

Declaration

I, Binwell Chananga Kumwenda, do declare that this piece of work is my own, and that all the work of other persons have been duly acknowledged, and that this work has not been previously presented at this university and indeed any other university for similar purposes.

Signed.....

Date.....

Approval

This dissertation of Binwell Chananga Kumwenda is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of master of Education in Literacy and Learning.

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

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

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

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Violet Ngwenya Kumwenda for being behind this success through her patience and encouragements during the two year study. We both missed each other dearly. It should also act as an inspiration to my four children, Margret, Suzyo, Tendai, comfort and my first grand daughter, Rejoice. To them, I say age is not a limit to education.

Abstract.

The purpose of this research was to find out the reading performance of pupils to whom Cicewa is not their first language in comparison with those to whom Cicewa is their first language.

The data were collected through End of Term Test, Interviews and class observation. The key informants included: teachers, Head teachers and the Chipata District Education Board Secretary(DEBS). Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to collect data.

Interviews and observations were conducted to help the researcher verify the information given by the respondents through the End of Term Test. The target population included 520 NBTL pupils in Chipata urban. Each of these schools has an average enrolment of 40 Grade 1 pupils in each class. The researcher used the simple random sampling procedure to select the 3 schools from which the 3 classes were sampled.

The findings showed that pupils to whom Cicewa was their first language performed better than those whose Cicewa was not their first language.

The analysis of the quantitative data revealed that the difference in performance in reading between the pupils to whom Cicewa was not their first language and those to whom Cicewa was their first language was significant. It was also observed that teachers did not use the standard Nyanja but the language of play.

The following were the recommendations:

1. The duration for NBTL course (initial literacy) should increase from one year to 4 years. This would allow pupils to whom the language of instruction is not their first language to master the language and get the skill of reading and writing.
2. The teachers should be encouraged to use the standard (official) language of initial literacy, in this case Nyanja, and not the language of play. This would reduce the confusion that is there between the standard Nyanja in the textbooks and the language of play. The language of play should be used to correct pupils' linguistic mistakes.
3. The teachers who are given to teach grade 1 initial literacy should be those that at least know more than one regional local language of initial literacy. This would enable the teacher to assist more pupils to whom the language of instruction is not their first language.
4. The classroom should be decorated (the talking walls) with words from other regional local languages. This would motivate the pupils to whom the language of initial literacy is not their first language because such pupils would also feel at home.

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Also to all dedicated lectures of the University of Zambia, particularly those who directly taught me in the department of Language and Social Sciences Education, literacy and learning. To all those, I say, only God can reward you appropriately.

I am also indebted to the provincial office in the Eastern Province for allowing me to conduct my research in the province. In the same vein let me thank the District Board secretary, the Head teachers and their NBTL class teachers for taking time out of their busy schedule in order to avail themselves for interviews.

My heartfelt-debt goes to my wife , Violet, for her encouragement and patience with me when I was preoccupied with my studies. My mother in-Law also deserves special recognition in my academic success for her significant contributions, especially, caring for my wife whenever High Blood Pressure (BP) attacked her in my absent.

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