DECLARATION

I, Moonga Alfred Hambayi, do declare that this piece of work is my own, and that all the works of other people have been duly acknowledged, and that this work has not been previously presented at this university and indeed any other universities for similar purposes.

Signed: ....................................................................................

Date: .....................................................................................
APPROVAL

This dissertation of Moonga Alfred Hambayi is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning.

Signed: .......................... Date: ...........................................

Signed: .......................... Date: ...........................................

Signed: .......................... Date: ...........................................
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Cynthia Kasamba Dumbula, for her unwavering love, patience, care and encouragements during the two year study. My wife, you actually gave me protection and hope to continue studying. You are such a blessing to me and our children, Lubono and Kasamba. This dissertation should therefore also inspire our children to attain greater heights in education.
ABSTRACT

Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) Programme has been incorporated in the Zambian education system because it has been viewed as one way access to education by many Zambian learners, especially the orphans and vulnerable children, can be enhanced. For that reason, the programme has received overwhelming support from both the government and the church. Apparently, the IRI programme has greatly expanded attracting a huge number of learners in rural areas. The concern therefore has also been on the quality of education such huge number of learners are receiving. Although the IRI programme has received much support, it has been established through conducted studies that their performance in literacy is below the expected level. This study investigated the underlying factors behind the low literacy gains among IRI learners. The study engaged with the central theoretical, methodological, and pragmatic challenges in the tradition of IRI programme and literacy development. The study specifically established the extent to which the IRI learners were engaged in the meaningful learning activities. It also established the effects mentor translations had on the learners. It as well established the challenges mentors faced when doing translations and it also shows how learners performed in literacy at the selected IRI center.

The data presented in this study were collected through lesson observations, initial literacy tests administered on the IRI learners as well as through interviews. The interviews in form of follow up questions were used as a way of clarifying on some observed behaviour and activity. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data.

The target population of this study comprised the Grade One (1) learners and the mentors handling Grade 1 learners from the selected IRI Center.
It was found that several factors contributed to the low literacy gains recorded among the IRI learners. The first one is the IRI mode of initial literacy lesson itself which restrained both the learners and the mentor on doing a variety of learning activities. The other factor is the aspect of translating radio teacher’s English instructions into the familiar language of the learners, which was not clearly done at times. The medium of instruction (English-to-Chitonga) was also established to have contributed to the low literacy gains recorded at LTMC; it confused both learners and the mentor and consequently distorted the progression of the lesson. Lack of full parental support in the learning of children at LTMC was another factor which could also have greatly contributed to the low literacy levels that obtained among the IRI learners.

This study recommended that the radio recordings should be in the familiar language of the learners so as to do away with the translations. It also recommended that the Educational Broadcasting Services in Zambia should ensure that the IRI lessons are put on soft copies which can be played and paused by the mentor. That would allow for more flexibility and allow more time for learner participation and for the mentor to do remedial work there and then. This study further recommended that parents/guardians should be actively involved in the learning of their children, and that there is need for refresher courses for mentor training and retraining.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is as a result of the contributions from many people. I therefore sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr. B. Matafwali for her scholarly guidance, which went as far as counseling and encouraging. This gave me hope to continue writing the dissertation amid many challenging circumstances.

I am deeply indebted to my sponsors, the NOMA project, for funding my studies at the University of Zambia. I also thank the coordinator of the NOMA project and Master of Education in Literacy and Learning programme, Dr. Luangala, for every effort he made to see to it that the project was a success. My gratefulness extends to all the lecturers who taught and gave me advice on how to go about scholarly writing. I appreciate the District Education Board Secretary in Monze, the priest in-charge of the Learning at Taonga Market programme under Radio Chikuni, Fr. Kelly Michelo and the mentor in charge of the IRI center from where the research was conducted. I also thank Mr. Dumbula and the family for the role they played in facilitating my movements to and from the research site.

I also thank my sisters, Ireen Moonga, Gorrety and Brenda for every help and information they gave me. I thank my parents for they braved their old age and continued giving me advice and encouragement and even financial support. Thank you, my dear parents!

To my brother-in-law and a childhood friend, Hilary Hazele, thank you very much for the scholarly advice and help.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my loving wife, Cynthia. She always cared and exercised her patience with me during the time I was writing this dissertation which kept me away from her most of the time.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration........................................................................................................ i  
Approval............................................................................................................ ii  
Dedication.......................................................................................................... iii  
Abstract............................................................................................................. iv  
Acknowledgements............................................................................................ vi  
List of Tables...................................................................................................... xi  
List of Graphs....................................................................................................... xii  
List of Abbreviations.......................................................................................... xiii  

CHAPTER ONE................................................................................................. 1  
INTRODUCTION............................................................................................... 1  
1.1. Overview..................................................................................................... 1  
1.2. Background to the Study.......................................................................... 1  
1.2.1. Radio and Education............................................................................ 1  
1.2.2. Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) Programme.................................... 1  
1.2.3. Learning at Taonga Market Programme............................................. 2  
1.2.4. Contextual Background...................................................................... 3  
1.3. Statement of the Problem......................................................................... 5  
1.4. The Purpose of the Study......................................................................... 5  
1.5. Objectives.................................................................................................. 6  
1.5.1. Main Objective.................................................................................... 6  
1.5.2. Specific Objectives.............................................................................. 6  
1.6. Research Questions................................................................................... 6  
1.6.1. Main Question.................................................................................... 6  
1.6.2. Sub-questions...................................................................................... 6  
1.7. Significance of the Study.......................................................................... 7  

vii
1.8. Delimitation of the Study ................................................................. 7
1.9. Limitations of the Study ................................................................. 7
1.10. Operational Definitions ............................................................... 8
1.11. Theoretical Framework ............................................................... 7

CHAPTER TWO ................................................................. 11

LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................. 11
2.1. Overview ...................................................................................... 11
2.2. Literacy Development ................................................................. 11

2.2.1. The Role Oral Language Plays Literacy Development ................. 11

2.2.2. The Role of Active Learning in the Development of literacy Skills .... 12
2.2.3. The Role Literacy Principles Play in Literacy Development .......... 15
2.3. The Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) Mode and Literacy ............... 18
2.4. Factors Contributing to Effective Learning ..................................... 21

2.4.1. Teacher Related Factors .......................................................... 21
2.4.2. Language Related Factors .......................................................... 23

2.4.2.1. Teacher Language Proficiency .................................................. 23
2.4.2.2. Learner Language Proficiency .................................................. 25
2.4.2.3. Classroom Management and Parental Involvement .................. 29

2.5. Chapter Summary ........................................................................ 31

CHAPTER THREE ................................................................. 33

METHODOLOGY ................................................................. 33
3.1. Overview ...................................................................................... 33

3.2. Research Design .......................................................................... 33

3.3. Population .................................................................................... 34

3.4. Target Population .......................................................................... 34

3.5. Sample and Sampling Procedure ................................................. 35
3.6. Data Collection Procedure................................................................. 36

3.7. Research Instruments........................................................................ 36

3.8. Data Analysis...................................................................................... 39

3.9. Procedure and Ethical Considerations................................................. 39

CHAPTER FOUR......................................................................................... 41

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS.......................................................... 41

4.1. Overview............................................................................................. 41

4.2. Learner Performance in Reading and Writing....................................... 41
4.2.1. Knowledge of the Letters of the Alphabet........................................ 42
4.2.2. Reading Abilities............................................................................. 43
4.2.3. Language Abilities.......................................................................... 44

4.3. Engagement of Learners in Meaningful Learning Activities................... 45
4.3.1. Learner Engagement........................................................................ 45

4.4. Effects of Mentor Translations on the Learners.................................... 49
4.5. Challenges Faced by the Mentor.......................................................... 51
4.5.1. Question and Answer....................................................................... 51
4.5.2. Class Management.......................................................................... 53
4.5.3. Pupil Motivation.............................................................................. 54
4.5.4. The Pace of the IRI Initial Literacy Lesson at LTMC......................... 54
4.5.5. Parental Involvement....................................................................... 55

4.6. Chapter Summary............................................................................... 57

CHAPTER FIVE.............................................................................................. 58

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS................................................................. 58

5.1. Overview............................................................................................. 58
5.2. Learner Performance.......................................................................... 58
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: IRI Learner Performance .................................................. 20
Table 2: Tabulation of Pupils’ Performance on Knowledge of the Letters of the Alphabet ........................................ 42
Table 3: Pupil Engagement ................................................................. 46
Table 4: Instructional Teaching Practice ........................................... 47
Table 5: Classroom Environment ...................................................... 48
Table 6: Classroom Culture ............................................................... 49
Table 7: Illustration of Parents’ Views ............................................... 56
LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1: Reasing Abilities Performance of the Learners .......................... 43

Graph 2: Pupil Performance on Language Ability Test ............................ 44

Graph 3: Performance in Writing .......................................................... 44
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DEBS ........................................District Education Board Secretary
DODE........................................ Directorate of Open and Distance Education
EBS ...........................................Educational Broadcasting Services
EDC...........................................Education Development Centre
GRZ...........................................Government of the Republic of Zambia
IRI……………………………….Interactive Radio Instruction
LTM……………………………..Learning at Taonga Market
LTMC…………………………... Learning at Taonga Market Center
MOE...........................................Ministry of Education
NOMA…………………………. Norwegian Masters
QUESTT………………………...Quality Education Services Through Technology
USAID…………………………..United States Agency for International Development