

**READING PERFORMANCE IN CINYANJA OF LEARNERS TAUGHT
BY AN INDIGENOUS TEACHER AND THOSE TAUGHT BY A NON-
INDIGENOUS TEACHER OF CINYANJA AT LOTUS BASIC SCHOOL,
LUSAKA.**

BY

MAO N. KACHINGA

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of a
Degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning**

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Lusaka**

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DECLARATION

I, Mao N. Kachinga, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a presentation of my own original work and that it has not been previously submitted for the award of a degree at the University of Zambia. I further declare that no published works or materials from other dissertations are reflected in this dissertation.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation by Mao N. Kachinga is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

Reading is at the core of the educational experience and one's ability to read is essential if they are to succeed in society. However, many Zambian children are not able to read at the expected grade level. These low literacy levels led the Zambian government to introduce a new literacy language policy called the Primary Reading Programme (PRP). It is under this programme that the New Break Through to Literacy (NBTL) course falls. This new language policy requires that children in Grade One are taught to read in a familiar language, preferably their mother tongue after which they switch to English in the second grade. In spite of all these changes in the language policy, the reading levels of many Zambian learners are still low (MoE, 2003; Kalindi, 2005; Ojanen, 2007; Matafwali, 2010). Could this be attributed to the teachers' linguistic backgrounds? It is in this respect that the present study sought to establish the differences in reading performance of initial learners taught by indigenous teachers and those taught by non-indigenous teachers of Cinyanja at Lotus Basic School, in Lusaka, Zambia.

The study was a case study and utilized both qualitative and quantitative designs. Interview guides, lesson observation checklist and the NBTL test were used to collect data. The target population comprised all Grade One learners in Lusaka District. 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. The two classes were sampled purposively. The Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) in charge of languages, school manager and the two teachers were also be sampled purposively.

The findings revealed that despite both groups of learners being poor readers, there was a difference in the reading performance of the learners from the two classes. The difference, however, was not significant. It was also revealed that the indigenous teacher was proficient and comfortable when teaching using Cinyanja while the non-indigenous teacher lacked proficiency and had difficulty teaching using Cinyanja. Lastly, the findings showed that there was a linkage between the linguistic background of the teachers and the way they taught NBTL in the classroom.

In view of the above findings, the following were recommended:

- Teachers trained in NBTL should be the ones to teach initial literacy.
- The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education should strengthen the training of teachers in NBTL at both pre-service and in-service level.
- Teachers who are not proficient in the language of initial literacy should not be forced to teach initial literacy classes.
- The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education at the school level should try by all means to have indigenous speakers of the target language teach initial literacy.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Ronald, my children, Chileshe and Takondwa for enduring my absence when they needed me most. It is also dedicated to my mum, Elizabeth for ensuring that I succeeded in my education despite her being a single parent.

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Mao N. Kachinga.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBRVIATIONS

EFL - English as a First Language

ESL - English as a Second Language

GRACE- Teacher Grade Meetings at the Resource Centre

MoE - Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education

NBTL - New Breakthrough to Literacy

PRP – Primary Reading Programme

SACMEQ - Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

SESO - Senior Education Standards Officer