result they could not assist their children with their homework. The study established that the educational level of the parents affected their involvement with their childrens' homework. Parental involvement is important in the acquisition of initial literacy skills of their children. This can only be achieved if the parents are literate too. The study therefore recommends that the head teachers should reinforce adult literacy programmes.

6.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.

(1)The study was limited to 5 schools in Kapiri- Mposhi District of Central Province of Zambia. There could be need to broaden the study to other districts and provinces in the country. Furture researchers could find out whether the assumption of the mutual intelligibility between other ROL's and the dialects they represent facilitates learning of initial literacy skills.

(2)Future researchers could also investigate other linguistic factors which affect mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje.

(3)It could be necessary to establish the lexical distance between Chitonga vocabularies and Lenje vocabulary using the Levinshtein algorithm.

(4)Having found out that some Grade 1 learners learn Chitonga vocabulary graduary, it might be important to establish at which level they are able to learn to read if at all they ever do.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE GRADE 1 CLASS TEACHER

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in instruction materials for effective learning of initial literacy skills: The case of selected schools of Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi, Zambia

1. Could you tell me about yourself; your age, mother- tongue, the language you frequently speak, etc.
2. What do you think about the assumption that Chitonga vocabulary used in the instructional materials is mutually intelligible to Lenje?
3. What are the similarities and differences (if any), between the Chitonga and Lenje vocabularies, used in the instructional materials?
4. How can the difference (if any), affect the effective teaching and learning of initial literacy among Lenje speaking learners?
5. What are the reading levels, in Chitonga, of the pupils who are predominantly Lenje speakers, in your class?
6. Do you think learners who are predominantly Lenje speakers are able to effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instructional materials?
7. How do you help the learners to understand the vocabulary from the instructional materials (if there is need)?
8. What are your experiences in teaching initial literacy through using Chitonga vocabulary from the instructional materials, to learners who are predominantly Lenje speakers?
9. How effectively do the parents who are Lenje speakers, help their children with their home- work using Chitonga vocabulary from the instructional materials?
10. What are some of the comments that the parents pass with regard to the use of Chitonga vocabulary, when helping their children with their home- work?
11. How do you help the parents who are Lenje speakers to cope with the Chitonga vocabulary from the instructional materials?

12. What could be done to help the learners who are predominantly Lenje speakers acquire initial literacy skills effectively and easily?

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
EDUCATION
TITLE OF RESEARCH:

Mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in instructional materials for effective learning of initial literacy skills: The case of selected schools of Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi, Zambia

A. Guided Interview Questions

- 1.** Could you tell me about yourself; your age, mother- tongue, the language you frequently speak, etc.
- 2.** What do you think about the assumption that Chitonga vocabulary used in the instructional materials is mutually intelligible to Lenje?
- 3.** What are the similarities and differences (if any), between Chitongavocabularies used in the instructional materials and Lenje?
- 4.** What does your child say about his comprehension of the Chitonga vocabulary used in the instructional materials, during the literacy hour, at school?
- 5.** What do you think are the challenges (if any), that your child encounters when learning initial literacy through Chitonga vocabulary used in the instructional materials, during the home- work programme?
- 6.** How is the reading ability of your child, in Chitonga from the instructional materials, during the home- work programme?
- 7.** How do you help your child to read Chitonga vocabulary from the instructional materials, with ease, during the home- work programme?
- 8.** How effective are you, when helping your child in his homework, using Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials?
- 9.** How easy is it for your child to understand the Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials when you are helping him/ her during the homework policy?

10. What are some of the challenges (if any), that you encounter when helping your child with his/ her homework, using Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials?
11. What do you suggest could be done to help your child, who is a Lenje speaker to learn and acquire initial literacy skills effectively and easily?

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation.

**APPENDIX 3: LESSON OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR GRADE 1 CLASS
TEACHERS**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

RESEACH TITLE: Mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in the instruction materials for effective learning of initial literacy skills: The case of selected schools of Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi, Zambia

Check List

School.....

Class.....

Topic.....

No. of pupils.....

Date.....

Gender of teacher.....

Observations on the Teacher

1. Lesson planning.
2. Lesson presentation i.e. flow of the literacy lesson using Chitonga vocabulary, orally.
3. Is the teacher using any teaching/ learning aids written in Chitonga vocabulary, apart from the text books?
4. Are the walls ‘speaking’ with Chitonga vocabulary?
5. Use of Chitonga vocabulary from the instructional materials during the literacy lesson.
6. Teacher- pupil rapport through Chitonga vocabulary during the literacy lesson.
7. Teachers’ encouragement of pupil- pupil rapport through Chitonga vocabulary, during the literacy lesson.
8. Is the teacher allowing the pupils to read the Chitonga vocabulary, from the instructional materials?

9. How is the teacher helping the learners who are unable to read the Chitonga vocabulary from the instructional materials, during the literacy lesson?
10. How is the teacher helping the learners who cannot comprehend the Chitonga vocabulary during the literacy lesson?
11. Is there any evidence of remedial work provided to learners who have difficulties with comprehension of Chitonga- written exercises?
12. How is the teacher interacting with Chitonga vocabulary, in general, during the literacy lesson?
13. Are there any challenges the teacher is encountering using Chitonga vocabulary during the lesson process?
14. How is the teacher handling the problems, which the learners who are Lenje speakers, are encountering, through the use of Chitonga vocabulary from the instructional materials?
15. Is the teacher translating Chitonga into Lenje for the learners during the literacy lesson?

B. Observation based on pupils during the literacy lesson

16. Are pupils interacting with each other through Chitonga?
17. Are the pupils interacting with the teacher using Chitonga vocabulary?
18. Are the learners able to read the Chitonga vocabulary, fluently?
19. Are the pupils able to comprehend the Chitonga vocabulary easily?
20. What are the common errors that the learners are making, in reading and writing through Chitonga?
21. How is the teacher correcting the errors which the learners' are making in reading and writing?
22. What are the general challenges that the learners are encountering during the literacy lesson?
23. How is the teacher addressing the challenges which the learners are encountering during the literacy lesson?

Thank you for your cooperation and for allowing me to observe your lesson.

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSENT FORM

(Translated into Lenje)

Title of Research: Mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in instruction materials for effective learning of initial literacy skills: The case of selected schools of Chilumba area of Kapiri- Mposhi, Zambia

REFERENCE TO PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET:

1. Mubelenge akunyumfwikisha maswi alimupepala ili, nimbi bamulondolwete kwamba munyumfwikishe.
2. Mulelete kusuminisha kumu taping'a na balisuni ku taping'a maswi yanu.
3. Mulicite nkusu shaku sala kubwesa lubasu mulisechi eyi, nambi kukaka.
4. Naamwakaaka, taku mulandu ngweshi mu pekwe.
5. Naamwasumina, mulicite nkusu shakuleka pakati kanshila, kwakububula kumupa mulandu nambi bulondoloshi ncomwacilekela.
6. Ngamwakaaka kukumbula meepusho amwi. Mulicite nsambu shakutabandika maswi ngomuta suni.
7. Maswi onse eshi abwesekwe atosungwa munkama.
8. Namwasumina kubwesa lubasu mukwiya oku, muleelete ku saina kwambai mwasumina, kantana kutalika kumwipusha meepusho.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

Ndabelenga (nambi bandondolwela) maswi alimupepala eli. Ndalicite lishuuko lya kwipusha meepusho mpontana kunyumfwikisha, yalo ngo bansasulwita cakwiila.

Ndasumina kubwesa lubasu mukwiiya oku, alimwi ndishi kwambai nga ndacilekela panshila, alimwi akutakumbula meepusho aamwi.

Ku saina kwangu kutondesha kwambai ndasumina kubwesa lubasu mukwiiya oku.

Liina:.....

Siginacha:.....Bushiku.....

Sichikolo ato sainisha lipepala eli:

Siginacha ya sicikolo..... Bushiku

Siginacha yabashali/ baleli.....Bushiku

APPENDIX 5: APPLICATION LETTER TO THE DEBS

Mpunde Primary School,
P.O. Box 810063,
Kapiri- Mposhi.
2nd November, 2015.

The District Education Board Secretary,
P.O. Box 810063,
Kapiri- Mposhi.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Ref: Permission to Conduct Research in your District- Mulunda Malambo
(Comp# 514700140)

I am hereby requesting for permission to conduct my research from your district. My research site is Chilumba Zone because the schools in the Zone are using Chitonga as medium of instruction. Find attached an introductory letter from the Directorate of Research and Post- graduate Studies.

Your consideration will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Mulunda Malambo.

APPENDIX 6: INTERPRETATION OUTLINE TOOL

Analytic Category 1: Mutual intelligibility between Chitonga vocabulary from instruction materials and Lenje spoken in Chilumba area of Kapiri- mposhi.

It was found that some of the Chitonga vocabularies used in the instruction materials were not MI with the Lenje spoken in Chilumba area. There are seven main underlying themes to discuss this category.

What is happening?

. Similar vocabularies were mutually intelligible. This finding was in line with Gooskens and van Heuven (2007) suggestion that lexical distance affects mutual intelligibility.

. Different vocabularies were not mutually intelligible. The Chitonga vocabularies which were different from the Lenje vocabularies were not mutually intelligible with Lenje vocabularies. These different vocabularies hindered effective comprehension of the learners. This finding is supported by Gooskens, Bezooijen and Heuven (2015) suggests that non- cognates between languages affected mutual intelligibility. Non- cognates are vocabularies which do not share the same ancestral roots.

. Some vocabularies bore the similar spelling and pronunciation but different meaning. Such words were called homonyms. Raga and Adola (2012) from literature review were used as cross findings. Gooskens (2008) talked about lexicons called ‘neighbours’ and ‘false friends’ which affect mutual intelligibility.

. Some vocabularies have different pronunciations. Pronunciation affected intelligibility, (Gooskens, 2015). Phonological and phonetic make up of a language affects mutual intelligibility. Pronunciation hinders successful communication, (Jenkins, 2002).

. Use of translation. Teachers and parents said they used translation in order to enable the learners to understand Chitonga vocabulary. Translation exposed learners to two languages and also killed creativity on the part of learners. Teachers also made wrong translations.

.Use of inference. Teachers used inference on words they did not know. Different meanings were given for the same word using inference. The implication was that the words used in the instruction materials were not frequently used in every day speech. Inference was reliable.

. Grade 1 learners learn Chitonga vocabulary gradually. The learners have no prior knowledge of Chitonga vocabulary on first entrance into school. They learn Chitonga after exposure. School environment has fewer role models than home environment. Time of contact with Chitonga vocabulary is limited in school. Learning a language in school is a demanding experience, despite age and takes a long period of time, (Thomas and Collier, 2002). BICS and CALPS are acquired differently and have different functions, (Cummins, 1980).

Analytic Category 2: How effectively did the learners comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials?

Teachers and parents acknowledged that the pupils did not effectively comprehend Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials. The researcher observed during the lessons that the learners were not able to comprehend Chitonga vocabulary effectively. Why? Because the Chitonga vocabulary in the instruction materials was not mutually intelligible with Lenje spoken in Chilumba area of Kapiri- mposhi. Four themes emerged from this analytic category as indicated below.

What is happening?

. There was no effective comprehension of Chitonga vocabulary. Due to language barrier and lack of mutual intelligibility, some vocabularies were understood while others were not. The result was that pupils missed concepts. Learners who grew up among the Tonga speaking people were able to understand a bit of Chitonga. Learners were not able to answer Chitonga questions, but could answer when the teacher translated into Lenje.

. Learners were reading without understanding. Some learners were able to read but could not understand what they were reading due to lack of mutual intelligibility between Chitonga and Lenje. You can decode what you can't comprehend but you cant comprehend what you can,t decode, (Tambulukani and Banda, 2015). This was the third

term and yet Grade learners could not read. Poor readers and learners who could not read were affected by lack of mutual intelligibility between the two languages.

. Teachers were helping learners to complete the exercises. The learners gave wrong responses because they could not understand Chitonga vocabulary. They could not complete the exercises and so the teachers helped them to complete the tasks. The teachers also gave the pupils tasks to ask from their parents where the teachers were not sure of the meaning.

. Teacher's and learners used Lenje and not Chitonga during lessons. The MoI is Chitonga, but the teachers and learners were using Chitonga throughout the lesson except when they read from the text books.

Analytic Category 3: How did the teachers interact with Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials?

. Teachers used translation due to lack of mutual intelligibility. The difference between Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary made the teachers to struggle with translation of the Chitonga vocabulary into Lenje. They had to translate in order for to help the learners to understand the comprehension and cloze exercises.

. Variation in meaning of vocabularies. The teachers gave varied meanings of the vocabularies. Teachers who were non- Tonga speakers translated words based on homonymy or inference.

. Vocabulary used in the text books was not used in every day speech. The Tonga speaking teachers agreed that some of the vocabulary used in the text books were not used in every day speech; for example the phrase 'basika ntuku'. This led the teachers to vary in the translation of the vocabulary.

Analytic Category 4: How easy did the parents find Chitonga vocabulary from the instruction materials when helping their children with their home work?

. Vocabularies which were not mutually intelligible posed challenges to the parents. The parents also faced challenges of reading some of the vocabularies without understanding. Due to lack of mutual intelligibility parents had to struggle to translate

the Chitonga vocabularies into Lenje in order to help their children to understand their homework.

. The parents also had challenges when helping their children because some of the children could read without any understanding. They associated this to language barrier.

. Similar orthography made it easy for parents to help children with homework. Some phonemes were not used in the Lenje vocabularies e.g. /h/, /z/, /v/, /vw/.

. Some parents found it easy to teach their children using Chitonga because they also learnt in Chitonga. Their concern was that Grade 1 learners learn Chitonga from the school environment because they were coming from home where they were only exposed to Lenje.

**APPENDIX 7: EXAMPLES OF CHITONGA VOCABULARIES WHICH ARE
NOT SIMILAR TO LENJE IN THE INSTRUCTION MATERIALS.**

<u>ENGLISH</u>	<u>CHITONGA</u>	<u>LENJE</u>
Different	caandeene	cipusene
Read	bala	belenga
Words	mabala	maswi
Compare	kwendelanya	kupalanya
Use	beleshya	sebensesha
Friend	musa	namata
Dress	cisani	lilaya
Tomato	deede	matambwati
Cut	gela	cesa
Pluck	cela	yapa
Cook	jika	teleka
Comb	nkamu	cisakulo
Injection	ndonga	nyeleti
Hole	bwina	bulyango
Right hand	lumweshi	cipiko
Maize	popwe	lincebele
Want	yanda	sunu
Trouble	pyopyongana	taka-taka
Red	salala	fubela
Water	meenda	maanshi
Bush	musokwe	muluundu
Shrub	kavwuna	kateu
Young	mushonto	mwanice
Roast	yoka	tenta
Visit	swaya	tandala
Meet	swaana	kumana
Tell	amba	lwita
Knees	magondo	manungo

**APPENDIX 8: EXAMPLES OF CHITONGA PHONEMES WHICH ARE NOT
PRESENT IN LENJE VOCABULARIES**

CHITONGA		LENJE	
PHONEME	Example of vocabulary	PHONEME	Example of vocabulary
Gg	Guma	Kk	Kumya
Hh	Hhete	0	0
Jj	Jula	Cc	Calula
JW jw	Kujwe	CW cw	kwicwe
MVW mvw	Komvwa	MFW mfw	konyumfwa
NZ nz	Inzoka	Ss	Insoka
NZW nzw	Nzwide	NSW nsw	Nswite
VW vw	Vwikila	FU fu	Fukila
Zz	Zuba	Ss	Suba
ZW zw	Zwa	SW sw	Swa
ZY zy	Zyabo	SH sh	Shabo

APPENDIX 9: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Telephone: +260 -1- 290258/291777 Ext. 2208
Fax: +260-1-290258/253952
E-mail: drgs@unza.zm

P O Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia

25th February, 2016

Mr. Mulunda Malambo
DAG 23
University of Zambia
P.O Box 32379
LUSAKA

Dear Mr. Malambo,

RE: EXEMPTION FROM FULL ETHICAL CLEARANCE

With reference to your research proposal entitled:

"Use of mutual intelligibility in a multi lingual set-up of Chitonga and Lenje vocabulary in instruction materials to facilitate effective learning of initial literacy skills: The case of selected schools of Chilumba Area of Kapiri-mposhi District."

As your research project does not contain any ethical concerns, you are hereby given an exemption from full clearance to proceed with your research.

ACTION:	APPROVED
DECISION:	25th February, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE:	24th February, 2017

You are however, strongly advised to use pseudonyms.

Please note that you are expected to submit to the Secretariat a Progress Report and a copy of the full report on completion of the project.

Finally, and more importantly, take note that notwithstanding ethical clearance given by the HSSREC, you must also obtain authority from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of General Education, before conducting your research.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. M. Namafe'.

Prof. C. M. Namafe
ACTING CHAIRPERSON
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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

APPENDIX 10: INTRODUCTORY LETTER



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 291381
Telegram: UNZA, LUSAKA
Telex: UNZALU ZA 44370

PO Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia
Fax: +260-1-292702

=====

Date: 11/09/15

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS / PhD STUDENTS

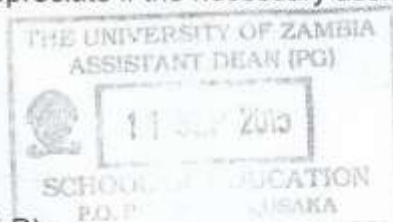
The bearer of this letter Mr./Ms. MULUNBA MARAMBA..... Computer number 514700140..... is a duly registered student at the University of Zambia, School of Education.

He/She is taking a Masters/PhD programme in Education. The programme has a fieldwork component which he/she has to complete.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to him/her/

Yours faithfully


Daniel Ndhlovu (PhD)
ASSISTANT DEAN (PG)- SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



cc. Director, DRGS
Dean, Education

APPENDIX 11: AUTHORISATION LETTER

*All Communications should be addressed to
the District Education Board Secretary
Telephone: 05 - 271318*



Computer No. 514700140

*In reply please quote
No. 54352*

**REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF GENERAL EDUCATION**

**DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD
P.O BOX 810063
KAPIRI MPOSHI**

2nd November, 201


Ms Mulunda Malambo
Mpunde Primary School
KAPIRI-MPOSHI

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DISTRICT- YOURSELF

Reference is made to the above subject matter.

Permission has been granted for you to conduct your research in the district, in particular Chilumba Zone.

I wish you all the best in your studies.



**MUMA P. C
DISTRICT EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY
KAPIRI MPOSHI**