

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
TRANSITION FROM INSTRUCTION IN ZAMBIAN LANGUAGES LITERACY TO
ENGLISH AT GRADE THREE IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF MANSA
DISTRICT-ZAMBIA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Mumba Amos, do hereby solemnly declare that this report represents my own work, and all the works of other persons used have been duly acknowledged and that it has never been previously submitted at the University of Zambia or any other university.

Signature.....

Date.....

APPROVAL

This dissertation by Mumba Amos is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy, Language and Applied Linguistic of the University of Zambia.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife and children for their help and support throughout my entire life as well as encouraging me to do my master's degree. I also dedicate my lecturing career to coaching and equipping student teachers with quality content and pedagogical knowledge which would enable them to present systematic and explicit literacy instructions to all the learners in all Zambian primary schools in order to improve literacy levels and general academic performance of the learners. Above all, my heavenly Father for His uncountable blessings he has bestowed upon me.

ABSTRACT

The general purpose of the study was to assess how primary school teachers manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language (ZL) literacy to English at grade three. Specifically, it sought to examine whether learners are able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English; investigate how primary school teachers are managing the transition from ZL literacy to English and find out the challenges primary school teachers face in effectively implementing the transition from ZL literacy to English at grade three. Since the study focused on such objectives, the researcher selected an explanatory sequential mixed research design and employed methods of data collection from both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected using reading assessment tools in Zambian language and English, lesson observations, questionnaires, structured interviews and document analysis. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select six (6) primary schools implementing the transition method from three zones of Mansa urban district in Zambia. Hence, participants were also sampled on purpose such as six (6) primary school teachers, one (1) grade three teacher from each school. One (1) School In-set Coordinator (SIC), one (1) Zone In-set Coordinator (ZIC), one (1) District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC) and six (6) Head teachers as well as six (6) learners from each selected primary school were involved in the study. Therefore, the sample size for this research was 51. The study revealed that eighty percent of grade four learners were not able to transfer basic literacy skills from Zambian language to English. It was also discovered that some grade three teachers were teaching learners English language instead of literacy in English. While others employed Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS) which they thought was literacy in English language. These observations indicated that grade three teachers were not able to teach learners literacy in English. As result, the study found out that all the grade three teachers as key stakeholders were not adequately trained on how to manage the implementation of the transition from ZL literacy to English at grade three (3). Additionally, the study again found out that teaching and learning materials for literacy in English language were not adequately supplied to primary schools and the District Resource Centre. Based on the above findings, the study recommended that the Ministry of Education should organize training workshops on how to implement the transition from ZL literacy to English for all key stakeholders at provincial, district and

primary school level and provide them with appropriate and adequate teaching and learning materials to facilitate effective implementation. In addition, the District Recourse Centre Coordinator and Head teachers in primary schools should sustain literacy teaching knowledge and skills by organizing GRACE meetings for grade three teachers at the resource centre and Teacher Group Meetings in schools.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter begins by giving an account of the background of the study. Thereafter, it presents the statement of the problem under investigation, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, the significance of the study and its delimitation. Finally, operational definitions of terms are also presented.

1.1 Background to the Problem

In the education system of Zambia, improving literacy has always been the main priority and a national concern because of the persisting low literacy levels in the country for decades (Mkandawire et al., 2023; Tambulukani, 2015; Chipili, 2016). For this reason, there have been a number of interventions such as the Primary Reading Programme from 1999 to 2013 and Primary Literacy Programme from 2013 to date. This is because literacy is the key to achieving success in school and beyond (MoE, 2013).

These interventions above were introduced to correct mistakes in policy decisions made after independence when the Zambian government changed the colonial language policy (Manchishi, 2014). This was a change from the use of local languages in early grades before transitioning to English in the upper grades introduced as early as 1924. The use of local languages in the early grades was recommended to the colonial government by the Phelps-Stokes Commission that visited Northern Rhodesia as early as 1924. They also recommended that English was to be used in the upper grades to give African children access to European knowledge and information (MoE, 2021). This led to the Three Tier Language in Education Policy that was adopted by the colonial administration. In this policy, a local language of the area where the school was based was to be used as the language of instruction (LOI) in the first three years of primary school then a regional language was used from the third grade to the fifth after which English was the medium of instruction (MoE, 2021).

In 1963, a United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) mission visited Northern Rhodesia and recommended the use of English as a medium of instruction from grade one. Their argument was that the earlier learners started learning English the better would be their spoken and written language (MoE (TTE), 2021). In the Education Act of 1966, the Zambian government following the recommendation of UNESCO made English the sole medium of instruction in schools. However, in the years that followed literacy levels declined continuously. There was some debate in the country about this as could be seen in the educational reform documents, first in 1977 (MOE, 1977) and in *Focus on Learning* (MOE, 1992). But in both documents, while acknowledging this problem of the declining literacy levels among primary school leavers, no attempts were made to change the language in education policy nor were any interventions proposed to address the falling literacy levels.

It was not until 1996 that the Zambian government decided to act. In the new educational policy entitled *Educating Our Future* (MoE, 1996), the government while maintain English as a medium of instruction in schools, decided to reintroduce the use of Zambian languages as languages of initial literacy in the first grade. The use of Zambian languages would make learning easier for children transitioning from homes where English was not being spoken and it would also enable children to learn to read rapidly in their familiar language. Literacy skills acquired would be transferred to English in the second grade where English literacy would be introduced.

It was under *Educating Our Future* policy that the Ministry of Education introduced the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) which was fully implemented in 1999 and phased out in 2013 (Chibamba et al., 2018). It is cardinal to take note that all these changes took place in order to improve literacy levels in Zambia (Simwinga, 2006; Banda and Mwanza, 2017,; Mwanza, 2012). The PRP was a comprehensive seven- year plan of action aimed at improving the levels of literacy in the lower basic education sector through the New Breakthrough To Literacy (NBTL) (Grade 1), Step In To English (SITE) (Grade 2) and Read On Course (ROC) in the middle grades to upper grades (Grades 3-7) which was aimed at consolidating skills acquired in both Grade1 and Grade 2 (MOE, 2001). However, the introduction of the PRP did not help improve literacy levels among Zambian learners as reported by many studies (NLF, 2013, SACMEQ 2013).

Hence, the failure of the PRP to improve literacy levels necessitated the need to further come up with yet another literacy programme (Chileshe et al., 2018). In 2013, the Ministry of Education introduced the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) which was fully implemented nationwide in 2014 and it is still running in all the primary schools in Zambia (MoE, 2013). The main aim of this programme is to improve literacy instructions. It uses a systematic synthetic phonics approach and is taught in the seven official languages: Ibibemba, Citonga, Silozi, Lunda, Luvale, chinyanja, and Kikaonde. The Primary Literacy Programme also introduced the use of Zambian languages as media of instruction from Grade one to four so that there is more exposure to literacy in Zambian languages. It also brought in a change in method of teaching-from the eclectic PRP which involved a number of methods to only a synthetic phonics approach (Mkandawire, 2022). In addition, there was a longer period of literacy in Zambian languages, three years before the introduction of English literacy years compared to the two years during PRP.

Under this programme literacy is taught through the five competences identified in the literature (National Reading Panel, 2000). These are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The programme is systematic in that the sounds of the languages are introduced in a sequence based on frequently used sounds in each language. This ensures that learners encounter the most familiar sounds first before those that are less familiar. Learners learn to match sounds with letters, form syllables, and combine these into words and finally sentences (TTE, 2021).

According to the Primary Literacy Programme, literacy instruction in the local language is designed to give a strong foundation in literacy skills which can subsequently be transferred to English literacy in grade three, while at the same time sustaining and strengthening literacy in local languages.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As stated above, it is the aim of the Ministry of Education to not only enable learners become fluent readers and writers in their Zambian languages but also transfer these literacy skills to English language effectively from grade three (3) onwards. To facilitate this, the Ministry of Education introduced the teaching of basic literacy skills in local familiar languages (Zambian

languages) in grade one and later on expose learners to oral English in grade two to ensure that they become aware of English sounds which subsequently they link to graphemes (letters) in grade three as they transition to literacy in English. English serves as the medium of instruction from grade five onwards. This means that learners should have acquired adequate literacy skills in English to enable them use it for learning in different subjects across the curriculum. For this reason, it is cardinal that learners in grade three (3) acquire strong literacy skills in English to ensure good academic performance in their education journey. However, it was not known whether learners were able to transition their literacy skills from Zambian languages to English effectively; it was also not known whether grade three teachers were able to enable learners transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English; it was not even known whether grade three teachers were facing challenges when transitioning learners from literacy in ZL to English at grade three. The main research problem posed by the above concerns in question form is, ‘how did primary school teachers manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?’

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct an assessment on how primary school teachers managed the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three in selected primary schools of Mansa urban district in Zambia.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

In order to achieve the above purpose of the study, the research was guided by the following objectives:

1. To assess whether learners were able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English.
2. To examine how primary school teachers were managing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English.
3. To investigate the challenges primary school teachers face, if any, - in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three.

1.5 Research Questions

The research was guided by the following research questions:

1. Were learners able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English?
2. How did primary school teachers manage the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English?
3. What challenges were being faced by primary school teachers in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three?

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The findings of the study may inform specialists in literacy and policy makers to come up with measures that can improve the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English so as to enable learners transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English at grade three. In addition, the knowledge and skills included in the paper may help in-service teachers in primary schools to understand and follow the procedure of transitioning learners from Zambian language literacy to English in grade three and present literacy instructions in English language systematically and explicitly. It may also add value to the body of knowledge on the challenges primary teachers face during the implementation of the transition method and possible solutions for improvement and sustainability.

1.7 The Limitation of the Study

Limitations of the study are characteristics of design or methodology which impact or influence the normal flow of the study (Meredith et al, 2003). Hence, the limitations in this study are in terms of scale-few schools, regional selection and the use of local language so it is difficult to generalize. But it does give an indication of how primary school teachers manage the transition method and what might be the challenges to be addressed and paves way for others to replicate it in other contexts.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study was conducted in Luapula Province of Zambia, in selected primary schools of Mansa urban district.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Terms

The study used the following operational definitions:

Literacy: The ability to read fluently and write accurately for the purpose of communication.

Initial Literacy: This is the teaching foundational literacy in Grade 1.

Literacy policy: This is a reading and writing plan put in place by a particular nation in order to improve literacy levels.

Transition method: The National literacy plan of teaching learners literacy skills in ZL from grades 1 to 2 before learning how to read and write in English language in grade three.

Primary Reading Programme (PRP): The literacy programme in Zambia which has three literacy courses namely; NBTL, SITE and ROC that had been implemented in order to improve the reading and writing levels of learners in primary schools so that they learn effectively in all subjects across the curriculum. It was introduced in 1999 and phased out in 2013.

Primary Literacy Programme (PLP): A new programme of teaching literacy in Zambian primary schools aimed at improving literacy skills among primary school learners in Zambia. It was introduced in 2013 and still in operation.

1.10 Summary

In summary, this chapter has clearly discussed the background to the problem and other items such as: statement of the problem, purpose of the study; research objectives; research questions; significance of the study; delimitations and limitations of the study as well as operational definition of different terminologies. The following chapter will give a review of related literature following themes generated in relation with the research objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews relevant literature to this study from researches conducted globally, regionally and locally (Zambian) by scholars with respect to the challenges primary school teachers face in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English. The literature review also helps to identify the gaps in the existing knowledge that this study aims to fill. This chapter will also discuss the meaning of term literacy, importance of literacy and growth and development of literacy in Zambia. It will also review literature on the language and literacy policies that have been implemented in Zambia from independence to 2014. It will review literature on the teaching of literacy in Zambian languages focusing on the five competencies or skills of reading. Then, turn to the transfer of literacy skills from the first language to the second language and also look at how a teacher can facilitate this transfer of skills. Lastly, review of literature is categorized according to objectives of this study.

2.1 Conceptual Review of Literature

2.1.1 Concept of Literacy

First and foremost, literacy is defined as the ability to read, write, speak, and listen in a way that enables people to communicate effectively and make sense of the world. In the vein, the Nation Literacy Framework defines literacy as “the ability to read and write so as to understand and communicate effectively” (MOE, 2013:1). The ability to read and write facilitates effective teaching and learning of quality knowledge and skills which would enable a literate person to actively participate in social, economic, cultural and political activities. While in this study, the ability to read and write in Zambian languages should pave way for learners to learn how to read and write in English language as well as enhancing effective learning in other study areas in the upper grades.

In addition, literacy has been the concern for many organizations worldwide and it has been defined in different ways. For instance, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

(PIRLS) defines literacy as, “the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual”. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and in everyday life, and for enjoyment (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Foy, 2007:103).

In addition, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines literacy as, “understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve ones goals, to develop ones knowledge and potential, and to participate in society” (OECD, 2010:37). Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment describes literacy as, “the ability to read and write with understanding, a simple statement related to a person’s daily life.

During the UNESCO-led assessment meeting held in Germany on the international definitions of literacy, Montoya (2018:1) defined literacy as, ‘The ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.’ Literacy also involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society (UNESCO, 2004; 2017). Below were other definitions by UNESCO:

- Literacy is about the uses people make of it as a means of communication and expression, through a variety of media;
- Literacy is plural, being practiced in particular contexts for particular purposes and using specific languages;
- Literacy involves a continuum of learning measured at different proficient levels.

Basing on the above definitions, literacy is categorized into two namely; initial literacy and functional literacy.

2.1.2 Initial Literacy

To begin with, initial reading literacy development is the foundational process through which children acquire the skills necessary for reading and writing (Wildova, 2014). According to this study, initial literacy refers to teaching learners the basic literacy skills in Zambian languages from grade two (1) to two (2) and transitioning them to literacy in English language from grade three (3) to grade seven (7). In the same vein, Wildova (2014) describes initial literacy according

to the American style which encompasses several key stages as children progress from pre-K to high school. In addition, effective teaching of initial literacy is the main focus of this study and stages below give a clear picture of how literacy skills are transitioned from one grade level to another:

2.1.3 Emerging Literacy (Infancy and Toddlerhood):

During this stage, infants and toddlers begin to use their language and communication skills as a foundation for reading and writing. They apply their receptive (listening and understanding) and expressive (speaking and expressing themselves) language skills. Infants and toddlers also start distinguishing the differences and similarities between spoken and written language (Wildova, 2014).

2.1.4 Early Childhood Education

At this level, children engage in language play that fosters awareness of speech sounds. They learn letter names, sounds, and formation alongside basic language skills. Applying this knowledge, they begin to read printed words. With explicit instruction and practice, they become more fluent and develop a repertoire of sight words. Additionally, they build a lexicon of sounds, patterns, and morphemes needed to unlock unfamiliar words and texts (Wildova, 2014).

Primary school teacher should remember that reading development is influenced by factors like motivation, background knowledge, vocabulary, and cognitive skills. Each child's journey is unique, but these stages provide a general framework for understanding how literacy develops over time.

Additionally, literacy development is defined as the process of learning words, sounds, and language (Learning Without Tears, 2021). Children develop literacy skills in order to learn to read and write confidently and eventually improve their communication skills overall. The stages of literacy development that a child goes through can vary depending on the child's comprehension levels but generally include the same key concepts along the way. Learning without Tears (2021) makes an emphasis that understanding literacy development in children as an educator is a key for helping children master these core skills that set them up for their

education. With an understanding of literacy development and how to address each of the stages of literacy development, both educators and students alike will be set up for success in the classroom.

2.1.4 Why is it important for teachers to understand literacy development?

As the pillars of language and reading skills, literacy development is a crucial time in a child's life. Educators need to understand why literacy development is so important in order to effectively help children within each stage of their early literacy development.

Here are just a few reasons early literacy development is important:

- Children with confident reading abilities typically struggle less with their studies and have a confident approach to their education.
- Strong literacy skills translate well into independent learning and encourage consistent growth in and out of the classroom.
- Literacy development affects the way students communicate and problem solve. Those with strong literacy skills usually have improved cognitive ability (Learning Without Tears, 2021).

2.2 The Five Stages of Literacy Development

As a child grows older and demonstrates the key stages of literacy development they will improve their reading and writing ability. The five stages of literacy development include emergent literacy, alphabetic fluency, words and patterns, intermediate reading, and advanced reading. Each stage of literacy development helps the child move forward and become a stronger student. Keep in mind that a child's current age group doesn't necessarily mean that they're at that step in their early literacy development.

Stage 1: Emergent Literacy (Age Range: 4-6 years old).

As the earliest stage of literacy development, emergent literacy is the first moment that a child begins to understand letters and words. While many of the behaviors of the emergent literacy stage are not fully formed and irregular, these are still some of the first signs that a child is beginning to form literacy ability. Here are Some Behaviors of Stage 1 Learners:

- Pretending to be able to read children's books.
- The ability to recognize the first letter of their name.

- Singing the ABCs, even if unable to identify letters separately.
- Trying to memorize certain books to “read” them.
- The ability to recognize some letters and potentially their sound.
- The ability to find words in their environment (Learning Without Tears, 2021).

To learn helpful strategies to support emerging readers by helping them understand what alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness are and why they are both so critically important, teachers should be equipped with essential strategies to effectively teach letters and sounds. In the same vein, this study sought to find out whether teachers were fully prepared to hold the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three.

Stage 2: Alphabetic Fluency (Age Range: 6-7 years old).

As the child grows older and more comfortable with learning their words and letters, they enter the alphabetic fluency stage of literacy development. Here are Some Behaviors of Stage 2 Learners:

- No longer “pretend” reading.
- Finger-pointing to words while reading them.
- Beginning to recognize words.
- Admitting that they’re unable to read certain words.
- Using pictures and context clues to figure out certain words.
- Reading out loud word by word (Learning Without Tears, 2021).

Stage 3: Words and Patterns (Age Range: 7-9 years old).

Sometimes referred to as the “transitional” stage of literacy development, the words and patterns stage is when children begin to develop stronger reading skills. This is the stage when children can vary the most in terms of skills and may adopt behaviors in multiple stages of literacy development. Here are Some Behaviors of Stage 3 Learners:

- Less decoding of words and stronger ability to comprehend reading materials.
- More self-correction when what is read is unclear.
- Less sound by sound reading and easier time grouping letters.
- Able to recognize words that pop up most often automatically.
- Less reliance on context clues to figure out unknown words.
- Beginning to be able to spell complex consonant words like “-tch”.

Stage 4: Intermediate Reading (Age Range: 9-11 years old).

During the intermediate stage of literacy development, children begin to rely less on educational crutches that help a child learn new words. This is also when children are becoming able to write out sentences with less error and develop stronger fluency overall.

Here are Some Behaviors of Stage 4 Learners:

- Reading to learn new information and writing for multiple purposes.
- Less difficulty with independent reading.
- Reading to explore new concepts from numerous perspectives.
- Reading longer materials such as textbooks with little difficulty.
- An interest in wanting to learn and develop new vocabulary (Learning Without Tears, 2021).

Stage 5: Advanced Reading (Age Range: 11-14 years old).

As the last stage of literacy development, advanced reading is when children become fully fluent and capable of relying on independent reading to learn new information. Reading and writing provide little difficulty and students can absorb complex reading materials during this stage. Here are Some Behaviors of Stage 5 Learners:

- The desire to read numerous types of reading materials.
- Reading becomes a daily tool for learning new information.
- The ability to formulate longer texts such as essays or book reports.
- Readers usually have a strong understanding of the meaning and semantics of words.
- The ability to understand and retain complex reading materials (Learning Without Tears, 2021).

Each stage of literacy development provides its own unique challenges and triumphs in learning to become confident in reading and writing.

However, once a learner has achieved initial literacy and is able to use the reading and writing skills sufficiently for the purposes and activities in a person's social position, the learner is said to have achieved **functional literacy** (UNESCO, 2015). This is said to be the ability to apply what has been learned in relation to reading and writing. A person who is functionally literate may not be able to comprehend fully a complex written form such as a novel or a poem and able to function in society by using literacy skills. Further, the definition employed by the UNESCO

Institute for Statistics sees functional literacy as a level of reading, writing, and calculation skills sufficient to function in the particular community in which an individual lives.

In addition, during the national workshop of experts in Zambia which was held in 1998, a literate person was defined as one:

“ with the ability to read, write, calculate and interpret symbols for use and application for effective functioning of self, family, community and environment in which one is found (Chali,1998:10).”

Luchembe (2016) emphasizes the view that literacy is simply the mastery of the ability to read, write and do basic calculations relevant to the tasks at hand. This way of looking at literacy to a greater extent approves of Wagner's (2000) reasoning that a person deemed literate in one culture or setting would not necessarily be considered literate elsewhere. While, Chali's definition implies that a literate person should have the ability to read and write in one's mother language in order to fulfill the demands of one's life such as reading and writing letters; and the ability to make simple calculations in dealing with everyday demands, for example, basic budgeting, estimating quantities and telling time (Luchembe, 2016). Finally, the European Literacy Policy Network, as cited by Montoya (2018) asserted that literacy refers to the ability to read and write at a level whereby individuals can effectively understand and use written communication in all media that is be it print or electronic.

This section has defined literacy in different ways from different sources. It has also described in detail initial literacy, literacy development and functional literacy with clear examples. The following section will bring out the importance of literacy in education and social economic development of the nation.

Importance of Literacy

As stated in the previous page, it is evidently true that literacy is very important. Literacy is learning. Reading and writing are essential life skills. If children do not learn to read and write early enough in primary school, they cannot learn other subjects properly. Literacy is important in all spheres of life be it in social, cultural, political and economic life. This implies that this section is connected to the previous one where literacy was defined in different ways from

different sources and other related terminologies like initial literacy and functional literacy were also discussed. Therefore, the importance of literacy can best be discussed in the same order that is beginning with foundational literacy and end with functional literacy.

According to Institute of Education Sciences (IES) (2023), foundational literacy is crucial for children's success as readers and writers. These fundamental skills serve as the building blocks for more advanced literacy abilities. Below are the reasons why such skills matter:

- **Understanding Print Represents Speech:** Foundational literacy involves grasping that written words represent spoken language. This connection is essential for reading comprehension and communication.
- **Oral Language and Academic Vocabulary:** Developing strong oral language skills and expanding academic vocabulary are critical. Children who can express themselves effectively and understand complex words have a solid foundation for literacy.
- **Connecting Sounds with Letters:** Phonological awareness; the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken language, prepares children for decoding words when reading. It's like deciphering a secret code!
- **Sounding out Words and Spelling:** Proficiency in phonics (understanding letter-sound relationships) enables children to decode unfamiliar words. Spelling skills also contribute to effective writing.
- **Word Meaning:** Knowing the meanings of words enhances comprehension. A rich vocabulary allows children to understand texts more deeply.
- **Reading Fluency:** Fluent readers can read smoothly and with expression. This fluency is built upon foundational skills.
- **Making Meaning from Text:** Ultimately, literacy is about understanding and deriving meaning from what learners read. Strong foundational literacy sets the stage for lifelong learning and success.

The above foundational literacy skills are very important to a child's success in education and teachers should delivery explicit instructions to enable learners acquire such skills in their local familiar language. Therefore, this study sought to find out whether learners are

able to transition foundational literacy skills from Zambian language to literacy in English language.

In addition, the National Early Literacy Panel (2008) argues that foundational literacy is crucial for several reasons as listed below:

- **Academic Success:** Literacy skills are fundamental for learning across subjects. Students who read proficiently perform better in school.
- **Critical Thinking:** Literate individuals can analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information. They make informed decisions and solve problems effectively.
- **Communication:** Literacy enables effective communication through reading, writing, and speaking. It fosters social interaction and self-expression.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Literate adults have better job prospects and earning potential. They can access information and adapt to changing work environments.

This is a clear indication that teachers should remember that literacy is not just about decoding words but also about understanding, interpreting, and applying knowledge. Literacy empowers individuals and contributes to a thriving society. This statement leads the discussion to functional literacy.

According to Surwanti & Hilkimah (2019), functional literacy is a set of real skills: reading and writing, which in the context of a globalized world, means from a simple process of acquiring basic cognitive skills to use these skills by contributing to socio-economic development, to develop capacity for social awareness and critical reflection as a basis for personal and social change. Functional literacy can be situated from educational, social or political viewpoints. A functionally literate person is an individual who is able to read and write well enough to understand any signs, ads, newspaper headlines, and able to fill out job applications, make shopping lists, and writes (Groenestijn, 2003). A functionally literate person must be able to fulfill moral obligations including being able to provide for themselves in the society (Johnson, 2016). Higher literacy ability is resulted in greater work productivity and higher incomes especially in the context of employment and economic development (Bravo, Contreras, & Larrañaga, 2002 and Edwards & Corson, 1997).

Bhola and Gómez categorize functional literacy into autonomous literacy, critical literacy, ideological literacy, dysfunctional literacy, document literacy, narrative literacy/ prose literacy, numeracy or quantitative literacy, and integral literacy (2008). The low ability to comprehend reading or a text certainly affects many things. For example, the low understanding of literacy (especially digital literacy) has negative impacts such as the high rates of hoaxes, pornography, misuse of private content, to the spread of terrorism or radicalism in cyberspace (Hadi, 2019).

Functional literacy also helps people to:

- Read road signs so that they can avoid accidents.
- Read the Bible and write down some verses to prepare a sermon for delivery at church.
- Write an application letter when looking for employment.
- Read prescriptions written on medicine bottles from the hospital or clinic.
- Write a letter to your parents, guardians or siblings asking for money for transport.
- Fill in nomination forms in order to contest an election.
- Write an application letter to a bank in order to get a loan.
- Fill in various forms in one's life.
- Read to access new information.
- Read books for pleasure.

This clearly indicates that literacy is an important part of a globally competitive society. A literate society is able to transfer knowledge easily through the use of written information as well as document history, growth, and change within the society. Literate individuals are better able to engage in social activities, convey cultural learning and knowledge, and understand and respond to both political and economic situations within Zambia and the wider world (MoE (TTE), 2021).

In summary, literacy development is vital to overall development for children and survival for adults. For this reason, literacy is considered as the foundation for doing well at school, socialising with others, problem-solving, making decisions, developing independence, managing money and working.

2.2.1 Changes in Language Policies in Zambia since independence

It is important for this study to review literature on how language policies for literacy instructions have been changing since independence in Zambia. According to Mwansa and Kula (2022), Zambia has been grappling with poor literacy achievements among primary school learners for more than five decades. Research shows that low literacy levels in Zambia has been attributed to inconsistency of language policies for literacy instructions. Hence, it is important to look at language policies for literacy instructions that have been implemented since independence and see how they have contributed to low literacy levels in Zambia.

To begin with research shows that during the colonial period, missionaries in the area called Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) taught initial literacy skills using the local language as the language of instruction (LOI) and transitioned learners to English after grade 5 (MoE (TTE), 2021). A local language is a native language used within a given area or region. The local languages used for instruction were Cibemba, Citonga, Cinyanja, and Silozi. The colonial government also implemented this structure for education. MoE (TTE) (2021) makes it clear that the term local language is often used interchangeably with familiar language. For example, a child who grew up speaking Cibemba would also consider Cibemba to be ‘familiar’ to him or her. While, children who grow up in home where family members speak English though found in an area in which Cibemba is a local language would consider English to be a familiar language to them. However, English language was not used to teach initial literacy as a local familiar language anywhere in Zambia by then.

But, after Zambia’s independence in 1964, the UNIP government decided to change the language policy which the colonial government had recommended where local languages were used in the lower primary grades and English as medium of instruction was introduced in the fifth grade. In 1966, the Education Act indicated that English was the sole medium of instruction from the first grade and Zambian languages were to be taught as subjects. The recommendations of the UNESCO mission preceded the Act because they were the first to adopt English as medium of instruction from the beginning of Grade 1 to tertiary education for reasons of national unity as

well as a belief that the earlier a language was started, the better. (Linehan (2005). Since there were very few people who were educated by then, Mwanakatwe (2013) also points out that choosing a local language would have created problems such as shortage of teachers to teach the language. He further added the following advantages of using English as a universal medium of instruction from the beginning of schooling:

- Using English language as the language of instruction would enable learners to improve their spoken and written skills whilst at primary school level.
- Since English language would be introduced from the beginning of schooling, there would not be any emotional disturbance as used to be the case when learners shifted from the local languages to English as a medium of instruction in grade 5 during the colonial period.
- Using English language at upper primary level and in the secondary schools would be easy and straight forward as learners would have been learning in English from grade one.
- Exposure to more literature in English in the early grades would lead to a general improvement of children's educational development (Mwanakatwe, 2013)

The reasons above were used to enact the 1966 Education act that made English the sole medium of instruction in education from grade one to the tertiary level. Considerable resources were put in place over the years that followed to establish and run what was initially called, the English Medium Scheme, later to be called, the New Zambia Primary Course (Linehan, 1992:2).

Years later, the Draft Statement (1976) proposed that the structure of using local languages in primary grades 1–4 instruction be returned. However, the proposal was not well designed, and the 1977 Educational Reforms document reaffirmed the use of English as the language of instruction (LOI) across all levels of education in Zambia. However, the 1977 Educational Reforms document did acknowledge that learning is done best in a familiar language (Mwansa and Kula, 2022).

In 1992, a document entitled Focus on Learning replaced the 1977 Educational Reform policy document. This policy emphasised that children should use a local language of instruction until they were taught English and were able to transition to English as the LOI (Mwansa and Kula,

2022). This inferred that local languages were required to be used in all government primary schools. However, it became clear that the majority of learners were graduating from primary school unable to read and write after the English medium programme was implemented (Mwansa and Kula, 2022). This was contrary to the claim made by those who recommended the adoption of the English medium of instruction from Grade 1 that the earlier the learners started using English, the better would be their spoken and written English.

It was pointed out in *Focus on Learning* (1992) that the use of English as a sole medium of instruction downgraded the indigenous languages and did not foster appreciation for the learner's cultural heritage. The exclusive use of English also made the school an alien institution in the community. In spite of being aware of the negative consequences of an English-only medium of instruction on children's education, no practical steps were taken to change the language policy for the better (Mwansa and Kula, 2022). Williams (1998), for example, found that Zambian learners in Grades 3, 4 and 6, on average, were unable to read texts two grades below their level. He also found that Zambian learners were not performing better than Malawian learners in English literacy in spite of the fact that the latter began their education in the local language (Chichewa) before shifting to the English medium in Grade 4. In addition, the Malawian learners outperformed the Zambian learners in local language literacy.

Mwansa and Kula (2022) adds that another study in 1995 conducted as part of the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) assessed literacy and numeracy levels in the education system and reported that only 25.8% of the learners in Grade 6 could read at a level defined by teachers as minimum and only 2.3% at the desired level (SACMEQ 1998).

Then, as a way of arresting the falling literacy levels in primary school, the government replaced the 'straight into English' policy with *Educating Our Future* policy in 1996, a document which provided an opportunity for learners to learn initial basic skills of reading and writing in a local language in the first grade only, while English remained the official language of instruction in all other subjects. *Educating Our Future* is currently the language policy document in use across Zambia and paved a way for the new Primary Reading Programme (PRP) from 1999 to 2013,

which indicated that initial literacy was to be taught in one of the seven regional official languages in the first grade, but was closely followed by the introduction of English in the second grade (Mwansa and Kula, 2022).

In addition, during the pilot stage of the literacy component of the Primary Reading Programme, which was called the New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL), the results of the learners' reading performance were very promising: children were breaking through to literacy within a year and the reviewers claimed they were reading at a level equivalent to Grade 4 or higher (Linehan 2004). However, the abrupt shift to English literacy in the second grade appeared to arrest the development of reading skills in the local languages, and learners were unable to transfer their literacy skills from Zambian languages to English as envisaged in the policy document *Educating Our Future* (MOE 1996).

Mwansa and Kula (2022), points out that many new studies and assessments by both the Ministry of Education and non-governmental organisations on learners' literacy have since then continued to report low literacy levels in primary schools. For example, SACMEQ (III) of 2010 reported that only 27.4 per cent of Grade 6 learners tested in reading fluency read at the basic competence level. This and similar reports prompted government to once again reconsider its language in education policy in 2013.

For that reason, the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) was launched through a National Literacy Framework (MESVTEE 2013), and this came with a change in the language in education policy that now stipulated that the medium of instruction in the first four grades would be in a 'familiar' Zambian language, rather than just the regional languages. Literacy would initially be in familiar Zambian languages while literacy in English would be introduced in Grade 3 after an oral English course, which would start in Grade 2 (Mwansa and Kula, 2022). English would be used as a medium of instruction starting in Grade 5. This was a full circle return to the language in education policy in the colonial period up to independence. However, the main difference between this and the pre-independence policy was in allowing initial literacy in any mother tongue without restriction to the seven official regional languages.

This was a significant shift in all those areas where languages other than the seven regional languages are spoken. The National Literacy Framework (MESVTEE 2013: 12) acknowledges the importance of using a ‘familiar language’ (which seems to be used interchangeably and broadly understood as a mother tongue) and recommends that instruction be ‘in a familiar language, so as to build learners’ arsenal for learning to read in other languages as well as learning content subjects. However, in the subsequent Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (MESVTEE 2015), the term ‘familiar language’ is, unfortunately and counter to the wider language embracing approach expected, used in a rather more restricted way that is not equivalent to the mother tongue. It is defined as a local language that is commonly used by children in a particular locality. It could be a zone or community language (Iversen & Mkandawire, 2020; Mwansa and Kula, 2022).

Furthermore, Mwansa and Kula (2022) argues that although the document recommends for familiar language as LOI for basic literacy skills, it treats a familiar language as one of the seven zonal/regional languages: Cinyanja, Chitonga, Ibibemba, Kiikaonde, Lunda, widely used community languages in specific school catchment areas. They further expressed ignorance on how these ‘widely used community languages’ are selected or decided on which languages count within this framework and it essentially boils down to the dominant use of the regional languages as it was during the pre-colonial period. However, some language groups not represented by the seven official regional languages, and which can be deemed to be widely used community languages, have attempted to use their languages in primary schools but have not been successful or suffer many impediments due to the lack of resources and the inability to financially support such approaches without government assistance (Mwansa and Kula, 2022). According to Mwansa and Kula (2022), Namwanga is one of such languages where an attempt was made in the 1990s to the early 2000s. An association of Namwanga speakers (mainly educationists) produced a language course for Grade 1 called Chinamwanga amatampulo: ibuuku lyamusambiliizi (Mulilo 2005): ‘Steps in Chinamwanga: a learner’s coursebook’.

However, this was ultimately unsuccessful due to lack of funding as well as apathy from some teachers and learners in implementing it. As a result, Namwanga-speaking children have continued to learn through Ibibemba, the regional official language in the area (Mwansa and

Kula, 2022). Thus, the very encouraging policy to use familiar languages seems to practically revert to using only the regional national languages in early years and this is the current situation in Zambian primary schools.

2.2.2 Growth and Development of Literacy in Zambia

According to Luchembe (2016), literacy instruction was the earliest form of education that Zambia was introduced to by the early missionaries. Its growth and development can be traced to the pre-colonial period, company rule, colonial rule and post-independence periods. The missionaries set up numerous village schools where rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic were taught to children who stayed after religious instructions. Though the provision of some literacy training continued for a long time, village schools were poorly organized and were staffed by untrained teachers (Snelson, 1974).

For this reason, the Phelps-Stokes Commission visited Northern Rhodesia in June 1924 and made important recommendations to improve literacy education which laid out the Three Tier Language in Education Policy. In this policy, the local language was to be used for the language of instruction (LOI) in primary grades. Then, learners were expected to shift to the lingua franca, the most widely spoken language in the area. English was introduced in upper grades.

In 1943, the Colonial government recommended a system of education catering for both children and adults and appointed a Commissioner for Native Development who set up Area Development Centres, one in each province. These centres taught courses such as home craft, brickwork, carpentry, tailoring, leather work, blacksmithing and mass literacy (Mwansa, 2005). Alongside literacy organized by the Commissioner for Native Affairs, the Department of African Education was assigned the responsibility of conducting mass literacy in selected area. Some voluntary organizations and individuals also got interested in mass literacy work. Literacy was, however, overshadowed by skills training activity (Mwansa, 2005).

In 1963, a year before, Zambia's political independence, a UNESCO Mission visited Northern Rhodesia and found that 50% of pupils enrolled at grade 1 (Sub A) did not proceed beyond grade IV. The Mission observed that with the prospect of Northern Rhodesia becoming independent

there would be a motivation for starting a literacy campaign to create a literate electorate. Thus the Mission made many recommendations concerning adult literacy. First, it recommended literacy in English. Second, it recommended a six month literacy course for literacy teachers. Third, it recommended that literacy should be implemented by two ministries namely the Ministry responsible for Community Development (literacy related to hygiene, agriculture and community) and the Ministry responsible for Education (literacy in English) (Luchembe, 2016).

The recommendations of the mission were wide in scope but among government officials literacy was not taken seriously (Luchembe, 2016). Though some form of literacy was introduced in community development materials which were used, they were not suitable and those who attended classes soon relapsed into illiteracy (Maala & Mkandawire, 2022; Mwanakatwe, 1968). At the time of political independence, there were over one million adults who were not able to read and write (Mwanakatwe, 1968; Alexander, 1971) and adult illiteracy was estimated at 61%. The government saw the high illiteracy rate as an obstacle to economic development. For this reason, the government immediately thought of programmes aimed at reducing illiteracy among men and women so that they would meaningfully contribute to the development of the country. These are explained below:

- **Basic Literacy Programme**

In 1966, the Basic Literacy programme was launched by the Department of Community Development under the Ministry of Rural Development (Luchembe, 2016). This programme was earmarked to run from 1966 to 1971 and its main objective was to teach the three Rs i.e. writing, reading and arithmetic. It involved large numbers of participants with over 1,300 local volunteer teachers thereby making literacy a major national concern and not just the responsibility of few full time government officers (Mulenga, 2000; Mwansa, 2005). In addition, 16 literacy supervisors and eight literacy officers were trained to run the programme. Six primers entitled *umwenge* (meaning 'light') were used in the programme.

- **Functional Literacy (Agriculture)**

In 1970, functional literacy was introduced initially in two provinces namely Central and Southern as a pilot project but later was extended to Eastern and Northern provinces in 1974 (Luchembe, 2016). The following year, the programme was extended to North Western and Western Provinces. Thereafter, the remaining provinces were covered. The programme was

linked to the growing of more maize, the staple food of the country. And to supplement the project, a radio programme on literacy was introduced. It broadcast information on self-help programme, mother and child care, self-reliance and how to save money from their produce (Mwansa, 2005). This programme was jointly funded by the government and UNESCO.

- **Functional Literacy (Health and Nutrition)**

The period after 1978 was characterized by a decline in the provision of adult education and literacy mainly due to reductions in budgetary allocations to adult education brought about by severe economic crisis (Luchembe, 2016). In 1978, the Ministries of Education and Health in collaboration with FAO and WHO introduced a health and nutrition component into the on-going functional literacy programme. After a pilot study phase from 1978 to 1981 in three provinces namely Central, Lusaka and Southern, it was integrated into the Functional Literacy Programme nationally.

- **National Literacy Campaign**

In 1984, the Zambian government formed a national committee to identify feasible strategies of eradicating illiteracy following the Udaipur Conference organized by the International Council for Adult Education and the Germany Foundation for International Development (Mwansa, 2005). At the same time, the Women's Affairs Committee of United National Independence Party (UNIP), the ruling party then, created an inter-ministerial committee to examine the feasibility of launching a national literacy campaign following a conference to mark the United Nations Decade for Women (Luchembe, 2016). This sparked interest among women and in their working document proposed identification of needs, sending of study parties to Tanzania and Ethiopia to learn how those two countries had reduced illiteracy. Though the project failed to take off due to lack of resources, it contributed to the nurturing of political will among politicians and senior government officials (Mwansa, 2005).

In 1990 when UNESCO proclaimed the year 1990 International Literacy Year, a new committee (i.e. The National Literacy Campaign Committee) comprising non-governmental organizations and ministries was formed (Luchembe, 2016). The National Literacy Campaign Committee under the supervision of the Ministry of Community Development undertook three major activities in 1990 as follows:

- Under a joint committee of the Ministry of Community Development and Curriculum Centre of the Ministry of Education, literacy materials were reviewed and revised;
- The National Literacy Campaign Committee played an active role in the preparation of the country paper for the International Conference on Education-For-All held at Jomtien, Thailand; and
- Training workshops for literacy instructors were conducted in all provinces in preparation for a national literacy campaign (Luchembe, 2016).

The Government of the Republic of Zambia launched the first national literacy campaign on 10th October, 1990 (Luchembe, 2016). The goal of the campaign was to reduce illiteracy to 12 per cent by the year 2000. The beneficiaries were identified as ‘the underprivileged women and men who had attended school and those who had relapsed into illiteracy’ (ZAALIT, 1993). The campaign was designed to be implemented in phases starting with Lusaka, Western and Eastern Provinces. Later, it would be spread to North Western, Central and Southern Provinces. Then, (Luchembe, 2016). However, no time frame was fixed for any of these regions.

In 1992, the government established the Zambia National Alliance for the Advancement of Literacy (ZAALIT) (Luchembe, 2016). The main goal of ZAALIT was to design and implement a campaign to eradicate adult illiteracy. By 1993, ZAALIT had established over 1,000 classes with an enrolment of 25,243 students (ZAALIT, 1993). However, like other previous campaigns ZAALIT was also faced with lack of adequate funds.

The government of the Republic of Zambia released the second policy document on education: Focus on Learning. The main thrust of Focus on Learning was the mobilization of resources for the development of formal education. Then in 1996, the final Draft of the Education Support Implementation Programme (ESIP) document, Investing in our People and the 1996 Educating Our Future were released (Luchembe, 2016). Both documents recognised the central importance of adult continuing education and literacy. Furthermore, both documents also acknowledged that adult continuing education faced serious problems of underfunding, lack of skilled personnel and transport, inadequate materials for learning and teaching and poor coordination (Mkandawire & Tambulukani, 2017; Lungu & Mkandawire, 2022). It was again noted that although there was

potential for enormous growth in the number of students reached by adult continuing programmes, the capacity to sustain immediate and rapid growth did not exist (Ministry of Education, 1996).

In 1966, the Education Act legislated that English would become the LOI from grade 1 until the end of tertiary education. Years later, the 1977 Educational Reforms proposed a return to local languages as the LOI in the early grades, but this was not agreed upon. English was still to be used as the LOI (MoE (TTE), 2021). Following these reforms, Focus on Learning (1992) attempted to again return to local languages used in the early grades but once again this policy was not implemented, but it was not until the Educating Our Future (1996) policy document came in to force, that things changed. The policy recommended that learners be given opportunities to use a local or familiar language when learning foundational reading and writing skills and then later transition to English as the official language of instruction (MoE, 1996). It was under this current policy that MoE introduced the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) which was fully implemented in 1999 and phased out in 2013 (Chibamba et al., 2018). The PRP is discussed next.

2.2.3 Primary Reading Programme (PRP 1999-2013)

The PRP was a literacy programme implemented in Zambia in 1999 and phased out in 2013. It used a language experience approach and a whole language approach to phonics instruction (Sampa et al., 2018). Language experience approaches ‘promote reading and writing through the use of personal experience and oral language’ (Taylor, 2000, para. 1).

The PRP consisted of three parts:

- New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL) is a course through which learners spent an hour each day learning to read fluently and write easily and accurately in their local language in grade 1. There was also an oral English course called Pathway to English that taught English language twice a week to ensure that learners develop enough English language to learn literacy in English in grade 2 (MoE (TTE), 2021).
- Step into English (SITE) is a literacy course that enabled learners to read fluently and to write clearly and accurately in grade 2. This helped learners to build onto literacy

skills they would have acquired reading in their local language in grade 1. The Pathway to English course was for oral English in grade 2 (MoE (TTE), 2021).

- Read on Course (ROC) is a literacy course for grades 3–7 to support reading and writing in both local and English languages. It consists of a single teacher’s guide that helped teachers identify the reading ability levels of learners and provided appropriate learning activities to help them improve their literacy skills (MoE (TTE), 2021).

While the PRP sought to improve learners’ literacy outcomes, research studies have demonstrated that improvements could have been better. For example, the baseline study of the Zambian PRP (1999) found that among the learners tested in grades 1–6, the majority of children were reading two grades below grade level in English and three grades below level in their own Zambian languages (MoE (TTE), 2021). The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (Musonda & Kaba, 2011) assessed 2,895 grade 6 learners who attended a registered primary school in reading. They divided reading competencies into eight levels ranging in order of complexity: pre-reading, emergent reading, basic reading, reading for meaning, interpretive meaning, inferential reading, analytical reading, and critical reading. The majority of the learners assessed were reading at level 2: Emergent reading.

Indeed, there are numerous factors associated with learner outcomes besides what takes place in the classroom (e.g. parental beliefs towards literacy, the language background of both teachers and learners, learner absenteeism, learner motivation), but there were specific aspects of the PRP that did not support best practices for literacy instruction (Chibamba et al., 2018). Literacy instruction that begins with developing a foundation in letter-sound recognition improves learner outcomes (Honig et al., 2000), a component that the PRP was lacking in. However, there was also another critical aspect lacking in the programme; reading instruction was taught using a local or familiar language up through grade 1 with children then transitioning to English in grade 2 (Sampa et al., 2018). Yet, research shows that when children learn how to read in a language, they are most familiar with, they can transfer that knowledge to learning a new language (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training & Early Education, 2013). The inability for the PRP to improve learner outcomes provided impetus for another educational policy change and the emergence of the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP).

2.2.4 Primary Literacy Programme (PLP 2013 to date)

According to Tambulukani et al. (2018), the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) started in 2013 by the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) with support from cooperating partners, as an intervention initiative to help address the weaknesses noted under the Primary Reading Programme. This interposition programme, emphasized the use of a familiar local Zambian language as the medium of instruction from pre-school to grade 4.

The PLP adopted the process of learning to read that is based on the principles of provision of the big five key competence skills, namely, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension (Tambulukani et al., 2018). Therefore, in terms of having an effective approach for teaching reading, the MESVTEE reviewed the Primary Reading Program (PRP) and realized the need to first have a National Literacy Framework. In March 2013, with support from USAID/Zambia Read to Succeed Project, MESVTEE developed a draft National Literacy Framework for grade 1 to 7 that established the roadmap for literacy teaching in primary schools (MESVTEE, 2013).

The Primary Literacy Programme took a different approach as far as literacy instruction was concerned. Its major emphasis was on starting with phonics or the teaching of letter sound relationship in early Grades using the seven regional official languages, namely; Icibemba, Tonga, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale Cinyanja and Kikaonde (Tambulukani et al., 2018). This was not the case in the PRP where the whole language approach was emphasized. It was expected that before the official launch of the Primary Literacy Programme, stake holders for the implementation of the programme such as primary school teachers and primary teacher training college staff that were training primary education teachers would be trained in the new method.

This was done because some primary school teachers especially those teaching Grade 1, were not adequately trained in teaching literacy. College and University staff training primary early grade teachers were themselves not even oriented but were left to figure it out by themselves (Tambulukani et al., 2018). This partly affected the effective implementation of the PLP programme. In this case, when one teacher is promoted or retired, it is not easy to find a good

replacement. Another interesting aspect is that in the PLP, the teaching and learning materials were reduced to three as compared NBTL of PRP where there were several materials in a kit. PLP relied much on the Teacher's Guide, Learners' Activity Book and teacher created resources such as Decodable stories, charts and others.

In other words, in terms of literacy instruction PLP has two course books; the Teacher's Guide and the learner's Activity Book. The Teacher's Guide contains all the lessons required to be taught from term 1 to term 3 in each grade year. The lessons in the teacher's guide correspond to the activities in the learner's book. It is also important to know that the lessons in the teacher's guide are written in all the seven prescribed regional languages (Tambulukani et al., 2018). This makes it easy for a teacher to teach in other languages should there be a transfer. The sounds to be taught are also graded starting with the most frequently used to the least. This arrangement has reduced teacher preparation time and the materials are cost effective and comparatively easy to reproduce (Tambulukani et al., 2018).

Although the approach, just like in PRP was based on oral language skills and learners' vocabulary, PLP enables learners to attend to specific letter sounds, and connections between letters and sounds. In this approach learners identify sounds, read syllables, form and read words proficiently with speed and accuracy and understanding (Tambulukani et al., 2018). It enables learners to attend to specific letter sounds, that aid them to make connections between letters and sounds and facilitates their reading skills.

In addition, the programme is systematic in that the sounds of the languages are introduced in sequence based on frequently used sounds (MoE (TTE), 2021). This ensures that learners encounter the most familiar sounds first before those that are less familiar. Learners are taught that these sounds are mapped to letters, the letters form syllables and words, and words form sentences. The expected outcomes of the PLP as outlined by the NLF (MESVTEE, 2013) following Grades and Competencies expected to be achieved by learners as shown below:

Grade one (1): Show skills of reading initial sounds (e.g. letters, syllables, and words); and demonstrate basic skills in reading and writing common words and simple sentences.

Grade two (2): Demonstrate basic skills in reading and writing short paragraphs; and show understanding of short written text.

Grade three (3): Write legibly and neatly in script and cursive forms and communicate in speech in different situations.

Grade four (4): Demonstrate basic skills and knowledge to:

- retell a story
- punctuate simple sentences and short paragraphs
- describe various activities, objects, places, actions, and simple processes

Grade five (5): Demonstrate skills and knowledge to express feelings, thoughts, experiences, and convictions clearly and effectively in speech and writing at this level; and demonstrate ability to read with steady and clear comprehension.

Grade six (6): Demonstrate high level skills, knowledge, and values in a Zambian language to express feelings, thoughts, experiences, and convictions clearly and effectively in speech and writing at this level; and demonstrate ability to read with steady and clear comprehension

Grade seven (7): Demonstrate high level skills, knowledge, and values in a Zambian language to express feelings, thoughts, experiences, and convictions clearly and effectively in speech and writing; Demonstrate high level skills, knowledge, and values by integrating life skills in academic and challenges in life while at this level and the other levels (MoE (TTE), 2021).

Five Key Component Skills of Literacy under Primary Literacy Programme

The PLP approach to teaching literacy follows internationally recognized methods that include teaching the component skills that are required for reading and writing (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education, 2013). The English Language Curriculum Guide reiterates that learners should be given real-world tasks that reflect the integration of all language skills (Early Grade Reading Assessment, 2004). According to Mine (2005), reading and writing are both important in a balanced literacy programme. Therefore, in most alphabetic languages in which print can be decoded into sounds, being able to read well requires that a learner grasps the five basic skills namely; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (Jiminez and O'Shanahan Juan, 2008). This approach introduces sounds made when people speak and the symbols representing those sounds before exposing the learners

to word formation. Using the knowledge that the learners already have, PLP helps learners see what they already know in print.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonology refers to the study of meaningful sounds in a language. These meaningful sounds in a language are known as phonemes (Mwansa, 2016). When a person is able to tell which sounds make up a word or words, we say she/he has phonemic awareness. Therefore, Phonemic awareness is defined as the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the sounds in spoken words. It is at this stage where learners are taught the systematic relationship between the sounds and the letters and letter combination (National Reading Panel, 2000). For this reason, Phonemic awareness enables learners to associate sounds with letters and use these sounds to read words. In other words, before learners learn to read print, they must become aware of the sounds in language. In short, learners are taught how to identify letter sounds, blend them to form syllables and use syllables to form words verbally. Hence, teachers should make phonemic awareness activities simple and interesting in order to enable learners learn through play (Yopp and Yopp, 2000). If Phonemic awareness activities are presented to learners in a meaningful and helpful manner, learners would be able to read words with fewer difficulties. Phonemic awareness activities are important because “children are expected to transfer reading skills to English” (Mwansa 2017:122). For this reason, it is important for teachers to clearly and consistently pronounce the sounds they are teaching. Therefore, teachers should develop and continually refine their ability to clearly pronounce the phonemes in order to set a standard. Additionally, within the five minutes given they need to model the pronunciation of letters and demonstrate how to blend the letters in order (initial, medial and final) through a word.

Mwansa (2016) further says that Phonemic awareness is a listening skill that involves listening for a sound and making the sound. Phonological awareness is a closely-related skill that involves not only this ability to tell that words are made up of phonemes but that words can also be cut up into other larger units such as syllables, onsets and rhymes. The words ‘onset’ and ‘rhyme’ refer to parts of a syllable. A syllable such as the word ‘cat’ consists of the onset which is the consonant ‘c’ before the vowel ‘a’ and a rhyme which is made up of the vowel together with the following consonant ‘t’ . A word like cat rhymes with pat because in both the rhyme is ‘at.’ In grades 1 and 2 teachers used phonemic awareness activities such as asking learners to tell which

sound a word began with or ended with or whether a particular sound was found in a word or words (Mwansa, 2016).

2.3 Why should primary school teachers teach phonemic awareness during literacy lessons in English language?

Phonemic awareness is a key skill in beginning reading because letters in the alphabetic writing system represent sounds in a language. For this reason, Mwansa, (2016) points out that learners must first be able to tell that words are made up of individual sounds or phonemes, and it is these phonemes that are represented by letter forms. Mwansa (2016) adds that when words are dictated to them, learners must be able to mentally separate a word into its individual phonemes to be able to spell it; to read, they must sound out all the phonemes in a word and be able to blend or put all the sounds together to form a word. Phonemic awareness is thus a strong predictor of how well children will learn to read in the early grades (National Reading Panel, 2000).

2.3.1 What are the important phonemic awareness skills in English language literacy?

According to Mwansa (2016), learners are considered to have had practice in phonemic and phonological awareness activities in their own Zambian language in grades 1 and 2 through a variety of activities and they portrayed skills such as identifying words with the same beginning sound, isolating the beginning sound, blending sounds into words, breaking words apart into individual sounds, adding sounds, deleting sounds, substituting sounds. In the PLP, phonemic awareness and phonological awareness were considered together and called “Phonemic Awareness;” and that is how they are referred to in the manual on Effective Practices for Transitioning from Literacy in Zambian Languages to Literacy in English (Mwansa, 2016).

2.3.2 How do primary school teachers teach phonemic awareness in English language literacy?

Research shows that if children have phonemic awareness skills in their first language, they can often transfer them to learning a second language (Gersten & Geva, 2003). Thus, for learners who have developed phonemic awareness skills in their Zambian language, teachers do not have to “start over” in teaching phonemic awareness. Moreover, some of these sounds from their Zambian languages are the same in English; learners already know these sounds from grade 1

and 2. When learners begin learning English, however, there will be some sounds that do not exist in their own language. To successfully transfer their phonemic awareness skills, learners must be familiar with and able to hear and produce all of the sounds in English (Irujo, 2007). Mwansa (2016) adds to the previous point that this is one reason why learners are taught oral English in grade 2, so that they get used to hearing English phonemes in words before they are taught literacy in English in grade 3.

When teachers introduce a new letter sound in English, research shows that phonemic awareness activities are most helpful when they are tied to a phonics activity (Bradley & Bryant, 1985; Byrne, 1998; Share, 1995). For example, first learners listen for the new sound, make the sound themselves (as best they can), listen for words that begin with that sound, and then put the new letter sound with the new letter form (phonics).

The teacher should model the correct pronunciation of the new letter sound and give learners an opportunity to repeat and practice it (Robertson, 2009). As the teacher models and learners repeat, the teacher can ask them to focus on the position of the lips, tongue and teeth (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

Additionally, it is important to note that when learners make the new letter sound, it may be difficult for them to pronounce. That is to be expected if it is a sound that is not within the sounds of their first language. The primary concern here is that learners can read the words and understand the written and spoken meanings. Mwansa (2016) suggests that correct pronunciation will come later.

As stated above, instruction in phonemic awareness typically targets learner in grades one and two. In instances where grade three readers have challenges noticing, thinking about, and manipulating the sounds in English language, then providing interventions may be necessary. A collection of practice activities are given below to guide support. Phonemic awareness skills are critical skills in reading development.

These activities are intended to provide opportunities for teachers to play with sounds in words in a fun and engaging way. Each activity has examples of words that will get them started with building phonemic awareness with learners. The purpose is to have learners build understanding of phonemic awareness by listening to and manipulating sounds in words.

Phoneme Isolation of Initial and Final Sounds

2 Phoneme Isolation of Initial Sound

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she is going to say a word, and it will be their job to say the first or initial sound they hear.

Example: “I am going to say a word and then say the initial or first sound in the word. The word is man. The initial or first sound is /m/. Now it’s your turn.”

- (i) Fish
- (ii) Bowl
- (iii) Nest
- (iv) Said
- (v) Ship
- (vi) There

3 Phoneme Isolation of Final Sound

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she is going to say a word, and it will be their job to say the final or last sound they hear.

Example: “I am going to say a word and then say the final or last sound. The word is book. The final sound is /k/. Now it’s your turn.”

- (i) Bike
- (ii) Wheel
- (iii) Stairs
- (iv) Tree
- (v) Table

Phoneme Blending

4 Phoneme Blending - Onset and Rime

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she is going to break up words into parts, or onset and rime. It is their job to put the two sounds together and say the whole word.

Example: “I am going to say the sounds and then I’ll put the word together. /r/ /an/. The word is ran. Let’s practice one more time. The parts are /m/ /op/. The word is mop. Now it’s your turn.”

- (i) /c/ /up/
- (ii) /sh/ /ip/
- (iii) /th/ /ree/
- (iv) /ch/ /eck/
- (v) /fr/ /og/

5 Phoneme Blending - All Phonemes

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she is going to separate all the sounds in a word and it is their job to say the whole word.

Example: “I am going to say a word by isolating or separating each sound in the word and then say the word together. /b/ /u/ /g/. The word is bug. Let’s practice one more time. /p/ /l/ /a/ /n/ /t/. The word is plant. Now it’s your turn.”

- (i) /r/ /a/ /t/
- (ii) /f/ /oo/ /t/
- (iii) /s/ /p/ /ee/ /d/
- (iv) /s/ /k/ /a/ /t/
- (v) /s/ /w/ /ee/ /t/

Adding Phonemes

6 Adding Phonemes

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she is going to add a sound at the beginning of a word. It is their job to say the new word.

Example: “I am going to add the sound /s/ to the word at. My new word is sat. Now it’s your turn.”

- (i) Add /s/ to top – stop
- (ii) Add /t/ to rain – train
- (iii) Add /d/ to ream – dream
- (iv) Add /b/ to room – broom
- (v) Add /t/ to race - trace

Phoneme Deletion

7 Phoneme Deletion of Initial Sound

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she is going to say a word but drop the first or initial sound in the word. It is their job to say the word without the initial or first sound.

Example: "I am going to say dog without the first or initial sound. /og/. Now it's your turn."

- (i) Rocket- ocket
- (ii) Cement – ement
- (iii) Grow – row
- (iv) Block – lock
- (v) Plug - lug

8 Phoneme Deletion of Final Sound

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she is going to say a word but drop the final sound in the word. It is their job to say the word without the final sound.

Example: "I am going to say the word bike without the final sound. Bike becomes /by/. Now it is your turn."

- (i) Road- row
- (ii) Goat- go
- (iii) Couch – cow
- (iv) Bean – be
- (v) Teach – tea

Phoneme Substitution

9 Phoneme Substitution of Initial Sound

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she will make a new word by changing the initial or first sound to make a new word. It is their job to say the new word.

Example: "I am going to make new words by changing the initial or first sound in cat. If I change /c/ in cat to /b/, the new word is bat. Now it's your turn."

- (i) Change /f/ in fall to /t/ - tall
- (ii) Change /s/ in sight to /l/ - light
- (iii) Change /b/ in bake to /m/ - make

- (iv) Change /ch/ in chin to /sh/ - shin
- (v) Change /f/ in feel to /s/ - seal

10 Phoneme Substitution of the Final sound

Directions: The teacher should tell the learners that he or she will make a new word by changing the final or ending sound to make a new word. It is their job to say the new word.

Example: “I am going to make a new word by changing the ending sound. If I change /g/ in the word dog to /k/, the new word is dock. Now it’s your turn.”

- (i) Change /m/ in clam to /p/ - clap
- (ii) Change /n/ in train to /l/ - trail
- (iii) Change /d/ in food to /t/ - foot
- (iv) Change /t/ in sent to /d/ - send
- (v) Change /k/ in fork to /t/ - fort

2.4 Phonics

After the phoneme of the day is verbally introduced to learners under Phonemic awareness, they should then be exposed to Phonics which is the ability to associate sounds with letters and use these sounds to read words (National Literacy Framework, 2013). Teacher teaches learners the systematic relationship between the sounds and the letters and letter combination. Learners should identify letter sounds. They should blend letter sounds to form syllables, words and sentences as well as identifying words differentiated by vowel length. Moreover, the understanding that letters and combinations of letters make up particular sounds and words would enable learners to read unfamiliar words. Without knowing letter-sound correspondences, learners are deprived of a fundamental means of recognizing and producing known words and figuring new words when reading and writing” (Literacy Teaching Guide, 2009:12). The recognition that letters represent sounds in a systematic and predictable way enables learners to blend sounds of letters together to read words and segment to allocate letters to write words (TTE, 2021).

2.4.1 Why should primary school teachers teach phonics in English language literacy?

It is important to be reminded that children learned a very consistent sound system in Zambian languages, where one letter makes one sound. In other words the orthographies or spelling

systems of Zambian languages are transparent in that one can tell which sound each letter represents. In contrast, Mwansa (2016) says that English is not so transparent; it is actually the best example of an opaque orthography. This means that it is not easy in many cases to tell which sounds letters represent in the language. He further adds that there are 26 letters in the alphabet which in English represent some 44 phonemes. Therefore, some letters can represent more than one sound and in some cases one sound can be represented by different letters. These inconsistencies can make reading more difficult in English. Still, learners are taught to use their knowledge of letters and individual sounds as one important clue to help them to decode (figure out) words because there are enough consistencies to make phonics a worthwhile decoding tool. Mwansa (2016) suggests that it is always better to teach children first in a language with a transparent orthography so that they can transfer their phonics knowledge to the less transparent language later. This is what is being done in Zambia

2.4.2 What are the important phonics skills in English language literacy?

In Zambian languages letter sound is emphasized but in English children need to learn the letter names (the alphabet) and shapes so that they can name the letters quickly and accurately (Adams, 1990); this helps them to match a letter and its sound or sounds. As stated above, learners in grades 1 and 2 were taught how to relate letters to sounds in their languages but did not learn the names of the letters. So in grade 3 they have to be explicitly taught that the letters they have been using also have names. In English they also need to know what has been mentioned above that:

- (i) Some letters represent more than one sound, e.g., the vowels /u/ in ‘put’ and ‘cut’, ‘c’ e.g. in the two ‘c’s in concern.
- (ii) Different letters can represent the same sound, e.g., ‘c’ and ‘k’ in ‘kick’ and ‘cook.’
- (iii) Sounds can be represented by a single letter or a combination of letters, e.g., ‘a,’ ‘ai,’ ‘ay,’ ‘ey,’ ‘eigh,’ and others (Mkandawire et al., 2023; Mwansa, 2016).

2.4.3 How should primary school teacher teach phonics in English language literacy?

According to Mwansa (2016), the teaching and learning materials that have been produced for teaching literacy in English require teachers to teach letter names and sounds of English explicitly. It is important, however, to remember that learners can decode many English sounds using their phonics knowledge in Zambian languages. Hence, a teacher should always find out if

learners are able to read words in English that have consistent letter–sound correspondences. Thus, he or she should begin with the most common letter sound first before teaching the less common one. For example, in English the five vowel letters /a e I o u/ represent about 12 vowel phonemes in the language; but there are many short words where the vowel sounds are similar to those in Zambian languages, e.g. /a/ in ‘at’, /i/ in ‘in’, /e/ in ‘bed,’ /u/ in ‘put’ and /o/ in ‘on’. Similarly, most English consonants can easily be introduced by using short English words as in the examples below:

- (i) Stops: /b/ as in ‘bin’, /p/ in ‘pot’, /t/ in ‘top’ or ‘toilet’, /d/ in ‘dog’, /k/ in ‘kit’, /g/ in ‘God’,
- (ii) Fricatives: /f/ in ‘fish’, or ‘fat’, /v/ in ‘veranda’, /s/ in ‘song’, /sh/ or ‘shop’, and /h/ in ‘hen’
- (iii) Nasals: /m/ in ‘man’, /n/ in ‘no’, /ng/ in ‘song’,
- (iv) Liquids: /l/ in ‘leg’, /r/ in ‘rob’ (Mkandawire et al., 2023; Mwansa, 2016).

Teachers should remember that the majority of words used in the examples above are introduced in the grade 2 English oral course and learners are expected to know their meanings although they did not see them in their written form (Mwansa, 2016). For instance, a teacher can try to either ask learners to spell the words when he or she dictates them or after introducing them in, for example, in a short English sentence, a teacher should write the word on the board and then ask learners to read it. But such a teacher should try not to teach words in isolation. Instead, use them in sentences so that they are clearly understood in terms of meaning.

Research shows that irregular spellings should come after the regular ones (Mwansa, 2016). For example, the double vowels in English do not always represent a long vowel as in Zambian languages but instead represent a different vowel sound as in ‘book’. When introducing this, it is better to use words learners have learnt orally. For example, the word book can be introduced by asking learners as the teacher holds the book: ‘What is this?’ Learners respond, ‘It is a book’. The teacher writes the word ‘book’ on the board to introduce the ‘oo’ spelling pattern. The teacher can then introduce other words with this pattern in a similar way when this is possible, e.g. ‘look’, ‘stool’, etc. Later learners should also be introduced to words that violate this pattern such as ‘door’ and ‘floor’.

Mwansa (2016) reminds teachers that letters which are not found in Zambian languages can be introduced as was done in Zambian languages by starting with a phonemic awareness activity. Learners can be asked to listen for the initial, final or even middle sound in words. Ideally, the new sound may be introduced in an English word learners have already learnt orally in grade 2 (Mwansa, 2016). For example, 'q' may have been heard in words like 'quick' /kwik/. The teacher should explain that this sound is like /k/. The teacher can then introduce other words with this spelling such as 'quiet', 'queen', 'quack,' etc. Incidentally, the cluster 'qu' can be compared to the Zambian language one 'kw'. Other letters not found in all Zambian languages such as x, r and z can also be introduced in similar ways through familiar English words or even by being compared to sounds in Zambian languages. It is also suggested that combinations of letters which represent individual phonemes such as 'th' called digraphs should also be introduced through simple words such as 'the' which learners should have learnt orally. Digraphs can come before trigraphs like 'tch' in words like 'catch,' 'ugh,' in 'enough' and so on (Mwansa, 2016).

Mwansa (2016) brings out diphthongs as another area that requires special attention in English. A diphthong is a combination of two vowel sounds said rapidly together as in boy /boi/. In Zambian languages, when vowels follow each other in a word, they usually belong to different syllables as in the iChimba word aeba (a-e-ba) 'he/she told'. So decoding words with English diphthongs may present a challenge to the learners. They need help to understand these new patterns. It is also important to remember that it is difficult to tell what some visual diphthongs in English represent, e.g. 'ou' in 'soup,' 'proud,' 'soul,' 'young,' etc. These words may have to be learnt as wholes. Split diphthongs can also be taught as patterns, e.g. in words like 'take' /teik /, 'lake' /leik/ and so on. They are called split diphthongs because the vowels which make up the diphthong are separated by a consonant as in 't-a-k-e' but when pronouncing them they come together (Mwansa, 2016).

In general, the procedure for teaching should involve what the teacher can begin with a listening activity (phonemic awareness using the new letter sound of the day) and then teaching the letter name and letter shape. Mwansa (2016) cautions that practice needs to be provided for reviewing the letter-sound relationships, writing the letter shapes, and reading words that, at first, contain

consistent letter-sound relationships. Some learners will seem to pick up the letter-sound relationships on their own, but many learners will need explicit instruction and lots of practice.

Furthermore, a teacher should begin with the most common sound for each letter first. Then, when learners have some experience and success in reading phonetically-spelled words, less common sounds of a letter can be introduced and taught explicitly in a gradual fashion (Mwansa, 2016).

It is also important to keep in mind that reading is “getting meaning from print.” Learners need to expect that words they are pronouncing “make meaning;” they are “talk written down.” For beginners, words they are asked to read should be familiar in meaning; they should know the meaning of the words when they decode them (Mwansa, 2016).

2.5 Fluency

According TTE (2021: 91), “Fluency is defined as the ability to read connected text with speed, accuracy, prosody, and comprehension.” Reading fluency is an important link between decoding and comprehending. Fluent reading allows learners to focus on the meaning of the text rather than on trying to sound out the words. Ministry of Education (2017:3) refers to fluency, “as the effortless, automatic ability to read words in connected text. A fluent reader reads with expression and appropriate inflection.” Fluent reading means a learner is reading text accurately and at a sufficient pace so that comprehension is not impeded. In other words, fluency is the ability to read orally with accuracy, speed and expression (MoE, 2013). Or fluency is reading at a good rate with accuracy and expression.

2.5.1 Why should primary school teachers teach oral reading fluency in English language literacy?

To begin with, research shows that when learners can read fluently, they can focus on understanding the meaning of what they read (comprehension) (Mwansa, 2016). Readers who struggle to read individual words lose the “train of thought” of the text; when they get to the end of the sentence or paragraph, they cannot explain what it said. Teachers need to provide lots of opportunities for learners to do repeated reading activities so they begin to automatically recognize words and word patterns. This is called “automaticity.” When learners can read with

automaticity, their reading rate (words per minute) and accuracy improve (Grabe, 1991; McLaughlin, 1987).

2.5.2 What are important oral reading fluency skills in English language literacy?

Fluency is improved by practice with decoding skills (sounding words out) and also, especially with second language learners, by vocabulary knowledge (Mwansa, 2016). Sometimes learners can sound out the word but still do not know what it means. To be a fluent reader means, to read at a good rate with accuracy and expression. Hence, learners need to have decoding skills and vocabulary knowledge.

2.5.3 How should primary school teachers teach oral reading fluency in English language literacy?

Reading and rereading passages with feedback and support from the teacher and peers has been shown to improve learners' fluency (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007). The teacher should pre-teach the important, unfamiliar words in the text before the first reading. Modeling of fluent reading by the teacher and by fluent readers in the class should be provided. Then, time and opportunities to practice reading fluently by repeated readings with a peer partner should be provided.

For fluency reading activities, teachers need to select texts or passages that learners have read previously and that are easy enough for them to read with only a few errors. It can be a book below their reading level. This way, learners can focus on building their reading rate and expression; and they will build confidence that they are good readers (Mwansa, 2016).

Before beginning partner reading activities, the teacher and learners need to establish rules. For instance, learners should:

- (i) Talk only with their partner.
- (ii) Talk only about the reading.
- (iii) Listen to their partner read.
- (iv) Give feedback in a helpful way.
- (v) Not laugh at the partner in case he or she fails to read words correctly.

During partner reading activities, the teacher should walk around the class, observing, listening to learners read and providing help where necessary.

2.6 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is referred to as the knowledge of the meaning of words. Vocabulary skill is the key to comprehension of either spoken or written information. Hence, vocabulary can be defined as a list of words people use to listen, speak, read and write (MoE (TTE), 2021). It is a set of words a learner acquires. In order to develop vocabulary learners should understand and use words to convey meaning. Vocabulary knowledge is a key component of reading comprehension. Learners should have the ability to understand the meaning of words and use them orally and in writing. Learners should be able to use vocabulary to construct meaningful sentences. Vocabulary is also categorized into two groups namely; receptive and productive. Receptive vocabulary refers to the words learners understand through reading and listening. While, productive vocabulary refers to the words learners use to communicate through writing and speaking (Yeung et al, 2020). In order to for learners to use language effectively whether orally or through the comprehension of written text, they should receive explicit vocabulary instructions so as to be able to flexibly use words that he or she recognizes and understands.

Hence, the following are some of the best practices for vocabulary acquisition in early grades (Yeung et al, 2020):

- Teaching of new words for known concepts by starting with known words helps learners to acquire vocabulary.
- Learners acquire vocabulary through frequency and multiple, repeated exposures to vocabulary materials.
- Direct vocabulary instruction improves vocabulary knowledge. It also promotes word consciousness.
- Vocabulary floods help learners to develop greater depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge.
- Employing trinity properties which would engage learners in word interaction, repetition and meaningful use is another explicit vocabulary instruction.
- Gradual Release Model is also the best instruction and enables the teacher to teach vocabulary systematically.

Therefore, learners should be immersed in vocabulary – rich environment to enable them acquire vast vocabulary.

Mwansa (2016) also adds that vocabulary is word knowledge, which means understanding the meanings of words and how to use them, both orally and in reading and writing. A learner has four types of vocabulary:

- (i) Listening vocabulary consists of words the learner can understand when they are spoken.
- (ii) Reading vocabulary consists of words they can read.
- (iii) Speaking vocabulary consists of words they can use in their own speech.
- (iv) Writing vocabulary consists of words they can use in expressing their own thoughts or information.

Another way in which vocabulary is classified is that of an ‘active’ and ‘passive’ vocabulary. The active vocabulary is that part of one’s knowledge of words that one uses in speaking and writing comfortably (Mwansa, 2016). Passive vocabulary consists of words which are known or partially known by a learner but which he/she might not be very comfortable to use productively in writing and speaking. This discussion implies that learners understand more words than they can use. Learners can increase their active vocabularies through wide exposure to the same words in what they read or listen to. This makes them more confident to attempt using the same words in their writing or speaking.

- **Why should primary school teachers teach vocabulary during literacy lesson in English?**

According to Mwansa (2016), vocabulary development is a critical foundation for all other learning such as developing oral language, becoming a fluent reader, and reading comprehension skills. When learners decode a word, they need to know what the word means in order to understand what they read. Since it’s not possible for teachers to teach learners *all* the words they need to know, it is important to teach strategies for learning new vocabulary so they can learn new words on their own.

Vocabulary strategies are also necessary for reading in the different subject areas. To be able to read a chapter in a science text, for example, learners need to know the special vocabulary used in the lesson (Mwansa, 2016).

- **What elements should be included in vocabulary instruction?**

There are three important elements of effective vocabulary instruction (Stahl, 1985):

- (i) Teach both the definition and the context of words.
- (ii) The definition of a word includes the dictionary definition, synonyms (similar words), antonyms (words with opposite meanings), prefixes, suffixes, roots, etc. The context of a word is how it is used in a picture, in a sentence, talk, or in a demonstration.
- (iii) Engage learners in activities that involve them in thinking about words and making connections to other words.
- (iv) Provide lots of opportunities for learners to see and use the new words they are learning (Mwansa, 2016).

- **How should primary school teacher teach vocabulary during literacy lesson in English?**

Effective practices for teaching vocabulary include both explicit and implicit instruction as well as the use of multimedia methods (National Reading Panel, 2000):

- (i) **Explicit instruction**

Teachers should pre-teach a small number of important words that learners will encounter when they read the textbook; write them on the board or on a card; define words as much as possible in simple words learners have learnt in English. When this fails, a teacher is supposed to use a Zambian language or real objects, pictures and gestures to promote understanding.

- (ii) **Implicit instruction**

Learners can infer the meaning of words they do not know from Teacher Read-alouds, word lists, or from their own wide reading.

- (iii) **Multimedia methods**

Multimedia methods are methods other than reading in books. Learners can be taught to make concept maps, working word walls, and graphic representations of words to show their connections to other words they already know.

- (iv) **Introducing New Words**

The teacher should assist the learners in learning the new word by following these steps:

- (a) Provide a child-friendly definition of the word.

- (b) Give a child-friendly example that connects to their prior knowledge or daily life.
- (c) Ask the learners to give their own example.
- (d) Keep new words active by using them during classroom conversation and discussions.

2.7 Comprehension

The key concept in learning to read is comprehension which is the ability to derive meaning from the words and the concepts they convey in written texts (MoE (TTE), 2021). Or is the ability to understand what is read or heard. Learners should be able to identify and express the main idea of a piece of writing. Learners should locate details in a passage; deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words; draw inferences from written material and describe the feelings, qualities and motives of a character in a story. Mwansa (2016) refers to comprehension as the ability to getting meaning from a text. It is what most people consider “reading.” This is because the main reason for reading is to comprehend what is read. Comprehension is the most complex aspect of reading, as it requires the reader to draw upon their background experiences (in life and schools), their knowledge of the English language (vocabulary and word skills) and a certain degree of automaticity in decoding is required so that learners can focus on the meaning.

- **Why should primary school teachers teach comprehension during literacy lesson in English?**

Mwansa (2016) reveals that teachers often ask questions after assigning a reading, but learners are not usually provided with demonstrations of comprehension strategies that they need to answer the questions. There are strategies learners can use before, during, and after reading that can be taught. Teaching comprehension strategies requires explicit teaching, modeling by the teacher, and many opportunities for guided practice in using the strategies in narrative and expository (informational) texts before learners can be expected to use the strategies independently.

- **What are important comprehension skills in English language literacy?**

There are many important comprehension skills. Here are some of the most common comprehension skills that learners can be taught how to do:

Before reading:

- (i) Set a purpose for reading e.g. finding specific information, getting the general meaning of a text, and reading for pleasure, etc.

- (ii) Make predictions about the content of the text based on the title, headings and illustrations in the text.
- (iii) Link their previous learning and background experiences to what they are going to read. Ask questions about the topic of the text, e.g. using the title and or headings, or provide general information about the topic if learners are not familiar with it.
- (iv) Make predictions about what will happen, or what they will learn.
- (v) Ask themselves questions about the text in readiness for reading.

During reading:

- (i) Monitor their own understanding as they read through the text by asking themselves questions to clarify their understanding.
- (ii) See if their predictions come true, or how they change.
- (iii) Ask themselves questions, or think about the teacher's questions as they read.
- (iv) Summarize information as they read in their exercise books.

After reading:

- (i) Think about what they learned.
- (ii) Use a graphic organizer (visual) to analyze a character or a topic. They could, for example, draw a spider web showing how ideas in the text are connected; draw a picture of a character using the description in a text, etc.
- (iii) Write questions they have about the text in their exercise books.
- (iv) Make a story map to show the important elements of the story.
- (v) Answer by their own or the teacher's questions posed before reading.

• **How should primary school teachers teach comprehension in English language literacy?**

The teaching of comprehension skills require the teacher to explicitly teach by demonstrating and doing “Teacher Think Alouds” until learners have practiced the skills enough that they are habitual. In a “Think Aloud” the teacher goes through the process and models what they are thinking at each step (Mwansa, 2016). Since many teachers already use the strategies habitually in their own reading, each teacher may have to think about his or her own thinking in order to share it with learners.

Specific comprehension strategies should be taught to support learners during the Before Reading phase, the During Reading phase, and the After Reading phase. Teachers should choose

the strategies that are most appropriate for their learners' age and abilities, but there should always be some structure in the reading process; teachers should not just assign learners to read without a purpose and a process (Mwansa, 2016).

Reading comprehension is a thinking activity that requires the active involvement and mental engagement of learners (Mwansa, 2016). It takes more time and effort on the part of teachers and learners, but when learners interact with the text, each other and the teacher using the simple structures learning improves and learners remember more of what they read.

In addition, comprehension strategies are conscious plans and sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension (Adler, 2001). These seven strategies have research-based evidence for improving text comprehension.

Seven Strategies to Teach Learners Text Comprehension

1. Monitoring comprehension

Teachers should enable learners monitor their comprehension by helping them know when they understand what they read and when they do not. They should have strategies to “fix” problems in their understanding as the problems arise. Research shows that instruction, even in the early grades, can help learners become better at monitoring their comprehension.

Comprehension monitoring instruction teaches learners to:

- Be aware of what they do understand.
- Identify what they do not understand.
- Use appropriate strategies to resolve problems in comprehension (Adler, 2001).

2. Metacognition

Metacognition can be defined as “thinking about thinking.” Teachers should help good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading (Adler, 2001). Before reading, they might clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text. During reading, they might monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text and “fixing” any comprehension problems they have. After reading, they check their understanding of what they read. Learners may use several comprehension monitoring strategies:

- Identify where the difficulty occurs; “I don’t understand the second paragraph on page 76.”
- Identify what the difficulty is; “I don’t get what the author means when she says, ‘Arriving in America was a milestone in my grandmother’s life.’”
- Restate the difficult sentence or passage in their own words; “Oh, so the author means that coming to America was a very important event in her grandmother’s life.”
- Look back through the text; “The author talked about Mr. McBride in Chapter 2, but I don’t remember much about him. Maybe if I reread that chapter, I can figure out why he’s acting this way now.”
- Look forward in the text for information that might help them to resolve the difficulty; “The text says, ‘The groundwater may form a stream or pond or create a wetland. People can also bring groundwater to the surface.’ Hmm, I don’t understand how people can do that... Oh, the next section is called ‘Wells.’ I’ll read this section to see if it tells how they do it.” (Adler, 2001)

3. Graphic and semantic organizers

Graphic organizers illustrate concepts and relationships between concepts in a text or using diagrams. Graphic organizers are known by different names, such as maps, webs, graphs, charts, frames, or clusters (Adler, 2001). Regardless of the label, graphic organizers can help readers focus on concepts and how they are related to other concepts. Graphic organizers help learners read and understand textbooks and picture books.

Graphic organizers can:

- Help students focus on text structure differences between fiction and nonfiction as they read.
- Provide students with tools they can use to examine and show relationships in a text.
- Help students write well-organized summaries of a text (Adler, 2001).

Here are some examples of graphic organizers:

- (i) **Venn-Diagrams:** Used to compare or contrast information from two sources.
- (ii) **Storyboard/Chain of Events:** Used to order or sequence events within a text. For example, listing the steps for brushing your teeth.
- (iii) **Story Map:** Used to chart the story structure. These can be organized into fiction and nonfiction text structures. For example, defining characters, setting, events, problem,

and resolution in a fiction story; however in a nonfiction story, main idea and details would be identified.

(iv) **Cause/Effect:** Used to illustrate the cause and effects told within a text. For example, staying in the sun too long may lead to painful sunburn (Adler, 2001).

4. Answering questions

Asking learners comprehension questions can be effective because they:

- Give learner a purpose for reading.
- Focus learners' attention on what they are to learn.
- Help learners to think actively as they read.
- Encourage learners to monitor their comprehension.
- Help learners to review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know (Adler, 2001).

The Question-Answer Relationship strategy (QAR) encourages learners to learn how to answer questions better. Learners are asked to indicate whether the information they used to answer questions about the text was textually explicit information (information that was directly stated in the text), textually implicit information (information that was implied in the text), or information entirely from the learner's own background knowledge (Adler, 2001). Hence, there are four different types of questions:

- **“Right There”**

Questions found right in the text that ask students to find the one right answer located in one place as a word or a sentence in the passage. Example: Who is Frog's friend? Answer: Toad

- **“Think and Search”**

Questions based on the recall of facts that can be found directly in the text. Answers are typically found in more than one place, thus requiring learners to “think” and “search” through the passage to find the answer. Example: Why was Frog sad? Answer: His friend was leaving.

- **“Author and You”**

Questions require learners to use what they already know, with what they have learned from reading the text. Learners must understand the text and relate it to their prior knowledge before answering the question. Example: How do think Frog felt when he found Toad? Answer: I think that Frog felt happy because he had not seen Toad in a long time. I feel happy when I get to see my friend who lives far away (Adler, 2001).

- **“On Your Own”**

Questions are answered based on a student’s prior knowledge and experiences. Reading the text may not be helpful to them when answering this type of question. Example: How would you feel if your best friend moved away? Answer: I would feel very sad if my best friend moved away because I would miss her.

5. Generating questions

Teachers should encourage learners to generate questions in order to become aware of whether they can answer the questions, if they understand what they are reading. Learners learn to ask themselves questions that require them to combine information from different segments of text (Adler, 2001). For example, learners can be taught to ask main idea questions that relate to important information in a text.

6. Recognizing story structure

In story structure instruction, learners learn to identify the categories of content (characters, setting, events, problem, and resolution). Often, learners learn to recognize story structure through the use of story maps (Adler, 2001). Instruction in story structure improves learners’ comprehension.

7. Summarizing

Summarizing requires learners to determine what is important in what they are reading and to put it into their own words. Instruction in summarizing helps students:

- Identify or generate main ideas.
- Connect the main or central ideas.
- Eliminate unnecessary information.
- Remember what they read (Adler, 2001).

Finally, teachers should make sure that effective comprehension strategy instruction is explicit. Research shows that explicit teaching techniques are particularly effective for comprehension strategy instruction. In explicit instruction, teachers tell readers why and when they should use strategies, what strategies to use, and how to apply them (Adler, 2001). The steps of explicit instruction typically include direct explanation, teacher modeling (“thinking aloud”), guided practice, and application.

- Direct explanation: The teacher explains to learners why the strategy helps comprehension and when to apply the strategy.

- Modeling: The teacher models, or demonstrates, how to apply the strategy, usually by “thinking aloud” while reading the text that the students are using.
- Guided practice: The teacher guides and assists learners as they learn how and when to apply the strategy.
- Application: The teacher helps learners practice the strategy until they can apply it independently (Adler, 2001).

Effective comprehension strategy instruction can be accomplished through cooperative learning, which involves learners working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined tasks. Cooperative learning instruction has been used successfully to teach comprehension strategies. Learners should work together to understand texts, helping each other learn and apply comprehension strategies (Adler, 2001). Teachers should help learners learn to work in groups. Teachers also provide modeling of the comprehension strategies.

2.8 Assessing Reading Comprehension Continually

As earlier mentioned, learners who are able to read words in their Zambian language may transfer the same skill fluently in beginning English text which uses consistent sounds, that is, where it is easy to say which sound each letter represents. In fact, learner will be able to figure out the meaning of words uttered in their Zambian language. But, they may not know the meaning of an English word even if they can pronounce it. Nevertheless, continually assessing learners’ comprehension of the meaning in English language is important (Robertson, 2009). This should involve frequent questioning of learners to find out if they are following explanations. When necessary, the teacher can use the local language to clarify points, but this should be done sparingly. It is important that learners should get used to following explanations in English.

2.9 The Role of Language in Literacy Development

Literacy and language are familiar terminologies. Literacy is reading and writing skills, while language, on the other hand, is many times viewed as a means of communicating and sharing ideas (Mkandawire, 2018). According to MoE (TTE) (2021), language and literacy involve development of the skills used to communicate with others through language as well as the ability to read and write. Children acquire language through social interactions, and language use

varies based on social backgrounds, roles of the speaker, and the social settings. Language develops very quickly over the first 4 years of life. Children across the world master many aspects of their first language by the time they are 3 or 4 years old MoE (TTE), 2021). From birth, language is observable from the cries of an infant that are meant to express themselves to the sounds and words expressed by a toddler. Therefore, both receptive (hearing and understanding) and expressive (speaking) forms of language are the basic building blocks for literacy development. When the language is familiar, it builds on existing knowledge and enables learners to express themselves and engage in discussion-thereby participating in their own learning (Sampa, 2008).

Moreover, there is significant research evidence that children learn best when the first language of instruction and examinations is their mother tongue (see, for example, UNESCO 1953; Benson, 2002; Brock-Utne, 2005; Clegg, 2005; UNESCO GMR, 2015). The rewards of schooling in local languages outweigh the costs, with gains in education quality and inclusion leading to reduced school-year repetition and drop-outs. When vocabulary and literacy skills are built in the mother tongue (or L1), along with building oral fluency in the second language, learners can more easily access and master learning in the second language (L2).

In fact, literacy is a secondary system, dependent on language as the primary system. This means that effective literacy teachers and learners need to have a good command of language and language development' preferably the local familiar language (Snow et al., 2006). The relationship between language and literacy is reciprocal in nature and changes over time. 'Young children need writing to help them learn about reading, they need reading to help them learn about writing, and they need oral language to help them learn about both' (Roskos et al., 2003, p. 3). The ability to produce and comprehend spoken language is one of the earliest predictors of literacy achievement (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

MoE (TTE) (2021) points out that the conventional forms of literacy and language are so closely related to the extent that it is impossible to discuss reading, writing, and literacy skills without implying the existence of language skills. This simply means that language and literacy cannot

be separated-one skill builds upon the other. For instance, one can only read and write meaningfully in a language that they understand and which is familiar to him or her.

For this reason, the National Literacy Framework stated that the language of classroom instruction impacts on a child's ability to read and learn. Hence, it is suggested in the document that:

“... learning in one's language is essential for the initial teaching of reading. Children arrive on the first day of school with thousands of oral vocabulary words and tacit knowledge of the sound system of their mother tongue, but are unable to use and build upon these linguistic skills because they are instructed in a foreign language. Dismissing this prior knowledge, and trying to teach children to read in a language they are not accustomed to hearing or speaking makes the teaching of literacy difficult (MESVTEE, 2013).”

Moreover, children who enter school with strong oral language skills in their familiar language tend to learn how to read and write with greater ease and tend to excel more in school than their peers with less knowledge of vocabulary and language structure. The Ministry of Education therefore proposed that the language of instruction in the first four grades would be regional languages. English would be taught orally in grade 2 and then literacy in English would be introduced in grade three. After grade five, English would be used as medium of instruction (MESVTEE, 2013).

But it should be born in the minds of teachers to adjust their level of English and vocabularies to enable learners comprehend what is being said. Moreover, if teachers speak English clearly and slowly, using words learners know from the grade 2 Oral Course or can learn from context, their comprehension will improve (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007). As stated in PLP, learners begin learning English with oral English in grade 2 and continue with literacy in English as learners move into grade 3 and beyond, emphasizing both general English language development and language development in subject areas such as Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, and so on, in upper grades where content subjects will be taught in English. This will prepare learners for later instruction in English and other subject areas, with vocabulary that is specific to the subject. It is important to remember that whichever subject in upper primary school that teachers

teach, they always ensure that the reading skills of the learners are constantly being improved and consolidated. Therefore, the following section will elaborate more on language policies in Zambia in relation to teaching of literacy in primary schools.

2.9.1 Transfer of Skills from first language (Zambian Language) to second language (English)

Despite the above stated challenges on the language of instruction, literacy still remains the heart of a learner's ability to learn and succeed in the school and beyond (MoE, 2013). Therefore, the Ministry of General Education (MOGE) has made a concerted effort to provide initial reading instruction in Zambian languages beginning in grade 1, with a gradual transition to English beginning in grade 2 with oral English and reading instruction in English at grade 3. This is because learning in one's first language is 'essential for the initial teaching of literacy skills' such as reading. Moreover, low literacy levels in primary schools can also be solved by scaffolding learning through instruction in local languages (MoE, 2013).

Research shows that teaching the foundational skills (early literacy and numeracy) and critical thinking in a language that the child speaks and understands is one of the most effective ways to reduce school failure and drop out in the early grades (UNESCO, 2008a). And more importantly, these foundational skills significantly increase learning later on.

(i) Phonological Awareness:

Phonological awareness refers to the ability to manipulate language at the sound level. It involves recognizing and playing with sounds within words. Research shows that phonological awareness skills developed in the native language (L1) can transfer to a second language (L2) and facilitate L2 literacy development. For example, if a child has strong phonological awareness in their L1, they are likely to exhibit similar skills when learning to read in L2 (UNESCO, 2008a).

(ii) Universal Concepts and Skills:

Certain universal concepts and skills transfer across all languages such as:

- **Alphabetic and Orthographic Awareness:** Understanding that written symbols represent sounds.
- **Meaningfulness of Print:** Recognizing that print carries meaning.

- Habits and Attitudes about Reading and Writing: Positive reading habits and attitudes.
- Higher-Level Thinking and Metacognitive Skills: Strategies for comprehension and problem-solving.
- Content Knowledge: Knowledge acquired in one language can transfer to another (UNESCO, 2008a).

(iii) Content Knowledge Transfer:

Content mastered in L1 can indeed transfer to L2. When students learn about specific topics or concepts in their mother tongue, this knowledge remains valuable when they encounter similar content in their second language. For bilingual learners, this dual content knowledge enhances their overall understanding and cognitive abilities (UNESCO, 2008a).

(iv) Syntax and Pragmatics:

While transfer can be advantageous, it can also lead to challenges. Some learners may inappropriately generalize rules from their L1 to L2. Syntax (sentence structure), spelling, phonology, and pragmatics (social language use) may differ between languages, causing occasional confusion.

In short, literacy skills developed in the native language serve as a bridge, allowing learners to apply their knowledge and strategies effectively when acquiring a second language (UNESCO, 2008a). For this reason, this study sought to find out whether learners in grade three are able to transition the basic literacy skills learnt in grades 1 and 2 in Zambian language (Icibemba) to English language.

The practice of using Zambian languages to teach basic literacy skills will facilitate children's second language development, since such skills are transferable (Robertson, 2009; Upton, 2001). In the same vein, the Ministry of Education under Primary Literacy Programme focuses on the transfer of the skills learned in reading in children's Zambian language to learning to read in English. For this reason, teachers should begin with what learners know from their Zambian language that is the same in English, and then later, teach aspects of English that are different. Therefore, it is important to ensure that teachers in Zambian primary schools have the knowledge, skills and support to help the learners acquire literacy skills in their local familiar language and later on attain a successful transition to English language at grade three. As alluded

to earlier on, the Ministry of Education decided that initial literacy should be done in a local familiar language predominantly spoken in an area (MoE, 1996). It was decided like that because starting school in the learners' local familiar language does not delay education but leads to faster acquisition of literacy skills and attitudes needed for success in formal education.

In fact, when teaching starts in the teachers' and learners' home language, the experience is more natural and less stressful for all. As a result, the teacher can be more creative and innovative in designing teaching and learning materials and approaches, leading to improved learning outcomes. This implies that teaching through local familiar language is more effective and provides for quality learning for learners and enable them to combine existing knowledge with new knowledge. In addition, the use of Zambian languages or first language to teach initial literacy skills to children fosters learner participation in the classroom in that there is active interaction between the teacher and the learner.

Learners also develop reading and writing skills faster and in a more meaningful way which leads to great excitement when they discover that they can make sense of written texts and can write the names of people and things in their environment. This is so because literacy skills are built on the foundational and interactional skills of speaking and listening. And that it enables learners to develop their critical thinking skills which are later transferable in all learning experiences even when the first language ceases to be the language of instruction in upper grades (Checkaraou, 2004).

It has also been shown that literacy skills and concepts taught in the learners' home language do not have to be re-taught when they transfer to a second language. A learner who knows how to read and write in local language will develop reading and writing skills in a second language faster (Checkaraou, 2004). The learner already knows that letters represent sounds, the only new learning he or she needs is how the new language 'sounds' its letters. In the same way, learners automatically transfer knowledge acquired in one language to another language as soon as they have learned sufficient sounds and vocabulary in the new language. For example, if a teacher teaches learners how to sound out vowels and consonants in the local familiar language. He or she does not need to re-teach these concepts in English. When learners have developed the abilities to sound out vowels, consonants and syllables in the local familiar language, combining

such sounds to read simple words in English language would be easy. Thus, knowledge and skills are transferable from one language to another. This means that transitioning literacy skills from first language to second language is possible and helpful to learners.

In order to prove that transition of literacy skills from first language to second language is possible or not, this study reviewed the following literature from different scholars who had done research on the same topic.

To begin with, August et al (2002) conducted a study which focused on understanding the manner in which component skills of reading are transferable from Spanish to English. The study examined how performance on indicators of Spanish reading at the end of second grade predicted English reading performance at the end of third and fourth grades. The researchers examined transfer in the areas of phonological awareness, word reading, word knowledge, and comprehension. They also evaluated whether transfer effects would be different for Spanish-speaking children initially instructed in Spanish as compared with Spanish-speaking students instructed only in English.

August et al (2002) collected data from four to six classrooms at each site, depending on the number of target students available in each classroom. At the beginning of the study (end of second grade), a total of 287 students were participating. By the end of the fourth grade, 189 students remained in the sample. Of these 189 students, 34 were monolingual English speakers, 59 were Spanish-English bilingual students in English-only instruction, and 96 were Spanish-English bilingual students who received initial reading instruction in Spanish.

The researchers also employed a method for identifying statistically significant correlations between variables to examine whether initial Spanish performance within each component of reading (phonological awareness, word reading, and reading comprehension) would predict English performance at the end of third and fourth grades (August et al, 2002).

The results of the study indicated that Spanish phonemic awareness, Spanish letter identification, and Spanish word reading were reliable predictors of performance on parallel tasks in English at the end of third and fourth grades, controlling for nonverbal ability, English oral proficiency, and

performance on the same English literacy task at the beginning of the study. The effect of Spanish phonemic awareness on English phonemic awareness emerged for all students. However, the effect of Spanish letter identification and Spanish word reading on English letter identification and English word reading emerged only for students who had received formal instruction in Spanish reading. With regard to vocabulary knowledge, August et al (2002) found that the Spanish-instructed students knew significantly more cognates than the English-only instructed students, but the two groups did not differ in their knowledge of no cognates.

With regard to passage comprehension, the results differed depending on whether we examined English passage comprehension at the end of fourth grade or growth in English passage comprehension between second and fourth grades. August et al (2002) found a positive relationship between Spanish passage comprehension at the end of second grade and English passage comprehension at the end of fourth grade, controlling for English oral proficiency, nonverbal ability, and language of initial reading instruction. Using growth modeling, however, August et al (2002) did not find a relationship between initial Spanish literacy skills measured at the end of second grade and growth in passage comprehension between second and fourth grades.

August et al (2002) also investigated whether the effect of Spanish literacy on English literacy varies with respect to level of Spanish literacy ability. The regression analyses they conducted did not provide evidence to suggest that the effect of Spanish literacy on English literacy varied for differing levels of Spanish literacy. However, it should be noted that lack of variation among students on the assessment measures may have masked a possible relationship.

Further, August et al (2002) investigated whether the effect of Spanish phonemic segmentation, letter identification and word reading on the same component skills in English varies with respect to level of English oral language proficiency. The analyses indicated no data suggesting that differences in the magnitude of the relationship between Spanish and English performance was a function of oral language proficiency. However, oral English proficiency might play a role in higher order component skills such as comprehension.

Finally, with regard to group differences in English literacy outcomes and rate of growth in English, results of growth models indicated that while Spanish-instructed students had lower overall performance on the English reading measures at the end of fourth grade, their rate of growth in English was slightly greater than that of the English-instructed students (August et al, 2002). These preliminary findings support the practice of providing literacy instruction in Spanish to Spanish-speaking English-language learners as a means of helping them acquire literacy skills in English. By strengthening these students' Spanish literacy, this practice also enables them to use their native language well, enhancing their bilingual capability.

Kwakye (2018) also conducted a study and the general purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of pupils' first language (L1) literacy skills on second language (L2) literacy skills. Specifically, it was meant to find out how: the use of first language literacy skills influence pupils reading skills in the second language the use of first language literacy skills influence pupils speaking skills in the second language, and the use of the first language literacy skills influence pupils writing skills in the second language. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select sixty-eight (68) Lower Primary pupils and seven (7) teachers of the Amamoma Basic School in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Questionnaire and observation guide were the instruments and frequency, percentage and means were used to analyze data from the field.

In addition, Kwakye (2018) found out that the use of first literacy language skills influenced pupils reading skills in the second language and that if teachers are to use it appropriately pupils reading skills could improve. He further said that speaking skills of pupils in the second language is influenced by the first language literacy skills and teachers should continuously adopt the first language skills to improve upon pupils speaking. The researcher again found out that writing skills in the second language was not influenced in their first language literacy skills. Kwakye (2018) recommended that teachers should be encouraged to use pupils mother tongue to stand as the foundation to transfer learning from the first language to the second language. Again, teachers should be encouraged to adopt appropriate language literacy skills in the first language to transfer into the second language.

Furthermore, Li (2017) conducted a brief literature review of the researches on the effect of L1 Chinese transfer on L2 English learning. In order to find the relevant journal articles analyzing the transfer function of L1 Chinese on L2 English, he chose the articles from the peer-reviewed journals focusing on reading research, applied linguistics, and multilingual research from 2000 on. Li (2017) had to put the search terms like "L1 transfer on L2 English" and "phonological relation between English and Chinese" and "morphological relation between English and Chinese" into Google Scholar. I managed to choose eight peer-review journal articles as the base of his review and paid attention to the following six aspects: research questions, methodologies used as well as the contexts in which the study took place, the populations studied, findings, and conclusions.

This literature review was conducted from two aspects, phonology and morphology. The phonological studies indicated that the Chinese pinyin system contributes to a shared phonological process for bilingual reading acquisition. The morphological studies revealed that both in Chinese and English, inflection, derivation, and compounding are the principal methods for word formation. Thus, practice of morphological principles in Chinese characters contributes to L1 Chinese transfer on L2 English learning. In addition, these studies emphasized that lexical exposure and extensive readings are the best ways to improve Chinese EFL learners' English comprehension (Li, 2017).

Research shows that debates on the language of instruction in schools has a long history with Ghana, highlighting the complexities in an environment where a large number of languages are spoken, as in many other African countries like Zambia (Ansah, 2014; Klu and Ansre, 2018; Owu-Ewie, 2013). For this reason, Sabates et al (2020) conducted a research on 'Sustaining Literacy from Mother Tongue Instruction in Complementary Education into Official Language of Instruction in Government Schools in Ghana' using the sample of 2,360 students drawn from an approximate 40,000 CBE children who took part in the programme in the 2016/2017 academic year.

Sabates et al (2020) selected the sample of students using stratified random sampling which provided proportional representation by gender, local language, region, district and provider of

the CBE programme. Literacy assessment tools, children interviews, questionnaires and discussions were employed to collect data. This paper presented evidence on literacy trajectories for children in Ghana who enrolled in a Complementary Basic Education programme taught in mother tongue and transitioned into government schools. At the point of transition, Sabates et al (2020) found that children who enrolled in government schools where the language of instruction differed from instruction in their mother tongue did not perform as well in literacy. After a year in government schools, those taught in another local language caught up. By contrast, those who transitioned into English did not. The researchers' evidence reinforces the benefits of mother tongue and local language instruction for progress in literacy.

Furthermore, Mokibelo (2016), examined learners' transition from Setswana in Standard One to English at Standard Two in line with the implementation of the language-in-education policy in six districts and six primary schools of Botswana. Using data from classroom observation, open ended questionnaires and interviews, this study scrutinizes the effectiveness of such transition especially where learners do not speak both language of instruction. The transitional education model is used as a theoretical framework for this paper to better understand how transition could be done from one language to another. The findings of this study indicate that transition from Setswana medium of instruction to English medium is taken for granted and is overlooked by key agents of the policy and supervisors and therefore it is not monitored and supervised. The conclusion is that the period of transition is critical and sensitive. As a result, teachers and supervisors both internal and external should have the necessary delivery skills and support to enable them to go through that critical period with less anxiety.

Last but not the least, Goodrich et al (2013) conducted a study to evaluate the cross-language transfer of the emergent literacy skills of preschoolers who were Spanish-speaking language minority children in the context of an experimental intervention study. Ninety-four children were randomly assigned to either a control condition (High/Scope preschool curriculum) or to receive small-group pull-out instruction (Literacy Express Preschool Curriculum) in English or initially in Spanish and transitioning to English.

Goodrich et al (2013) examined whether children's initial skills in one language moderated the impact of the intervention on those same skills in the other language at posttest. Results demonstrated that, for children in the English-only intervention condition, initial Spanish receptive vocabulary and elision skills moderated the impact of the intervention on English receptive vocabulary and elision skills at posttest, respectively. For children in the transitional intervention condition, initial English definitional vocabulary and elision skills moderated the impact of the intervention on Spanish definitional vocabulary and elision skills at posttest, respectively.

Results for the vocabulary interactions, as well as the elision interaction for the English-only intervention group comparisons, supported the notion of transfer of specific linguistic information across languages. Results for elision interaction for the transitional intervention group comparisons supported language-independent transfer. Implications for the theory of cross-language transfer of emergent literacy skills are discussed (Goodrich et al, 2013).

Despite the global world's linguistic diversity, language-in-education policies remain limited to using one national language as a language of instruction especially in African countries Botswana. On the other, the use of mother tongue in teaching basic literacy skills has also been proven effective. Hence, most African countries adopt education policies that give chance learners in early grades to learn basic literacy skills in their familiar language and later transition to English as national language of instruction. As a result, the subject of transition from mother tongue (first language) to second language (language of instruction) has been a crucial topic for research in Africa. Although some research findings reviewed above have indicated that it is possible and manageable to transition basic literacy skills from first language to second language other information still consider it as a problematic policy due to some factors affecting its effective implementation.

2.9.2 Using General Best Practices in Teaching Reading

In addition to the best practices described above for English language learners, other general instructional procedures used in the Primary Literacy Program (PLP) (National Reading

Framework, MoE, 2013) in teaching reading in Zambian languages are also important in teaching English such as:

- Learning is built upon learners' prior background and experiences. This means that teachers should make use of what learners have already learnt or know from their experiences both in school and outside.
- Learning is relevant to learners' lives. Learning is more meaningful when it is related to the lives of the learners and to things with which they are familiar with.
- Lessons are interactive; teachers interact with learners and learners interact with each other. Learning is a social activity; it involves relationships. When learners work with the teacher and their peers freely, they also learn how to live with other people. In addition, learners are much freer when they work with peers and thus can benefit more from such interactions.
- Reading for meaning is emphasized. Reading should not end at decoding but should involve understanding what is being decoded. This requires paying attention to vocabulary development in English and also ensuring that learners move from what they already know to the unknown.
- Lessons should include all of the five key reading skills,(Phonemic awareness, Oral Reading, Vocabulary, Comprehension) not just phonics. Sometimes it will be necessary to focus on one skill or continue an activity over to a number of lessons. However, all five reading skills are important and instructional time needs to be spent on all of them over the course of a week.
- Continuous assessment of learning is made and activities are provided to address areas of need. It is necessary to continually assess learners to make sure that they have understood what they have learnt and can use their learning in different contexts.

Although, international evidence is clear that there is no best practice in transitioning literacy skills from mother tongue to English as the medium of instruction in low and middle-income countries, the benefits of introducing literacy skills in the mother tongue instruction (MTI) are well established in literature above and the effective transfer of literacy skills and academic competences from the mother tongue to the second language is possible only when the learners have acquired adequate linguistic and academic competence in their mother tongues (Boateng,

2019). In fact, the transition programme supports that the development of literacy skills in the native language plays a role in the acquisition of second language literacy.

2.9.3 Explicit Skills Instruction

It has been stated in the previous section that transition of literacy skills from first language to second language cannot be achieved without taking into practice systematic and explicit literacy instructions. Hoque (2011) adds that literacy needs to be taught explicitly from Kindergarten to Year 12 and beyond because the social and cognitive demands of literacy are constantly changing, evolving and expanding. All these demands increase in complexity and sophistication as students move through school. In each new context students need to know what they know, the relevance of new learning and how to apply their knowledge to make active connections to their world with greater precision. Hence, primary school teachers in Zambia should teach literacy skills explicitly, they should usually start by modeling the skill step-by-step and thereafter, explain it, and also give clear instructions on what they want learners to think as they do it together with them. Then, they observe and guide learners as they try out the new skill in groups before asking them to do it independently (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

Following the procedure above, Hoque (2011:53) defines explicit teaching as, ‘an instructional strategy used by teachers to meet the needs of their students and engage them in unambiguous, clearly articulated teaching.’ By explicit instruction, the researcher means teaching where the instructor clearly outlines what the learning goals are for the student, and offers clear, unambiguous explanations of the skills and information structures they are presenting. An important part of comprehension strategy instruction is the active participation of students in the comprehension process (Hoque, 2011). In addition, explicit instruction involves providing a sufficient amount of support, or scaffolding, to students as they learn the strategies to ensure success. The goal was to gain a clearer understanding of how learners with different skills and capabilities processed short-term instruction, how effectively they learned, and how those differences looked physiologically in the brain.

According Hoque (2011:54) explicit teaching is critically about clarity in:

- (i) Knowing the learner.
- (ii) Responding to the learner.
- (iii) Implementing focused lessons.
- (iv) Reflection and review.

Knowing and responding to the learner

An inherent feature of explicit teaching is that the talk in lessons shapes classroom learning and the learning context, and simultaneously is shaped by knowledge of the learner. Explicit teaching builds onto what is known. Effective teachers build on the notion that meaningful teaching and learning acts on knowledge of the learner. They know their students and respond to their learning needs. This is mirrored in the classroom talk. An essential component of explicit teaching therefore is linked to collecting definitive assessment evidence of student learning; teachers need to know what students can do in order to respond authentically and explicitly to their learning needs (both in their talk and in the tasks they design for their students). Knowing individual learning needs helps to direct teaching and the talk of the classroom toward assisting students to achieve desired outcomes. Not only do they act on clear instructional goals and focused planning of learning outcomes, they directly seek clarification from their students by responding to what is said to ensure that what students ‘hear’ and ‘talk about’ clearly relates to learning objectives.

Hoque (2011) says that in English language literacy classrooms, it is vital for teachers to use explicit talk in both whole class and small focused group teaching sessions to effectively maximize learning outcomes for all students. This enhances the accessibility to the literacy curriculum. For example instructional strategies such as Cooperative Reading (Raison, 2002) and Reciprocal Teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1985) used in guided reading sessions provide opportunities for meaningful interactions that motivate learners to engage with their learning in enjoyable, interesting and reflective way. Hoque (2011) explains that these are strategic approaches used within a balanced literacy programme and are suitable for teaching all students across all developmental stages. Such strategies can be used in whole class instruction, or in small needs-based groups. Students are provided with opportunities to take on different roles which assists them to construct the meaning of text through reading and focused talking and listening; and significantly they are not only encouraged

to do most of the talking, but students are explicitly taught to self-reflect and generate meaningful questions and statements (Hoque, 2011).

The teacher-talk focuses on making explicit connections in the talk to all levels of text (visual, word, meaning, function and critical) through predicting, clarifying, questioning (both at literal and an inferential levels) and summarizing. Teachers respond to student responses in a way that shapes the talk around learning about specific aspects of literacy (Hoque, 2011).

Implementing Focused Lessons

Hoque (2011) argues that explicit teaching is not just merely giving students clear directions or even stating the learning goals at the beginning of a lesson, but it is a way of thinking about and acting out teaching and learning in a principled way throughout the lesson (from assessment through to planning, implementation and review). Hoque (2011) points out that explicit instructional talk is evident when it directly and intentionally prepares students for their learning, informs them of the learning path and enables them to develop metacognitive strategies for knowing that learning has taken place. It is an approach that clearly explicates and maintains the ‘what’, the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of any given lesson. Additionally, Hoque (2011) brings out the following descriptions:

- It makes assessment and learning purposes and goals clear by presenting students with ‘upfront’ information about the new learning in terms of the primary topic and purpose for the learning or assessment task.
- It engages student thinking for the purpose of learning about specific aspects of literacy and involves a clear progressive lesson structure that allows introduction-elaboration-practice-summary/review. It requires the teacher to work within a structured framework for the focused teaching of all aspects of literacy that connects what is new to what is known
- It assesses student learning throughout the lesson by monitoring the talk. It responds to student contributions in a way that makes the connections to specific learning a priority;
- It responds to students’ contributions in lessons in a meaningful way that provides scope for them to reformulate ideas, skills and knowledge and articulate their learning to make real connections to their learning at all stages of the lesson;
- It builds on, and asks students to build on to each other’s’ responses;

- It engages in focused instructional talk, and does not allow conversations about ‘everyday familiar topics’ or talk orienting to ‘behaviour management’ to cut into and override the main learning agenda;
- It enables the Four Roles of the Reader to be presented systematically and strategically; and
- It allows time at the end of the lesson for students to share their learning with talk (or brief written notes) that summarize, review or reflect on the main learning points of the lesson (Hoque, 2011).

The framework for focused literacy instruction

It is suggested by the researcher that teachers can only provide an active, progressive and sequential program of instruction when they are clear about what it is they want children to learn; when they provide a meaningful, child-centred and focused instructional program. When consideration is given to focus learning they need to provide students with opportunities to make sense of the learning by creating purposeful connections between lesson purposes, lesson tasks and texts, and lesson reviews or conclusions. The following framework for teaching and learning literacy (an adaptation of ‘The model of effective teaching’ by Rosenshine and Stevens, 1986) supports teachers to organize their instruction in an explicit and systematic way. Applying the framework assists teachers to construct lessons in a way that the literacy learning purposes are clear, direct and progressively presented.

It is important for students in that it establishes the learning task and the management and organizational routines clearly and does not allow the learning task to be loosely presented or blurred within talk about other things. It enables the students to actively connect ‘new learning’ to ‘what is known’. Time allocated in each phase is determined by the specific lesson purpose for that lesson on that day (Hoque, 2011).

A Framework for Explicit Instruction Focused Literacy Lessons				
Introduction	Maintenance of the specific literacy learning focus			Review
	Elaboration		Practice	
Brief Lesson Orientation	Linking new to known concepts; re-teaching if necessary		Independent practice	Summary, Review & Reflection of specific literacy learning (oral and /or written)
Setting up focused lessons in terms of specific aspects of literacy	Clarifying		Skills, knowledge & use of aspects of literacy	Student reformulation and articulation of learning
Overview of new learning	Demonstration and modelling		Application of new learning	
Purposes of assessment tasks are made clear	Guided Instruction using <i>Guided reading/writing, Reciprocal Teaching or Cooperative Reading</i>			
Review of relevant prior learning	Guided Student Practice			
Formative assessment through monitoring of the talk is ongoing across the phases of the lesson				

(Hoque, 2011)

Improving teaching and learning through reflective practice: reflection and review: Explicit teaching visibly connects teachers and students with learning through focused self-reflection and evaluation in a deliberate and conscious way. There are two dimensions to this feature, namely:

- (i) Reflecting on teaching practice (monitoring and evaluating teacher and student talk)
- (ii) Reflecting on learning (allowing time in the lesson for student reflection and review)

Hoque (2011) adds that reflecting on classroom interaction assists teachers to refocus their talk to engage in a learning-centred pedagogy that keeps learning about literacy as the primary concern for the diversity of students. Videoing or taping their own lessons can further assist teachers to reflect on their own teaching practice in a focused way. Practically, asking, considering and reflecting on the following questions can assist teachers to reflect on and review the details of interaction in their own lessons. Hoque (2011) explains that explicit instruction is a powerful way to create a classroom environment that not only values but also demonstrates that learning is the focal point of the talk

encountered in classroom literacy lessons. It liberates students to control and monitor their own learning by connecting them to their learning through focused talk. Effective teachers act in the knowledge of their learners and respond authentically to their contributions and learning needs. Furthermore explicit teaching actively enables students' new learning to be informed by what they know enhancing the transfer and application of skills and knowledge across the key curriculum areas. Teachers and students are then able to act in the knowledge of what they are doing and why in order to mutually accomplish purposeful teaching and learning (Hoque, 2011).

Aspects of explicit teaching

Hoque (2011) points out the following aspects of explicit teaching represented in these vignettes:

- Focusing instruction on identified curriculum content;
- Connecting to prior knowledge and skills when beginning a learning sequence;
- Establishing and maintaining clear learning goals and expectations for each lesson;
- Teaching and expecting students to use meta-language in ways that support learning;
- Deconstructing and sequencing teaching to focus on the steps that lead to new knowledge, deeper understandings and/or more sophisticated skill;
- Describing and modeling concepts and processes clearly, using 'think aloud' and examining models and inferior examples;
- Varying instruction in response to immediate and reflective feedback;
- Asking questions to continually monitor understanding and progress and inform immediate feedback;
- Providing scaffold learning experiences for students to practice, synthesise and consolidate learning;
- Developing the capability of students to self-regulate and learn independently (Hoque, 2011).

Explicit instruction is cited by many researchers as the most effective and efficient way of teaching literacy skills in English language. Explicit instruction is considered a systematic approach of teaching that proceeds in small steps, constantly checks for student understanding, and achieves successful student participation (Hoque, 2011). It is also called demonstration-prompt-practice, antecedent prompt and test, or "I do, we do, you do." No matter what label this type of instruction is given, students are shown how to perform a task before they are expected to do it on their own. Effective and efficient explicit instruction includes three key aspects. These

include lesson planning (learning objectives and prerequisite skills), lesson delivery (opener, model, guided practice, independent practice, and closing), and lesson assessment (mastery, maintenance, and generalization). Explicit instruction may be considered simple, but it is deceptively so. Explicit instruction is complex in its attention to instructional detail. It can be distinguished from non-explicit approaches where teachers serve as facilitators, guiding students in the learning process. Explicit instruction is an important factor in the stages of learning. These stages include acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization, and adaptation. Finally, without a doubt, the research base is strong for implementing explicit instructional practices with students with or without learning difficulties (Hoque, 2011). After receiving explicit instruction from the teacher, it is important for learners to practice what they are learning during pair or group work and receive feedback. Practice needs to take place in a classroom atmosphere that makes them feel comfortable to try new things (Calderon et al, 1996; Muniz-Swicegood, 1994).

2.9.4 Teacher Preparedness to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English

It is evidently true that a teacher plays an important role in imparting knowledge and skills which is needed in their academic success. Therefore, teacher preparation is very important to ensure that the teacher who is the main driver in the success of any teaching needs is prepared before implementation takes place. This simply means that for teaching to be effective, a teacher has to be provided with appropriate and intensive training to ensure that they know when and how to teach using specific methods (NRP, 2000). Hence, teacher preparation is the process of making a teacher ready for effective teaching by equipping him or her with quality knowledge and skills. Primary school teachers for lower grades have a great role to play if learners are to learn literacy skills in Zambian languages and transfer them to English. This can only be achieved if the teacher has received proper training for him or her to deliver literacy instructions effectively. Moreover, the implementation of any given education programme depends on how knowledgeable and skilled the implementer is. For this reason, there is need for adequate teacher preparation.

To begin with, Kombe (2021) conducted a study to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy in selected primary schools in Kitwe

district on the Copper belt. The study focused on two objectives such as; to establish the extent to which in- service teachers were prepared to implement the revised policy and to establish the challenges teachers faced in the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy. The study employed qualitative descriptive design and the respondents selected by using purposive sampling technique were 134 in total, that is, 103 classroom teachers, 30 lecturers and 1 District Resource personal. Data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions.

Kombe (2021) found that some teachers were trained while others were not. That was a clear indication that teacher preparation was not done adequately for in-service teachers. On the other hand, the researcher also found out that teacher training colleges were also unable to include Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) in the syllabus for Primary Teachers Diploma programme because they did not fully understand the content of this policy. As a result, student teachers who graduated from such college were not prepared to teach literacy using PLP approach, adding up on the number of unprepared teachers in primary schools. Kombe (2021) further lamented that even after commissioning the policy in 2014, schools still lacked teaching resources with which they could implement the policy. This means that the policy was not effectively implemented due to inadequate teacher preparation and lack of teaching and learning materials. Therefore, Kombe (2021) recommended for wider consultation between policy makers and implementers during formulation or revision of literacy policies.

Furthermore, Mutolwa (2019) conducted a study in order to establish whether Literacy and Language lecturers were adequately prepared to train teachers in literacy and language education in colleges of education in Zambia. The objectives of the study were; to establish the preparedness of literacy and language lecturers to prepare teacher trainees in literacy and language education, establish whether the literacy and language teacher education programme adequately responds to the pedagogical needs of a teacher and establish challenges which literacy and language lecturers do face in preparing trainee teachers in literacy and language education.

Mutolwa (2019) employed a mixed method descriptive design which involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique to come up with

49 respondents, that is, 45 college lecturers and four college administrators while simple random sampling was also used to select colleges of education where data was collected. Questionnaires and interviews were the techniques used to collect data.

Mutolwa (2019) found that all literacy and language lecturers were professionally trained and qualified as primary school teachers or secondary school teachers, but they were not fully prepared to train teachers in literacy and language education. The researcher further discovered that the failure to interpret the literacy and language teacher education programme by lecturers in this section made it difficult for them to coach student teachers effectively. Apart from that, the syllabus for literacy and language education was not being totally in line with the school curriculum particularly on the areas of literacy and language education. Mutolwa (2019) added that the Ministry of Education did not update lecturers of literacy and language on the latest developments of the school curriculum. Hence, lecturers were not aware of some new programmes on language and literacy in primary schools. Therefore, Mutolwa (2019) recommended that literacy and language lecturers needed to be inducted and mentored upon appointment so as to prepare them to train teachers. The research also suggested that the syllabus for literacy and language should always be aligned with primary school curriculum in order for colleges of education to prepare students effectively. Last but not the least, the researcher recommended that the syllabus for literacy and language should incorporate literacy.

In addition, Pali (2023) conducted a study and the purpose of that study was to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade three in Livingstone district. In line with this, it sought to establish the methods the teachers were using in teaching English literacy in Grade three and establish the challenges faced by teachers in managing the transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade three.

In his study, Pali (2023) employed a mixed method descriptive design which involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data was collected using questionnaires, lesson observations, interviews and document analysis. A random selection and a purposive sampling were used to select respondents for the study.

Pali (2023) found out that the teachers were not adequately trained during in-set programmes such as workshops, Continuous Professional Developments and TGMs. Another finding was that the teacher's attitude to the introduction of English in grade three differed. Some felt that English should be introduced in grade one, while others felt that it should be delayed at least up to grade four or five. Lack of funding at the school level to organise the school inset programs was another issue revealed in the study. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education (MOE) should introduce English literacy courses in colleges, specifically for the transition. It is also recommended that the MOE should provide Grade three English literacy materials and fund in-set programs in schools.

However, this study sought to find out whether primary school teachers were fully prepared to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three in Mansa District of Luapula province. It also looked at how grade three teachers were managing the transition from Zambian language literacy to English in their classrooms.

2.9.5 Challenges Teachers Face in Effectively Implementing Transition from Zambian Language Literacy to English at Grade Three

First and foremost, Nalwimba (2019) conducted a study that sought to establish the challenges grade one teachers' face in the implementation of the primary literacy programme (PLP) curriculum. The data collected was through qualitative method particularly interview guide. Data from primary school teachers and head teachers were collected using interview guides. Raw data collected from interviews was analyzed using themes.

Nalwimba (2019) found out that teachers were dissatisfied with the existing practice of curriculum development which insignificantly involved them. The majority of primary school teachers in selected parts Lusaka had never participated in the development of the curriculum and this they thought this was the main reason as in why they faced challenges with implementing it effectively. It was further revealed that curriculum materials such as textbooks were of poor quality. The teachers, however, indicated that they were willing to participate in the curriculum development process, especially in situational analysis, in the formulation of educational objectives, setting up the curriculum project, and writing of curriculum materials such as textbooks.

From this study, Nalwimba (2019) concluded that teachers were not adequately involved in the curriculum development process with their role being mainly to implement the already developed curriculum. Consequently, most teachers' encountered challenges when implementing the developed curriculum (PLP). A majority of teachers felt they can contribute in the curriculum development process apart from the actual curriculum implementation.

Last but not the least, Nalwimba (2019) recommended that Ministry of General Education (MoGE) through CDC should broaden the scope of teacher involvement in curriculum development through constant involvement with schools especially through extensive research, adequate communication channels and making visits to schools. This may enable them to develop a curriculum that is flexible to be easily implemented by all teachers depending on the learners' needs and different school environment. Through Continuing Programme for Development teachers practical skills should be assessed at least once or twice a year.

The study above shows the challenges grade one teachers were facing during the implementation of Primary Literacy Programme. But it was not yet known whether primary school teachers face the same challenges during the effective implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. Hence, this study sought to find out the challenges primary school teachers face in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian language to literacy in English language at grade three.

Therefore, in this research, this transition programme refers to instructional programme for learners who have been schooled in their native language and are now in "transitional" classes (grade 3) receiving literacy instruction in English. This transition in Zambia usually occurs during elementary school as stated in the Nation Literacy Framework (MoE, 2013). Regarding literacy development and transition from a first to a second language, this case study has highlighted learner performance in both Zambian languages and English language literacy, management of the transition by the teachers and challenges that they may face in effectively implementing the transition.

2.10 Summary

In summary, this chapter has reviewed studies on the definition of literacy, importance of literacy, growth and development of literacy in Zambia, five key components skills of literacy under PLP and role of language in literacy development. It brought out changes in language policies in Zambia since independence, transfer of basic literacy skills from first language to second language, using general best practices in teaching reading, explicit skills instruction, teacher preparedness to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English and challenges teachers face in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Overview

In the previous chapter, literature which is relevant to this study was reviewed. This chapter presents the theoretical framework that governed the study. The chapter begins with a discussion on theoretical framework. It further highlights the theories which guided the study and how they relate to the study.

3.1. Theoretical framework

The researcher decided to use a theoretical framework as opposed to conceptual framework. According to Imenda (2014:189) a theoretical framework is referred to as, “the application of a theory or a set of concepts drawn from one and the same theory to offer an explanation of an event or shade some light on particular phenomenon or research problem.” Moreover, the nature of the study needed this theory so as to help shed more light on whether or not primary school teachers face challenges as they effectively implement the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three in Zambian primary schools and tried to explain why things were the way they were based on the theories applied or used in the study.

This study had used two theories, the Critical Discourse Analysis and the Practical theory. It was done like that because a theory is a supposition or speculation about a phenomenon. Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases to challenge and extend existing knowledge with the limits of critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists (Gabriel, 2008).

3.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

First and foremost, Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is defined as a qualitative analytical approach for critically describing, interpreting, and explaining the ways in which discourses construct, maintain, and legitimize social inequalities (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA, like

discourse analysis (DA), examines the ways in which language produces and moderates social and psychological phenomena; however, CDA emphasizes the role of language as a power resource (Willig, 2014). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a qualitative research method for studying written or spoken language in relation to its social context.

This study used critical discourse analysis to analyze the language and interaction of teaching and learning in grade three classes. In addition, the researcher employed critical discourse analysis to critically, (1) assess the ability of learners to transition literacy skills from Zambian language to English, (2) examine the teaching of literacy in English language in grade three (3) and behavioral support practices, (4) take a deeper, qualitative look at different types of PRP and PLP documents, and (5) use different responses from different respondents to understand the situation under study.

According to Mullet (2018) CDA takes a number of different approaches and incorporates a variety of methods that depend on research goals and theoretical perspectives. This methodological guide presents a general CDA analytic framework and illustrates the application of that framework to a systematic literature review of CDA studies in education. CDA research studies are no less likely than other forms of scholarly research to reproduce ideological assumptions; qualitative rigor and trustworthiness are discussed.

In addition, research shows that CDA is a useful approach for educational researchers who explore connections between educational practices and social contexts; for example, CDA has been used to examine relationships between teaching, learning and curricula, students' identities across time and context (Tamatea, Hardy, & Ninnes, 2008), cultural representations in textbooks (de los Heros, 2009), and the influence of teachers' ideological perspectives on their teaching practice (Llewellyn, 2009).

This study employed some of the approaches to CDA (Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2009) such as:

- (a) Problem-oriented focus;
- (b) Analysis of semiotic data;

- (c) The view that discourses are situated in time and place;
- (d) The idea that expressions of language are never neutral; and
- (e) Analysis that is systematic, interpretive, descriptive, and explanatory;

This simply shows that this method was used in this study to take a deep and qualitative look at different questionnaires, literacy lesson observation tools, learners' performance in reading words in English language and interview responses from different participants. This study used Critical Discourse Analysis in the following ways; firstly it defined the research questions and selected the content of analysis basing on the same research questions. It gathered information and theories on the context; analyzed the content following the themes and patterns; reviewed results and drew conclusions basing on the findings.

3.3. Practical Theory

A practical theory is one that suggests actionable steps toward solving a problem that currently exists in a particular context in the real world. Practical theories can guide practitioners in changing psychological processes or behaviors and state the conditions under which and the people for whom the theoretical predictions apply (Giner-Sorolla, 2019).

Practical theory refers to the application of knowledge or skills to real-life situations. It is all about taking what someone has learned and putting it into practice in a tangible way. It focuses on hands-on experiences rather than abstract ideas or concepts. In other words, practical theory is concerned with how things work in reality rather than just in theory. For example, if teachers attend a workshop and learn about the new procedure to follow when preparing and planning for literacy lessons, different techniques of teaching literacy, the content of literacy instructions and assessment procedure but never actually plan, teach and assess learners in literacy, it can be said that they have theoretical knowledge of literacy instructions but lack practical experience.

This theory intends to be of value to practices or things that are based on actual experience, application or implementation. The Practical Theory focuses on implementing concepts and principles in real-world situations. Therefore, this study employed the practical theory to find out how primary teachers are managing the implementation of the transition method in a classroom situation. In the same vein, literacy lesson observations were done in all the six primary school to

investigate how grade three teachers teach literacy in English language. In addition, assessment of grade four learners was done in order to establish whether teachers were able to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English to the extent where learners would be able to transfer basic literacy skills from their Zambian language to English. Moreover, children need explicit instruction and practice in both the receptive modes of communication (listening, reading, and viewing) and the expressive modes (speaking, writing, representing) from their Zambian language to English.

3.4 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter discussed both theoretical framework and practical theory because the study used two theories to analyze data and practices. The practical theory focuses on a teacher's expert performance after being trained. The theory is relevant to the study because there is need for a teacher to be effective in the delivery of literacy lessons. Therefore, a teacher must be prepared to help learners acquire the literacy skills and knowledge. Critical Discourse Analysis theory focuses on analyzing written and spoken responses from participants. The next chapter discusses the methodology that was used in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.0 Overview

The chapter focuses on research design and methods of data collection that were applied in the study. To begin with, this chapter will discuss the concepts of research design and the methodology as well as explain how these concepts were applied in the study. Kasonde, (2013) defines a research design as, “a guideline upon which the researcher draws his or her roadmap to conduct a particular research project, spells out what type of data will be yielded, indicate the source and the nature of data, whether it is primary or secondary whereas methodology is referred to as a systematic theoretical analysis of methods applied to a field of study.” In fact, methodology comprises of the theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with a branch of knowledge. This study employed a mixed research design comprising both qualitative and quantitative methods. This chapter will discuss qualitative and quantitative methods and how they were applied in this study respectively, and the choice of a mixed research design is explained and justified. The target population, sample size, sampling procedure and research instruments are also presented and explained, followed by the data collection procedure and methods of data analysis. The chapter will discuss the reliability and validity of the methods and instrument used with regards to the findings emanating from the study. Interviews and document analyses were given attention as these are the primary instruments for data collection. Therefore, the chapter will end with ethical considerations relevant to the study and the procedures followed in data analysis and interpretation of the data will be discussed.

4.1 Research Design

This study used explanatory sequential mixed research design; Quantitative and Qualitative. To begin with, quantitative research is a research strategy that focuses on quantifying the collection and analysis of data. It is formed from a deductive approach where emphasis is placed on the testing of theory, shaped by empiricist and positivist philosophies (Goertzen, 2017). While, qualitative research approach allows researchers to access the experiences and viewpoints of the research participants (Creswell, 2009). This study focused on the experiences of teachers and

their learners in transitioning from literacy in Zambian languages to English literacy in selected Mansa urban district schools.

4.2 Study Population

The researcher employed purposive sampling technique to select six primary schools implementing the transition method from three zones of Mansa urban. The researchers decided to pick on purposive sampling because it is also referred to as judgmental or selective sampling, involving deliberately selecting participants who possess specific characteristics or meet predetermined criteria (Nikolopoulou, 2023). In other words, it focuses on selecting participants who possess desired characteristics or have specific knowledge or experiences related to the research topic. For instance, grade three teachers were selected because they have knowledge and experiences needed for the study. It also involves a smaller sample size since the focus is on selecting participants with specific characteristics or expertise relevant to the research objectives. For example, a sample size of 51 participants is small and manageable. Purposive sampling is more efficient as the researcher can directly approach individuals who meet the desired criteria, reducing the time and effort required for recruitment (Nikolopoulou, 2023). For sure, participants of this study were just visited in their respective schools and offices. Purposive sampling is relatively easier to implement as the researcher can rely on his or her judgment and knowledge of the target population to identify suitable participants (Nikolopoulou, 2023). It also prioritizes internal validity, as it aims to provide rich and detailed insights into specific characteristics or experiences (Nikolopoulou, 2023).

As stated above, the researcher selected grade three teachers, School In-sert Coordinators (SICs), Zonal In-sert Coordinators (ZICs) and the District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC) on purpose so much that can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study. Additionally, grade four learners were also selected using the same technique because of sharing certain characteristics such as receiving the same content presented to them using the same lesson procedure. Purposive sampling was picked to work best because the researcher had a lot of background information about his research topic and selected participants with the desired characteristics such as knowledge and experiences. Hence, six primary teachers were sampled, and that was one grade three teacher from each school. One SIC, one ZIC, one DRCC and six

head teachers as well as six learners from each selected primary school were involved in the study. Therefore, the sample size for the research was 51.

4.3 Study Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study sample was from six primary schools within Mansa District. These primary schools are located in three different zones and each school has its own leadership and management styles. This simply means that two schools were selected from each zone that was Mansa Central, North and South. The reason for using different types of school systems was to get different views or results depending on school leadership and management as well as the school surrounding communities. As stated above, purposive sampling was employed when selecting the population of the study.

4.4 Methods of Data collection

According to Burns and Grove (2003:373) data collection is, ‘the precise, systematic gathering of information relevant to the research sub-problems using methods such as interviews, participant observation, focus group discussion, narratives and case studies.’ In other words, data collection includes the manner and the instruments used to collect data during the research.

4.5 Research instruments

Data in this research was collected by using the following instruments:

4.5.1 Literacy Assessment Tool

Assessment is an essential element of education used to inform instruction and find out whether learning took place or not (Wren, 2004). NCTE (2018) also believes that literacy assessment is an integral part of literacy teaching and learning; that literacy assessment contributes to the conditions for literacy teaching and learning; and that professional knowledge about literacy assessment is a critical component of a literacy teacher’s development and practice. Literacy assessment is also purposeful; therefore, this literacy assessment tool was designed for one purpose and that was to find out whether learners were able to transition the basic literacy skills from Zambian language to English and as data collection during this study. The literacy assessment tool was designed to provide a researcher with information on what literacy skills

learners had and had not mastered before and after the transition from Zambian language literacy to English. It helped the researcher know whether learners were able to transition basic literacy skills (reading) from their first language (Icibemba) to second language (English). The results indicated whether grade three teachers were able to manage the transition effectively or not. The assessment based on reading skill and learners were expected to read twenty (20) words graded from simple to complex (single syllable to multiple syllable words) in Zambian language (Icibemba). This reading assessment was also meant to find out whether learners had the abilities to identify initial, middle and end sounds in a word and read it with correct pronunciation in English language. It also examined a learner's knowledge of how sounds make words in their first language (Icibemba) and second language (English). Grade four (4) learners involved in the assessment were thirty-six (36) in total, that is, six (6) from each school and they were randomly selected from their classes, but gender was observed.

4.5.2 Observation guide

Observation is defined as the way of watching people's behaviour in a particular situation in order to collect information on a phenomenon (Johnson and Christensen, 2012). The observation tool was used because it provided a picture of ideal teaching and learning practices in English language literacy classroom. It included what the researcher expected to see in a classroom that was effectively implementing the relevant standards of the transition method. It was designed as a data collection tool for primary school teachers who were implementing the transition from Zambian language literacy to English in grade three. It was not designed for use in evaluation of teachers but for data collection in this study.

4.5.3. Document Analysis

According to Bowen (2009) document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic materials. It is also defined as a versatile method in qualitative research that offers a lens into the intricate layers of meaning, context, and perspective found within textual materials. Through careful and systematic examination, it unveils the richness and depth of the information housed in documents, providing a unique dimension to research findings.

Hence, the researcher decided to use document analysis in this study in order to gather data on the context within which research participants operated and the background information on preparation, planning and delivery of literacy lessons in English language at grade three. The information contained in the literacy documents suggested some questions that the researcher asked and situations which were observed as part of the research. In addition, such information and insights derived from documents were valuable additions to a knowledge base on the teaching of literacy in both Zambian languages and English. The researcher read PRP and PLP documents to understand the similarities and differences between the two programmes and as a means of tracking change and development of literacy instructions in the Zambian education system. These documents enabled the researcher to have a clear understanding of the approaches for PRP and PLP as well as the lesson plan formats for literacy instructions in both Zambian languages and English.

Additionally, Bowen (2009) comes up with the following advantages to using document analysis in research:

- **Authenticity:** Since documents are typically created for purposes other than research, they can offer an unobtrusive and genuine insight into the topic at hand, without the potential biases introduced by direct observation or interviews.
- **Availability:** Documents, especially those in the public domain, are widely accessible, making it easier for researchers to source information.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** As these documents already exist, researchers can save time and resources compared to other data collection methods.

4.5.4. Interviews

White and Rayner (2014), define interview as the act of asking the interviewee questions about some aspect of the research. George (2023) adds that an interview is a qualitative research method that relies on asking questions in order to collect data. Interviews involve two or more people, one of whom is the interviewer asking the questions. There are several types of interviews, often differentiated by their level of structure.

- **Structured interviews:** Have predetermined questions asked in a predetermined order.

- Unstructured interviews: Are more free-flowing and none of the questions are predetermined.
- Semi-structured interviews: Fall in between and a few questions are predetermined, whereas the other questions aren't planned.
- Focused group interviews: The questions are presented to a group instead of one individual.

However, this study used well-organized and structured interviews because they are the most systematized type of interviews. In contrast to semi-structured or unstructured interviews, the interviewer uses predetermined questions in a set order. Asking set questions in a set order allowed the researcher to easily compare responses between participants in a uniform context. This tool helped the researcher to see patterns and highlighted similar areas of concern from different participants. It was noted that a structured interview is straightforward to conduct and analyze. Furthermore, asking the same set of questions in structured interviews mitigates potential biases and leads to fewer ambiguities in analysis (George, 2023).

4.5.5 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is defined as a specific tool, also known as an instrument, for gathering information directly by asking people questions and using the responses as data for analysis (Thornhill, 2014). It can also be referred to as a research instrument that consists of a set of questions or other types of prompts that aims to collect information from a respondent (Pahwa, 2023). A research questionnaire is typically a mix of close-ended questions and open-ended questions. Open-ended, long-form questions offer the respondent the ability to elaborate on their thoughts. The researcher employed questionnaires in this study because they are very useful to collect demographic information, personal opinions, facts, or attitudes from respondents. One of the most significant attributes of a research form is uniform design and standardization. Every respondent sees the same questions. This helped the researcher in data collection and statistical analysis of this data.

4.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher began data collection exercise by first seeking permission from the District Education Board Secretary's (DEBS) office for Mansa District to carry out research in the district which was followed by a pilot project where a few teachers were given questionnaires to answer before finally administering it. Thereafter, literacy lesson observation was conducted followed by a face to face discussion with individual primary school teachers in order to collect different views on what they know and experience about the transition. Grade four learners were also assessed in reading words in both Zambian language (Icibemba) and English. The same procedure was used for the actual research after a successful pilot.

First and foremost, the researcher collected PRP and PLP documents from the resource centre and critically went through them in order to have a clear understanding about the changes and development of literacy instruction in the Zambian education system. Before observing the lessons, the researcher looked at the lesson plans prepared by the teachers, in order to check if the teachers were teaching in line with the lesson plans in English Language Teachers' Guide for Grade three under PLP. The researcher understood very well the procedures for preparation, planning and delivery of literacy lesson in English language. The observation tool was designed in line with the lesson plan procedure for literacy in English language at grade three.

Then, the researcher conducted lesson observation in the transition literacy classroom for the purpose of data collection, not evaluation. In order to be an effective observer while using TTE Literacy Lesson Observation Tool the researcher established good rapport with the teacher(s) in the transition classrooms and explained that the purpose of the observation was to understand what goes on in the transition classroom on a day-to-day basis for research purposes. The researcher explained to the teachers that they needed not to go out of their way to prepare something special for the observation. This tool was meant for data collection not evaluative.

The tool was designed to provide the observer with areas to look for in terms of best practices of literacy in English language that had been identified in the research literature. The observation was conducted following the procedure below:

- Pre-observation: The observer (researcher) communicated to the teacher(s) that the notes from the observation were to assist in facilitating a discussion about the literacy

lesson components and ways in which they were presented to the learners to enable them learn how to read and write words and sentences in English language.

- Observation: The observer stayed in the grade three classrooms from the beginning to the end of the literacy lessons. The observer used to arrive a few minutes earlier before literacy lesson began.
- Post-observation: This was the key to using the tool the way it was intended. The post-observation step consisted of a meeting between the teacher(s) and the researcher. That meeting was reflective in nature, not evaluative. As a result the discussion was guided by what the researcher had written in the tool. The observer asked questions about some of the things he observed. However, rather than criticizing these things or praising them, the purpose was to discuss them.

In this study, six lesson presentations on literacy in English language were observed. This means that one teacher was observed in six of the sampled schools. Transforming Teacher Education (TTE) Observation tool for literacy lesson observation guide was used (put in appendices). The reason for the observations was to see how English literacy was taught to grade three learners and how learners were responding to the transition.

In this study the researcher administered closed questionnaires to primary school teachers only in six sampled schools to find out if they had the knowledge and skills needed to teach learners literacy in English, appropriateness of the content, availability of teaching and learning materials, learners attitude towards the transition, reliability of support from administrators and other stakeholders. The samples were given ten to twenty minutes to answer the questionnaire and after they had completed, the researcher collected the questionnaire. That way was chosen in order to avoid unreturned questionnaire.

In this study, structured interviews were conducted with SICs, ZICs and school head teachers and the DRCC to find out if learners were able to transfer literacy skills from Zambian languages to English and how teachers were managing the transition as well as the challenges they were facing during implementation. A structured interview guide was used to interview the teachers after every observation in order to compare their performance during lesson delivery with their views about the transition.

The researcher used a Literacy Assessment Tool in order to assess learners' performance in literacy at grade four. Six grade four learners were randomly selected from each of the six selected primary schools within Mansa urban and assessed in both Zambian languages (Icibemba) and English language literacy. The assessment based on reading skill and learners were asked to read few words graded from simple to complex (single syllable to multiple syllable words) in Zambian languages and English language as earlier indicated.

4.7 Methods of Data Analysis

In this study the researcher analyzed data qualitatively using the thematic approach. This means that the research prepared, organized, reviewed and explored the data. Thereafter, created initial codes, reviewed those codes and revised or combined / into themes. Then, the researcher presented themes in a cohesive manner. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistic such as mean, standard deviations, correlation, mode, percentage and range. In other words, data that was collected from lesson observations, questionnaires, open-ended interviews and literacy assessment was summarized by the researcher through qualitative and quantitative methods meaning only relevant data was put in the research.

4.8 Ethical Consideration

This study considers the following ethical issues, among others:

- In order for the study to be conducted successfully, the researcher got ethical clearance from the University of Zambia, School of Education Directorate of Postgraduate and The District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) office so as to conduct research in various schools.
- Permission was gotten from all participants/respondents before they were interviewed.
- To maintain confidentiality, participants were assured that no names or school was to be mentioned in interview guides and serial numbers were used instead. They were also assured that data collected was not to be disclosed to other persons, and that the data was only to be used for academic purpose only.

4.9 Summary of the chapter

In summary, this chapter discussed research design, study population, study sample and sampling techniques, methods of data collection, research instruments, data collection procedure, methods of data analysis and ethical consideration. The next chapter presents the research findings of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

To begin with, methodology was well presented and justified in the previous chapter. While in this chapter, research findings will be reported in line with research questions as highlighted below:

1. Were learners able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English?
2. How did primary school teachers manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English?
3. What challenges were being faced by primary school teachers in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three?

5.1. Were learners able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English?

As stated above, the first research objective sought to assess whether learners were able to transfer their literacy skills from Zambian language to English. Therefore, it was of paramount importance to conduct reading assessment in both Zambian language (Icibemba) and English for grade four (4) learners who had already passed through grade three (3) where literacy in English language was first introduced in their literacy journey. To ascertain the transition of literacy skills from Zambian language (Icibemba) to English at grade three, six grade four learners from six primary schools within Mansa District were assessed in reading twenty (20) words in Icibemba and the other twenty (20) in English which were extracted from grade four pupil's books. The words used varied in strength in both languages, that is, ten words consisted of a single syllable while the other ten contained multiple syllables. Hence, the test items were categorized into two sections, that is, section A for single syllable words and section B for multiple syllable words. However, both sections had equal marks, which is ten marks for each section. In the same vein, learners were chosen at random but gender was taken into consideration. The pass percentage for reading test in Icibemba and English language was **50%** to show that transition had taken place. It was so because, the researcher used words that learners had already learnt in the previous lessons.

**Results for Grade 4 Reading Assessment in Zambian Language Literacy (Icibemba)
and English Language from Six Primary Schools**

NAME OF SCHOOL	LEARNER	ICIBEMBA	ENGLISH	TRANSITION
School B	1	100	60	YES
	2	100	50	YES
	3	90	55	YES
	4	95	40	NO
	5	95	50	YES
	6	100	60	YES
	MEAN	97	53	

Table 5.2.1: After the reading assessment, it was discovered that five out of six learners who were randomly chosen from a grade four class were able to transfer literacy skills from Zambian languages (Icibemba) to English at School B. The five scored 50% and above in English language. While one participant performed below average which was an indication that he or she was not able to transition the literacy skills.

NAME OF SCHOOL	LEARNER	ICIBEMBA	ENGLISH	TRANSITION
School F	1	00	00	NO
	2	95	65	YES
	3	50	40	NO
	4	100	90	YES
	5	00	15	NO
	6	00	00	NO
	MEAN	40	35	

Table 5.2.2: Indicates that out of the six learners who were assessed from School F only two were able to transition the literacy skills from Zambian languages (Icibemba) to English. While the other three learners did not manage to get 50% in English language. The performance for learners 1, 5 and 6 was extremely worrisome because they were not even able

to read words of single syllable in both languages. As result, they were given zero marks, except for learner 5 who got 15% in English.

NAME OF SCHOOL	LEARNER	ICIBEMBA	ENGLISH	TRANSITION
School D	1	70	30	NO
	2	100	35	NO
	3	100	55	YES
	4	75	45	NO
	5	100	45	NO
	6	85	40	NO
	MEAN	88	42	

Table 5.2.3: Five learners assessed at School D did not indicate much signs of transitioning the literacy skills. All the five failed to score 50% which was considered to be the average score, except for learner 3 who scored 55%.

NAME OF SCHOOL	LEARNER	ICIBEMBA	ENGLISH	TRANSITION
School C	1	85	40	NO
	2	75	50	YES
	3	90	75	YES
	4	100	75	YES
	5	100	40	NO
	6	85	40	NO
	MEAN	89	53	

Table 5.2.4: The performance of learners from School C was 50%:50%, because three learners were able to transition while the other three were not. Those who portrayed the ability to transition got 50% and above.

NAME OF SCHOOL	LEARNER	ICIBEMBA	ENGLISH	TRANSITION
School E	1	85	35	NO
	2	70	30	NO
	3	90	50	YES
	4	90	40	NO
	5	50	40	NO
	6	80	30	NO
	MEAN	80	38	

Table 5.2.5: The table above shows that only one learner was able to meet the cutoff point after reading assessment in English language was conducted at School E. While the performance of the five learners was below average.

NAME OF SCHOOL	LEARNER	ICIBEMBA	ENGLISH	TRANSITION
School A	1	100	50	YES
	2	100	70	YES
	3	100	65	YES
	4	100	65	YES
	5	70	20	NO
	6	100	80	YES
	MEAN	95	58	

Table 5.2.6: Five learners at School A were able to score 50% and above which was an indication that they were able to transition literacy skills. While one participant got low score in English language.

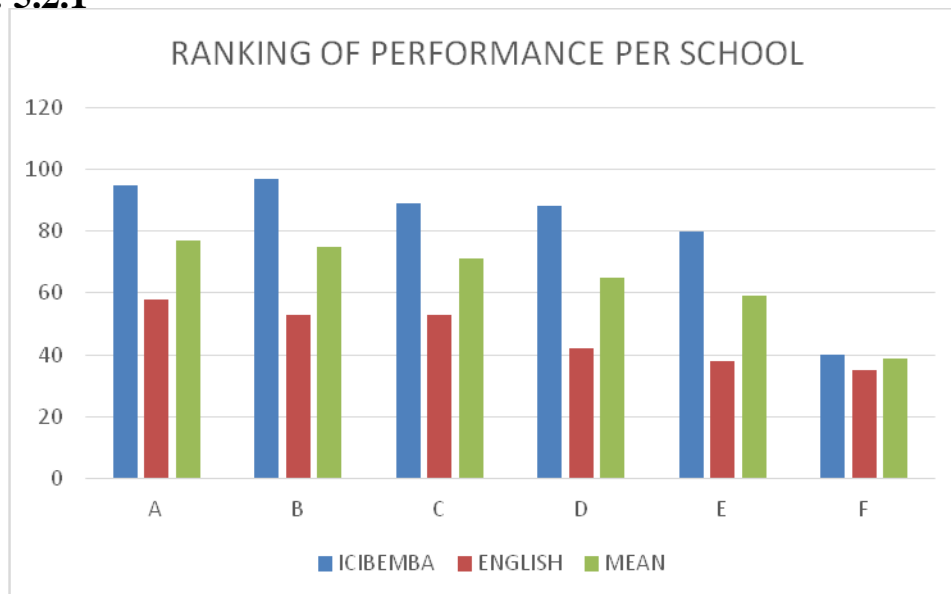
Grade four (4) Reading Assessment

Ranking the Performance of Schools in **Zambian Language Literacy (Icibemba)** and **English Language**

Table: 5.2.7

Name of School		Icibemba	English	Mean
School	A	95	58	77
School	B	97	53	75
School	C	89	53	71
School	D	88	42	65
School	E	80	38	59
School	F	40	35	38

Figure: 5.2.1



Generally, the above assessment results indicate that out of thirty six (36) grade four learners who were assessed, sixteen (16) managed to reach the pass percentage of (50%) and above which was an indication that they were able to transition literacy skills from Zambian Language (Icibemba) to English, while the other twenty (20) learners were unable to make it and it simply

showed that they were not able to transfer the literacy skills from Zambian Language (Icibemba) to English. In terms of percentages, the results indicates that 44% of grade four learners were able to transition literacy skills from ZL to English while 56% did not manage. The findings showed that a bigger number of learners were not able to transition literacy skills from ZL to English.

5.2 How did primary school teachers manage the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English?

The second research objective sought to examine how primary school teachers were managing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English. In order to fully understand the implementation of the policy, it was important to consider the knowledge, skills and performance of grade three teachers in the selected schools. It is evidently true that a teacher plays a very important role in the implementation of any education policy. Additionally, a teacher is an agent of change and helps learners to acquire knowledge, competencies, values and skills needed for the development of the society. Hence, a teacher at any level is expected to be more knowledgeable than his or her learners (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, in order for any policy to be a success, there is need for the implementer to be knowledgeable and this knowledge can only be acquired through adequate preparation through training workshops, orientation or re-orientation, or through in-service training at national, provincial, district or school level (World Bank, 1980). Hence, the researcher first prepared questionnaires which were given to grade three teachers to answer, conducted literacy lesson observations and interviewed grade three teachers to understand how the transition method was managed. The research findings under this objective are presented following the same order as shown below:

5.2.1. The following were the responses from the questionnaires answered by grade three teachers:

(a) I was fully trained to teach literacy in English at grade three.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	5	83
2	Disagree	1	17
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	0	00
5	Strongly agree	0	00

According to the data presented in **Table 5.3.1.1** above, 83 percent of the participants strongly disagreed being fully trained to offer literacy in English at grade three. In addition, 17 percent disagreed. These responses from all the teachers who answered the questionnaires indicated that they were not fully trained at all.

(b) I better understand the transition method and able to implement it effectively.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	5	83
2	Disagree	1	17
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	0	00
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.2: The above statistics show exactly the same responses as the ones in Table 5.3.1.1. Hence, 83 percent of the participants expressed their strong disagreement and 17 percent indicated a mere disagreement towards the statement. All the teachers claimed that did not understand the policy very well and they were not able to implement it effectively.

(c) Lesson plan for literacy in English language is easy to prepare and apply.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	4	67
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	2	33
5	Strongly agree	0	00

From the data in **Table 5.3.1.3**, 33 percent of participants agreed to the statement. While the percentage of participants who expressed disagreement was 67.

(d) It is easy to teach literacy using English language at grade three.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	4	67
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	2	33
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.4: Following the responses above, 67 percent of participants indicated that it was difficult for them to teach literacy using English language. On the other hand, 33 percent found it easy to teach literacy using English language at grade three.

(e) I receive support from internal and external monitors on how best I can teach literacy using English language at grade three.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	6	100
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	0	00
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.5: The data above indicate that all the participants disagreed to the statement.

- (f) We do have TGM on how to improve literacy instructions in English language at grade three.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	4	67
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	2	33
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.6: It is noticeable in Table 5.3.1.2 and Table 5.3.1.3 that 67 percent of the participants had no chance of being trained during in-house training (TGMs) as it was with 33 percent who even agreed that they used to have Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs) on how to improve literacy instructions in English language at grade three using THRASS.

- (g) Teaching techniques used for the transition method are suitable and usable.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	4	67
4	Agree	2	33
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.7: According to the responses above, 67 percent of participants stated that they had no idea concerning the suitability and usability of the teaching techniques used for the transition method. While 33 percent of the primary school teachers agreed to the statement.

(h) Contact hours for literacy lessons in English language are enough.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	0	00
5	Strongly agree	6	100

Table 5.3.1.8: It was clearly indicated by all the participants that contact hours for literacy lessons in English language were enough.

(i) Learners enjoy learning literacy in English language.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	4	67
4	Agree	2	33
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.9: In the above table, participants who had no idea about the statement were 4 giving out 67 percent, whereas 2 participants agreed and the percentage was 33.

(j) It is easy to assess literacy levels for learners in English language.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	4	67
4	Agree	2	33
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.10: A bigger percentage of participants of about 47 percent had no idea whether it was easy to assess literacy levels for learners in English language or not. But, 33 percent agreed to the statement.

(k) The content is reliable and systematic.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	4	67
4	Agree	1	17
5	Strongly agree	1	17

Table 5.3.1.11: Shows that 67 percent of participants had no idea, 17 percent agreed and another 17 percent strongly agreed to the statement.

(l) The content is structured in a clear and understandable manner.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	4	67
4	Agree	1	17
5	Strongly agree	1	17

Table 5.3.1.12: Shows that 67 percent of participants had no idea, 17 percent agreed and another 17 percent strongly agreed to the statement.

(m)The content is present in creative way and motivates learners to explore.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	4	67
4	Agree	2	33
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.13: The above table indicates that 67 percent of the participants had no idea while 33 percent agreed to the statement.

(n) The literacy instructions are systematic and explicit.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	4	67
4	Agree	2	33
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.14: The above table indicates that 67 percent of the participants had no idea while 33 percent agreed to the statement.

(o) Teachers' and learners' books are available and enough.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	1	17
2	Disagree	5	83
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	0	00
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.15 above shows that 17 percent of participants strongly disagreed while 83 percent disagreed.

(p) Educational materials are suitable and usable.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	5	83
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	1	17
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.16: It is clearly indicated on the table above that 83 percent of participants disagreed whereas 17 percent agreed to the statement.

(q) Educational materials easy to understand.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	5	83
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	1	17
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.17: Above table shows that 83 percent of participants disagreed while 17 percent agreed to the statement.

(r) The letter sound can enhance the presentation of information.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	0	00
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	5	83
5	Strongly agree	1	17

Table 5.3.1.18: It is tabulated in the table above that 83 percent of participants agreed and the other 17 percent strongly agreed to the statement.

(s) All the sounds are easy to sound and increase learners' interests to learn literacy in English language at grade three.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	5	83
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	1	17
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.19: The table above indicates that 83 percent of participants disagreed while 17 percent agreed to the statement.

(t) I do not teach literacy in English Language in grade three.

S/N	Choices	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Disagree	0	00
2	Disagree	2	33
3	No idea	0	00
4	Agree	4	67
5	Strongly agree	0	00

Table 5.3.1.20: Data on the table above indicates that 33 percent of participants disagreed while 67 percent agreed to the statement.

5.2.2. Lesson descriptions from lesson observations conducted in six primary schools.

To thoroughly evaluate the teacher's performance, an observation tool for literacy in English was designed and used during the observations. All the lessons were observed to assess the quality of literacy teaching and find out whether learners were receiving the most effective learning experiences to enable them transition literacy skills from ZL to English in grade three. Before the observation, the researcher met all the grade three teachers in their respective schools and discussed the purpose, focus areas, specific instructions and expectations of the study in order for them to be original and genuine. Findings from lesson observations will be presented in form of lesson descriptions from six different teachers of six different schools. These schools will be

referred to as School A, B, C, D, E and F and corresponding teachers as Teacher A, B, C, D, E, and F. But the lessons will be referred to as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. These lesson descriptions will not be done in full but only important areas will be considered from literacy point of view:

(a) Lesson 1/Teacher A/School A

Teacher A is lady who is sixteen years old in the service and she has Primary Teachers' Diploma. She has been teaching lower grades for ten years now.

Subject: Literacy

Topic: Initial letter sound

Sub-topic: Letter /b/

Introduction: Teacher reads a story aloud to the learners and asks a few questions about the story in relation to letter /b/. Learners respond correctly by mentioning few words that begin with the phoneme of the day:

'A big brown ball'

One day, Jane saw a big brown ball along the road.....

Learners' responses: big, brown, ball

Description: In this activity learners will identify the sound at the beginning.

Learning outcome: learners should be able to:

- Identify the initial sound of a word.
- Sound the letter sound /b/ correctly.
- Write words and sentences using the letter /b/.
- Answer listening comprehension questions.

Materials: Teacher writes a list of words to be used on a chart.

Procedure: Lesson Development

Step: 1. Teacher asks learners to identify the beginning sound in the following words. A good number of learners did it correctly. But some learners were identifying wrong sounds like:

Wrong response: bat, butter-fly, begin, bad

Correct response: bat, ball, bell, boy, bag, bed, bad, begin, butter-fly

Step: 2. Teacher models the task: “Listen, the word is “bat.” The beginning sound is /b/. Teacher makes an emphasis on how to pronounce the initial correctly. Then she asks learners to pick a word on the chart and points at the initial sound and sound it correctly. E.g.in the word **begin**, initial sound is /b/

Step: 3. Teacher asks learners in groups to mention words that begin with the same initial sound /b/ and construct sentences. e.g **bitter**. ‘I tasted a **bitter** lemon.’ **better**. It is **better** to come to school every day. Some learners did make meaningful sentences. e.g. I like **butter** shoes. (using a wrong word)

Step: 4. Ask learners individually to identify and underline the first sound in the words and make sentences using the same words.

Words: 1. bus 2. blue 3. bird 4. ballon 5. box

Expected Sentences: 1. My father is waiting for a bus. 2. She has a blue dress. 3. I saw a black bird in the sky. 4. My teacher likes brown ballon. 5. The cat is in the box. Learners underline the initial sound and make sentences. Many learners managed to underline the sound but did not write good sentences for example one learner wrote:

1. Me to buy
2. Book colour
3. Peter and box

Step: 5. Teachers asks learners to listen to a story containing words with the initial sound /b/ and asks them questions orally. Title of the story: ‘The Big blue Ballon’; Questions: Name a boy who threw a big blue ballon in the blue sky. Answer: Bright Bwalya.

Conclusion: Teacher goes through the initial letter sound /b/ and words.

(b) Lesson 2/Teacher B/School B/

Teacher B is lady who is ten years old in the service and she has Primary Teachers' Diploma. She has been teaching lower grades for two years now.

Subject: Literacy

Topic: Letter sound

Sub-topic: Letter /ch/

Introduction: Teacher reads a story aloud to the learners and asks a few questions about the story in relation to letter /ch/. Learners responded correctly by mentioning few words that begin with the phoneme of the day. Like, *chalk, choir*

Description: In this activity learners sound and use the sound to make words and sentences.

Learning outcome: learners should be able to:

- Sound out letter sound/ch/.
- Identify and underline letter sound /ch/ in words correctly.
- Write words and sentences using the letter /ch/.

Materials: Teacher writes a list of words with sound/ch/ to be used on a chart.

Procedure: Lesson Development

Step: 1. Teacher asks learners to sound the letter/ch/ after her correctly.

/ch/ lower case and upper case /CH/

Step: 2. Teacher models how to sound out the phoneme of the day: "Listen, learners this sound is /ch/. Teacher makes an emphasis on how to pronounce the sound. Then she asks learners to pick a word on the chart and points at the sound and sound it correctly. **church, chain, child, chicken, charm, change, chips**. Teacher asks learner to make sentences using words with /ch/. One learner had to make a sentence like: *My child is at the church.*

Step: 3. Teacher asks learners to identify and underline the sound in words. Pitch, catch, kitchen, touch, watch, matches, teacher, lunch, coach, chalk. All the learners participated fully and gave the positive responses like:

Teacher: Who can come in front and underline sound /ch/ in the word pitch?

Learner: Me teacher, she goes in front and underlines sound /ch/ in pitch and sound it correctly.

Step: 4. Teacher ask learners individually to come up with words with the sound of the day and make sentences using the same words verbally.

Exercise

Words: teacher asks learners to copy the words from the board and underline sound /ch/: 1. choice 2. beach 3. children 4. achieve 5. attach 6. torch

Sentences: teacher asks learners to make six sentences using words written on the board. 1. *I did not make a good choice.* 2. *He was found at Samfya beach.* 3. *My sister has five children.* 4. *Did you achieve talking to her?* 5. *She attaches paper to clay.* 6. *My father has a good torch.* But some learners wrote the sentences without sound /ch/ e.g: *My mother is good. I look bananas. Kick the ball.*

Conclusion: Teacher goes through the letter sound and asks learners to mention words that contain the sound of the day/ch/.



Figure: 1 b

Figure: 1 b shows teacher B of school B teaching literacy in English using Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills THRASS.

(c) Lesson 3/Teacher C/School C

Teacher C is lady who is ten years old in the service and she has Primary Teachers' Diploma. She has been teaching lower classes for two years now.

Subject: English

Topic: Conversation

Sub-topic: Listening and speaking

Introduction: Teacher reads a story aloud about the house chores and asks learners to state the responsibilities for family members. Learners managed to discuss as a class and enjoyed the discussion. They gave the following responses: *cutting vegetables, playing with friends, cooking food*

Description: In this activity learners learn how to listen and speak.

Learning outcome: learners should be able to:

- Mention the house chores.
- State different responsibilities of family members.
- Take an active part in making simple dialogues.

Materials: A chart on house chore and responsibilities.

Procedure: Lesson Development

Step: 1. Teacher asks learners to state the house chores and responsibilities: learners responded correctly:

Chores: cooking, sweeping, gardening, washing clothes and plates

Responsibilities: caring for others, protecting family members

Step: 2. Teacher asks learners to state the responsibilities of family members. Learners provided answers in three categories:

Father: looking for food, paying school fees and other bills

Mother: caring for the children, cooking food, keeping the house clean and safe

Children: helping mother to fetch water and fire wood, gardening and sweeping

Step: 3. Teacher asks learners to come up with simple dialogues in groups and take characters like father, mother and children at home. One group of learners did this: (while others failed to construct meaningful sentences.)

Father: I am hungry.

Mother: Don't worry my husband. I have already prepared food for you and the children.

Children: Thank you mum, I am also hungry.

Conclusion: Teacher and learners go through the house chores and responsibilities of family members.

(d) Lesson 4/Teacher D/School D

Teacher D is lady who is two years old in the service and she has Primary Teachers' Diploma. She was given grade three class for the first time.

Subject: English

Topic: Types of transport

Sub-topic: Writing sentences

Introduction: Teacher reads a story aloud about types of transport and asks learners to state the type of transport which is common in their community: *using the bicycle, using taxi, walking, running, using motor bike*

Description: In this activity learners learn how to make meaningful sentences.

Learning outcome: learners should be able to:

- Describe how they travel from one point to another.
- State different types of transport.
- Complete sentences using different types of transport.

Materials: A chart on transport.

Procedure: Lesson Development

Step: 1. Teacher asks learners to describe how they visit relatives in distant places, and transport goods. Learners' response:

We move by using cars, bus, train, van or walk. We move goods by using trucks, tractor, bicycle. We use boats to travel on water. We use aero plane to travel in the air.

Step: 2. Teacher asks learners in groups to state different types of transport. Learners provide answers in three categories:

Air transport: use aero planes

Water transport: use boats

Land transport: use car, bus, bicycle, truck, motor-bike

Trail transport: use train

Step: 3. Teacher asks learners to complete sentences. Some learners completed sentences with difficulties e.g. *A/an ox-cart is fast. This is a wrong answer.*

Expected answers:

(a) A/an _____ is fast. (**aero-plane/ox-cart**)

(b) A _____ is slow. (**aero-plane/truck**)

(c) A _____ is big. (**motor-bike/boat**)

(d) A _____ is small. (**truck/car**)

Conclusion: Teacher and learners go through the sentences completed using types of transport.

(e) Lesson 5/Teacher E/School E

Teacher E is lady who is three years old in the service and she has Primary Teachers' Diploma. She has teaching grade three classes since her first year of deployment.

Subject: English

Topic: Ask the Doctor

Sub-topic: Reading Comprehension

Introduction: Teacher asks learners to mention the person they see whenever they go the hospital when they are sick. Responses: *doctors, nurses, clinical officers*

Description: In this activity learners learn how to read with understanding.

Learning outcome: learners should be able to:

- Read the story with understanding.
- Answer comprehension questions correctly.
- Re-arrange the sentence in order to form a story with fewer difficulties.

Materials: A chart showing pictures of medical practitioner.

Procedure: Lesson Development

Step: 1. Teacher asks learners to read the story. Learners read after the teacher and individually:

'Ask the Doctor!'

Musonda was sick. He had a bad cough. His friend Ngozo gave him some medicine. Musonda took the medicine. He still felt very sick. He was very weak too. His mother took him to hospital. The doctor said Musonda took wrong medicine.

Step: 2. Teacher asks learners comprehension questions orally. Learners answered the questions correctly:

(a) *Why did Musonda take the medicine? Answer: He was sick.*

- (b) *Who gave Musonda the medicine? Answer: His friend Ngozo*
- (c) *How did Musonda feel after taking wrong medicine? Answer: He felt very sick.*
- (d) *Where should you go when you are not well? Answer: Hospital, Clinic*

Step: 3. Teacher asks learners to re-arrange the sentence in order form a story. Some learners did very well while others did not:

- (i) *Luka felt better.*
- (ii) *The doctor gave him medicine.*
- (iii) *One day, Luka was sick.*
- (iv) *He went to hospital.*

Expected answer:

One day, Luka was sick. He went to hospital. The doctor gave him medicine. Luka felt better. But one learner had to write: One day, Luka was sick. The doctor gave him medicine. He went to hospital. Luka felt better. He was marked wrong by the teacher.

Conclusion: Teacher did not conclude the lesson.

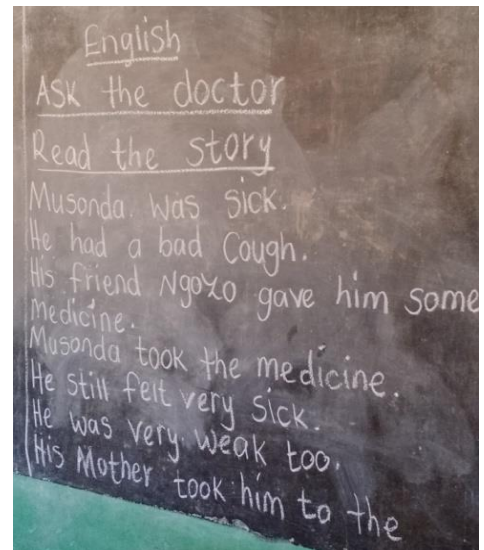


Figure: 1 e

This figure is showing teacher E of School E in the classroom teaching literacy in English language. The lesson is described above pictures.

(e) Lesson 6/ Teacher F/ School F

Teacher F is lady who is six years old in the service and she has Primary Teachers' Diploma. She was given grade three class in 2023.

Subject: English

Topic: People Found at the Market

Sub-topic: Reading Comprehension

Introduction: Teacher asks learners to mention the people found at the market. Responses from learners: *marketer, barber, cobbler, boys, mothers, drivers, shopkeepers, vegetable sellers.*

Description: In this activity learners learn how to read with understanding.

Learning outcome: learners should be able to:

- Read the story with understanding.
- Answer comprehension questions correctly.
- Fill in the blank spaces with fewer difficulties..

Materials: A picture showing at the market.

Procedure: Lesson Development

Step: 1. Teacher asks learners to read the story. Learners read after the teacher and individually:

'People found at the market'

I go to the market. I see many people. People at the market do many things. A marketer sells things at the market. A barber cuts hair. A cobbler mends shoes.

Step: 2. Teacher asks learners comprehension questions orally. Learners answered the questions correctly:

(a) Why do you go to the market? Answer: To buy food and other items.

(b) Who cuts hair? Answer: barber

(c) *Who mends shoes? Answer: cobbler.*

(d) *Who sells things at the market? Answer: marketeer*

Step: 3. Teacher asks learners to fill in the blank spaces. Individual learners wrote answers in their books as shown below: (not every learner did well)

1. *There are _____ people at the market. (a) few (b) many*

2. *A person who sells things at the market is called _____ (a) marketer (b) cobbler*

3. *What does the cobbler do? (a) cut hair (b) mends shoes*

4. *The _____ cuts hair at the market. (a) cobbler (b) barber*

answers: 1. B; 2. A; 3. B; 4. B

Conclusion: Teacher asks learners to mention people found at the market.

The questionnaire was coupled with lesson observations in all the six primary schools selected under this study and the table below shows how grade three primary school teachers performed basing on the checklist which was designed by the researcher:

Literacy Lesson Observation in English language

Results for Grade Three Teachers

Ranking the Performance of Schools

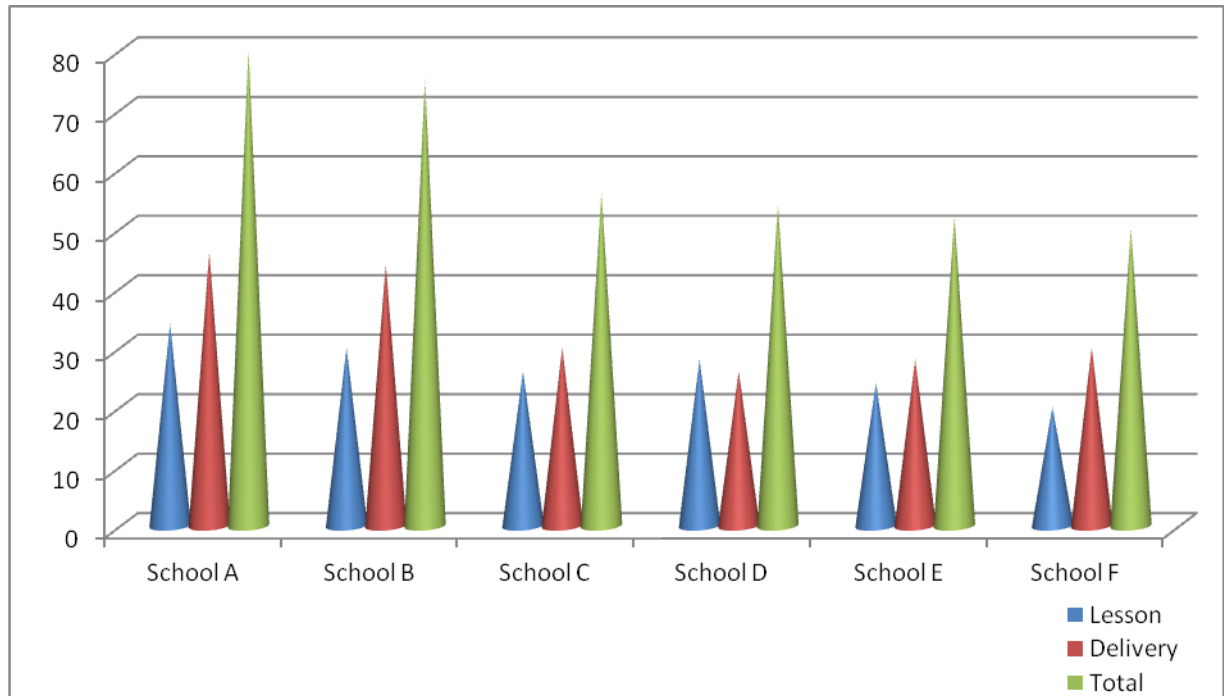
Table: 5.3.2.1

Name of School	Lesson Plan	Lesson Delivery	Grand Total
School A	34	46	80
School B	30	44	74
School C	26	30	56
School D	28	26	54
School E	24	28	52
School F	20	30	50

English Language Literacy Lesson Observation Results for Grade Three Teachers

Ranking the Performance of Schools in Graph

Figure: 5.3.2.1



During lesson observation, it was noticed that grade three teachers at School A and School B had used THRASS methodology to teach learners how to read in English language. While grade three teachers at School C, School D, School E and School F presented lessons using approaches for English language teaching instead of literacy in English language.

5.3. What challenges were being faced by primary school teachers in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three?

The third objective of this study sought to investigate the challenges primary school teachers face when implementing the transition from Zambian language literacy to English in Mansa District. This objective was important because there was need to find out if the teachers were facing any challenges in managing the transition. Data was collected from the face to face interviews with

primary school teachers, SICs, ZICs, DRCC and school administrators. Teachers also responded to questions on the questionnaires in line with the objectives.

5.3.1. The preceding paragraphs will present the findings from grade three primary school teachers who were interviewed

(a) How long have you been teaching at lower primary?

It was noticed that four of the participants interviewed were above five years of experience. Teacher A was the oldest and she witnessed the introduction of Primary Literacy Programme in replacement of Primary Reading Programme. Hence, her responses were based on what she had seen, heard or experienced. The work experience for the other three participants was ranging from six to ten years in the teaching fraternity and Teacher E had three years, while the youngest teacher had two years of experience. Nevertheless, they all had some information about the policy. No wonder, the youngest participants in the service had to say:

'I am two years old in the service. Although, I have heard very little about Primary Reading Literacy, literacy is very important for learners.' (Teacher D)

(b) Do you teach literacy in English language in grade three? If yes, how do you teach it?

Two participants indicated that they teach literacy in English language using a method called Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS). While the other four just came out in the open and responded that they do not teach literacy in English language at grade three. Instead, they had continued teaching literacy in Ibibemba and English language as a subject and not literacy in English language. The duration of the period also indicated that they were teaching English as a subject for 30 minutes instead of one hour as the recommended duration for literacy. For this reason, one participant had to say:

'As far as literacy teaching is concerned, the duration of the period and the procedure that I use to teach learners show that I teach English language as a subject not literacy in English language.' (Teacher A)

In the same vein, teacher E also added and said:

'I do not teach literacy in English language in my class. Instead, I teach literacy in Zambian language (Icibemba) and I use the materials for grade one and two.' (Teacher C)

Another participant came out in the open and she had to say:

'Yes, I teach literacy in English language using Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS) the method I was trained to employ when teaching learners how to read in English language. This means that I do not teach literacy in English as recommended in Primary Literacy Programme.' (Teacher A)

(c) Have you ever heard about the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three? If yes, how much do you know about it?

All the participants interviewed expressed ignorance about the transition method and they had never seen and read the National Literacy Framework before. In short, they had some ideas about PLP and teaching literacy in local familiar language but the transition method was news to them and indicated that no administrator or SIC has ever presented information about it. This is what one participant had to say:

'Yes, I have heard about Primary Literacy Programme particularly when it comes to teaching literacy in the local familiar languages. But I never knew it that learners in grade three were supposed to be transitioned to literacy in English language.' (Teacher D)

(d) Were you trained on how to manage the transition method at grade three? If yes, how and by who? For how long?

On teacher preparation to teach literacy in Zambian languages, the findings show that one teacher attended the training workshop at the district level. While, two teachers received their training through Teacher Group Meetings in schools and GRACE Meetings at the District Resource Centre. On the other hand, the findings showed that two teachers were not trained at all because the few teachers who were privileged to attend the training workshops did not train the other teachers adequately.

On the other hand, all the participants were not trained on how to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three and they did not know anything concerning the procedure for the transition method to be a success. They further indicated that no training workshop at either district or school level had been conducted on how to teach literacy in English language at grade three from the time they joined the teaching service. This is what one participant had to say:

‘I know how to teach literacy in Zambian language but I was not prepared to teach literacy in English at grade three. I know that grade one (1) learn literacy in their local familiar language as recommended in Primary Literacy Program. I am not aware that in grade 2 learners are supposed to be exposed to oral English where learners learn English orally without seeing the print which they are exposed to in grade 3. I have not learnt any specific methodology for the transition from Zambian language literacy to English.’ (Teacher D)

However, Teacher A had to say this:

‘Yes, I have not been trained to teach literacy in English language and enable learners to transfer their basic literacy skills from Zambian language to English. But, I have some ideas and I have decided to be using THRASS when teaching learners how to read in English language.’ (Teacher A)

(e) Do you have enough teaching and learning materials for literacy in English language at grade three? If yes, do you use them?

Findings showed that some of the participants had never seen any book in school about literacy in English language for grade three. But others said that they had seen just a copy of teachers guide in the Head teacher’s office. While one participant said that she had a teacher’s copy and few learners’ books. Another said that she uses THRASS materials when teaching reading to grade three learners. This is what one participant had to say:

‘Our school has enough books in Zambian language (Icibemba) for literacy in the local familiar language. However, educational materials for literacy in English

were not supplied to meet the demand, because in our school we only have a copy for teachers and about three learners' books.' (Teacher B)

(f) Are the educational materials in line with the content and syllabus?

The finding indicated that those participants who had chance to see the materials for literacy in English said that all the participants had no idea because they had not read such kind of educational materials for literacy in English language. One teacher used her experience said:

'I am not in a position to make judgment on the appropriateness of the little education materials given to our school and I do not use them at all.' (Teacher A)

(g) Are you able to implement the transition method effectively?

The findings showed that all the participants were not able to effectively implement the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. They were not abreast with the pedagogical knowledge of the transition method. This is what one grade three teachers had to say:

'I am able to effectively implement the transition method because I do not know the procedure to employ and our school does not have enough educational materials to use during lesson preparation and planning for literacy in English language.' (Teacher F)

(h) What challenges do you face in the effective implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?

The six participants lamented that the biggest challenge they had was inadequate training or preparation to enable them implement the transition method effectively. Another challenge mentioned during the interviews was lack of teaching and learning materials. One of the participants stated the challenges as shown below:

'I am lacking support from school administrators, DRCC and PRCC and I have not been monitored by school administrators, DRCC, PRCC and Standard Officers particularly to check how I am teaching literacy in English language. I do not have knowledge on literacy supportive pedagogy in English language at

grade three. I do not have access to National Literacy Framework document in hardcopy or attend policy orientation meetings at either school or district level.'
(Teacher C)

Another participant added that lack of funding affected the quality of school based workshops. This was what she had to say:

'The training at local level is not really enough and we do not even take these so called school based workshops due to lack of funding and some teachers who were trained to train us do not even seem to understand how this transition should be handled.' (Teacher E)

(i) What type of help do you receive that can be identified to be productive in improving the implementation of the transition method? If yes, how often and from who?

All participants indicated that they had not been receiving any form of help to enable them manage the implementation of the transition method effectively from either the Ministry or any other stakeholders. This is what one participant had to say:

'I have served the Ministry of Education for three years and I have not witnessed a day when the DRCC or Standard Officers visited our school to provide any help to primary school teachers on how to manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three.' (Teacher E)

(j) As a teacher do you think the transition from Zambian language literacy to English relevant to the learners at grade three? If yes, are they able to transfer literacy skills from Zambian language to English?

The participants thought it wise to expose grade three learners to literacy in English language in order to enable them learn how to read very well and even unfamiliar words in English and facilitate learning in different subjects. They also said if teachers were well prepared to manage the implementation of the transition, learners would be able to transfer the literacy from Zambian languages literacy to English. Some participants said that learners who broke through to literacy

in grade one (1) in Zambian language were able to transfer their literacy skills to English at grade three. Hence, one teacher said:

'I have conducted assessment before to find out whether learners in my class were able to read words in English language as they were fluently reading words in Icibemba. I discovered that a good number of learners were not able to read words in English language with fewer difficulties. This means that I was not able to enable learners to transfer literacy skills from Zambian language to English.'
(Teacher F)

However, Teacher A said that her learners were able to transition their literacy skills from Zambian language to English:

'I use THRASS method when I am teaching reading in English language and many learners in my class are able to reads correctly. To me, it is an indication that I able to help learners transfer literacy skills from Zambian language to English.'

(k) What do you think can be done in order to improve the management of transition method at grade three in primary schools?

It was anonymously suggested by all the participants that the Ministry of Education should come up with a deliberate programme of training grade three teachers, SICs, ZICs, School Administrators, DRCC, PRCC and Standard Officers on how to implement and monitor the transition method. Furthermore, they expressed the need for appropriate teaching and learning materials and designing a suitable pedagogy for literacy instructions in English language. This is what one participant had to say:

'My humble request to the Ministry of Education is to organize training workshops for primary school teachers and other officers involved in quality assurance. Schools like ours need education materials to enable teachers manage the transition method effectively. Last but not the least, school administrators should revamp CPDs in their respective schools for sustainability of the transition method.'(Teacher C)

5.3.2. The following were the responses from interviews conducted with School Head Teachers from six primary schools and they will be referred to as Head teacher A, B, C, D, E and F:

(a) How much do you know about the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?

All the participants interviewed did not know much about the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. Instead, they had knowledge on other methodologies like THRASS and Catch Up. One head teacher had to say this:

'I remember attending a two day workshop at the District Resource Centre and I went with one of the grade three teachers. The workshop was about the transitioning of learners' literacy skills from ZL to English. I have some ideas about the transition method but I am not in the position to train other teachers. Unfortunately, the madam I went with was transferred last year to a zone school. (Head teacher D)

In contrast to what Head teacher D said, Head teacher F had to say the following:

'I joined this primary school two years ago from the secondary school where I taught for many years. I do not know much about literacy teaching and the transition method because I just learnt one or two things from the deputy head teacher and senior teachers.'

(b) Are your teachers trained to manage the transition from ZL literacy to English at grade three? If yes, who trained them? What kind of training did they receive?

All the participants indicated that grade three teachers had not been fully trained to manage the transition method very well. In other words, all the head teachers said that primary school teachers were not adequately prepared on how to manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. As a result, some of the teachers use THRASS while others do not teach literacy in English language at all. Instead, they still teach literacy in Zambian language in grade three. No wonder, Head teacher D had to say this:

'I really wanted to have all the teachers handling lower classes to be trained at school level during CPDs in order to enable them manage the implementation of the transition method effectively. Unfortunately, the madam I was trained with left

for zone school where she is currently holding the position of Zone In-serve Coordinator (ZIC). I cannot orient newly deployed teachers alone because I did not even understand the concept.'

However, head teacher A had a different response about teacher preparation and this is what he had to say:

'Yes, one of the grade three teachers we have in school was trained to teach literacy and she is capable to handle the transition because she attended the workshop when PLP was first introduced in our district. I observed her and I think she does not have any problem in managing the transition from Zambian language literacy to English. But, other teachers are not conversant with the transition method.'

(c) Do you have adequate teaching and learning materials for literacy in English language at grade three?

The first response was no from almost all the participants but after showing them the book spoken about; they agreed receiving one copy of PLP book and retrieved it. But they did not know how to use it and they kept the book very safe in their cabinets. One of the head teachers said:

'The teaching and learning materials for literacy in Zambian languages are adequate though the language used is not appropriate. But we do not have enough books for literacy in English language. We only received one copy for teachers only and I have kept it safe as a reference book. Moreover, I did not know that a book was designed for literacy in English in grade three.' (Head teacher C)

(d) How often do you monitor the delivery of literacy lesson in English language? If yes, do you have the monitoring instrument?

Some participants said that they could not monitor the transition method which was not implemented. Instead, they monitor PLP lessons which teachers deliver to learners in Zambian language (Icibemba) in grade three. But one head teacher said:

'I monitor the implementation of PLP lesson delivery including the transition method. But I do not use the instrument which is designed specifically for

literacy in English language. But I use the monitoring tool for all the subjects in general' (Head teacher A)

(e) What measures have been put in place to ensure the effective teaching of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?

The findings showed that some Head teachers said that nothing had been done to ensure the effective implementation of the transition because the method was not employed by grade three teachers in their respective schools. While others claimed to have done something to improve the implementation of the transition method such as holding Teacher Group Meetings so that teachers can share ideas. This is what one head teacher had to say:

'As a school we invited the ZIC from the zone school to come and orient our grade three teachers on how they can effectively manage the transition method. Unfortunately, he was not very much conversant with the policy. Nevertheless, he share the little knowledge and skills with our teachers. But it was equally difficult for them to implement the transition method effectively. Hence, the teachers themselves decided to keep on using THRASS when teaching learners how to read in English language.'
(Head teacher B)

(f) What type of materials do you provide to your teachers for the effective implementation of the transition method?

Participants said they provided markers, flips charts, manila paper and stickers for literacy teaching for lower primary grades. But they did not have materials set aside for literacy in English language. This was said by one head teacher who further add as shown by the quote below:

'As the head teacher for this particular school, I do always make sure that teaching and learning materials are provided to all the teachers including those teaching literacy.' (Head teacher E)

(g) Do you receive Standard Officers, PRCC or DRCC for monitoring literacy lessons in English language at grade three?

All the participants indicated that DRCC, PRCC and Standard Officer, visited schools once in a while to monitor teaching and learning generally with little focus on literacy instructions. Literacy lessons were monitored by such Officers during the teaching experience for Mansa College student teachers under TTE (USAID) project. This is what one head teacher had to say:

'To be honest our external monitors do not focus much on observing the presentation of literacy lessons in English language. They interest was mainly on Zambian language literacy and they ask about the reading levels in lower classes such as grade one and two. They forget that literacy does not end in grade two but it goes onwards and learners are expected to transition their literacy skills from ZL to English in grade three.' (Head teacher F)

(h) What are your comments and recommendations concerning the effective implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?

It was noticed that all participants had a lot of answers to give on this question. Some of the responses given were:

'First and foremost, primary school teachers and their supervisors should adequately be prepared in as far as teaching of literacy in English language is concerned in order for them to manage the transition effectively.'

(Head teacher E)

Another head teacher added and said:

'Educational materials should also be readily available and enough for grade three classes. External monitors should focus their attention on literacy in English language in grade three whenever they visit schools.'

'Grade three classes should be split into manageable number of learners to foster effective teaching of literacy in English language. Learners in grade three should be provided with adequate furniture to enable them practice writing easily.' (Head teacher F)

5.3.3. The following were the responses from interview conducted with SICs, ZICs and DRCC

The Ministry of Education has come up with a structure to foster Continuing Professional Development in the teaching fraternity and teachers are appointed to serve as School In-serve Coordinator (SICs) at school level, Zone In-serve Coordinator (ZICs) at zone level and District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC) at district level. These teachers are in charge of organizing and conducting training workshops at school, zone and district levels. For this reason, SICs, ZICs

and DRCC were also asked some questions on how they help primary school teachers to manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy at grade three. This was so because the SICs, ZICs and DRCC are mainly invited to attend training workshops as teacher trainers each time there is a change in the curriculum. It is their responsibility to organize and conduct workshops and CPDs to train the teachers whenever the Ministry has introduced a new educational programme. These participants will be referred to as SIC A, B, C, D, E, and F; ZIC 1, 2 and 3; and DRCC

(a) How much do you know about the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?

All the participants said that they have some knowledge about the transition method but they were not in the position to retrain newly deployed teachers. One of the SICs had to say this:

'I was trained on how to manage the transition method that time when they introduced PLP. But the training was not adequate. As a result, I do not know much about the transition method.' (SIC E)

In addition, one ZIC pointed out that the training at district level was done and they attended. However, the explanation was not clear to him and this is what he had to say:

'I attended the training workshop at the resource centre where I learnt that learners at grade three should be transitioned from ZL literacy to literacy in English language. But I did not understand very well how the lessons will be conducted in English language and the introduction of English as a subject at grade two. Therefore, I can say that I learnt something about the transition method though lacking adequate knowledge and skills on how to manage it.' (ZIC 2)

While the Assistant DRCC said that he was not trained on how to manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. Nevertheless, he learnt something about the transition method from the DRCC and this is what he had to say:

'I was not trained to train primary school teachers on how they can manage the transition method and I do not have much knowledge and skills on the same programme. Instead, I just have some ideas on how the programme is. The information I have about the transition came from the DRCC who attended the training workshop. There has never been any retraining workshop on the same programme ever since I was appointed.' (Assistant DRCC)

(b) Are primary school teachers trained to manage the transition method effectively?

If yes, who trained them? What kind of training did they receive?

Some participants from the three categories responded that some grade three teachers were trained on how to manage the implementation of the transition method while others were not. This is what one of the SICs had to say:

‘One of the grade three teachers we have at school A was trained on how to manage the transition from ZL literacy to English though she claims that the preparation was not adequate for her to manage the transition method effectively. While other newly deployed grade three teachers were not trained at all and it has been difficult for them to manage the transition very well.’ (SIC A)

The assistant DRCC lamented on teacher preparation and this is what he said:

‘Teacher preparation is key to effective implementation of any education programme but it is sad to say that a good number of grade three teachers are not adequately prepared to handle the transition method effectively. I consider this inadequacy in teacher preparation as the biggest challenge primary school teachers have.’ (Assistant DRCC)

(c) Has the Ministry of Education supplied the resource centre or school with adequate teaching and learning materials for literacy in English language at grade three?

The DRCC had one copy of PLP English literacy in grade three and schools were also supplied with a copy each. For this reason, the Assistant DRCC stated that the resource centre and schools lacked books for English literacy because the Ministry of Education did not supply adequate grade 3 English literacy books. Hence, education materials for the transition method were not adequately supplied. Additionally, one SIC said that teachers were forced to use books that were designed for PRP in particular ROC. The SIC also said that there was no syllabus to refer to, forcing teachers to use outcomes from the National Literacy Programme and this is what he had to say:

‘It has observed that another big challenge that grade three teachers have experienced is inadequate teaching and learning materials for the transition from ZL literacy to English. Our grade three teachers depend on the learning outcomes that

are in the National Literacy Framework because we do not have a syllabus to guide them on how the transition should be managed. Furthermore, some teachers are using materials meant for Read On Course (ROC) which was under the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) to teach English literacy to grade three learner while others feel comfortable using the Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS).’ (SIC C)

In the same vein, ZIC 1 said that:

‘It is evidently true that Primary Literacy Programme did not come on board with any books or other necessary learning and teaching materials to go with it. Hence, it was a big challenge for teachers to manage the implementation effectively.’

(d) How often do you monitor the delivery of literacy lesson in English language? If yes, do you have the monitoring instrument?

All the three categories said that monitoring had not been done perfectly well due to lack of financial and material support. They had not developed any monitoring instrument for literacy monitoring in particular. Furthermore, they had said that they did not have much knowledge and skills on literacy instructions in English language. Therefore, one of the ZICs had to say the following:

‘I do monitor lesson presentations in Zambian language literacy at our zone school. I do not visit other schools within our zone due to lack of financial support. I do not also pay attention to observe how grade three teachers are transitioning learners from ZL literacy to literacy in English language. I use the literacy monitoring instrument designed by Mansa College of Education which I got from one of the student teacher.’ (ZIC 3)

(e) What measures have you put in place to ensure the effective management of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?

Some of the participants said that nothing had been done yet to ensure the effective teaching of the transition from Zambia language literacy to English for grade three teachers. While others stated that although they did not receive adequate training for them to train grade three teachers, it is their responsibility to ensure that teachers handling the transition classes are equipped with knowledge and skills during CPDs or Teacher Group Meetings. This is what SIC A had to say:

'I organize and conduct some school based CPD meetings for newly deployed teachers and old teachers. I ask some old teachers who have attended workshops on PLP to become facilitators. I also facilitate though not easy because of the surface training that I received. Nevertheless, I try my level best to ensure that teachers handling the transition classes are prepared to teach literacy in English language.'
(SIC A)

(f) What type of materials do you provide to primary school teachers for the effective implementation of the transition method?

All the categories of participants openly said that primary schools were not provided with education materials to support literacy teaching in English language or help grade three teachers to manage the transition method effectively. This is what the Assistant DRCC had to say:

'As assistant DRCC, I do not have any information on record indicating that the resource centre provided primary schools with financial or material resources in order to facilitate the effective management of the transition from ZL literacy to English at grade three. On the other hand, we have not yet organized and conducted any training workshop at the resource centre to train teachers on how to manage the transition method.'

(g) Have you been trained on how you can monitor or equip primary school teachers with the knowledge and skills they need for effective implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?

All the participants responded that they had not received adequate training to monitor or equip primary school teachers with the knowledge and skills they would need for effective implementation of the transition from ZL literacy to English at grade three. One of the participants had to say the following:

'I did not receive adequate training. When PLP was introduced we were only trained on the surface but much was supposed to be done thereafter. I noticed too many changes, and this is confusing to me as a trainer, especially when I am not fully equipped with the knowledge and skills I need to train and monitor the implementation of the programme. The best approach is the Ministry to send us for refresher courses so that we can do a good job. In this case, I do not even know if teachers are doing the right thing or not.' (ZIC 3)

(h) What are your comments and recommendations concerning the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three?

It was observed that all the participants from three categories had much to share on that question. However, the following were the suggestion made by one of the participants:

'As Assistant DRCC, I am suggesting that all key stakeholders should be trained and equipped with quality knowledge and skills on how to manage the implementation of the transition method at grade three. The Ministry of Education should come up with a clear pedagogical knowledge for literacy instruction in English language at grade three. The focus of monitoring exercise should be on literacy instructions and design the instrument for both Zambian languages and English.'

5.4 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter presented the findings of the study on how grade three teachers managed the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. The findings were presented according to research questions. The findings from the first research question revealed that 44% of grade four learners were able to transition literacy skills from ZL to English while 56% did not manage. These percentages simply indicates that a bigger number of learners were not able to transition literacy skills from ZL to English. While the findings from the second research question showed that some grade three teachers monitored were using THRASS cards and others employed English language teaching methodology when teaching learners how to read in English language. This situation implies that a good number grade three teachers were not able to manage the implementation of the transition method effectively. For this reason, a bigger number of learners could not read some English words correctly, citing that they were so stuck with sounds in Icibemba that they pronounced some English words in Icibemba. The two different alphabetic systems in the two languages, open alphabetic system for Icibemba and closed alphabetic system for English needed fully prepared teachers to manage the transition from ZL literacy to literacy in English language. But findings from research question number three indicated that some grade three teachers were had inadequate knowledge and skills due to insufficient training that they received from facilitators who were not competent enough. While other participants did not receive any training on how to manage the implementation of the transition method at grade three. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.0 Overview

The purpose of the study was to assess how primary school teachers manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language (ZL) literacy to English at grade three in Mansa urban district in Zambia. The study objectives will guide the discussions so as to answer the research questions appropriately. The discussion is based on findings presented in chapter five and the theoretical framework guiding this study as well as other related literature in chapter two. The findings will be discussed with special reference to the results obtained from interviews, questionnaires, and class observations in six primary schools and the office of the District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC). The discussion is based on the research objectives of this study as highlighted below:

1. To assess whether learners were able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English.
2. To examine how primary school teachers were managing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English.
3. To investigate the challenges primary school teachers face, if any, - in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three.

As indicated earlier on, the above objectives will precede the discussions and the actual words said by respondents will be used as much as possible, while other words will be paraphrased. It is important to note that some ideas presented were interrelated and could fall into more than one section. The above elements will be followed by the summary of this chapter.

6.1. To assess whether learners were able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English.

It is important to point out that a learner is at the center of any education programme and the focus of all the teaching experiences. Hence, literacy teaching is not an exceptional. For this and many other reasons, it is imperative to find out whether learners are able to transfer their literacy skills from Zambian language literacy to English in grade three. According to Ministry of Education (2013) learners should first be taught how to read in their Zambian language in grades

1 and 2 before making a transition to learning to read in English in grade 3. Because, this practice will facilitate children's second language development, since reading skills are transferable (Robertson, 2009; Upton, 2001). Teachers should begin with what learners know from their Zambian language that is the same in English, and then later, teach aspects of English that are different. Moreover, learning is built upon learners' prior background and experiences. This means that teachers should make use of what learners have already learnt or know from their experiences both in school and outside.

From the data collected through the use of reading assessment items, the findings of the study indicated that 56% of learners tested in both Icibemba and English languages in grade 4 were not able to transfer their literacy skills from Zambian language to English, whereas 44% were able to transition. Because, the results indicated that out of thirty six (36) grade four learners who were assessed, sixteen (16) managed to reach the pass percentage of (50%) and above which was an indication that they were able to transition literacy skills from Zambian Language (Icibemba) to English, while the other twenty (20) learners were unable to make it and it simply showed that they were not able to transfer the literacy skills from Zambian Language (Icibemba) to English.

It was observed that some learners who did not show the ability to transfer the literacy skills from Zambian language to English did not break through to literacy in either grade 1 or 2. Because, learners who are good at decoding ("sounding out") words in their Zambian language (Icibemba) may be able to read fluently in beginning English text which uses consistent sounds, that is, where it is easy to say which sound each letter represents. In addition, such learners were not even able to read 75 percent of the words which were given to them to read in Zambian language (Icibemba).

Furthermore, it was noted that some learners were in schools where oral English was not introduced in grade two. As a result, it appeared that such learners had never seen and heard of the words which were given to them to read in English language. Because, when teachers begin teaching English as oral English in grade 2 learners' language development keep on improving as they move into grade 3 and beyond. This will prepare learners for instruction in English in grade four, with vocabulary that is specific to literacy and language development. It is also important for teachers to ensure that learners comprehend the essence of what they are saying. Teachers need to adjust their level of English and vocabulary to the learners. If teachers speak English

clearly and slowly, using words learners know from the grade 2 oral English course or can learn from context, their ability to read and comprehension will improve in grade four (Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007).

In addition, inconsistencies of the English language orthography made reading of words in that state more difficult to some learners. English spelling system is not so transparent. Instead, it is actually the best example of an opaque orthography. This means that it is not easy in many cases to tell which sounds letters represent in the language. There are 26 letters in the alphabet which in English represent some 44 phonemes. Therefore, some letters can represent more than one sound and in some cases one sound can be represented by different letters. But in Zambian language (Icibemba) grades 1 and 2, learners learned a very consistent system where one letter makes one sound. In other words the orthographies or spelling systems of Zambian languages are transparent in that one can tell which sound each letter represents. Hence, such differences made the transition of literacy skills from Zambian language to English difficult to learners in some primary schools.

Following the literacy lesson observations which were conducted in six primary schools of Mansa urban, it was observed that some learners did not receive explicit literacy instructions from grade 1 up to grade 3. Lack of explicit literacy instruction would impede the acquisition of literacy skills in Zambian language and affect the transfer of such skills to the second language. But when teachers teach explicitly that is model the skill step-by-step and explain it, learners break through faster and become capable to transition literacy skills from ZL literacy to literacy in English language.

In the same vein, some learners were not exposed to literacy in English language in grade three. Hence, they had no opportunity to practice transition of literacy skills from Zambian language to English. As a result, they were not familiar with words in English language. Moreover, English language as a subject was also dropped and the focus was mainly on teaching literacy in Zambian language in grade three. In fact, learners need many opportunities to learn and practice what they are learning, with assistance and feedback from the teacher (guided practice) and independently (independent practice) in order to foster understanding and retention of skills (Grabe, 1991; McLaughlin, 1987).

The findings of the study further revealed that lack of regular literacy assessment made some learners to become nervous during their reading test and failed to read words which they would have read if they had been exposed to literacy assessment on a regular basis. Engaging learners in reading aloud during reading assessment would enable them to inculcate the habit of reading different words without fear and make a better sense of what they are seeing, reading, or hearing. Therefore, the more they read, the larger their stock of known words and knowledge of the world around them. They develop advanced cognitive capabilities and perceive things better.

The findings of the study also find out that some learners had negative attitude towards English language and they never wanted to do anything with it, because it was perceived as difficult language to learn. One of the learners just told the researcher that English is difficult and she cannot read any word written in English language. Learners cannot develop a negative feeling against English if they are exposed to it as early as grade 2 as oral English. This will prepare learners for literacy instructions in English, with vocabulary that is specific to the grade level.

In relation to the above point, such learners had portrayed low self-esteem which greatly contributed to their failure to read words in English language correctly. Learners needed positive reinforcement and constant involvement in reading simple words in English language. This requires paying attention to vocabulary development in English and also ensuring that learners move from what they already know to the unknown. By so doing, such learners can develop high self-esteem and the desire to read words in English language.

It was also revealed in this study that sudden learner transition to English in grade 3 was also a challenge to learners in schools where oral English language was not introduced in grade 2. This simply shows that learners love it when the language of instruction familiar to them is used as a medium of instruction in literacy lessons. This is also evident that, “The use of the mother tongue will further promote better understanding between the home and the school (Letsie, 2002). What the children learn can easily be expressed or applied at home. It is important to note that when learners meet the new words, it may be difficult for them to read. That is to be expected if it is a word that is not within the words of their first language.

The study revealed that learners who performed well during the reading assessment were also able to read almost all the words in Ibibemba. This implied that they had broken through to

literacy in Zambian language. It is important, however, to remember that learners can decode many English sounds using their phonics knowledge in Zambian languages. Therefore, learners are able to read words in English that have consistent letter–sound correspondences. For example, in English the five vowel letters /a e i o u/ represent about 12 vowel phonemes in the language; but there are many short words where the vowel sounds are similar to those in Zambian languages, e.g. /a/ in ‘bad’, ‘fat’.

It was also observed during the assessment that learners who had done very well were taught how to read in English language using a method called Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS). THRASS is a phonics programme that has been specifically designed to teach children (and adults) about the 44 speech sounds (phonemes) in spoken English and their related 120 key spellings (spelling choices or graphemes) in written English (Next Level Learning, 2017). This programme is taken as literacy in English language by some teachers in some primary schools within Mansa urban. Using the THRASS methodology, children’s reading, spelling, auditory, visual, sequential and spatial perceptual skills are all improved. So, learners from such primary schools were able to show some indicators of transitioning literacy skills from Zambian language to English.

Last but not the least, findings from literacy lesson observation indicated that grade three teachers were not able to manage the transition very well due to lack of adequate knowledge and skills. As a result, a bigger number of learners were not able to transition their literacy skills from ZL to English language at grade three.

6.2. To examine how primary school teachers were managing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English.

It should be born in the minds of policy makers that teachers play a critical role in the effective implementation of any educational programme in the classroom. They are responsible for designing lessons that meet the needs of their learners and providing feedback to help them improve their learning. Teachers must also be able to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners and adjust their teaching methods as needed. To implement the educational programme effectively, teachers must have a strong understanding of the material they are teaching, and be able to engage learners in learning. This simply means that whenever there is

change in the curriculum, teachers need to undergo training to help them teach effectively. For this reason, objective two of the study was directed to investigate how primary school teachers were managing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English in grade three. That was so because the teacher's role in the delivery of quality and effective literacy instructions in English language is critical to the success of the transition method. However, it was discovered that the training primary school teacher received through workshops and CPDs was not sufficient enough for them to manage the transition method very well. Because, the facilitators who trained them were also not compete enough to enable primary teachers teach learners literacy in English language. In other words, all the grade three teachers who actively participated in this study were not adequately prepared to manage the transition from ZL literacy to literacy in English language. It was also revealed that schools did not receive proper and adequate educational materials for effective implementation of the transition method. As a result, it was discovered that all grade three teachers involved in the study were not able to manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English effectively.

For instance, the results of the lesson observation conducted in the six primary schools revealed that grade three teachers used lesson plan formats for English language and THRASS respectively. For this reason, some grade three teachers presented English language lessons while the others presented THRASS lessons. That simply meant that the teachers observed did not know how to plan, prepare and teach literacy in English language in grade three. It was also observed that only two out of the six teachers monitored managed to teach literacy for an hour while the other four teachers, their lessons only lasted between 30 to 40 minutes.

The findings of the study further revealed that, learners were not able to comprehend the essence of what the teachers were saying in English because they were not introduced to learning in English language with oral English in grade 2. Hence, learning literacy in English language was strange to them and that affected their comprehension of the literacy skills. Additionally, the literacy skills, strategies and understandings were not presented explicitly through modeling, demonstration, simulation and explanation. It was noted that learners were not provided with guided practice interspersed with additional instruction as needed. As a result, many learners in such classes were at a loss because they did not know what to do and how to do it.

In addition, some teachers were not continuously checking for understanding and modifying instruction as necessary. That was so because such teachers did not employ the Gradual Release Model when teaching learners how to read in English language. As stated above, learners were not given opportunities to practice what they learnt, with assistance and feedback from the teacher (guided practice) and independently (independent practice) (Grabe, 1991; McLaughlin, 1987). Moreover, the ideal procedure is that after receiving explicit instruction from the teacher, learners can also practice and receive feedback during peer tutoring activities; this is where learners do the activities in pairs or groups. In fact, practice needs to take place in a literacy classroom atmosphere that makes learners feel comfortable to try new things (Calderon et al, 1996; Muniz-Swicegood, 1994).

In other words, lessons were supposed to be interactive that is teachers interact with learners and learners interact with each other. It cannot go without saying that learning is a social activity and it involves relationships. When learners work with the teacher and their peers freely, they also learn how to live with other people. In addition, learners are much freer when they work with peers and thus can benefit more from such interactions in literacy classrooms.

The study further revealed that in some lessons learning was not built upon learners' prior background and experiences. This means that grade three teachers did not make use of the basic literacy skills that learners had already learnt or known from their experiences in the previous grades. It was observed that learners were involved in reading words in English but reading for understanding the meaning was not emphasized. Teachers did not know that reading should not end at decoding but should involve understanding what is being decoded. This requires paying attention to vocabulary development in English language and also ensuring that learners move from the words they already know in grade two to the unknown in grade three.

These five reading skills are very important in English language literacy. But, in almost all the lessons observed all the five key reading skills were not correctly tackled. Although some scholars say that time does not matter but the quality and explicit presentation of literacy instructions matter a lot, instructional time needs to be spent on all of the literacy competencies during a literacy hour or over the course of a week depending on the level of abilities of the learners. This simply means that all the teachers monitored were supposed to observe time and present the reading skills in English language explicitly. But it was difficult for grade three

teachers to manage the implementation of the transition from ZL literacy to literacy in English language.

Apart from lesson observations, the researcher administered closed questionnaires to primary school teachers only in six sampled schools to find out if they had the knowledge and skills needed to teach learners literacy in English, appropriateness of the content, availability of teaching and learning materials, learners attitude towards the transition, reliability of support from administrators and other stakeholders. The samples were given ten to twenty minutes to answer the questionnaire and after they had completed, the researcher collected the questionnaire. That way was chosen in order to avoid unreturned questionnaires.

The general view of all the participants who completed the questionnaires was that they did not have adequate knowledge and skills needed to manage the transition from Zambian language (Icibemba) literacy to English. It was also difficult for them to determine the appropriateness of the content because some of grade three teachers did not have any idea of what goes on when it comes to teaching literacy in English language. In addition, teaching and learning materials were not available. All these challenges had to impede their good performance in classroom during literacy lessons in English language.

Furthermore, the responses received from four grade three teachers during the interviews indicated that they were not prepared to manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to literacy in English language. All the teachers involved in the study found it a challenge to manage the transition in that those who received training through CPDs claimed that the training was not adequate while others stated that they were not trained to handle the transition at all because they did not have anyone to orient them in their respective schools.

6.3 To investigate the challenges primary school teachers face, if any, - in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three.

Qualitative method was used to collect data using the open-ended structured interview guide. The main aim of using this interview guide was to get detailed data on how teachers are managing the transition in classrooms and the challenges they face in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. According to the findings the first challenge revealed by some grade three teachers was lack of pedagogical

knowledge and skills on how to manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English. The study further showed that such teachers faced problems on how to plan and prepare a literacy lesson plan in English language and follow the stages during lesson presentation. It was then established that some grade three teachers continued teaching literacy in Zambian language (Icibemba) in grade three and English language was taught as a subject.

This suggests that teacher preparation is very important for effective implementation of a new educational policy. Unfortunately, grade three teachers were not fully trained and equipped with quality knowledge and skills to enable them manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English successfully. Cheung and Wong (2012) argue that it is important to enhance teachers' understanding and build capacity if the implementation of curriculum reform is to be successful. MOE (1996:115) adds that, "teacher education is a continuing process that must be extended throughout the individual's years of actual teaching". This simply means that teachers at any educational level need continuous capacity building to enhance their performance and that of learners. By so doing, teachers would keep on learning new approaches, methods and techniques which come with the change educational programme which take place in the education sector.

Moreover, it is expected that once the Ministry of Education comes up with any change regarding education policies, then teachers who are key players in the implementation exercise need to be oriented or retrained in order for them to be in line with what is prevailing in the education system and what they are expected to do. By so doing, teachers develop sense of ownership of the educational programme; develop an in-depth knowledge of the appropriate teaching approaches, methodologies and techniques as well as becoming familiar with the specific content objectives for each subject area. In case of literacy teaching teachers were supposed to be equipped with systematic and explicit literacy instruction to enable them manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English and help learners to recognize and decode words in English, read fluently as well as comprehend what has been read.

In addition, grade three teachers were required to build upon the key reading skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, oral reading fluency and comprehension, which were addressed in teaching reading in Zambian languages. In grade three, teachers should begin with what

learners know from their Zambian language that is the same in English, and thereafter, teach aspects that may be different. Additionally, teachers are also required to help learners transfer skills they gained in their first language to English (MOE 2017b). Linan-Thomson & Vaughn (2007) suggest that when teachers teach explicitly, they model the skills step-by-step as well as explain it in the best way they can.

In the same vein, the newly deployed grade three teachers indicated a challenge of not being trained on how to teach literacy either in Zambian languages or English from the colleges of education they did their teacher training courses. According to their observations, lecturers under Language and Literacy Section were not prepared and ready to equip student teachers with systematic and explicit literacy instructions in both Zambian languages and English. As a result, they graduated with inadequate pedagogical knowledge, content and literacy teaching skills.

Another challenge that they had was lack of literacy coaching from SICs or Senior Teachers which could have helped them to teach effectively. It is important to support newly deployed teachers in their professional development in order to improve their performance in and outside the classroom. As indicated above, this practice involves novice literacy teachers and coaches (SICs or Senior Teachers) working together on an ongoing basis during the school year to continually improve the teaching of reading and writing in the classroom and learners' ability to read and write (MOE 2017a). In addition, Moss and Silk (2003) point out that in the teaching fraternity, coaching is about developing a teacher's skills and knowledge in order to improve performance, leading to effective teaching to improve learner performance. Hord and Roussin (2013) also observe that effective support cannot be solely dependent on workshops and seminars alone. Hence, school administrators should facilitate professional interactions between experienced teachers and the newly deployed teachers because they need to be actively supported through coaching and they should work together to adapt programs to local conditions.

Although teaching and learning materials are the most visible aspects of a curriculum and are often considered the main script that shapes the teaching and learning processes (UNESCO, 2017), the study further revealed that teachers teaching literacy in primary school did not have teaching and learning materials for literacy in English language at grade three. However, teaching and learning materials are the tools that teachers use to engage students in learning. Such materials facilitate effective teaching and learning. They can include textbooks, workbooks,

software, apps, games, videos, teachers' guides, syllabi and more. When used effectively, teaching and learning materials can help learners to master content and skills more efficiently. In other words, teaching and learning materials contain explicit communication of conceptual goals with links to proposed activities, provide knowledge and support to help understand and implement teaching plans, reinforce pedagogical content knowledge, give guidance on the practice and understanding of relevant pedagogical activities, present alternatives and freedom of choice, and engage teachers in ongoing reflection.

In the same vein, it was observed that if teaching and learning materials for literacy in English language were distributed to primary schools, grade three teachers would have followed the guidelines from National Literacy Framework and provided a better platform to understand literacy instructions with the help of such materials. They would have adapted, supplemented and elaborated the materials to teach literacy skills to the learners and monitor the progress of the learners and finally evaluate them. But it was not done like that due to lack of funds. Moreover, teachers and learners rely on materials to comprehend the literacy content, and the teaching and learning materials become the center of literacy teaching experiences. The transition from Zambian language literacy to English would have worked better if teachers were given chance to know the correct methods such as systematic and explicit literacy instructions, adapt the available materials, choose the best material for instruction and make supplementary material for the class in order to enable learners learn how to read and write in English language.

But according to a study by Pali (2020) primary schools in Livingstone had also a shortage of teaching and learning materials, especially for Grade 3 English literacy and they did not even have a syllabus to refer to, only one school had an extract from the NLF that they referred to. It was observed that when the policy was rolled out in schools, materials to go with it were not in place. For this reason, Masatunya (2014) stated that shortage of materials had made teaching of literacy unsuccessful. Pali (2020) also added that it is a challenge when there are no teaching and learning materials in schools to implement a transition method successfully. In the same vein, Moonga (2016) discovered that learners in Chikankata district did not easily access the reading materials in schools because they were either inadequate or not available at all. The evidence provided above shows that the Ministry of Education has not so far taken keen interest in supplying primary schools with quality and adequate teaching and learning materials in order to

facilitate effective teaching of literacy skills in English language at grade three. Hence, it is a challenge for primary school teachers to effectively manage the transition of literacy skills from Zambian language to English with inadequate or no materials to use at all.

The study revealed that those teachers who attempted to teach literacy in English language using THRASS approach found it difficult to teach learners sounds in English language because they sounded different from the sounds they had made in Zambian language (Icibemba). Hence, learners were pronouncing sounds in English language in Zambian language (Icibemba) because they learnt a very consistent system where one letter sound made one sound. In addition, learners were not able to understand and recognize that one sound in English language would make different sounds in different words. It was like that because the orthographies or spelling systems of Zambian languages are transparent in that one can tell which sound each letter represents. While English is not so transparent; it is actually the best example of an opaque orthography. This means that it is not easy in many cases to tell which sounds letters represent in the language. There are 26 letters in the alphabet which in English represent some 44 phonemes (Mwansa, 2016). Therefore, some letters can represent more than one sound and in some cases one sound can be represented by different letters. These inconsistencies can make reading more difficult in English.

Another challenge from some grade three teachers was that learners were not able to understand literacy instructions given to them in English language because they were used to learn in their local familiar language which is Icibemba. For this reason, learners' performance was affected and some of them lost interest in learning literacy because of language interference. This was so because teachers did not introduce oral English in grade two and learners were not exposed to using English orally. It was revealed that grade two teachers concentrated so much on teaching literacy in Icibemba and ignored the importance of teaching their learners oral English in readiness for the transition. This challenge contributed to learners failing to understand simple literacy instructions in English language which resulted in learners not being able to transition basic literacy skills learnt in Icibemba to English language. Primary school teachers should be reminded that there is a connection between oral language development and early reading.

Therefore, lack of prior oral knowledge of English language in grade two might be one factor contributing to the reading difficulties experienced by learners in grade three. During lesson

observation in classes where grade three teachers were using THRASS cards to teach learners how to read in English language, it was discovered that some learners were reading the words in Ibibemba (Zambian language) and others read the words without understanding their meaning, because they had actually memorised them. This simply shows that it is a challenge for teachers to successfully manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy to English literacy in Grade three. Gonzales, Minaya-Rowe and Yawkey (2006), argue that pre-literacy skills emerge when learners whose English is the second language achieve oral language maturity. They emphasize that ESL learners need to achieve maturation in oral language proficiency as a prerequisite for developing literacy skills such as knowledge of print, ability to discriminate letters, phonemic awareness, acquisition of phoneme-grapheme knowledge and reading comprehension. But it would be a challenge to enable learners to transition literacy skills from ZL to English if they have this knowledge in their local language and thus have limited exposure to English. Furthermore, Hartney (2011) discovered that insufficient exposure to the target language (English) resulted in it becoming a barrier to learning reading and writing.

The sudden change of education policy, especially at the beginning or middle of the implementation of another policy was another challenge primary school teachers brought out. They also stated the following impact of a sudden change in education policy especially when it comes to literacy activities:

‘When education policies change abruptly, teachers experience a shift in teaching approaches, methods and techniques, quality of literacy instruction, teacher preparedness and professional development, learners’ well-being and engagement, teacher evaluation and resource allocation to schools which may lead learners to struggle with reading and writing throughout their academic lives (Pali, 2020).’

For instance, if a policy shifts from using local familiar language as language of instruction for literacy teaching to English language, the transition could affect learners’ engagement and overall literacy development. In other words, education policies play a crucial role in shaping literacy activities. Sudden changes can have both immediate and long-term effects on learners, teachers, and the overall education system. Balancing policy adjustments with thoughtful implementation is essential for positive outcomes.

6.4 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter discussed the findings in line with the research objectives meant to assess whether learners were able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English, examine how primary school teachers were managing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English and investigate the challenges primary school teachers face, if any, - in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three in Mansa urban district of Zambia. The data collected revealed that a good number of grade four learners were not able to transition literacy skills from ZL to English. This was so because the grade three teachers who were involved in the study did not manage the implementation of the transition method effectively due to lack of adequate knowledge and skills which resulted from insufficient training and lack of teacher preparation to enable learners to transition literacy skills from ZL to English. In addition, the inability to manage the transition effectively and coach learners to transfer literacy skills from ZL to English at grade three by grade three teachers was not only caused by inadequate training or lack of training at all but also lack of teaching and learning materials, differences in the Ibibemba and English orthographies and failure to expose learners to oral English at grade two. The next chapter concludes the study and makes some recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Overview

The previous chapter presented discussions following the research objectives of the study. While in this chapter, research questions will be used to come up with the summary of the main research findings before giving appropriate recommendations. The study sought to assess how primary school teachers manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language (ZL) literacy to English at grade three in Mansa urban district in Zambia. The following are the research question to guide the conclusion and recommendations of the study:

1. Were learners able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English?
2. How did primary school teachers manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English?
3. What challenges were being faced by primary school teachers in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three?

The above research questions were answered through document analysis, lesson observations, questionnaires and face to face interviews with participants. This study involved a DRCC, 6 Heads of school, 6 SICs, 3 ZICs and 6 grade three primary school teachers as well as 36 grade four learners. As indicated above, this chapter is presented into two sections namely, conclusions of the findings guided by research objectives and recommendations proceeding from the findings. The implications for further research will also be presented.

7.1. Conclusion

The focus of this study was to assess how primary school teachers manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language (ZL) literacy to English at grade three in Mansa urban district in Zambia. As earlier alluded to in the previous chapter, the following research objectives provide a clear guide in making conclusions of the research findings:

7.1.1. To assess whether learners were able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English.

It is clearly understood that learners are at the center of any education system in this world. Hence, learners are considered as key in the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. For this reason, this study revealed that a bigger number of learners did not show the ability to transfer the literacy skills from Zambian language to English due to the following reasons:

Some learners did not break through to literacy in either grade 1 or 2 and they were not even able to read 75 percent of the words which were given to them to read in Ibibemba (Zambian language). That was so because it was observed that such learners did not receive explicit literacy instructions. Lack of explicit literacy instruction would impede the acquisition of literacy skills in Zambian language and affect the transfer of such skills to the second language. It was also noted that learners were not exposed to oral English as early as grade two. In addition, inconsistencies of the English language orthography made reading of words in that state even more difficult to such learners. In the same vein, learners were not exposed to literacy in English language in grade three. Hence, they had no opportunity to practice transition of literacy skills from Zambian language to English. As a result, they were not familiar with words in English language in grade four.

Last but not the least, inadequate teacher preparation to manage the transition method effectively and coupled with lack of teaching and learning materials made a good number of learners not being able to transfer literacy skills from ZL to English at grade three or even read simple words in English language. This simply means that the inability to manage the transition method well by grade three teachers lead to inability to transfer literacy skills from ZL to English by learners.

On the other hand, the study revealed that learners who performed well during the reading assessment in English were also able to read almost all the words in Ibibemba. This implied that they had broken through to literacy in Zambian language literacy. It was also observed during the assessment that learners who had done very well were taught how to read in English language using a method called Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS).

7.1.2. To examine how primary school teachers were managing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English.

While learners stand at the center, teachers are considered to be the key in any education system because their content and pedagogical knowledge is cardinal to the success of any learner. In this case, teachers should be able to employ systematic and explicit literacy instruction as they implement the transition method. But teachers can only manage the transition very well if they are well equipped with quality knowledge and skills which would enable them to present literacy instructions in English systematically and explicitly. However, the case is different in this study because the findings revealed that some of the teachers received insufficient preparation while others were not trained at all to manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English. Therefore, it was difficult for all of them to manage the transition effectively and enable learners to transfer basic literacy skills from Zambian language (Icibemba) to English with fewer difficulties. It was also revealed in this study that grade three teachers were asked to implement the transition method regardless of them being fully equipped with quality knowledge and skills needed for effective implementation. This situation contributed to failure in managing the implementation of the transition method effectively by grade three teachers. As a result, it was also difficult for learners to transition literacy skills from Zambian language to English at grade three.

7.1.3 To investigate the challenges primary school teachers face, if any, - in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three.

First and foremost, grade three teachers lamented that they were not adequately prepared to manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English. Above all, they did not have much pedagogical knowledge and skills on how to manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English. The study further showed that such teachers faced problems on how to plan and prepare a literacy lesson plan in English language and follow the stages during lesson presentation. In the same vein, they were not oriented on how to teach literacy in English language in grade three. As if this was not enough, primary schools were not supplied with adequate teaching and learning materials which even impeded literacy teaching in English language in grade three. In addition, the study revealed that those teachers who attempted to teach literacy in English language using THRASS approach found it difficult to

teach learners sounds in English language because they sounded different from the sounds they had made in Zambian language (Icibemba). Hence, learners were pronouncing sounds in English language in Zambian language (Icibemba) because they learnt a very consistent system where one letter sound made one sound. In addition, learners were not able to understand and recognize that one sound in English language would make different sounds in different words. It was like that because the orthographies or spelling systems of Zambian languages are transparent in that one can tell which sound each letter represents. While English is not so transparent; it is actually the best example of an opaque orthography. This means that it is not easy in many cases to tell which sounds letters represent in the language. There are 26 letters in the alphabet which in English represent some 44 phonemes (Mwansa, 2016). Therefore, some letters can represent more than one sound and in some cases one sound can be represented by different letters. These inconsistencies can make reading more difficult in English.

Another challenge from some grade three teachers was that learners were not able to understand literacy instructions given to them in English language because they were used to learn in their local familiar language which is Icibemba. For this reason, learners' performance was affected and some of them lost interest in learning literacy because of language interference. The sudden change of education policy, especially at the beginning or middle of the implementation of another policy was another challenge primary school teachers brought out. All the above mentioned challenges made the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three very difficult and unsuccessful.

7.2 Recommendations

It is of paramount importance to come up with the recommendations arising from the research findings:

- (a) First and foremost, the Ministry of Education should provide all colleges of education under Language and Literacy Section with Language and Literacy Education syllabi that put much emphasis on teaching student teachers how to manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. Moreover, Transforming Teacher Education (TTE) programme has equipped all the lecturers with quality knowledge and skills on how they can coach student teachers to become effective teachers of literacy who

can implement and sustain systematic and explicit literacy instructions in English language from grade three and onwards.

- (b) Secondly, the Ministry of Education should facilitate teacher preparation by organizing and conducting training workshops at district, zone and school level for in-service teachers in order to equip them with strategies for systematic and explicit literacy instructions in English language and enable grade three teachers to manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three. In other words, the Ministry of Education should ensure that all key stakeholders and trainers are given an opportunity to attend trainers' refresher workshops at district resource centres so that grade three teachers can receive proper training through CPDs, TGMs and GRACE meetings on how they can manage the implementation of the transition method.
- (c) Head teachers should also revamp and sustain CPDs and TGMs in their respective primary schools in order to keep on orienting newly deployed primary school teachers on how to effectively manage the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English language at grade three.
- (d) Policy makers should take time to consult and involve teachers during formulation and or revision of education policies.
- (e) The issue of the use of language of instruction and literacy instruction should be clarified and properly documented in order to have specific details on the manner of classroom implementation.
- (f) Last but not the least, the Ministry of Education should facilitate the production and distribution of adequate teaching and learning materials to all Zambian primary schools for effective management of the transition from Zambian language literacy to literacy in English at grade three.

7.3 Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that researchers should undertake the following studies:

- (a) Assess the impact of Transforming Teacher Education activities on literacy instructions in Zambian primary schools within the proximity of colleges of education.
- (b) Examine the effects of the 2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (ZECF) on literacy education in some pilot primary schools within Zambia. This new

curriculum advocates the use of English language as medium of instruction for all levels of education, but allows code-switching during foundational learning.

- (c) Explore how effective collaboration between key stakeholders in the Ministry of education and colleges of education can improve literacy instructions in primary schools.

7.4 Summary of the chapter

The chapter made a precise conclusion and some recommendations basing on the findings of the study which were in line with the research objectives meant to assess whether learners were able to transfer their literacy skills from ZL to English, examine how primary school teachers were managing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English and investigate the challenges primary school teachers face, if any, - in effectively implementing the transition from Zambian languages literacy to English at grade three in Mansa urban district of Zambia. It has concluded that a good number of grade four learners who were assessed in reading words in both Zambian language (Icibemba) and English were not able to transition literacy skills from ZL to English. This was so because the grade three teachers who were involved in the study did not manage the implementation of the transition method effectively due to lack of adequate pedagogical knowledge and skills which resulted from insufficient training and lack of teacher preparation to enable learners to transition literacy skills from ZL to English. In addition, the inability to manage the transition effectively and coach learners to transfer literacy skills from ZL to English at grade three by grade three teachers was not only caused by inadequate training or lack of training at all but also lack of teaching and learning materials, differences in the Icibemba and English orthographies and failure to expose learners to oral English at grade two. Last but not the least, Education Standard Officers, DRCC, ZICs, SICs and school administrators did not take keen interest in monitoring how grade three teachers were managing the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English. All the above mentioned challenges made the implementation of the transition from Zambian language literacy to English at grade three very difficult and unsuccessful.

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