

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Overview**

This chapter is an introduction to the study. It gives the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions, significance, delimitation, limitations, and operational definitions.

#### **1.1 Background**

The issue of literacy in Zambia has, for some time been a subject of concern due to the low literacy levels observed among Zambian pupils, particularly those in public primary schools. After realising that using English as the language of instruction, particularly at the primary level, did not enhance educational gains (MoE, 1992), it was decided that initial literacy be done in a local language predominantly spoken in an area (MoE, 1996). The teaching of initial literacy using the local languages was advocated for because of the low reading levels among learners in Zambia. Presently, initial reading in Zambia is done in the officially recognised local language of the region where the school is located. There are seven officially recognised Zambian languages: Bemba, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga.

The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) was also concerned about the low literacy levels in Zambia. The study conducted by SACMEQ actually revealed that 25% of Grade Six pupils could not read at a minimum level of proficiency and only 3% could read at a specified desirable level (MOE, 1995). To explain and justify these low literacy levels, the same study highlighted a number of reasons, one of which was the use of an unfamiliar language (English) when teaching literacy. This language factor was seen to

be the major reason for most Zambian children's backwardness in reading and writing skills (Kelly, 1995; MOE, 1996; Sampa, 2003; Williams, 1995).

Williams (1995) conducted a study among Malawian and Zambian primary school learners which was aimed at establishing the reading proficiency of the learners in English and local languages. The findings of the study revealed that the Malawian learners performed better than their Zambian counterparts in both English and the local language. The Malawian superiority in local language reading tests was supported by the reading investigation when all Malawian pupils were judged to have read the text with understanding, while less than a third of Zambian pupils were able or willing to read the text. There appeared to be two reasons for the difference between the two groups: the first was to do with the fact that the "ordinary" Nyanja of the Zambian pupils differs from the Nyanja used in the tests; the second view, the more substantial reason, was the lack of attention to local languages in Zambia (Williams, 1995).

This shared concern led to the establishment of the National Language Committee and later the formulation of the national language policy, which directed that initial literacy instructions were to begin in a child's local language, preferably their mother tongue (MoE, 1996).

In 1998, Break Through to Literacy (BTL), an initiative of a South African non-governmental organization, Molteno project was piloted in Kasama and Mungwi in Northern Zambia. This was among Grade One learners. IciBemba was used as the language of initial literacy. The results of the project were positive as learners were able to read in Grade One and by the time they reached Grade Two they were able to read at a level equivalent to those in Grade Four (Ministry of Education, 2001). The project which was renamed New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL) in 2000 was extended to Mongu, Chipata and Lusaka where Lozi and Nyanja, respectively were used to teach initial literacy.

The NBTL approach requires that a child learns to read and write in their mother tongue or familiar language before attempting to do this in a foreign language (English). The NBTL programme is based on Language Experience Approach and includes phonics, syllabic, look and-say and “real books” (Ministry of Education, 2003a). NBTL-project states that the expected outcome for the Grade One is that “learners should demonstrate understanding and knowledge of the writing system of their language, knowing that letters make up words and words make up sentences” (MoE, 2003, p. 1). Children under this programme are first familiarised with drawing, using of symbols, learning the left to right orientation, and other similar activities which are certainly good for children who may have never seen books or used a pencil before. In 2003, the NBTL course was extended to all the provinces of Zambia.

The Primary Reading Programme (PRP), under which the NBTL course falls, is the current seven-year literacy teaching programme in Zambian public basic schools which was introduced by the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education in 1999. The main aim of the programme was to address the then extremely low literacy levels in Zambian primary schools which was a matter of concern to the Government and other stakeholders, including parents of school children in the country.

Since its inception in 2000 and in the few years that followed, the Primary Reading Programme recorded notable successes, the major one being Grade One children’s accelerated reading and writing in a familiar language with an improvement rate from 23% to over 60% (MoE, 2002). However, the literacy levels of most Zambian school going children are still low and undesirable.

An assessment survey conducted by the Examinations Council of Zambia on behalf of the Ministry of Education revealed that reading performance on the English test was poor. Overall

pupils exhibited deficiencies in reading and comprehension skills (ECZ, 2006). Similar deficiencies were observed in the Zambian languages. This means that despite the language of initial literacy instruction being familiar to the learners the reading performance is still poor.

It is clear that despite government and other stake holders working hard, very little success has been achieved with regards to improving literacy levels among learners, especially at Basic school level (Matafwali, 2010, Mubanga, 2012; Mwanza, 2012). In addition, although NBTL has scored some success since its inception in Zambia, many learners in Grade One do not break through despite being taught in the local languages (Kalindi, 2005; Matafwali, 2010). Moreover, reading and writing levels have continued to decline and factors leading to this need to be investigated.

Could the low literacy levels be attributed to the teachers? The aim of this study therefore, was to compare the reading performance of grade one learners taught by indigenous speakers of the language used for initial literacy instruction with those taught by non-indigenous speakers.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Although the issue of teaching initial literacy in local languages has been under discussion and extensively researched for some time, it is not known which initial learners read better, those taught by indigenous or non-indigenous speaking teachers of the local language that is used in teaching initial literacy. The study sought to answer the question “Is there a difference in reading levels in Cinyanja of learners taught by indigenous and those taught by non-indigenous speaking teachers of the language used in teaching initial literacy?”

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to compare the reading levels in Cinyanja of learners taught initial literacy by indigenous speakers of Cinyanja with those taught by non-indigenous speakers of Cinyanja.

### **1.4 Research objectives**

The study sought to:

- i. compare the reading levels in Cinyanja of pupils taught by indigenous and those taught by non-indigenous Cinyanja speaking teachers.
- ii. establish what the significant difference (if any) was.
- iii. establish how the linguistic background of the teachers affected the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja.

### **1.5 Research questions**

- i. What were the reading levels in Cinyanja of learners taught by indigenous and those taught by non-indigenous Cinyanja speaking teachers?
- ii. What was the significant difference (if any)?
- iii. How did the linguistic background of the teachers affect the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study aimed at comparing the reading levels in Cinyanja of Grade One learners taught by an indigenous speaking teacher and those taught by a non-indigenous speaking teacher of Cinyanja. It is hoped that the findings of the study may be of great importance to the Ministry

of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education. The findings of the study may be used to improve policy in so far as the teaching of initial literacy in local languages is concerned. In addition, the findings may be used to establish a criterion for deploying teachers, particularly those involved in the teaching of initial literacy. This could probably have a positive effect on the education standards, especially in the field of reading because literacy is a gateway to all other subjects. Ultimately, the study may contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of initial literacy.

### **1.7 Delimitation**

The study limited to Lotus Basic School in Lusaka, Zambia.

### **1.8 Limitations of the study**

Being a case study of only one basic school in Lusaka Province where the language of initial literacy instruction is Cinyanja, the findings of the study may not be generalised to all Grade One learners in other schools and provinces where the language of instruction is different. Further, no pre-test was conducted. Therefore, we did not have information on the reading performance of the learners prior to subjecting them to the NBTL course, and subsequently the test.

### **1.9 Operational Definitions**

**Grade one:** The first grade level of education in basic schools in Zambia.

**Initial literacy:** The basic skills of reading and writing which a child learns in Grade One.

**Local language:** An indigenous language that is widely spoken by members of a particular community.

**Indigenous speaker:** A person who is a native of an area, speaks and is proficient in the language that is widely spoken in that community.

**Non-indigenous speaker:** A person who lacks fluency and proficiency in a language that is widely spoken in the community, and is not a native of that community.

**Reading:** The ability to interpret meaning from print.

**Scaffolding:** The provision of support or help to learners by teachers or more capable peers and/or adults to promote teaching and learning.

**Zone of Proximal Development:** The distance between what learners can do with guidance from a teacher, or a more capable peer and what those learners can do without guidance.

## **Summary**

This chapter has presented the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions, significance, delimitation, limitations, and operational definitions. It is clear that a lot of research has been done regarding the language of initial literacy and that initial literacy is best taught in a local language. However, the teachers and their proficiency in the language used for initial literacy have been overlooked. The next chapter presents the literature review.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Overview

This chapter presents the theoretical framework guiding the study as well as some studies that have been done at global and Zambian level regarding the indigenous and non-indigenous teachers and how they affect the reading performance of learners. The first part focuses on studies that have been done outside the African continent. The second part discusses studies done within the African continent. Studies done in Zambia have been presented separately.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the social constructivist theory as proposed by Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1983) and Piaget (1977). Key in this theory is Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of proximal development and Bruner's notion of scaffolding. The two are used in the classroom as teaching strategies. Scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy originates from Lev Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and his concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). 'The distance between what children can do unaided and what they can achieve or do with assistance from those that know better is the Zone of Proximal Development' (Raymond, 2000, p.176). Scaffolding as a teaching strategy provides individualized support based on the learner's ZPD (Dorn, 1996). Using scaffolding instruction, a more knowledgeable other provides help and thereby aids the learner's development. The scaffolds or support facilitate a student's ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new knowledge.



Matafwali (2010) defines reading as the ability to obtain meaning from print. In this respect, the goal of any form of reading therefore is to understand and interpret printed material in order to fulfill one's needs. In order for this to happen one must be able to understand the language in which the material is printed. Grade One learners are beginners and need to be assisted so that they can obtain meaning from print. In the classroom, teachers are the more knowledgeable others, and thus key in providing this assistance. According to Vygotsky (1978), scaffolding instruction is the "role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level" (Vygotsky, 1978) cited in Greenfield (1984, p. 176). In addition "the goal of the educator when using the scaffolding teaching strategy is for the student to become an independent and self-regulating learner and problem solver" (Vygotsky, 1978) cited in Goodman & Goodman (1990). The social constructivist theory is related to this study in that the researcher was looking at how much assistance was given to the learners in order to enable them read. The framework is linked to the study in that the researcher was looking at the two teachers as the more knowledgeable others, and the pupils as the ones that needed scaffolding.

## **2.2 Studies outside the African Continent**

Much of the studies conducted in the field of reading have revealed that learning to read is a huge challenge to learners in the lower primary grades (Wong, 1998). It is a task that they have to master and try to perfect throughout their years of schooling. Fluency determines one's reading competence. According to Logan (1977), fluency includes the reader ability to make connections between and within sentences at a formidable speed. It is thus the teacher's duty to assist his or her learners to be fluent in a language so as to be able to be competent in reading. But what happens with the learners if the teacher himself/herself is not competent or

if the teacher is too competent and familiar that he/she does not consider the pace of the learners?

Outside the African continent, the debate on indigenous and non-indigenous teachers was opened by Medgyes (1994). This debate had its focus on the English language. For a long time there was a well-spread “prejudice”, which started with Chomsky (1965) that ‘native’ speakers were better English teachers. Scholars such as Braine (1999) and Cook (1999) consolidated the research in the area, striving to ascertain whether native speaking (NS) teachers are necessarily better teachers than non-native speaking (NNS) teachers. In this demystification, they have ultimately favoured the latter, asserting the status of non-native speaking (NNS) teachers of English in the world. The fact that non-native speaking (NNS) teachers of English have learnt their English in very much the same context as their students allows them to better predict which linguistic items would be difficult for them.

A research by McNeill(1980) cited in Llurda (2005) where native speaking (NS) and non-native speaking (NNS) teachers were compared concluded that teachers who spoke the same L1 as their students were generally more accurate in identifying sources of lexical difficulty in reading texts than teachers whose mother tongue was English (Llurda, 2005). On the other hand, it was observed that only non-native speaking (NNS) teachers could put themselves into the students’ shoes and understand their feelings during the learning process. Thus, non-native speaking (NNS) teachers can be more patient and understanding with their students.

Indigenous speaking teachers may have a better pronunciation or richer vocabulary but sometimes they lack teacher training. In many cases they are just foreigners working as teachers or they take a brief training course upon arrival in the country where they will be teaching. Employers often give indigenous speaking teachers a high status because they

assume that they are perfect in the language. However, researchers (Braine, 1999; Arva and Medgyes, 2000) hold that this is not the case.

According to Arva and Medgyes (2000:261), “one of the most outstanding weaknesses of ‘native’ speaker (NS) teachers that were identified in a research was their poor knowledge of grammar”. This research showed that ‘native’ speaking teachers could not explain or give a scientific reason why something was right or wrong. On the contrary, knowledge of English grammar was often a source of pride for ‘non-native’ teachers, since they study the language in depth; thus, giving scientific explanations for correct or incorrect answers.

Braine (1999) holds that native speaking (NS) teachers will probably be unable to teach at their students’ own pace because they will not know the difficulties a student might have with certain contents or some specific skill. They will also find it difficult to adjust their English to be understood by students of lower levels of proficiency who might have difficulties in understanding because of speed or lack of knowledge and vocabulary. In these cases, the non-native speaking (NNS) teacher has the advantage of knowing the L1 which may be used for clarification. Both native and non-native English speakers can effectively teach grammar, vocabulary, register, and pragmatic concepts, as long as they are both well trained.

Cook (1999) holds that non-native teachers can serve as credible models of successful English First Language (EFL) or English Second Language Learners (ESL) while native speakers cannot. A non-native speaker may be at a disadvantage in teaching listening and pronunciation if he or she speaks at a speed slower than a native speaker; or does not link words as a native speaker does.

Wong (1987) pointed out that even when the non-native speakers' vocabulary and grammar are excellent, if their pronunciation falls below a certain threshold level, they are unable to communicate effectively. Wong (1993) further argues that the importance of pronunciation is even more distinct when the connection between pronunciation and listening comprehension is considered. In other words, Wong (1987: 1993) favoured the native teachers because to him they were able to make the appropriate connection between pronunciation and listening comprehension.

The teacher is probably one among many other factors that contribute to low reading levels among learners. According to Ur (1996), when articulation habits are transferred into the pronunciation and intonation of the target language, the inescapable result is the development of a foreign accent. Foreign accent points to the inefficiencies of a speaker in articulation, pronunciation and intonation of a foreign language in a native like habit. These inefficiencies may lead to misinterpretation of what is being said on the part of the learners.

There are many non-native speakers of English who are not aware that they carry over obvious traits of a foreign accent in speech just because they speak it with a non-native flow. Usually, the non-native speaking teachers' English is not accurate, not fluent and not intelligible, sounding unnatural to the students. Questions arise as to how such a teacher can teach efficiently if he himself cannot handle the language appropriately and sufficiently.

Avery and Ehrlich (1987) recommend that in order to assist learners to read, non-native speaking teachers should not retain a foreign accent in their foreign language teaching profession. A high degree of foreign accent is harmful to students' learning because the teachers may not be understood by their students. As Rivers (1981: 33) notes "there are great

problems for students if teachers themselves do not have a near native like fluency with the language”. The definition of reading as the ability to obtain meaning from print (Matafwali, 2010) entails that the knowledge of the language of the text is also cardinal in helping the learner to learn to read. Mwanakatwe (1968) suggests that a particularly careful approach to teaching reading is needed with learners who have little knowledge of English if they are to learn and read successfully in a language.

McCarty (2003) argues that the only strategy for languages is through teacher training. He further argues that being a fluent speaker does not automatically make a skilled teacher because a first language teacher is often unaware of the difficulties of learning that language.

UNESCO (2003) also considers the training of teachers in mother tongue education as vital towards improving educational quality. It is argued by UNESCO (ibid, p. 28) that:

*...all educational planning should include at each stage early provision for the training, further training of sufficient numbers of fully competent and qualified teachers of the country concerned who are familiar with the life of their people and able to teach in the mother tongue.*

In Papua Guinea, a small island in New Guinea, North Australia with about one-sixth of six thousand and more languages of the world is an example of a country where multilingualism acts as a barrier to informal education because it is difficult to conduct training for teachers to teach in the various languages for deployment throughout the country. Previously, primary teachers were trained at Teacher Training Colleges then deployed nation-wide. This was acceptable because the language of instruction was only English. However, when many languages of instruction were introduced, there were problems for teachers because some of

them could not communicate with their pupils

(<http://www.linguapax.org/congrs04/pdf/klaus.pdf>).

Benson (2004) highlights factors involved in delivering quality education. Of all the factors mentioned, language stands out as a key factor to communication and understanding in the classroom. Regarding teacher preparation, Benson (ibid) states that compounded by chronic difficulties such as low levels of teacher education, poorly designed, inappropriate curricular and lack of adequate school facilities, submersion makes both learning and teaching extremely difficult, particularly when the language of instruction is foreign to the teacher. She goes on to state that teacher training must be addressed no matter what the innovation and serious consideration should be made for in-service (in the short-term) and pre-service (in the long-term). She does not favour the short in-service programmes as they often leave bilingual teachers with limited skills and inadequate understanding of the bilingual teaching methodologies required.

Ojanen (2007) states in her Master's Thesis that, "failure in reading acquisition can be a result of inadequate teaching". Reading is an essential skill in our world and has become a necessity. Therefore, teachers have great responsibility to teach literacy skills efficiently and carefully in order to help as many children as possible to become fluent readers. Teachers, on the other hand, need adequate training for their profession and well designed curricula they can depend their work on. To teach someone to read requires profound knowledge about the language that is used and the process of reading acquisition.

Littlebear (2009) suggests a model that can be used to select people to teach Native American languages simply based on fluency. He stresses that fluency is an essential qualification for all

Native American language teachers to teach students. This should be coupled with further training aimed at equipping Native American teachers with necessary classroom knowledge to effectively teach their languages (Littlebear, *ibid*).

Mann (1991) acknowledges reading as a language skill and as such, many reading problems are language problems. Badian, McAnulty, Duffy and Als (1990) also note that in many cases the root of reading difficulties in children is language based. These language problems could probably be with the teacher. Wong (1998) asserts that there are two pieces of background information that is useful in understanding the role of language problems in poor reading. The first has to do with how language systems transcribe the units of spoken language and the second looks at how skilled readers rely on certain language skills.

The above literature has revealed that in Europe and elsewhere outside the African continent, people have divergent views concerning native and non-indigenous teachers of language.

### **2.3 Studies within the African Continent**

In Africa there seems to be no specific studies on the indigenous and non-indigenous speaking teachers. What is available however, is related to language and reading. Most studies conducted in Africa have their focus on teaching using the local languages. In addition to these there are a few studies on the challenges faced by teachers when they are required to teach in the learners' mother tongues or local languages.

The languages used to teach the colonial masters imposed literacy in African schools before independence. This led to the reviewing and in some cases changing of language in education policies in most of these countries after they attained independence. In the few years after they attained independence, most African countries continued with the language in education

policies that favoured the use of a foreign language for instruction including in initial literacy. Various reasons were advanced for choosing such policies even after independence, among them the need to foster national unity (Simwinga, 2006).

Most African countries are multilingual in nature with some having as many as 70 languages. McNab (1989) cited in Simwinga (2006) indicates that in situations of extreme linguistic diversity, or of rivalry between major language groups, like the exogenous language option, the use of a European language for official purposes may be a political necessity. In the years that followed and because of assessments in Education, it was realised that teaching and learning were better and easier when these two processes were conducted in the learners' mother tongue.

In Ethiopia, the education policy stipulates that learning and teaching in the first eight years of schooling be done in the mother tongue. However, this rule is not applied in all the regions. In the capital Addis Ababa for instance, English, a foreign language, is introduced as medium of instruction in the sixth year. A comparative study of the learning achievement in the eighth year revealed that learners with stronger mother tongue performed better in all subjects including English (Heugh et al., 2007). In addition low proficiency in the language of instruction impacts negatively on the teaching and learning behaviour. In Africa most teachers have not been trained in language acquisition theory and practice. This, coupled with lack of mastery of the language of instruction results in a serious teaching barrier.

If teachers instruct in a language in which they are not very proficient it is important to train them in second language teaching and learning didactics. In Malawi, Chilora (2001) suggested that when learners are taught by a teacher who speaks their language, learning seems to be



enhanced. However, it is not known if a teacher who teaches using a language that she or he understands makes learning easier.

A study conducted by McDonald (1990) in Botswana where students switch from a local language to English in the fifth grade revealed that switching from one medium of instruction to another in year five was an important factor in high drop-out and repeater rates by the end of that year. When year five students switched from Setswana to English at the beginning of year five, they had exposure to only 800 words in English but needed 7,000 to be able to follow the year five curriculum. Teachers are aware of this fact and often use a familiar language instead. However, more problems arise when the teacher himself or herself is not proficient in the language that the learners are familiar with.

It has also been argued that there is better understanding of scientific concepts when learners are taught in a familiar language. An experiment conducted in Botswana (Brock-Utne and Alidou, 2006) where science concepts were taught in Setswana to one group and to a control group in English revealed that students taught in Setswana had developed a significantly better understanding of these concepts than the students taught in English. In Tanzania a similar study was conducted and the results were the same. Secondary school students that were taught scientific concepts in Kiswahili did far better than those who had been taught in English (Mwinsheikhe, 2003).

Le Mottee (2008) cited in Nkossa (2011) argues that learning and teaching are completely dependent on language and that this significant role that language plays in learning and teaching has made it every country's necessity to take on a language in education policy that will enable and not hinder learning and teaching from taking place. Therefore, in most African countries,

teachers are expected to teach learners to read and write in a language that is familiar to the learners. In most cases it happens that the teachers have little competence themselves to teach in that particular language. As a result, both teachers and learners face serious communication and learning problems on a daily basis.

Chihana (2012) also conducted her study in Malawi. Among the findings of the study was that the learners' familiar language was not familiar to some teachers. In addition, teachers had inadequate knowledge about Malawi Breakthrough to Literacy teaching. Chilora (2001) cited in Chihana (2012) suggested that learners who are taught by a teacher who speaks their language are likely to perform well in class because the teacher knows and understands the language so teaching easier and more effective.

#### **2.4 Studies conducted in Zambia**

To our knowledge, no studies on the indigenous and non-indigenous speaking teachers have been conducted in Zambia. What are there are issues of language in education policy and reading difficulties of learners especially at the lower grade levels.

In Zambia, the issue of language and education was clear and straight forward throughout the colonial and much of the federal period (Linehan, 2004). Both the colonial and federal governments favoured the use of the local languages to teach in the early years of school. After independence, however, the medium of instruction in the country changed to English from Grade One to the highest level of education which is University. This policy seems to have led to a decline in reading performance among learners in Zambia especially at primary school level. Several attempts were made to alter the language in education policy. In 1977, despite there being a broad agreement that learning using English as the medium of instruction was

detrimental to educational achievement, educational principles were subordinated to the need for political harmony. The final report, “*Educational Reform: Proposals and Recommendations*” acknowledged that “it is generally accepted by educationists that learning is best done in the mother tongue”, decided that “this situation is found to be impracticable in multi-lingual societies, such as the Zambian society” (Ministry of Education, 1977, p. 32). However, the new policy made provision for the teacher to explain concepts that might not be understood through the medium of English, in one of the seven official local languages, provided a majority of pupils in a class could understand this vernacular language.

The 1992 *Focus on Learning* policy document which was a response to the 1990 World Conference on Education for All tackled the issue of language in education. It is clearly stated in the document that using local languages in education would lead to better education gains (Ministry of Education, 1992).

In 1996, government through the Ministry of Education produced *Educating Our Future* policy document. It was in this document that a separation was made between the medium of instruction and the language of initial literacy instruction. The document outlined that initial literacy and numeracy would be developed through a language which was familiar to children. In addition the status of Zambian languages was enhanced and a rationale for future initiatives was provided through the same policy. The separation of medium of instruction from medium of initial literacy allowed *Educating Our Future* to set down initial literacy in a familiar language as a child’s right while maintaining English as the medium of instruction (MOE, 1996).

The National Reading Assessment Programme was created in 1998 by government through the Ministry of Education to monitor learning achievement in literacy and numeracy. Three national assessments were conducted (2001, 2003 and 2006). As of 2006, the assessment survey conducted by the Examinations Council of Zambia on behalf of the Ministry of Education revealed that reading performance on the English test was poor. Overall pupils exhibited deficiencies in reading and comprehension skills (ECZ Report, 2006). Similar deficiencies were observed in the Zambian languages. This means that despite the language of initial literacy instruction being familiar to the learners the reading performance is still poor.

Kelly (1999) in stressing the need to teach initial literacy in local languages sets aside Grade One learners as being very close to their parents and relatives. It is in this vain that Kelly (1999) argues that the knowledge that these children acquire in school should be used to interpret things to their parents and relatives at home. In addition teaching children in the mother tongue makes learning easier for the children as they are able to identify, explain and describe things around them with ease. To further support the teaching of children in local languages (Manchishi, 2004) argues that using local languages as languages of instruction in the first four years of primary schooling facilitates comprehension of certain concepts which pupils may find hard to understand and interpret when English is used as the medium of instruction.

In 1999, the Primary Reading Programme was designed by the Ministry of Education with support from the Department for International Development (DFID). This was a seven-year programme designed in an attempt to implement the new initial literacy policy. The Primary Reading Programme, which began to be fully implemented in 1999, involves interventions at each of seven primary grade levels. By 2003, a total of 9,245 grade one teachers and head teachers were trained within nine days. The training was in form of workshops with the

incorporated methodologies being child-centred and moving from what the children knew and had experienced to what they did not know (Sampa, 2003).

In Grade One, the *New Breakthrough to Literacy* (NBTL) course is taught for one hour per day. This course is a version of the original *Breakthrough to Literacy* that has been modified to better suit the Zambian environment. The one-year initial literacy course has been translated in the seven official Zambian languages and has so far had significant success. After conducting an evaluation of the pilot programme carried out in Kasama in 1998 it was reported that: “The programme was an unqualified success; children in *Breakthrough to Literacy* (BTL) classes were reading and writing at a level equivalent to Grade 4 or higher in non-BTL classes” (Kotze, Higgins, & Tambulukani, 1999, p. 4). The review team further claimed in oral presentations of their findings to the Ministry of Education, that children in pilot schools in Kasama were performing in literacy tests at a level above what they would expect of children of similar age in South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Ireland, areas with which they were familiar.

Basic school teachers in Zambia were initially trained under a programme known as Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC). This was a two year course that was offered in all the basic teacher education colleges. The programme has since been changed and the teachers are now trained for three years at the end of which they are awarded a diploma. In Zambia, all the teachers trained to teach Grades One to Seven are trained in the Zambian New Breakthrough To Literacy (ZNBTL) course. In addition the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) contributes to the training of teachers to teach initial literacy in local languages. However, this does not resolve the reading problems that are as a result of the language of initial literacy instruction because in most cases teachers are deployed away from the region where they are trained. Manchishi

(2004) adds that all Primary Teacher Training Colleges have a Zambian Languages Section where all teachers are trained in the teaching of local languages.

Kashoki and Ohannessian (1978) cited in Mpepo (2006) have provided one of the most detailed studies of the socio-linguistic situation of Zambia. This survey reveals that more than seventy three dialects or language varieties exist in Zambia. Out of this number, only eight languages, including English, Cibemba, Cinyanja, Citonga, Silozi, Kikaonde, Cilunda and Ciluvale, have been selected as official languages. “Since there was no systematic study to establish precisely the socio-linguistic situation especially when the English medium policy was adopted, a claim could be made that these languages were chosen more for political and geographical reasons than as a result of socio-linguistic or educational considerations” ( Mpepo, 2006, p.5).

A number of other studies regarding the language used for initial literacy instruction have been done in Zambia. Among these studies is one conducted by Kashoki (1970), who wanted to determine to what extent speakers of the seven officially approved local languages in Zambia could understand languages other than their mother tongue. Findings of the study revealed that although there were cases of languages that were close to each other in terms of geography influencing each other, this influence was not significant. The implication here is that being Zambian does not mean that one can understand and speak all the seven officially recognised local languages as well as teach each one of them.

Matafwali (2010) also conducted a study which aimed at determining the progress made by learners when taught to read in the mother tongue. Findings, however, revealed that the reading levels of first and second grade learners were still very low despite them being taught in the

local language. This was particularly true for Lusaka province. Matafwali's findings further revealed that there was a cognitive relationship between language and thought, and owing to this, the NBTL course which requires that initial literacy be taught in the mother tongue could be effective. It was also revealed that low levels or a total lack of language proficiency in the target language were a typical feature of poor reading and writing skills among most Zambian learners (Matafwali, *ibid*). She further supports the teaching of Grade one learners in a familiar language, preferably their mother tongue. However, she recommends that the Ministry of Education should consider teacher training in local languages as a priority.

Similar to Matafwali's study is a study conducted by Kalindi (2005). This study was conducted in Zambia's Northern Province where the language of initial literacy instruction is Bemba. In this particular study, Kalindi involved 60 poor second grade readers from selected schools. It was revealed in this study that only 13% of the learners could read two syllable words and only 8% were able to identify 20 letters of the alphabet. In addition their reading levels were still low despite there being clear and intensive instructions on the reading lessons. Probably one of the reasons that can be advanced for the poor reading skills is that the teachers were not native speakers of Bemba hence the lack of proficiency on the part of the teachers. In fact Kalindi (2006) herself just like Matafwali (2010) notes that the NBTL course has the potential to improve learners' reading and writing skills. However, the teacher who is key in helping the learners to read in the language of initial literacy instruction is often taken for granted.

Ojanen (2007) argues that "In order to give adequate instruction in Zambian Native Languages, teachers need to have profound knowledge of the language, its linguistics, pronunciation and standardised spelling. If the teachers themselves have been schooled in the English era, how

could they have information of such issues without retraining?” She further adds that the current system that is followed in Zambia of using the children’s familiar language still faces the mother tongue problem in a country of dozens of languages.

It has been found out that it is not harmful for the teacher to speak a different Zambian indigenous language than his or her pupils (Linehan, 2004), but that pupils, who are non-indigenous speakers of the Zambian indigenous language used in their school, have lower Zambian indigenous language literacy skills in Grade 3, although they catch up with their peers in Grade 5 (Muhau, 2005). Thus, even the differences within Zambian indigenous languages can be risk factors for the pupils' education. Both Linehan (2004) and Muhau (2005) overlook the importance of the teacher’s familiarity with the language of instruction and how this can affect the reading abilities of the learners.

Maliyunda (2009) looked into the perception, expectation and experience that Zambian teachers have in teaching initial literacy in a mother tongue language using the NBTL programme. He acknowledged the importance of training teachers in NBTL methodology prior to giving them classes to teach initial literacy. His argument was that a teacher who had not received adequate orientation in NBTL methodology would face a lot of difficulties in delivering lessons to learners. He further argued that several student teachers did not get adequate training during the pre-service training in NBTL methodology because the one year period of time is too short and it is committed for training in college (Maliyunda, *ibid*). Although Maliyunda was concerned about the training of teachers in NBTL, he, like other authors, mentioned in the literature overlooked the linguistic background of the teacher, which can affect the way they teach NBTL. A recent study conducted by Mwanza (2012) on the use of Cinyanja as language of initial



literacy instruction in Lusaka District revealed that teachers were not proficient in standard Cinyanja that was used for initial literacy instruction and what was spoken by the teachers was not the Cinyanja that was recognised in schools. In addition the teachers mispronounced most of the Cinyanja words and this according to Mwanza (ibid) was due to mother tongue influence. What Mwanza (2011) did not highlight is whether this affected the reading abilities of the learners.

Miti and Monaka (2009) cited in Mwanza (2012) also argue that due to multilingualism, when teachers were deployed to teach in primary schools others were taken to regions where the language used in initial literacy was not their mother tongue. In such case teachers failed to teach initial literacy in the language is recommended for that particular region. In addition lack of a strong background in the mother tongue hindered most teachers from teaching Grade Ones effectively in the NBTL programme.

The literature has highlighted the teacher as playing a key role in the teaching and learning process as he or she is the manager in the classroom. It is also clear that his or her learners task the teacher with ensuring that whatever happens in the classroom generates successful achievement of literacy skills. To our knowledge, no study has focussed on the difference in reading performance of learners taught by indigenous and non-indigenous speaking teachers of Cinyanja in Lusaka. This is the gap that this study sought to fill.

### **Summary**

The above chapter has reviewed some literature relevant to the study. Whereas some literature revealed that there are differences in the ways indigenous and non-indigenous speaking teachers teach language, some other literature showed that there is no difference at all. It is also evident from the literature review that despite there being studies concerning indigenous and non-

indigenous speaking teachers of languages, none of these studies focussed on the reading performance of learners taught by indigenous and non-indigenous speaking teachers. The next chapter presents the methodology that was used in the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Overview**

This chapter presents the methodology that was used during the study. That is; the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical issues.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study was a case study and employed both qualitative and quantitative designs. The qualitative method allowed the researcher to obtain in-depth information about the phenomenon under investigation while the quantitative method ensured high levels of reliability of the gathered data. Case studies are concerned with a rich and clear description of events relevant to the case. They also strive to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation (White, 2003). Therefore, the researcher conducted a case study in order to get in depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

#### **3.2 Population**

According to Moulton (1998, p.134), “a population is a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristic that the researcher is interested in studying”. In this study the target population comprised all the Grade one (1) learners and teachers in public basic schools in Lusaka district.

### **3.3 Sample size and sampling procedure**

A sample is a subset of a population that is used to represent the entire group as a whole (White, 2003). In this study the sample size was 98 which comprised 49 pupils in each class. The Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) in charge of Languages Lusaka District, the Head teacher of the school, two teachers, one indigenous and the other non-indigenous speaker of Cinyanja also participated in the study. Selection of the school was done using the simple random sampling technique. This gave all the schools in the district an equal chance to participate in the study. The two classes were sampled purposively in that the researcher was specifically looking for a class taught by an indigenous speaker of Cinyanja and another taught by a non-indigenous speaker.

The Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) in charge of languages and school manager were sampled purposively. This was because they were the only ones with information that the researcher was interested in. The two teachers were also sampled purposively in that the researcher was specifically looking for an indigenous and a non-indigenous teacher of Grade One learners. In purposive sampling, the sample is satisfactory to the specific needs of the researcher and is chosen for a specific purpose (Moulton, 1998).

#### **Teacher Characteristics**

##### **a) The indigenous Teacher**

The indigenous teacher is Nsenga by tribe and lived in Eastern Province until she went to college. She did her teaching course at Kasama Teachers' Training College in Northern Province. She taught in Northern Province for some time before moving to Lusaka in 1992. She was trained in NBTL when it was just introduced and she is also a trainer. She speaks Nyanja fluently and can also speak Bemba as her husband is Bemba.

### **b)The non-indigenous Teacher**

The non-indigenous teacher is Lunda by tribe and lived in North Western Province from the time she was born until 2009 when she moved to Lusaka. She did her teaching course at Solwezi Teachers' Training college. She was not trained in NBTL and the only training she has in this particular course is what she learnt at college and the Grade Meetings at the Resource Centre (GRACE) held once every term. She speaks Lunda, Kaonde and Bemba. She can speak and understand Cinyanja but not fluently. She still cannot understand certain words in Cinyanja but is slowly learning.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

The following data collection instruments were used in the study:

- i. New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) test: This structured NBTL achievement test comprises the 19 core vocabulary words. Instructions were read out to the learners and clarified in Cinyanja.
- ii. Lesson observation checklist: this instrument was used alongside the NBTL teacher's guide. The checklist comprised elements that the researcher was looking for in the lessons. Additional notes and observations were written in a notebook.
- iii. Interview Guides: these instruments comprised some structured and open-ended questions that the researcher asked the SESO in charge of languages, the school manager and the two teachers. According to White (2003:69) 'Open-ended questions are used for complex questions that cannot be answered in a few simple categories but require more detail and discussion'. In this study, open-ended questions allowed the respondents to express feelings and to expand on ideas.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection exercise took place within the first term of the school calendar, which was from January to April. Most data was collected in March. The researcher observed the lessons as they occurred naturally in the classroom using a detailed checklist. In order to ensure that the lesson observation was natural the researcher did not interfere with the lessons in any way.

Towards the end of the term in March, the learners' reading ability was assessed. The idea was to put the learners in ability groups. The period for assessment was one week. The teachers assessed the learners individually in the teaching corner with both teacher and learner sitting on the mat but pupils were called out from their pace groups. The researcher was present during these assessments.

The researcher used the results of the test to ascertain whether at the end of the term there was a difference in reading performance of learners from the two classes.

The researcher made an appointment to interview the SESO in charge of languages in Lusaka District during the school holiday. The interview session took place in the SESO's office and information was obtained in one session only. During these face-to-face interviews, the researcher read out the questions and took note of the responses by writing them in a notebook. The responses were also recorded on a digital voice recorder.

The school manager was interviewed in her office at her own time of convenience, which was a week after schools had closed. The responses written in a notebook as well as recorded on a digital voice recorder. The two teachers were interviewed in the middle of the term and at the end of the term. They were interviewed on the same day but in two different sessions.

Responses to these face-to-face interviews were written in a notebook and recorded on the voice recorder.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

Part of the data analysis exercise, particularly of qualitative data begun in the field during data collection. The researcher at this stage ensured that the data were internally consistent. The qualitative data was analysed by transcribing the interviews, summarizing and organizing the data according to categories. Two of the lessons that were observed were transcribed, one from each class. These transcriptions were in form of verbatim. This helped in establishing the proficiency of the teachers and the understanding of the learners. Responses from the interviews were also analysed qualitatively and some of these responses were also in form of verbatim. This ensured that the data was authentic.

The T-test was used to establish the significance of the difference in the reading performance of learners from the two classes. The T-test is a statistic that is used to compare two means in order to measure the difference between the means of one sample on two separate occasions or between two samples one occasion (Cohen & Manion, 1994). In this study, the t-test was used to measure the difference between the mean scores of the pupils from the two classes. This helped in establishing the difference in reading performance of the two classes and whether or not this difference was significant.

The test results were presented according to the teachers that is; indigenous and non-indigenous.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethics as defined by (Strydom, 2000) are a set of moral principles suggested by an individual or group, is widely accepted and which offers rules and behavioural expectations towards

respondents and other stakeholders in research. During the study, the researcher observed the ethical considerations by respecting the rights and views of the participants. The researcher sought written informed consent from the University of Zambia in order to conduct the research. White (2003) cites the relevance of the information to the participants' decision as one key element in informed consent. Permission to conduct research at the basic school was sought from the head teacher who allowed the researcher to engage the teachers and learners in the study.

### **Summary**

This chapter discussed the methodology that was used to collect data. The study was a case study and utilised both qualitative and quantitative designs. Both simple random and purposive sampling techniques were employed in the study. The proceeding chapter is a presentation of the findings of the study.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### Overview

This section presents the findings of the study. These are presented in line with the research questions. The research questions were 1) What were the reading levels of learners taught by the indigenous and those taught by the non-indigenous speaking teacher of Cinyanja? 2) Was the difference, if any significant? 3) Did the linguistic background of the teachers affect the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja?

#### **4.0 What were the reading levels of learners taught by the indigenous teacher and those taught by non-indigenous teacher of Cinyanja?**

In an effort to answer the first research question, data was collected using the NBTL achievement test.

Both teachers assessed the learners' reading ability to read the core vocabulary words in Cinyanja. The assessment comprised 19 words of the core vocabulary words, with each word printed on a card.

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage obtained in the test from the indigenous teacher's class.**

SCORE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
0	2	4.2
2	1	2.1

3	3	6.3
4	3	6.3
5	5	10.4
6	1	2.1
7	3	6.3
8	1	2.1
9	1	2.1
10	3	6.3
11	3	6.3
12	2	4.2
13	1	2.1
14	2	4.2
15	1	2.1
16	4	8.3
17	1	2.1
18	5	10.4
19	6	12.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1

**Table 2: Frequency and Percentage obtained in the test from the non-indigenous class**

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
0	7	14.6
1	1	2.1
2	3	6.3
3	4	8.3
4	1	2.1
5	3	6.3
6	5	10.4
7	1	2.1
9	3	6.3
11	1	2.1
13	1	2.1
14	2	4.2
16	1	2.1
17	3	6.3
18	4	8.3

19	8	16.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2

The two tables indicate that the two groups of learners were poor readers. Nevertheless, those from the indigenous teacher's class performed better than those from the non-indigenous teacher's class. The average scores from the indigenous teacher's class and the non-indigenous teacher's class were 10.81 and 8.20, respectively.

#### 4.1 What was the significant difference (if any)?

Findings for this particular research question were obtained by comparing the results from the two classes using the T-test computer technique.

#### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the performance of pupils taught by indigenous speaking teachers and non-indigenous speaking teachers ( $H_0: \mu_{\text{indigenius}} = \mu_{\text{non-indigenus}}$ ). The significance level is 0.05.

Test conducted: Independent Samples T Test

Group Statistics					
	Status of the teacher	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Endterm test	Indigenous speaking teacher	49	10.81	6.104	.881
	Non-indigenous speaking	49	8.20	7.133	1.019

	teacher				
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Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2- tailed )	Mean Differen ce	Std. Error Differen ce	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Endter m test	Equal varianc es assume d	2.06 3	.15 4	1.93 3	95	.056	2.608	1.349	-.070	5.28 7
	Equal varianc			1.93 6	93.32 8	.056	2.608	1.347	-.066	5.28 3

	es not assume d									
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Table 3. Matrix table of the T-test

### End-term results

$t = 1.933$ ;  $df = 95$ ;  $p > 0.05$ . We therefore accept the  $H_0$  i.e. there is no significant difference in the performance of pupils taught by indigenous and non-indigenous Cinyanja speaking teachers.

In this particular test, the mean scores of the learners from the indigenous and non-indigenous teachers' classes were 10.81 and 8.20, respectively. When tested for significance difference, with a significance level of 0.05, it was found that the p value was greater than 0.05 meaning that the difference was not significant.

### 4.2 How did the linguistic background of the two teachers affect the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja?

Whereas the test results were used to determine whether there was a difference in reading levels in Cinyanja of the learners from the two classes, lesson observations revealed what the indigenous teacher did which the non-indigenous teacher did not do and vice-versa. Therefore, data for this particular research question was obtained through lesson observations and the views of the two teachers, the school manager and the education officer. The lesson proceedings were recorded on a digital voice recorder and transcribed. One lesson was transcribed for each teacher. In these lesson observations, the researcher was mainly interested in the teachers' proficiency in Cinyanja, the language that is used for instruction in NBTL. The teacher's ability to read Cinyanja with fluency and translate words to the level of

understanding of the pupils was also of interest to the researcher. Further, the researcher wanted to establish whether the pupils had any difficulties in reading and following the lesson due to the way their teacher read and spoke Cinyanja. Teachers' creativity and innovation were also important factors that the researcher was looking for. The findings from the interview sessions are presented in line with the questions reflected on the interview guide.

#### **4.3.0 Findings from lesson observations**

The researcher observed two lessons-one taught by an indigenous teacher and another taught by a non-indigenous teacher. The total number of pupils was 98, 49 in each class. NBTL lessons were second on the timetable and started at 07.55 hours in the morning. The lessons went on until 08.55 hours after which the teacher switched to Zambian Languages (Cinyanja).

##### **The Non-indigenous Teacher**

The researcher observed that the teacher did not have adequate teaching materials in her class. The materials that the teacher did not have during the time of the research included the sentence marker, teacher's sentence holder and the learners' sentence holder. The teacher however, made adequate use of the NBTL teacher's guide and had her lesson plans up to date. The teacher used the conversation poster to facilitate conversation amongst the learners. The learners were able to say what was happening in each picture. In this class, instructions were given on how to read the pictures. Clearly, the teacher was able to teach NBTL to her learners, however, she was not proficient in her use of Cinyanja and constantly mispronounced words. It was also observed that the learners pronounced the words the way the teacher did even if it was wrong. However, learners participated in the lesson. After this the teacher asked the learners to read her fingers using the space in between the fingers to represent the space in between words in sentences. This is illustrated below:

*Amai/malu/acapa/malu/zobvala.*

In English this sentence is ‘Mother is washing clothes’.

The word *malu* stands for the space in between the words and the way it is written is how the non-indigenous teacher pronounced it. The learners also pronounced the word as *malu*. The word is actually supposed to be ‘*malo*’, a Cichewa word meaning space and in this particular lesson it was used to refer to the spaces left between words in sentences. The teacher then wrote the sentence on the board and read it to the learners before asking the learners to read to their friends. The teacher used a ruler to point at the words and the spaces. The pupils had to do the same. The researcher observed that instead of saying ‘*malo*’ meaning space the non-indigenous teacher said ‘*malu*’. It was also observed that when reading the sentence on the board some learners pointed at the words instead of the space in between the sentences when referring to the space. This is illustrated below:

*Amai akonda mwana.* One pupil pointed at the word *akonda* as *malu*.

The other observation was that some learners recited the sentence as ‘*Amai acapa malu zobvala*’ such that if it were to be written the sentence would look like the one below:

*Amaiacapa zobvala.* (Mother is washing clothes)

The teacher did not explain the meaning of some words to the learners. She rarely asked if the learners knew the meaning of the words, especially the ones in the story and names of animals. For instance, the words ‘*Gulugufe*’ and ‘*Mbalame*’, which refer to butterfly and bird respectively were not explained to the learners. Fortunately, one of the learners knew that ‘*mbalame*’ was bird and he shouted ‘*kanyoni*’ to the rest of the class. Another word which was not explained but used often was ‘*Cithunzi-thunzi*’ which means picture or drawing in English.



## **The Indigenous Teacher**

The teacher had most materials required to teach NBTL. The teacher was proficient in her use of Cinyanja and taught at the pace of the learners. She simplified words that seemed difficult to the level of understanding of the learners. The indigenous teacher explained to the learners that the pictures that they saw on the poster actually told a story. The teacher was also in the habit of asking the learners if what was taught was clear or if they understood the story. If they said they did the teacher asked them to retell the story. The indigenous teacher did not check for spellings in the textbook except on a few occasions. She was more relaxed and at ease when teaching. It was also observed that the teacher made sure that the learners understood what was being read or said. For instance the teacher asked the learners during story time if they understood the word '*kufungatila*'.

T: *Muziba kufangatila aini?*

Ps: *Ehe.*

T: *Niku kumbatila aini.*

Another example is that of the sentence '*Amai acapa zobvala*' (Mother is washing clothes). The teacher asked the learners if they understood the word *capa* after which she explained to the learners that '*Ise tima kamba ati ku washa*' (Us we say washing).

The teacher trained her class in such a way that whenever she was late or not around the class leader would lead the rest of the class in reading the core vocabulary items and the key sentences.

## Lesson transcriptions

### a) The indigenous teacher's class

T: Nkalani zee monse. Tiye ni tonse tiyangane pa picture apa.

Mwaonapo cani apa?

P: Mwana

T: Ehe. Apa pali mwana. Tikamba ati mwana ngati ni umozi. Ambili ni ana.

Nichani chamene mwaonapo **apart from** ana?

P: Galu.

T: Pali na Galu aini. **O.K.** Tiye ni tiyanganisise. Nanga ana amene awa achita cani?

Ps: Ba gwilana.

T: So apa akamba ati Gwira. Ati cani?

Ps: Gwira.

T: So ninshi ni ndani wamene bauza ati Gwira?

Apa badula. Uyu agwililila vidoli.

**So** kapena aba ndiye amene auza ati agwile aini.

Tiye ni tibelenge manje.

Apa ikamba ati gwira.

Ati bwanji?

Ps: Gwira.

T: Ndimba konda pamene amai andi fungatila?

Nindani wamene akamba zamene izi?

Ps: Kamwana.

T: Muziba ku fangatila ka?

Ps: Ku kumbatila.

T: Umhu. **So** kamwana kakamba ati kama kondwela pamene bamai bake baka kumbatila.

Ndi pamene atate andi goneka pa bedi usiku.

**So** uyu mwana akonda cani?

P: Batate bake.

T: Ehe.

P: Bamai bake.

T: Ah! Mwati tamvela vamene bakamba apa? Ati mwana uyu akonda cani?

P: Akondo gona.

T: Ehe. Ati mwana akonda pamene atate ake amugoneka pa bedi usiku.

**So** uyumwana akonda cani?

Ps: Bamai bake kumu kumbatila.

T: Ehe. Ati mwana akonda pamene amai ake....

Ps: Bamu kumbatila.

T: Na cani cinangu camene akonda mwana?

*The pupils are silent*

T: Pamene atate ake ama mugoneka pa bedi usiku. Muzimvela imwe zamene a teacher akamba.

Pamene Petulo ndi ine tima kunkhulika pansi.

Ni cani cinangu camene ama konda mwana uyu?

Ps: Ku kunkulika pansi.

T: Ku kunkulika pansi aini?

**So** apa pali vinthu vingati?

P: Vitatu.

T: Vitatu, aini? Uyu mwana ama konda vintu vitatu.

Koma sipa nthawi yomenyana ayi.

**So** panthawi yomenyana uyu mwana amachita bwanji?

Ps: Sama khondwela.

T: Ama zonda aini?

**So** lelo tiza imilila pamene apa pakuti ati mailo futi mukabwele mukamveleleko futi.

This was the end of the story reading activity

#### **b) The non-indigenous teacher's class**

T: **O.K**

**So** bonse tunkale zee.

The pupils keep quite.

T: **Good**

T: **So last time** twenze kubelenga ka **story book**.

Nikalibe kuyamba kubelenga pali citunzi-tunzi apa.

Waonapo ciani?

P: Kasote ka agogo.

T: Ehe. Pali cisote ca agogo amuna.

P: Amai ana dabwa.

T: Anadabwa cani?

*(Silence)*

T: Aba bamai banadabwa. Anadabwaca?

P: Kasote kambululuka

T: **So** tuzabelengako vyamene vikambika mukabuku kamene aka ka **story book**.

Bonse nikunkhala zee mumvelele **story** iyi, aini?

Apa mvelani bonse balembapo ati Cisote ca agogo amuna.

Tikaonapo apa pali ambuya amuna, pali na ambuya akazi na mwana **then** pali na uyu mwamuna. **So** niza yamba kubelenga mumvesese.

Apa balembapo ati cisote cagogo amuna cinali **kukunkuzika** pa mse.

**Then** apa tubwele apa balemwapo atibwa? Agogo amuna anayesesa kuchigwila ndi panzi lao.

**Then** apa, tibwele apa. Mpepo inaomba soka loka- loka.

Chisote china kukulizika kungsi kwa galimoto yofila.

**So** apa nipamene tuzasilila kubelenga.

This was the end of the story reading activity.

The above transcriptions show that both teachers code switched. However, the non-indigenous teacher was observed code-switching and mixing on many occasions compared to the indigenous teacher. She switched from Cinyanja to English, and mixed with Bemba. In addition, she mispronounced words.

#### **4.3.2 Findings from oral interviews on whether or not there was a linkage between the teachers' indigenous languages and the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja.**

The interviews were guided by schedules with predominantly open- ended questions and some close-ended questions. The questions were designed to obtain first hand information regarding the teaching of initial literacy in Cinyanja by indigenous and non-indigenous speaking teachers of Cinyanja.

#### **4.3.3 Findings from Indigenous Teacher**

The teacher stated that she was fluent in Cinyanja but also used Cibemba because she lived in Kasama, Northern Province for some time where Cibemba is the most predominant language. She also revealed that she did not have problems teaching initial literacy in local languages. The respondent also put it to the researcher that she was not prepared to teach in initial literacy in local languages at college because at the time she did her teacher training initial

literacy was done in the English language. However, she was trained in NBTL because at the time the programme was introduced she was already in the teaching service and she was one of the people selected to undergo training:

*I was lucky to have been around the time the NBTL programme was introduced so I was trained to teach NBTL. I am also a trainer though it is not really effective nowadays.*

It was also revealed to the researcher by this particular respondent that the one hour allocated to the literacy lessons was enough if the teacher was well prepared. The respondent further revealed that:

*It is very difficult to teach initial literacy in Cinyanja because children have different backgrounds of mother tongue. The Cinyanja that is in the books is very difficult and the teacher has to simplify some words which is not an easy task. Some are in deep Chewa for instance 'ku jambula'. One who doesn't know Chewa can't even guess that it means to draw.*

The respondent suggested that the Ministry of Education should look into the children's vocabulary, which is the language that the children used when playing and to use the same vocabulary in the classroom. This would be better because the words in the books did not match the different backgrounds of the children. The respondent further recommended that town Cinyanja be adopted as the language of classroom instruction in initial literacy.

*In rural areas, children understand and the language that they use is the one in the books. If only the books in Chewa can be simplified*

*into the Cinyanja that the children use when playing things would be easy even for us teachers*

Asked whether she found it interesting to teach initial literacy in local languages, respondent revealed that:

*It is interesting and better to teach initial literacy in local languages. Teaching literacy in local languages makes learning easier for the learners because learning begins from the known to unknown. However, book writers for Grade One should consider adjusting the language that is used in the books to the one that the children use at home and during play.*

#### **4.3.4 Findings from Non-indigenous Teacher**

The first question sought to find out how good the teacher was in the language of initial literacy- Cinyanja. The response was that she was not very good. Asked on whether the teacher had problems in teaching initial literacy in Cinyanja this was what she had to say

*I have no problems in teaching initial literacy in Cinyanja. Initial literacy involves two components that are quite straight forward- the core vocabulary words and the key sentences. The sentences are made from words in the core vocabulary.*

She stated that problems come in when using Cinyanja to teach other subject matter and during pre-reading activities.

*Words in the story books are advanced and I don't know the meaning of some of them. Sometimes the pupils correct me but in other cases the pupils also don't know the meaning of the word.*



*For instance I didn't know that the word mbalame means bird and the pupils also didn't know.*

The researcher also sought to find out how the teacher dealt with such challenges to which the respondent stated that she consulted other teachers and tried to research on her own. The other question was on whether or not the teacher was adequately prepared to teach literacy in local languages. The response was that she was not adequately prepared:

*At college you are trained in the local language of the province where the college is. I did my teacher training at Solwezi teachers training college where I was trained in Lunda, Luvale and Kaonde. In addition there is very little time allocated to lectures in language teaching. Most of us leave college half-baked. What helps us is experience, consultation and research.*

Asked what could be done to improve the situation, it was put to the researcher that teachers should be taken to schools to practice so that they encounter the challenges first hand and see how best they could overcome them. Asked if this was not the same as teaching practice it was revealed that it was but when they went for teaching practice they were not allowed to teach Grade Ones and Seven because these were 'sensitive' classes. She further stated that there was no upgrading or in-service training in NBTL:

*However, there are two types of training-Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Grade Meetings at the Resource Centre (GRACE). Nowadays these are not helpful because in most cases the facilitators were also not trained in NBTL.*

It was suggested by this particular respondent that more strategies should be put in place so that these meetings can be done seriously with adequately equipped facilitators. On whether or not she enjoyed teaching NBTL, the teacher said that she enjoyed it and it was a good programme. It was put to the researcher that the learners learn faster when taught using NBTL.

*When taught in local languages the pupils learn fast. The NBTL programme is pupil-centred.*

#### **4.3.5 Findings from the School Manager**

The first question sought to find out how well teachers deployed to the school were prepared to teach initial literacy in local languages. It was revealed that the teachers were not very well prepared. The school manager said that:

*The NBTL programme at the time of its introduction came with an initial training for teachers to teach initial literacy in local languages. The training has since stopped and the only information the teachers have is the one they get in college. Some of the people giving the information were not even trained in NBTL.*

The other question aimed at establishing whether the school had challenges of teachers failing to teach well because the language of initial literacy was unfamiliar to them to which the response was that teachers that did not know Cinyanja experienced difficulties when teaching. Asked how this was resolved at the school level, the manager said that the teachers who had such problems consulted their colleagues, which of course was not enough. It was revealed to the researcher during the same interview session that the school manager observed lessons at least once a term and the experience was that it was challenging to teach

literacy in local languages especially in Lusaka where the language was foreign to both the learners and the teacher.

It was put to the researcher that selection of teachers to teach initial literacy was done by the senior teacher in charge of the lower section who considered the capacity of the teachers before assigning them a Grade One class. On the question of whether there was resistance from teachers selected to teach initial literacy this is what she had to say:

*All the time. Nobody wants to teach Grade ones. It's not easy because you don't only teach but you also have to build character. Most of our pupils here are beginners with no pre-school background. So you have two tasks: teaching and building character. Some of the other reasons given are that there is too much work and talking. And some say that they do not know Cinyanja very well.*

It was also put to the researcher that there was a linkage between the indigenous language of the teacher and the way he or she taught. The school manager said this was especially true for Lusaka province because of its uniqueness. Lusaka was unique because it was a cosmopolitan province with pupils speaking different languages.

*The Cinyanja that is spoken by the pupils is not the same language used in the books. What is in the books is CiChewa from Chadiza. In other provinces, however, the language that is spoken is the same language in which storybooks are written. Southern Province is one place where the Citonga spoken by learners at home is the same one used for initial literacy.*

The school manager recommended that English be reintroduced as the language of initial literacy instruction, at least for Lusaka which was cosmopolitan:

*... in fact some parents do not want to hear their children speaking Nyanja even at home. They prefer English to the local languages.*

#### **4.3.6 Findings from the Education Officer**

The officer revealed that there was no in-service training for teachers in NBTL.

*Every primary school teacher is trained to teach NBTL in any local languages as long as it is in Zambia. I know it is very difficult when one is just beginning but things get better with experience. When NBTL was introduced there used to be workshops where teachers were trained but without funding, things are difficult. It is now up to the districts and zones to ensure that their teachers are knowledgeable.*

The officer did not think that there was a difference in the reading performance of learners taught by indigenous teachers and those taught by non-indigenous teachers of Cinyanja.

*Of course you expect the teachers to teach differently because one is friendly with the language and the other one is not, but at the end of the day it is the same subject matter that is taught. So if there is a difference in the performance of the pupils maybe it can be attributed to other factors and not the teacher's language.*

Asked on the criteria used to select teachers to teach Grade One and whether teachers resist, it was put to the researcher that:

*Any person who trains as a basic school teacher can teach Grade One. Teachers are deployed in schools where there is a shortage of teachers. It does not matter which province they come. In some cases, depending on the need teachers are lucky they are sent to go and work where they applied. We have had a number of cases of teachers wanting to be transferred and communication has been among the reasons why teachers want to get transfers.*

## **Summary**

The findings presented above revealed that there was a difference in the reading performance of the learners. This was evident in the results obtained by learners in the test. The difference however, was not significant.

There was a linkage between the linguistic backgrounds of the two teachers and the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja. This was clear in the lessons that were observed. The non-indigenous teacher mispronounced most of the words in Cinyanja. In addition, she code switched and mixed languages more than the indigenous teacher did.

The findings also revealed that the teacher's training in the NBTL was a factor in the teaching of literacy. This chapter has presented the findings of the study. The next chapter discusses these findings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **Overview**

This chapter is a discussion of the findings of the study. The discussion is guided by the research objectives which were to: compare reading levels of Grade One pupils taught by indigenous speaking teachers and those taught by non-indigenous speaking teachers of Cinyanja; establish what the significant difference was (if any) and lastly to establish how the linguistic background of the teachers affected the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja.

It is important to note that the teacher variables included qualification of teachers, proficiency of teachers in the language of initial literacy instruction and training in NBTL. On the qualifications, both teachers had Primary Teacher Certificate. The indigenous teacher was trained in NBTL while the non-indigenous teacher was not. The indigenous teacher as the name suggests was familiar with Cinyanja as she was born and raised in the Easter Province of Zambia. The non-indigenous is Lunda and grew up in North Western Province. She lacked proficiency and was still learning Cinyanja at the time of the research. She was however familiar with Bemba.

#### **5.1 Reading performance of Grade One pupils taught by indigenous speakers and those taught by non-indigenous speakers of Cinyanja.**

The first objective was to compare the reading levels of Grade One pupils taught by indigenous speakers and those taught by non-indigenous speakers of Cinyanja. In the test, pupils from the indigenous teacher's class out-performed those from the non-indigenous teacher's class. The results showed that there was a difference in the reading performance of the learners. 16.3% of learners from the non-indigenous teacher's class (table 2) were not

able to read whereas only 6.1 % (table 1) of learners from the indigenous teacher's class could not read any of the core vocabulary items.

The difference in the reading performance of the learners was also obtained through the lesson observations. The researcher observed that at least more than half of the pupils from the indigenous speaking teacher's class could read not less than 10 of the core vocabulary words. In fact there were 7 pupils whom the researcher thought were very good and would definitely break through because they were able to read all the 19 core vocabulary words and could even read the story books on their own. In the non-indigenous speaking teacher's class however, only two pupils were able to read the story books on their own. This observation contradicts what was said by the two teachers and the education officer that there was no difference in reading performance of pupils from the two different classes. However, it is in agreement with Ojanen (2007) who after noticing the difficulties that teachers had in teaching NBTL and which she thought affected the pupils negatively suggested that teachers should be educated in linguistics so that they could have a firm understanding of the languages they are teaching. She added that it is difficult to teach things such as pronunciation, phonemes and spelling to the children. This information is needed just as much when the teacher is working in his or her mother tongue, as it provides possibility to recognise the reading difficulties of the pupils early.

Vygotsky (1978) in his social constructivist theory advocates that in order for learners to learn something they must be assisted by 'more knowledgeable' others who can be the parents, older peers at home and the teachers at school. It can be argued therefore that the pupils from the indigenous teacher's class performed better because their teacher was the 'more knowledgeable other' while those from the non-indigenous class were assisted by someone who was not knowledgeable in the language that was used. This affirms Ojanen's

(2007) observation that the teachers had difficulties teaching NBTL because they did not have firm understanding of the languages used to teach which affected the pupils negatively.

There was a difference in the performance of the learners in the test and this can partly be attributed to one teacher being an indigenous speaker and more familiar with the language of instruction, and the other one being a non-indigenous speaker and having difficulty using the language of instruction. Matafwali (2010) observed that low levels or total lack of proficiency in the target language were a typical feature of poor reading and writing skills among most learners. The same lack of proficiency affects teachers who are not familiar with the language of instruction. The implication therefore is that if teachers of initial literacy are not proficient in the language of instruction, which is Cinyanja, they would not teach according to the expected standards and this would in turn affect the reading levels of the learners.

## **5.2 Significant Difference**

The second objective was to establish whether the difference in reading performance was significant. The NBTL test results showed that the learners from the indigenous teacher's class performed better than those from the non-indigenous teacher's class.

To establish if the difference was significant, an independent T-test was performed. The results from the t-test showed that there was no significant difference in the performance of the pupils from the two classes in the test. This means that despite the teachers teaching differently which ultimately led to a difference in the reading performance of the learners, this was not significant and could not lead to some learners not breaking through.

The insignificant difference implies that the way the teachers taught did not have any significant impact on the reading levels of the pupils from their respective classes because the difference was not much.



The insignificant difference in the reading performance of the learners in the test is in line with what Medgyes (1996) contends that both 'native' and 'non-native' speaking teachers have equal rights to use a particular language and that there is no need to distinguish these two categories. He also asserts that "natives and non-natives stand an equal chance of achieving professional success." Phillipson (1996) argues that teachers are made and not born, whether they are natives or non-natives. This is further supported by UNESCO monograph (1953: 69) which states "a teacher is not adequately qualified to teach a language merely because it is his mother tongue". The implication here is that whether indigenous or non-indigenous teachers can teach effectively and help their learners to breakthrough to literacy as long as they are adequately trained.

The insignificant difference in the performance was also influenced by the fact that the readers from the two classes were poor readers. None of the pupils could read to the expected Grade level. Only a few pupils could read complete sentences. No group of readers could be distinguished as being better than the other they were homogenous.

### **5.3 How the linguistic background of the teachers affected the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja.**

The third and last objective of the study was to establish how the linguistic background of the teachers affected the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja. It should be noted from the outset that the non-indigenous teacher was not trained in NBTL while the indigenous teacher was trained. This was another factor that the researcher observed affected the way the teachers taught. The findings from the lesson observations revealed that there was a linkage between the linguistic background of the teacher and the way they taught NBTL in the classroom. This was also revealed by the teachers and the head teacher in the interviews that were conducted. The non-indigenous teacher, had difficulties teaching due to her lack of

proficiency and understanding of the language. This assertion is supported by Ojanen (2007), who observed that teachers had difficulties teaching NBTL because they did not have firm understanding of the languages used to teach which affected the pupils negatively.

The non-indigenous teacher was not proficient in Cinyanja. In fact, she could not even speak standard Cinyanja and had a limited vocabulary of Cinyanja words. This was evidenced in the use of bilingualism, code-switching and code-mixing instances and the constant mispronouncing and wrong usage of Cinyanja words. This is in line with Miti and Monako (2009) cited in who argued that due to multilingualism, when teachers were deployed to teach in primary schools others were taken to regions where the language used in initial literacy was not their mother tongue, they had great difficulty teaching. In such case teachers failed to teach initial literacy in the language that is recommended for that particular region. In addition, lack of a strong background in the mother tongue hindered most teachers from teaching Grade Ones effectively in the NBTL programme.

The findings presented in chapter four also revealed that the teacher lacked consistency in the use of the target language. For instance, instead of saying *tinali* or *tenze* (we were) the teacher said *twenze*. This was also observed in the word *zimene* (those) which was pronounced as *vyamene*. This was a result of the Lunda influence which is the indigenous language of the teacher. The teacher also used the English word 'story' instead of '*nthano*' which is in Cinyanja. This also was clear indication that the teacher was not proficient in Cinyanja and resorted to using English when she did not know a particular word in Cinyanja. The accent of the teacher also interfered with the way she read, leaving some words with a different meaning or no meaning at all.

The non-indigenous teacher also misled the pupils when she mispronounced some words. For example, the teacher mispronounced the word *kuguguzika* (dragging) as *kukulizika* which

literally has no meaning. The word *tiza silizila* (finish) was pronounced as *tuzasilila* which means “they (little things) will finish”. This changes the meaning of the word because of the way it is pronounced. This in turn leads to a change in the meaning of the entire sentence “So *apa ni pamene tuzasilila kubelenga*”. In fact the sentence would be misinterpreted by someone who is an indigenous speaker of Cichewa and does not know the Cinyanja that is spoken in Lusaka. The person would look at the sentence to mean ‘So this is where the little things will finish reading’ which is grammatically wrong and out of context for the lesson that was in progress. This is exactly what Mwanza (2012) found and he reports that the mispronouncing of words by the teachers due to mother tongue influence would eventually lead the pupils into learning the wrong words. He further retaliates that some of these words would in fact become different words with different meanings to indigenous speakers of the language (Mwanza, *ibid*).

Avery and Ehrlich (1987) recommended that in order to assist the learners to read, non-indigenous teachers should not retain a foreign accent in their language teaching profession as this is harmful to the students’ learning. Retaining a foreign accent may lead to teachers not being understood by their students as was the case with the non-indigenous teacher in our study.

The teacher failed to pronounce the words correctly and occasionally used Bemba ones. This situation worsened when the pupils corrected the teacher. For example when eliciting sentences from the observation poster, one of the pupils said that ‘*atate afuna kunyamula mwana*’ (father wants to lift the baby). The teacher responded by saying ‘*ehe! Atate apokelele mwana*’ (father is receiving the baby). The word ‘*apokelele*’ is a Bemba word for receiving. This is congruent with what Mwanza (2012) observed and reported that the teachers misled the pupils when they mispronounced most Cinyanja words. This according to Mwanza (*ibid*) was due to mother-tongue influence.

These semantic mispronunciations and misinterpretations expressed by the teacher and as observed by the researcher are also consistent with Ojanen (2007) who writes that “in order to give adequate instruction in Zambian Native Languages, teachers need to have profound knowledge of the language, its linguistics, pronunciation and standardised spelling. If the teachers themselves have been schooled in the English era, how could they have information of such issues without retraining?”

In this study, the non-indigenous teacher seemed to be learning Cinyanja and teaching at the same time. The teacher had a limitation in the use of language and could not explain certain things to the learners. This assertion is underscored by Rivers (1981) who notes that there are great problems for students if the teachers themselves do not have a ‘near-native like fluency’ with the language. The non-indigenous teacher was not familiar with the language and therefore was in no position to help the learners. Apparently, this teacher was assigned a grade one class when she did not know how to speak Cinyanja, which did not help the learners because someone who teaches initial literacy should be one who knows the language in which the learners are to know how to read and write. This is contrary to the social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) that the one helping learners to know something should be someone who knows more or is better than them such as an older peer, adult or teacher.

The teacher did not seem to be comfortable teaching using Cinyanja but only did so because she did not have a choice. The teacher said it herself that she had refused to teach Grade One because she did not know Cinyanja. She particularly pointed out the story books as being the most difficult. The findings presented in chapter four are a clear indication of this. The teacher failed to pronounce most of the words in the story, and unlike indigenous teacher who asked the learners whether they understood what she thought were difficult words, the non-indigenous teacher did not do this neither did she explain the words to the learners.

It was also observed that the teacher only knew a limited number of Cinyanja words some of which she did not even understand. During one of the lesson observations of non-indigenous teacher class, the researcher heard the teacher telling a pupil that '*ninachita mwai kumu pasa pencil munzako*' (I was lucky to give your friend pencil). What the teacher meant to say was that 'I felt sorry for your friend that is why I gave him a pencil' which should have been '*ninachita chifundo kumu pasa pencil munzako*' in Cinyanja. The mispronunciation and usage of wrong words was a result of the influence the teacher's indigenous language and a limited vocabulary of Cinyanja words, respectively. This showed that the teacher had difficulty in teaching NBTL because of her linguistic background. The teacher resorted to using English whenever she failed to express herself in Cinyanja. It seemed that the teacher was more comfortable with English especially when it came to giving instructions to the different pace groups and controlling the class.

The non-indigenous teacher seemed to have a difficulty with word meaning. During story time, the teacher paused to ask the pupils whether they understood the story or not, or better still what they thought would happen next in the story. However, teacher did not help the learners to understand some of the words. She did not simplify the words to the level of understanding of the learners. She knew what some words meant in Bemba but could not translate into Cinyanja. In cases where the pupils knew the word, they corrected the teacher and if they did not know, they went home without knowing. This is a clear indication that the language that was used was not familiar to both the teacher and the learners. This was actually confirmed by the school manager who said that "the language used for initial literacy was foreign to both the teachers and the pupils". The Cinyanja that was used to teach was different from the one that was spoken by the pupils, that which they were familiar with.

In one of the lessons, the teacher did not ask the pupils if they knew the meaning of the word '*yofila*'. This was obviously because she did not know the meaning of the word. The

researcher did not know the meaning of the word either and only knew that it was the Cichewa word for the colour red after asking the indigenous teacher. No wonder Chilora (2001) suggests that when learners are taught by teachers who speak their language, learning seems to be enhanced because the teacher knows and understands the language, thereby making teaching easier and more effective. Another word that was mispronounced and not corrected by non-indigenous teacher was the word '*malo*' (space). This word was pronounced as *malu*, a word which has no meaning. Apparently, this word used almost on a daily basis and the fact that the word was mispronounced was probably why some pupils could not read the sentences properly and pointed at words as '*malu*' instead of the space in between the words. This is consistent with Matafwali's (2010) assertion that lack of proficiency in the language of instruction could serve as an explanation to difficulties in learning to read. Low levels of proficiency on the part of the teachers could affect the learners' reading levels negatively. The implication here is that if teachers are not proficient in the language of initial literacy they would not teach according to the expected standards, which in turn would affect the reading levels.

The teacher's inability to teach appropriately also seemed to be as a result of her not being trained in NBTL. Because the teacher lacked training, she did not know how to go about teaching the NBTL step by step ensuring that her learners successfully achieved literacy skills. Maliyunda (2005) acknowledges that it is important to train teachers in NBTL methodology before giving them classes to teach initial literacy. Maliyunda's (ibid) argument is that a teacher without adequate orientation in NBTL methodology would face a lot of challenges in delivering lessons to learners. He cites time as a reason why student teachers are not adequately trained in NBTL methodology during pre-service training in college.

In addition to all these arguments Owino (1987) contends that when teachers are not fluent in English and African languages they make mistakes in teaching reading. So the teacher's

knowledge in both content and methodology is important if teaching of the initial literacy in local languages is to succeed.

Seeing that the non-indigenous teacher was not familiar with Cinyanja and actually did not understand some of the words that were supposed to be used in scaffolding the children so that they can read is an indication that the social constructivist teaching strategy was not being used. One wonders how the learners will move from the zone of proximal development to the next level, where they are able to read independently if the teacher, who is supposed to help them does not know.

The indigenous teacher on the other hand, was proficient in Cinyanja and was able to pronounce and use words correctly because her indigenous language was similar to the language of instruction and therefore she did not have a limited vocabulary of Cinyanja words. This showed that the indigenous teacher had no difficulty in teaching NBTL because of her linguistic background and training in NBTL. The teacher, unlike the non-indigenous teacher, did not resort to using English because she could express herself in Cinyanja. It seemed that the teacher was more comfortable with Cinyanja especially when it came to reading, giving instructions to the different ability groups and controlling the class.

In addition, a strong background in the mother tongue contributes to teachers teaching Grade Ones effectively in the NBTL programme. The findings presented in chapter four revealed that the teacher was consistent in the use of the target language. There were few code mixing and code-switching instances observed in the indigenous teacher's class. The indigenous teacher also often asked the learners if what she taught was clear or if they understood the story. If they said they did, the teacher asked them to retell the story. This is in conformity with the ideas of the social constructivist theory, particularly the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development and the notion of scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978; Dorn, 1996).

The teacher acted as a scaffold when she offered support to the learners. This support was gradually withdrawn and she asked the learners to read on their own or tell the story. The findings presented in chapter four also indicate that the teacher paused from time to time to explain certain content to the pupils. For instance the teacher made it clear that '*Tikamba ati mwana ngati ni umodzi. Bambili ni ana*' (we say a child if it is one. Children if they are many). This shows that the teacher was comfortable with using Cinyanja and ensured that her learners understood what she was talking about.

Chilora (2004:24) suggests that "when learners are taught by a teacher who speaks their language, the learning seems to be enhanced". This was particularly true for the indigenous teacher who was familiar with Cinyanja. To this, one can add that when a teacher teaches using a language that she knows and understands, it makes teaching easier and more effective. The indigenous teacher was more at ease and comfortable when teaching using the language. She was very helpful to her pupils. She was able to pronounce the words correctly and her accent did not interfere with the meaning of the words.

Apart from the linguistic background of the teachers, it is clear that the training of teachers in NBTL is vital if they are to teach initial literacy effectively. Not only was the indigenous teacher familiar with the language used for initial literacy but she was also trained in NBTL, a factor that contributed to her teaching effectively. This is consistent with Benson (2004) who highlights factors involve in delivering quality education. She cited language as standing out to be a key factor to communication and understanding in the classroom. Regarding teacher preparation, Benson (ibid) argues that compounds of chronic difficulties among them low levels of teacher education, poorly designed, inappropriate curricular and lack of school facilities, submersion make both learning and teaching difficult, particularly when the language of instruction is foreign to the teacher.



UNESCO (1953) also underscores the importance of training teachers in a monograph where it is clearly stated that “a teacher is not adequately trained to teach a language merely because it is his mother-tongue” (p.69). Phillipson (1996) sums it up when he argues that teachers are made rather than born, whether they are “natives” or “non-natives”.

One would argue that the indigenous teacher’s proficiency in the target language and her adequate training in NBTL qualify as training in mother tongue education, which is considered by UNESCO (2003) as vital towards improving educational quality.

It goes without saying therefore, that the two teachers taught differently because of their different linguistic backgrounds. The education officer in chapter four acknowledged that teachers with different linguistic backgrounds taught differently. He however, went on to state that this did not have any effect on the children’s ability to read. The findings on the non-indigenous teacher are not consistent with the social constructivist teaching strategy outlined in chapter two. Social constructivist theorists hold that learners are supposed to be assisted by the ‘more knowledgeable others’ (Vygotsky, 1978) who happen to be the teachers in this case.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, we have discussed the findings of the study. In the test, pupils from the indigenous teacher’s class out-performed those from the non-indigenous teacher’s class. The results showed that there was a difference in the reading performance of the learners, although this difference was not significant. The insignificant difference implies that the way the teachers taught did not have any significant impact on the reading levels of the pupils from their respective classes. The insignificant difference was also because of the low reading levels of the two groups of learners.

The linguistic background of the teachers affected the way the pupils read in class. Clearly, both teachers could teach NBTL well but the non-indigenous teacher had difficulty with pronunciation and word meaning.

The teachers' training in NBTL was also a factor. The indigenous teacher was efficient in her teaching due to her training in NBTL. Because she had first hand information in the course, she was able to teach with ease. The non-indigenous teacher on the other hand had some difficulty teaching because she was not trained in the NBTL course.

The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Overview**

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations. In this study the intention was to compare the reading performance of learners taught by indigenous speaking teachers and those taught by non-indigenous speaking teachers of Cinyanja.

#### **6.1 Conclusion**

The objectives of the study were 1) to compare the reading levels of Grade One pupils taught by indigenous and those taught by non-indigenous speaking teachers of Cinyanja; 2) to establish what the significant difference (if any) was; and 3) to establish how the linguistic backgrounds of the teachers affected the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja.

The reading performance of the pupils in the test revealed that pupils from the two classes were poor readers. Nevertheless, those who were taught by the indigenous teacher performed better than those from the non-indigenous teacher's class. The average scores of the learners from the indigenous and non-indigenous teachers' classes were 10.81 and 8.20, respectively.

Secondly, although there was a difference, it was not significant. After conducting the T- test in which the significance level was 0.05, it was found that  $t = -1.212$ ;  $df = 63.219$ ;  $p > 0.05$ .

The findings of the study further revealed that there was a linkage between the linguistic background of the teachers and the way they taught initial literacy in Cinyanja. The non-indigenous teacher had a lot of difficulty teaching initial literacy in Cinyanja. Due to her linguistic background, she was observed code-mixing and switching on many occasions. The teacher failed to pronounce the words correctly and occasionally used Bemba and English

words instead. Due to mother tongue interference, she mispronounced some words leaving them with a different meaning or no meaning at all. In addition to lack of proficiency in Cinyanja, the teacher did not understand some of the words that were supposed to be used when teaching. The non-indigenous teacher had problems in reading the core vocabulary words of the NBTL course.

The indigenous teacher on the other hand, was proficient in Cinyanja and was more comfortable using the language for initial literacy. She pronounced the words with fluency thereby making it easy for the pupils to understand. The teacher knew and understood the Cinyanja words and was able to simplify them to the level of understanding of the pupils.

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings stated above, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ministry of Education should intensify and strengthen the training of teachers in NBTL.
2. Only teachers who are trained in NBTL should teach initial literacy classes.
3. Indigenous speakers or those that are familiar with the language of instruction should be the ones to teach NBTL

## **6.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

In future, the following area is being suggested for possible research:

- Need to establish if the approaches used in NBTL are effective in helping children to learn to read and write.
- Need to compare the reading performance of learners taught by teachers who are trained in NBTL and those not trained in NBTL.

- Need to establish whether the Cinyanja that is used in the story books is appropriate for Grade One learners in Lusaka.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Lesson Observation Checklist

Class: .....Topic: ..... Date: .....

Sex of Teacher: ..... Indigenous/ Non-indigenous teacher: .....

Rating (Score 0-5) 5-Excellent; 4-Very Good; 3- Good; 2-Fair; 1-Poor; 0-Very Poor.

#### 1. Organisation and Analysis of Subject Matter

##### a) Lesson Plan

b) Relevant materials/ books

##### c) Pre-reading activities

d) Suitability of content to grade level

e) Suitability of linguistic level to grade level

#### 2. Presentation of the Lesson

a) Ability to follow lesson

b) Spelling and pronunciation of words

c) Words and meaning

d) Reading with fluency

#### 3. Teaching strategies

a) Lesson Introduction

b) Contextualization of vocabulary items in learners' world

c) Use of appropriate methodologies

d) Creativity and innovation

## **Appendix 2: Sample Interview Guide for Senior Standards Education Officer (SESO)**

1. Apart from the regular training that teachers undergo during their two years at college do you have any other training/ programme or workshops for teachers to teach initial literacy in local languages?
2. If your response to (1) above is yes, what measures exactly are put in place?
3. Seeing that all basic school teachers are trained in NBTL, do you think that NBTL develops reading competencies in teachers to enable them teach initial literacy in local languages?
4. How adequate are pre-service teachers prepared to teach initial literacy in local languages at the end of the two years ZATEC programme? Give reasons for your response.
5. Is there a difference in reading performance between learners taught by indigenous speaking and those taught by non-indigenous speaking teachers of Cinyanja?
6. If your answer to (5) above is yes, why do you think there is this difference?
7. Is the difference if any significant?
8. In cases where there is a difference, what measures do you put in place to assist the teachers?
9. In an effort to ensure that Grade One Learners receive the best quality education from qualified teachers, what challenges do you encounter?
10. What criteria are used to select teachers to teach literacy in Grade One?
11. Is there any resistance from teachers selected to teach literacy in Grade One?

### **Appendix 3: Sample Interview Guide for School Manager**

1. How well are the teachers deployed to your school prepared to teach initial literacy in Cinyanja?
2. Have you had any cases of teachers failing to deliver to the learners due to the language used for initial literacy?
3. If your answer to (2) above is yes, how have you handled such cases?
4. Have you had any cases or complaints from parents whose children say they do not communicate well/ understand what the teacher says?
5. If your answer to (3) above is yes, give details of the measures put in place.
6. How often do you observe lessons at your school, particularly in initial literacy?
7. On the occasions that you have observed the initial literacy lessons, what has been your experience?
8. What criteria are used to select teachers to teach literacy in Grade One?
9. Have you had any resistance from teachers selected to teach literacy in Grade One?

#### **Appendix 4: Sample Interview Guide for Teachers**

1. How good is your Cinyanja?
2. Do you have any problems teaching literacy in Cinyanja?
3. If your answer to (2) is yes, which ones?
4. If your answer to (2) is yes, are these problems due to you being indigenous/ non-indigenous?
5. In your view, were you well prepared at college to teach initial literacy in local languages?
6. If your answer to (5) above is no, what do you suggest should be done at college to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to handle initial literacy in local languages?
7. Have you had any upgrading/ in-service training in NBTL?
8. Do you enjoy teaching initial literacy? If not give reasons.
9. Do you think that the one hour allocated to NBTL on a daily basis is adequate? Explain your answer.
10. In teaching literacy in Cinyanja do you face any challenges?
11. What would you suggest that the government through the Ministry of Education should do in order to improve the NBTL programme?



## **Appendix 5: NBTL Achievement Test**

The 19 core vocabulary words in Cinyanja

<b>a</b>	<b>zo</b>
<b>mwana</b>	<b>bvala</b>
<b>lira</b>	<b>sa</b>
<b>li</b>	<b>tate</b>
<b>wa</b>	<b>ndi</b>
<b>uka</b>	<b>ku</b>
<b>konda</b>	<b>mwa</b>
<b>mai</b>	<b>capa</b>
<b>ke</b>	<b>malume</b>
<b>tiyi</b>	

## **Appendix 6: Informed Consent Form**

Dear respondent,

This serves to give you an understanding of the purpose of this research and the procedure that will be followed. The implications of your participation are explained below. Finally, you are required to sign this form to show that you agree to participate in this research.

### **Description**

This is an educational research. The researcher is a student at The University of Zambia pursuing a Masters Degree in Literacy and Learning. This research is a major requirement for completion of the programme. Therefore, this exercise is purely academic.

### **Purpose**

The researcher wishes to compare the reading performance in Cinyanja of learners taught by an indigenous speaking teacher and those taught by a non-indigenous speaking teacher of Cinyanja.

### **Consent**

Participation in this exercise is voluntary. You are free not to respond to some questions which you are not comfortable with.

Name:.....

Occupation:.....

Sign:.....

Thank You.