

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF GRADE 12 PUPILS' POOR
PERFORMANCE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS IN
SELECTED DISTRICTS OF THE COPPERBELT PROVINCE IN ZAMBIA**

by

Lucy Mwesa

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics

Declaration

I, **Lucy Mwesa**, do declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it has never been submitted by anyone for any degree or examination at this University or at any other University, and that all the sources I have quoted have been referenced and acknowledged.

Full Name: Lucy Mwesa

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

Copyright

All rights reserved. No part of this dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the author or the University of Zambia.

Lucy Mwesa

Approval

This dissertation by Lucy Mwesa is approved as a fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics.

Internal Examiner 1

Name of Internal Examiner 1: Prof Peter C. Manchishi

Signature:..... **Date:**

Internal Examiner 2

Name of Internal Examiner 2: Dr Geoffrey K. Tambulukani

Signature:..... **Date:**

Examiner 3

Name of External Examiner: Dr Friday Nyimbili

Signature:..... **Date:**

Chairperson of the Board of Examiners

Name: Dr Lydia Mukuka Mulenga-Hagane

Signature:..... **Date:**.....

Supervisor

Name of Supervisor: Prof David Sani Mwanza

Signature:..... **Date:**

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved late parents, Mrs. Veronica Chabu Kapeya Mwesa and Mr. Stephen Malemba Mwesa, and my family, whose unwavering love and encouragement inspired me to pursue knowledge and strive for the best in life.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to the Almighty God for granting me good health and strength throughout my study. This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and encouragement of many individuals and institutions, to whom I extend my heartfelt gratitude.

First and foremost, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, **Prof David Sani Mwanza**. Your invaluable guidance, patience, and constructive feedback have been instrumental in shaping this research. Your expertise, keen eye for detail, and unwavering support have greatly contributed to the quality of this work. I am also grateful to the Co-Supervisor **Dr Benson Sitwe Mkandawire** for his timely academic guidance, deep insights and patience which have further enriched my academic journey. Your selflessness, commitment, cheerful personality and availability made the journey easier especially in times of uncertainty. My supervisors have deepened my passion for research.

I am also grateful to the department for the academic exposure through the **NORMA programme**, which provided me with the opportunity to engage with other scholars in Norway. I extend special thanks to **Prof Anne Danbolt, Dr Kristin Vold Lexander, and Prof Kulbrandstad** for their academic insights and encouragement, which have significantly contributed to my intellectual growth. My sincere appreciation also goes to the staff of the **Inland University of Applied Sciences** for their various forms of assistance.

I am deeply indebted to the participants of this study—teachers, pupils, administrators, parents, and examiners—who generously shared their experiences and perspectives, making this research possible. I also extend my gratitude to **Dr Michael Chilala, The Executive Director, and Mr. Simwinga from the Examinations Council of Zambia**, whose assistance enabled me to obtain the necessary statistical data to support my research.

To my family and friends, your constant encouragement, love, and understanding have been my pillar of strength. Special thanks to my family members who sacrificed their financial resources to support my studies. I am indebted to you all.

I am particularly grateful to **Josephine Chishimba Musonda, Prof Serah Kalambo Mbetwa, and Beggan Mashinja** for their unwavering support during the challenging moments of this journey. You provided a shoulder to lean on.

I also wish to express my appreciation to my Principal, Mr. Chileshe L. D., and the members of staff at Mufulira College of Education for their encouragement and support during my academic journey.

I thank **Sr. Angela Mwaba and Sr. Lucy Lubumbashi**, for their administrative support and availability whenever I needed help.

Lastly, I acknowledge the support of my religious family, particularly **Sr. Christine Mwape, O.P., and the Immaculate Conception Community**, for providing me with the space and support needed to carry out my work. My heartfelt thanks go to **St. Rose of Lima Community, Lusaka** for their hospitality and support, without which this journey would have been even more challenging.

To all who have contributed in ways both big and small, I extend my deepest gratitude. I will forever remain thankful to you all. May God bless you abundantly in ways only He knows best.

Abstract

Performance in English Language has been a source of concern for a long time in Zambian secondary schools. The Examinations Council of Zambia reports from 2014 to 2021 have indicated that many learners perform poorly in English. For this reason, the study endeavoured to investigate the reason behind pupils' poor performance in English. The research was directed by four objectives:(1) To analyse the quality of Grade 12 English examination questions; (2) To analyse the performance of Grade 12 pupils in English; (3) To examine teachers' and pupils' views of factors that contribute to Grade 12 pupils' poor performance in English examinations; and (4) to suggest strategies that can be used to improve Grade 12 pupils' performance in English. Rooted in an interpretivist framework and using a qualitative research, interviews, focus groups and document analysis were conducted to collect data. Data was collected from 8 Heads of Departments (2 females and 6 males), 24 teachers (14 females and 10 males), 13 administrators, 5 national examiners, 80 current pupils, 16 alumni, 16 parents, and 2 ECZ officials. The sample size was 164. Results regarding the quality of examination papers revealed both favourable and unfavourable viewpoints. While participants acknowledged that examinations were set by trained professionals, were syllabus-aligned, and tested critical thinking, concerns were raised over ambiguous wording, and limited awareness among stakeholders regarding examination standards. Performance analysis of 164,503 candidates over six years indicated that, 56,816 (G7-G9) pupils performed poorly, 58, 273 fell in G4-G6 category which was the average performance category and only 49, 414 fell in the high performance category (G1-G3) highlighting a discrepancy in achievement levels in the Copperbelt Province. Equally the eight schools that were sampled showed performance below average for the six year period reviewed.

Insights from teachers and examiners revealed that pupils faced difficulties in grammar structures, composition writing, reading comprehension and summary writing because of a lack of practice, restricted vocabulary, and minimal exposure to reading materials. Contributing factors were divided into four categories: (1) teacher-related factors, encompassing absenteeism, low motivation, insufficient lesson preparation, incomplete syllabus coverage and inconsistent feedback; (2) School-related factors included over-enrolment, resource scarcity, inadequate monitoring, limited professional development opportunities; (3) Learner-related factors such as absenteeism, inability to read and write, informal language use, poor conduct, lack of

parental involvement, lack of role models in community, long distance to school and (4) Policy-related factors, highlighted were the elimination of English as a mandatory passing subject at Grade 9 level, abolition of cut-off points at Grade 9 and flaws in the Re-Entry Policy (REP). To improve the English language proficiency and performance, the research suggested boosting teacher motivation, expanding infrastructure, employing additional teachers, enhancing monitoring, creating functional libraries in schools, and providing access to free online additional resources for literacy enhancement. Furthermore, it supports changes in policy, such as making English a mandatory passing subject again at every examination level and re-assessing the REP. The research is based on self-efficacy theory, expectancy theory and critical discourse analysis theory providing a comprehensive insight into the difficulties faced by Grade 12 pupils in English. The results offer essential perspectives for educators, policy makers, and stakeholders aiming to enhance English language teaching with the view to improving English examination performance in Zambia.

Key words: Grade 12, examinations, poor performance, proficiency, quality, critical discourse, Copperbelt Province

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	i
Copyright.....	ii
Approval.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Abstract	vii
List of tables	xvii
List of Figures.....	xviii
Abbreviations.....	xix
List of Figures.....	xx
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Overview.....	1
1.1 Background of the study.....	1
1.1.1 The status and functions of English in Zambia.....	1
1.1.2 The Role of English in Zambia and the world	2
1.1.3 The Zambian English Curriculum.....	6
1.1.4 The Importance of Examinations in Education.....	7
1.1.5 Structure of Grade 12 Examinations	7
1.1.6 Performance in the Zambian Education System	8
Table 1: National Grade 12 English Language Results from 2018 to 2023.....	9
Table 2: National Grade 12 result statistics in percentage	10
Table 3: National Grade 12 result statistics in actual numbers	11
Table 4: National Grade 12 cumulative result statistics for G7, G8 and G9.....	12
1.2 Statement of the Problem	14
1. 3. Purpose of the Study.....	14
1.4 Research objectives	14
1.4.1 Research questions	15
1.5 Significance of the study	15
1.6 Delimitation of study.....	15
1.7 Limitation of the study	16
1.9 Key operational terms	18
1.10 Summary.....	19
CHAPTER TWO	20

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	20
2.0 Overview	20
2.1 Quality of Grade 12 English Examination Questions.....	20
2.3 Performance of Grade 12 Pupils in English Subject	28
2.4 School Certificate Examination Performance	33
2.5 AO1 Knowledge of Vocabulary	33
2.6 AO2 Application of Language Structures.....	33
2.7 AO3 Comprehension of Passages/Texts	34
2.8 AO4 Synthesis and Evaluation of Information (Summary).....	34
2.9 AO5 Analysis and Synthesis of Information (Composition)	34
2.10 High Performing Candidates	35
2.11 Average Performing Candidates.....	35
2.12 Low Performing Candidates.....	36
2.13 Factors Contributing to Poor Performance in the English Subject Examinations.....	36
2.14 Strategies to Improve Performance in English Subject Examinations in Secondary Schools.....	56
2.15 Conclusion.....	65
CHAPTER THREE	66
THEORETICAL FRAME.....	66
3.0 Overview	66
3.1 Expectancy Theory	66
3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis	68
3.3 Self-Efficacy Theory.....	73
3.3.1 Self-Efficacy and English Examination Performance	75
3.3.2 Conclusion.....	76
3.4 Chapter summary.....	77
CHAPTER FOUR.....	78
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	78
4.0 Overview	78
4.1 Research Paradigm	78
4.1.1 Interpretivist Paradigm.....	79
4.1.2 Ontology in the Interpretivist Paradigm.....	80
4.2 Research Approach.....	82
4.3 Research Design	83
4.3.1 Justification for using a descriptive case study design	84
4.4 Population	84

4.5 Sampling Methods	84
4.5.1 Purposive Sampling	85
4.5.1.1 Snowball Sampling	86
4.6 Sample Size	86
4.7 Data Collection Methods and Data Collection Instruments.....	87
4.7.1 Document Analysis.....	87
4.7.2 Interviews	88
4.7.3 Focus Group Discussions	89
4.8 Data Analysis	91
4.9 Trustworthiness	91
4.10 Ethical Considerations	93
CHAPTER FIVE	95
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	95
5.0 Overview	95
5.1 HODs’ Demographics.....	96
5.1.1 Table 6.....	96
5.1.2 Teachers’ Demographics.....	97
5.1.2.1 Table 7.....	97
5.1.3.1 Current Grade 12 Pupils.....	98
5.1.3.2 Grade 12 Alumni	98
5.2 How is the Quality of Grade 12 Examination Questions?.....	99
5.2.1 Examination Papers for 2018	99
5.2.2 Examination Papers for 2021	114
5.2.4 Teachers’ Perspectives on the Quality of Grade 12 Examination Questions.....	137
5.2.5 Positive Perceptions about the Quality of Examination Questions	137
5.2.5.1 Examination Questions are Uniformly Equitable.....	137
5.2.5.2 Examination questions are of good quality because they are set by trained teachers.	137
5.2.5.3 Questions in the Examination papers are consistent with the syllabus content	138
5.2.5.4 Examination Questions also Test Critical Thinking	138
5.2.6 Negative Perceptions about the Quality of Examination Questions.....	138
5.2.6.1 Same Questions Being Repeated in Different Examination Years.....	138
5.2.6.3 Lack of knowledge of the quality of the examination papers by some participants	139
5. 3 How is the performance of Grade 12 pupils in English in the Copperbelt Province?	140

5.3.1 Grade 12 Pupils’ Examination Performance from 2018 to 2023 in the Copperbelt Province	140
5.3.2 Examination results for 2018 to 2023 Per School	144
5.3.2.1 Examination Results for School 1	144
5.3.2.2 Examinations Results for School 2	146
5.3.2.4 Examinations Results for School 4	150
5.3.2.5 Examinations Results for School 5	152
5.3.2.6 Examinations Results for School 6	154
5.3.2.7 Examination Results for School 7	156
5.3.2.7 Examinations Results for School 8	157
5.3. Teachers’ and Examiners’ Perspectives on Grade 12 Pupils’ Performance in English	159
5.3.1 Learners’ Performance in Structure	159
5.3.2 Pupils’ Performance in Composition	160
5.3.3 Learners’ Performance in Reading Comprehension	161
5.3.4 Learners’ Performance in Summary Writing	162
5.4. Summary of findings to Objective two	163
CHAPTER SIX	164
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	164
6.0 Overview	164
6.1 What are the factors that contribute To Poor Grade 12 Pupils’ Performance in English?	164
6.1.1 Teacher Related Factors	164
6.1.1.1 Absenteeism by teachers and reporting late for work/lessons	164
6.1.1.2 Low motivation among teachers	165
6.1.1.3 Lack of or Inadequate Preparation for Lessons	166
6.1.1.4 Incomplete Syllabus Coverage	167
6.1.1.5 Lack of Feedback or Inconsistent Feedback	168
6. 2 School Related Factors	168
6.2.1 Over-enrolment and its effects in schools	169
6.2.2 Limited Classrooms	169
6.2.3 Lack of and Inadequate Teaching Materials	170
6.2.4 Absence of Libraries in Schools	170
6.2.5 Lack of Technology	171
The respondents reported that teachers relied on traditional methods of teaching using ..	171
6.2.6 Lack of or Inconsistent Monitoring	172

6.2.7 Limited Opportunities for Professional Development.....	173
6.3 Learner Related Factors	174
6.3.1 Absenteeism by Learners	174
6.3.2 Learner Inability to Read and Write	174
6.3.3 Limited Vocabulary among Learners	175
6.3.4 Poor Conduct by Some Learners	176
6.3.5 The Use of the Informal Variety of English.....	177
6.3.6 Long Distance to School	178
6.3.7 Lack of Parental Support.....	179
6.3.8 Lack of Role Models in the Community.....	179
6. 4 Policy Related Factors	180
6.4.1 Removal of English as a Compulsory Passing Subject at Grade 9	180
6.4.2 Abolition of cut off points for Grade 9 examinations.....	181
6.4.3 The Pitfalls of the Re-Entry Policy.....	182
6.5 What strategies can be used to improve pupils' performance in Grade 12 examinations in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province?.....	183
6.5.1 Improve school based and district based monitoring and supervision	183
6.5.2 Motivate teachers through incentivisation	184
6.5.3 Heads of department should ensure each teacher has a lesson plan before going to teach.....	184
6.5.4 Reduced workload for teachers	185
6.5.5 Infrastructure Expansion	186
6.5.6 Employment of more teachers.....	186
6.5.7 Multi-sectoral approach to provision of adequate teaching and learning materials .	187
6.5.8 Use of free online English language resources.....	188
6.5.9 Provision of Learning Opportunities for Teachers	188
6.5.10 Reduce travel time from home to school by constructing more schools	188
6.5.11 Teachers to collaborate with parents to tackle learner absenteeism	189
6.5.12 Establishing Functional Libraries to Provide Literacy Materials	190
6.5.13 Use of Various Techniques to Teach Reading and Writing.....	190
6.5.14 Improve learner conduct through a strict school code of ethics	191
6.5.15 Establish mentorship programmes to improve learner motivation.....	191
6.5.16 Encourage learners to practise formal English in and outside the classroom	192
6.5.17 Abolish Re-Entry Policy	192
6.5.18 Making English a compulsory passing subject at every examination level.....	193
6.6 Conclusion.....	193

CHAPTER SEVEN.....	195
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	195
7.0 Overview	195
7.1 ANALYSE THE QUALITY OF GRADE 12 FINAL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS	195
7.1.1 Mismatch between Syllabus content and Examination content	195
7.1.2 Examination Questions Test Wide Range of Cognitive Skills.....	198
7.1.3 Clarity in the Formulation of Questions	199
7.1.4 Teachers and HODs’ Perspectives on the Quality of Grade 12 Examination Questions	201
7.1.4.1 Uniformity of Examinations Papers.....	201
7.1.4.2 ECZ Trained Examiners and the Quality of Examination Questions	203
7.1.4.3 The Perception of Question Repetition across Examination Years	204
7.1.4.4 Limited Teacher Awareness of Examination paper Quality	204
7.1.4.5 The Need for Assessment Quality Training for Teachers.....	206
7.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 12 PUPILS IN ENGLISH	207
Overall Analysis of Poor Performance in English Language Examinations	209
7.2.1. Performance Analysis of school 1	209
7.2.3 Performance Analysis of School 3	214
7.2.4 Performance Analysis of School 4	216
7.2.5 Performance Analysis of School 5	218
7.2.6 Performance Analysis of School 6	220
7.2.7 Performance Analysis of School 7	221
7.2.1.0 Teachers’ and Examiners’ Perspectives on Grade 12 Pupils’ Performance in English	225
7.2.1.1 Learners’ Performance in Structure	225
7.2.1.2 Pupils’ Performance in Composition	226
7.2.1.3 Learners’ Performance in Reading Comprehension	226
7.2.1.4 Learners’ Performance in Summary Writing	228
7.3 EXAMINE TEACHER AND LEARNER VIEWS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR ENGLISH PERFORMANCE AMONG GRADE 12 PUPILS IN THE SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE COPPERBELT PROVINCE	229
7.3.1 Teacher Related Factors	229
7.3.1.1 Absenteeism by teachers and reporting late for work/lessons.....	229
7.3.1.2 Low motivation among teachers.....	230
7.3.1.3 Lack of or Inadequate Preparation for Lessons	232
7.3.1.4 Incomplete Syllabus Coverage	233

7.3.1.5 Lack of Feedback or Inconsistent Feedback	235
7.3.2 School Related Factors.....	237
7.3.2.1 Over-enrolment and its effects in schools	237
7.3.2.2 Lack and Inadequate Teaching Materials.....	238
7.3.2.3 Absence of Libraries in Schools	239
7.3.2.4 Lack of Technological tools	240
7.3.2.5 Lack of or Inconsistent Monitoring	241
7.3.2.6 Limited Opportunities for Professional Development	243
7.3.3.1 Absenteeism by Learners	244
7.3.3.2 Learner Inability to Read and Write	245
7.3.3.3 Limited Vocabulary among Learners	247
7.3.3.4 Poor Conduct by Some Learners	247
7.3.3.5 The Use of the Informal Variety of English.....	248
7.3.3.6 Long Distance to School	249
7.3.3.7 Lack of Parental Support.....	250
7.3.3.8 Lack of Role Models in the Community	251
7.3.4 Policy Related Factors	251
7.3.4.1 Removal of English as a Compulsory Passing Subject at Grade 9.....	252
7.3.4.2 Abolition of cut off points for Grade 9 examinations.....	252
7.3.4.3 The Pitfalls of the Re-Entry Policy.....	253
7.4 What strategies can be used to improve pupils' performance in Grade 12 examinations in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province?.....	254
7.4.1 Improve school based and district based monitoring and supervision	254
7.4.2 Motivate teachers through incentivisation	255
7.4.3 Reduced workload for teachers	256
7.4.4 Infrastructure Expansion	257
7.4.5 Employment of more teachers.....	258
7.4.6 Multi-sectoral approach to provision of adequate teaching and learning materials .	259
7.4.7 Provision of Learning Opportunities for Teachers	260
7.4.8 Reduce Travel Time from Home to School by Constructing More Schools	261
7.4.9 Teachers to Collaborate with Parents to Tackle Learner Absenteeism	262
7.4.10 Establishing Functional Libraries to Provide Literacy Materials	263
7.4.11 Use of Various Techniques to Teach Reading and Writing.....	264
7.4.12 Improve Learner Conduct through a Strict School Code of Ethics	265
7.4.13 Establish mentorship programmes to improve learner motivation.....	265
7.4.14 Encourage learners to practise formal English in and outside the classroom.	266

7.4.15 Making English a compulsory passing subject at every examination level.....	268
7.4.16 Abolish Re-Entry Policy.....	269
7.5 Conclusion.....	269
CHAPTER EIGHT	272
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	272
8.0 Overview	272
8.1 Conclusion - Objective 1.....	272
Implications for the Nation	273
Implications for the Nation	274
8.3.3.1 Learner Absenteeism.....	275
8.3.3.2 Learner Inability to Read and Write	275
8.3.3.3 Limited Vocabulary	275
8.3.3.4 Use of the Informal Variety of English.....	275
8.3.3.5 Disruptive Behaviour among Learners	276
Implications for the Nation	276
8.3.3.6 Overall Implication	276
8.4.1 Removal of English as a Compulsory Passing Subject	276
Implications for the Nation	276
8.4.2 Removal of Cut-Off Points for Grade 9 Examinations.....	277
Implications for the Nation	277
8.4. 3 The Re-Entry Policy	277
8.4.3.1 Implications for the Nation.....	277
8.4.4 Overall Implication	277
8.5 The Contribution of this Study to the Body of Knowledge	278
8.6 Recommendations.....	279
8.6.1 Examinations Council of Zambia should.....	279
REFERENCES	281

List of tables

Table 1: National Grade 12 English Language Results from 2018 to 2023.....	9
Table 2: National Grade 12 result statistics in percentage	10
Table 3: National Grade 12 result statistics in actual numbers	11
Table 4: National Grade 12 cumulative result statistics for G7, G8 and G9.....	12
Table 6 HODs’ Demographics	96
Table 7 Teachers’ Demographics.....	97
Table 16: Provincial Grade 12 result statistics.....	141
Table 17: Summary of Provincial result statistics.....	142
Table 18: Provincial Cumulative Poor Performance	143
Table 19: School 1 Grade Distribution	145
Table 20: School 1 Cumulative Poor Performance	145
Table 21: School 2 Grade Distribution	146
Table 22: School 2 Cumulative Poor Performance	147
Table 23: School 3 Grade Distribution	148
Table 24: School 3 Cumulative Poor Performance	149
Table 25: School 4 Grade Distribution	150
Table 26: School 4 Cumulative Poor Performance	150
Table 27: School 5 Grade Distribution	151
Table 28: School 5 Cumulative Poor Performance	152
Table 29: School 6 Grade Distribution	153
Table 30: School 6 Cumulative Poor Performance	153
Table 31: School 7 Grade Distribution	154
Table 32: School 7 Cumulative Poor Performance	155
Table 33: School 8 Grade Distribution	156
Table 34: School 8 Cumulative Poor Performance	156

List of Figures

Figure 5: Research Site.....	17
Figure 8: Current Grade 12 Pupils	98
Figure 9: Grade 12 Alumni	98
Figure 10: 2018 English Paper 1	100
Figure 11: 2018 English Paper 2	104
Figure 12: 2021 English Paper 1	115
Figure 13: 2021 English Paper 2	118
Figure 14: 2023 English Paper 1	127
Figure 15: 2023 English Paper 2	129

Abbreviations

Ab	Absentees
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
DESO	District Education Standards Officer
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EPI	English Proficiency Index
ESL	English as a Second Language
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HOD	Head of Department
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
LATAZ	Language Teachers' Association of Zambia
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoGE	Ministry of General Education
REP	Re-Entry Policy
SESO	Senior Education Standards Officer
SES	Socio-economic status
SET	Self-efficacy Theory
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PPP	Private-Public Partnerships

List of Figures

- Figure 1: National Performance Trends
- Figure 2: National Grade 12 English Examination Statistics
- Figure 3: National Examination Statistics
- Figure 4: National Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 5: HODs' Demographics
- Figure 6: Teachers' Demographics
- Figure 7: Current Grade 12 Pupils
- Figure 8: Former Grade 12 Pupils
- Figure 9: 2018 English Paper 1
- Figure 10: 2018 Grade 12 English Paper 2
- Figure 11: 2021 Grade 12 English Paper 1
- Figure 12: 2021 Grade 12 English Paper 2
- Figure 13: 2023 Grade 12 English Paper 1
- Figure 14: 2023 Grade 12 English Paper 2
- Figure 15: National Grade 12 English Examination Statistics
- Figure 16: Provincial Performance Trends (2018–2023).
- Figure 17: Summary of provincial examination results
- Figure 18: Grade 12 Provincial Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 19: School 1 Grade Distribution
- Figure 20: School 1 Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 21: School 2 Grade Distribution
- Figure 22: School 2 Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 23: School 3 Grade Distribution
- Figure 24: School 3 Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 24: School 4 Grade Distribution
- Figure 25: School 4 Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 26: School 5 Grade Distribution
- School 27: School 5 Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 28: School 6 Grade Distribution
- Figure 29: School 6 Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 30: School 7 Grade Distribution
- Figure 31: School 7 Cumulative Poor Performance
- Figure 32: School 8 Grade Distribution

Figure 33: School 8 Cumulative Poor Performance

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter presents the introductory part of this dissertation. It gives the background to the study by explaining the status of English in Zambian schools and pupils' performance trend in the English language national examinations. Further, the chapter gives the problem statement, objectives and research questions, the significance and justification of the study, the limitations, delimitation as well as the chapter summary.

1.1 Background of the study

1.1.1 The status and functions of English in Zambia

In examining the current state of the English language proficiency among pupils, this chapter investigates several key areas. Firstly, it evaluates the historical and educational context of the English language instruction in Zambia, tracing how past policies and educational reforms have shaped the present scenario.

The official status of English in Zambia has an historical background to the country's quest for national unity highlighted by the national motto "One Zambia, one nation." Zambia's cultural and linguistic diversity prompted the newly independent nation to find a common language that would cut across the approximately seventy three (73) indigenous and regional languages spoken in Zambia. The ratification of the use of English as the official language came into effect after the attainment of Zambia's independence in 1964. The status of the English language started to gain ground after independence. Simwinga (2009) explains that in June 1965, in the newly established Republic of Zambia, the cabinet deliberated on the issue and on the advice of the then Minister of Education, Mr. J. M. Mwanakatwe, decided to legislate on the Hardman recommendation, which became enshrined in the 1966 Education Act.

There was also a belief that the earlier a language was started the better, so English was formally adopted, for the first time, as the medium of instruction from the beginning of Grade 1 to the end of tertiary education. Considerable resources were committed over the following years to establishing and running what was initially called the English Medium Scheme, later to be called, the New Zambia Primary Course. It was from this period that the status of the English language was raised and its functions changed the landscape of Zambia forever. Since then, the status of English in Zambia is far superior

to that of Zambian languages. While English is vital for education in Zambia, it is important to recognise that Zambia is a multilingual country with numerous indigenous languages. Efforts have been made to promote the preservation and teaching of these languages alongside English to maintain the cultural and linguistic diversity.

After independence Zambia did not have a language whose speakers were more than 50%, so for reasons of national unity, Simwinda (2008:143) observed that ‘Zambia chose the English language to be the official language due to “the fear of ethno-linguistic rivalry in case of any of the local languages was selected.” As observed by Marten & Kula (2008) English was the only “non-tribal” language available to present that national unity. Furthermore, Lungu (1988) noted that English was seen as the neutral language acceptable to all the divergent linguistic and ethnic groups.

1.1.2 The Role of English in Zambia and the world

There are various reasons for favouring English as the language to be learned, ranging from the need for business and trade, academic pursuit, cultural and technological contact, to political convenience. English plays a major role in business and education. In establishing its status, one has only to look at the role English plays in the Zambian society. At the national level, English is:

The language used by the administration at all levels, central, provincial and district. In parliament, in the courts of law, at meetings of city and municipal councils, in the more advanced industrial and commercial institutions, banks, post offices and others. English is the effective instrument for the transaction of business (Mwanakatwe, 1974:213).

Other scholars have ascertained the importance of English. “As a second language, English is spoken by people in the countries as the official language” (Crystal, 1997:4), “... or the language of the administration” (Graddol, 1997:11). The knowledge of English language is important for educational, economic and national development of a country (Awoniyi, 1978; Hall, 2017; Hyon et al., 2018). The importance of the English language in Zambia cuts across different spheres of life. To pursue higher education abroad or take part in international academic collaborations and exchanges Zambian students must be proficient in English. English is the primary language of instruction at many of the best universities and many research centres in the world. English is a language that many nations use to draw in foreign

faculty and students, encourage cross-national research partnerships, and raise the standard of higher education. Furthermore, it fosters cross-cultural communication. It gives students in Zambia the opportunity to participate in cultural exchange programmes with nations across Africa and the rest of the world. It also allows them to gain knowledge about various cultures, viewpoints, and concepts. Literature, art, and culture are widely available worldwide in the English language. Countries can engage in international cultural exchanges and market their own traditions and culture to a global audience by utilising English in the classroom. Thus, proficiency in English is necessary for scholastic success or academic advancement.

Lack of proficiency in English has an impact on scholarship opportunities. Scholarships, whether from government or private organisations, often have academic eligibility requirements, which may include specific grades in English. Failing English can disqualify students from scholarship opportunities (Ma & Lin, 2023).

English proficiency is linked to personal and professional development. It provides access to a vast array of resources, including professional development courses, online learning platforms, and global networking opportunities. This continuous learning and development contribute to career advancement and personal enrichment (Education First, 2020).

The Education Act of 2011 gives legal guidance on language of instruction in Zambia. It prescribes the use of the English language as the official Language of Instruction from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Tertiary. English is the medium of instruction in education in all schools from ECE through to tertiary education. (2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework). The English Language is compulsory in the primary and secondary school curriculum and the rest of the subjects make use of the English Language as the medium of instruction except the seven selected zonal languages. The English language plays an important role and facilitates overall learning in schools. Mastery of English is indispensable for learners to excel academically, as all key subjects in secondary and tertiary education are taught and examined in English (Mwanza, 2016). Because of using English in various key sectors of the country, the language has gained a higher status than ethnic languages.

Mwanza (2016:39) states that, “Zambians are eager to learn the English language due to its economic value and prospects that come with the acquisition of English language proficiency.” Mwanza’s observation is supported by other scholars. Kula (2008:6), for

instance also confirmed the important position of the English Language by stating that, “The predominant use of English in the media, government and education means knowledge of English is extremely important for finding employment, at least in the ‘formal’ sector, and English thus has a relatively high social status in Zambia.”

English is frequently regarded as an essential skill in the global job market. Candidates with strong English communication skills are given preference by employers because it is necessary for corresponding with partners, clients, and co-workers around the world. Moonga (2020) postulates that English proficiency is a prerequisite for employment in both the public and private sectors, where effective communication skills are highly valued. According to a Cambridge English survey (2016), 85% of employers use English as their primary language of communication and 95% of employers think that English is important for their business. Proficiency in English broadens economic prospects. In Zambia, many job opportunities, particularly in sectors like tourism, hospitality, and international trade, require strong English skills. English is closely linked with enhanced economic potential as it serves as the primary language for business and commerce globally. Being fluent in English can significantly improve a person's employability and provide access to international job markets. Multinational corporations, which operate across various countries, often adopt English as their working language to ensure effective communication and operational efficiency across their global offices. Employees who are proficient in English have an advantage in securing jobs within these companies, leading to better career opportunities and professional development (Cambridge English, 2016). In Zambia, many multinational companies also use English as their main business language.

On a macroeconomic level, countries with higher levels of English proficiency tend to have stronger economic growth. The English Proficiency Index (EPI) by Education First (2020) reveals a correlation between a country's English skills and its economic performance, suggesting that English proficiency can be a key driver of economic competitiveness and innovation.

Zambia recognises English as its official language, utilising it across government, administrative, and legal sectors. This establishes English as essential for communication in official and formal settings. Beyond its official status in government institutions, English plays a pivotal role in international business, information and communication technologies (ICTs), science, and serves as the language of instruction

in Zambian schools and universities. Most textbooks, instructional materials, and examinations are provided in English, ensuring learners' access to extensive educational resources and opportunities.

Other motivations for choosing English as the only official language have been its connotation to modernisation, prestige and international connections (Mwelwa & Spencer 2013). English enables people access to global knowledge because it is the dominant language of global communication, science, technology, and business. Much of the world's scientific, technological, and academic knowledge is documented in English. By teaching in English, countries aim to give their students access to a wealth of information and resources. Proficiency in English enables Zambian learners to access information and knowledge from around the world, which is vital for their education and future career prospects.

The English language is the means by which pupils process and acquire knowledge and skills in school and then demonstrate their learning in every subject on the curriculum. Without English, learners would struggle across the curriculum. The English language is an enabler, since it is the language of instruction in Zambia. As Chishiba and Manchishi (2016) highlight, English serves as the primary medium of instruction in the Zambian education system, playing a crucial role in knowledge acquisition and academic success. Similarly, Mkandawire (2017) highlights that English proficiency enhances pupils' reading, writing, and comprehension skills, which are crucial for academic success.

Beyond the classroom, English is also the primary language of the internet, scientific research, and technological advancements (Zambia, 2024). Consequently, proficiency in English enables pupils to access a vast array of information and resources online. It empowers them to engage with global media, stay informed about current events, and critically evaluate information from various sources. Furthermore, DevTech Systems Inc. (2022) notes that English proficiency plays an important role in learners' ability to interact with digital resources, increasing their learning opportunities and future career prospects.

At the personal and interpersonal level, English is used primarily for communication between Zambians. Moody (1984) stated that Zambia has a multiplicity of indigenous languages and Zambians who communicate with each other outside their first language groups often choose to do so through English. It improves communication. Proficiency

in English can lead to improved communication skills, which are valuable in various aspects of life, including social interactions and career advancement.

Evidently, English in Zambia is used for official, social and interpersonal communication in addition *to* its use for wider communication. It thus enjoys a privileged position which is extended to all sectors of the social life and economy of the Zambian people. The importance of English in education advancement and global employability cannot be overstated. It is a vital tool for accessing knowledge, pursuing higher education, and thriving in the international job market. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, proficiency in English will continue to be a significant asset, enhancing educational opportunities and employability on a global scale.

1.1.3 The Zambian English Curriculum

The Zambian curriculum has set goals that learners need to attain. According to the Zambian Curriculum learners who have reached Grade ten (10) are expected to communicate effectively and appropriately in English in various social contexts; to recognize and apply the difference between spoken and written English and to read and understand various types of texts, including fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. This includes the analysis of literary elements and techniques. The curriculum also focuses on developing writing skills, including essay writing, creative writing, and formal letters. Emphasis on grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary is also important. Teachers are expected to help learners develop effective oral communication skills, including public speaking, presentations, and discussions. In-depth study of English grammar rules and usage, including syntax and semantics is emphasised in the curriculum.

As learners advance to Grade eleven (11) they are expected to undertake Advanced Reading and Analysis building upon the skills from Grade 10. In Grade 11 learners delve into more complex texts and analyse them critically. This may include plays, novels, and essays. Further development of essay writing skills, argumentative writing, and literary analysis essays is spelt out in the curriculum. Emphasis is on clear and concise writing. At this level of education, learners are exposed to refining oral communication skill, which can be attained through formal debates, group discussions, and persuasive speeches. The curriculum also emphasises continued study of advanced grammar rules and syntactical structures.

At Grade 12 level, learners are expected to display advanced writing skills, including research papers, literary critiques, and extended essays. They should show advanced public speaking skills, including the ability to present and defend complex ideas. It is at this stage teachers are expected to prepare learners for national examinations. According to the curriculum objectives, teachers should prepare and give comprehensive assessments to assess all language skills just as the final national examinations do.

1.1.4 The Importance of Examinations in Education

Examinations serve as an important measure of academic achievement and a determinant of pupils' future educational and career opportunities (Linn, 2000). They assess learners' comprehension, retention, and application of knowledge while providing feedback for teachers and policymakers to improve educational systems (Harlen, 2007). In Zambia, the Grade 12 English Language examination is a high-stakes assessment that determines pupils' eligibility for tertiary education and professional training (Kalinde & Verster, 2016). Poor performance in this examination not only limits pupils' academic progression but also affects their ability to participate effectively in national and global economic activities (Mbozi, 2019).

1.1.5 Structure of Grade 12 Examinations

The English language examination consists of two written papers. Paper 1, coded as 1121/1, assesses learners' composition writing skills and is divided into two sections. Section A presents six questions, from which candidates must choose and answer one. These questions vary in their requirements and cover different types of composition outlined in the English Senior Secondary Syllabus, including narrative, descriptive, discursive, and expository writing. Section B contains a single compulsory guided composition question. Candidates are required to write two compositions in total. The paper carries 40 marks and has a duration of 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Paper 2, coded as 1121/2, consists of three compulsory questions. Question 1 is divided into two sections, focusing on language structure. Section 1 assesses grammar, including vocabulary, lexis, cloze tests, and spelling. Section 2 evaluates sentence transformations, covering various sentence structures and tenses. Question 2 tests reading comprehension skills, while Question 3 assesses summary writing abilities. The paper is allocated 60 marks and has a duration of two hours.

1.1.6 Performance in the Zambian Education System

Examinations play an important role in education. They provide an opportunity for stakeholders to know what learners have learnt and how well they have learnt. Examination performance is a means through which schools give an account of learners' achievement and underachievement. The Zambian government through the Ministry of Education places a high value on examinations. On the one hand, this seems to reflect the influence of an examination-oriented education system in Zambia. On the other hand, this could also be due to the fact that examination performance would determine if learners could pursue their higher education with success. The Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) reports from 2014 to 2021 have indicated that many learners perform poorly in English. Writing continues to present a major educational challenge for English language learners. Adas and Bakir (2013) state that writing is an intricate and complex task. Learners' underachievement in English raises a concern over their translation of knowledge of language skills in a practical situation. The ECZ reports highlight that grade 12 examination candidates present a range of problems in their performance in English language. The ECZ report of 2020 cited poor knowledge of grammar, spellings, limited vocabulary and poor sentence construction among others as some of the factors responsible for the pupils' poor performance in English language. As a result, it is then significant to explore the statistics of results in English language in the national examinations.

Sakala (2020) argued that grade 12 results in second language teaching were not impressive because the language is an imposition on the Zambian education system, and it was not very common in most rural school and communities. She argues that second language teaching like English has remained a challenge for most learners and teachers in schools as teachers are not mandated to use their local language to present the content knowledge to learners with little knowledge in English. Due to this, results in English have continued to be poor at grade 12. However, the Ministry of Education's point of view is that learner performance is improving from time to time because the ministry has put in mechanisms to achieve its mandate, (MOE, 2019).

Ogawa (2010) argues that the mastery of curriculum can be determined partly through the national examination. As such a high score in the national examination is an indicator of high quality education. Considering the contribution English may have on the overall performance in the examinations, there is need to explore the measures geared to improve on performance of English language. The learner performance in

English language, nonetheless, is not very impressive where quality pass is concerned. This concern has come because English is held in high esteem in the country and a learner who fails English cannot enter a college or university despite passing very well in other subjects.

According to the statistics obtained from the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) reports, the following poor performance rates were recorded:

Table 1: National Grade 12 English Language Results from 2018 to 2023

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	Absent	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9
2018	FEMALES	57093	56125	968	2469	3346	9162	4242	4551	9752	9253	8229	5121
2018	MALES	64205	63062	1143	1655	3027	9593	4689	5272	11373	11175	9902	6376
2019	FEMALES	64761	63448	1313	3052	3359	9220	6001	5148	11777	9897	9252	5742
2019	MALES	72718	71130	1588	2383	3152	8556	5773	5385	13051	11993	12139	8698
2020	FEMALES	72026	70543	1483	2745	4520	12432	5001	5491	13534	7722	8673	10425
2020	MALES	77952	76015	1937	1779	3896	11463	4823	5604	14683	8800	10670	14297
2021	FEMALES	61404	60292	1112	2455	3902	10107	4723	5237	11346	9004	8274	5244
2021	MALES	62571	61151	1420	1618	3087	9357	4419	5126	11390	9851	9291	7012
2022	FEMALES	62894	61710	1184	2260	4362	12709	3634	5798	10938	8779	6982	6248
2022	MALES	64394	63085	1309	1308	3300	11283	3679	5838	11852	10015	8390	7420
2023	FEMALES	84248	82593	1655	4178	4904	12305	7187	6396	17444	12076	10603	7500
2023	MALES	82345	80607	1738	3596	4235	10545	6281	5607	16296	12490	11996	9561

Source: ECZ

Table 1 shows annual data on male and female candidates who entered and sat for the English examinations from 2018 to 2023, including the number of absentees. The columns labelled g1 to g9 represent different grade categories or performance bands in the examinations. Key observations from the table include: The number of candidates (both entered and sat) generally increased over the years, with a significant rise in 2023. Male candidates consistently outnumbered females each year except for 2023, and their performance distribution showed slight variations across the grade categories. The number of absentees varied each year, with a relatively higher number in 2023. Generally, there were more absentees among males across the years. The distribution of candidates across **g1 to g9** fluctuated suggesting variations in performance trends by year and gender.

Table 2: National Grade 12 result statistics in percentage

YEAR	NO. SAT	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	TOTAL FAIL %
2018	119,187	3.46	5.34	15.73	7.49	8.24	17.72	17.14	15.21	9.65	9.65
2019	134 578	4.04	4.83	13.21	8.75	7.83	18.45	16.27	15.89	10.73	10.73
2020	146,558	3.09	5.74	16.30	6.70	7.57	19.25	11.27	13.20	16.87	16.87
2021	121,443	2.08	5.75	16.03	7.53	8.53	18.72	15.53	14.46	10.09	10.09
2022	124,795	2.86	6.14	19.23	5.86	9.32	18.26	15.06	12.31	10.95	10.95
2023	163,200	4.76	5.60	14.00	8.25	7.35	20.67	15.05	13.85	10.45	10.45

Source: ECZ

Table 2 shows the national Grade 12 examination statistics in percentage for the years 2018 to 2023. The percentage of top-performing pupils (G1) fluctuated but remained relatively low, with a noticeable increase in 2023. A significant number of pupils consistently fell in the G6 category, peaking in 2023 at 20.67%. The G9 was highest in 2020 (16.87%) but decreased in subsequent years, showing some improvement.

Table 3: National Grade 12 result statistics in actual numbers

YEAR	NO. SAT	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	TOTAL FAIL
2018	119,187	4124	6373	18755	8931	9823	21125	20428	18131	11497	11497
2019	134 578	5435	6511	17776	11774	10533	24828	21890	21391	14440	14440
2020	146,558	4524	8416	23895	9824	11095	28217	16522	19343	24722	24722
2021	121,443	2532	6989	19464	9142	10363	22736	18855	17565	12256	12256
2022	124,795	3568	7662	23992	7313	11636	22790	18794	15372	13668	13668
2023	163,200	7774	9139	22850	13468	12003	33740	24566	22599	17061	17061

Source: ECZ

Table 3 table shows the actual number of candidates achieving each grade (G1 to G9) in the National Grade 12 examinations from 2018 to 2023. The number of candidates sitting for the examinations had generally increased, reaching the highest in 2023 (163,200). The highest concentration of candidates consistently fell in G6, with the highest in 2023 (33,740). The number of pupils who failed English completely (G9) fluctuated, with 2020 having the highest failure count (24,722) and a decrease in 2021 and 2022 before rising again in 2023 (17,061).

The data is presented in table form for easy comprehension. The data presented in Table 1 shows the total number of candidates who sat for the English examination and the grades they obtained are shown in percentage. Table 2 shows the actual number of candidates who sat for the examinations and the grades they obtained are converted from numbers to percentages. Table 3 shows the performance trends across the years 2018 to 2023. The percentages were converted to the actual numbers. Table 3 shows that a total number of 119 187 candidates sat for the English language examinations and 11,497 (9.65%) failed English language in the year 2018. In 2019, a total number of 134, 578 candidates sat for English language at Grade 12 level and 14,440 (10.73%) candidates failed the English language. In 2020, 146 558 Grade 12 candidates sat for English language and out of the total number, 24,722 (16.87%) failed the English language. In 2021, the total number of Grade 12 candidates who sate for English examination was 121, 443 and a total number of 12, 256 (10.09%) candidates failed. In 2022, 124, 795 Grade 12 candidates sat for Grade 12 examination and 13,668 (10.95%) candidates failed English language. Meanwhile, in 2023, a total candidature of 163, 200 sat for English language examinations. Out of this number, 17,061 (10.45%) failed the examinations completely.

Table 4: National Grade 12 cumulative result statistics for G7, G8 and G9

YEAR	NO. SAT	G7	G8	G9	ACTUAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO PERFORMED POORLY IN ENGLISH	CUMULATIVE TOTAL POOR PERFORMANCE IN PERCENTAGE (%)
2018	119,187	17.14	15.21	9.65	50, 057	42.00
2019	134 578	16.27	15.89	10.73	57, 721	42.89
2020	146,558	11.27	13.20	16.87	60, 587	41.34
2021	121,443	15.53	14.46	10.09	48, 676	40.08
2022	124,795	15.06	12.31	10.95	47, 834	38.32
2023	163,200	15.05	13.85	10.45	64, 226	39.35

Table 4 shows the cumulative performance of Grade 12 pupils in the lowest three grade bands (G7–G9), which indicate poor performance in English.

From 2018 to 2023, over 38% of pupils each year who sat for Grade 12 English national examinations fell into these lower bands, with the highest cumulative poor performance percentage in 2019 (42.89%). Generally, in English there was poor performance for a compulsory subject and a compulsory entry subject into tertiary education. This is a big problem because it means that regardless of how these pupils performed in other subjects, they could not proceed to tertiary education for further training without re-writing English. Despite English being one of the official languages in Zambia and a language of instruction used from upper primary to tertiary level as stipulated in 'The Language of Instruction Policy of 2013' many Grade 12 pupils still fail English. From 2018 to 2023- between 38.32 % and 42.89% Grade 12 pupils country-wide obtained grades ranging from Grade 7 to Grade 9 which would not enable them to proceed to tertiary education. As the main language of government, commerce and education in Zambia and the world-over, English is a key subject for academic progression. Pupils need to obtain a credit pass which is the minimum requirement for admission into higher institutions of learning in Zambia. By implication, the number of pupils that are eligible for admission into the undergraduate courses in the universities and other higher institutions of learning in Zambia has been on a consistent decline for the past few six years and will continue to be so if the situation is not addressed.

From the statistics presented in table 1, it can be seen that the percentages seem less yet the number of candidates who failed English language is alarming. Teachers are in schools and teaching and learning takes place and yet the failing numbers are too high. These high numbers of pupils failing English made it necessary to investigate pupils' underachievement in English. Therefore, this study could bring about the understanding as to why such Grade 12 poor performance rates are being recorded in the English language. Therefore, this study was undertaken to critically analyse the performance of Grade 12 pupils in English in Zambian secondary schools, focusing on the Copperbelt Province, to address the challenge of poor performance in the Grade 12 English National Examinations.

English, as a key and pivotal subject, significantly influences pupils' academic trajectories within the Zambian educational context. The ongoing concern among educators, policymakers, and researchers regarding pupils' persistent poor

performance in the English examinations highlights its critical importance. As the official language and language of instruction in Zambian schools, English is vital for pupils' academic and professional future. Nevertheless, the persistent underachievement in English examinations suggests a deeper systemic problem that requires a thorough academic examination.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

English proficiency is essential for university admission and career opportunities. At Grade 12 level, learners are expected to display advanced writing skills and should be proficient. This level of mastery is measured during national examinations. Examinations are the key measure of quality education in Zambia. Grade 12 English results have been consistently low in the Copperbelt Province. Studies by (Mulenga & Mwanza, 2019; Banda & Phiri, 2019; Simumba, 2019) highlight continued poor results in English. National poor performance rates (2018–2023) ranged between 38.32% and 42.89%. This trend has far-reaching implications. The persistent decline suggests that existing interventions have been inadequate in addressing the root causes of this issue. There is need for a deeper investigation into causes and improvement strategies. Despite this revelation, no study has comprehensively analysed statistical performance data, the quality of examination papers, and contributing factors within a single study in the Copperbelt Province.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to critically analyse the causes of Grade 12 pupils' poor performance in English language in national examinations and how it can be improved.

1.4 Research objectives

In an attempt to achieve the above objective, the following research objectives were formulated. The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Analyse the quality of Grade 12 examination questions;
- ii. Analyse the nature of performance of Grade 12 pupils in English subject in the Copperbelt Province;
- iii. Examine teacher and learner views of factors contributing to poor English performance among Grade 12 pupils in selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province;
- iv. Suggest strategies to improve pupil performance in Grade 12 examinations in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia.

1.4.1 Research questions

To achieve the objectives above, the study will attempt to answer the following specific questions:

- i. How is the quality of Grade 12 examination questions?
- ii. How is the performance of Grade 12 pupils in English in the Copperbelt Province?
- iii. What factors contribute to Grade 12 pupils in selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province performing poorly in English final examinations?
- iv. What strategies can be used to improve pupils' performance in Grade 12 examinations in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province?

1.5 Significance of the study

A thorough analysis will help uncover the major factors contributing to poor performance in English national examinations in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia thus contributing to literature on research-based evidence on the factors. Understanding the root causes of poor performance may allow for targeted interventions that can improve pupils' proficiency in English, thereby increasing their chances of academic and professional success. This kind of knowledge will not only add to the existing research based literature on the subject matter but may also provide a useful database that could be used as a tangible reference by relevant education authorities and other stakeholders interested in devising intervention measures aimed at improving pupil performance. Results from the study may be used for more meaningful in-house capacity building for secondary school teachers of English and may also help in finding solutions to problems related to English language teaching and learning in various schools in Zambia. The study might advance knowledge and provide basis for further research on similar topical issues. Pupils, teachers, administrators, parents, curriculum planners and other research enthusiasts could benefit from this study.

1.6 Delimitation of study

According to Calabrese (2009) delimitations are things a researcher puts in place to narrow the study to in order to focus on specific aspects in terms of the research methodology, participant characteristic, context or research site or phenomenon that was studied during the research. The study was delimited to 8 selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province, 24 teachers of English who were teaching Grade

12 classes, 80 current Grade 12 pupils, 16 former Grade 12 from selected schools, 8 deputy head teachers and 8 Heads of Languages Department of selected schools, 16 parents who had children in selected schools, the Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) for Languages within the Copperbelt Province of Zambia, 5 selected national examiners and 2 officials from the Examinations Council of Zambia. The schools were selected from the urban and rural areas for differential effect.

1.7 Limitation of the study

Limitations are possible shortcomings or influences that can affect the study and are not under the control of the researcher. According to Simon & Goes (2013) they limit the extent to which a study can go and may affect the end results of the study. Limitations are described as constraints or restrictions to one's study on the research methodology and design and cannot be controlled by the researcher (Miles, 2017). These restrictions are outside the researcher's control and are essential to the study that could affect the generalisability of the results (Terrell, 2016). Further, limitations are possible weaknesses in a study that are out of the researcher's control (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014; Lewis, 2015) and are important to the possible effects on the outcome of the study.

The study had a methodological limitation due to its descriptive case study design, which restricted the generalizability of findings beyond the Copperbelt Province. Different contexts and cases in other provinces may not align with those observed in this study. Additionally, the study addressed a somewhat sensitive issue regarding pupil performance, making it challenging to access key stakeholders. Many were not readily available, and bureaucratic hurdles complicated data collection from government offices, factors beyond the researcher's control. Grade 12 English performance statistics were considered confidential, making it difficult to obtain data from the provincial office let alone district offices despite official authorisation. The gatekeepers were reluctant to share this information, fearing potential misuse. Some schools expressed concerns that the data might be accessed by unauthorised parties and used improperly. Even after presenting an introductory letter from the University of Zambia and a permission letter from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) office, most schools were hesitant to release information. Furthermore, many schools lacked complete records of pupil performance. Without concrete data on learner performance, it would have been difficult to assess the true extent of academic challenges or the effectiveness of interventions. Performance data helps identify patterns and whether

challenges are widespread or not. The researcher would have loved to interview both the item writers and national draft setters, but this was not possible. To address the challenges of gatekeeping and incomplete data, I collaborated with the Examinations Council of Zambia to obtain statistics and grade distributions for 2018–2023. However, all but one school declined to provide internal assessment items used to evaluate learners which made it difficult to track where learner performance challenges began. Another challenge was participants' reluctance to be recorded. A total of 120 respondents (73.17%) refused to be recorded due to past experiences, requiring me to document discussions manually. Only 44 respondents (26.83%) consented to being recorded.

1.8 Description of the Research Site



Source:https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=7b7b3c18afc3e931&rlz=1C1CHBF_enNO1001NO1001&sxsrf=AHTn8zodLbBnbmM7JY1qF

Figure 5: Location of the Copperbelt Province

Figure 5 shows the research site of the study. The research site for the study was the Copperbelt Province, named for its rich copper production. The province has a total of 304 secondary schools, comprising 248 public, 37 private, 16 grant-aided, and 3 community secondary schools. For primary education, there are 1,240 schools in total, including 516 government-run, 5 grant-aided, 325 private, and 394 community primary schools. There are more primary schools than secondary schools in the province. The majority of both primary and secondary schools in the province are government-run. This study was conducted in Zambia’s Copperbelt Province, one of the largest

provinces with a high number of candidates sitting for the English language national examinations. Poor performance in English within the province significantly impacts the national progression rate to tertiary education. Additionally, no previous study has comprehensively analysed statistical performance data, examination question quality, and contributing factors within a single study in the Copperbelt Province, highlighting the need for this research.

1.9 Key operational terms

Attitude:	In this study attitude will mean the teachers’/ pupils’ judgment or feelings towards English, which is reflected through their behaviour in teaching/learning of English as a Second Language.
Commitment:	In this study will mean pupils’ consistent effort in learning English as a Second Language reflected through their cooperation in and outside class.
Critical Discourse	In this study, critical discourse refers to the systematic analysis of language use in social, political, and educational contexts to uncover underlying power relations, ideologies, and biases. It involves examining how language shapes and reflects societal structures, influencing perceptions, interactions, and decision-making.
Facilities:	In the study will be taken as the buildings, equipment and services provided for teaching and learning purposes.
Language proficiency:	ability to use the English language accurately in writing and speaking so as to effectively communicate with others.
Performance:	In the study refers to the outcome of learners’ ability in the national examinations measured in terms of their grades.
Poor performance	In this study poor performance is obtaining G7, G8 and G9 in the English language examination.
School Principal	In the study School Principal refers to the teacher in charge of a secondary school.
Quality	In the context of this study, quality of examination papers means syllabus coverage, clarity of questions, assessment of different cognitive levels and competences and assessment of language skills.

Teacher Absenteeism Not being in school for the prescribed time or being in school but not attending to learners during timetabled periods.

1.10 Summary

Chapter one outlines the proposal of the research which includes the background to the problem, statement of the problem, Theoretical framework and objectives which carry the main and specific objectives, research questions and significance of the study. This chapter provides the general overview of the whole research which is based on 'A Critical Discourse Analysis of Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language Examinations in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia'. The next chapter will present the review of related literature.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews relevant literature from various studies conducted in Zambia and beyond, addressing the research problem. The review is structured around the four objectives of the study and concludes with a summary and identification of research gaps.

2.1 Quality of Grade 12 English Examination Questions

The quality of national examination questions, particularly in subjects such as English, plays a critical role in determining not only the academic achievements of pupils but also the effectiveness of a country's education system. In Zambia, the Grade 12 English examination is a crucial determinant of a pupil's ability to transition into tertiary education. This section of the literature review seeks to critically analyse studies conducted over the past seven years that evaluate the quality of Grade 12 English examination papers in Zambia and other countries.

Rind and Mari (2019) employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The theoretical framework guiding their research was Bloom's Taxonomy, which categorises cognitive learning objectives into different levels. The researchers analysed examination papers from the past ten years to assess the types of cognitive demands placed on pupils and the frequency and variety of topics covered. Additionally, qualitative data were collected through interviews with teachers and learners from selected schools. The purpose of interviews was to evaluate the impact that examination patterns had on classroom practices. Their findings showed that examination papers primarily emphasised lower-order cognitive skills which in turn promoted limited teaching tendencies among teachers who more often than not only taught topics that were frequently examined in national examinations and did not teach comprehensive aspects of language learning. Consequently, pupils were forced to memorise rather than internalise concepts leading to limited ability to interact with content at a much more challenging level. This approach does not foster the development of critical thinking or analytical skills. These findings confirm previous studies that have revealed negative impact of high-stakes examinations on the depth and quality of pupil learning (Au, 2011; Jones, 2013).

Rind and Mari's (2019) study used Bloom's Taxonomy as a framework to methodically assess the cognitive demands of examination questions and that choice set this study apart. The Taxonomy framework brought out deep insights about how examination design correlates with and proportionately influences teaching and learning practices in classrooms. Furthermore, the mixed-methods approach assisted the researchers to triangulate their findings increasing their credibility and enhanced the understanding of the problem under review. However, the study only used information from a single examination board resulting in its limitation to generalise its findings to other districts and conditions. Even though the research explains the impact of examination patterns, it does not really give an in-depth understanding of other factors that have a bearing on teaching and learning in a real classroom situation. Nonetheless, the study by Rind and Mari (2019) does indicate the need for educational reforms to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Pakistan's secondary education system.

Smith and Nkosi (2020) carried out a study whose aim was to assess the quality of Grade 12 English examination papers in Africa with a special focus on how well these examination papers aligned with curriculum outcomes and how they promoted critical thinking skills. They used a constructivist paradigm underscoring the communally created nature of knowledge and learning. The study used a mixed-methods design. Examination papers were quantitatively analysed and interviews were conducted with ten curriculum developers and subject experts to obtain qualitative data. The examination papers analysed covered the period from 2016 -2020 and these were purposively sampled. Content analysis of the examination papers was conducted to examine question types and cognitive demand. Quantitative data were analysed using statistical procedures to classify questions by cognitive difficulty, while qualitative data from the interviews were analysed thematically. The selection of the mixed-methods approach provided a holistic understanding of the question papers and qualitative interviews with curriculum developers and subject experts provided other valuable insights which could not be obtained from content analysis of the examination papers. However, this study did not provide pupil performance data for the period reviewed to see how they performed on various questions and how they showed critical thinking through their answers to the various cognitive demands as outlined in the examinations.

Kamau conducted a research in 2019 and focused on assessing the validity and reliability of Grade 12 English language examination papers for students in Kenya. He utilised the positivist research paradigm. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design, where the performance of students in various components of the English examination (comprehension, essay writing, and language structure) was compared over five years (2015–2019). To be as representative as possible, two hundred examination papers were sampled from different regions of Kenya using stratified random sampling. Reliability of the examination papers was determined through the use of Test-retest and internal consistency methods. Teacher evaluations and standardised test scores were compared with examination results to assess validity. Further correlation analyses were carried out to determine the relationship between pupils' examination scores and other performance indicators.

Kamau used Cronbach's alpha to measure reliability. This study did not only analyse the content of the examination papers but placed strong emphasis on validity and reliability which gave it unique strength. Moreover, by integrating several performance indicators, the study presented a wide range assessment of examination value. However, the quasi-experimental design did not provide explanations for external factors such as the quality of teaching and or availability of resources that could have affected pupil performance.

Another research was conducted by Johnson (2023) in the United Kingdom (UK) to assess the quality of examination papers in the UK. He wanted to find out if examinations in the UK did evaluate critical thinking and creativity. The study employed a critical theory paradigm to show how the power dynamics take centre stage in the examination process. Using an ethnographic design, Johnson conducted in-depth interviews with thirty (30) secondary school teachers and examination moderators, along with document analysis of the 2020 - 2023 examination papers. Participants were selected using a non-random snowball sampling method. Thematic analysis was employed to explore participants' views on whether the examinations promoted critical thinking and creativity, while grounded theory was used to analyse the data and identify themes related to power structures, assessment practices, and their influence on learning. The use of the ethnographic approach brought out rich insights from the teachers' and moderators' experiences providing a comprehensive understanding of examination practices. However, the study results could not be generalised due to the

use of non-random sampling since there is a likelihood that participants could have had comparable perspectives.

Kingori, Wambua, and Kimani (2021) conducted a study which they titled "Curriculum-examination alignment in Kenyan secondary schools: An evaluation of Grade 12 national examinations. They used a mixed-methods design to evaluate the alignment between the Kenyan national examinations and the national curriculum. They did content analysis of the examination papers to examine how consistent they were with the national curriculum and also administered surveys to teachers to get their perceptions on the alignment. Survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics while content analysis was used to analyse examination papers. However, the study surveyed a small sample of teachers which was not very representative of broader national trends. The study did not also provide pupil performance data to help the researchers' measure if there was at all any misalignment on pupil expected outcomes and the actual examination outcomes.

Ahmed Gumaa Siddiek conducted research in Sudan. The research was conducted to examine the characteristics of the Sudan School Certificate English Examinations (SSC) in terms of content validity and completeness. To collect data, a questionnaire was administered through which the researcher examined attitudes of teachers of English towards the completeness and content validity of the (SSC) English examinations. The researcher also conducted a document analysis of (SSC) English language examinations and examined the elements of the examination items taken by students during the period 2003-2008. Furthermore, he analysed the (NORMS) of the 2003 Technical Guide of Secondary Examinations, which stipulated that the test developer must take into account the general rules of good examinations when writing the test. The research was quantitative in nature. Seventy-seven (77) markers of SSC participated in the study. The data was collected using a questionnaire and processed analytically by machine. The results showed that the Sudan School Certificate English Examination (SSCEE) in its current form was not a standardised academic achievement test as it did not reflect students' actual performance in English, as standardised tests are intended to attempt to provide authenticated information about it to deliver achievements of the individual learner in their course or unit. These tests also lacked content validity. A test is valid in terms of content if its content represents a representative sample of the linguistic skills, structures, etc. that it is intended to address. The results also showed that the examinations were not comprehensive as they

did not cover the topics, elements and language skills contained in the textbooks. The items in the SSCEE were not representative of what could be found in the textbooks and had no content validity as they did not test all of the language skills presented in the curriculum, forcing teachers to focus only on teaching examination techniques rather than focusing on imparting language skills. The study ultimately concluded that the SSCEE were achievement tests and not school-based standardised achievement tests.

The weaknesses of this research are that the research design is not clearly stated. The research focused on assessing teachers' attitudes towards the completeness and content validity of the (SSC) English examinations, but they were not included as respondents in the research. The researcher simply provided the examination markers with a questionnaire. The sample size (77) is rather too small for a quantitative study.

Another research was conducted by Mohammed Shure Wado and Abdurehman Osman Seid in Southern Ethiopia. The main objective of this research was to examine the challenges of preparing authentic English language tests in six secondary schools in Ethiopia. This study aimed at examining the challenges of preparing authentic English language tests at the high school level and was exploratory in nature. To achieve the research objective, the researchers used qualitative data collection methods. The target group of this study was secondary school English teachers who taught grades 9 to 12 in the selected schools. Twenty-four (24) teachers of English were selected using simple random sampling. Six high schools were deliberately selected as the researchers' areas of study. The research was qualitative in nature. First, interviews were conducted. To follow up on data collected through interviews, researchers used focused group discussions (FGD). The purpose of FGD was to gain a better and deeper understanding of the information collected through interviews. The results of the study showed that teachers had problems preparing authentic language tests due to six main challenges: large class size, low student motivation, teacher language skills, testing environment, and lack of authentic materials. The weakness of this research was that testing specialists and department heads were not included in the document analysis to assess the quality of the items presented in the tests. The students who are the main actors in written examinations were not taken into account. Their views and experiences would have enriched the research results.

Mwansa (2021) conducted an intensive study which sought to analyse the quality of examination papers set at Grade 12 level in Zambia. The study employed an interpretivist paradigm. The main aim of the study was to assess whether Grade 12 examination questions set really aligned with the curriculum objectives and tested high order thinking skills. A case study approach was used and it focused on an in-depth analysis of 2018 – 2020 examination papers. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the examination papers. The researcher utilised content analysis to evaluate the cognitive demands of the questions relying on Bloom’s taxonomy as a framework. Data analysis employed descriptive statistics to quantify the proportion of questions assessing various cognitive levels, followed by thematic analysis of qualitative feedback from teachers of English. The study did provide a detailed analysis of the spreading of cognitive demands across the years, emphasising inconsistencies between intended learning outcomes and the skills actually evaluated. However, the study does not provide data on pupil performance on the three years studied to help readers understand how pupils performed according to taxonomy levels tested. Pupil performance data would have been helpful to understand which taxonomy levels posed the most difficult for pupils in the years that study assessed.

Nyirenda and Mulenga (2020) did a study aimed at assessing the quality of examination papers in Zambia. The study employed an interpretivist research paradigm and used a descriptive research design. Eight (8) education specialists among them curriculum developers, examination officers and English subject experts were purposively sampled for inclusion in this study. Grade 12 English examination papers for the period of five years from 2015 – 2019 were also purposively sampled for this study. Data were collected through document analysis of Grade 12 English examination papers from 2015 – 2019 as well as expert interviews were conducted to examine the quality of Grade 12 English examination papers. The evaluation was focused on validity, reliability, fairness and alignment of questions with the national curriculum.

The findings revealed that the examinations papers were to a larger extent generally aligned with the English curriculum even though they did not adequately cover speaking and listening which are vital linguistic skills. On the issue of reliability, it was established that marking guides were in some areas found to be inconsistent providing room for potential variations in scoring. Questions were found to be mostly fair though occasionally examples used were culturally and contextually biased which might have been disadvantageous to rural learners due to limited exposure. The study further

revealed that the examination questions poorly represented higher-order cognitive skills for instance, analysis and evaluation. Additionally, the questions did not sufficiently focus on real-life communication skills. Through document analysis and interviews with experts, the study provided a detailed evaluation of examination quality. It also shed light on practical areas that could be improved upon in examination preparation and design. The study availed important insights into education policy and practice in Zambia. Much as this study contributed valuable insights, its sole focus on English could have potentially led to missing wider systemic problems that needed to be addressed to improve learner performance in examinations. The study did not include teachers' or learners' perspectives on the quality of examinations. The papers sampled covered only five years and these might not fully reflect recent changes or developments that might have been incorporated in examination quality.

Nyirenda and Mulenga (2020) highlight criticisms regarding English examination papers in Zambia, particularly for their insufficient focus on higher-order thinking skills like analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are vital for both academic achievement and critical thinking. Concerns have also been raised about the fairness of certain questions and whether they align with real-world language usage. Furthermore, the connection between what is taught and what is tested impacts pupil performance. Nkhoma & Chikalanga (2022) observe that when examinations emphasise rote memorisation over practical application, pupil results may not truly represent their language proficiency.

Mweemba and Phiri (2022) conducted a research whose aim was to investigate how Zambian Grade 12 examination papers aligned with international standards. They adopted a positivist paradigm to ensure objectivity in the analysis of examination papers. Zambian English examination papers were compared with those of South Africa and Botswana for the period 2016 – 2021 using a comparative design. The researchers used random sampling to select ten examination papers from each country for the period under review. To assess the level of difficulty of the questions, content analysis was used focusing on essay writing, comprehension abilities and language accuracy. Statistical procedures were further used to assess the data so as to gauge its degree of difficulty and conformity to Bloom's taxonomy. The study brought out rich cross-country comparisons and showed how examination practices in Zambia compare with international standards. However, the researchers' selection of the positivist approach restricted their examination of qualitative insights from pupils and teachers. Insights

from pupils would have added a richness to the findings. The random selection of papers could not also account for the yearly variations in the examinations. Purposive selection of papers would have been more helpful.

Maambo and Chilala (2020) conducted a study which they titled “An Analysis of the Difficulty Level of Grade 12 English Language Examinations in Zambia. This was a five year longitudinal research. Document analysis of examination papers for the period under review was done in order to examine changes in difficulty levels. They calculated difficulty indexes for each year and used trend analysis to identify patterns over the five-year period. The researchers conducted qualitative interviews with teachers to gather their perspectives on the examinations. Their findings revealed inconsistencies in examination difficulty levels from year to year. These significant variations raised concerns about the reliability of examinations as an accurate measure of pupils' linguistic proficiency in English. The fluctuating cognitive demands undermined the reliability and fairness of Grade 12 examination papers, which are critical for consistently and accurately assessing pupil performance across different contexts and pupil populations. While the study provided valuable insights into examination difficulty levels, the lack of pupil performance data limited the understanding of how these variations impacted learner outcomes.

The overall educational outcomes in secondary schools can be determined by the quality of Grade 12 examination papers. According to Mellon & Ferretti (2019) high quality examination papers should reflect and align with the national curriculum objectives and should assess various cognitive capabilities and should also be a trustworthy measure of pupils' linguistic proficiency in English. In Zambia, the setting of examination standards and administering of General Certificate of Education (GCE) is the responsibility of the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ). ECZ works in conjunction with all stakeholders to ensure that these standards are implemented and adhered to. Conducting examinations of acceptable standard is therefore the responsibility of all stakeholders at all levels. According to Kabunga et al., (2021) studies done all seem to point to the fact that the quality of examination papers in English impacts on how effectively pupils show their knowledge, dexterities and comprehension of the subject.

It is important to ensure that examination papers align with the national curriculum if the intended learning outcomes are to be accurately assessed. According to Mbale and Mulenga (2019) a major problem in Zambia is the unpredictability between the material taught in classrooms and what is actually assessed in Grade 12 final examinations. This unpredictability can cause anxiety and tension among both pupils and teachers as they may judge examinations as a formality that do not actually intend to assess pupils' ability since what is taught and learned does not correspond to what is assessed as outlined in the national curriculum. Kingori et al. (2021)'s research findings confirmed the contradictions that exist between curriculum expectations and what is actually assessed. When what is taught and what is examined does not match, examination content validity becomes questionable.

Kapambwe (2017) states that research shows that examination papers play a decisive role in assessing pupil performance. Studies that have been conducted have brought out concerns about the quality of Grade 12 examination papers in Zambia. Mwanza's (2015) study for example, revealed that examination questions are often unclear which leads to confusion among pupils. There is need to address these concerns so that pupils are assessed fairly and their performance gives a true reflection about their level of proficiency.

Studies by Mwansa (2021), Mweemba and Phiri (2022), Smith and Nkosi (2020), and Kamau (2019) all emphasise the need for examination questions to align with cognitive skills such as critical thinking and creativity. Notably, these researchers employed different methodological approaches, including content analysis, statistical methods, and mixed methods, to assess reliability and validity.

2.3 Performance of Grade 12 Pupils in English Subject

Examination results give an indication of how the education system is performing in the country. English being a determining factor for educational progression attracts a great deal of attention from many stakeholders. The performance of Grade 12 pupils in English national examination in the Copperbelt Province has been a matter of concern as examination reports show a downward trend in the pass rate. According to the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) (2021) this poor performance is not only a regional issue but mirrors broader national trends. English being the medium of instruction from Grade ECE upwards is a critical subject which raises great concern

when pupils perform persistently poorly. The persistent poor performance in English is suggestive of deeper educational issues that need to be addressed sooner than later.

Masuku (2023) carried out a research aimed at finding ways of improving the educational performance of Grade 12 progressed learners in English first additional language. The study was carried out in South Africa in Gert Sibande District. Transformative research paradigm was employed for this study. Eight (8) Grade 12 learners and four (4) educators from two (2) schools were sample through purposive and convenience sampling techniques. This was a Participatory Action Research. To collect data, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were used. The research findings revealed that students ha challenges stemming from their not having foundational understanding in grammar and literature coupled with inadequate support from teachers. To bridge this gap, there was need to improve preparation in earlier grades. The strength of this study lay on its focused intervention strategy specifically personalised to meet the needs of progressed learners. However, the study sample was small making it disadvantageous to apply its findings to other similar contexts.

Andes (2019) did a study in the Philippines in the Division of Sorsogon during the 2017-2018 academic year. The study sought to describe the English language proficiency among high school learners. Descriptive survey research design was used. Two hundred and eighty six (286) students were sampled from five (5) various educational pathways in Sorsogon. Surveys were admired to students. Data were collected from the administered surveys and student grade records. Chi-squares tests were used to measure the correlation between proficiency, teaching methods and school environment. The study findings revealed that students' performance was influenced by learner attitudes, resource availability like facilities and teaching materials, teaching methods and school environment. Further the study revealed that insufficient exposure to English inside and outside classroom, teacher-centred methods and limited access to additional valuable learning resources significantly and negatively influenced learner proficiency. The large sample ensured broad representation which could facilitate the generalisability of findings within the Sorsogon situation. The data were collected from different sources which strengthened data reliability. The research design was appropriate and suitable for capturing valuable and detailed insights about the target population especially that the participants were drawn from different tracks. However, the survey design limited the possibility of explaining the reasons for the trends that had been observed. Survey responses are prone to self-report bias which could also

affect the accuracy of the results. Grade records are not sufficient to explain or describe other factors that affect learner proficiency.

Nakale and Iita (2020) conducted a study in Omusati Education Region in Namibia in their quest to highlight factors that influence Grade 12 learners' performance in English as a second language. A mixed methods research paradigm was used. One hundred and fifty one (151) learners, three (3) teachers and two (2) principals were purposively and randomly sampled for inclusion in the study. Surveys and interviews were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The study findings revealed that there was low English proficiency among learners. The cause of the low proficiency was attributed to non-availability of resources, ineffective instructional methods and learners' low socio-economic status. Additionally, the study revealed that parental involvement and teacher motivation played pivotal roles in learner performance. The interviews brought out valuable insights which might not be articulated in the surveys thus complementing the quantitative data from surveys. The study however had a limited geographical scope.

Nghipandulwa and Ndjamba (2022) conducted a research in Namibia. The focus of the study was to analyse poor performance of learners in Grade 12 in English as a Second Language in examinations. The research employed social constructivism paradigm. Thirty six (36) alumni students took part in the study and were selected through voluntary sampling. Data were collected through content analysis of Oshigambo High School Alumni WhatsApp dialogue. The findings revealed poor performance among alumni of Oshigambo High School, largely attributed to teachers' limited proficiency in English, which led to frequent code-switching and disadvantaged learners. Additionally, insufficient school resources negatively impacted instruction, ultimately contributing to poor examination performance. The study took an innovative approach by utilizing WhatsApp-based data collection. However, limited participant diversity may have introduced bias. Including current Grade 12 students could have enriched the data by validating alumni perspectives. Moreover, a sample of 36 participants was not fully representative of all alumni from the school.

Castillo and Martinez (2021) carried out a study which sought to find out if there was any correlation between English language proficiency and academic performance among senior high school students. The study was conducted in the Philippines. The study employed a quantitative research paradigm. The study used a descriptive-

correlational research design. Two hundred (200) senior high school students were sampled through stratified random sampling. Questionnaire based-surveys were administered. The findings revealed that higher English language proficiency correlated positively with better academic performance across all subjects. The study had a clear focus on measurable outcomes. However, the study findings could have been further enhanced if there had been qualitative data to highlight learner attitudes or challenges that impacted performance.

Dela Cruz, Santos, and Reyes (2018) researched on academic performance of Grade 12 students in the Philippines specifically in San Pablo City Senior High School. The research used a quantitative research paradigm. Six hundred and forty (640) participants were selected for the study through stratified random sampling. The researchers used a questionnaire-based survey to collect data. The findings of this study revealed that prominent among the factors that influenced learner performance were parents' level of education and income, teacher involvement and learners' participation in co-curricular activities. The research further revealed that larger family size impacted performance negatively. The strength of this study lay in its large sample size which enabled the researchers to do factor analysis comprehensively. However, the study solely relied on self-reported data which might have potential for bias.

Banda (2018) carried out a study, titled "An Analysis of Grade 12 English Language Performance in Selected Secondary Schools in Copperbelt Province." A descriptive survey research design was used. Three hundred (300) Grade 12 pupils and ten (10) teachers of English were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected through document analysis, questionnaires and interviews. The research findings revealed poor pupil performance in English, attributed to ineffective teaching methods, inadequate resources, and a lack of motivation among pupils. The research brought out valuable insights into factors that negatively impact pupil performance in English. However, the findings are not transferable to other contexts due to the small sample size.

Simumba (2019) conducted a study titled "An Analysis of Grade 12 English Language Performance in Selected Secondary Schools in Copperbelt Province." He employed a comparative research design. The sample included two hundred (200) Grade 12 pupils from urban and rural schools who were purposively selected. Data were collected through document analysis and interviews. The findings revealed notable differences

in English language performance between pupils in urban and rural settings indicative of the existing incongruences in achievement. The notable setback of this study was its small representation of the rural schools. As such the results could not be generalised to other similar contexts.

Kabwe (2019) conducted a research using a survey research design aimed at examining teacher factors that influence pupil performance in English within secondary schools in Ndola. This research was grounded in a quantitative paradigm. The study sought to address various research questions among them identification of definite teacher factors that affect pupil performance, the extent to which teacher qualifications affect learner outcomes, and the correlation between teacher experience and pupil performance. Through stratified random sampling, a sample of one hundred (100) teachers of English and five hundred (500) Grade 12 pupils was selected. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews with teachers and document analysis. For document analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistics, including regression analysis, were used. The findings indicated that teacher qualification had a significant impact on pupil performance in English, while a positive correlation was observed between teacher experience and pupil performance. Furthermore, teacher motivation and a positive attitude toward teaching English were identified as key factors influencing pupil performance. The study concluded that teacher-related factors—specifically qualifications, experience, motivation, and attitude—play a crucial role in shaping pupils' educational outcomes in English. However, the study's findings are not generalizable, as it focused exclusively on Ndola and did not examine pupil-related factors that influence performance.

Banda and Phiri (2019) conducted a research to explore pupil performance in English. The study employed a positivism research paradigm. Quantitative approach was employed using descriptive statistics. Two hundred (200) pupils across several schools in the Copperbelt Province were randomly sampled. The findings revealed a decline in English performance attributed to large class sizes and inadequate teacher support. There was also a strong correlation between classroom overcrowding and examination outcomes. Clear statistical analysis and insights into correlations gave this study its strength. Nonetheless, the study lacked qualitative depth as it did not explore teachers' and pupils' lived experiences about pupil performance. Semi-structured interviews and pupil focus group discussions could have further enriched the study's analysis.

Simukonda and Chanda (2019) conducted a study on pupil performance in English, adopting an interpretivist research paradigm. The study employed a qualitative approach, using interviews and classroom observations for data collection. Teachers of English and English heads of departments were purposively sampled. The findings revealed that inconsistent curriculum implementation and resource shortages negatively impacted pupil performance in English. Additionally, the study found that teachers felt unprepared to support pupils struggling with comprehension. The qualitative approach provided in-depth insights into teaching practices and classroom challenges affecting learner outcomes. However, the study's limitation was its exclusion of pupil perspectives, which could have offered a more comprehensive understanding of the subtleties that influence performance."

Banda (2018) and Chansa (2020) found that Grade 12 pupils in the Copperbelt Province struggle with English language proficiency. Similarly, Simumba (2019) asserts that pupil performance in English remains consistently low, characterised by poor grammar and limited vocabulary skills.

2.4 School Certificate Examination Performance

The School Certificate English Language Paper 1 and 2 Examinations aim to assess candidates' proficiency and competency in English, as outlined in the Grade 10–12 Curriculum (CDC, 2013). Additionally, the two papers evaluate candidates' linguistic ability to communicate effectively in various contexts (ECZ, 2023). According to ECZ (2022), the examination is guided by specific assessment objectives (AOs), which form the basis for evaluating candidates' performance. These objectives include:

2.5 AO1 Knowledge of Vocabulary

Spelling words correctly e.g., 'tease' and not 'taese,' writing and not writting

Defining a word in the context in which it has been used.

Using lexical items correctly and appropriately in a given context e.g. homophones (pose/pause), homonyms (present/present), antonyms (long/short), synonyms (allow, let, permit), homographs (live/live), etc.

2.6 AO2 Application of Language Structures

Applying the lexical items and grammatical concepts correctly in different sentences e.g., Parts of Speech, Comparison, Condition, Unreal Past, etc.

Using all the common English Language structures correctly.

2.7 AO3 Comprehension of Passages/Texts

Reading various types of texts with understanding.

Reading, understanding and interpreting various print resources e.g. charts, graphs, etc

Explaining unfamiliar words/phrases according to the context in which they are used.

Interpreting the writer's ideas and perspectives.

2.8 AO4 Synthesis and Evaluation of Information (Summary)

Identifying and selecting relevant information from given text.

Analysing a given situation and producing a continuous piece of writing.

Tabulating information from passages into tables, charts and diagrams

Extracting specific information from various print resources.

Writing note and prose summaries

2.9 AO5 Analysis and Synthesis of Information (Composition)

Writing legibly and effectively to communicate messages.

Producing kinds of writings required in tertiary education and the world of work such as reports, letter, and speeches.

Producing different types and styles of writing such as narrative, persuasive and descriptive compositions.

Writing appropriate style suitable for a particular audience or purpose such as advertisements, notices and curriculum vitae.

Writing ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings.

The English Language Paper 1 (1121/1) of the School Certificate Examination consists of two sections: Section A, which includes six questions, and Section B, which has one compulsory question. Candidates are required to answer one question from the six options provided. A review of examination papers from 2018 to 2023 indicated that the questions in Section A aligned with the syllabus, covering the four types of composition: narrative, descriptive, discursive, and expository. The Chief Examiner's reports consistently highlighted recurring challenges in Paper 1. Candidates struggled with various writing concepts, including abbreviations, subject-verb agreement, conjunctions, figures, homophones, informal language, paragraphing, punctuation, run-on sentences, spelling, and word order (Chief Examiner's Report, 2021, 2022, & 2023). Similarly, in Paper 2 (1121/2), candidates faced difficulties with structural concepts such as impossible conditions, comparison, and coordination (particularly using 'apart from'). Many also struggled with fully comprehending the summary question and adhering to the word limit. Paper 2 comprises three questions, with Question 1 being

the most poorly answered, especially in areas related to vocabulary and sentence rewrites. Additionally, candidates encountered significant challenges with transformations in Section 2.

To evaluate candidates' performance, a qualitative analysis was conducted using a review of sample scripts and the Chief Examiner's reports. Candidates were categorized into three performance levels: high, average, and low. This approach offers a comprehensive, multi-faceted perspective on candidates' strengths and weaknesses, enabling educators to develop targeted interventions to address specific needs and enhance overall performance. Below are the characteristics of candidates in each category:

2.10 High Performing Candidates

These candidates exhibited:

A strong understanding of questions and effective presentation of answers.

Excellent spelling and writing skills, with strong language mastery

Well-structured compositions with proper paragraphing

A strong command of vocabulary and adherence to the stipulated summary word limit

Effective use of varied and correct sentence structures

Adequate and relevant content

Strong comprehension of concepts and structures

Accurate punctuation and grammar application

Adherence to summary rules, producing clear and cohesive summaries

2.11 Average Performing Candidates

Average-performing candidates exhibited the following characteristics:

A fair understanding of questions but struggled with word order in sentences.

Frequent use of short or contracted forms in compositions, rewrites, and summaries, despite a fairly good grasp of vocabulary and spelling.

A moderate number of spelling and grammatical errors.

Limited use of varied sentence structures and language in compositions and rewrites.

Difficulty interpreting rubrics, often leading to incorrect tense usage or tense shifts.

Average punctuation skills, with occasional errors in using advanced punctuation marks.

Satisfactory subject treatment but issues with essay organization.

A fair understanding of concepts.

2.12 Low Performing Candidates

Low-performing candidates exhibited the following characteristics:

Inability to extract specific information as required by the question.

Frequent errors, resulting in broken and unclear English with erratic essay development.

Misinterpretation of topics, often leading to the inclusion of unrelated details.

A high percentage of misunderstood or inadequately addressed subject matter.

Difficulty comprehending passages and answering related questions correctly.

Disregard for word limits in summaries, often leading to direct reproduction of passage content.

Little to no understanding of instructions and rubrics.

Failure to accurately copy words provided in the question paper.

Poorly structured and presented answers.

Based on these observations, the ECZ recommended that teachers conduct remedial lessons after administering composition exercises to help learners recognise and address challenges in composition writing. Additionally, structural topics in the syllabus particularly problematic areas such as conditionals, adverbial phrases, and coordination should be thoroughly taught and reinforced (cf. ECZ, 2022).

2.13 Factors Contributing to Poor Performance in the English Subject Examinations

This section of the related literature review examines studies that explore teacher and learner perspectives on factors contributing to Grade 12 pupils' poor performance in English in Zambia and other countries. Key aspects, including research paradigm, design, sampling techniques, sample size, methodology, data analysis, as well as the strengths and limitations of each study, are discussed to identify gaps and highlight areas for future research to enhance knowledge.

Maganga (2016) looked at factors affecting students' academic performance, a case study of public secondary schools in Ilala district, Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania. The study employed qualitative research design. Interview, focused group discussion and documentary were employed in data collection. The findings revealed that many learners struggled to master English as the Language of Instruction (LOI) and had a limited understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. Their weak proficiency in English hindered their ability to construct clear and logical sentences. Overall, poor

proficiency in English hindered learners' ability to comprehend concepts across various subjects, such as Geography, Physics, and Chemistry. Additionally, the findings revealed that, except for arts textbooks, science textbooks were insufficient in Ilala secondary schools. The lack of English language proficiency contributed to widespread academic failure, as English served as the medium through which learners accessed other subjects.

Learners who master various reading strategies in English comprehension tend to become proficient readers. Mubashir et al. (2015) conducted a study in Pakistan to investigate factors contributing to poor English reading comprehension at the secondary school level. The study involved teacher interviews in five secondary schools and focus group discussions with learners. It emphasised the significance of reading as a fundamental skill, describing it as a stepping stone in the pursuit of knowledge. Findings revealed that learners had a weak command of vocabulary, relied heavily on rote memorisation, and lacked interest in developing creative reading skills, focusing instead on merely passing examinations. The study concluded that learner achievement should not be measured solely by examination performance but also by the skills acquired through language learning. These insights from Pakistan provide a valuable perspective for this study, reinforcing the importance of considering both learner achievement and language proficiency when evaluating educational outcomes.

Anwar (2017) conducted a study in nine selected districts in Bangladesh, encompassing urban, suburban, and rural areas. The study aimed to identify the factors contributing to poor English performance among ESL/EFL learners. The study utilised both qualitative and quantitative approaches of research on teachers and learners in the selected schools. The study found that students' English skills and performance were generally unsatisfactory, with a significant number receiving poor marks in English examinations each year. Even those who achieved good grades often struggled to use the language effectively in real-life situations. The study concluded that multiple factors contributed to ESL/EFL learners' poor performance, including psychological factors, teacher-related challenges, instructional methods, the teaching and learning environment, as well as issues with the syllabus and curriculum."

Rind, Irfan Ahmed, and Mari Mumtaz Ali conducted this study in two phases. The first phase aimed to evaluate ten years of English examination papers, focusing on how English was taught and assessed in grades 10 and 12 under BISE Sukkur, Pakistan.

Using Bloom's taxonomy as a theoretical framework, the researchers analysed each question to assess (1) the cognitive complexity required for students to respond, (2) the variety of topics and the frequency of repeated items across different years, and (3) the chapters from which these items were selected. The findings revealed that syllabus coverage in the examinations was inadequate. The findings of this study suggest that BISE Sukkur examinations prioritize lower-order learning, primarily assessing students' memory and comprehension skills. Even application-level questions focused more on procedural knowledge than on actual application skills. The study further revealed a lack of logical or innovative questions in the examinations during the period under review. Additionally, it identified patterns in the emphasis on high- and low-order learning, the most frequently examined topics, and the chapters from prescribed textbooks that were either consistently assessed or largely ignored. These examination trends were analysed to determine their impact on teaching and learning practices in schools affiliated with BISE Sukkur. To validate these findings, the second phase of the study involved surveys of teachers and students from selected schools.

The study findings contradicted the standards set by the National Curriculum (2009) for English, which outlined that students in Grades 6–12 should develop analytical, synthesis, and evaluative skills across various competencies. However, the examinations primarily assessed memory and comprehension, leading to significant washback effects on both students and teachers. Teachers adopted instructional strategies that emphasized memorization and rote learning rather than critical thinking and language application. The study also revealed a strong correlation between examination patterns, teaching practices, and students' learning approaches. Teachers routinely reviewed past examination papers, compiled “guess papers” with predicted questions, and provided students with pre-written notes for revision. Additionally, examination questions were frequently recycled over the ten-year period analysed, with some appearing verbatim year after year. The researchers suggested that this practice indicated a lack of creativity and innovation in question design, as examiners appeared to rely on simply copying and pasting questions rather than developing new, thought-provoking assessments. Finally, the study found that certain chapters from the prescribed textbooks were entirely omitted from examination papers over the ten-year period reviewed, while others were disproportionately emphasised, with multiple questions frequently drawn from them. As a result, teachers largely neglected the chapters that had been consistently excluded from past exams, deeming them

unimportant from an examination standpoint. This led to the adoption of exam-oriented teaching practices, where instruction was heavily driven by anticipated examination content rather than comprehensive subject coverage.

The researchers concluded that the high-stakes nature of these examinations, shaped by the patterns established by examination boards and information systems specialists, had a significant impact on teaching and learning in affiliated schools. The emphasis on predictable examination trends influenced curriculum delivery, ultimately reinforcing a narrow focus on examinable content at the expense of broader subject mastery.

Robinson (2008) conducted a study titled “Teacher Absenteeism: Its Relationship to Student Performance on State Assessments in English/Language Arts in Grades Three, Five, and Seven.” The study hypothesized a significant negative relationship between the extent, reasons for, and patterns of teacher absenteeism and student performance on state English/Language Arts assessments. The research was carried out in a medium-sized urban school district in upstate New York, analysing the performance of 7,030 students on state English/Language Arts assessments in relation to the absences of 672 teachers assigned to teach them. Data from the 2006–2007 academic year were used, and Pearson correlation analysis was applied to examine the relationship. Statistical significance was determined at the $p = 0.05$ level. The results of the study quite unequivocally showed that teacher absences were unrelated to pupil performance on the State English/language arts tests and certainly were not a negative relationship. That is, pupils did not perform lower when teacher absenteeism was higher. There were some weak relationships at grades five and seven that were significant, but these relationships showed a positive relationship between teacher absenteeism and pupil performance. That is, the scores were higher when teachers were absent more. These results were counterintuitive and generated a number of questions. There is a critical and dramatic overriding question that is generated by the results of this study. To what extent is the presence of the teacher responsible for pupil performance? The strength of the study was its large sample size. However, the study relied solely on statistical data and did not collect data from other sources such as learners themselves, teachers, and administrators. These stakeholders could have provided valuable information to answer the question “To what extent is the presence of the teacher responsible for pupil performance?”

Moyo and Nyathi (2020) carried out a research which they titled “Teacher and learner perceptions of English language challenges in Zimbabwean secondary schools,” aimed at capturing both objective and subjective explanations of English language challenges. A pragmatic research paradigm was used and a convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed. The researchers collected both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) teachers of English and three hundred (300) pupils were selected through multistage random sampling. To collect data from both teachers and pupils, surveys and interviews were used. ANOVA was used to analyse quantitative data while thematic analysis was used for qualitative data. The study revealed interesting findings in that both the teachers and the learners mentioned the same challenges which were shortages of learning and teaching materials, inadequate teaching training and big classroom sizes. Additionally, the researchers observed that pupils recurrently ascribed their challenges to personal factors among indiscipline and limited study time while teachers attributed their challenges more to systemic problems. The sample size and the mixed-methods design gave the study enhanced the understanding of the research problem. However, there is a likelihood of inconsistencies between the two datasets as the collection of data was done concurrently.

Akpofure (2022) conducted a research titled “Factors affecting English performance in Nigerian secondary schools: A teacher-learner perspective” whose aim was to study on observable and measurable factors impacting performance. The study adopted a positivist research paradigm. A longitudinal survey design was employed. The study took three years with the view to track changes in English performance. Five hundred (500) learners and one hundred (100) teachers were selected through cluster sampling from different regions of Nigeria. Questionnaires were administered and test scores analysis was done to assess performance and participants’ perceptions. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to decide whether there was any the relationship between various factors and English performance. The findings revealed that both teachers and learners acknowledged that poor performance was a result of over-reliance on memorisation in preparation for examinations at the expense of quality teaching which would provide pupils with opportunities to engage meaningfully with language. Furthermore, socio-economic inequalities and varying teaching quality across regions further intensified the problem. The study was longitudinal and stretched over a period of three years which was ample time to track in-depth insights into

changes over time. Nonetheless, the study relied heavily on quantitative data giving a possibility of overlooking more valuable qualitative elements.

Wanyama (2019) conducted a study titled “Teachers’ Absenteeism and Performance of English Language in Rural Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Namayingo District.” The study aimed to investigate the impact of teacher absenteeism on English language performance in rural secondary schools in Namayingo District. The research focused on three main objectives: (1) Examining whether a lack of instructional materials affects English performance in rural secondary schools. (2) Investigating how low teacher and pupil motivation influences English performance. (3) Assessing whether a shortage of competent teachers affects English performance in Namayingo District. A descriptive survey design was employed, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches. The study sampled 67 respondents, comprising teachers and pupils from Namayingo secondary schools, selected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview guides.

The collected data were analysed using SPSS, which was also employed to determine reliability. The study's findings revealed that 89.6% of rural secondary schools lacked instructional materials, negatively impacting learners' performance in English. Additionally, all 67 respondents (100%) refuted the claim that audio-visual aids were used in rural secondary schools during lessons. The study further established that low teacher and learner motivation contributed to poor English performance. Specifically, 87.5% of respondents indicated that while teachers were paid on time, their salaries were insufficient, affecting their motivation. Moreover, more than half of the respondents disagreed with the notion that pupils had a strong English background, highlighting a fundamental challenge in language acquisition. A significant finding was that a lack of competent teachers negatively impacted learners’ performance in English. However, 89.6% of respondents acknowledged that teachers actively encouraged learner participation in class activities. The study concluded that multiple factors, beyond teacher absenteeism, influence pupil performance in English. However, its scope was limited to a single district, which may affect the generalisability of the findings. Additionally, a key weakness identified was a misalignment between the study title and its objectives, potentially affecting the coherence of the research focus.

Ayivi (2021) conducted a study titled “Impact of School Monitoring on the Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Junior High Schools in the Akuapem North Municipality of Ghana.” The study aimed to examine the effect of school monitoring on pupils’ academic performance in the municipality. Specifically, it investigated the measures employed by school administrators to enhance effective monitoring and improve academic outcomes in public junior high schools. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used, with data collected through questionnaires from 311 teachers and head teachers across the nine circuits of the Akuapem North Municipality. The findings revealed that schools that placed a strong emphasis on monitoring measures achieved better academic performance. The study’s strengths included a reasonable sample size and clear evidence demonstrating the positive impact of effective monitoring on academic achievement. However, a notable limitation was that the study focused on only one municipality, potentially affecting the generalisability of the findings to other regions.

Munji (2018) conducted a study titled “The Influence of Teacher Monitoring on the KCPE Performance of Public and Private Primary Schools in Wareng’ Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.” The study aimed to examine how teacher monitoring impacts KCPE performance in both public and private primary schools within the sub-county. The research was guided by three objectives: (i) To examine the relationship between teacher monitoring and KCPE performance in public and private schools; (ii) To establish the extent of teacher monitoring in Wareng’ Sub-County; and (iii) To explore teachers’ perceptions of teacher monitoring. A descriptive survey design was employed, and data were collected from 3 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs), 34 head teachers, 54 teachers, and 102 school prefects from both public and private primary schools. The study utilised a Likert-scale questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, with quantitative data presented as frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed divergent perspectives on teacher monitoring. Public school teachers largely viewed it as invasive and punitive rather than professionally supportive, with many advocating for its abolition. In contrast, private school teachers considered monitoring a crucial tool for fostering innovation and improving school management. Additionally, the study found that many public school head teachers rarely supervised teachers’ work, leading to incomplete syllabus coverage as prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

The study concluded that effective teacher monitoring had a strong positive relationship with KCPE performance. Schools with better monitoring systems exhibited improved teaching effectiveness and higher academic achievement. Despite the divergent perspectives on teacher monitoring, the study established that it played a significant role in improving KCPE performance. A key strength of the study was its provision of valuable insights into the impact of teacher monitoring on academic performance in both public and private schools. However, a limitation was its focus on a single sub-county, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings to other regions.

Ogwok (2023) conducted a study whose aim was to determine the relationship between course content coverage and academic performance in Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) in Lira City. The study employed a Positivist research paradigm and used a case study survey research design. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides, and correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between variables. The study involved 54 respondents, including the District Education Officer, Divisional Inspectors of Schools, head teachers, and teachers from selected primary schools in Lira City. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation (Pearson coefficient of 0.871) between course content coverage and academic performance, suggesting that comprehensive syllabus coverage significantly enhances student outcomes. A key strength of the study was its integration of both qualitative and quantitative data, allowing for a well-rounded analysis. Additionally, the sample size was appropriate for the study context. However, the study's limitation was its focus on a single city, which may affect the generalisability of the findings. Another potential weakness was the reliance on self-reported data, which could introduce biases.

Kimamo and Gathara (2024) conducted a study whose aim was to identify gaps between government policies on English syllabus coverage and actual school practices in Nairobi County. The study employed the Interpretivist research paradigm and Descriptive research design. Purposive sampling was used. 62 respondents (8 Heads of Departments and 54 teachers of English) were purposively selected for the study. Data were collected through questionnaires and observation checklists and were analysed using descriptive statistics. The research findings revealed that Government policies on syllabus coverage were not fully implemented. The study recommended regular professional development for teachers and the introduction of oral and listening examinations by the Kenya National Examination Council. The research provided actionable recommendations and addressed policy-practice gaps. However, it was

limited to Nairobi County, affecting generalizability and reliance on self-reported data may have introduced bias.

Mwansa (2021) conducted a research entitled “Socio-Economic Challenges and Their Influence on Academic Performance of Secondary School Learners in Zambia” aimed at finding out if socio-economic challenges can impact performance. The research employed critical realism paradigm. The cross-sectional survey research design was used. Five hundred (500) Grade 12 pupils were selected for the study through cluster sampling. Socio-economic questionnaires were administered. Additionally, structured interviews were conducted. To determine the correlations between socio-economic factors and performance, regression analysis was used. The findings revealed that poverty, non-parental support and nutritional scarcities considerably hindered pupil performance. The study had a large and diverse sample size. However, the study did not carry out follow-up interviews to explore learners’ lived experiences to see how they impacted performance. Teachers especially Guidance and Counselling teachers and parents were not involved in this study. How did he identify these 500 students for the study without the help of the Guidance and Counselling teachers?

Chikoti (2022) researched on “Socio-economic impacts on education in the Copperbelt Province.” The study employed the interpretivist paradigm to explore how socio-economic conditions influences educational outcomes. This study employed a case study design with a qualitative methodology, utilising interviews and focus group discussions to gain in-depth insights. Participants included 30 secondary school teachers, as well as parents and community leaders. The findings revealed that socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and limited or inconsistent parental support significantly affected pupil access to education and contributed to high dropout rates. The study provided valuable insights into the educational challenges faced by communities, highlighting the broader socio-economic barriers to sustained school attendance. However, the study had a narrow geographical outlook and focused on the Copperbelt Province and did not explore any quantitative data about the research problem. The findings of the study could not be applied to any other context outside the Copperbelt though the conditions might be similar. The study also did not include guidance and counselling teachers, who typically support vulnerable pupils and could have provided additional valuable insights on the issue.

Lufungulo (2021) conducted a research on "Class size and learning outcomes in Zambian secondary schools." The research employed a positivist research paradigm. It was a correlational design to find out if there was indeed a relationship between class size and academic performance. The participants were selected through stratified sampling which fostered the representation across different schools and different class sizes. The findings of this research showed that smaller classes had better pupil performance than the larger classes. Larger classes tended to perform poorly due to limited or non-personalised attention to individual learners, and pupils tended to be less engaged in the learning process. The study provided empirical evidence on the negative impact of class size on pupil performance because of its large sample. The findings can be used to form basis for policy discussions on class size limits for effective teaching and learning. However, the study only focused on class size and overlooked other factors that negatively impact pupil academic outcomes.

Teachers and learners try to explain the causes of poor performance in English from different perspectives. Both perspectives are important in comprehending what really contributes to poor performance. According to the attribution theory, both teachers and pupils attribute causes of success or failure to internal or external factors which in turn impacts future behaviour and performance (Weiner, 2010).

Mwila and Chibamba (2021) conducted a study to explore pupils' perceptions of the factors contributing to poor performance in English in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. The study adopted an interpretivist research paradigm and employed a qualitative approach. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that factors such as lack of motivation, insufficient feedback, ineffective teaching methods, a shortage of learning resources, challenging home environments, and difficult examinations contributed to poor English performance. The study provided valuable context-specific insights into the challenges affecting educational outcomes. However, the data collection methods may have been influenced by biases, as stronger voices within the groups could have dominated discussions and interviews.

Banda and Phiri (2022) conducted a research titled "Factors affecting English language proficiency in secondary schools: Teachers' perspectives in Zambia." in a quest to provide solutions to the problem of pupils' poor performance in English. The study adopted a constructivist research paradigm as a way to understand teachers' experiences

and their operational contexts. A case study design was employed, as the study focused on a limited number of schools within Lusaka, Zambia. Fifty (50) experienced teachers of English were purposively sampled based on their extensive teaching experience. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis was used to identify and classify repeated themes in the teachers' responses during interviews. Findings revealed that overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching resources and socio-economic backgrounds of pupils contributed to poor performance in English. The research methodology provided an enabling environment for teachers to share real lived experiences from their perspective. Nonetheless, these findings are specific to Lusaka and cannot be used to explain the causes of poor performance in other parts of the country.

Mwansa and Chileshe (2021) conducted a study titled "Teacher Perceptions of the Impact of Curriculum Reforms on English Language Performance in Secondary Schools in Zambia." The research aimed to explore how curriculum reforms influenced pupil performance in English. Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, the study provided a platform for teachers to express their views on the effects of curriculum changes on English language learning and achievement. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. A sample of one hundred (100) teachers of English was selected across the Copperbelt Province through stratified random sampling to make the sample as representative as possible. Both teachers from urban and rural schools were included in the sample. A questionnaire comprising both open-ended and closed-ended questions was administered to the participants. Using descriptive statistics and content analysis, data generated from open-ended responses were analysed. Findings revealed that teachers were overwhelmed by how rapidly curriculum reforms occurred especially that each reform came with new teaching methods and instructional materials. The pace of reforms did not correlate with the training and support that teachers needed and this mismatch had a negative bearing on pupil performance. The sample size and varied teacher voice enhanced the reliability of the research findings. However, the study relied solely on teachers' self-reported data which had a potential for biasness as teachers could blame their resistance to change on frequent curriculum reforms.

Some points need to be highlighted. Simui et al. (2020) observe that teachers often ascribe pupils' poor performance to external factors, for instance a lack of teaching materials, heavy teaching loads, and non-parental involvement. These findings are in line with the Examinations Council of Zambia's (ECZ) review, which recognises

inadequate teaching utilities, shortage or lack of practice materials, and high teacher workloads as contributing factors (ECZ, 2022).

Musonda (2020) carried out a research entitled “Contesting English Hegemony in Zambian Education System: Causes and Effects.” The study was premised on two research objectives namely to establish reasons why English was removed as a mandatory passing subject at Grade 9 level and to investigate the attitudes of teachers of English and pupils towards government’s removal of English as a mandatory passing subject at Grade 9. This study adopted the qualitative research design. The study sample was drawn from Ministry of Education offices; national, provincial and district where four officers were interviewed. Three public schools were sampled; urban, peri urban and rural. From each of the three sampled schools, one school manager and three teachers of English were interviewed. Two focus group discussions were conducted in each school with the Grade 9 and 12 pupils respectively. The focus groups comprised eight (8) pupils in each group. More interviews were done with four (4) former pupils who sat for their Grade 9 examinations before English was removed as a mandatory passing subject. Four (4) parents for both categories of pupils were also interviewed. A total of seventy two (72) participants were purposively sampled. Semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussion guides were used for data collection. Face to face interviews were done with the standards officers, school managers, teachers of English, parents to both current and former pupils, as well as former pupils who wrote their Grade 9 examinations before the policy of waiving English as a mandatory passing subject. The focus group discussions were used to collect data from the current pupils. The data were collected from pupils who were in Grade 9 at the time the study was being conducted. The aim was to get learners’ views towards learning the English subject at Grade 9.

The study revealed that the removal of English as a compulsory passing subject was attributed to low literacy levels among learners, limited proficiency in English, and the desire to increase access to senior secondary education. The findings showed that this policy shift led to mixed reactions among teachers as some developed positive attitudes toward teaching English, while others responded negatively following the removal of English as a mandatory passing subject (REMPS). Similarly, pupils also displayed varied attitudes. The study further found that pupils' classroom performance in English was generally poor, largely due to their negative attitudes toward learning the subject. These attitudes were, in part, influenced by the policy change, which appeared to

diminish the perceived importance of English, thereby negatively affecting learners' motivation and academic performance. The study demonstrated strong contextual relevance by addressing the critical issue of language dominance within the Zambian education system. It provided meaningful insights into the socio-cultural consequences of English linguistic hegemony and its impact on the marginalisation of indigenous Zambian languages. By framing the discussion within the broader discourse of linguistic colonisation, the study contributes to ongoing debates on language policy and advocates for more inclusive and equitable linguistic practices in education. Data were collected from multiple sources, each contributing a unique perspective and enriching the study's nuanced comprehension of language dominance. The findings have the potential to inform policy reforms aimed at incorporating local languages into the formal education system as a means of fostering national identity, cultural preservation, and linguistic inclusivity. Nonetheless, the study would have been strengthened by the inclusion of longitudinal data to assess the long-term implications of English hegemony on learners' academic outcomes and cultural perceptions. Furthermore, there is a possibility of bias in responses, particularly from participants with strong views on language in education. While the study thoroughly explored the causes and effects of the English language supremacy, it provided limited analysis of the practical challenges associated with the implementation of existing multilingual education policies in Zambia.

The issue of pupil poor performance in English needs to be understood from pupils' as well as teachers' viewpoints. Nasilele (2023) conducted a research titled "Learner perspectives on English language performance in Zambian secondary schools" which sought to capture pupils' perspectives. This study adopted a phenomenological paradigm and a qualitative narrative design was employed. Thirty (30) pupils were selected through convenience sampling from two secondary schools in Ndola, Zambia. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with participants to hear their perspectives and in addition obtained further information from pupils' diaries. Narrative analysis was used to analyse data focusing on pupil descriptions of challenges and success in English. Findings revealed pupils perceived poor performance to be a result of limited exposure to English outside of school due to the fact that learners used their mother-tongue at home and English was rarely spoken. This limited exposure enhanced their inability to comprehend important language concepts. Learners also highlighted a lack of individualised support from teachers which further worsened their

linguistic struggles. The deep and personalised insights into learner experiences set this study apart. However, the sample was too small to be representative of pupils' experiences, and it also lacks data about other classroom dynamics.

Simutowe and Mwale (2020) conducted a research titled "Exploring the impact of socio-economic status on English language learning: Learner perspectives from Zambian secondary schools." They employed a critical realist paradigm to unravel the impact of socio-economic conditions on learner performance. A mixed-methods design was used. Two hundred (200) pupils were randomly sampled for the quantitative stage and a further twenty (20) pupils were purposively sampled for the qualitative phase. Surveys were conducted to collect quantitative data and focus group discussions were also conducted for the qualitative data collection. Regression analysis was used to analyse quantitative data and qualitative data were thematically analysed. The findings confirmed that there was indeed a correlation between socio-economic status and performance. The research revealed that learners from lower socio-economic homes performed poorly in English due to their inability to easily access educational learning materials and uncondusive learning conditions coupled with the absence of parental involvement in their school affairs. All these challenges inhibited learners' motivation and caused them to regress in their linguistic abilities. The choice of the mixed-methods enhanced the triangulation of the findings and provided a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. However, the study's narrow focus on the specific socio-economic conditions of the sampled schools limits the generalisability of its findings to broader contexts.

Phiri, Kalasa and Chanda (2023) carried out a study on "Factors Contributing to Poor Academic Performance in English Composition Writing among Grade 12 Learners in Kabwe District, Zambia." The study sought to establish the main problems that negatively contribute to learners' poor composition writing skills. Vygotsky's social-cultural theory was employed as the study's theoretical framework. The study employed a mixed methods design. Questionnaires were administered to teachers, learners, education standards officers, and head teachers from various secondary schools in Kabwe District. Interviews were also conducted. The findings revealed that pupils performed poorly in composition writing because teachers were not effectively and adequately equipped with composition writing skills to enable them teach composition effectively. Due to this lack in skills, teachers tended to use poor teaching methods and often times the materials used for teaching were not suitable. It was also

revealed that learners had inadequate proficiency in grammar and their spellings were below the expected standard. Additionally, it was found that learners had limited opportunities to engage in practical writing exercises during class. These factors collectively contributed to the development of negative learner attitudes, which in turn adversely impacted their academic performance. The study offered context practical insights that can be used to improve composition teaching. However, the study focused solely on writing and ignored other equally vital language skills which work in complementarity to enhance learners' linguistic proficiency.

Chungu (2022) conducted a study on "Performance Challenges in Kitwe Secondary Schools." A qualitative research paradigm was used. The study employed a case study design. Purposive sampling was used to select sample schools from Kitwe District, in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. A total of fifty four (54) participants was selected through purposive sampling. The sample comprised teachers, learners and school administrators. Questionnaires were administered to collect quantitative data, while interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to gather qualitative data. Qualitative data were thematically analysed. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used to analyse quantitative data, and these were presented in the table format. The study findings revealed that an un conducive academic environment had a bearing on performance. Schools had shortage of study space, and parents were not fully involved in school operations. Teachers had few opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) leading them to using obsolete teaching strategies. Learners too lacked self-discipline and motivation to engage in serious study which resulted in poor academic performance. Academic environment, teacher-related factors and pupil-related factors all contributed to overall poor educational outcomes. The study adopted a comprehensive approach to examining various factors that contribute to poor performance, offering a well-rounded understanding of the issue under investigation. However, its focus on urban schools limited the applicability of the findings to rural school contexts.

Chansa (2020) conducted a research titled "Factors Contributing to Poor Performance Among Grade 12 Pupils in the Copperbelt Province." He used a mixed-methods approach. Through cluster sampling, five hundred (500) Grade 12 pupils and twenty (20) teachers of English were selected for the study. Questionnaires, focus groups and interviews were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The findings revealed that inadequate teacher training, limited educational resources, and

minimal pupil engagement contributed to learners' lack of proficiency in English, which in turn resulted in performance below the expected standard. The use of focus group discussions and interviews facilitated the provision of a comprehensive understanding of variables that influence pupils' proficiency in English. However, the study's main limitation was its labour-intensive and cost-inefficient data collection process.

Banda and Phiri (2022) carried out a research whose aim was to examine factors that influence English language proficiency in Zambian secondary schools from the teachers' view-points. Constructivist paradigm was employed for this research and a case study design was used. Fifty (50) teachers of English were purposively sampled and a number of schools in Lusaka were purposively included in the sample. All the fifty teachers had experience in teaching English. Qualitative data on classroom challenges were collected from teachers through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes in the teachers' responses. The findings revealed that overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, low pupil motivation, and adverse socio-economic conditions significantly contributed to poor pupil performance in English. According to the teachers interviewed, these factors negatively affected learners' examination outcomes and hindered their attainment of English language proficiency. The interviews and focus group discussions highlighted the challenges that teachers experienced in the classroom contexts. The findings are specific to schools in Lusaka and could not therefore account for low English proficiency in other districts of Zambia.

A study by Mwanza (2016) observed that attitudes held by teachers regarding a given method of teaching language had a bearing on their classroom application which later provided learner achievement. The study indicated that while some teachers demonstrated understanding of the eclectic approach and held positive attitudes, others did not which led to poor application and sometimes non application of the approach. It was also established that among the teachers who were observed, four used the eclectic approach and one did not implying that while the policy was accepted by some, others contested it. The study argued that to some teachers, grammar meant language rules and some stated that they taught Standard English while holding negative attitudes towards Zambian languages and other varieties of English. From this, it could be seen that teachers held monolingual ideologies in which they used English exclusively during classroom interaction. Such teaching and teacher attitude were a recipe for language failing by learners during the final examinations in secondary schools which

can be seen as a teacher factor. The study under review was conducted in Central Province while this study will be conducted in the Copperbelt Province amongst grade 12 learners.

Chazangwe (2011) conducted a study to investigate the factors for the poor performance of Grade 12 pupils in reading comprehension in selected high schools of Kalomo District. The study employed a qualitative approach, using interviews with teachers and focus group discussions with pupils in secondary schools. It revealed that multiple factors contributed to the problem, including the methods used to teach reading comprehension and the generally weak reading culture among pupils. The study also revealed that teachers faced challenges in teaching reading comprehension, primarily because it was time-consuming and the learners often struggled to grasp key concepts, making instruction more difficult. Furthermore, the study found that a poor reading culture among pupils was compounded by a lack of relevant and age-appropriate reading materials for the younger generation. These factors resulted into learners failing to perform well in the final examinations.

Mulenga (2015) conducted a mixed methods analysis of the programmes at the University of Zambia. The study aimed at establishing whether or not English language teacher education curriculum at the University of Zambia had the relevant knowledge and skills for teaching English language in Zambian secondary schools and could produce a quality teacher of the English language despite curriculum designers not conducting a job analysis as the starting point of the curriculum designing process. The study findings revealed that the two schools which taught content and methodology had different aims about the same curriculum. While the school of Education aimed at producing a teacher of English, the school of Humanities and Social Sciences intended to produce a graduate who would use the knowledge and skills learnt to venture in any field related to what would have been studied since they thought producing a teacher was not their mandate. Mulenga's study was conducted at the University of Zambia with a sample that included students.

Nyimbili (2016) speculated that the cause of poor grade 12 results in the English language was a result of limited pedagogical knowledge amongst teachers in the secondary schools in Lundazi. He argued that teachers were not using learner-centred techniques hence the learners failed to grasp the linguistic concepts which would enable them to retain the learnt information. It was also found that learners on the other hand

were interested in learning English using learner centred techniques as it provided them with the zeal to practise the lesson concepts practically. He concluded that the poor performance of Grade 12 learners in English at the secondary level was closely linked to the pedagogical knowledge demonstrated by teachers in schools.

A qualitative study was conducted in two schools in Chama District by Sidambi (2011) whose focus was on the teaching of composition writing in Zambian high schools. Data were collected through interviews and classroom observation. The study findings revealed that learners in Zambia completed Grade 12 with significantly weak composition writing skills. It was further established that many teachers lacked adequate knowledge of key principles involved in teaching composition. Of the 12 teachers whose lessons were observed, only two employed appropriate second language teaching methods, while eight used ineffective or incorrect approaches. The study recommended the implementation of refresher courses to improve teachers' competence in composition instruction. These findings suggest that teacher competence plays a critical role in the effective teaching of English at the secondary school level, and that poor learner performance can, in part, be attributed to teacher inadequacies. This section of literature review brings some points that need to be highlighted. It is clear from the literature that has been reviewed that common themes have emerged. Teacher training, pedagogical knowledge, attitude, limited exposure to language, resource availability, curriculum reforms, high teacher-pupil ratios, and socio-economic challenges all influence learner performance negatively.

Mukuka (2021) conducted a study entitled “The Role of Teacher Competence in Student Performance in Literature in English: A Case of Copperbelt Province, Zambia” whose main aim was to establish if there was any correlation between a teacher’s competence and student performance in Literature in English. The study used Constructivist research paradigm. The study focused on understanding the relationship between teacher competence and pupil performance from the viewpoint of the teachers. A case study design was employed. This study employed a qualitative approach, collecting detailed data on teacher competence and its impact on student performance through in-depth interviews and document analysis. The sample comprised fifteen (15) teachers drawn from five (5) different secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province. Participants were selected based on their experience in teaching Literature in English.

The findings revealed that there was a strong relationship between teacher competence and pupil performance in Literature in English. Teachers who had more advanced training and knowledge in literary analysis were better at engaging learners and facilitating deeper comprehension of literature texts. Many teachers lacked sufficient content knowledge and pedagogical skills, leading to inappropriate and ineffective teaching practices. Their limited subject knowledge made it difficult for them to adapt instructional methods to meet the diverse needs of learners, which negatively impacted their teaching effectiveness. The study further revealed that teachers rarely participated in continuing professional development workshops aimed at enhancing their knowledge and improving their teaching competencies. The issue of teacher competence was further compounded by insufficient teacher education during initial training. The qualitative approach of interviews and document analysis brought out valuable insights into context specific teaching challenges that teachers faced in teaching literature in English. The qualitative data also helped to understand the Zambian context comprehensively and brought out real challenges that teachers of Literature in English encountered in classrooms as they taught the subject. The sole focus on teachers without the inclusion of pupils' voice weakens the study. There may be other factors that influenced pupil performance which the study's focus could not account for. Although the study employed a qualitative approach, the experiences and challenges of the fifteen teachers interviewed may not fully represent those of all teachers of Literature in English. Additionally, the study was limited to only five schools within a single province, which restricts the generalisability of its findings to other regions and provinces of Zambia.

Mumba and Chanda (2022) carried out a study titled "Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Performance in Literature in English among Secondary School Students in Zambia" in Central and Lusaka Provinces of Zambia respectively. The study adopted an interpretivist research paradigm, aimed at exploring the personal experiences and perspectives of both pupils and teachers regarding the impact of socio-cultural factors on performance in Literature in English. A qualitative case study design was employed, and participants were selected using purposive sampling. The sample was drawn exclusively from selected schools. The sample consisted of forty (40) grade 11 and 12 students who were studying Literature in English and ten (10) teachers of English language and Literature in English. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that pupils from rural

areas performed poorly in Literature in English, largely because the subject was taught in English while their home environments predominantly used local languages. This language barrier significantly contributed to their poor performance. Additionally, many of the prescribed texts featured themes, characters, and settings rooted in Western contexts, which learners found difficult to relate to, making the curriculum content less engaging. The study also found that parents neither supported their children nor appreciated the value of Literature in English, which negatively affected students' motivation and academic performance. Furthermore, both students and teachers lacked passion for the subject, perceiving it as less important than Mathematics and Science. The shortage of teaching and learning resources, such as books and audio-visual materials, also contributed to ineffective instruction and learning. The use of qualitative methods enabled the researchers to provide rich, in-depth insights into the real socio-cultural difficulties that learners faced. The choice of the case study design facilitated context-specific analysis of socio-cultural dynamics in various school situations. However, the study sample was limited and the study focused on particular schools thus making the findings not generalisable to all secondary schools in Zambia. The comprehensive reliance on participants' self-reported data may be prone to preconceptions or imprecisions.

Mukuka's (2021) and Mumba and Chanda's (2022) studies examined learner performance in Literature in English. However, their findings align with studies on learner performance in English, highlighting the intrinsic connection between the two subjects. While English language's main focus is on linguistic skills which are grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension, Literature in English on the other hand includes evaluative reading, analysis, and explanation of texts, all of which entail strong language proficiency. A learner's expertise in the English language might be inferred from their success in literature. The study of Literature in English provides learners with opportunities to engage with a diverse range of expressions and syntactic structures, enabling them to apply language in meaningful contexts. This practical use of language not only enhances their language skills but also promotes critical thinking both of which are essential components of the English syllabus and contribute significantly to overall language performance.

2.14 Strategies to Improve Performance in English Subject Examinations in Secondary Schools

English is the language of learning, so it is important to ensure that learners are proficient in English. This section will reveal related literature that highlight strategies that could be employed to enhance pupil performance in English in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia.

A study conducted by Oki (2016) aimed at uncovering the pedagogical effects of applying the flipped classroom strategy to Content-Based Instruction for English language learners in the United States of America. Students' perceptions and academic performance were measured by adopting a mixed methods approach where interviews and a questionnaire were used. This study found that the ESL students' overall experience with the flipped classroom strategy was positive. As the term progressed, changes in the dynamics of the classroom became evident. The flipped class structure, which included efficient use of narrated videos and class time, contributed to the reading comprehension of course content. Survey results confirmed that visual aids and voiceover in the videos effectively promoted comprehensible input. Class time was efficiently used for reviews, pair discussions, and problem-solving activities requiring critical thinking skills. Students also perceived the instructor more as a facilitator with whom students felt more comfortable asking questions. The study concluded that this method enhanced learner participation and increased language efficiency in learners as well as improved academic scores. Although the study does not disclose the sample on which the conclusions were drawn, it is important to also see if teachers in the secondary schools in Zambia are using flipping as a classroom strategy to increase learner academic performance in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia.

This study by Sabbah (2016) used a quasi-experimental pre-post-test design to investigate the effect of using jigsaw cooperative strategy on ELS students' achievement in reading comprehension. Convenience sampling of the two classes was used from the female students enrolling in Level 4 reading classes in the Foundation Programme in the Community College of Qatar in the fourth quarter of the academic year 2013-2014. It is a non-probability sampling technique where two classes were selected because of their convenient accessibility to the researcher as the researcher was supposed to teach them reading. The two classes were assigned randomly to two groups: the experimental group (n=16 students) which was taught seven units in Real Reading Textbook via the jigsaw strategy and the control group (n=10 students) which

was taught via the traditional strategy-no grouping. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOV) was used to analyse students' scores on the post-test. The results revealed significant differences in favour of the experimental group.

Lipnevich and Smith (2009) conducted an experiment titled "Effects of differential feedback on students' examination performance". The effects of feedback on performance and factors associated with it were examined in a large introductory psychology course. The experiment involved college students (N = 464) working on an essay examination under 3 conditions: no feedback, detailed feedback that was perceived by participants to be provided by the course instructor, and detailed feedback that was perceived by participants to be computer generated. Additionally, these conditions were crossed with factors of grade (receiving a numerical grade or not) and praise (receiving a statement of praise or not). The task in question was a single-question essay examination administered at the start of the course. The findings revealed that detailed feedback on the essay, specific to individual's work, was found to be strongly related to student improvement in essay scores, with the influence of grades and praise being more complex. Generally, receipt of a tentative grade depressed performance, although this effect was ameliorated if accompanied by a statement of praise. Overall, detailed, descriptive feedback was found to be most effective when given alone, unaccompanied by grades or praise. It was also found that the perceived source of the feedback (the computer or the instructor) had little impact on the results. These findings were consistent with the research literature showing that descriptive feedback, which conveyed information on how one performed the task and detailed ways to overcome difficulties, was far more effective than evaluative feedback, which simply informed students about how well they did. The sample size was big enough. The experiment revealed valuable insights about the effects of feedback and which feedback was most effective. Nonetheless, the experiment was not extended to other courses to see if the results would be the same.

Oladejo and Adeyemi (2019) conducted a research in Nigeria focusing on improvising secondary school students' performance in English. The study was titled "Factors Affecting the Performance of Students in English Language." A positivist research paradigm was used. A survey research design was used. Questionnaires were used to gather data from teachers and students. The researchers used quantitative methods. Data collection focused on identifying factors that influenced learner English language performance in examinations. Some of the targeted factors were teaching strategies,

resources and student attitudes. Three hundred (300) students and fifty (50) teachers from ten (10) schools participated in the study. The participants were selected for the study using stratified random sampling. Findings revealed that teacher qualifications, availability and use of teaching aids strongly influenced performance. It was further revealed that engaging learners through interactive and multi-media methods improved their comprehension. The sample was large and diverse ensuring diverse representation from the ten schools which improved the reliability of the findings. The positivist paradigm ensured focus on measurable and observable factors. However, the study did not examine external factors such as students' home environment and socio-economic status and their effect on student performance.

Foncha, Abongdia, and Kepe (2018) conducted a research aimed at enhancing comprehension through the reading to learn strategy. The title of the study was "Effectiveness of the Reading to Learn Approach in South African Schools". The study employed the Interpretivist research paradigm which focused on understanding the experiences and perceptions of participants. A case study research design was used. The researchers used qualitative methods which involved classroom observations and interviews with teachers. The study focused on few schools already using the "Reading to Learn Approach". Purposive sampling was used to select schools that were already using the strategy. Ten (10) schools were selected and included in the study. Data collection techniques included classroom observations, interviews with teachers and test score analysis before and after implementing the strategy. Research findings revealed that students' comprehension and essay writing skills improved greatly. Collaborative learning like peer review increasingly improved learner engagement. The research provided detailed practical teaching strategies that could be used to improve student performance in English. The study focused only on few schools already familiar with the strategy, hence, the findings of this study may not be generalised to other school contexts since only schools that were familiar with approach were studied. The reliability of the findings would have been enhanced if the strategy had been implemented even in other schools which were not previously using the strategy.

The Cambridge Assessment International Education (2022) conducted a study on examination preparation techniques in international schools. The aim of the research was to identify practical strategies for improving test performance. The research title was "Test Preparation and its Effectiveness in English Examinations." This was an organisation-based research and not an individual author's work. The researchers

employed a mixed-methods approach. An action research design was used. Two hundred (200) students and fifty (50) teachers were selected for inclusion in the study. Random sampling was used across fifteen (15) international schools. Data collection techniques included teacher observation, surveys, and focus group discussions. From the research findings it was established that acquainting students with test formats considerably improved their confidence and performance in tests. Additionally, the study revealed that when there was too overemphasis on test preparation the learners' critical thinking skills were weakened resulting from anxiety. The choice of the mixed-methods approach enabled the researchers to comprehensively analyse the findings. However, relying on participant self-reported data might create potential for bias and inaccuracy in the findings.

Studies have also been done in Zambia to identify strategies that could be used to improve learner performance in English final examinations. This section will review literature on studies that have been done locally in response to the fourth objective of this study.

Mumba 2020) conducted a research titled “Impact of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programmes on Teacher Effectiveness in Zambian Secondary Schools” aimed at finding out if CPD had indeed any impact on teacher's efficiency in the classroom. The study employed an interpretivist research paradigm with a case study design. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of forty (40) secondary school teachers as participants in the study. Interviews and classroom observations were used for data collection. Since the research used qualitative approach, the data collected were thematically analysed. The research findings revealed that CPD programmes had an impact on teachers as it contributed to improving their pedagogical content knowledge and enhanced their teaching methods thus leading to improved learner educational outcomes. Through interviews, the research revealed valuable insights shared from the teachers' viewpoints. Although the study was purely qualitative, the findings cannot be taken to be representative of the whole country due to the small size of the sample.

Banda and Phiri (2019) also conducted a study entitled “The Role of Pedagogical Strategies in Enhancing Student Performance in English in Zambian Schools” which sought to establish how pedagogical strategies contributed to enhancing pupil performance in English in Zambia. The research used a pragmatism paradigm. The

study further employed a mixed-methods research design. Two hundred (200) pupils and twenty (20) teachers were sampled through stratified random sampling. Surveys were used to collect quantitative data while focus group discussions were used to collect qualitative data. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were thematically coded. Research findings revealed that use of learner-centred teaching approaches and frequent formative assessments improved pupil academic performance. The sample size was large enough to allow the study's findings to be generalised to other similar contexts. However, the study lacks in-depth qualitative analysis since qualitative data were obtained from one source only. Interviews would have consolidated the perspectives gained from focus group discussions.

Nawa and Mulenga (2018) conducted a study entitled "Resource Availability and Its Impact on Learner Performance in Secondary Schools in Zambia" whose aim was to find out if indeed there was correlation between availability of resources and learner performance. This particular research employed a positivist research paradigm and used a descriptive survey design. Fifteen (15) secondary schools, two hundred (200) pupils and fifty (50) teachers were selected through random sampling. Questionnaires were administered to participants and document analysis was also done. Statistical analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was carried out. Findings showed that schools that had sufficient textbooks, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources, and laboratory equipment had better learner performance in English and sciences. The findings align with the Ministry of Education (MoGE, 2021) which acknowledged that there was need to allocate more resources to rural and economically disadvantaged schools of Zambia. The study had broad coverage of secondary schools with a big participant sample which gave it quantitative rigor. However, the study had limited qualitative exploration about how resources were actually used in schools. The inclusion of interviews and focus group discussions could have enriched the findings, as participants might have shared insights not easily captured through questionnaires. Another limitation of the study was the exclusion of school administrators, who could have provided valuable perspectives on the factors influencing the availability or lack of resources in schools.

Simukonde and Chanda (2019) researched on "The effect of curriculum design and assessment practices on pupil performance in Zambia." The research was conducted in selected secondary schools across Zambia over the course of one academic year.

Guided by a constructivist research paradigm, the study adopted an action research design. Ten (10) secondary schools were selected through convenience sampling. A classroom intervention involving changes in assessment methods was implemented as part of the study. Learners were tested before the commencement of the study, and post-tests were conducted after the classroom interventions were implemented. A comparative analysis of the test scores was carried out to evaluate the impact of the interventions. The research revealed that shifting from summative to formative assessment led to significant improvements in learners' academic performance. The study used real-time application of strategies in a classroom setting, and intervention was carried out at the right time. However, the small sample size and short intervention period limited the study. Although the researchers observed and analysed the impact of curriculum design and assessment strategies over one academic year, a longer duration could have yielded more comprehensive insights.

Phiri (2020) did a study entitled "The Effect of Teacher-Pupil Ratio on Learning Outcomes in Zambian Secondary Schools" which sought to find out if there was a relationship between teacher-pupil ratio and pupil performance. The study was conducted in Lusaka Province and employed a post-positivist paradigm and a longitudinal design over a period of two academic years. Thirty (30) secondary schools and one hundred and fifty (150) teachers were selected through random sampling. Structured questionnaires were administered for data collection. The researcher also tracked learner performance for a period of two years. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used for data analysis. Findings revealed that the smaller the teacher-pupil ratios the better the learner engagement and performance. The findings of this study align with Lufungulo (2021)'s study which also showed that high teacher-to-pupil ratios have a negative impact on pupil performance. One of the strengths of longitudinal studies is their ability to provide insights that develop over time, allowing for a clearer understanding of changes and trends. However, this particular study offered limited qualitative insight into classroom dynamics. Incorporating classroom lesson observations, along with focus group discussions and interviews with teachers, could have significantly enriched the findings.

Banda and Phiri (2020) conducted a research which focused on strategies to enhance Grade 12 student performance in examinations in Zambia. The research employed a mixed-methods research paradigm. Fifty (50) teachers were purposively sampled and one hundred (100) students were selected through stratified random sampling. The total

sample was one hundred and fifty (150) participants. Data were collected through surveys and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that insufficient teaching resources and overcrowded classrooms considerably hindered pupil performance. The study also revealed that poor teacher training negatively affected preparation of learners for standardised tests. Learners encountered examination challenges, including a lack of examination techniques and inadequate psychological preparation. The study recommended enhanced teacher professional development programmes to improve instructional skills. It also suggested classroom expansion and increased allocation of resources for instructional materials. Additionally, the introduction of examination preparation workshops was proposed to help pupils build psychological readiness for examinations. The study presented comprehensive data obtained from teachers and learners. It revealed context-specific insights into examination challenges faced during examination preparation. However, the study did not include input from school administrators and policymakers. Their insights would have enriched the findings more. The study focused only on urban schools which limits its generalisability to other similar contexts.

Lungu and Nyirenda (2021) conducted a research whose aim was to assess the impact of pedagogical practices on examination outcomes. The study employed an interpretivist paradigm. To identify experienced teachers for the study, snowball sampling technique was used while pupils were selected through stratified random sampling technique. The sample size was one hundred and twenty (120) participants comprising eighty (80) pupils and forty (40) teachers. This was a case study research design. Interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis were used for data collection. Findings revealed that using active learning strategies for instance group discussions and problem-solving exercises enhanced comprehension and retention of learnt material. They also further revealed that lack of regular formative assessments impacted pupil readiness for examinations. The study recommended training teachers in learner-centred teaching methods as well as consistent and systematic use of formative assessments to improve pupil performance in examinations. The study provided a detailed examination of pedagogical approaches and their impact on learner performance. The study utilised multiple data sources, which enhanced the credibility of its findings. However, it did not examine other influential factors such as socio-economic conditions and learner-related challenges that may also affect examination performance.

Simukonde and Mwansa's (2019) study focused on addressing barriers to academic achievement in rural areas. The study employed a qualitative research paradigm. Ten (10) teachers and ten (10) education officers were purposively sampled for the study. Semi-structured interviews were used for data collection and data were thematically analysed. The study revealed that poor infrastructure such as inadequate classrooms and teaching/learning materials negatively impacted examination performance. It was also revealed that teachers lacked motivation attributed to poor remuneration and lack of opportunities for career growth. The study recommended investing in rural school infrastructure and developing teacher incentive programmes to enhance teacher motivation. The study brought out unique challenges that rural schools faced and suggested practical recommendations for policy reforms. The small sample however limited the scope of the study findings.

Mulenga and Banda's (2022) research focused on integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) in education to enhance Grade 12 examination performance. A constructivist paradigm was employed in this study. The sample size was two hundred (200) comprising one hundred and fifty (150) pupils and fifty (50) teachers who were selected through stratified random sampling technique. Mixed-methods approach was used. Surveys were administered. In addition pilot ICT tools were implemented. Research findings revealed that inclusion of digital learning tools such as online quizzes and interactive platforms greatly improved learners' examination preparedness. Pupils who were using ICT resources performed better than their peers in mock examinations. The study recommended expanding access to ICT resources in all schools as well as training teachers in integrating technology in their teaching practices. The study demonstrated the practical application of technology in education and proved its quantifiable improvement in learner performance. The practical improvement in learner performance was limited to schools with access to ICT infrastructure.

Mwale and Chileshe's (2020) study employed a pragmatism research paradigm. Cluster sampling was used to select ten (10) schools while purposive sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) teachers for the study. The mixed-methods approach was adopted for the study. The mixed-methods involved training sessions for teachers combined with pre- and post-training performance evaluations and interviews. The findings showed that teachers who underwent professional development sessions demonstrated improved instructional practices which conversely improved pupil

performance. However, lack of follow-up support restricted long-term impact. The study recommended establishing continuous teacher training programmes and creating mentorship as well as peer learning networks for teachers. The practical focus on teacher development was a key intervention toward improving pupil examination performance. Since the study used pre- and post-training assessments, the study's reliability was strengthened. Nonetheless, the study lasted for a short duration which made it difficult to assess long-term outcomes of professional development.

Mumba and Nkandu (2021) carried a study to assess the role of formative assessment in enhancing examination preparedness among learners. The study employed a constructivism paradigm. Thirty (30) teachers and one hundred and twenty (120) pupils were selected for the study through convenience sampling technique. Mixed-methods were adopted for data collection. Classroom observations were conducted and pupils' performance was tracked. Findings revealed that regular feedback using formative assessments greatly improved pupils' readiness for final examinations. It was also revealed that teachers did not use formative assessments regularly because they lacked sufficient training in designing effective and appropriate assessments. The study demonstrated a clear link between formative assessments and learner performance. This study also provided insights that could be used by teachers to improve their pupils' academic outcomes. However, the study was limited to a small geographical area.

In Zambia, a number of studies have cited the need for teacher training institutions to employ hands on instruction to train teachers. In this way, teachers will be equipped with the theory, but most importantly, they will have the practical skills required for teaching (Mwanza, 2020; Manchishi & Mwanza, 2016; Manchishi & Mwanza, 2013). Mwanza (2018) has also proposed that teachers should be trained according to the needs of the school and learners. The researchers cited above suggest that there is need to improve the quality of teacher training while providing refresher courses to the in-service teachers so that they can also acquire the most important components. The teachers also need to acquaint themselves with the needed teaching and learning methods for them to remain relevant to the teaching of English as a second language in the secondary school (Nyimbili, 2016) and use a variety of learner centred methods to make learners participate actively in class (Nyimbili, Namuyamba and Chakanika, 2018). Above all, the text based and communicative methods emphasised in the teaching guides, policy documents, English language syllabus and secondary schools are key in helping learners perform better and improve their academic performance.

2.15 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed relevant literature aligned with the study's objectives. The reviewed literature has provided valuable insights into the factors contributing to Grade 12 pupils' poor performance in English final examinations, particularly within the Zambian context.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAME

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents the theories that will guide this study. The theories are used to link the study with the explanation of the concepts that the study will identify on the factors affecting Grade 12 English language performance in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

3.1 Expectancy Theory

Victor Vroom's 1964 theory of expectation holds that people are driven to behave a certain way by what they anticipate will happen as a result of their actions. Expectancy Theory can be used to examine how pupils' expectations and perceptions impact their motivations, efforts, and accomplishments in relation to their performance. The three pillars of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence form the foundation of this theory. When applied to pupils' performance in English, these factors help explain how pupils approach their assignments and what motivates them to put in effort and reach their goals.

The expectancy theory of motivation, as formulated by Victor Vroom, describes three key components: expectancy (effort → performance), instrumentality (performance → outcome), and valence (value of the outcome), (Vroom, 1964).

Expectancy refers to the belief that increased effort will result in better performance. The idea that exerting more effort will result in better performance is known as expectation. When learning English, learners are more likely to put in effort if they think that spending more time on vocabulary study or grammar practice will boost their grades or improve their fluency (Vroom, 1964). Learners may become discouraged and perform poorly if they do not think their efforts will have an impact.

Instrumentality is the perception that performance is positively correlated with favourable outcomes or rewards. In other words, good performance is rewarded. In an English class, learners may work harder if they believe that mastery of the subject will lead to tangible rewards, such as better grades, praise from the teacher or recognition from peers (Vroom, 1964). If a learner believes that greater effort will certainly lead to success, he/she will choose to make greater effort. When learners do not see a direct

connection between their success and the rewards they value, their motivation to achieve can decrease.

Valence is the value that a learner places on the rewards expected from him/her. In English classes, some learners may value good grades because they see them as necessary for future opportunities, such as attending a prestigious university, while others may value the personal satisfaction of achieving language proficiency (Vroom, 1964). The higher the valence, the stronger the motivation to perform well. Conversely, if the results are of little value to the learner, his or her motivation will be lower (Vroom, 1964).

Expectancy Theory has a big impact on how learners perform in school, especially when it comes to how teacher expectations affect learner performance. Teacher expectancy effects, according to Main (2023), are the phenomena in which a teacher's perceptions and expectations regarding a learner's potential and abilities can affect that learner's performance and learning outcomes. Main (2023) goes on to say that when teachers hold themselves to high standards, they are more likely to give their learners challenging and stimulating learning opportunities, as well as extra support and encouragement and growth-oriented feedback. Conversely, when teachers hold themselves to low standards, they run the risk of unintentionally limiting their learners' opportunities for development and reinforcement as well as failing to provide them with the tools and resources they need to succeed.

Learner outcomes can be improved by implementing the fundamental ideas of Expectancy Theory. First, there is a direct relationship between learners' performance and effort. According to the framework of expectancy theory, in order to exert effort, one must have a clear expectation that greater effort will be linked to outcomes deemed valuable (Vroom, 2005). Teachers can enhance pupils' expectancy by setting clear, achievable goals and providing specific feedback on how to improve. Learners are more likely to make the effort to meet high expectations when teachers make those expectations clear. Uttamchandani (2022) asserts that the relationship between teacher expectancy effects and self-fulfilling prophecies, the situation in which a learner's performance reflects the expectations that others, in this case, teachers, have of them is close. If a teacher has high expectations for their learners, they will usually go above and beyond in order to support and encourage them to achieve those expectations. On the other hand, learners may have fewer opportunities for personal growth and

development if their teacher has low expectations for them (Uttamchandani, 2022). Second, positive reinforcement in the form of opportunities for growth, acknowledgment, and praise can inspire learners to achieve better. Teachers can increase the value of success. By recognising and rewarding good performance in meaningful ways, they can increase the valence of academic success, thereby boosting motivation. Finally, learner motivation and effort can be influenced by the degree to which a need, such as the need for competence or autonomy, is satisfied.

Teachers can establish a classroom environment that is both supportive and motivating for their learners by comprehending and utilising these fundamental principles. They are able to establish high standards, give prompt, insightful feedback, provide focused assistance, and provide incentives and rewards that are in line with the needs and objectives of the learners. Teachers can emphasise the connection between effort and performance, helping pupils understand that their efforts will likely lead to better results. This may result in higher motivation levels among learners, better performance, and ultimately better academic results. According to Expectancy Theory, learners will perform better in English if they believe that their efforts will yield better results, value the rewards they anticipate receiving, and expect that their efforts will be rewarded (Vroom, 1964). Results, performance, and motivation are all related (Main, 2023).

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

The second theory that guided this study was critical discourse analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was developed primarily by a group of scientists, with Norman Fairclough often considered a key player. Fairclough's work in the late 1980s and early 1990s played a significant role in shaping CDA, particularly through his book *Language and Power* (1989).

CDA is a theoretical approach that examines how language, power, and ideology interact in texts and communicative practices. It is rooted in the idea that language is not just a means of communication but also a tool for social control and a medium through which power relations are exercised and maintained. In the context of education, particularly in relation to pupil performance, CDA can be used to explore how discourses within educational settings influence pupils' academic outcomes and social positioning.

Van Dijk (2008) emphasises that the “core” of CDA remains the systematic and explicit analysis of the different structures and strategies of different text and conversation

levels. CDA assisted the researcher in understanding specific approaches that teachers use to teach English in secondary schools and how these may or may not contribute to improving learners' performance. Through the CDA lens, the researcher was helped to understand the reasons that led to learners failing English proficiency in the twelfth grade and the factors associated with it.

There are four key concepts to consider in CDA. The first concept is **discourse**. In CDA, discourse refers to the way language is used in a particular context, including spoken, written and visual texts. Discourses are viewed as ways of representing aspects of the world, including social identities, relationships, and knowledge systems. Baker et al. (2008) add that CDA takes into account the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between utterances, texts, genres and discourses, as well as extra-linguistic social/sociological variables, situations and processes of text production, text reception and text consumption. In this study, the causes of poor performance in Zambian secondary schools were examined through teacher-learner interactions and learner-material engagement. These interactions are crucial as they allow learners to express their strengths and weaknesses in the second language. The teacher's ability to identify these challenges, provide corrective feedback, and support language development enabled the researcher to analyse them within the framework of this theory.

The second key concept in CDA is **power and ideology**. CDA emphasises that language is inextricably linked to power and ideology. Discourses often reflect and reinforce the power structures in society. Baker et al. (2008) further assert that CDA researchers are fundamentally interested in analysing opaque and transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. They further argue that the language alone is not powerful for CDA. It gains power through the uses people make of it and through the people who have access to language and public forums. In keeping with its Critical Theory predecessors, CDA emphasises the need for interdisciplinary work to achieve an adequate understanding of how language functions in the formation and transmission of knowledge, in the organisation of social institutions, or in the exercise of power in different areas/fields of our societies (Wodak, 2004). Therefore, the way teachers and learners use the language is of utmost importance in the context.

The researcher used the CDA framework during classroom observation. The linguistic actions and speech acts of teachers and learners were understood through the power of language or words used by both teachers and learners in the classroom. This provided clues about how classroom interaction can help teachers and learners make sense of the languages they use in class. In the classroom, the way teachers and learners interact can influence pupil performance. CDA can be used to analyse the language teachers used when giving instructions, giving feedback, or managing behaviour in the classroom. The language used in classroom interactions, assessments, and feedback can reproduce dominant ideologies and marginalise certain groups of learners.

Classroom conversations often reflect the power relationships that exist between educators and pupils. Typically, teachers control the conversation and decide who speaks, when and how. According to Fairclough (1989), this authoritative control has the power to either increase or decrease learner engagement and participation. One can examine how language maintains power hierarchies through CDA. For example, instructional language positions the teacher as the authority, which can suppress learners' confidence and critical thinking skills (Rogers, 2011). On the other hand, through linguistic inclusivity, such as asking open-ended questions, a teacher can encourage participation, create a collaborative learning environment, and increase output (Fairclough, 2015).

CDA analyses the ways in which the linguistic forms of the teacher and the learner are used in various expressions and manipulations of power and control (Chilton, 2004). Power is signalled not only through grammatical forms within a text, but also through a person's control over a social occasion, through the genre of a text, or through access to certain public spheres. Power is often exercised or challenged precisely within the genres associated with certain social occasions (Muntigl et al., 2000; Wodak, 1996, 2007). Textual literacy is related to the learner's ability to use the second language and write meaningful texts that are considered accurate in their context. The power of the second language is also related to the learner's ability to use it socially and cognitively in order to learn effectively. Learners' texts form the basis for analysis to determine how their linguistic inventory manifests itself in both speech and writing, leading to better or poorer performance in the classroom and subsequently to better or poorer performance in final examinations.

Baker (2008) contrasts that a “critical” analysis would not only be interested in explaining what linguistic elements and processes are present in a text or set of texts, but would also have to explain why and under what circumstances and consequences producers of the text have made certain linguistic choices among several other options that a given language can offer. That is, a critical analysis takes into account both absences and presences in the data (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). This justifies the use of CDA rather than purely descriptive, data-driven approaches, which are epistemologically inadequate to account for the complex linguistic commitments that learners and teachers undertake to make sense in the classroom. The teacher's selection of methods and techniques is one of the aspects analysed to determine whether they affect classroom interaction and how they affect learners' performance.

Pupil participation is shaped by patterns of interaction and discourse in the classroom, such as the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) model (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Teacher asks a question, pupils answer, and the teacher provides feedback in traditional IRF patterns. Although this structure can be useful for assessing understanding, it can also prevent topics from being explored in more detail. CDA emphasises the value of different interaction styles in the classroom. Critical thinking and improved academic performance are promoted in classrooms that support dialogic discourse in which pupils actively participate in discussions and ask questions of both teachers and peers (Alexander, 2008).

The third key concept is **social practice**. CDA views discourse as a form of social practice that both shapes and is shaped by social structures. Lessons are guided by government guidelines, made possible by secondary school teachers. Proper implementation of such policies leads to improvement in learning outcomes, while poor implementation leads to poor performance. CDA is another avenue that highlights how government policies and guidelines coupled with instructions to teachers and their decisions can be accepted, rejected and sometimes ignored in the process of providing inclusive teaching and learning practices (Mwanza, 2016). The classroom discourse is not neutral. According to van Dijk (1993), classroom discourse often incorporates dominant ideologies and values into the curriculum and teaching strategies. The guidelines are therefore implemented both at the classroom level and at the practice level. The teacher's ability to make learners perform well in second language examinations is nothing but effective policy implementation. Poor performance is also related to poor policy implementation, which leads to poor outcomes. This means that

the language used in educational environments can influence learners' beliefs, behaviours and identities, which in turn affect their academic performance. In this case, the teacher's ability to get learners to conceptualise the learning material is related to the implementation of policies examined in this study in relation to CDA concepts.

The fourth key component of CDA is **text analysis**. CDA involves a detailed analysis of texts (spoken, written or visual) to explore how they construct meaning and how these meanings relate to broader social and power structures. The CDA approach is important for reflecting the ways in which linguistic forms are used discursively by speakers to create new or alternative forms of social reality through coherently organised texts in a classroom (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). It is necessary to understand how an individual linguistically constructs or frames an activity, organises meaning, and prescribes normative behaviour for participants. It is clear that a teacher uses public discourse in the classroom in which learners strategically use texts (oral or written) essentially as representations of both individual and collective identities filtered through linguistic form. In the same vein, a study by Van Dijk (2004) shows that texts are a by-product of broader social and cultural realities and their disclosure in the examination therefore results in learners either passing or not achieving the best results. By cultural realities in this case are meant the knowledge sharing practices that the teacher uses to present lessons and influence learners' performance in school.

Critical analysis of how language works in the creation of knowledge is encouraged by CDA (Fairclough, 2015). When critical discourse is encouraged in the classroom, learners learn to not only consume information, but also to question and analyse it. Better performance is the result of this critical thinking, which also increases cognitive engagement. For example, teachers who use discourse to challenge pupils' assumptions or prejudices promote greater understanding and higher-order thinking skills, both of which improve learning outcomes (Janks, 1997).

From the previous discussion, it is clear that texts (oral or written) are representations of linguistic structures that are coherently constructed to reflect macro-level social realities (Van Dijk, 2006). CDA plays an important role in establishing and legitimising linguistic and institutional actions. In this study, the Critical Discourse Analytic Framework (CDA) for language and text analysis examined the dialectic between language and social reality and the crucial role the former plays in the construction of the latter. Through this theory, teachers and their teaching practices are linked to the

factors that contribute to the poor and high poor performance rates in Grade 12 English examinations. CDA was employed to examine the language used in examination question structures to identify any ideological biases. I applied CDA to analyse whether specific linguistic structures or discourses in the questions privileged some learners while disadvantaging others.

In summary, CDA provides a powerful framework for understanding the complex relationships between language, power, and pupil achievement in educational settings. By applying CDA, the researcher will attempt to understand whether there are hidden biases and power dynamics that may influence pupil outcomes. This will enable the researcher to critically analyse the causes of poor performance of Grade 12 pupils in national English examinations and how these can be improved.

3.3 Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy theory, as developed by Albert Bandura (1977, 1986), plays a central role in understanding human motivation, behaviour, and academic performance. This theory refers to a person's belief in his or her ability to perform, behaviours necessary to achieve certain performance outcomes. In educational settings, self-efficacy has a significant impact on pupil learning, engagement, and outcomes, especially in demanding contexts such as English examinations.

Bandura (1997) conceptualized self-efficacy as a core component of social cognitive theory and emphasized that an individual's belief in his or her ability to achieve goals influences his or her decisions, effort, and persistence. He proposed four major sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. These elements contribute to students' confidence in their academic abilities and are critical in the context of English examinations. The four sources of self-efficacy are explained in more detail in the following sections.

Bandura viewed **mastery experiences** as the first primary source of self-efficacy. Learners who have been successful on previous English examinations or classroom activities are more likely to believe they can be successful on future examinations. According to Bandura, mastery experiences are the most influential source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). For English learners, consistent performance on grammar exercises, essay writing, and reading comprehension tasks strengthens their belief in their ability to effectively tackle examination content.

Vicarious experiences were conceptualised as a second source of self-efficacy. Observing classmates who perform well on English tasks can increase a pupil's self-efficacy, especially if they perceive similarities between themselves and their peers. When a student witnesses classmates, especially those of similar proficiency levels, pass English examinations, they may believe that they too can be successful (Schunk, 1989).

The third source of self-efficacy according to Bandura's concept is **verbal persuasion**. Teachers and peers play a crucial role in shaping pupils' self-efficacy through verbal feedback and encouragement. Positive reinforcement, such as providing feedback on performance on practice tests or mock examinations, for example, can significantly increase pupils' confidence in their English skills (Pajares, 2006). However, negative feedback can undermine this trust and lead to lower self-efficacy and potentially poorer examination performance.

The fourth source of self-efficacy is **physiological and affective states**. Physiological and affective states play a critical role in influencing academic performance by affecting cognitive functioning, motivation, and engagement in learning. **Energy** and **attention** have an impact on pupil performance. Pupils who get enough sleep, eat right, and are physically fit tend to be more alert and able to concentrate better. Lack of sleep, poor nutrition, or fatigue can lead to reduced attention span, memory problems, and impaired decision-making.

Stress and anxiety have a major impact on student performance. Physiological responses to stress, such as increased heart rate, muscle tension and fatigue, can hinder cognitive processes. Chronic stress impairs the brain's ability to retain information, solve problems, and concentrate, which can negatively impact academic performance. According to Kyllonen et al. (2013), stress and anxiety can reduce working memory capacity, making it more difficult for pupils to recall information. Eysenck et al. (2007) state that anxiety can lead to distractions, reduced concentration and attention during exams, resulting in impaired academic performance. Stress can also impair critical thinking and analytical skills, which are essential for English exams (Kashdan and Ciarrochi, 2013). Furthermore, Bandura (1997) says that repeated experiences of anxiety can undermine pupils' confidence in their abilities, thereby affecting performance.

Chronic stress can trigger negative emotions such as frustration and anxiety, creating a feedback loop that worsens both physiological and emotional well-being. When a pupil is both physically exhausted and emotionally overwhelmed, his/her academic performance will be significantly affected. High levels of test anxiety can lead to poor academic performance because anxiety can cause pupils to forget information they have already learned or have difficulty understanding tests (Bandura, 1997). Examinations often lead to increased levels of anxiety and stress. Bandura (1997) found that pupils tend to interpret physiological responses such as increased heart rate or nervousness as signs of poor performance. High-risk English examinations can trigger such reactions, reducing self-efficacy and negatively affecting performance. Conversely, pupils who manage their emotions well tend to have higher levels of self-efficacy.

A pupil's illness and unwellness negatively impact the student's performance. Health problems such as headaches, stomach aches or chronic illnesses can affect pupils' ability to concentrate on schoolwork. Pain and discomfort distract from the learning process and lead to absenteeism, which in turn affects overall performance.

Affective states refer to emotional states such as moods, feelings and attitudes. Emotional well-being plays an important role in learning success. Affective states include self-confidence and self-efficacy. Pupils who believe in their academic abilities (high self-efficacy) are more likely to take on challenging tasks, persevere when faced with difficulties, and perform better. On the other hand, pupils with low self-confidence may avoid academic challenges, leading to poorer performance.

Affective states also include emotions because they affect learning. Positive emotions such as happiness and excitement can improve cognitive function and motivation. When pupils enjoy learning, they tend to be more engaged and perform better. In contrast, negative emotions such as fear, frustration, and boredom can reduce motivation and impair concentration, memory, and decision-making.

3.3.1 Self-Efficacy and English Examination Performance

Self-efficacy is particularly relevant in language learning contexts such as English examinations, which require a combination of skills including reading comprehension, essay writing, grammar use, and vocabulary knowledge. Studies have shown that learners with high self-efficacy are more likely to approach language tasks confidently, use effective learning strategies, and demonstrate resilience when faced with difficulties (Zimmerman, 2000). In English examinations, high self-efficacy can lead

to increased motivation. Pupils who believe they can do well are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to prepare for English examinations. This motivation drives them to persistently engage with complex materials such as ... and advanced grammar exercises (Pajares & Johnson, 1996).

High self-efficacy can lead to higher cognitive engagement. As noted by Pintrich & De Groot (1990), students with high self-efficacy are more likely to use effective cognitive and metacognitive strategies, such as summarising texts, self-questioning and organising ideas for essays. These strategies contribute to improved examination performance. Aside from higher cognitive engagement, high self-efficacy can lead to greater persistence. When faced with challenging tasks, such as answering difficult comprehension questions or organising thoughts for essay writing, learners with higher self-efficacy demonstrate greater persistence and problem-solving skills, which are essential for success in English examinations (Bandura, 1986).

Bandura's self-efficacy theory has implications for teaching and assessment that teachers must consider. For teachers, promoting pupil self-efficacy is critical to improving English test scores. Teaching strategies that include clear feedback, creating learning experiences, and fostering a growth mind-set can help strengthen pupils' belief in their abilities (Dweck, 2006). Additionally, incorporating regular formative assessments, such as practice examinations and low-stakes quizzes, allows learners to gain mastery experiences that directly increase their self-efficacy. Additionally, creating a supportive classroom environment in which learners feel comfortable expressing themselves in English, receiving constructive criticism, and observing the success of their peers can contribute to improved self-efficacy. Teachers should also combat test anxiety by helping learners develop stress management techniques, as this can mitigate negative physiological effects on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

3.3.2 Conclusion

Bandura's self-efficacy theory provides a robust framework for understanding the relationship between pupils' beliefs in their abilities and their performance on English examinations. By increasing self-efficacy through mastery experiences, positive reinforcement, and stress management, teachers can help pupils improve their academic outcomes. The theory highlights the importance of fostering self-confidence and resilience in learners, particularly in subjects such as English, where self-efficacy has been shown to correlate with higher motivation, engagement and achievement. The

theory posits that considering both the physiological and emotional well-being of learners is critical to improving their academic performance. Additionally, fostering a positive emotional environment in the classroom can lead to better cognitive functioning and engagement in learning, which in turn leads to better academic performance in both formative and summative assessment.

3.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented three theories which were used to critically analyse the causes of Grade 12 pupils' poor performance in English national examinations and how it can be improved. The next chapter presents the methodology for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the strategy for dealing with the given research topic of the study. A number of subtopics are covered in this chapter, including the study paradigm, methods, design, population, sample, sampling techniques, instruments, data collection techniques, quality control, data analysis, ethical considerations, and a summary. It is important to understand a research paradigm because it influences all aspects of a study, including the formulation of the research question and the techniques used for data collection and analysis. Understanding the paradigm helps a researcher select the best methodology for his/her particular topic and defend his/her methodological decisions more convincingly.

4.1 Research Paradigm

Before delving into the research design and methodology, it is imperative to introduce the philosophical research framework that served as the cornerstone of this investigation. A research paradigm is a set of assumptions about how the scientific community works. According to Schumacher and McMillan (2010), a research paradigm includes the global perspective on how research information should be acquired. As a result, they establish a set of rigid frameworks for organising and exploring knowledge. These conceptual frameworks have been articulated in a variety of widely accepted models developed in the social sciences; these models are called paradigms. Their views on ontology (What is reality?), epistemology (What is knowledge?) and axiology (Is truth value-free or value-laden?) often distinguish them. The three ideas influence the researcher's decision on research formulation and study design.

The nature of reality is a topic of ontological philosophy. It requires scientists to think about how society is structured, how the world works, and how these factors affect everything around us. According to Phillimore and Goodson (2004), ontology discusses the differences between reality and our perception of it, and how they affect people's actions. To confront the facts, epistemology asks what constitutes acceptable knowledge. It requires one to define what one knows about his or her field, what is considered acceptable knowledge, and what one knows to be true and accepted as fact based on extensive testing. This concept is most commonly applied in scientific

research because it looks for information and facts that can be proven beyond doubt, rather than situations and views that are subject to change (Norris, 2005).

Rather than attempting to reduce or balance the influence of values and opinions, axiology allows the researcher to understand and acknowledge their involvement in the collection and processing of study data. For example, the researcher must disclose in his research whether he is a vegetarian and look at the variety and availability of vegetarian meals in hotels. Depending on the approach chosen, how this impacts the research and outcome analysis of the topic needs to be carefully considered and examined in a variety of ways (Ngulube, 2017). Examining the philosophical viewpoints associated with this philosophy help clarify it better. In this study, interpretivist was the research paradigm used

4.1.1 Interpretivist Paradigm

This research was guided by the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm is rooted in the works of Max Weber (1864–1920), a German sociologist and philosopher. Weber emphasised *Verstehen* (interpretive understanding) as a key method for studying social phenomena, arguing that human behaviour should be understood from the perspective of the individuals involved rather than through purely objective observation. Later scholars, such as Wilhelm Dilthey and Hans-Georg Gadamer, further developed interpretivist ideas, particularly in the fields of hermeneutics and qualitative research.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the interpretive paradigm is a philosophical research approach that places a strong emphasis on comprehending the arbitrary meaning that social phenomena and human experiences can have. In contrast to the positivist paradigm, which sees reality as objective and quantifiable, it is predicated on the idea that reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Interpretivists contend that context, values, and participant perspectives are crucial to comprehending phenomena because knowledge is co-created through interactions between the researcher and participants (Stake, 1995). This paradigm emphasises the richness and complexity of human experiences over quantitative measurements, frequently using qualitative methods like case studies and interviews to investigate how individuals or groups interpret their social environment (Merriam, 1998). It is especially appropriate for research that seeks to comprehend distinct, context-specific behaviours or meanings which makes it perfect for disciplines like anthropology, sociology, and education

(Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The interpretivist method looks for the layers of meaning hidden behind social interactions and prioritises depth over breadth.

The use of interpretivism in this study was justified because Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aligned with interpretivist principles, which focus on understanding social meanings, power relations, and ideological influences embedded in language. Since the study examined how examination question structures and discourse may contribute to pupils' poor performance, an interpretivist approach allowed for an in-depth, contextualised exploration of how language constructs and reinforces inequalities. This paradigm supports qualitative methods, enabling the researcher to interpret subjective experiences, teacher-learner interactions, and textual analysis beyond mere statistical trends. The study took a qualitative approach.

4.1.2 Ontology in the Interpretivist Paradigm

Ontology studies the nature of existence. Interpretivists do not see reality as a single, objective truth, but rather as socially constructed and multifaceted. According to the interpretivist viewpoint, social settings, human experiences, and beliefs all influence reality. The same phenomenon may therefore be interpreted differently by different people, and these interpretations are equally valid. Positivism assumes an external reality that is objective and quantifiable, in contrast to interpretivism. According to interpretivism, reality is pliable and subject to the interpretations that people and/or groups give it. As such, interpretivist's ontological position is frequently characterised as relativistic (Crotty, 1998).

In the interpretivist paradigm, ontology concerns the nature of reality, which is viewed as socially constructed and context-dependent. In this study, ontology was applied by recognising that pupil performance was shaped by subjective experiences, power relations, and socio-linguistic contexts rather than fixed, objective realities. This meant the study assumed that examination question structures, teacher expectations, and linguistic biases influenced pupils differently, and their struggles with English were not just individual failings but were linked to broader social and institutional discourses.

4.1.2 Epistemology in the Interpretivist Paradigm

Epistemology refers to the nature and extent of knowledge, particularly how we come to know what we know. The interpretivist paradigm adopts a subjectivist or constructivist epistemology, meaning that knowledge is not discovered but rather co-constructed between the researcher and participants. Knowledge is context-dependent

and value-laden, with an emphasis on understanding the social world from the perspective of those being studied. Interpretivists argue that researchers cannot be detached or objective because they bring their own perspectives to research. Therefore, the research process is viewed as a dialogic process in which both the researcher and the participants have an influence on knowledge generation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Carson et al. (2001) claim that interpretivist researchers avoid rigid structural frameworks such as those used in positivist research. They adopt a more personal and flexible research structure, receptive to capturing the meaning of human interaction and making sense of what is perceived as reality (Carson et al., 2001; Black, 2006). Interpretivist recognises the interaction and interdependence between the researcher and their informants. This reflects that the interpretivist researcher enters the field with some prior knowledge of the research context, but assumes that this is insufficient for developing a fixed research design due to the complex, diverse and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality (Creswell, 1998). In this way, the researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and allows for its further development with the help of informants. The use of such an emergent and collaborative approach is consistent with the interpretive belief that humans have the ability to adapt and that no one can achieve prior knowledge of time- and context-bound social realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

Interpretivist researchers represent the subjectivist view in which subjective meaning and subjective interpretations have great importance (Pring, 2000). The object cannot be adequately described without the subject, nor can the subject be adequately described without the object. Therefore, the relationship between the knower and the subject to be known is not one of detachment, but rather one of participation and interaction (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Dammak, 2015). This implies that, according to interpretivists, the world is constructed socially, i.e. through the interaction of individuals. This also implies that the natural and social worlds are not separate but intertwined and that researchers are part of this social reality and not separate from the subjects studied (Dammak, 2015).

According to Cohen et al. (2003), interpretivist researchers believe that the social world can only be understood from the perspective of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being studied. It should be understood that interpretive research is an interactive process between the researcher and the people around him (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In contrast to the positivist paradigm, researchers are not detached from

the situation being investigated, but rather see themselves as participants in the situation being investigated (Creswell, 1998). Because of this involvement of interpretivist researchers in real life situations, they are able to provide detailed descriptions of the situation under study (Holliday, 2007).

Understanding people is the goal of the human sciences (Babbie and Mouton 2011). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), people derive their sense of meaning from their experiences, which are often difficult to notice but can be discovered through asking questions, talking to them, and spending time with them. They also claim that people try to understand the social lives they lead and that in order to understand how people make sense of a particular situation, a researcher must look at it from the perspective of everyone involved and obtain their definition of it and focus on the context and interactions. This paradigm was suitable for the study as it enabled the researcher to critically and qualitatively analyse the performance of Grade 12 pupils in English examinations in the Copperbelt Province. This was achieved through interviews with teachers, heads of departments (HODs), administrators, national examiners, Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) officials, and parents, as well as focus group discussions with pupils.

In the interpretivist paradigm, epistemology concerns how knowledge is acquired and understood. In this study, epistemology was applied by recognising that knowledge about poor performance was constructed through language, interactions, and lived experiences rather than through objective measurements alone. This study gathered qualitative insights from teachers, pupils, administrators, national examiners, parents, and examination texts to interpret the influence of discourse, power dynamics, and linguistic structures on performance. Rather than relying solely on statistical data, it prioritised contextual understanding, multiple perspectives, and an in-depth analysis of how language shapes reality within the examination setting.

4.2 Research Approach

Methodology is very important in research. It forms the driving force of the study. To choose the right methodology, one must be clear about the purpose of the study. As Agee (2009) notes, one must ask oneself, “What do I want to know in this study?” Questions that need to be answered help determine the method one would use in the study. This research used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a naturalistic approach in which phenomena are examined in their natural environment

(McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, Patton, 2002). A qualitative researcher seeks an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and the data is analysed inductively (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2006). Case study research often uses qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, although quantitative data may also be included (Merriam, 1998). This research used qualitative methods.

4.3 Research Design

A research design, according to Creswell (2012), is a framework, outline, or plan used to develop solutions to a specific research problem. A research design can also be defined as the overall plan that a researcher uses to logically and convincingly integrate various study components to ensure that the research problem is adequately addressed (University of California Libraries, 2015). Although the term “research design” has the same meaning, different scholars have given different definitions. According to Burns and Grove (2003), a research design is a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over variables that could affect the validity of the results. According to Kothari (2004), decisions about what, where, when, how much and by what means are made in the context of an investigation or research study in a research design. According to him, a research design is the setting of parameters for data collection and analysis with the aim of balancing procedural economy with relevance to the study objective. In the light of this study, a case study research design was used to answer the given research questions.

This study used a descriptive case study research design as it involved an in-depth investigation into the poor performance of Grade 12 pupils in English final examinations in a real-world context. Case studies are typically used to investigate complex phenomena that are not easily understood using other methods because they allow researchers to examine how different variables interact in specific, contextual environments (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) further emphasises that case studies are suitable for examining complex phenomena in real-world contexts, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly visible.

In research, a “case” refers to a single unit of analysis being studied. A case can be a person, a group, an organisation, an event, a process, or a specific instance or phenomenon (Yin, 2018). This unit can vary depending on the research context and objectives. In case study research, the focus is typically on an in-depth, detailed examination of the selected “case” to gain a comprehensive understanding of its

complexity and context (Stake, 1995). Case studies often collect qualitative data through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

4.3.1 Justification for using a descriptive case study design

A descriptive case study design was ideal for analysing Grade 12 pupils' poor English performance in the Copperbelt Province, as it offered a comprehensive and context-specific understanding of contributing factors and the magnitude of the issue. Through the use of this design, the researcher was able to examine challenges like teacher-to-pupil ratios, learning materials, school environments, and socio-economic factors, providing a holistic perspective (Yin, 2018). The design also enabled the researcher to capture diverse views from learners, teachers, parents, and administrators on instructional challenges, parental involvement, and examination standards (Merriam, 1998). Use of multiple data sources (examination results, final examination papers senior secondary school syllabus, interviews, and focus groups) enhanced triangulation for credibility. The design supported an interpretivist approach, allowing flexible data collection and rich descriptions of experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, through the use of this design, the researcher was able to investigate administrative-related factors, learner-related factors, and teacher-related and examination-related factors, leading to evidence-based recommendations (cf. Yin, 2018). This approach ensured depth, credibility, and contextual relevance, making it ideal for addressing English performance challenges in Grade 12 examinations.

4.4 Population

According to White (2003), a population is a collection of people, things or objects from which samples are taken to make measurements. Population refers to the group of cases (individuals) with similar characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). It can also refer to a series of similar events or cases that are of interest to the research problem or question. Grade 12 pupils in public secondary schools, teachers of English, Language Department heads, Deputy Head-teachers, a Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) for Languages in the Copperbelt Province, District Education Standards Officers (DESOs), national examiners, and the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) officials from the ECZ headquarters were all part of the study population.

4.5 Sampling Methods

Sampling methods are divided into probability and non-probability categories. The methods used by the researcher to select study participants from the sample are called

sampling techniques (Msabila and Nalaila, 2013). Unlike positivists who rely on randomisation, interpretivists use purposive sampling technique and select people and sites that are rich in information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Creswell, 2008). This study employed expert, criterion, and homogeneous purposive sampling, along with snowball sampling, to ensure the selection of appropriate participants for interviews and focus group discussions.

4.5.1 Purposive Sampling

Cohen et al. (2014) state that purposive sampling involves researchers hand-selecting cases for the sample based on their assessment of the cases' typicality or possession of the specific characteristics sought. The selection of data, rich in cases for in-depth analysis and related to the main topics under study, gives purposive sampling its strength (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). Selecting information-rich cases for an in-depth study is called qualitative sampling (Punch, 2011). This procedure is used when one wants to learn more about a specific case without feeling compelled to generalise to all similar cases. The purpose of qualitative sampling is to improve the utility of data from small samples (Gay, 2010).

The teachers of English, HOD Languages, Grade 12 markers of English Language, Deputy Head-teachers and SESO Languages were specifically included in this study. The teachers of English and HOD Languages were specifically selected as they are responsible for teaching English in secondary schools. Criterion purposive sampling was used to select teachers, following Nyimbili & Nyimbili (2024), who state that this sampling method requires researchers to establish specific criteria for participant selection. Teachers were chosen using criterion/expert purposive sampling based on the following criteria: they were teaching Grade 12 classes, had at least three years of teaching experience, and were trained to teach English. The HODs are subject matter specialists responsible for supervising and advising teachers on the delivery of content in schools, so expert purposive sampling was used to select HODs. The Deputy Head-teachers were included in the sample because as heads, they are responsible for the school's academic performance and are responsible for monitoring the overall academic performance of their schools. The SESO (Languages) was included in this study because he/she is responsible for the province when it comes to the teaching and learning of the English language. The ECZ officials were targeted because they are responsible for administering the examinations and conducting the annual performance analysis of the national examinations in Zambia. Expert purposive sampling was used

to select the deputy head teachers, SESO, DESOs, national markers, HODs, and ECZ officials.

Schools were specifically sampled through the office of the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS). The researcher sought help from the DEBS' office in finding two lowest performing schools in the districts that took part in the study. The schools were chosen using expert purposive sampling since they were identified by the standard officers. These were the schools that participated in the study. The selection of learners was homogeneous purposive sampling as only the 12th grade pupils took part in the focus group discussions.

4.5.1.1 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling was specifically used when identifying national markers. The researcher was helped to identify one Grade 12 national marker through the SESO Languages Provincial Office. The researcher then worked with the identified marker to nominate additional markers from the province who were included in the study.

In summary, purposive selection of participants for a study, also known as purposive or judgmental sampling, involved selecting individuals who were most likely to provide rich, relevant, and diverse data to the research objectives.

4.6 Sample Size

According to Sidhu (2014), a sample is a small portion of the population that is selected for testing and research. A sample can be defined as a sub-group of people or cases taken from a large population studied to get information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). According to Best and Kahn (2006), one can make certain conclusions about the characteristics of the population from which the sample was taken by looking at the characteristics of the sample. The Copperbelt Province comprises ten districts namely Chililabombwe District, Chingola District, Kalulushi District, Kitwe District, Luanshya District, Lufwanyama District, Masaiti District, Mpongwe District, Mufulira District and Ndola District. Four districts were sampled. Two schools, urban and rural/peri urban, were sampled in each district. The study sample consisted of ten pupils and three teachers of English per school from the eight secondary schools that participated in the study. This included a total of 80 current Grade 12 pupils, sixteen former pupils who had failed English final examinations, 24 teachers of English and eight heads of Language Departments from eight secondary schools, 8 Deputy head-teachers from eight schools, 5 Grade 12 national markers (assessors) for the English language, 1

Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) Languages, 4 District Education Standard Officers (DESOs), sixteen former pupils, sixteen parents and two ECZ headquarters officials were sampled. The total sample comprised 164 participants.

A small sample is typically used in qualitative research because the focus is on gaining detailed insights into a specific phenomenon rather than generalising the results to a larger population. The aim is to explore meanings, experiences or perspectives in detail, which can be better achieved through intensive study with fewer participants. Qualitative research often involves in-depth interviews, focus groups, or case studies, and the wealth of data collected from each participant allows for a deeper understanding of the topic. Furthermore, Cohen, Morrison, and Manion (2018) explain that in a qualitative study, a small sample size is sufficient and there are no clear sample size rules. The sample size therefore depends on “fitness for purpose” and varies from one participant to many (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). Dworkin (2012) claims that small sample sizes are used in qualitative research in order to achieve data saturation, which is the state in which more data is no longer able to yield novel insights. This implies that fewer participants are needed to produce significant findings, and the quality and depth of data are prioritised over quantity.

4.7 Data Collection Methods and Data Collection Instruments

Any device used to collect data is considered a data collection instrument. Creswell & Creswell (2012) define a data collection instrument as any tool or device used to gather information from research participants systematically. These instruments can be qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups, observations) or quantitative (e.g., surveys, tests, questionnaires). Instruments can be presented in written, audio or visual form. According to Kasonde-Ng'andu (2014), the researcher uses these tools to collect the required data. The purpose of interpretive research influences the data collection methods the researcher should use so that the researcher can build a trusting relationship with the subjects. To collect information from respondents for this study, the researcher used focus groups guide, field notes, audio recordings, interview guides, and document analysis checklist.

4.7.1 Document Analysis

The researcher examined chief examiner's reports and final examination question papers from 2018 to 2023. Additionally, this study analysed documents related to the performance of English language learners from Grades 10 to 12, including internal

assessment items and lesson records (lesson plans). Document analysis makes multiple sources of information available. Document analysis is crucial in qualitative research because it provides contextual and historical insights by analysing performance over time (Bowen, 2009). Additionally, documents are an objective and unobtrusive data source that provides authentic records without being influenced by the research process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This method is also particularly valuable in assessing various forms of learning, revealing complex competencies such as critical thinking and creativity that are difficult to measure using traditional assessments (Yin, 2014). To ensure an open-minded approach, the researcher first conducted interviews before analysing documents. This sequence allowed the researcher to explore participants' perspectives without preconceived notions. Regarding research questions (i) and (iii), the findings from document analysis subsequently helped refine and contextualise the interview data. Additionally, document analysis highlighted key areas to focus on during other interactions. This helped the researcher understand the extent of poor performance and the actions taken by the authorities before the final examinations. Triangulation was carried out based on the results of document analysis. Document analysis enabled data triangulation and improved the validity of research by cross-checking information from different sources (Patton, 2002).

4.7.2 Interviews

In qualitative research, semi-structured or unstructured interviews are often employed to collect rich, narrative data. The research additionally utilised semi-structured interviews using an interview guide to collect data. In semi-structured interviews, questions may be prepared in advance so that the interviewer is prepared, but the participant has the freedom to express his/her views in his/her own words (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2006; Stuckey, 2013). The interview guide provides respondents with the opportunity to express their experiences in a way that is unique to them (Pole and Morrison, 2003). According to Cope and Kalantzis (2009), meaning expressed in one mode cannot be fully and directly translated into another. To get their views on how teaching and learning took place in schools and what were the reasons for the high poor performance rate of learners, the Deputy Head Teachers, HODs, teachers of English, Grade 12 English language markers, DESOs, and the SESO Languages were interviewed. The DESOs were interviewed as they interact with teachers during the inspection. ECZ officials were also interviewed as they have a general

understanding of performance issues and could therefore explain why the poor performance rate had been consistently high for a long time.

Best and Khan (2001) state that interviews are often considered a better data collection method than other methods because they promote a relationship between the researcher and the respondent. In addition, they prevent misunderstandings because the interviewer can explain the questions in more detail, allowing the interviewee to provide relevant answers. According to Kvale (2007), an interview provides an interviewer with an opportunity to clarify and clarify questions. Interviews were used in this study because they allowed the interviewer to delve deeper into the respondents' answers and gather comprehensive information about the research topic. Interviews also provide rich and contextualised data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The interview guide was used to collect data in accordance with the objectives of the study (see appendices VII - XV). By providing useful strategies, they assisted the researcher in interacting with those who had information to improve learners' performance in school.

4.7.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups were held to obtain first-hand information from pupils about their experiences. According to Morgan (2007), a focus group is a collection of individuals chosen and brought together by researchers to provide their personal perspectives and insights into the research topic. Each school hosted one focus group discussion led by the researcher. Researchers can gather rich, complex data through focus group discussions (FGDs), where participants share their views, experiences, and attitudes in a social setting. The interactive nature of the discussions facilitates the generation of in-depth insights that might not surface in one-on-one interviews (Morgan, 1996). Participants are encouraged to react to and expand upon each other's ideas in a group setting. This dynamic may give rise to fresh viewpoints, insights, and concepts that enhance data and let the researcher see how opinions change as a result of group interaction (Kitzinger, 1994).

FGDs were used in this study because they are helpful in gaining an understanding of group norms and practices, especially when exploring the ways in which perspectives are shaped by shared experiences, culture, or background. Collective perspectives that might be harder to access in one-on-one interviews can be revealed through group discussions (Barbour, 2007). When participants reveal multiple understandings and meanings, multiple explanations for their behaviour and attitudes can be more easily

articulated (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). FGDs are an effective way to get a variety of viewpoints in a short amount of time since they enable researchers to gather data from several participants in a comparatively short amount of time (Krueger and Casey, 2000). FGDs are ideal because of the many benefits they offer the researcher.

According to Kalantzis and Cope (2006), education is more important than ever because knowledge is the result of learning. The researcher used digital devices in some research activities, applying the knowledge gained from the Reaching Digital Literacy Practices course. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) requires both an awareness of the possibilities of devices and knowledge of using tools. To allow the researcher the opportunity to listen to the discussions while transcribing the data, the focus group discussions were recorded.

4.7.3.1 Selection of Participants for the Research

To select teachers and pupils for this study, the researcher used purposive sampling. Case studies are often based on purposive sampling, where participants or cases are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research questions or objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Purposive sampling ensures that participants are relevant and can provide meaningful insights. Participants were selected based on specific criteria aligned with the objectives of the study.

The researcher identified and selected six teachers who met the following criteria: They had at least three years of teaching experience; They were currently teaching English that was relevant to the focus of the study; Represent a variety of teaching styles (e.g., traditional, inquiry-based, or collaborative) and were willing to participate voluntarily in the study after being informed about the research objectives and procedures. They were selected using criterion/expert purposive sampling.

After identifying teachers who met these criteria, the researcher contacted them and asked them to voluntarily participate in the study. Three teachers per school who agreed to participate were included in the study. Twenty pupils in each school participating in the study were selected based on the following criteria: Pupils with varying academic achievement levels (high, medium, low) to ensure a diversity of perspectives and experiences; Pupils from different gender groups to ensure diverse representation; Pupils who demonstrated different learning behaviours or approaches, such as active engagement, quiet reflection or collaborative learning.

The researcher worked with teachers to identify pupils who met these criteria. Once identified, pupils and their guardians were informed about the study and asked for their voluntary participation. Ten (10) out of twenty (20) pupils per school who consented were included as participants in the research. The selected respondents reflected a range of experiences and perspectives that were critical to answering the research questions. This approach ensured that participants were selected based on their potential to contribute rich, relevant data and was consistent with ethical and qualitative research practices. Creswell & Poth (2018) emphasise that purposive sampling is usually preferred to ensure that the cases selected are information-rich and consistent with the objectives of the study. The pupils were selected using homogeneous purposive sampling.

4.8 Data Analysis

The three research tools (interview guide, focus group guide and a document review checklist) provided qualitative data. The researcher first transcribed all audio recordings of the focus group and interview as the conversations were recorded. The pre-analysis phase of the listening process was enhanced by using a dual listening and transcription technique. Since the tools used to collect the data required thematic analysis to understand the meaning of qualitative data, the analysis of this data was done thematically. To facilitate understanding, thematic analysis involves categorising and grouping related themes that emerge from the data. According to Valsiner (2006), the researcher conducting a thematic analysis will look for recurring themes and describe the data found in the themes and patterns that are unique to that particular group of participants. In order to conduct interpretations and discussions (thematic analysis), the data responses must be framed or grouped into recognisable themes and categories (Kothari, 2004). In the context of this research, respondents' similar responses to a particular question from focus groups and interviews were recorded. The main themes of the focus groups and interviews with the respondents were used for the descriptions. Creswell (2009) states that in qualitative research, conclusions are drawn from the information provided by respondents.

4.9 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence in the data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed these four key criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. Credibility refers to how accurately

the research findings represent the participants' perspectives and experiences. To enhance credibility, the researcher used multiple data sources (interviews, focus groups, document analysis). Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources, methods, investigators, or theories in research to enhance the credibility, validity, and reliability of findings (cf. Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is commonly used in qualitative research to cross-check data and provide a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. Triangulation helps to reduce bias and increase confidence in the results by cross-verifying information from different perspectives (Denzin, 2012). The researcher did member checking to confirm that participants' views or perspectives were accurately represented. Creswell & Poth (2018) emphasise that member checking is cardinal in qualitative research to enhance credibility. Peer debriefing which refers to discussing the research process with colleagues or experts to challenge assumptions and interpretations (Nowell et al., 2017) is another way of enhancing credibility. The researcher constantly did debriefing with the supervisors. Data was also compared to see agreements, disagreements, confirmations and contradictions between data sets.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied or generalised to other contexts or settings. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not aim for statistical generalisation but rather for contextual applicability. To enhance transferability, Geertz, 1973) suggested thick description which entails providing detailed accounts of the research setting, participants, and context to enable other researchers or practitioners to determine whether findings apply to their settings. The researcher provided the contextual setting of the sampled schools where the research was undertaken. Purposeful sampling was used to ensure that participants selected were those who would provide rich, in-depth information relevant to the research questions.

Dependability refers to the consistency and stability of the research findings over time. It is similar to reliability in quantitative research. Since qualitative research acknowledges that findings may evolve, ensuring dependability requires transparency in the research process. The researcher kept detailed records of field notes, interview transcripts, coding processes. Furthermore, the researcher with the help of the supervisors revisited the coding process to check for consistency in data interpretation.

Confirmability ensures that the research findings are shaped by participants' experiences and not the researcher's biases or personal inclinations. It is similar to objectivity in quantitative research. Confirmability in this study was achieved through

triangulation. External auditing which involves an independent reviewer to assess whether data and interpretations are supported by the evidence collected is encouraged (Nowell et al., 2017). In this study external auditing was done by the supervisors. To boost confirmability, reflexivity is emphasised. Reflexivity is the process of critical self-reflection about oneself as researcher (own biases, preferences, preconceptions) and the research relationship (researcher's relationship to the respondent and how the relationship affects participant's answers to research questions). Reflexive Journaling – keeping a journal to document personal reflections on how the researcher's assumptions and decisions may influence the study helps the researcher to check their biases so they do not interfere with the research process and findings (Finlay, 2002).

In this study trustworthiness was achieved and ensured through data triangulation. Data were collected from various sources. The results of this study are credible since the findings represent the original data from the participants. Furthermore, the data of this study can be transferable by prospective users in different contexts. The findings of this study are dependable because the data reflects the actual views and perceptions of participants, their interpretation and recommendations. In terms of confirmability, the results of this study can be confirmed by other similar studies which means that the data from the study were not just out of the researcher's resourcefulness, but derived from the field. Through self-reflexivity, the researcher connected the findings to existing literature, and context during discussions to enhance the study's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research ensures that findings are credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Bell (1995) emphasises that researchers must adhere to established ethical guidelines when collecting data and protect the interests of the research subjects and the researcher at all times. Mulenga (2015) examined the work of Lankshear and Knobel (2004) to emphasize that ethics in educational and social research involves safeguarding the well-being and interests of participants, ensuring that their involvement in the study does not negatively impact them. So, ethics refers to moral guidelines that usually refer to adherence to a set of values or a code of conduct (Robson, 2011). Researchers still need to make quick decisions and be sensitive to problems that arise in the field of study. According to Flewitt and Ang (2020), they must use their subjectivity as well as their understanding of the research context and participant preferences to guide their ethical judgments and decisions.

The Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee of the University of Zambia first approved the study. Secondly, the Assistant Dean Postgraduate of the School of Education provided the researcher with an introductory letter for conducting the study. To conduct research in the sampled schools, the researcher also obtained written permission from the Secretary of the District Education Board of the district concerned. Data collection only began after approval from the responsible authorities. The researcher guaranteed compliance with and consideration of the following principles: benefits, non-infringement, informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality.

In accordance with ethical guidelines, all participants received detailed information about the study before conducting the interviews and only those who provided informed consent took part in the study. Those included in the sample were also notified prior to scheduled interviews. Permission was sought from respondents before the researcher recorded the interview. I also asked that interviewees to sign a consent form. The significance of the study was explained to the participants. They were also free to withdraw from the study at any time during the duration of the study. Participation by participants was completely voluntary. To maintain the confidentiality of this research, the information provided was only used for academic purposes and was not be disclosed to any third party or organisation under any circumstances without prior permission from the University of Zambia.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter is crucial because it lays the foundation for the credibility and rigor of the study and describes in detail how the research is structured and how the data were systematically collected and analysed to answer the research questions. The research design, methodology, data collection instruments, and data analysis processes have all been described in this chapter. In addition, it contains information about ethical concerns that were considered in the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the research which aimed at investigating the poor performance of Grade 12 pupils in the English Language final examinations in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. Due to the robustness of the data and for neatness of presentation, the research findings are presented in two chapters. Chapter 5 presents the findings from the first two research questions mirroring the first two objectives.

In this section of the chapter, the findings from the qualitative data which were collected during the study are presented. Qualitative methods for data collection included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the SESO Languages, DESOs, Deputy Head teachers, Heads of Languages Departments, teachers of English, Grade 12 examiners, ECZ officials, former pupils, and parents. Focus group discussions were conducted with the former Grade 12 learners. The researcher used various data collection methods to ensure a thorough examination of the research problem in response to the set research objectives. These multiple approaches facilitated the provision of valuable and deep insights into the lived experiences, perceptions and practices of research participants. Additionally, the approaches enhanced an in-depth comprehension of the problem being investigated in this study.

The findings are organised according to the research questions. The emerging themes from the respondents were amplified by inclusion of the participants' voices by means of verbatim quotes and descriptive narratives. This chapter will first present the demographics of the participants followed by the findings on each specific objective.

5.1 HODs' Demographics

5.1.1 Table 6

S/N	HOD CODE	GENDER	TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	SCHOOL CODE
1	HOD 1	Female	24 years	S1
2	HOD 2	Male	25 years	S2
3	HOD 3	Male	13 years	S3
4	HOD 4	Female	14 years	S4
5	HOD 5	Male	16 years	S5
6	HOD 6	Male	24 years	S6
7	HOD 7	Male	18 years	S7
8	HOD 8	Male	16 years	S8

Eight (8) HODs took part in the study. Six (6) were male accounting for 75% while two (2) were female accounting for 25%. Most HODs (87.5%) have over 13 years of experience, showing a strong background in teaching. The distribution suggests that leadership roles among HODs favour male teachers, though experience levels between genders are comparable. The range of experience (13 to 25 years) indicates a mix of both relatively new and highly seasoned educators.

5.1.2 Teachers' Demographics

5.1.2.1 Table 7

S/N	TEACHER CODE	GENDER	TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	SCHOOL CODE
1.	T1	Male	10 years	S1
2.	T2	Female	4 years	S1
3.	T3	Female	4 years	S1
4.	T4	Female	10 years	S2
5.	T5	Male	11 years	S2
6.	T6	Male	14 years	S2
7.	T7	Male	18 years	S3
8.	T8	Female	10 years	S3
9.	T9	Female	4 years	S3
10.	T10	Female	13 years	S4
11.	T11	Female	12 years	S4
12.	T12	Female	15 years	S4
13.	T13	Male	12 years	S5
14.	T14	Female	10 years	S5
15.	T15	Female	14 years	S5
16.	T16	Female	24 years	S6
17.	T17	Female	17 years	S6
18.	T18	Female	15 years	S6
19.	T19	Female	15 years	S7
20.	T20	Male	18 years	S7
21.	T21	Male	10 years	S7
22.	T22	Male	12 years	S8
23.	T23	Male	15 years	S8
24.	T24	Male	12 Years	S8

The data presents information about twenty four (24) teachers based on gender, teaching experience, and school allocation. There were ten (10) male teachers

translating to 41.67% and fourteen (14) female teachers translating to 58.33%. This suggests that female teachers are more prevalent (58.33%) than male teachers (41.67%) in this dataset.

5.1.3.1 Current Grade 12 Pupils

Eighty (80) pupils took part in the study. Thirty seven (37) were male translating to 46% and 43 were female translating to 54%. The pupil demographics are represented graphically.

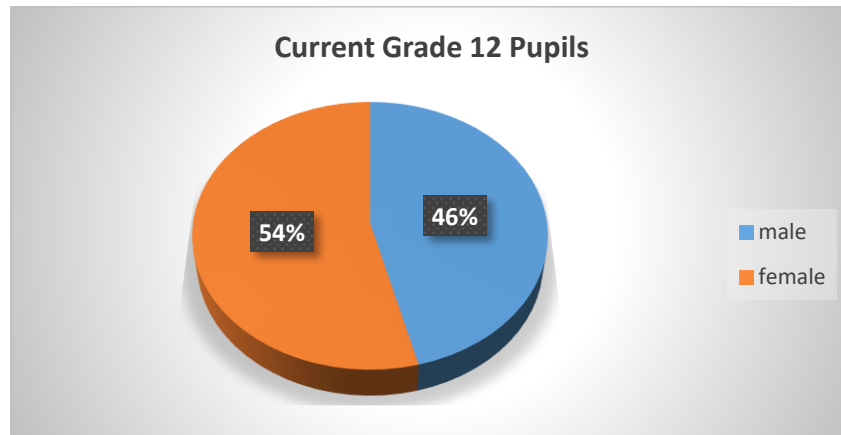


Figure 8: Current grade 12 pupils

5.1.3.2 Grade 12 Alumni

Sixteen grade 12 alumni took part in the study. 9 were male translating to 56% while 7 were female translating to 44%. The demographics are presented graphically.

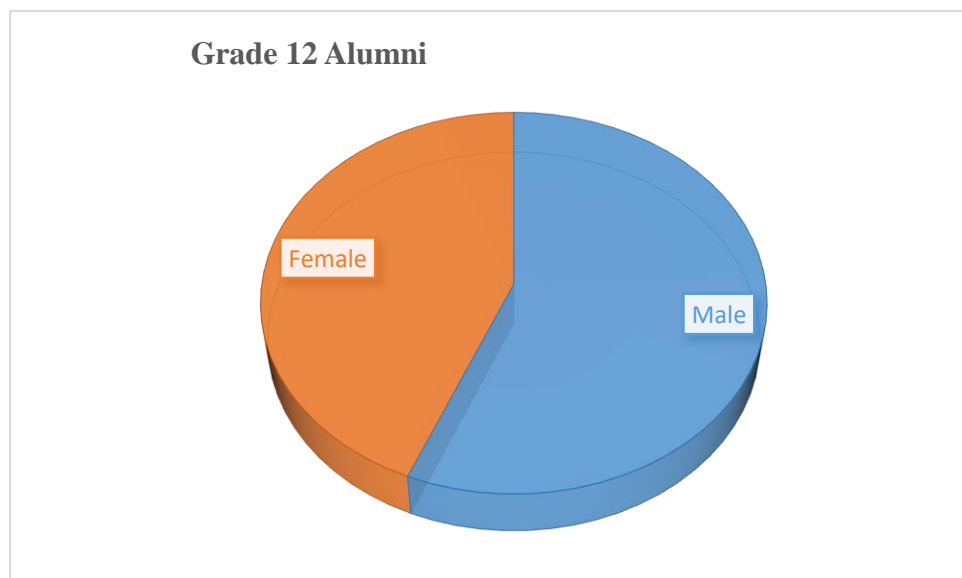


Figure 9: Grade 12 Alumni

5.2 How is the Quality of Grade 12 Examination Questions?

The first research question sought to find out about the quality of examination questions administered at grade 12. The Grade 12 English examinations consist of two papers namely Paper 1 and Paper 2. Paper 1 comprises essay questions and is made up of two sections. Section A consists of six questions and candidates are required to answer one question only. Section B consists of one compulsory question only. The compulsory question contains some guiding points that learners are expected to use to answer the question. Each question carries 20 marks totalling to 40%. Paper 2 consists of structure, comprehension and summary. Each component in Paper 2 carries 20 marks totalling to 60%. Grade 12 pupils are assessed in essay writing, structure, comprehension and summary skills.

The study analysed papers for the period 2018 to 2023. However, only examination papers for three years (2018, 2021 & 2023) are in texted within the thesis. The other three years (2019, 2020 & 2022) are attached as appendices.

The qualitative data presented in this section were gathered through semi-structured interviews with teachers, Heads of Language Departments, former pupils and national examiners.

5.2.1 Examination Papers for 2018

The papers for 2018 are briefly explained and presented here. Paper 1 consisted of two sections. Section A contained six questions, from which candidates were required to choose one. Each question had distinct requirements. Some questions required candidates to write a story on the given topic; one question assessed learners' ability to write a descriptive essay on an occasion; to argue for or against polygamous or monogamous marriage; to discuss why some people are never satisfied with what they have and one question required them to write on advantages and disadvantages of being self-employed. Section B had one compulsory question which required candidates to write a speech on the dangers of drug abuse among young people that was to be presented at a Provincial Anti-Drugs Conference. In Paper 2 question 1 section 1 was a structure question based on vocabulary testing spellings of words that are often confused. Question 1 Section 2 were questions on Transformations. Question 2 was Comprehension based on the passage entitled 'Discipline Pre-requisite to Academic Excellency' and Question 3 was summary based on the effects of alcohol and drug abuse.

EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level

English Language
Paper 1

1121/1

Monday

29 OCTOBER 2018

Additional Material(s):
Answer Booklet

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Marks: 40

Instructions to Candidates

- 1 Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on the Answer Booklet.
- 2 There are two sections in this paper. Answer both sections.
- 3 Write your answers in the Answer Booklet provided.
- 4 If you use more than one Answer Booklet, fasten the booklets together.

Information for Candidates

- 1 All questions in this paper carry equal marks.
- 2 You should first read through the whole paper.
- 3 You are advised to spend an equal amount of time on each section.
- 4 Dictionaries and textbooks are not allowed in the examination room.
- 5 Cell phones are not allowed in the examination room.



©ECZ/SC/2018/K2

This question paper consists of 4 printed pages

57811211

Figure 10: 2018 English Paper 1

You are advised to spend not more than 50 minutes on this section.

Write on **one** of the following topics. You should write between **250** and **350** words. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

- 1 Write a story with **one** of the following titles:
Either
(a) Love is Blind
Or
(b) Kidnapped
- 2 Describe an occasion when someone very close to you deserted you and what the end result was.
- 3 Write on the advantages or disadvantages of being self-employed.
- 4 Some people are never satisfied with what they have. Discuss.
- 5 A polygamous marriage is better than a monogamous one. **Argue** for or **against** this statement.
- 6 Write a story ending: "..... violence is not the answer".



SECTION B [20 Marks]

You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

You are a member of the Anti-Drugs Club in your school and have been chosen to present a speech on the dangers of drug abuse among young people. Before you prepare your speech to be presented at a Provincial Anti-Drugs Conference, you organise a local discussion in order to get different views within your school. The free-for-all discussion went as follows:

- You:* My fellow learners, I would like to find out what you think are the effects of drug abuse. Can anyone tell us one effect?
- Owen:* Dagga makes a learner very intelligent.
- Beauty:* No! It can actually erode someone's brain cells, leading to loss of memory ...
- John:* ...and even become dull.
- Owen:* Can you prove it?
- Beauty:* Dagga smokers end up hallucinating
- John:* and one becomes mad.
- Beauty:* John! Stop interrupting me!
- Peter:* Drug-abuse has been known to make people
- Beauty:* I haven't finished!
- Peter:* Your time is up! People become addicted.
- John:* How?
- Beauty:* With continuous use, one can no longer stay without using the drug.
- Peter:* They feel depressed when they haven't used drugs, so they crave for more.
- John:* What if they have no money to buy drugs?
- Beauty:* They end up stealing items to sell.
- Peter:* They become criminals – ruthless criminals.
- You:* But it has been socially proven that drugs make a person become a star. People want to be stars.
- Rose:* That's not true. Only three out of a hundred people think like that.
- Peter:* To be serious, some people have died after an overdose of drugs. It is pure suicide.



Page 4 of 4

Rose: Besides, a person can't progress if he or she is always drunk.

John: True, they use all their money on drugs.

You: Then, what should be done to solve these problems?

John: Arrest the offenders.

Peter: Simply create rehabilitation centres for them.

Rose: Yes! I totally agree with you.

Beauty: To be honest, intensive sensitisation is the best solution.

Using the relevant notes only and adding your own ideas, write the speech. The length of your speech should be between **250** and **350 words**. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition. The speech has been started for you.**

The Provincial Minister, the



120

Candidate Name _____

Centre Number	Candidate Number

105

EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level

English Language **1121/2**

Paper 2

Monday **29 OCTOBER 2018**

Additional Material(s):
Candidates answer on the question paper.
No additional materials are required.

Time: 2 hours **Marks: 60**

Instructions to Candidates

- 1 Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided at the top of this page.
- 2 There are **three (3)** questions in this paper. **Answer all the questions.**
- 3 Write your answers in the spaces provided on the question paper.
- 4 Do not start writing until you are told to do so.

Information to Candidates

- 1 Dictionaries and textbooks are not allowed in the examination room.
- 2 Cell phones and calculators are not allowed in the examination room.

For Examiner's Use	
Question 1	
Question 2	
Question 3	
Total	

364

A074

©ECZ/SC/2018/K4
57811212

This question paper consists of 10 printed pages.

Figure 11: 2018 English Paper 2

Answer all three questions

Question 1: Structure (20 Marks)

Answer both Section 1 and 2

Section 1: Vocabulary (10 marks)

From the given four options, choose the one that completes the sentence correctly. Write your answers on the spaces provided. Ensure that your answers are spelt correctly.

Example:

Don't _____ a lot of time on the first part of the examination.

(waist, waste, west, worst)

Answer: Don't waste a lot of time on the first part of the examination.

- 1 The _____ season in Zambia starts in November. [½]
(rain, rains, rainy, reins)
- 2 His _____, the President, will visit our school tomorrow. [½]
(Excellence, Excellency, Excellent, Excellently)
- 3 Zambia needs to process _____ materials before they are exported to other countries. [½]
(law, raw, role, row)
- 4 A lion is an animal of _____. [½]
(play, pray, prey, preys)
- 5 Most learners at Betu Secondary School are _____. [½]
(boarders, bolders, borders, boulders)
- 6 When answering questions, it is advisable to _____ some examples. [½]
(cite, sight, site, sites)
- 7 She is the _____ candidate in the race. [½]
(saw, sole, sore, sow)



- 8 Peace is better than _____ . [½]
(wall, war, whore, wore)
- 9 Will you please pick up that cigarette _____ ? [½]
(bat, but, butt, butts)
- 10 She has _____ down because her head is aching. [½]
(laid, lain, lay, lied)
- 11 The Headteacher has a _____ head. [½]
(bald, board, bold, bored)
- 12 Give me a _____ pipe. I want to water the garden. [½]
(hoarse, horse, hose, hoes)
- 13 Those birds are in _____ to the Northern Hemisphere. [½]
(flight, freight, fright, frights)
- 14 Fine salt is more expensive than _____ salt. [½]
(cause, coarse, course, courses)
- 15 I prefer the _____ alternative to the former. [½]
(later, latter, letter, litter)
- 16 Rotten eggs smell _____. [½]
(fall, foal, foul, fowl)
- 17 People who like milk consume a lot of _____ products. [½]
(daily, dairy, diaries, diary)
- 18 Seeing a policeman, the thief took to his _____. [½]
(heals, heels, hill, hills)
- 19 The _____ left their homeland to another country in the hope of securing a better future for their families. [½]
(emigrants, immigrants, migrants, migrations)
- 20 You can be _____ that all your valuables will be safe with us. [½]
(assured, ensured, insurance, insured)

Section 2: Transformations (10 marks)

In each of the following items, Sentence A is complete, but Sentence B is incomplete. Complete Sentence B each time making it as similar as possible in meaning to Sentence A. Make Sentence B one sentence, never two. Do not make any changes to the printed parts of Sentence B.

Example:

A Chuma broke the mirror.

B The mirror

Answer: The mirror was broken by Chuma.

- 1 A They did not know the situation was serious. They did not take action.
B They would [1]
- 2 A You ought to be punctual for lessons.
B Rewrite this sentence by adding a question tag.
..... [1]
- 3 A She is too lazy a student to catch up.
B She is such [1]
- 4 A It is very likely that vote counting will be concluded this morning.
B That [1]
- 5 A The plane was flown to the nearest airport by the commander.
B The commander [1]
- 6 A We can get sorghum only in Gwembe and Namwala.
B Only [1]



- 7 A The truck is at the garage. The trailers are also at the garage.
The truck, as
..... [1]
- 8 A I was careless to lose my handbag.
It was
..... [1]
- 9 A Jennipher said, "I have to write this exercise today."
Jennipher said that
..... [1]
- 10 A Mwape found the exercise difficult. The teacher assisted her.
Finding
..... [1]

Accept
more forward
equal

Question 2: Comprehension (20 Marks)

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

DISCIPLINE PREREQUISITE TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCY

- 1 Nothing can be achieved where emphasis is only placed on academic training alone without commensurate attention to discipline among students in higher learning institutions.
- 2 Universities and colleges exist for the purpose of training well-disciplined individuals who must propel the engine of economic growth in a country. It is rightly observed that indiscipline in these institutions will affect future students. And it is unfortunate that such indiscipline comes from both students and members of staff; that in itself is not good for the country.
- 3 Where education at all levels fails to do so, a nation may suffer in all areas, including economic, social, cultural, political and religious spheres. Because societal values are important for the survival of any society, educational institutions must embrace discipline as one of their core values if meaningful inculcation of knowledge has to take place.

Society
e-Inst

- 4 Discipline is vital not only to positive academic achievement which parents, lecturers and students themselves cherish and aspire to, but also to the preparations for one's success throughout their life. Therefore, expectations among citizens are that tertiary institutions, whether public or private, should be fully committed to providing students with a high quality educational experience and a community in which we can all live and work. This calls for exemplary behaviour among all stakeholders in colleges and universities.
- 5 For a long time, many people have spoken against the tendency by students in institutions of higher learning to engage in riots, causing damage to property such as university and college buildings and motor vehicles for innocent citizens. Such protests are conducted by students in an attempt to air their grievances which may be a result of delayed meal and project allowances, increased tuition fees or poor sanitary conditions within campuses, among many other reasons. Government officials and members of the public have described such acts as 'lacking respect for leadership and promoting lawlessness and indiscipline.' This is because there is always an opportunity for those aggrieved, their leaders and other stakeholders to sit down and dialogue in order to find a lasting solution to any problem they may be facing.
- 6 Several stakeholders have always insisted that dialogue is the best way of finding amicable solutions to the problems affecting our universities and colleges however grave the challenges affecting them may appear. But the problem of student demonstrations does not seem to die down. Many people have come to label students in tertiary institutions as indisciplined. Strikes and go-slows that are guided by the law are an exception. But engaging in protests that clearly go against the law as well as specific institutional code of conduct amounts to indiscipline.

(An adaption from Daily Mail, January 22, 2018)



In each of the questions 1 – 9, select the best answer from the four options provided. Indicate your answer by drawing a circle around the letter on this question paper as in the example below. If you change your mind, cross out the initial choice neatly and then circle your revised answer clearly. For question 10, answer as instructed.

Example:

This passage is about students' ...

- A behaviour.
- B excellence.
- C discipline.
- D riots.

A is the best answer, and it has been circled.

- 1 Paragraph 1, emphasizes that ... [2]
 - A academic training should be provided to students.
 - B discipline is vital to students during training.
 - C both discipline and academic training should be provided to students.
 - D there is no connection between discipline and academic training.
- 2 According to Paragraph 2, well-disciplined individuals ... [2]
 - A affect economic growth negatively. *
 - B can drive the economy of a country.
 - C do not exist in colleges and universities. *
 - D only exist in colleges and universities.
- 3 According to Paragraph 3, who is responsible for the discipline of individuals? [2]
 - A Educational institutions
 - B Parents *
 - C Religious institutions *
 - D Society
- 4 Paragraph 3, "Where education fails at that level to do so," In this sentence, '... **that level**' refers to a/an ... level. [2]
 - A country's economic
 - B educational institution
 - C social cultural
 - D tertiary education

- 5 According to Paragraph 4, members of the public expect students to ... [2]
A be well educated.
B have good behaviour.
C to cherish themselves.
D to study and work hard.
- 6 Paragraph 5, describes student's ... [2]
A behaviour towards people.
B involvement in solving the problem.
C involvement in riotous behaviour.
D plight in colleges and universities.
- 7 According to Paragraph 5, students can avoid riots by ... [2]
A showing lack of respect for their leaders.
B promoting lawlessness and indiscipline.
C facing problems and their solutions.
D discussing problems with their leaders.
- 8 Paragraph 6: What does the author mean when he says, "Strikes and go-slows that are guided by the law are an exception."
He means that strikes and go-slows can ... the law. [2]
A be allowed by
B give guidance to
C show the way to
D take the place of
- 9 Which one of the following is **true** about the passage? [2]
A Discipline is vital to academic excellence.
B Education is vital to academic excellence.
C Knowledge is the key to success.
D University students like to cause riots.
- 10 For the underlined words in the passage, find one word which **means the same or nearly the same** as the following words or phrases. **Spell the word correctly.**
- (a) Accept [½]
(b) Move forward *propel* [½]
(c) Equal [½]
(d) Habit *habit* [½]



Question 3: Summary (20 Marks)

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the question that follows.

- 1** Many studies and surveys carried out by the government have found that a large percentage of students who abuse drugs and alcohol are teens in high school. Studies done by renowned campaigns like Smart Studies (Yorana FM) have also shed light on the fact that teens and college students have at least experimented with drugs or alcohol at one time or another, even if they do not abuse them.
- 2** Many students become addicted to harmful substances at a young age which can continue into adulthood. A large percentage of people in recovery at drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres are young adults. Abusing harmful substance such as marijuana, heroin and alcohol negatively affects both the physical and mental health of a teenager. Drug and alcohol abuse may lead to various other complications.
- 3** There are many problems caused by drug and alcohol abuse. Some of the most common ones are problems at school which include excessive tiredness, low performance and suspension from school. Others are problems with the law pertaining to breaking curfew and being a public nuisance.
- 4** Alcohol and drug abuse can negatively affect the memory of a student as well as decrease one's ability to pay attention. This may lead to poor academic performance. The problem may worsen as a person grows older. During the teenage years, the brain sheds gray matter to work more efficiently. However, if the brain is exposed to alcohol for example, it is at risk of being smaller in certain parts.
- 5** It has also been found that students who abuse drugs are likely to suffer from various social problems. They have difficulty relating to their peers and are more likely to show anti-social behaviour. The rebellious behaviour of teens is sometimes associated with drug and alcohol abuse. Teenagers who abuse drugs are also likely to steal and get into physical fights.
- 6** Students who abuse drugs and alcohol are more likely to indulge in risky sexual behaviour as well. Evidence has shown that young people who abuse drugs are less likely to use protection during sex and are more likely to have sex with strangers even in school. This considerably increases the chances of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and teenage pregnancy.
- 7** It is clear from these research findings that there are serious repercussions associated with alcohol and drug abuse. It is therefore imperative that teenagers are sensitised about this abuse so that society can have a more productive and responsible generation.

(Adapted from Echo, October, 2017)

5.2.2 Examination Papers for 2021

The 2021 Examination Paper 1, Section A offered candidates a variety of questions aimed at evaluating their inventive, descriptive, expository, and argumentative writing skills. In Section A, candidates were presented with questions that required them to demonstrate their ability to create convincing narratives, such as writing stories with the titles *A Wicked Neighbour* or *An Unrepentant Child*, or concluding a story ending with “ ... that was the end of a strong friendship we had built for over ten years”. Descriptive writing skills were also assessed with a task to describe the most uncomfortable house they had been to, while expository and argumentative skills were assessed through asking them to explain why some parents are strict with their children, and discussing the effects of dependency syndrome to development. Additionally candidates were asked to engage in debating whether schools should engage in business to generate sustainable income. Section B tested the candidates on secretarial minutes writing skills using provided prompts. These questions tested the importance of clear expression, critical thinking, and originality in effective communication



15117238



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level



1121/1

English Language

Paper 1

Wednesday 10 NOVEMBER 2021

Additional Material(s):

Answer Booklet

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Marks: 40

Instructions to Candidates

- 1** Write the centre number and your examination number on every page of the separate Answer Booklet provided.
- 2** There are two sections in this paper. Answer both sections.
- 3** Write your answers in the separate Answer Booklet provided.
- 4** If you use more than one Answer Booklet, fasten the booklets together.

Information for Candidates

- 1** All questions in this paper carry equal marks.
- 2** You should first read through the whole paper.
- 3** You are advised to spend an equal amount of time on each section.
- 4** Do not use pencil. Only blue or black ink should be used.
- 5** Dictionaries and other reference materials are not allowed in the examination room.
- 6** Cell phones and other electronic gadgets are not allowed in the examination room.

©ECZ/SC/2021/P1

This question paper consists of 3 printed pages

Figure 12: 2021 English Paper 1

SECTION A [20 Marks]

You are advised to spend not more than 50 minutes on this section.

Write on **one** of the following topics. You should write between **250** and **350** words. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

- 1 Write a story with one of the following titles:
Either
(a) A Wicked Neighbour
Or
(b) An Unrepentant Child
- 2 Describe the most uncomfortable house you have been to.
- 3 Explain why some parents are strict with their children.
- 4 The Dependency Syndrome is a hindrance to development. **Discuss.**
- 5 Write a story ending: "... that was the end of a strong friendship we had built for over ten years".
- 6 Schools should engage in business in order to generate income to sustain themselves. **Argue for or against** this statement.

SECTION B [20 Marks]

You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

The Debating Society of your school is holding its Annual General Meeting (AGM). As the secretary of the society, you have taken down the following notes in order for you to write the minutes.

AGENDA

- 1 Chairperson's Opening Remarks
- 2 Reading, Correction and Adoption of the Previous Minutes
- 3 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes
- 4 New Business
 - 4.1 Programme of the Year
 - 4.2 Choice of Speakers
 - 4.3 Rules of the Club
- 5 Any Other Business
- 6 Closing Remarks and Prayer

NOTES

- chairperson thanked everyone in attendance
- chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting, asked for volunteers to lead in the singing of the national anthem and prayer
- interclass contests within stream - Term 1
- no absenteeism during meetings
- secretary leads in reading previous minutes
- best speakers in each contest to be chosen
- inter-grade contests – Term 2
- minutes proposed and seconded to be true record of what transpired in previous meeting
- society to meet every Friday afternoon
- society did not go for finals last year
- closing prayer by secretary at 16:35 hours
- no society member to use vernacular during meetings
- contest 4 different schools – Term 3
- society to recruit more members
- in other business - lack of funds hindrance to many activities
- certificates for 4 outgoing members
- members proposed fundraising ventures - spelling contests, essay writing competitions etc.

Using the agenda and the jumbled notes provided, write the minutes. You are free to add your own ideas. The length of the minutes should be between **250** and **350 words**. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

The minutes have been started for you.

MINUTES OF THE DEBATING SOCIETY'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) HELD IN THE SCHOOL HALL ON 23RD OCTOBER, 2021 AT 14.00 HOURS

1.0 Chairperson's Opening Remarks

The Chairperson called the meeting to order by

Centre Number				Examination Number			



16052283



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA



Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level

English Language

1121/2

Paper 2

Wednesday

10 NOVEMBER 2021

Additional Material(s):

Candidates answer on the question paper.
No additional materials are required.

Time: 2 hours

Marks: 60

Instructions to Candidates

1. Write the **centre number** and your **examination number** on **every page** of this question paper.
2. There are **three questions** in this paper. **Answer all the questions.**
3. Write your answers in the spaces provided on the question paper.
4. Do not start writing until you are told to do so.

Information for Candidates

1. Dictionaries and other reference materials are **not allowed** in the examination room.
2. Cell phones and other electronic devices are **not allowed** in the examination room.

For Examiner's Use only	
Question 1	
Question 2	
Question 3	
Total	

©ECZ/SC/2021/P1

This question paper consists of 8 printed pages.

Figure 13: 2021 English Paper 2

Centre Number				Examination Number																			

Answer all three questions

Question 1: Structure (20 Marks)

Answer both Section 1 and Section 2

Section 1: Vocabulary (10 marks)

From the given three options, choose the one that completes the sentence correctly. Write your answers on the spaces provided. Ensure that your answers are spelt correctly.

Example: Don't a lot of time on the first part of the examination. (waist, waste, worst)

Answer: Don't waste a lot of time on the first part of the examination.

- 1 They stayed in the for two days. (dessert, desert, deserter) [½]
- 2 He was told to get the garden in order to water the flowers. (hose, hoarse, horse) [½]
- 3 He was the apparent to the throne. (hare, heir, hair) [½]
- 4 Joan was given a piece of by her parents. (advise, advice, advising) [½]
- 5 The thief who was was finally caught by the police. (illusive, elusive, allusive) [½]
- 6 The doctor gave her a for influenza. (job, jab, jolt) [½]
- 7 The coach told the player to take a deep (breathe, breath, breadth) ½]
- 8 The policeman managed to the truth from the patient. (illicit, elicit, illiterate) [½]
- 9 She was regarded as an freedom fighter. (eminent, imminent, emanate) [½]
- 10 The referee urged the players to demonstrate play. (fare, fair, flare) [½]
- 11 The striker made a prior to scoring the ball. (feint, faint, fend) [½]
- 12 The children's lives were at as there was no one to look after them. (stake, steak, stick) [½]
- 13 The Head of State took a salute during the past on International Women's Day at Heroes Stadium. (march, match, much) [½]
- 14 It was established that many members of the community died of poisoning. (led, lead, lid) [½]

Centre Number				Examination Number																			

- 15 They all gave an to the proposal. (assent, ascent, accent) [½]
- 16 The expert managed to the bomb and the situation came back to normal. (diffuse, defuse, defeat) [½]
- 17 They reached the of the mountain. (pick, peck, peak) [½]
- 18 It is not healthy to eatmeat. (row, role, raw) [½]
- 19 The people on the island took refuge in an (arc, ark, acre) [½]
- 20 That the attacker turned into a cat was a (meth, myth, mirth) [½]

Section 2: Transformations (10 marks)

In each of the following items, Sentence A is complete, but Sentence B is incomplete. Complete Sentence B each time making it as similar as possible in meaning to Sentence A. Make Sentence B one sentence, never two. Do not make any changes to the printed parts of Sentence B.

Example:

- A Human rights must be observed by everyone.
- B What

Answer: B What must be observed by everyone are human rights.

- 1 A The old lady was attended to only when the director intervened.
B Not until [1]
- 2 A Clara was both an actress and a soccer player.
B Besides [1]
- 3 A I am sorry I did not seek the doctor's advice.
B I wish I [1]
- 4 A You need to stop dodging lessons.
B I would rather you [1]
- 5 A She will buy the books provided that you give her the money.
B As long as [1]

Centre Number	Examination Number

- 6 **A** You should not use bad language. [1]
 B You should avoid [1]
- 7 **A** As Charity worked harder, she made more money.
 B The harder [1]
 [1]
- 8 **A** Kitesa accidentally broke the glasses when he was setting the table.
 B Setting [1]
 [1]
- 9 **A** He didn't perform well although he studied hard.
 B despite [1]
 [1]
- 10 **A** Chilinda and seven other students were expelled from the university last year.
 B Chilinda, with [1]
 [1]

Question 2: Comprehension (20 Marks)

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

Nature's Pharmacy

- 1 A chemical in the mucus of frogs has been found to kill certain strains of the influenza virus. The discovery could lead to the development of powerful anti-viral drugs, but many frogs are at risk of extinction. Scientists have discovered a weapon in the fight against the influenza virus, a special chemical found in the mucus of South Indian frogs.
- 2 A species of fungoid frog has the capacity to kill some strains of flu. This is as a result of a molecule known as 'urumin' fittingly named after a traditional Indian-whip-like sword.
- 3 Researchers were able to test the compound on mice. This successfully managed to destroy a number of flu strains including the multi-maligned H1N1 virus, also known as flu, which has previously proved resistant to other drug treatment.
- 4 Frogs are immune to the influenza virus. However, they are vulnerable to bacterial and fungal infections. This knowledge gave researchers a reason to believe that there are peptides on their skins which could help treat the HIV virus in humans. Despite the promising findings, it will take some time before effective medicine becomes available.
- 5 The 'urumin' molecule does not survive long in the human body, meaning researchers will need to find a way to make it more stable. This should be done before it can be used as a treatment option. Luckily, scientists are confident that they will eventually be able to chemically synthesize the compound for use in humans. Meaning frogs are at least safe from being harvested in large quantities for medical purposes.

Centre Number	Examination Number

Question 3: Summary (20 Marks)

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the question that follows.

Floods

- 1 A flood is a large amount of water that covers an area that was dry before. Floods cause displacement of people, destruction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges and houses. Crops and livestock are washed away. Affected families lose most of their household goods especially electronic appliances. Given the magnitude of the destruction caused by floods, more collaborative efforts by global and local partners are necessary to ease immediate challenges through relief food distribution and social cash transfer. Global partners include multi-national corporations. The private sector and faith-based organisations dotted around the country are examples of local partners.
- 2 The destruction of infrastructure, crops and livestock is an economic cost to the country while the displacement of people has caused a humanitarian crisis. People afflicted with floods require emergency aid in form of tents for shelter, blankets and medicines. It is also necessary to prevent an outbreak of waterborne diseases such as dysentery and typhoid. In this regard, water treatment chemicals should be part of the relief. Chlorine is an example of a treatment chemical that ought to be used.
- 3 The Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit has been on the ground. They need more financial support to be able to continue responding quickly to distress calls. Beyond the humanitarian aid, early warning systems that enable people in flood-prone areas to vacate need to be put in place. These, though, require reliable weather forecasting technology that makes timely and accurate predictions of flooding. In addition, it is prudent to build houses that can withstand flooding so that relocated families can return without needing to start rebuilding. According to the Zambia Meteorological Department, torrential rain causes floods in the rainy season in various parts of the country.
- 4 Floods may be an opportunity for employment through mechanisms like rainwater harvesting. Rather than complain about water scarcity during the drier months, this is the perfect opportunity to conserve excess water for future use. Garbage disposal in undesignated places blocks drainages. In the event of drainages getting clogged by silting for example, they should be unblocked forthwith to allow free movement of water. When movement of water is hindered, floods inevitably result. There is definitely need to consider constructing climate-resilient roads like the one from Choma to Namwala.
- 5 There are people still living in places which are flooded every rainy season. Measures should be taken to permanently relocate those communities to safer places. There is no longer any justification for people to continue living in what they may term ancestral places where their forefathers were born. Climate change is real and people should come to terms with realities by doing what is right for themselves.

(Adapted from the Zambia Daily Mail, January 21, 2020)

5.2.3 Examination Papers for 2023

The 2023 English Examination Paper 1 presented a diverse range of questions designed to assess candidates' creativity, analytical skills, and ability to express ideas effectively. Section A presented questions on narrative writing with topics such as “*My brother is an alarmist...*” and other topics like “*The First Cut is the Deepest* and *Make a Mountain out of a Mole Hill*” that encouraged imaginative storytelling. The questions also assessed candidates' ability to engage in descriptive writing on reflective personal experiences of any event that reminded them of motherly love. Further the paper sought to assess candidates' ability to engage in insightful discussion of topical issues such as the causes and prevention of sexual harassment, the impact of social media on societal security, and the complex relationship between love and jealousy. In Section B, the focus shifted to practical communication, where candidates were required to write an informal letter advising a friend in their final year of secondary school on strategies to employ for post-school success. Collectively, these questions not only evaluated linguistic competence but also challenged students to engage with meaningful and relevant themes. Paper 2 Question 1 Section 1 tested candidates on vocabulary. Section 2 had questions on Transformations which tested candidates' ability to apply grammar rules. Question 2 assessed Comprehension skills using a passage entitled “Tigers.”. Question 3 assessed Summary writing skills.



40159535



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA



Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level

English Language

1121/1

Paper 1

Monday 6 NOVEMBER 2023

Additional Material(s)

Answer Booklet

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Marks: 40

Instructions to Candidates

- 1** Write the centre number and your examination number on every page of the separate Answer Booklet provided.
- 2** There are two sections in this paper. Answer both sections.
- 3** Write your answers in the separate Answer Booklet provided.
- 4** If you use more than one Answer Booklet, fasten the booklets together.

Information for Candidates

- 1** All questions in this paper carry equal marks.
- 2** Do not use pencil. Only blue or black ink should be used.
- 3** Dictionaries and other reference materials are not allowed in the examination room.
- 4** Cell phones and other electronic gadgets are not allowed in the examination room.

EECZ/SC/2023/R1

This question paper consists of 2 printed pages

Figure 14: 2023 English Paper 1

SECTION A: [20 MARKS]

You are advised to spend not more than 50 minutes on this section.

Write on **one** of the following topics. You should write between **250** and **350 words**. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

- 1 Write a story which begins with the sentence: "My brother is an alarmist ...".
- 2 Describe any event that reminds you of motherly love.
- 3 Explain the cause of sexual harassment and how the scourge could be stopped.
- 4 Write a story with one of the following titles:
Either
(a) The First Cut is the Deepest
Or
(b) Make a Mountain Out of a Mole Hill
- 5 Social media has brought about a lot of insecurity in our society. **Discuss.**
- 6 There is no true love without jealousy. **Argue for or against** this statement.

SECTION B: [20 MARKS]

You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

Your friend who is in his final grade in secondary school has asked you to advise him on ideas and strategies that would help him thrive after completing school. Write a letter to advise him. You have written down the following notes to help you write the letter.

- identify your talents and potential
- be honest in your dealings
- start small poultry business
- help teach children at local school and church
- stay away from alcohol abuse and women
- look for job as driver
- train at local skills training centre
- do not be naive
- do not rush into marriage
- look for piece of land
- use your time wisely
- avoid bad company
- do not overstretch yourself

Using the notes above, write the letter to your friend. The length of your letter should be between **250** and **350 words**. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

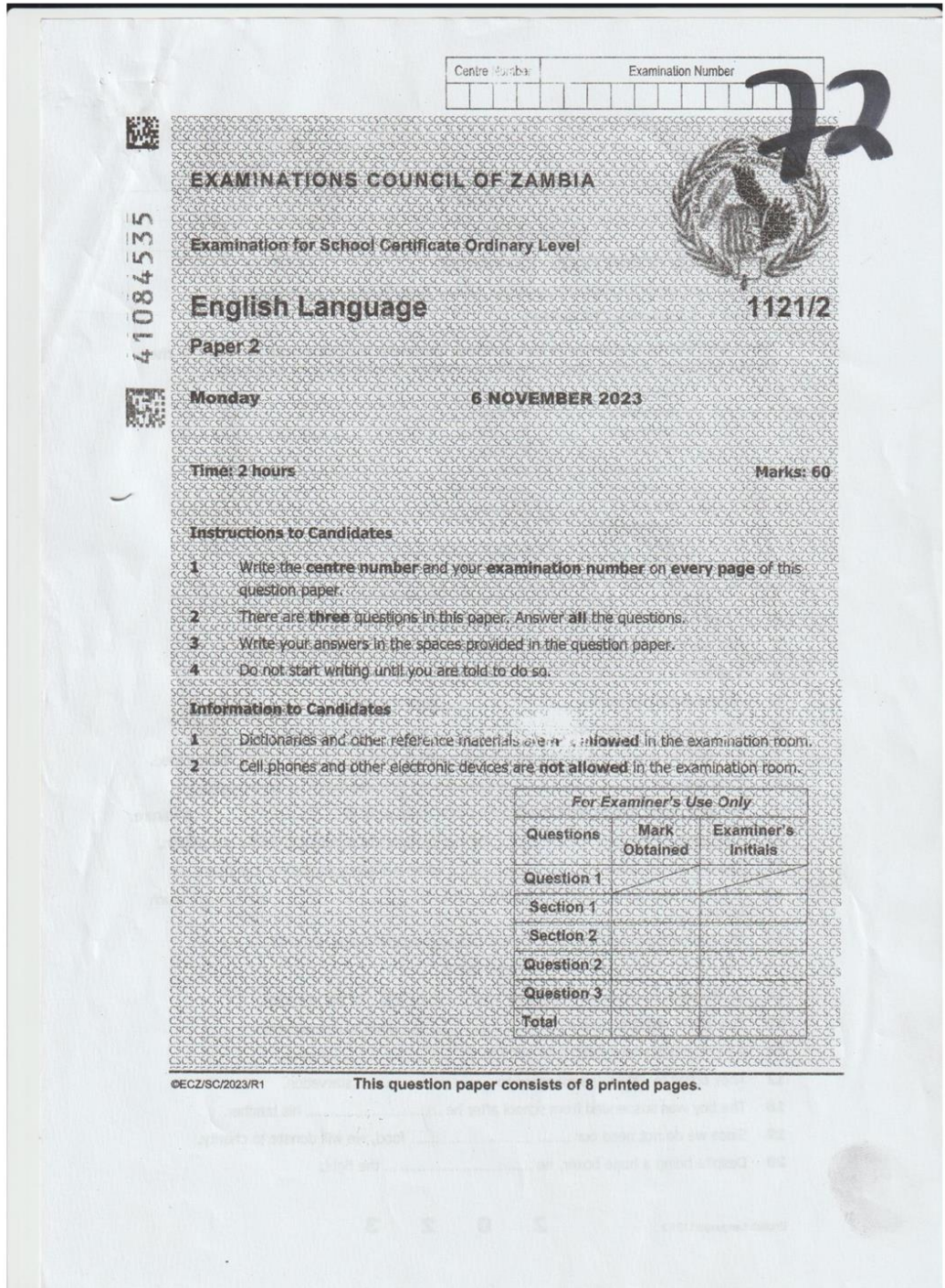


Figure 15: 2023 English Paper 2

Handwritten marks resembling the number '25'.

Centre Number	Examination Number

QUESTION 1: STRUCTURE [20 MARKS]

There are two sections under this question. Answer **both** Section 1 and Section 2.

Section 1: Vocabulary (10 marks)

There are twenty sentences in this section. Complete the sentences by filling in the blanks with one word chosen from the list below. Use each word only once.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| - resist ✓ | - harmony ✓ |
| - monotony ✓ | - defamed ✓ |
| - composite ✓ | - industrious ✓ |
| - despair ✓ | - trumped ✓ |
| - luxurious ✓ | - delay ✓ |
| - avert ✓ | - exquisite ✓ |
| - lost ✓ | - advance ✓ |
| - melodious ✓ | - surplus ✓ |
| - virtue ✓ | - urge ✓ |
| - strict ✓ | - pessimistic ✓ |

- 1 The to laugh could not be overcome.
- 2 He who does not falls back.
- 3 The teacher was flattered with an gift by the learners.
- 4 The play is a of reality and fact.
- 5 Ntwala is famous for his gospel music.
- 6 Mr Mude was arrested on up corruption charges.
- 7 The businessman's idea of tempting a police officer with a house failed.
- 8 Zambians are people striving to make their country prosperous.
- 9 We must never lose sight of the fact that man must work in with nature.
- 10 The cause of the for her to report to school was traffic congestion.
- 11 The old woman cried in when her son collapsed on the floor.
- 12 The head teacher advised the repeaters not to be but to work much harder.
- 13 Mbangweta's engagement in volleyball training sessions helps her to break the of her household chores.
- 14 Mr Mubanga has been promoted by of his integrity.
- 15 The school regulations are but open to amendments.
- 16 A healthy diet should help your body to infection.
- 17 They opted to eat unripe mangoes to starvation.
- 18 The boy was suspended from school after he his teacher.
- 19 Since we do not need our food, we will donate to charity.
- 20 Despite being a huge boxer, he the fight.

Centre Number	Examination Number

Section 2: Transformations (10 marks)

In each of the following items, Sentence A is complete, but Sentence B is incomplete. Complete Sentence B each time making it as similar as possible in meaning to Sentence A. Make Sentence B one sentence, never two. Do not make any changes to the printed parts of Sentence B.

Example:

A Human rights must be observed by everyone.

B What

Answer: What must be observed by everyone are human rights.

- 1 **A** Dabwitso is a better singer than Chanda.
B Chanda is not as [1]
- 2 **A** She said, "I submitted my Geography assignment late yesterday."
B She said that [1]
- 3 **A** After the learners had written the exercise, the teacher permitted them to go outside.
B Having [1]
- 4 **A** My niece would have seen me if it had not been for the huge crowd.
B But for [1]
- 5 **A** Please stop making noise.
B Rewrite the whole sentence and add a question tag. [1]
- 6 **A** Both my mother and I enjoyed ourselves at the wedding.
B My mother enjoyed herself at the wedding and so [1]
- 7 **A** The cleanest class was taken for an outing by the matron.
B The matron [1]
- 8 **A** I received a cake and got a bicycle for my birthday.
B Apart from [1]

Centre Number					Examination Number				

- 9 A Chewe's sister has been awarded a scholarship to study in Malaysia. Chewe is my friend.
 B Chewe, [1]
- 10 A Since the manager was new, the secretary introduced him to the members of staff.
 B The manager..... [1]

QUESTION 2: COMPREHENSION [20 MARKS]

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

TIGERS

- The tiger is the largest living cat species. It is territorial and generally a solitary predator requiring huge adjacent areas to support its requirements for prey. The tiger usually hunts by night and preys on a variety of animals. It prefers fairly large prey such as deer and wild pigs. Healthy, large animals are avoided in most cases. After making a kill and consuming what it can, the tiger makes a deliberate attempt to hide the carcass from vultures and other scavengers so that another meal can be obtained.
- Tigers can get a kill by force from leopards and they sometimes eat carrion. Skill in killing and obtaining prey is only partly instinctive, maternal training being essential for proficiency. For this reason, tigers raised in captivity do not fare well if released into the wild. As the top predator throughout its range, the tiger plays a major role in controlling not only its prey population but also that of other predators such as the leopard. The tiger resorts to man-eating owing to disability caused by age or injury, scarcity of prey, acquisition of the habit from the mother or defence of its cubs or kill.
- When the tigress is expecting her cubs, she seeks out a suitable den, well hidden by thick vegetation. From there, the tigress now enjoys a view down onto a plain with a water hole that attracts other animals. She selects this spot so that she can hunt for food without being far from her cubs. From birth, the cubs receive lots of attention. Throughout their infancy, their mother cuddles them between her paws, nuzzles them and licks them as she murmurs softly. When the cubs get older, they begin to play hide-and-seek and fight mock battles.
- Among tigers, aggression is rare. For instance, a young tiger may wander into the territory of another tiger and bump into the resident male. Deep growls, blood curdling roars and fierce nose-to-nose snarling ensue but when the older male shows his superiority, the younger one will roll onto his back with his paws in the air as a sign of submission and the confrontation is over.
- Poaching has been responsible for keeping the number of tigers low during the past three decades. Forests and grasslands are habitats for prey but these are sadly cleared for agriculture. Reduction in prey population results in greater dependence on livestock and the

Centre Number	Examination Number

consequent retribution from man. Fortunately, the status of the tiger has aroused widespread empathy and its cause has received substantial international support.

- 6 The World Wide Fund for Nature has been a pioneer and the largest contributor along with corporate donors and non-governmental organisations. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species is entrusted with the task of controlling illegal trade in tiger derivatives.
- 7 In the 1970s, the trade in tiger skins was outlawed. Nevertheless, tiger skins are still highly valued for display and for worship as are claws and teeth. Skulls, bones, whiskers, meat and blood have long been used by Asians, especially the Chinese, in medicines, potions and even wine. There are persistent practices of using tiger parts as medicine or tonics despite scientific evidence being contrary to their efficacy. Every twelfth year of the Chinese calendar is the year of the tiger and children born in it are considered lucky and powerful.

(Adapted from Encyclopedia Britannica-Panthera Tigris)

In each of the questions 1 – 9, select the best answer from the four options provided. Indicate your answer by drawing a circle around the letter on the question paper as in the example given below. If you change your mind, cross out the initial choice very neatly then circle your revised answer clearly. For Question 10, answer as instructed.

Example:

The tiger ...

- A is generally a solitary predator.
- B is the largest living creature.
- C preys on limited animal species.
- D usually hunts during the day.

A is the best answer and, it has been circled.

- 1 Paragraph 1: The tiger requires huge adjacent areas in which to ... [2]
- A establish its territorial supremacy.
 - B hunt for animals to feed on.
 - C rear its offsprings.
 - D support its solitary requirements.
- 2 According to Paragraph 2, tigers raised in captivity do not fare well if released into the wild because they have not had ... [2]
- A fathers to train them to be proficient in killing and obtaining prey.
 - B maternal training to enable them to challenge other predators.
 - C mothers to train them to be highly skilful hunters.
 - D parental training to enable them to successfully relate well with their companions.

Centre Number				Examination Number											

- 3 Paragraph 2: As the top predator throughout its range, the tiger plays a major role in controlling ... [2]
A its own population and other predators.
B its prey population and that of other predators.
C not only its prey population but also that of leopards.
D only its prey population in the jungle.
- 4 Which one of the following statements is not given as a reason for becoming man-eaters according to Paragraph 2? [2]
A Disability resulting from old age or injury
B Inheriting the habit from its mother
C Protection of its cubs or kill
D Scarcity of other predators
- 5 Paragraph 3: When the tigress is expecting her cubs, she seeks out a suitable den in ... [2]
A an elevated dense forest.
B a low lying thick forest.
C a plain near a water hole.
D a well hidden dambo area.
- 6 What has caused a decline in the number of tigers in the past three decades according to Paragraph 5? [2]
A Deforestation due to agriculture
B Illegal killing by man
C Legitimate poaching
D Natural calamities
- 7 Paragraph 6: The World Wide Fund for Nature has ... [2]
A aroused widespread empathy for tigers.
B offered tremendous support towards the sustenance of tigers.
C received substantial international support.
D recently pioneered trade in tiger derivatives.
- 8 Paragraph 7: In the 1970s, trade in tiger skins was ... [2]
A forbidden.
B highly valued.
C protected by law.
D reintroduced.
- 9 According to Paragraph 7, scientific evidence indicates that medicines and tonics made from tiger parts ... [2]
A are contrary to conventional beliefs.
B are ineffective.
C can eradicate diseases.
D give desired results.

Centre Number	Examination Number

10 From the underlined words in the passage, find one word which means the same or nearly the same as the following words or phrases:
(spell each word correctly)

- (i) Punishment [½]
- (ii) Angry sounds..... [½]
- (iii) Determined [½]
- (iv) Very good skill [½]

QUESTION 3: SUMMARY [20 MARKS]

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the question that follows.

- 1 Impatience has been around for a long time. There is nothing new about people losing their patience while stuck in traffic or waiting in a queue. Everyone is likely to become impatient occasionally but there may be serious consequences when bouts of impatience are an everyday occurrence.
- 2 Some analysts suggest that in recent years, many people are less patient because of technology. The instant results we get from this technology have in turn increased our appetite for instant gratification in different aspects. Impatience causes frustration, irritation and even anger which lead to raised stress levels. It is also a risk factor for hypertension, even among young adults.
- 3 There are other health problems associated with lack of patience. Researchers found that impatient individuals are more likely to be obese than people who are good at waiting. In some areas, inexpensive fast food is easily available at all times of the day and many impatient people cannot resist the temptation.
- 4 Impatient people are likely to be chronic procrastinators. Could be that they feel compelled to postpone time consuming tasks because they do not have the patience needed to bring the tasks to completion? At any rate, the tendency to postpone can have serious consequences for the procrastinator as well as for the economy.
- 5 The Echo, a British newspaper, reveals that people who were impatient were more likely to drink alcohol heavily and were prone to violence. This was concluded after noticing that impatient people were more involved in late-night drink fuelled violence. Such people also often made quick and shallow choices. An expert explains that impatience will cost you. It can cost you money, causing you pain and suffering or any number of consequences.
- 6 Some impatient newly weds may want to have all the comforts of a home soon after the wedding despite limited finances, so they buy the house, the furniture, the car and everything else on credit. This practice can harm the marriage. Impatience in this case will lead to higher debt levels. Some people have blamed impatience for causing an economic crash. For instance, thousands of ordinary people sought to borrow collectively immense sums that they could not hope to repay for many years and in some cases, ever.

5.2.4 Teachers' Perspectives on the Quality of Grade 12 Examination Questions

To establish the quality of the examination questions, data was also collected through interviews with teachers. Thus, there was triangulation of data through the collection of documentary data and interview data. During interviews, teachers were asked to share their perspectives on the quality of grade 12 examination questions. A number of views were given ranging from positive to negative including the fact that some teachers claimed that they were not aware of the quality of the questions despite teaching English at secondary school. Data is presented under key themes as follows:

5.2.5 Positive Perceptions about the Quality of Examination Questions

Teachers expressed both positive and negative perceptions regarding the quality of Grade 12 English examination questions. They highlighted certain aspects about the questions that qualified them as positive as well as those that qualified as negative. Their viewpoints were classified into themes. The following insights reflect these differing perspectives:

5.2.5.1 Examination Questions are Uniformly Equitable

Respondents reported that examination questions were of good quality because they were uniform and fair to everyone. According to the respondents, examination questions are of good quality if all learners are subjected to the same questions under the same examination regulations regardless of the socio economic background of the learner. Here is what some respondents said:

You find that examination candidates are subjected to the same questions which simply means all are assessed on the same content areas. I strongly feel that there is justice and fairness regarding conditions under which examinations are administered here in Zambia. (T15S5).

5.2.5.2 Examination questions are of good quality because they are set by trained teachers.

Some respondents explained that grade 12 examination questions were of good quality because they were set by teachers who were trained by examination council of Zambia. According to these respondents, examination questions are of high quality because the people who are asked to set have undergone training by the examining body. Below are some of the responses:

The examination quality as far as I am concerned is alright especially that the people who set these examinations are trained by ECZ, so they know the standards that should be observed in setting these papers. (T17S6).

The papers are up to standard, but the quality of learners is not standard. A child who passes a Zambian English examination on his/her own should meet the standard anywhere in the world. (HOD6S6).

5.2.5.3 Questions in the Examination papers are consistent with the syllabus content

Some respondents explained that grade 12 examination questions were of good quality because the questions tested the content that is covered at senior secondary level as outlined in the syllabus. There were no questions that were set outside what learners cover in the three years of senior secondary. Here is what they said:

I can say that the quality of examination papers is good because they are aligned with the current Zambian English syllabus. (HOD3S3).

The papers are designed to test a broad range of skills as outlined in the syllabus (T13S5).

5.2.5.4 Examination Questions also Test Critical Thinking

The respondents further clarified that the quality of examination questions was good as they also take into account and test critical thinking and problem solving skills through Paper 1 which involves essay writing and Paper 2 through comprehension questions. The following are some of the responses:

Definitely there are some sections in the examinations that assess critical thinking and problem solving skills. In paper 1 we have composition questions. To answer these questions, candidates need to analyse the scenario and link textual content in order to answer them appropriately. (NE1).

5.2.6 Negative Perceptions about the Quality of Examination Questions

5.2.6.1 Same Questions Being Repeated in Different Examination Years

It had been observed by the participants that sometimes questions were repeated wholesomely without changing anything in the way the questions were formulated. Respondents explained that if pupils saw questions that they had encountered before, they may remember the questions and possibly the answers that were given. They added that this tendency had the possibility of affecting learner performance including

advantaging some while disadvantaging others. The following are some of the responses which they gave:

Much as the examination papers are said to be quality to a large extent, there have been incidences where questions have been repeated especially in paper 2. A child who is smart and has taken time to review examination papers for at least three or four years can easily get a merit. (HOD1S1).

This tendency of repeating questions encourages teachers to teach examinations instead of content because teachers can somehow predict what topics are likely to be examined. (HOD6S6).

I cannot just remember the exact year when section 1, question 1 was repeated exactly as it was presented in another year. We were actually very surprised as teachers that the exact same items were put in the paper. (T1S1).

5.2.6.2 Some Questions are Ambiguous and Lack Clarity

Some respondents explained that the questions sometimes were ambiguous and not very clear which made it difficult for learners to understand the questions leading to misinterpretation of the questions. Respondents further explained that ambiguous questions led to some pupils giving wrong answers. Below are the selected verbatim:

There are times that the examination questions are not quite clear. They tend to be ambiguous and sometimes complex too. These questions unfortunately tend to disadvantage learners with limited language proficiency like our learners in this locality where English is never spoken at home. (HOD2S2).

Some questions are straightforward, but others are tricky especially in Paper 1 section A, proverb titles are subject to misinterpretation. (HOD4S4).

5.2.6.3 Lack of knowledge of the quality of the examination papers by some participants

Some respondents explained that they lacked knowledge about the quality of examination papers and questions. They further said that they only knew that examination papers were set and administered annually by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. However, they stated that they had never paid attention to analysing the quality of the papers. Here is what some respondents said:

I really do not know what the quality of examination papers is, so I cannot say anything. (T18S6).

To be quite honest, I have never bothered to analyse the examination papers to be in position to make a concrete comment. (T3S1).

I have never bothered to check the quality of these papers. I will take keen interest in future. (T12S4).

I do use past papers for revision with the learners, but I have never cared to check their quality except that I find them helpful to use after a topic is taught. (T7S3).

I do not know what to say about the quality of examination papers. (T5S2).

5. 3 How is the performance of Grade 12 pupils in English in the Copperbelt Province?

The second objective sought to analyse the performance of grade 12 learners in the Copperbelt Province. In order to answer the research question, data was collected through documents (Grade 12 examination results statistics for the Copperbelt Province) and interviews with teachers, pupils, and selected Grade 12 examiners. This section presents the data in two subsections: the first provides statistical data, while the second presents narrative data collected through interviews.

5.3.1 Grade 12 Pupils' Examination Performance from 2018 to 2023 in the Copperbelt Province

Below are statistics showing Grade 12 pupils' performance in the English language for the period 2018 to 2023. The section also presents data showing statistics of pupils who performed poorly in the English language for the six year period. As explained in chapter one, poor performance in this study refers to performance grades of 7, 8 and 9.

Table 16: Grade 12 Provincial result statistics

Copperbelt

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	Absent	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9
2018	FEMALES	13583	13367	216	718	888	2222	1034	1036	2154	2065	1895	1355
2018	MALES	13131	12904	227	415	673	2093	964	1025	2208	2081	1929	1516
2019	FEMALES	14091	13802	289	877	861	2325	1454	1259	2573	1911	1550	992
2019	MALES	13530	13189	341	624	745	1974	1263	1044	2484	1936	1696	1423
2020	FEMALES	15750	15429	321	795	1154	3050	1189	1231	2899	1533	1646	1932
2020	MALES	14507	14174	333	396	963	2567	978	1060	2556	1499	1707	2448
2021	FEMALES	13546	13314	232	727	1027	2357	1049	1113	2510	1884	1649	998
2021	MALES	12007	11757	250	428	685	1993	866	1033	2114	1708	1617	1313
2022	FEMALES	13091	12872	219	709	1193	3171	843	1312	2349	1581	1081	633
2022	MALES	11788	11582	206	335	807	2572	790	1166	2232	1694	1196	790
2023	FEMALES	17482	17176	306	1162	1300	3134	1719	1448	3772	2220	1617	804
2023	MALES	15244	14937	307	926	1069	2479	1354	1134	3058	2066	1727	1124
			164503	3247	8112	11365	29937	13503	13861	30909	22178	19310	15328

Table 16 shows the Grade 12 examination statistics for the Copperbelt Province from 2018 to 2023, categorized by gender. It includes the total number of pupils who entered the examination, those who sat, and those who were absent each year. The results are further broken down into performance grades (G1 to G9), showing the number of pupils achieving each grade. Over the years, the number of pupils entering and sitting for examinations fluctuated, with a general trend of more female candidates than males. The distribution of grades suggests variations in performance across different years and between genders.

Table 17: Summary of Provincial Results

YEAR	NO. SAT	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	TOTAL FAIL
2018	26271	1133	1561	4315	1998	2061	4362	4146	3824	2871	2871
2019	26991	1501	1606	4299	2717	2303	5057	3847	3246	2415	2415
2020	29603	1191	2117	5617	2167	2291	5455	3032	3353	4380	4380
2021	25071	1155	1712	4350	1915	2146	4624	3592	3266	2311	2311
2022	24454	1044	2000	5743	1633	2478	4581	3275	2277	1423	1423
2023	32113	2088	2369	5613	3073	2582	6830	4286	3344	1928	1928

Source: ECZ

Table 17 shows the summary of the provincial Grade 12 examination results from 2018 to 2023, showing the number of candidates who sat for the examinations and their distribution across different grades (G1 to G9). The highest-performing pupils fell under G1, while G9 represents the lowest scores. The **"TOTAL FAIL"** column indicates the number of pupils who failed English completely. Over the years, the number of candidates fluctuated, with the highest number recorded in 2023. The trend in grades suggests variations in performance, with some years showing higher numbers of failures compared to others.

Table 18: Grade 12 Provincial Cumulative Result Statistics for Grades 7, 8 and 9

YEAR	NO. SAT	G7	G8	G9	ACTUAL NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO PERFORMED POORLY	CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE OF POOR PERFORMANCE
2018	26, 271	4,146	3, 824	2, 871	10, 841	41.27
2019	26, 991	3, 847	3, 246	2, 415	9, 508	35.23
2020	29, 603	3, 032	3, 353	4, 380	10, 765	36.37
2021	25, 071	3, 592	3, 353	4, 380	9, 975	36.58
2022	24, 454	3, 275	2, 277	1, 423	6, 975	28.52
2023	32,113	4, 286	3, 344	1, 928	9, 558	29.76
	164,503	22,178	19, 310	15,328	56,816	34.54

Source: ECZ

Table 18 shows the Grade 12 provincial cumulative statistics for poor performance (G7, G8, and G9) from 2018 to 2023. It shows the number of candidates who sat for the examinations, the actual number of pupils who performed poorly, and the cumulative percentage of poor performance each year. The percentage of poor performance fluctuated, peaking at 41.27% in 2018 and declining to 28.52% in 2022. This trend

suggests some improvement in performance over the years, though fluctuations remained.

For the period 2018 – 2023, **164, 503** pupils sat for the English language national examinations. From the statistics presented, a total of **15, 328 (Unsatisfactory)** pupils failed English completely translating to **9.32%**. For the same period under review.

56, 816 pupils translating to **34. 54%** accumulatively performed poorly in English. However, **19,477** translating to **11. 84%** out of 164,503 pupils obtained Division 1 and 2 (**Distinctions**). Nevertheless, the number of pupils who performed poorly was higher than the number of those who performed well. Therefore, the province’s performance in English was **below satisfactory** due to the discrepancy in the number of pupils who performed poorly in relation to those who obtained distinctions.

5.3.2 Examination results for 2018 to 2023 Per School

This section presents an analysis of Grade 12 English examination results in the Copperbelt Province for the period 2018–2023. The analysis examines performance trends, pass rates, and patterns of achievement to identify significant variations over the years. The results presented are for the eight schools that were sampled. By exploring statistical data alongside qualitative insights from key stakeholders, this section aims to highlight factors influencing learner outcomes. The findings provide a foundation for understanding performance fluctuations and inform discussions on strategies for improving English proficiency and examination success.

Poor Performance is considered from Grade 7 (G7) to Grade 9 (G9). Percentages are calculated relative to the total number of pupils who sat for examinations each year. **Cumulative Poor Performance Percentage** is the sum of all pupils in G7-G9 divided by the total number of pupils who sat. For each school, a summary of poor performance is presented in a table format.

5.3.2.1 Examination Results for School 1

The school is a government co-education day institution that serves both boys and girls and is located in the peri-urban part of the town. Located in the peri-urban setting, the school caters for pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds. Some pupils walk to school while others access the school by public transport. It is a grade 2 school.

:

Table 19: School 1 Grade Distribution

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9	Abs
2018	MALES	318	314	6	17	34	21	24	52	54	44	61	0
2018	FEMALES	319	317	9	15	50	22	27	51	65	36	41	0
2018	TOTAL	637	631	15	32	84	43	51	103	119	80	102	0
2019	MALES	303	296	2	8	27	19	17	47	42	58	76	0
2019	FEMALES	319	310	1	6	36	28	24	55	52	62	46	0
2019	TOTAL	622	606	3	14	63	47	41	102	94	120	122	1
2020	MALES	213	209	2	14	27	11	12	28	20	32	63	0
2020	FEMALES	251	246	3	8	46	30	16	46	21	30	46	0
2020	TOTAL	464	455	5	22	73	41	28	74	41	62	109	0
2021	MALES	170	169	3	6	25	10	13	38	37	23	14	0
2021	FEMALES	156	153	2	6	29	15	19	42	20	15	5	0
2021	TOTAL	326	322	5	12	54	25	32	80	57	38	19	0
2022	MALES	158	156	3	4	28	6	17	36	35	14	13	0
2022	FEMALES	180	179	1	9	43	9	16	38	30	22	11	0
2022	TOTAL	338	335	4	13	71	15	33	74	65	36	24	0
2023	MALES	199	197	7	10	24	17	17	41	43	24	14	0
2023	FEMALES	190	190	2	13	31	19	13	46	27	22	17	0
2023	TOTAL	389	387	9	23	55	36	30	87	70	46	31	0

Table 20: School 1 Cumulative Poor Performance

Year	No. Sat	G7	G7 %	G8	G8 %	G9	G9 %	Cumulative %
2018	631	119	18.86	80	12.68	102	16.16	47.45
2019	606	94	15.51	120	19.80	122	20.13	55.45
2020	455	41	9.01	62	13.63	109	23.96	46.59
2021	322	57	17.70	38	11.80	19	5.90	35.40
2022	335	65	19.40	36	10.75	24	7.16	59.40
2023	387	70	18.09	46	11.89	31	8.01	38.24

The percentage of pupils obtaining poor grades (G7–G9) is notably high in all years. G9 (fail) was highest in 2020 (23.96%) and 2019 (20.13%), showing a decline in later years. G7 and G8 percentages remained consistently high for six years. Over the six years 446 pupils obtained G7, 382 obtained G8 and 407 pupils obtained G9 totalling to 1235 pupils who performed poorly. **2, 736** pupils sat for English examinations and **1, 235** pupils performed poorly translating **45.14%** of pupils who performed poorly for the period under review.

5.3.2.2 Examinations Results for School 2

The school is a grade 1 co-education day institution that serves both boys and girls. Located in the urban area and one of the most densely populated areas of the city, the school caters for pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds. The school is accessible either by walking or by public transport.

Table 21: School 2 Grade Distribution

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9	Abs
2018	MALES	338	334	5	13	59	21	19	59	61	60	36	0
2018	FEMALES	235	230	2	13	40	15	21	41	36	36	25	0
2018	TOTAL	573	564	7	26	99	36	40	100	97	96	61	0
2019	MALES	367	357	5	6	52	36	35	89	47	58	29	1
2019	FEMALES	345	341	3	4	45	39	28	85	65	52	20	0
2019	TOTAL	712	698	8	10	97	75	63	174	112	110	49	1
2020	MALES	206	201	11	20	53	11	18	30	12	26	20	0
2020	FEMALES	195	192	14	31	53	7	11	41	14	9	12	0
2020	TOTAL	401	393	25	51	106	18	29	71	26	35	32	0
2021	MALES	227	222	1	6	23	14	23	46	50	39	20	0
2021	FEMALES	225	223	1	4	24	18	28	51	36	44	17	0
2021	TOTAL	452	445	2	10	47	32	51	97	86	83	37	0
2022	MALES	209	207	1	3	32	9	27	48	36	38	13	0
2022	FEMALES	206	203	0	9	45	14	16	47	40	25	7	0
2022	TOTAL	415	410	1	12	77	23	43	95	76	63	20	0
2023	MALES	259	256	5	9	32	25	22	48	35	43	37	0
2023	FEMALES	240	237	1	14	46	34	19	74	31	12	6	0
2023	TOTAL	499	493	6	23	78	59	41	122	66	55	43	0

Table 22: School 2 Cumulative Poor Performance

Year	No. Sat	G7	G7 %	G8	G8 %	G9	G9 %	Cumulative %
2018	564	97	17.20	96	17.02	61	10.82	45.04
2019	698	112	16.05	110	15.76	49	7.02	41.60
2020	393	26	6.62	35	8.91	32	8.14	37.34
2021	445	86	19.33	83	18.65	37	8.31	39.24
2022	410	76	18.54	63	15.37	20	4.88	39.16
2023	493	66	13.39	55	11.16	43	8.72	38.20

There is a considerable percentage of pupils in G7-G9 across all the years, which suggests a struggle in achieving higher grades. The highest failure rate G9 (10.82%) was in 2018 where 61 pupils out of 564 pupils that sat for examinations failed completely. It is also worth noting that in 2023, the proportion of male pupils obtaining a Grade 9 increased to 14.5%, indicating a decline in performance. Out of the **3,003** pupils who sat for the English national examinations, 463 obtained a Grade 7, 442 obtained a Grade 8, and 242 obtained a Grade 9. In total, **1,147** pupils (**38.2%**) performed poorly during the period under review.

5.3.2.3 Examinations Results for School 3

This is a grade 2 rural school located in the outskirts of town. It is far from town. It is a co-educational government day institution that caters for both boys and girls from different socio-economic backgrounds. Being far from the town centre, most of the learners have to walk long distances to come to school.

Table 23: School 3 Grade Distribution

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9
2018	MALES	78	76	1	1	8	6	14	12	17	10	7
2018	FEMALES	109	107	3	1	8	9	11	18	23	25	9
2018	TOTAL	187	183	4	2	16	15	25	30	40	35	16
2019	MALES	132	127	0	0	2	6	4	18	21	34	42
2019	FEMALES	116	108	1	0	6	4	1	24	23	24	25
2019	TOTAL	248	235	1	0	8	10	5	42	44	58	67
2020	MALES	118	113	3	4	13	8	3	10	11	17	44
2020	FEMALES	129	124	0	2	17	5	9	25	13	19	34
2020	TOTAL	247	237	3	6	30	13	12	35	24	36	78
2021	FEMALES	109	104	0	2	7	3	10	18	11	18	35
2021	MALES	129	127	2	1	12	7	10	24	22	23	26
2021	TOTAL	238	231	2	3	19	10	20	42	33	41	61
2022	MALES	94	90	0	1	7	3	9	18	17	17	18
2022	FEMALES	114	110	0	2	12	5	7	29	17	13	25
2022	TOTAL	208	200	0	3	19	8	16	47	34	30	43
2023	MALES	152	148	0	1	9	4	8	36	19	37	34
2023	FEMALES	226	222	2	2	10	11	14	46	46	49	42
2023	TOTAL	378	370	2	3	19	15	22	82	65	86	76

Table 24: School 3: Cumulative Poor Performance

Year	No. Sat	G7	G7 %	G8	G8 %	G9	G9 %	Cumulative %
2018	183	40	21.86	35	19.13	16	8.74	49.73
2019	235	44	18.72	58	24.68	67	28.51	71.91
2020	237	24	10.13	36	15.19	78	32.91	58.23
2021	231	33	14.29	41	17.75	61	26.41	58.44
2022	200	34	17.00	30	15.00	43	21.50	53.50
2023	370	65	17.57	86	23.24	76	20.54	61.35

There is a considerable percentage of pupils in G7- G9 across all the years. The highest G9 grades were recorded in 2020. **1, 456** pupils sat for the English language national examinations and 240 obtained G7, 286 obtained G8 and 341 obtained G9 totalling **867** pupils (**59.55%**) who performed poorly during the period under review.

5.3.2.4 Examinations Results for School 4

This is an urban grade 1 school located very close to the town centre. It is a co-educational government day school serving both boys and girls from near and far. Some pupils access the school easily because of its central location while others walk some distance to school or travel by public travel.

Table 25: School 4 Grade Distribution

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9	Abs
2018	MALES	189	185	4	2	21	22	16	36	34	30	20	0
2018	FEMALES	191	182	4	11	32	13	18	44	28	17	15	0
2018	TOTAL	380	367	8	13	53	35	34	80	62	47	35	1
2019	MALES	236	234	2	11	16	14	12	36	49	47	47	0
2019	FEMALES	246	243	3	10	35	30	19	51	38	36	21	0
2019	TOTAL	482	477	5	21	51	44	31	87	87	83	68	0
2020	MALES	251	247	1	4	23	18	14	52	26	36	73	0
2020	FEMALES	235	233	1	3	25	19	27	63	27	23	45	0
2020	TOTAL	486	480	2	7	48	37	41	115	53	59	118	0
2021	MALES	170	167	1	4	23	13	17	40	39	22	8	0
2021	FEMALES	157	155	0	1	29	10	28	37	23	22	5	0
2021	TOTAL	327	322	1	5	52	23	45	77	62	44	13	0
2022	MALES	173	172	0	3	34	13	28	40	27	18	9	0
2022	FEMALES	168	165	3	6	49	14	21	38	22	7	4	0
2022	TOTAL	341	337	3	9	83	27	49	78	49	25	13	0
2023	MALES	233	227	8	12	48	29	22	50	29	15	14	0
2023	FEMALES	227	219	8	9	54	29	29	55	26	7	2	0
2023	TOTAL	460	446	16	21	102	58	51	105	55	22	16	1

Table 26: School 4 Cumulative Poor Performance

Year	No. Sat	G7	G7 %	G8	G8 %	G9	G9 %	Cumulative %
2018	367	62	16.89	47	12.81	35	9.54	39.24
2019	477	87	18.24	83	17.40	68	14.26	49.90
2020	480	53	11.04	59	12.29	118	24.58	47.92
2021	322	62	19.25	44	13.66	13	4.04	36.96
2022	337	49	14.54	25	7.42	13	3.86	25.82
2023	446	55	12.33	22	4.93	16	3.59	20.85

The data from 2018 to 2023 indicates a notable decline in the cumulative percentage of pupils achieving grades G7, G8, and G9. In 2018, the cumulative percentage was 39.24%, which increased to 49.90% in 2019. However, from 2020 onwards, there has been a consistent decrease, reaching a low of 20.85% in 2023. **2,428** pupils sat for the English language national examinations and 368 obtained G7, 280 obtained G8, and 263 obtained G9 totalling **911** pupils (**37.52%**) who performed poorly during the period under review. Generally, the cumulative poor performance for the six year period was relatively high.

5.3.2.5 Examinations Results for School 5

The school is a rural school. It is a grade 1 co-educational government day school serving both boys and girls. Most pupils come from different parts and have to walk to the school. It is situated in a densely populated area.

Table 27: School 5 Grade Distribution

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9	Abs
2018	MALES	153	153	1	2	18	9	11	27	32	20	33	0
2018	FEMALES	165	164	1	5	20	10	12	25	23	41	27	0
2018	TOTAL	318	317	2	7	38	19	23	52	55	61	60	0
2019	MALES	77	76	0	5	11	5	11	17	14	12	1	0
2019	FEMALES	93	92	5	10	22	10	12	19	8	3	3	0
2019	TOTAL	170	168	5	15	33	15	23	36	22	15	4	0
2020	MALES	121	120	0	5	16	4	6	23	20	20	26	0
2020	FEMALES	122	121	4	6	20	4	16	28	7	20	16	0
2020	TOTAL	243	241	4	11	36	8	22	51	27	40	42	0
2021	MALES	118	110	1	4	20	8	9	20	16	21	11	0
2021	FEMALES	108	103	1	7	15	10	11	26	17	14	2	0
2021	TOTAL	226	213	2	11	35	18	20	46	33	35	13	1
2022	MALES	69	68	0	1	12	3	6	15	13	9	9	0
2022	FEMALES	77	73	0	4	12	6	9	16	11	10	5	0
2022	TOTAL	146	141	0	5	24	9	15	31	24	19	14	0
2023	MALES	81	80	1	3	18	8	6	18	16	10	0	0
2023	FEMALES	80	79	0	6	14	9	9	19	14	8	0	0
2023	TOTAL	161	159	1	9	32	17	15	37	30	18	0	0

Table 28: School 5 Cumulative Poor Performance

Year	No. Sat	G7	G7 %	G8	G8 %	G9	G9 %	Cumulative %
2018	317	55	17.35	61	19.24	60	18.93	55.53
2019	168	22	13.10	15	8.93	4	2.38	24.40
2020	241	27	11.20	40	16.60	42	17.43	45.23
2021	213	33	15.49	35	16.43	13	6.10	38.03
2022	141	24	17.02	19	13.48	14	9.93	40.43
2023	159	30	18.87	18	11.32	00	00	30.19

Over the six-year period from 2018 to 2023, there has been a notable high cumulative poor performance percentage of pupils achieving Grades 7, 8, and 9 except for 2019 and 2023. A total of **1,239** pupils sat for the English Language national examinations. Of these, 191 obtained a Grade 7, 188 obtained a Grade 8, and 133 obtained a Grade 9 amounting to **512** pupils, which translates to **41.32%** who performed poorly during the period under review.

5.3.2.6 Examinations Results for School 6

This is a grade 1 co-education government day school serving both boys and girls. It is located about six kilometres from the town centre. Most of the pupils come from around the area near the school though some have to walk some distance to school. The school is situated in a densely populated area.

Table 29: School 6 Grade Distribution

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9	Abs
2018	MALES	108	106	0	0	1	1	4	19	26	28	27	0
2018	FEMALES	97	96	0	0	3	3	3	13	24	29	21	0
2018	TOTAL	205	202	0	0	4	4	7	32	50	57	48	0
2019	MALES	141	136	2	3	11	8	12	29	31	23	17	0
2019	FEMALES	151	150	0	0	13	10	14	30	41	31	11	0
2019	TOTAL	292	286	2	3	24	18	26	59	72	54	28	0
2020	MALES	77	73	0	1	4	7	0	15	10	17	19	0
2020	FEMALES	96	93	0	2	7	9	4	14	13	16	28	0
2020	TOTAL	173	166	0	3	11	16	4	29	23	33	47	0
2021	MALES	44	43	0	0	0	0	3	8	10	13	9	0
2021	FEMALES	54	53	0	0	2	2	3	16	16	8	6	0
2021	TOTAL	98	96	0	0	2	2	6	24	26	21	15	0
2022	MALES	15	15	0	1	1	1	2	8	1	1	0	0
2022	FEMALES	16	16	0	0	2	1	4	7	1	1	0	0
2022	TOTAL	31	31	0	1	3	2	6	15	2	2	0	0
2023	MALES	52	52	0	1	8	6	6	16	9	5	1	0
2023	FEMALES	59	57	0	1	8	6	4	18	12	7	1	0
2023	TOTAL	111	109	0	2	16	12	10	34	21	12	2	0

Table 30: School 6 Cumulative Poor Performance

Year	No. Sat	G7	G7 %	G8	G8 %	G9	G9 %	Cumulative %
2018	202	50	24.75	57	28.22	48	23.76	76.73
2019	286	72	25.17	54	18.88	28	9.79	53.85
2020	166	23	13.98	33	19.88	47	28.31	62.05
2021	96	26	27.08	21	21.88	15	15.63	64.58
2022	31	2	6.45	2	6.45	0	00	12.90
2023	109	21	19.27	12	11.01	2	1.83	32.11

The performance of pupils during the period under review shows a high cumulative percentage of poor performance except for 2022 when the school did not record any pupil who failed English completely. A total of **890** pupils sat for the English Language national examinations. Of these, 194 obtained a Grade 7, 179 obtained a Grade 8, and 140 obtained a Grade 9 totalling **513** pupils who obtained poor grades. 513 translates to **57.64%** of pupils who performed poorly during the period under review.

5.3.2.7 Examination Results for School 7

This is a peri-urban school serving both boys and girls from different places. It is a grade 1 co-education government day school. A good number of pupils come from the community surrounding the school, so they do not need to walk long distances to school while others walk some distance or access the school by public transport.

Table 31: School 7 Grade Distribution

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9	Ab
2018	MALES	281	274	7	16	41	21	18	39	43	49	40	0
2018	FEMALES	243	240	8	13	36	16	16	43	36	37	35	0
2018	TOTAL	524	514	15	29	77	37	34	82	79	86	75	1
2019	MALES	163	160	9	17	37	19	13	29	17	12	7	0
2019	FEMALES	156	155	10	18	38	12	14	28	20	8	7	0
2019	TOTAL	319	315	19	35	75	31	27	57	37	20	14	0
2020	MALES	178	176	2	15	40	14	11	32	16	26	20	0
2020	FEMALES	178	178	9	25	27	13	20	38	14	16	16	0
2020	TOTAL	356	354	11	40	67	27	31	70	30	42	36	0
2021	MALES	176	175	13	12	35	16	19	30	22	13	15	0
2021	FEMALES	162	160	3	10	29	12	11	38	20	31	6	0
2021	TOTAL	338	335	16	22	64	28	30	68	42	44	21	0
2022	MALES	154	154	6	16	51	14	15	26	19	5	2	0
2022	FEMALES	164	160	7	22	49	8	18	43	6	6	1	0
2022	TOTAL	318	314	13	38	100	22	33	69	25	11	3	0
2023	MALES	142	141	12	22	37	8	14	31	8	7	2	0
2023	FEMALES	166	165	10	28	43	22	15	27	10	6	4	0
2023	TOTAL	308	306	22	50	80	30	29	58	18	13	6	0

Table 32: School 7 Cumulative Poor Performance

Year	No. Sat	G7	G7 %	G8	G8 %	G9	G9 %	Cumulative %
2018	514	79	15.37	86	16.73	75	14.59	46.70
2019	315	37	11.75	20	6.35	14	4.44	35.50
2020	354	30	8.47	42	11.86	36	10.17	33.20
2021	335	42	12.54	44	13.13	21	6.27	32.90
2022	314	25	7.96	11	3.50	03	0.96	28.80
2023	306	18	5.88	13	4.25	06	1.96	26.10

Overall the cumulative poor performance percentage was relatively high for the entire period under review. **2, 138** pupils sat for the English language national examinations and 231 pupils obtained G7, 216 obtained G8 and 155 obtained G9 totalling **602 (28.16%)** of pupils who performed poorly during the period under review.

5.3.2.7 Examinations Results for School 8

This is a peri-urban school. It is a grade 1 co-education government day school. A good number of pupils walk to school as they come from the community that surrounds the school. It is also easy to access the school by public transport.

Table 33: School 8 Grade Distribution

Year	Gender	Entered	Sat	g1	g2	g3	g4	g5	g6	g7	g8	g9	Abs
2018	MALES	250	246	2	11	28	9	20	40	45	47	44	0
2018	FEMALES	259	255	1	11	32	18	25	35	45	46	42	0
2018	TOTAL	509	501	3	22	60	27	45	75	90	93	86	0
2019	MALES	187	185	11	14	26	26	17	33	27	21	10	0
2019	FEMALES	132	131	6	8	28	18	14	32	17	5	3	0
2019	TOTAL	319	316	17	22	54	44	31	65	44	26	13	0
2020	MALES	255	254	7	9	39	11	23	43	39	39	44	0
2020	FEMALES	234	231	3	16	44	17	21	50	31	27	22	0
2020	TOTAL	489	485	10	25	83	28	44	93	70	66	66	0
2021	MALES	163	157	2	2	12	15	19	34	33	22	18	0
2021	FEMALES	190	188	1	2	22	21	16	44	36	33	13	0
2021	TOTAL	353	345	3	4	34	36	35	78	69	55	31	0
2022	MALES	180	179	6	20	34	18	16	45	23	12	5	0
2022	FEMALES	165	164	3	8	61	14	17	30	17	11	2	0
2022	TOTAL	345	343	9	28	95	32	33	75	40	23	7	0
2023	MALES	295	291	2	14	40	24	28	66	44	43	30	0
2023	FEMALES	269	268	1	7	34	21	21	57	46	57	24	0
2023	TOTAL	564	559	3	21	74	45	49	123	90	100	54	0

Table 34: School 8 Cumulative Poor Performance

Year	No. Sat	G7	G7 %	G8	G8 %	G9	G9 %	Cumulative %
2018	501	90	17.96	93	18.56	86	17.17	53.69
2019	316	44	13.92	26	8.23	13	4.11	26.27
2020	485	70	14.43	66	13.61	66	13.61	41.65
2021	345	69	20.00	55	15.94	31	8.99	44.93
2022	343	40	11.66	23	6.71	7	2.04	20.41
2023	559	90	16.10	100	17.89	54	9.66	43.65

Overall, the cumulative percentage of poor performance remained high throughout the period under review. Of the **2,548** pupils who sat for the English Language national examinations, 403 obtained a Grade 7, 363 obtained a Grade 8, and 257 obtained a Grade 9 totalling **1,023** pupils (**40.15%**) who performed poorly.

5.3. Teachers' and Examiners' Perspectives on Grade 12 Pupils' Performance in English

As explained earlier, another set of data was collected through interviews. Teachers and examiners were asked to give their perspectives on learners' performance. The findings showed that most teachers and examiners viewed learner performance as being poor while some found the performance to be good. Those who stated that performance was poor referred to different sections of the examination paper which they found difficult. Below I present data which highlight examination performance as being poor:

5.3.1 Learners' Performance in Structure

The respondents interviewed highlighted that learners performed poorly in structure. They further explained that the performance was particularly poor in questions related to Transformations. According to the respondents the poor performance was a result of learners failing to apply the structures that they had learnt in different contexts. Below are some excerpts from the respondents.

The performance among our learners is poor. They have challenges in structure on the question that deals with transformations. They even fail to copy words that are written in the questions. (HOD6S6).

Our learners face challenges in grammar and writing due to weak foundations in earlier grades which adversely affects their performance on the question on transformations. (HOD3S3).

Generally, the performance is very poor and the question on transformation gets the worst answers one can ever imagine. (T16S6).

In structure transformations are normally poorly answered in tests. I personally teach and give notes, but it looks like they do not read the notes. (T18S6).

Transformations are also poorly done due to both learners and teachers. It is quite clear that many teachers tend to teach re-writes without teaching the

actual content topics from which questions should be formulated. The learners need to learn the content before they are given work on transformations. (A1).

Whenever we wrote a test, I would get a zero in transformations. (FS1S1).

In structure I always struggled with transformations. (FS5S3).

I never liked the question on transformations because I always got most of the questions wrong. (FS6S3).

Transformations are the most challenging in Paper 2. Candidates get two and few go beyond five. During final examination marking, if a candidate makes two mistakes in one transformation, that candidate gets a zero. The mistakes that are observed very frequently are subject-verb agreement, tense issues and punctuation. (NE4).

5.3.2 Pupils' Performance in Composition

The respondents reported that most pupils found it very difficult to write proper compositions. They explained that learners often times tended not to follow the rules for formal writing leading to poor scores in composition writing. They further highlighted some common problems that led to poor performance in composition writing. The most common problems were spelling errors, punctuation, paragraphing and informal language and illegible handwriting. Here are selected verbatim:

Composition is a nightmare. It is difficult sometimes to follow the line of thought because pupils' writing is really bad. Spellings, punctuations, paragraphing, and handwriting are real issues that we grapple with. (HOD6S6).

Our pupils demonstrate a lot of errors in terms of the layout, sentence construction, spellings, punctuations, informal language, the list is endless. They cannot write a comprehensive readable composition. The situation is so bad in our school that despite trying out different interventions to help them, there is not much to celebrate. (HOD3S3).

Performance in composition is bad. Spellings, punctuation errors, tense issues and overall sentence constructions make learners' work hard to read let alone decipher what they are trying to communicate. (T15S5).

The most common errors candidates commit are run on sentences, one sentence for a paragraph, colloquial expressions such as I'm good, Hey, what's up with you, stop beating around the bush and many other expressions; contractions

such as can't instead of cannot or don't instead of do not; cutting of words at wrong syllables; lack of variety in sentence structures, and tense issues where irregular verbs are written with -ed. For instance, we come across sentences like "I singed a song...." (NE1).

Grade 12 pupils present an array of issues in examinations. These issues include punctuations, spellings, sentence construction where candidates omit a subject or sometimes a verb, grammar, etc. (NE3).

In composition I had challenges with writing my points clearly, spellings, sentence construction, punctuation, and tenses. I am also in the habit of writing using short forms or abbreviations, and this cost me a lot in English. (FP5S3).

5.3.3 Learners' Performance in Reading Comprehension

The respondents interviewed highlighted that many Grade 12 learners struggled with comprehension. They explained that the learners struggled with comprehension due to limited vocabulary, inadequate reading skills, and poor understanding of question requirements. Teachers further said that learners often failed to grasp the main ideas of passages which caused them to misinterpret important details leading them to struggle or fail to provide accurate responses. They also reported that the problem was compounded by a lack of consistent reading habits, insufficient exposure to varied texts, and limited access to supplementary reading materials. The respondents explained that learners approached comprehension tasks with minimal confidence, which greatly affected their performance. Below are the selected verbatim:

Grade 12 learners do not do well in comprehension due to poor reading culture. Comprehension questions are based on understanding the passage, yet many are not able to understand the passage. Their vocabulary is below the expected standard. Bloom's taxonomy in this case shows that comprehension and analytical skills are not applied. (A1).

Our learners do not make an effort to read comprehension passages with understanding, so they miss out details that are required for answering examination questions correctly. (T20S7).

Paper 2 is too demanding for many learners, especially the comprehension section, which sometimes includes passages with complex vocabulary. (T19S7).

Comprehension in the tests was always also hard. The passage would be long and by the time I finish reading it, time had gone. There were also a lot of difficult words. (FP9S5).

I always had difficulties understanding comprehension passages therefore, I always performed poorly in comprehension. (FP5S3).

Any word that is difficult to understand discourages me to continue reading. (FP3S2).

The passages in Paper 2 were really difficult to understand and worse still I didn't know the meaning of certain words which made it very difficult to answer questions according examiners' expectations and requirements. (FS16S8).

Many words used in comprehension passages were beyond my understanding, so I always performed poorly. (FS15S8).

I always had difficulties understanding comprehension passages, therefore, I always performed poorly in comprehension. (FP5S3).

5.3.4 Learners' Performance in Summary Writing

The respondents reported that learners faced challenges in answering the summary question. They explained that learners performed poorly in summary because they lacked mastery in identifying main points and rephrasing them concisely. They further explained that learners faced challenges in distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information, which often led them to including excessive details or omitting key points entirely. The respondents particularly teachers and learners cited inadequate practice and insufficient feedback on written work as a factor that contributed to learners not being adequately prepared for examination demands. Furthermore, respondents highlighted that some learners' inability to apply grammatical rules appropriately resulted in ill-formed sentences which further made their summaries difficult to understand. Here is what some respondents said:

A candidate should know that summary is written in prose form, but the truth is that many candidates write summary in point form. They write unnecessary things and by the time they begin to write points, they have exceeded the word limit, so we just draw a line and mark what is above the word limit, and marks are lost just like that. (NE3).

I always had challenges writing summary because I could not easily find the main points from a given passage. We never learnt summary. (FP8S4).

Summary was hard for me because it was never taught, but we were only given long passages to read then summarise during mock examinations. (FP13S7).

5.4. Summary of findings to Objective two

This chapter analysed the quality of Grade 12 English examination questions and learners' performance over a six-year period. It examined the alignment of examinations with the national curriculum objectives, the balance between lower-order and higher-order thinking skills, and the clarity of questions. The validity and reliability of the examinations were also assessed to determine how effectively they measured what pupils had learnt. Furthermore, an analysis of past papers examined trends in question difficulty across grammar, comprehension, and essay writing. Additionally, national examination documents from ECZ were reviewed to highlight patterns in poor performance through statistical data. Insights from teachers, learners, and examiners further revealed key factors influencing examination quality and learner outcomes.

CHAPTER SIX

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

6.0 Overview

The previous chapter presented findings for the first and second research questions of the study. The first research question focused on the quality of examination papers while the second research question was on the performance of grade 12 learners in the English language examinations. This chapter presents findings on the third and fourth research questions of the study. The third research question which will be presented first is on the factors which contribute to grade 12 learners' poor performance while the fourth research question was targeted at strategies which could be employed to improve learner performance in grade 12 examinations.

6.1 What are the factors that contribute To Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Performance in English?

The third research question looked at the factors which contributed to learners' poor performance in English. To answer this research question, interviews were conducted with teachers, alumni, parents and school administrators. The triangulation of data sources was meant to strengthen the data and to avoid the bias that would potentially be found in one source. The data were presented under four main categories namely, teacher-related factors, learner-related factors, school-related factors, and policy-related factors. Each category of factors includes themes that are directly informed by the specific issues contributing to poor performance in the Grade 12 English Language examinations.

6.1.1 Teacher Related Factors

Teacher factors are causes which a teacher does or does not do which influences learners' outcomes academically. They can also be elements which affect the teacher to perform his or her teaching correctly or adequately. Teachers' role is critical in determining learners' academic performance. The following are the teacher related factors according to the findings:

6.1.1.1 Absenteeism by teachers and reporting late for work/lessons

The respondents reported that learners teachers were often absent from work. They explained that sometimes teachers were actually in school but did not go to class. They further explained that teachers who missed periods never bothered to make up for the time lost. The respondents also reported that some teachers had a tendency of being

absent from work when they got paid and would boast that they would still get paid if even they did not teach while others had a habit of reporting late for lessons. Below are some of the responses:

One of the problems that administrators struggle with in government secondary schools is teacher absenteeism. There are teachers who are frequently absent from work or get permission under false pretext. Others take leave every time they get their salary. (A2).

Absenteeism is one of the contributing factors due to time loss. Some teachers absent themselves frequently. Some teachers are in school but do not attend to learners during their teaching time. Loss of teaching and learning time does contribute to learners performing poorly in tests and in the final examinations. (T5S2).

Teachers steal time from pupils through absenteeism and late coming and in the end the pupils suffer by failing. (T1S1).

Some teachers like to miss lessons. They report for work, but they do not come to teach us. (L2S8).

Teachers should improve on their attendance and stop reporting late for lessons. (L6S2).

There are some teachers who are frequently absent from work. (L1S8).

6.1.1.2 Low motivation among teachers

The respondents reported that teachers were demotivated. They explained low motivation among teachers was a pervasive challenge that affected teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. They further highlighted that low motivation was caused by a number of factors among them poor remuneration and working conditions. They also said that teachers' low motivation was demonstrated through a lack of enthusiasm and negative attitudes towards work. Below are some selected responses:

Teacher's morale is key to pupil success. Low motivation among us teachers is caused by a number of factors. ... Many of us often feel undervalued despite the heavy workloads and long hours we put into preparing lessons and marking especially since the introduction of free education. (T6S2).

My efforts are not recognised. On Teachers' Day, you find that the people who are awarded are those we least expect. One wonders what criterion is used to select teachers to be awarded. (T8S3).

I personally feel demotivated. I go out of my way to help out in many ways, but there is no appreciation or recognition from the administration. This lack of recognition affects my morale, and in turn, the quality of teaching. (T12S4).

It is difficult to stay focused, energised and eager in the classroom when financial struggles weigh heavily on us. (T19S7).

Teachers are forced to do other things during working hours to make ends meet. It is not intentional but circumstances force us to do that. (T17S6).

Our conditions of service are not attractive at all. When you're working under stressful conditions and feel undervalued, it is hard to invest extra effort. (T24S8).

6.1.1.3 Lack of or Inadequate Preparation for Lessons

The respondents reported that inadequate or lack of lesson preparation was one of the major contributing factors to Grade 12 pupils performing poorly in English national examinations. They also said many young teachers did not want to prepare for their lessons including some teachers who had been in the service for too long since they felt that they knew what to teach. Below are some participants' narratives:

Teachers are too busy with other things other than lesson preparation. A teacher is teaching a topic that is self-lending, but this teacher has no teaching aids, or planned visual aids to reinforce learning. If teaching aids are there, they may not align with the lesson. What does that say about a teacher? (A1).

We have serious challenges with teachers failing to plan and adequately prepare for their lessons. The excuse is always high teaching loads. Our young teachers are notorious in this area. (A10).

Many of our young teachers do not want to prepare for their lessons and also some teachers who have been in the service for too long since they feel they know what to teach. (HOD5S5).

Schools over-enrol pupils, so we are overloaded with multiple classes. It becomes almost impossible to dedicate enough time to prepare well-structured lessons. (T6S2).

We have 87 or more pupils in one class and marking assignments takes ages. Between marking and other administrative duties, it is challenging or rather difficult to find time for detailed lesson planning. (T18S6).

6.1.1.4 Incomplete Syllabus Coverage

The respondents highlighted the fact that teachers did not usually complete the syllabus and did not adhere to teaching content prescribed in the syllabus within the time stipulated in the syllabus. They explained that some teachers tended to skip certain topics they found difficult because they are not able to handle such topics. They further explained that many teachers did not complete the syllabus and deliberately left out certain topics that they knew learners struggled to understand so that they would be covered during extra tuitions as a way of coercing learners to enrol for extra tuitions. Here is what they said:

Most of our learners are of low quality in terms of foundational knowledge, so they need more time to understand topics and that delays the completion of the syllabus. (T16S6).

Some teachers skip certain topics they term difficult because they are not able to handle such topics due to insufficient content knowledge. (T22S8).

Many teachers do not complete the syllabus deliberately. They leave out certain topics that they know we learners struggle to understand and say that these topics will be covered during extra tuitions. (L7S7).

Teachers teach passionately during extra tuitions. They even advertise saying, "If you want to learn, come for extra tuitions." (L10S2).

The government should ban extra tuitions so that teachers cover the entire syllabus in class for fairness for every pupil. (L1S6).

Some teachers even boast that even if they do not teach, they will still get their salary and that is the beauty of working in government. (L6S8).

The extra tuition syndrome encourages teachers not to complete the syllabus so they can earn extra money. Those learners who cannot afford to go for extra tuitions are disadvantaged. (P5S3).

Teachers do complete the syllabus purposely so they can earn extra money from private tuitions (P3S2).

6.1.1.5 Lack of Feedback or Inconsistent Feedback

The respondents reported that teachers rarely gave feedback to learners. They explained that lack of feedback caused learners to feel discouraged and think that their work was worthless. They further highlighted that teachers' failure to recognise learners' effort through feedback had a negative effect on learner performance. Below are excerpts from the respondents.

Since the dawn of free education, it has become difficult to provide feedback which is timely and consistent. (T16S6).

Learners struggle immensely in trying to understand where they are not doing things rightly and how to correct their mistakes due to lack of feedback. (T14S5).

This failure on our part has a bearing on our learners in that it becomes challenging to learners to close gaps in their skills and understanding. (T12S4).

One of the big problems that we face as learners is teachers not marking our books on time and sometimes not marking at all. (L6S6).

There are teachers who do not return books especially composition books, so we do not know how we are performing and progressing. (L9S5).

When I was in school, we rarely received feedback from teachers especially in English. Mistakes that I made were not corrected in time, so it is possible that I reproduced them in my final examinations resulting into my poor results in English. (FP1S1).

6.2 School Related Factors

School related factors in teaching and learning are those factors which are caused by the school or are the responsibility of the school in the teaching and learning process. The five key school related factors identified in this study are over-enrolment, high teacher-to-pupil ratio, lack of or inadequate teaching materials, lack of monitoring and

supervision as well as lack of continuous professional development opportunities. Below are the school related factors which were common among respondents.

6.2.1 Over-enrolment and its effects in schools

The respondents cited and highlighted over-enrolment as a critical problem affecting the performance of Grade 12 pupils in English. They explained that over-enrolment led to overcrowded classrooms, which created physical and auditory challenges for teaching and learning. They further explained over-enrolment had led to high teacher-to-pupil ratios. They also reported that there were not enough desks. Here is what they said:

Even when we ask questions to clarify our doubt, the teacher moves on quickly because there's no time for everyone, so we end up not asking. (L3S6).

There are too many pupils in class, and there is a lot of noise in our class, so the teacher spends more time controlling noise especially after break and the periods that come just before break or lunch. (L4S2).

Our classrooms were not designed for such high numbers. The infrastructure is deteriorating fast under the increased pressure. (T17S6).

There's simply not enough time to assess each pupil's work thoroughly due high numbers, and we end up focusing on group instruction otherwise we can't manage to cover even half the syllabus. (T5S2).

Some pupils don't even ask questions because they feel lost in the crowd and don't want to be laughed at when they make a mistake. (T16S6).

Big classes pose numerous challenges. One of them is that it's impossible to adapt lessons to individual needs, as a result weaker pupils continue to lag behind. (T10S4).

6.2.2 Limited Classrooms

The other factor which is related to the previous one is limited classrooms. The respondents explained that pupils found it difficult to focus and concentrate due to lack of space. They further explained that limited classrooms limited social interaction and caused higher stress levels due the discomfort of a compact place. Here are some of the responses:

Limited classrooms leads to overcrowding in classes. (HOD1S1).

The limited number of classrooms is a drawback as the learning process becomes stressful for both teachers and learners. (A9).

6.2.3 Lack of and Inadequate Teaching Materials

The respondents reported the absence or insufficiency of teaching materials which made it difficult to meet the varied educational needs of learners. Below is what some respondents said:

We often share one textbook among five or more classmates, which makes it hard to study at home or prepare for exams since we don't take textbooks home. (L7S3).

Books are not adequate, so it is difficult to study and prepare well for tests and worse still for our final examinations. (L2S8).

Our teachers rely heavily on chalkboards for everything, but we can't always see clearly or take notes fast enough. (L9S4).

Teaching comprehension and vocabulary is challenging when pupils share textbooks. They need to see the text to familiarise themselves with the spellings and associate pronunciations with actual words. (T8S3).

There is no library in the school. We are forced to use Grade 10 books due to lack of books. (HOD5).

We have nineteen Grade 12 textbooks against ninety (90) plus learners. We compromise the standards on comprehension. Planning and teaching is really made difficult. Learners cannot study at home due to lack of materials. (HOD6S6).

The government should prioritise and increase funding for education so that all schools have the necessary teaching and learning materials. Pupils' underperformance cannot be blamed entirely on teachers. (P2S1).

6.2.4 Absence of Libraries in Schools

The respondents explained that most schools had no libraries and the few that had had few outdated books. They explained that the absence of libraries in schools disadvantaged pupils in that they had no access to additional reading materials since they could do research. They further explained that the absence of libraries put all responsibility on teachers to look for material to create notes for learners and that

limited learners' opportunity to learn independently and develop critical thinking skills more. Here is what some of them said:

We don't have a library as well, so it is difficult to access additional study materials to help us improve academically. (L6S1).

A library would help us to study hard because that conducive atmosphere just puts one in the mood and helps one to concentrate. (L1S2).

The absence of libraries in schools disadvantages pupils in that they have no access to additional reading materials since they cannot do research. (T8S3).

The absence of libraries puts all responsibility on teachers to look for material to use to create notes for learners. It limits pupils' opportunity to learn independently. (T17S6).

There is no common place where the school can store past papers for ease access to pupils. This hinders their chance to practise answering questions in a standard way. (T3S1).

We have a library with a few outdated books. We also have no access to additional reference materials for lesson preparation. (T5S2).

As teachers we lack exposure to a wide variety of materials to keep abreast with information on new methods in language instruction. (T4S2).

The presence of a library helps learners to cultivate a reading culture. Once children see others reading, they will be challenged and begin to read too. (P1).

Libraries would be the only places that would provide a conducive environment for serious study. (P4S2).

6.2.5 Lack of Technology

The respondents reported that teachers relied on traditional methods of teaching using the chalkboard instead of using smartboards or projectors to project already prepared material thus saving on time. They explained that integrating technology in teaching would have helped to teach learners to study independently and begin to prepare them for higher education. They further explained that technology would have enhance learners' retention of learnt material and would also strengthen collaborative learning in class. Below are some selected verbatim:

Since we do not have enough books for every pupil, technology would have helped us to access reading materials online. (L9S7).

Things have changed and we need to move with time. Technology makes learning enjoyable. (L6S6).

Using technology in learning for example a video would help us to remember what we learn because we would use our senses. (L2S2).

We would save on time if we used computers and projectors to conduct lessons. I would not spend time writing notes on the board (T11S4).

I believe technology can make things easier. For example teaching pronunciation using an audio app, ... short videos would really help and be fun. (T1S1).

Technology would enrich our teaching resources as teachers would access online materials in the absence of books. (HOD3S3).

With technology we could make our English lessons more interactive through the use of simulations to enhance learner engagement. (HOD6S6).

6.2.6 Lack of or Inconsistent Monitoring

The respondents reported that there was lack of or inconsistent monitoring in government secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province at all levels of administration starting with heads of departments, deputy head teachers, head teachers and district education officials. They further explained that administrators failed to ensure teacher accountability and maintain high educational standards due to inconsistent monitoring. Below are some of the responses:

Teachers come late for lessons and no one seems to challenge them. We are punished for late coming but not teachers. (L1S5).

When we have a double period, the teacher sometimes comes to teach in the last period. The first is just wasted. No one cares about how our time is wasted by the teachers. (L1S2).

... no one is regularly checking to know how well or badly we are performing. (L7S8).

Inspectors from the Ministry of Education or important visitors rarely come to the schools. When they come, they have an audience with the teachers and not the pupils. (L4S2).

Standard officers from the Ministry of Education do not regularly visit us or inspect to find out what we are struggling with in order to provide guidance on pedagogical issues. It is difficult to stay updated with current teaching strategies when we are not monitored to ascertain knowledge gaps. (T23S8).

Lack of or inconsistent monitoring leads to delayed confirmation of teachers leading to frustration and low morale among teachers. (T1S1).

Sometimes monitoring has been done, but we have had challenges with follow-ups on recommendations leading to unresolved problems. (A6).

Some teachers report drunk for duty or abscond from work for long periods of time and are not charged; hence the increased number of teachers who do not care. (P15S8).

Sometimes it is the administrators themselves who do not set an example for their teachers, so they fail to monitor their teachers. (P5S3).

6.2.7 Limited Opportunities for Professional Development

The respondents reported that teachers had limited opportunities for professional development to improve on their already acquired skills, update their knowledge in their subject areas in order to address their learners' needs and improve their own teaching effectiveness. They explained that administrators said that they were unable to provide training opportunities for teachers because of budget constraints. They further explained that teachers were unable to maintain high teaching standards and adapt to the 21st century educational changes and needs due to limited continuing professional development opportunities. Here are some of the responses:

In our school it is rare that we have any meaningful workshops or get experts to train us so we can update our knowledge and ways of teaching English. (T20S7).

We get blamed when pupils do not perform to public expectations, yet we are not given what we need to teach to meet the expected standards. (T6S2).

We lack exposure to modern pedagogical techniques, so we often face challenges and struggle to adapt our teaching to meet needs of 21st century learners. (T13S5).

We miss opportunities for professional development programmes due to lack of or limited financial resources in the schools. (T23S8).

6.3 Learner Related Factors

The section below presents learner related factors influencing the academic performance of Grade 12 learners in English Language in selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province. Learner factors refer to learner characteristics or things which a learner has control over and are responsible for. In this study, the following learner factors were identified in the study.

6.3.1 Absenteeism by Learners

Respondents reported that absenteeism was a prevalent problem among pupils. They explained that it was negative as it disrupted the learning process and hindered overall academic progress. Here are some excerpts from respondents.

One of the factors that has contributed to our poor performance or low grades in English is absenteeism. We do not attend all the lessons sometimes due to peer pressure, parents being sick or parents failing to provide bus fare. (L3S5).

Missing a lot of lessons regularly makes it hard to understand the topics that are covered in our absence. (L2S7).

Since we do not attend school regularly, we fail to catch up with the rest of the class. Teachers are not ready to reteach which is understandable. (L4S6).

There has never been a day when all the pupils report for class. They take turns to be absent and they do not care to check the work that they missed. (T8S3).

Some pupils miss school because they have to help fend for the family, for instance ... cultivating the fields in readiness for planting maize, selling charcoal, etc. The community mentality is bad. (T7S3).

Some pupils miss school because they are teen mothers. When their babies are not well, they do not come to school because they need to attend to their babies. (T19S7).

6.3.2 Learner Inability to Read and Write

Respondents explained that at Grade 12 level, learners interacted more with written texts and were expected to read, understand various types of writing and also write clear, logical arguments in essays, letters, and speeches as outlined in one of the syllabus objectives, but that was not the case. They further explained that pupils' failure to read and write effectively weakened their ability to succeed in school as they were unable to comprehend instructions, follow lesson proceedings and ask questions when

in doubt. They also highlighted that such learners failed to do their homework or complete tests in allocated time which ultimately led to poor performance. Presented below are some of the responses:

I find English to be hard to understand because it is not my first language. We mostly speak our local language with our families at home. (L6S1).

The challenge with English is that words are written differently from the way they are pronounced. I find it difficult to write things correctly. (L8S2).

... many of us Grade 12 pupils in this school cannot read or write properly in English, so it is difficult to understand questions during tests or examinations. (L10S8).

We did not know how to read and write and that was the main reason we failed to write correct answers. (FP16).

I never participated fully in class activities because I could not read and write. (FP14).

I don't remember completing a test because I could not read and write. (FS12).

The majority of candidates who fail English cannot read and write. They do not understand the questions due to their inability to read, so it is obvious that they cannot answer the questions. (NE2).

We were able to read and write already in early grades, but today it is the very opposite. Many of our children who are in Grade 12 cannot read or write properly. (P1S1).

This system of training teachers through Distance Education is contributing to the poor quality of teachers. ... it means a teacher is trained for eighteen (18) weeks or twenty seven (27) weeks. The training is too short for such a noble profession. (P4S2).

6.3.3 Limited Vocabulary among Learners

Respondents explained that Grade 12 pupils faced a number of challenges arising from lack of language vocabulary which was central to good performance in English final examinations. They highlighted difficulties such as limited vocabulary which they attributed to a poor reading culture, poor grammar skills and lack of reading comprehension. Presented below are respondents' verbatim:

Guessing meanings of words we don't know often leads to wrong answers and low marks. (L2S8)

It is not possible to develop our vocabulary since we only learn a few words during lessons as the teachers are in the habit of using Bemba when teaching English. (L6S5).

One of our major problems is limited word choice. Because of that our compositions are dry and boring. (L1S7).

The home/community environment limits our learners' exposure to a wider range of vocabulary in the sense that parents interact with their children using local languages. (T2S1).

Their vocabulary is below the expected standard for Grade 12 pupils. They also do not make much effort to improve themselves. (T16S6).

Due to limited word choices, many of our Grade 12 learners tend to think in their local language and then translate directly from their local languages into English and in most cases direct translation results into incorrect sentences. (T8S3).

Many of our Grade 12 pupils display numerous errors in their grammar. Sentences are incorrect due to wrong tenses. (T12S4).

In paper 2 the passages are complex and often times we don't really understand the passages and worse still we don't know the meaning of certain words which makes it very difficult to answer questions appropriately. (L8S2).

6.3.4 Poor Conduct by Some Learners

Respondents explained that learners engaged in disruptive behaviour which influenced performance. They further explained that learners manifested indiscipline through disrespect for school authority, inappropriate behaviour in and outside classrooms, and a lack of commitment to orders and school rules that they had promised to obey. They said indiscipline distracted learners from concentrating on focused learning, and it also disturbed teacher-pupil relationship resulting in teachers being unwilling to help struggling learners even though they might have been innocent. They attributed indiscipline to lack of proper guidance at home, peer pressure, social media and inconsistent enforcement of rules due to too much emphasis on human rights. They

explained that it negatively impacted the classroom atmosphere, teacher-pupil relationships, and overall academic achievement. Below are selected narratives:

Some of our classmates smoke during break time, and when they return to class, they cause confusion, insult those who try to ask or answer questions during lessons. (L8S2).

Some pupils insult or argue with teachers when their work is marked wrong, and the teacher feels humiliated and this prevents them from helping us improve in English. (L7S8).

Teachers did not discipline pupils who were unruly for fear of being reported to the police. (FP4).

Pupils who try to speak English all the time are bullied and called names. This inhibits their participation in class. (T14S5).

6.3.5 The Use of the Informal Variety of English

Respondents explained that the use of text message language had become prevalent among learners, especially with the extensive use of mobile phones. They said learners found this form of written communication fast and convenient. They explained that learners' written work was mostly characterised by abbreviations, acronyms, and informal language. Here is what some of them said:

It is so confusing such that sometimes I don't know which words are acceptable in English composition or ... and which ones are not ... they sound ok when one reads them. (L2S6).

It's just the way we write now, and we see the same kind of writing on internet blogs. (L6S1).

Social media and texting make us feel and think like this is the modern way to write, so it doesn't feel wrong at all. (L10S7).

We are told not to use shortcuts, but there's not much emphasis in terms of practice or correction during lessons. (L4S8).

Most pupils now write the way they write text messages. ... This causes them to lose marks in final examinations. (NE1).

Pupils have a challenge and struggle to distinguish between informal text language and the formal tone demanded in examinations. As a result, pupils blend the two inappropriately leading to loss of marks. (NE5).

6.3.6 Long Distance to School

Respondents said long distance to school was one of the school environment factors that affected pupil performance during the year and finally having a negative impact on pupil performance in examinations. They explained that long distance to school had numerous challenges that influenced learners' educational engagement, commitment and readiness. They highlighted that learners who travelled long distances to school tended to perform poorly in school. Below are some of the respondents' narratives:

We walk for more than two (2) hours coming to school and two (2) going back home. We get tired by the time we are reaching school, so it is hard to concentrate in class. (L2S3).

It is hard to focus on learning when we arrive at school exhausted from walking. (L7S2).

When we are tired from walking a long distance, we fail to concentrate in class, and we leave home without eating anything. (L3S4).

There are times that we arrive late, and do not attend English lessons especially on days when English is in the first period. (L5S6).

Many pupils who live far from school come late quite frequently due to the distance. They miss some lessons and that affects their performance which is unfortunate. (T2S1).

Many of our pupils who walk long distances to school perform poorly due to fatigue and frequent late coming. (A6).

We record high absenteeism rates among pupils who walk long distances to school especially in term one (1) and term two (2). (A10).

Long distances to school do affect learners' performance in that these learners are not only frequently late for lessons but also fatigued leading to poor concentration in class. (NE4).

6.3.7 Lack of Parental Support

Respondents reported that the socio-economic challenges of poverty, sickness, and low educational attainment among parents contributed significantly to low parental involvement and that negatively affected Grade 12 pupils' performance in English. They also said that pupils whose parents were not involved in school activities tended to have low educational goals. They further explained that parents who had low or no education at all did not see the value of school and rarely encouraged their children to take school seriously. Some of the respondents stated the following:

My parents are rarely home to help me with my studies when I need help, for example answering questions that I am given for homework. (L9S2).

Since we don't have textbooks that we can carry home to study, our parents don't buy the textbooks we need. (L8S3).

Our parents do not understand the importance of education and don't attend open days or any school meeting. (L5S5).

Some of our parents refuse to take part in fund raising activities that schools organise claiming that the money will just be shared by the teachers. (L5S7).

We have instances when pupils misbehave and their parents are invited to come to school. They do not come because they expect teachers to handle everything. (T5S2).

Parents who are uneducated rarely monitor or support their children's studies. (T7S3).

Parent-teacher meetings are always poorly attended. (A6).

Many parents do not attend meetings or collect report forms for their children, so they do not know how their children are progressing in school. (A8).

We send our children to school because we believe the teachers are doing their job, so we stay out of it since we are not trained teachers. (P1S1).

6.3.8 Lack of Role Models in the Community

Respondents explained that the absence of positive role models in communities undermined pupils' motivation and aspirations, particularly in excelling in English. They highlighted that lack of role models within communities exacerbated low

aspirations among pupils and diminished the perceived value of excelling in English. Below is what some of them stated:

In our area, there are no people who inspire us to succeed in education. (L1S5).

Our pupils especially the girls often see other girls of their age married, so they regard education as a waste of time. (T21S7).

Communities that do not have professionals who succeeded in school often fail to encourage their children to aim higher. (HOD6).

Many of our learners in this school are coming from communities where they do not have much exposure to individuals who experienced the same or even worse hardships yet succeeded in their education. (HOD3).

6. 4 Policy Related Factors

The other category of factors contributing to poor performance of learners is related to education policies. Under this theme, three factors were identified from the findings. These are:

6.4.1 Removal of English as a Compulsory Passing Subject at Grade 9

Respondents explained that the removal of English as a compulsory passing subject had broader implications on educational outcomes. They highlighted that the policy had negatively hindered English language performance at the Grade 12 level. Below are some of the responses:

Teachers have a tough time to convince us to work hard in English because we were allowed to proceed to Grade 10. Many students think English doesn't matter anymore. (L7S2).

Since the removal of English as compulsory passing subject our pupils have stopped taking assessments in English seriously. As teachers we feel less supported in enforcing high educational standards in English. (T18S6).

If a pupil fails Grade 9, evidently, there is a gap in the acquisition and mastery of basic grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension skills in written and oral work. (HOD4S4).

Going to another grade without passing is not good. We are not ready because we were promoted without understanding the previous material, and now we have problems to understand Grade 12 work in English. (L9S5).

Those pupils who failed English at Grade 9 and moved to Grade 10 had serious challenges in Grade 12. (FP11S6).

I struggled to understand the lessons and did not normally participate in class. It affected the whole class when teachers had to repeat what was already covered. (FP4S2).

6.4.2 Abolition of cut off points for Grade 9 examinations

Respondents explained that pupils who progressed to Grade 12 without meeting the required cut-off points lacked the necessary language skills needed to perform well at higher grade level. Some of the respondents explained as follows:

There is no serious competition among pupils since the cut off points for Grade 9 examinations were removed. (L9S2).

Without cut-off points, we inherit challenges at the higher secondary level and get blamed when pupils fail their final examinations. (T7S3).

Pupils who pass and those who fail are put together creating a mix of abilities. The mix of abilities makes it problematic to plan lessons that meet the needs of all learners. The advanced pupils lose interest when they have to wait for slow learners. (T5S2).

It is very difficult to cater for mixed competencies adequately in terms of time and attention. (T13S5).

.... By removing of cut-off points the Ministry of Education has implicitly sent a message that accountability in learning is not important. (HOD6S6).

The removal of cut-off points has contributed to diminished accountability of both pupils and teachers for meeting academic benchmarks. The teachers have shifted their focus from academic preparedness to merely progressing pupils. That zeal to push learners is no longer there. (HOD2S2).

Allowing children to proceed to Grade 10 when their performance does meet the required standard is promoting mediocrity. Our children are so complacent

simply because they do not experience the consequences for failure. We are promoting academic mediocrity and laziness among our children. (P3S2).

6.4.3 The Pitfalls of the Re-Entry Policy

Some respondents said that the Re-Entry Policy (REP) was well intended but had turned out to encourage sexual irresponsibility among the youth. They explained that pupil pregnancy was an issue that impacted both the education and well-being of young learners. They further explained that teenage pregnancy negatively impacted the academic performance of Grade 12 pupils, particularly in English due to school attendance problems - absenteeism, emotional and psychological struggles attributed to unplanned pregnancy and exacerbated by a hostile environment both at school and at home, lack of time for school work, lack of concentration on studies, and lack of a supportive environment at school. Below are some of the responses:

Pregnancy and school don't go together. I fell pregnant in Grade 12. It was hard to concentrate in class I avoided asking questions in the English class because I didn't want to draw attention to myself and be ridiculed by my classmates especially the boys. (FP2).

Pregnant pupils miss classes repeatedly due to health issues or social stigma in school. (T18S6).

In some schools grandmothers sometimes come to school to bring the baby for feeding ... The lesson continues while the teen mother is outside feeding the baby, so catching up is difficult. (T7S3).

Teenage mothers often come to class exhausted, making it challenging for them to pay attention during lessons or examinations. Sometimes they leave midway. (T8S3).

Pregnant pupils are shunned. They often face stigma and ridicule from peers and even some teachers, which affects their self-image and participation in class discussions, especially in oral English activities. (HOD4S4).

The Re-Entry Policy is good in a way as it gives a second chance to vulnerable girls to complete school, but the children have abused it and become irresponsible. (P2S1).

6.5 What strategies can be used to improve pupils' performance in Grade 12 examinations in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province?

The fourth objective aimed at establishing the strategies which can be used to improve the poor learner performance in English language in the Copperbelt Province. This is in view of the challenges and several factors currently affecting learner performance. In order to collect the data for this research question, interviews were conducted with teachers, heads of department, current pupils, former grade 12 pupils and parents. A number of strategies were suggested. In the sections which will follow, I will be presenting the strategies as identified from the data.

6.5.1 Improve school based and district based monitoring and supervision

Respondents explained that absenteeism undermined schools' effort to excel. Once it was addressed, it would also enhance pupil motivation and achievement levels. They also explained that to enhance accountability among teachers and accountability for the resources especially time, supervising officers needed to be intensify monitoring to ensure that teaching and learning were being done and teachers were paid for the work they had done. Here are the respondents' views:

Schools should introduce a tracking system to indicate when teachers report for work and when they leave. (L8S2).

The administration must intensify supervision of teachers. (L7S1).

The inspectors from the Ministry of Education should visit schools more frequently. (L10S8).

Teacher attendance should be a mandatory requirement for the renewal of the teaching licence. (T3S1).

The administration in collaboration with HODs should intensify tracking attendance through the use of departmental registers. (T6S2).

The Administration in collaboration with HODs can use feedback from class prefects, School Council minutes and lesson observations to track and identify patterns of absenteeism. (HOD3S3).

We could try to conduct unannounced or informal visits to the classrooms to track absenteeism on a daily basis. (A7).

The HODs must schedule a termly plan for weekly departmental review meetings to discuss lesson delivery and student performance to provide interventions in good time. (HOD1S1).

6.5.2 Motivate teachers through incentivisation

Respondents shared that acknowledging or appreciating teachers in meaningful ways like giving incentives in any form could motivate teachers and encourage them to work harder in teaching and preparing for teaching and consistent attendance in school. They explained that keeping teachers motivated may lead to increased learner outcomes. Respondents' narratives below highlight this strategy:

The school in collaboration with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should give an award for outstanding teacher performance. (T3S1).

Schools in consultation with pupils should give a trophy to the most hard working teacher. (T7S3).

Teachers who work hard must be rewarded by the school on International Teachers' Day and on Labour Day. (T17S6).

The schools should give incentives to teacher who produce good examination results. (NE3).

The Ministry of Education should provide teachers with opportunities of professional development. (T18S6).

The government should promote and enhance career progression for deserving teachers. (A1).

Rural hardship allowances for teachers who serve in disadvantaged places such as remote rural areas should be increased and be reviewed periodically. (A6).

The government should pay teachers decent salaries. (P3S2).

6.5.3 Heads of department should ensure each teacher has a lesson plan before going to teach

Respondents explained that administrators should regularly check teachers' lesson preparation books or lesson plans and randomly collect samples of learners' work as a useful way of gathering informative pupil performance data. The supervisors could use this data when monitoring the progress of individual pupils across a range of learning areas, as well as tracking their achievement throughout the year. They further said that

the data could be used to identify what learners were learning and if it was aligned with the syllabus. Below are selected verbatim:

The HODs and administrators should check teachers' lesson plans daily. (HOD1S1).

Teachers' files should be checked frequently by the HODs and the administrators to see if they correspond to work in learners' books. (HOD4S4).

We should make it a point to conduct regular checks on teachers' lesson plans and offer guidance where necessary. (HOD5S5).

We should insist on lesson plans being marked by the HOD before a teacher teaches a particular lesson. (HOD6S6).

Administrators should strengthen teacher supervision and ensure that no teacher goes to teach without an approved lesson plan. (P5S3).

Departments should schedule time for weekly lesson planning meetings for teachers to share ideas. (HOD3S3).

New teachers should be paired with experienced teachers for mentorship in order to enhance lesson preparation and reduce on partial syllabus coverage. (HOD1S1).

6.5.4 Reduced workload for teachers

The respondents highlighted that there was need for improved monitoring mechanisms to ensure that learners got feedback that addressed their needs. They explained that administrators needed to reduce teachers' workload to give teachers time to attend to marking. Below are some of the responses:

Schools should reduce class size so that we are able to mark and return books to pupils in good time. (T5S2).

Our workloads should be reduced to give us more time to mark books and provide timely and appropriate interventions according to learners' needs. (T18S6).

We need to monitor teachers to ensure that they provide feedback to learners. (A10).

6.5.5 Infrastructure Expansion

Respondents explained that there was an urgent need for infrastructure expansion and provision of resources like desks. They highlighted that the government needed to recruit more qualified teachers to address workloads and high teacher-to-pupil ratios. Some respondents particularly teachers and administrators advocated for more resource allocation and construction of additional classrooms and schools to accommodate the growing numbers of pupils. They further explained that former pupils and communities needed to work with the government to complement its efforts. Here are some narratives:

The government can work with the PTA to build more classrooms in order to reduce the number of pupils per class. (L2S8).

The alumni can contribute an amount each or do fundraising venture to raise funds for classroom construction as a way of saying thank you to our teachers. (FP5S3).

We can conduct a “Buy a brick” campaign to help construct more classrooms in our former school. (FP3S2).

We will lobby MOGE for increased funding to enable us construct classrooms. (A6).

The government should consider expansion of secondary school infrastructure as a priority. (A5).

We urgently need funding to build additional classrooms to reduce class sizes. (A11).

6.5.6 Employment of more teachers

Respondents explained that coordinated effort was a must to address the issue of high teacher -to-pupil ratio in schools resulting from over-enrolment. They suggested that the government should employ more teachers to improve teacher-pupil ration. The following are some of the responses:

The government should recruit more teachers of English to reduce the workload of serving teachers. (T16S6).

The government should employ more teachers so that we can all receive help from teachers when we need it. (L9S5).

The government should employ more qualified teachers of English to help schools meet the demands and needs of overpopulated classes and improve the quality of instruction. (T20S7).

The government should recruit more teachers of English to decongest classes. (HOD8S8).

6.5.7 Multi-sectoral approach to provision of adequate teaching and learning materials

Respondents reported that school administrators needed to be proactive in sourcing for teaching and learning materials. They explained that teachers could set up partnerships with other schools to exchange or borrow extra resources and use technology and offline apps to teach. Here is what some respondents said:

Hold internal material production competitions to encourage learners to create their own supplementary study materials. (HOD3S3).

Initiate corporate social responsibility (CSR) partnerships with businesses for resource donations. (A3).

We could work with our former schools to create an alumni fund specifically for purchasing teaching and learning materials. (FP1S1).

Schools could ask former pupils to organise career talks or motivational events where alumni bring resource donations. (FP2S1).

Former pupils who work outside Zambia can assist in creating partnerships with international organisations or donors to donate teaching materials. (FP4S2).

Administrators should request for donations or support from publishing companies to acquire surplus stock at reduced prices. (T2S1).

We can create photocopies of structured summary notes for learners to use in place of textbooks. (T10S4).

We can hold workshops or forums where teachers can learn how to create innovative, low-cost teaching aids. (T8S3).

6.5.8 Use of free online English language resources

The other strategy is that teachers should make use of the internet to access free online teaching resources. Some of the respondents stated the following:

Teachers could create WhatsApp groups where they could share PDF versions of English textbooks or notes that we can access on our phones. (L9S8).

Implement policies requiring every new batch of textbooks to include digital copies for broader accessibility. (A6).

We should make use of multimedia teaching techniques using free or low-cost online videos and recordings. (T20S7).

6.5.9 Provision of Learning Opportunities for Teachers

Respondents explained that schools should invest in teaching training to upscale their skills, knowledge and competencies. They emphasised the need for teachers to keep up-to-date with the latest developments through in-house workshop. Below are some narratives:

We would be helped very much if schools plan and organise training workshops for our teachers so that they keep improving their teaching methods. (L8S1).

Regular workshops would help our teachers acquire new skills on pupil engagement because some teachers waste our time due to the way they present content. (L9S2).

We should revive the Provincial Language Teachers Association of Zambia (LATAZ) where national markers can be invited to train teachers on standard marking and weighting. (T2S1).

School CPD should be re-enforced and school CPD schedules should be strictly adhered to. (HOD2S2).

Departments must be encouraged to identify areas of need and be allowed to invite resource persons to conduct in-house training at least once or twice a year. (HOD6S6).

6.5.10 Reduce travel time from home to school by constructing more schools

Respondents explained that that collaborative efforts were crucial to addressing the challenges that long distance to school posed. They said that communal transportation, construction of boarding facilities, construction of nearby schools, deployment of

teachers to rural areas, and community-driven support systems if implemented would create a more equitable and favourable learning environment for all pupils. Here is what they said:

The government should build more secondary schools closer to where we live. (L10S3).

Schools could set up boarding facilities for day scholars who live far away. (L7S1).

There should be more community-based secondary schools to reduce travel time. (FP2S1).

Schools should lobby for funding to set up weekly boarding facilities for pupils who live far away. (HOD4S4).

The government with the help of national planners should ensure distance is considered when planning future school zones. (HOD5S6).

We could lobby the Ministry of Education to construct more schools and recruit more teachers to staff schools in remote areas. (A9).

6.5.11 Teachers to collaborate with parents to tackle learner absenteeism

Respondents explained that tackling absenteeism required the school and community to work together. They highlighted the importance of parent engagement in monitoring attendance. They also said that schools authorities needed to reinforce school rules, engage pupils productively through various activities and solicit for financial assistance for vulnerable children so that they are able to attend school every day. Here are some narratives.

Class teachers need to take keen interest in learners who frequently miss lessons and engage their parents earlier. (L2S5).

Teachers could give talks regularly on effects of absenteeism on academic performance. (LAS7).

Coordinate occasional visits to families of chronically absent learners to address underlying issues. (T18S6).

Parents should work with school to help monitor children's attendance. (P1S1).

Schools should communicate a child's absence immediately. (P4S2).

6.5.12 Establishing Functional Libraries to Provide Literacy Materials

Respondents explained that schools needed to have functional libraries to supplement resource shortages. They also explained that properly equipped libraries with diverse books, study materials, reference materials and multiple educational resources would facilitate reading. They highlighted that in the absence of physical libraries, E-libraries could be an alternative, and schools could research the possibility of investing in E-libraries which were technological solutions that could offer remote learning to pupils. Additionally, they said that schools needed to have reading clubs at grade levels. They also explained that literature in English should be a compulsory subject to foster a reading culture among learners. Here are some verbatim:

The Ministry of Education should ensure that every school has a functional and well stocked library. The timetable should have a library period for each class once a week. (L9S3).

We need functional libraries and well equipped computer labs in schools if schools are to support literacy effectively and efficiently. (A6).

Schools need functional libraries to encourage learners to read widely. (T6S2).

The Ministry of General Education (MOGE) should establish libraries in primary schools to promote literacy. (L6S6).

Schools need well stocked functional libraries to foster a reading culture among our learners. (NE4).

The government should invest in mobile libraries for rural communities to foster a reading culture among young people. (P14S7).

Schools through the Ministry of Education could partner with NGOs to fund mobile libraries for schools and especially for rural schools. (A6).

We need to lobby for infrastructure expansion especially libraries and provide computer labs to support literacy.”(A9).

6.5.13 Use of Various Techniques to Teach Reading and Writing

Respondents explained that schools needed to find creative ways of teaching reading and writing in order to respond to pupils' needs. They further explained that parents needed to be encouraged to take an active role in monitoring homework. Below are some of the responses:

Teachers need to prepare differentiated lessons for varied skill levels and also creating tiered assignment to correspond to pupil needs. (T6S2).

We need to integrate literacy games and You-tube videos through the use of interactive tools. (T18S6).

The teachers should incorporate activities that focus more on reading and writing skills in their lessons. (HOD1S1).

6.5.14 Improve learner conduct through a strict school code of ethics

Respondents explained that schools should reinforce school rules. They also said that class teachers should be more active in discipline management through formulation of class norms. Presented below are some responses:

We need to revise and disseminate a clear code of conduct for learners, with clearly outlined consequences for breaches. (A9).

Each class will have a copy pasted on the notice board. (A8).

Schools should conduct serious orientation sessions for new pupils and parents on rules and expectations. Let them sign and retain a copy. (A12).

Schools should reinforce school rules. (L9S3).

We should consistently enforce school rules and regulations to ensure discipline among learners. (T15S5).

Class teachers should work with pupils to formulate class objectives and norms with consequences for violated norms to guide behaviour. (T12S4).

6.5.15 Establish mentorship programmes to improve learner motivation

Respondents explained that schools needed to deliberately plan and implement programmes to educate pupils on values that promote success. Here are narratives:

Schools should invite former successful pupils to give motivational talks or to share personal experiences of how discipline improved their performance and career outcomes. (FP5S3).

Schools can also work at establishing alumni mentorship programmes to provide guidance to learners on how to manage academic and personal challenges. (FP2S2).

Pupils can also be given talks on time management and the importance of ethical behaviour. (FP3S2).

6.5.16 Encourage learners to practise formal English in and outside the classroom

Respondents explained that teachers should emphasise and insist on pupils using proper English in both spoken and written activities. They further said that even during classroom discussions teachers needed to model Standard English. They highlighted that teachers should give pupils weekly writing assignments to help them build the habit of using formal English and improve on their sentence construction and spellings as well. Below are selected verbatim:

Teachers should give us more opportunities to practise formal writing, like essays and letters, and penalise shorthand writing heavily. (L9S2).

Teachers should make us redo the same work several times. (L6S5).

Teachers should give us mock examinations frequently and mark our work strictly so that we learn to follow examination standards. (L8S6).

We must emphasise and insist on pupils using proper English in both spoken and written activities. Even during classroom discussions we need to model Standard English. (T3S1).

We need to give pupils weekly writing assignments to help them build the habit of using formal English and improve on their spellings as well. (T5S2).

We must encourage our pupils to review and edit each other's work so that they have an opportunity to identify and correct text message language before submitting it for marking. (T10S4).

We need to include and communicate strict penalties for the use of text message language in national examinations to discourage pupils from using it. (NE1).

6.5.17 Abolish Re-Entry Policy

Respondents expressed strong sentiments that the Re-Entry Policy (REP) should be abolished since it had contributed to moral decay among the youth. Below are some of the responses:

The Re-Entry Policy (REP) should be done away with because it has contributed to the issue of pupil pregnancy. (FP5S3).

Schools should engage parents to give talks on moral issues. (FP4S2).

Schools should partner with health organisations to conduct workshop on reproductive health. (HOD1S1).

Guidance and counselling teachers should spearhead better collaboration with parents to address pregnancy issues. (HOD5S5).

The government should stiffen punishment for adult men who impregnate school going girls. (L5S7).

6.5.18 Making English a compulsory passing subject at every examination level

Respondents explained that the Ministry of General Education should re-introduce English as a mandatory passing subject at Grade 9 to promote accountability among learners. Here are some of the responses:

English should be made a mandatory passing subject at Grade 9, so we do not become relaxed then have issues in Grade 12. (L1S2).

English must be made a mandatory passing subject at Grade 9 to help learners become serious and cut off point should be raised to improve standards. (FP5S3).

The Ministry of Education should re-introduce the cut-off point at Grade 9 level and allow pupils who are ready for high content to proceed to Grade 10. This measure will also address the language proficiency issue. (HOD4S4).

English should be made a compulsory passing subject at Grade 9 to encourage learners to work hard in preparation for Grade 12 examinations. (A7).

The Ministry of Education should set and adhere to minimum performance standards for progression within the system. (A6).

Cut-off points and passing English as a mandatory subject should be re-introduced to raise the standard of education and help our children become more accountable. (P3S2).

6.6 Conclusion

Learner performance is influenced by a myriad of factors. The study also noted that factors range from examination paper quality, school factors such as lack of teaching/learning materials, over-enrolment, lack of supervision; teacher factors such

as lack of lesson preparation, low teacher motivation; learner factors such as poor reading culture among learners, low learner proficiency levels in English, indiscipline among learners; parental factors such as non-parental involvement in school activities and monitoring pupil attendance, and policy related factors such abolition of cut off points, removal of English as a mandatory passing subject at Grade 9 were found to be some of the major factors affecting performance. The strategies proposed offer solutions of addressing the identified factors.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

7.0 Overview

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings on “A Critical Discourse Analysis of Grade 12 Pupils’ Poor Performance in English Language Examinations in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia.” The chapter discussed the findings in relation to the objectives of the study which were: to analyse the quality of Grade 12 examination questions; analyse the performance of Grade 12 pupils in the English language; examine teacher and learner views about factors contributing to poor English performance; and suggest strategies to improve pupil performance in Grade 12 examinations in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia.

7.1 ANALYSE THE QUALITY OF GRADE 12 FINAL EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Objective 1 focused on analysing the quality of the Grade 12 English language examination questions. From the analysis of the examination questions for the period 2018 - 2023, the findings showed that the aforementioned examination questions revealed both positive and negative aspects on their quality. Below is a discussion on both the positive and negative aspects.

7.1.1 Mismatch between Syllabus content and Examination content

The first research objective sought to analyse the quality of Grade 12 English final examination questions. To address this objective, document analysis was conducted alongside interviews with teachers. Findings presented in the preceding chapters revealed that Grade 12 English examination questions did not adequately reflect the syllabus content from 2018 to 2023. Topics such as listening and speaking were not assessed. One of the key competences for a learner at the senior secondary school level is that he/she should be capable of communicating effectively in both speech and writing (The Education Act, 2011) If speech is not assessed at the end of senior secondary education, how will we know for certain if this competency has indeed been achieved? In some years, some common topics on structure tested one or a few aspects such as spellings and left out other components of grammar. This findings hinges on content validity which addresses the degree to which the indicator reflects the basic content of the phenomenon or domain of interest (Deploy and Gitline, 2016). Therefore, the content of the examination questions should cover all the domains in the syllabus.

The research findings align with Nyirenda and Mulenga (2020), whose study also revealed that examination questions did not adequately cover speaking and listening, despite these being essential linguistic skills. Listening and speaking appear in the Senior Secondary School English Language Syllabus and are taught in classrooms, yet they remain unassessed in national examinations. These skills are fundamental to language learning, contributing significantly to learners' English proficiency, vocabulary development, and grammatical competence.

Listening and speaking are receptive and productive skills, respectively, and serve as foundational elements for reading and writing. Thus, excluding them from assessment weakens learners' overall language competency. This aligns with Crystal (2003), who emphasised that a well-designed English language examination must assess a learner's grammar, sentence construction, and overall language structure to ensure mastery of linguistic rules. Given this, it is critical that examination questions comprehensively evaluate all the components outlined in the syllabus.

The findings agree with all the three theories used in this study. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (1995) emphasises that language, power, and ideology shape discourse. The exclusion of listening and speaking from examinations reinforces an assessment-driven culture where only reading and writing are prioritised. This reflects institutional power dynamics that dictate what is deemed important in English language education. Therefore, CDA agrees with the findings because of the power the examination body (ECZ) has on the selection of components in the syllabus that should be examined and those that should not. When assessment policies ignore oral skills, teachers may undervalue them in instruction, and learners may not take them seriously, even though they are critical for real-world communication.

Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997) also states that learners' confidence in their abilities influences their motivation and performance. When listening and speaking skills are not assessed, learners may perceive them as unimportant, leading to low self-efficacy in oral communication. The absence of assessment deprives pupils of feedback, reducing their confidence in their ability to use English effectively in real-life situations. Similarly, teachers may feel inefficacious in teaching these skills since their efforts are not measured or valued in final examinations.

Expectancy Theory by Vroom (1964) further explains that learners are motivated by expected outcomes. If an effort in a particular area does not contribute to examination

success, learners will deprioritise it. Since listening and speaking are not examined, learners have low expectancy that practising these skills will yield academic rewards, leading them to focus more on reading and writing. Teachers, too, may deprioritise oral skills instruction in favour of examinable content, reinforcing an examination-oriented approach to language learning.

There is an agreement in all the three theories used which aligns with the findings of this study. CDA suggests that all language skills should be valued equally, yet the current assessment system contradicts this principle. If discourse truly shapes language education, one would expect listening and speaking to be assessed alongside reading and writing. The exclusion of oral skills from examinations undermines the holistic development of communication abilities.

Self-Efficacy Theory does acknowledge that pupils can build confidence in oral skills through informal learning, such as classroom discussions or debates. While assessment plays a significant role, some pupils may still develop strong self-efficacy in listening and speaking through non-examinable activities. This indicates that self-efficacy is influenced by factors beyond formal assessment.

Expectancy Theory suggests that learners focus on what is assessed, but some pupils may still value listening and speaking for future careers or everyday communication. This highlights a limitation of the theory: although assessment-driven motivation is dominant, intrinsic motivation can still influence learners' engagement with oral skills. Leaving out listening and speaking implies that it is not very important. This may make some teachers to stop teaching it because of its absence in the examination. Similarly, learners may develop negative attitudes towards listening and speaking because of its perceived lack of importance. This is so because there is a relationship between teaching and assessment. On one hand, it is expected that teaching should influence examination. However, examination can also affect teaching where examination tendencies can influence what teachers will choose to teach and what they may decide to leave out. This is the reason why, there is need to ensure alignment between curriculum and examinations.

In summary, the findings align with CDA, Self-Efficacy Theory (SET), and Expectancy Theory by demonstrating how assessment practices shape teaching and learning priorities. However, the findings also challenge some assumptions in these theories, particularly regarding intrinsic motivation and informal learning. Addressing this issue

in examinations would ensure a more balanced assessment of language skills, ultimately improving overall English proficiency among learners.

7.1.2 Examination Questions Test Wide Range of Cognitive Skills

The findings as presented in the previous chapter showed that examination questions assessed different cognitive skills as outlined in Bloom's taxonomy. They assessed knowledge (Paper 2 question 1 which assesses vocabulary, cloze, grammar), comprehension (Paper 2, comprehension passage), application (Paper 2 – transformations) analysis, (Paper 1 composition questions) evaluation, (Paper 1 and Paper 2) and synthesis (P1 composition and P2 summary writing). The finding aligns with Kamau (2019) who elucidated that all examination questions need to be aligned with various cognitive levels like critical thinking and creativity. Research evidence also suggests that when assessments are strictly curricular, they create equity in their assessment since they test pupils only on what was taught (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The results are consistent with Mellon & Ferretti (2019), who emphasised that excellent test questions should evaluate a range of cognitive skills and be a reliable indicator of pupils' English language proficiency. They should also reflect and be in line with the national curriculum objectives.

There is a connection between cognitive skills and performance. Examination questions assess different cognitive levels, from knowledge to synthesis. Self-efficacy theory emphasises that a learner's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks (e.g., answering comprehension or synthesis questions) directly affects their effort, persistence, and ultimate performance. Higher-order cognitive skills, such as analysis and evaluation, require confidence and perseverance. According to Bandura (1997) learners with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in complex problem-solving and critical thinking, which aligns with the variety of cognitive skills assessed in the examination questions. If test questions align with curriculum objectives and progressively challenge learners across cognitive levels, they reinforce self-efficacy. The findings support the self-efficacy theory because when learners successfully tackle a wide range of questions, they gain confidence in their abilities, motivating them for future learning.

On the other hand, critical discourse analysis did not agree with the findings on examination questions testing a wide range of cognitive skills because there are no inequalities in the testing of variety of cognitive skills in English language.

Notwithstanding the CDA theory, expectancy theory supports the finding on examination questions assessing different cognitive levels. This variation identified motivates learners to attempt questions because learners expect a variety of tests that should examine their various cognitive skills. Lastly, self-efficacy directly connects to how learners perceive their ability to handle different cognitive challenges in examinations. The theory supports the findings because it enables learners develop a belief in themselves to handle a variety of cognitive challenges since examination questions test various cognitive skills,

7.1.3 Clarity in the Formulation of Questions

The findings as presented in chapter 5 showed that some questions were clear while others were not. In some cases, the questions were clear, and the language used in the questions was also appropriate for the level of learners. Cambridge Assessment Research (2016) emphasised that well-constructed questions enable pupils to understand the tasks, allowing them to perform to the best of their abilities. Mwanza (2015) reported that unclear examination questions often lead to confusion among pupils, affecting their performance. Furthermore, McNamara (2000) stressed that well-designed assessments should use precise language to avoid misinterpretation. If test items lack clarity, they may end up assessing unintended skills, such as test-taking strategies, rather than actual language proficiency. Stiggins (2017) also emphasised how crucial it is for assessments to be clear and stressed that a clear and suitable specification of the achievement target being evaluated is essential to the quality of any assessment.

On the other hand, some questions lacked clarity. For instance, in Paper 1, narrative questions that used proverbs as titles such as *Love is Blind* (2018), *Every Dog Has Its Day* (2019), *Live in a Fool's Paradise* or *Take the Bull by the Horns* (2020), *A One-Eyed Man is a Hero Among the Blind* or *Put the Cat Among the Pigeons* (2022), and *The First Cut is the Deepest* or *Make a Mountain Out of a Molehill* (2023)—did not provide adequate instructions to guide learners in interpreting the proverbs correctly.

Berkowitz and Berkowitz (1981) argue that ambiguous or incomplete instructions in assignments and tests negatively impact learner performance, as learners may struggle to understand what is expected of them. Similarly, Larkin and Simon (1987) explain that interpreting unclear or vague instructions requires additional mental effort, which can lead to errors and lower performance. They emphasise that clear, well-structured instructions reduce cognitive load, helping learners focus on demonstrating their

knowledge rather than deciphering what is required. Ryan and Deci (2017) suggest that pupils perform better when assessments align with their cognitive abilities and prior learning experiences. Furthermore, Skinner and Pitzer (2012) highlight that if examination questions are too complex, ambiguous, or misaligned with the curriculum, pupils may feel overwhelmed, leading to anxiety and disengagement. Given these concerns, it is crucial for the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) to ensure that all examination questions are thoroughly reviewed and edited for clarity. The presence or absence of clear instructions directly influences learners' comprehension of questions, ultimately affecting their performance as was observed by HOD2S2 and HOD4S4.

CDA by Fairclough (1995) supports this finding because it examines how language, power, and ideology shape discourse. The presence of ambiguous instructions in English examinations reflects institutional power dynamics, where examiners who hold authority may assume that all learners have the same interpretative abilities. However, unclear phrasing in proverb-based essay questions creates a disadvantage for learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds, particularly those with limited exposure to idiomatic English expressions. Moreover, CDA suggests that examination structures shape teaching and learning practices. If instructions are vague, teachers may struggle to guide learners in responding appropriately, leading to uncertainty and inconsistent preparation. The ambiguity in examination questions also reinforces an assessment culture where learners are expected to "guess" what examiners want, rather than demonstrating their actual language proficiency. In this context, the lack of explicit guidance agrees with the principles of CDA because of inequalities observed in the manner in which questions are phrased. Examinations should serve as an equitable tool for measuring competence, rather than creating unnecessary barriers through unclear language.

The finding does not support Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory which posits that learners' confidence in their abilities affects their motivation and performance. When examination instructions are vague, learners may struggle to interpret what is expected of them, leading to frustration and low self-efficacy in writing tasks. If learners fail to understand the intended meaning of proverbs or the requirements of the task, they might develop anxiety and a sense of incompetence, regardless of their actual language proficiency. Additionally, poorly structured instructions deny learners valuable feedback on their abilities. When they are unsure whether their response aligns with examiners' expectations, they lack a clear basis for improving their writing skills. As a

result, they may lose confidence in their ability to write effectively, reinforcing the idea that English examinations are unpredictable and overly complex.

From a teacher's perspective, inconsistent question structures can also lower self-efficacy in instructional practices. If teachers are uncertain about how to prepare learners for ambiguous questions, they may struggle to provide clear guidance, further diminishing pupils' confidence in their writing skills. Thus, according to SET clearly written examination questions play a crucial role in building learners' confidence and motivation to engage with writing tasks effectively. Vroom (1964) argues that learners are motivated by the belief that effort leads to a desirable outcome. However, when examination questions lack clarity, learners may feel that their effort in preparing for English writing tasks does not necessarily guarantee success, leading to low motivation and disengagement.

Vroom (1964) also suggests that learners are more motivated to engage in tasks when they perceive a clear link between effort and achievement. However, when examination instructions are unclear, pupils may feel that success depends more on "guessing" the correct interpretation rather than applying their learned skills. This can lead to demotivation, reducing their willingness to improve their writing. Furthermore, when examiners fail to provide explicit instructions, they reinforce an assessment-driven learning culture where learners prioritise memorising "examination tricks" over mastering language skills. Teachers, in turn, may shift their focus toward teaching "examination survival strategies" rather than fostering authentic writing development, further distorting the learning process. Similarly, Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci (2006) emphasise the importance of intrinsic motivation, which is fostered when examination content makes language use meaningful and relevant. Clear and well-structured examination questions are therefore essential for maintaining learner motivation and ensuring that assessments accurately reflect pupils' true language abilities.

7.1.4 Teachers and HODs' Perspectives on the Quality of Grade 12 Examination Questions

This section presents the teachers' and HODs' responses on how they perceived the quality of the Grade 12 Examination questions.

7.1.4.1 Uniformity of Examinations Papers

The respondents stated that examination questions were the same for every learner regardless of their different identities. According to the respondents, this meant that

examinations were uniform and did not favour any candidate. The uniformity meant that the paper was fair because each pupil wrote the same examination and answered the same questions. Gipps (2012) highlighted that high-stakes testing relies heavily on standardisation because it reduces inequalities caused by institutional, socio-economic, and regional variations. Every candidate irrespective of social, economic, education level has an equal opportunity for competent skill demonstration. However, it must be noted that while the examination paper is the same implying fairness and uniformity in the manner it will be taken, there are other variables which make the writing of the examination unequal. For example, poor children may go to the examination room without eating and having walked long distances to the examination room. Some children may be coming from homes where there is no electricity thereby affecting their study time. In other homes, there may be a poor literacy environment. This will make these learners be disadvantaged in approaching the examination. Thus, while it is true that uniformity in the examination questions creates a certain form of equality, learners will still face the same examination from a position of inequality due to their different socio-economic conditions and backgrounds. Notwithstanding, it is important that the examination remains uniform because socio-economic conditions can not necessarily be mitigated in the setting of an examination paper.

CDA examines how language, policies, and institutional structures (such as standardised examinations) reinforce power dynamics and inequalities. While uniform examinations create a sense of fairness, deeper socio-economic disparities still affect learners' ability to perform equally. As Gipps (2012) notes, high-stakes testing is designed to minimise inequalities by offering the same assessment to all learners. However, CDA would argue that this "equality" is only at the surface level, as systemic inequalities (poverty, access to resources, literacy environment) still shape learners' readiness and performance. CDA critiques how institutional practices like uniform examinations may unintentionally privilege some groups while disadvantaging others. Factors like hunger, travel distances, and study conditions as earlier alluded to influence examination outcomes, reinforcing the argument that "equal" assessment conditions do not always translate to "equitable" opportunities. Thus, CDA helps unpack the complexities of fairness in standardised testing by revealing how broader social structures impact pupils' ability to succeed, despite the surface-level uniformity of examinations.

7.1.4.2 ECZ Trained Examiners and the Quality of Examination Questions

A significant strength of the English examination system, as highlighted by teachers, lies in the fact that examination questions are designed by educators who have undergone specialised training with the Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ). This ensures that assessments align with national academic standards, maintaining both validity and reliability. As expressed by T17S6 and HOD6S6 the involvement of ECZ-trained examiners enhances the credibility of examinations, as these professionals possess in-depth subject knowledge and assessment expertise. Madaus and O'Dwyer (1999) asserted that assessments developed by subject experts are more likely to be pedagogically sound, minimising bias and ensuring a fair evaluation of learners' competencies. Similarly, Fernández-Gómez et al. (2020) emphasised that rigorous selection and training of examiners are crucial for maintaining the integrity of national assessments. When assessment tools are carefully crafted by experts, they are more likely to comprehensively evaluate pupil learning, avoiding superficial testing while fostering critical thinking and language proficiency. However, Mwansa's (2021) study revealed that the ECZ Grade 12 examination questions had spread the cognitive demands across the years 2018 -2020, but he observed inconsistencies between intended learning outcomes and the skills actually evaluated though he did not provide pupil performance data on the three years studied.

By leveraging the expertise of ECZ-trained teachers, Zambia's examination system upholds a level of standardisation that enhances fairness and objectivity. However, it must be mentioned that there is no guarantee that when trained examiners set examinations, then they will have the highest standards expected. The Document Analysis established a mismatch between the syllabus and actual examinations where listening and speaking language skills were omitted in the examinations set by ECZ-trained setters. Therefore, continuous professional development and periodic reviews of examination content are essential to adapting to evolving educational needs and maintaining assessment relevance in a dynamic academic landscape.

Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy emphasises that individuals who are well-trained and experienced in a particular domain (such as ECZ-trained examiners in examination setting) are more confident in their ability to design fair, valid, and reliable assessments. This aligns with the argument that trained examiners enhance the credibility and pedagogical soundness of examination questions. When teachers set well-structured examinations aligned with national academic standards, learners are more likely to

perceive examinations as fair and predictable, reinforcing their self-efficacy. High-quality assessment tools contribute to pupils' belief that their effort and knowledge will lead to success, thus motivating them to prepare effectively. SET suggests that ongoing training and professional development can help examiners refine their assessment strategies, improving the overall validity of the examination system. Thus, SET supports the idea that well-trained educators contribute to high-quality examinations, but also highlights the importance of continuous skill development to ensure assessments remain comprehensive and relevant. However, CDA reveals that examination setters tend to prioritize reading and writing skills, while exhibiting a bias through the exclusion of oral language components in the examination questions they design.

7.1.4.3 The Perception of Question Repetition across Examination Years

According to the findings, several respondents thought that examination questions were the same from year to year, which allowed teachers and learners to anticipate question patterns. A rigorous analysis of previous examination papers (2018 – 2023), however, showed that although related ideas and subjects could have resurfaced throughout time, there was no clear evidence of precise recurrence in succeeding years. When similar questions recur in successive examinations/tests, it is known as true repetition, which jeopardises test security and integrity by enabling pupils to exchange answers and perhaps resulting in security breaches (McManus, 2020). Furthermore, by promoting memorisation over understanding, repeated questions may weaken the validity of tests and make it more challenging to determine pupils' level of competency (Brown & Harris, 2019). Since there was no repetition established in the papers reviewed, no one was advantaged through memorisation or disadvantaged by lack of access to past examination questions. Therefore, learners were encouraged to study hard to demonstrate their competence.

7.1.4.4 Limited Teacher Awareness of Examination paper Quality

The research revealed the presence of teachers with little or no regard for the standard of the English Language examination questions. In their responses regarding the standard of these examinations, they failed to define the areas they saw or failed to take active interest in scrutinising them. This shows that the teachers failed to be interested in reading or scrutinising the levels of the examination questions. Indifference or no regard in judging the standard of these examinations was indicated by teachers T18S6, T3S1, T12S4, T7S3, and T5S2. This finding corresponds to Asmaida (2023) who noted

that a large number of educators, including administrators and teachers, lack a thorough understanding of the types and purposes of national assessments, which hinders their capacity to use the findings of assessments to enhance the quality of education. This limited awareness limits their utilisation of assessment results in teaching as well as learning enhancement. Additionally, the quality of the tests utilised in the assessment of teachers also contributes immensely toward the effectiveness of teacher preparation programmes. Bhatnagar (2018) emphasises the importance of ensuring the alignment of assessment with national as well as the level of the institution. Alignment ensures teachers have more awareness regarding the assessment quality, preparing them with the necessary competencies in the utilisation of effective teaching mechanisms as well as the enhancement of pupil learning. Anif et al. (2019) also underscore the significance of professional growth in assessment literacy. As soon as teachers understand the role of assessment in pupil learning, they become more self-confident as teachers, become leaders in their classrooms, and contribute toward the overall growth of the education system. Bhatnagar (2018) also asserts that the assessment should be created in a way that enables them to provide constructive feedback for the preparation of teachers. Contextualisation of these assessment as well as alignment with the policies of the country is essential in enabling teachers with the skill of utilising quality assessment in enhancing pupil learning.

In this regard, Self-efficacy theory suggests that individuals engage more actively in tasks when they feel competent and confident in their abilities. The research findings indicate that some teachers lack awareness or interest in evaluating examination quality, which may stem from low self-efficacy in assessment literacy. If teachers doubt their expertise in analysing examination standards, they are less likely to engage in scrutiny or discussions about assessment quality.

Studies such as Anif et al. (2019) highlight that professional growth in assessment literacy enhances teachers' confidence and ability to use assessments effectively. Similarly, Bhatnagar (2018) emphasises that assessments should align with national policies and institutional expectations, ensuring teachers understand their purpose. However, the responses in this study suggest that many teachers do not feel confident or competent enough to assess examination quality. Phrases like "*I have never bothered to analyse*" or "*I do not know what the quality is*" indicate a perceived lack of ability or motivation to engage in this evaluative task. When teachers receive proper training, they develop higher self-efficacy, enabling them to critically engage with examination

questions and use assessment data to improve teaching and learning. Self-efficacy theory supports the idea that when teachers feel equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills, they are more likely to take an active role in evaluating and improving assessment quality. As Bandura (1997) suggests, teachers' confidence in assessment directly impacts their willingness and ability to scrutinise examination standards. Expectancy Theory could also provide insights, particularly the expectancy component, which refers to the belief that effort will lead to a desired outcome. If teachers do not see value in analysing the examination or do not believe their analysis will make a difference, they may not engage in the task. The finding does not support the expectancy theory.

7.1.4.5 The Need for Assessment Quality Training for Teachers

Enhancing teachers' awareness of national assessments is crucial for improving teaching methods and pupil performance. When teachers understand the purpose and structure of assessments, they can better align their instruction with learning objectives, leading to more effective teaching and improved pupil outcomes. To navigate the complexities of national assessments successfully, teachers require continuous professional development and assessment literacy.

The findings align with the Self-Efficacy theory by Bandura (1997) which emphasises that individuals who feel capable and knowledgeable about a task are more likely to engage in it effectively. Training teachers in assessment quality increases their confidence in designing, interpreting, and using assessments to enhance learning outcomes. When teachers receive proper training, they develop the belief that they can effectively implement assessments to improve instruction. This aligns with the idea that assessment literacy enables teachers to align their teaching with learning objectives, leading to better pupil performance. The theory suggests that continuous learning and professional development strengthen individuals' confidence in their skills. By providing ongoing training in assessment quality, teachers become more self-assured in evaluating and using national assessments to improve both their teaching methods and pupil learning.

In summary, the findings revealed a mismatch between the syllabus content and examination questions. While the questions assess a broad range of cognitive skills, issues related to clarity in question formulation and uniformity were identified. Additionally, the study found that the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) provides

training for examiners on examination quality. However, concerns were raised regarding limited teacher awareness of examination question quality, and the need for teacher training in assessment quality.

7.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 12 PUPILS IN ENGLISH

The second objective sought to analyse the performance of Grade 12 learners in the Copperbelt Province for the period 2018-2023. The finding revealed that the province's performance was below average due to the discrepancy in the number of pupils who performed poorly in relation to those who obtained distinctions. For this research, "poor performance" is operationally defined as the failure of pupils to achieve the minimum proficiency. This not only encompasses outright failure but also poor levels of achievement that reflect inadequate mastery of English Language competencies. G1–G9 categories represent grade bands for English performance, with: G1–G3 (Distinction & High Merit) → High-performing learners; G4–G6 (Low Merit & Credit) → Average-performing learners; and G7–G9 (Pass & Fail) → Poor-performing learners.

164,503 pupils who sat for English examinations, and **41,488** obtained Division 7 or 8, classified as satisfactory but insufficient for higher education entry, effectively counting as a fail. Additionally, **15,328** pupils (9.32%) completely failed to meet the minimum required standard. Combined, **56,816** pupils (35.03%) performed poorly during the reviewed period raising concerns about language proficiency. This performance by the Copperbelt Province indicates that the number of learners who performed poorly is still on a higher side. This entails that these learners had challenges in the English language which ranged from leaving numerous blank spaces in their responses, poor writing skills, misinterpretation of and misunderstanding of questions, (ECZ, 2022). This finding corresponds with Sitali et al. (2020) who elucidated that in Zambia, high-performing schools are characterised by a distinction rate of 10-20% and a failure rate of below 5%. A failure percentage of 9.32 is high despite the distinction percentage being in the range as outlined by Sitali and others. Furthermore, Chaamwe (2017) posits that failure rates above 10% and a sizeable percentage of pupils obtaining low marks (Division 7 and 8) are indicators of underperforming schools.

58, 273 out of 164,503 pupils that sat for the examinations across all the years fall in G4-G6 category. These learners fall into the average performance category and had the following traits: adequate use of language structure, inadequate command of grammar,

poor translation competency, weak composition writing proficiency, good reading comprehension skills, moderate comprehension question response interpretation, very limited vocabulary, and occasional misuse of words (cf. ECZ, 2022). Reich et al. (2013) suggest that moderate-performing schools typically have 15-25% low-grade passes and 5-10% failure rates, yet this performance level does not meet Zambian higher education entry requirements. Consequently, over one-third of pupils in the Copperbelt Province underperformed in English during the period under review.

The findings further revealed that out of 164, 503 learners who sat for the examinations, only 49,414 pupils (30.04%) were in the high performance category. This shows that such learners had a mastery of the English language and were able to demonstrate good writing skills, had good English language proficiency, good interpretative skills, and good understanding of the subject matter as cited by ECZ (2022). In terms of the categorisation used in this study, the G4-G6 (average performance category) performers (58, 273- 35.42%) are the majority followed by the G7-G9 performers (low performance category, 56, 816 – 34.54%) and then the high performers (high performance category – 49, 414). This shows that the majority of learners in the province were not in the high performance category but in the average category followed by low performance category.

This categorisation, however, has implications according to the CDA framework. Failure is formed through examination discourse as one central point of CDA analysis. When teaching agencies classify learners into distinction or merit or fail categories, their message creates negative impressions which shape learners' identity. Negative labels stuck to many learners lead to insufficient self-confidence followed by declining motivation to learn English. Academic findings by Wodak (2009) exposed that failure language systems in schools support structured social rankings by making nervous learners bear accountability for inadequate academic framework implementation.

Such total reliance on written tests to measure proficiency in English perpetuates elitist thinking that leads to learners facing negative outcomes although they may speak fluently but write poorly. The Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) and other examinations authorities employ language-related gatekeeping procedures through which they determine educational and career advancement based on CDA principles. According to Fairclough (1995) the assessment procedures maintain social differences

through their preference for educated English language forms versus alternative acceptable ways of expression.

Overall Analysis of Poor Performance in English Language Examinations

For the sake of this research, “poor performance” is operationally defined as the failure of pupils to achieve the minimum proficiency. This not only encompasses outright failure but also poor levels of achievement that reflect inadequate mastery of English Language competencies. These findings support ECZ’s (2023) observations, which identify poorly performing pupils in the area of English Language as having problems with the necessary writing skills such as the use of abbreviations, informal writing, spelling, conjunctions, structure, as well as the reading of tight word limit questions.

Statistical Performance Results of Selected Schools in the Copperbelt Province

The study sampled eight government secondary schools whose results for the period 2018 -2023 were analysed and presented below.

7.2.1. Performance Analysis of school 1

The findings for School 1 were presented in chapter 5. In 2018 47.45% of pupils underperformed compared with 55.45% pupils who underperformed in 2019. A 2019 increase would mean more pupils may have been academically challenged than in 2018. More pupils in the 2019 intake may have been automatically progressed to Grade 10, causing the increase in underperformance. Pupils’ self-perceived competence plays a critical role in their performance. Learners who feel capable and well-prepared exhibit higher levels of effort and persistence (Deci & Ryan, 1985). However, if they perceive themselves as inadequately prepared due to ineffective teaching methods, limited exposure to English, or unclear assessment expectations, they may struggle to engage actively in the examination process (Reeve, 2009). The number of candidates also saw a significant drop (455) during the COVID-19 year (2020) with an overall average performance also being poor (46.59%). This suggests that fewer able learners were potentially more affected by the disruption to the learning process brought about by the pandemic. Less teaching time would have seen the pupils with low capabilities falling behind with their learning. Many learners would have lacked exposure to online learning, worsening the gaps in performance. Additionally, minimal interaction with teachers would have limited the coverage of content as well as the revision process. In 2021, the percentage of cumulative poor performance decreased to 35.40%, possibly because there were fewer candidates as well as possibly the relaxation of the marking

of national examinations. In 2021, the lowest number of pupils joined the school, indicating that families may have been hit hard economically because of the pandemic, thereby forcing pupils to pursue livelihoods as opposed to going back to the classrooms.

In 2022, the percentage of poor performance rose again to 59.40%, indicating the persistent effects of interruptions in the learning process as well as the inadequacy of recovery efforts. Learners impacted by the pandemic might have had learning gaps due to school closures, lack of online learning materials, or financial difficulties. Learner concentration and school attendance might have been impacted by poverty, lack of parental support, or hunger. From the learning perspective, learning time had normalised; therefore, more stringent measures might have been applied during the marking of national examinations, leading to the cumulative percentage achieved.

The average rate of poor performance thus increased again in 2022 to 59.40%, indicating a persistent impact of disturbances in the learning process and inadequate efforts towards recovery. Learners whose education was affected by the pandemic may have experienced learning gaps due to school closures, a lack of materials for online learning, or financial struggles.

In 2023, the cumulative percentage dropped to 38.24%, showing signs of improvement as the education system stabilised. The school may have also put in place interventions such as remedial lessons and frequent tests/quizzes, which gradually started to assist learners in improving their performance.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on education. The school closures during the pandemic may have resulted in knowledge gaps, whose long-term impacts were evident in 2022. However, the proportion of pupils scoring low grades (G7-G9) was quite high across all the years, implying that COVID-19 may not have been the primary cause, but other underlying factors may have contributed to the underperformance.

The pupils who underperformed during the period under review outnumbered those who performed well, implying that the majority of pupils in this school were struggling with English. Being in a peri-urban area and a grade 2 government day school, the school may have had high enrolment rates, resulting in large classes that made it hard to provide individualised attention. The school may have also had a shortage of textbooks, teaching aids, and technological resources that made teaching and learning

ineffective. The analysis aligns with Nakale and Iita (2020) who observed that non-availability of resources impacted learners negatively.

The school may have had learners with poor language competence, failing to understand and interpret examination questions appropriately. A grade 2 school may have struggled with a shortage of teachers, which resulted in a high workload, compromised feedback, fatigue, and diminished teaching quality. This analysis agrees with Masuku (2023) who established that learners who have challenges stemming from their not having foundational understanding in grammar and literature coupled with inadequate support from teachers tended to perform poorly. The learners may have lacked good study habits. Pupil absenteeism and/or socio-economic factors may have also contributed to poor performance. Inconsistent teacher supervision and lesson monitoring may also have led to instructional gaps.

A total of 2,736 pupils sat for the examinations across the years, and 1,235 pupils underperformed, from 2018 to 2023. A total of 944 pupils who achieved grades G4-G6 accounted for 34.51%, while 557 pupils who achieved grades G1-G3 accounted for 20.36%, reflecting strong linguistic competency, accurate use of varied sentence structures, a sound grasp of concepts and grammar, strong language proficiency, and skilled spelling and writing skills (ECZ, 2023). In this school, the majority of pupils were in the low performance category followed by the average performance category then the high performance category. This evidence suggests that academic excellence was rare in the school since the majority of pupils were struggling. A highly performing institution is expected to have a higher percentage of high achieving pupils and a low percentage of underperforming pupils. Based on the foregoing, the school's performance was below average.

Vroom (1964) suggests that individuals are motivated to perform well when they believe their efforts will lead to desirable outcomes. The fluctuations in performance across different years could be linked to pupils' perceptions of whether their efforts in learning English would yield success, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic when learning conditions were disrupted. The school closures and minimal teacher interaction may have weakened pupils' belief in the effectiveness of their efforts, leading to reduced motivation and lower performance. The lack of access to learning resources and online education further diminished their expectancy of success. The slight improvement in performance in 2023 suggests that interventions such as

remedial lessons and frequent assessments may have strengthened pupils' confidence in their ability to succeed. When students see a clear link between effort (e.g., attending remedial classes, completing quizzes) and performance improvement, they are more likely to engage actively in learning. Large class sizes, resource shortages, and socio-economic challenges may have negatively affected pupils' belief in their ability to excel, reinforcing the cycle of underperformance. Expectancy Theory highlights how external conditions can shape learners' motivation by influencing their perceived control over academic success.

7.2.2 Performance Analysis of School 2

The findings for School 2 were presented in chapter 5. The school showed fluctuating performance. Interestingly, the pandemic year 2020 showed a sharp drop in G7–G9 performance (23.66%) but a significant increase in G1–G3 performance (46.31%) in 2020 suggesting that some learners may have had private tuition. In 2021, while G7–G9 increase was seen (46.29%), G4 – G6 also rose (40.45%) while G1–G3 dropped to 13.26%, showing that fewer learners achieved top grades, possibly due to lingering effects of lost learning time and limited access to remedial classes or revision materials for this set of learners when they were in Grade 11. The teachers may not have covered the whole syllabus and did not provide adequate examination support to learners. This aligns with Ogwok (2023), who found that comprehensive syllabus coverage positively correlates with improved academic performance. Furthermore, emotional and financial challenges leading to poor concentration and retention could have contributed. This aligns with Dela Cruz, Santos, and Reyes (2018) who also found that parents' level of education and income impacted performance negatively. There might have been learning gaps from 2020 that continued to impact 2021 candidates.

G7–G9 remained high (38.78% in 2022 and 33.26% in 2023) indicating that many learners continued struggling with English, probably due to cumulative learning gaps from previous years. G4–G6 performance fluctuated but improved to 39.27% in 2022, 45.03% in 2023). Generally, more learners fell in the average performance category and this was the largest group even before the pandemic struck. Fluctuations in G4–G6 performance suggest that learners with higher self-efficacy and external support (such as private tuition or teacher guidance) performed better. G1–G3 remained low (21.95% in 2022, and 21.71% in 2023) in relation to the low performing pupils. In this school, fewer pupils achieved top grades, suggesting that learning gaps persisted. Self-efficacy, as proposed by Bandura (1997), refers to learners' belief in their ability to succeed. This

applies to School 2's performance trends. The drop in G1–G3 performance in 2021 could be linked to diminished self-efficacy due to lost learning time and reduced access to remedial support. Learners may have perceived themselves as less capable, affecting their motivation.

The high number of G7–G9 learners suggests continued struggles with English, possibly due to incomplete syllabus coverage, poor reading culture and limited revision and possibly inconsistent teacher support due to heavy workload. Situated in a densely populated area, the school probably had a large pupil population, potentially resulting in overcrowded classrooms, which diminished teacher effectiveness and personal attention for learners. Pupils from various socio-economic statuses might have encountered obstacles like insufficient educational support at home, financial struggles, or limited access to learning resources. Since this is a day school, some learners might have faced challenges from distractions at home such as inadequate study spaces, or time limitations due to obligations beyond school. Dela Cruz, Santos, and Reyes (2018)'s study further revealed that larger family size impacted performance negatively.

In urban environments, parents often face challenging job hours, which restrict their engagement in their children's education and academic monitoring. Although the school can be reached by foot or public transport, some learners might still have encountered difficulties with arriving on time, exhaustion from lengthy commutes, or insufficient funds to cover daily transportation costs. The inadequacy of qualified teachers, appropriate teaching and learning resources, and inadequate infrastructure could influence pupil achievement. Urban schools frequently face resource pressure because of large enrolment numbers. Learners could have encountered distractions like peer pressure influence, social events, increased exposure to social media, and urban entertainment may have negatively affected study habits or even harmful external factors could have impacted their academic concentration. This aligns with Banda (2018), whose study identified inadequate resources and lack of pupil motivation as key factors contributing to poor English performance in Zambia's Copperbelt Province.

Based on the categorisation, the majority of pupils were in the average performance category (1,169) followed by the low performance category (1, 147) then the high performance category which had the lowest number (685). In conclusion, the findings

indicate that School 2 exhibited below-average to poor performance, as a significant proportion of pupils struggled to meet acceptable academic standards.

CDA examines how language, power, and social structures influence educational outcomes. In the context of School 2. The role of socio-economic status (SES) aligns with CDA's focus on structural inequalities. Learners from lower-income families struggled with access to learning resources, which impacted their ability to achieve high grades. Urban schooling challenges (overcrowding, lack of qualified teachers, and distractions) reinforce how systemic issues influence academic outcomes. Struggles with English among G7–G9 learners could be attributed to low linguistic self-efficacy caused by incomplete syllabus coverage, poor reading culture, and inadequate revision support. Teachers' workload and lack of resources could also have impacted their ability to instil confidence in learners, further weakening self-efficacy.

7.2.3 Performance Analysis of School 3

The findings for School 3 were presented in Chapter 5. The findings indicate that School 3 consistently demonstrated underachievement in English Language examinations from 2018 to 2023, with the majority of pupils performing below acceptable standards. The school showed consistently high poor performance rates (G7-G9). The poor performance rate had been increasing over time: 2018: 49.73%; 2019: 71.91% (worst-performing year); 2023: 61.35% (still high despite slight improvement from 2019). The lowest G7-G9 recorded was in 2018 (49.73%). From 2019–2023, over 50% of pupils performed poorly every year, implying more than half were struggling with basic comprehension. It is worth noting that the poor performance was not really the result of the pandemic, but other systemic issues beyond the pandemic. This school's levels of poor performance were high even when there was no COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that there were other reasons contributing to the poor performance observed. Ryan and Deci (2008) state that competence is key in helping people gain mastery of skills learnt. When people are confident that they have attained the competence needed, they are most likely to take appropriate actions that will help them achieve their goals.

The percentage of learners in the average performance category had remained between 24.26%–38.25% over the years. In 2023, the average scores increased to 32.16%, even though the majority remained in the poor performance category (61.35%). The school showed a declining pass rate in G1-G3. Surprisingly, the best performance year was

2020 (16.46% - G1-G3), while 2019 had the lowest pass rate (3.83% - G1-G3). In 2023, the pass rate dropped to 6.49%, showing a downward trend in top performance.

Self-Efficacy Theory by Bandura (1997) explains how an individual's belief in their ability to succeed influences their motivation, learning, and performance. In the context of School 3, self-efficacy is a crucial factor in understanding why pupils consistently underperformed in English Language examinations from 2018 to 2023.

The consistently high poor performance rates (G7–G9) indicate that many learners in School 3 might have developed low self-efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to succeed in English. Repeated failure can lead to learned helplessness, where pupils stop trying to improve because they expect to fail. This explains why, despite slight fluctuations, more than half of the learners consistently struggled with English. The declining pass rate in G1–G3 further suggests that low confidence in English ability may have been instilled early, affecting learners as they progressed through higher grades.

Limited resources (textbooks, learning aids, and qualified teachers) create an environment where learners struggle to grasp key concepts, further reinforcing their belief that they cannot perform well in English. Quality education requires the availability and use of educational materials (The Education Act, 2011). Overcrowded classrooms reduce teacher attention, making it difficult for struggling pupils to receive the necessary support. Without personalised guidance, learners may feel incapable of improving, thus lowering their self-efficacy. The community's language environment could also play a role. If English is rarely spoken outside the classroom, learners may not develop confidence in using it, making them hesitant to engage in lessons or examinations. This is supported by Simumba (2019), who found significant disparities in English performance between urban and rural pupils, highlighting the challenges rural learners face in achieving language proficiency.

Long distances to school, fatigue, and household responsibilities might reduce study time, causing learners to perform poorly. Over time, repeated struggles could make them believe that they are naturally incapable of succeeding in English. Lack of remedial lessons or private tutoring deprives pupils of opportunities to rebuild their confidence through additional support. Without structured interventions, learners remain trapped in a cycle of low self-efficacy and poor performance. Comparison with urban learners who have better resources and teacher support may further discourage

rural pupils, reinforcing their belief that they are at a disadvantage and unable to compete academically.

Interestingly, the highest G1–G3 performance was recorded in 2020 (16.46%). This could suggest that some learners received alternative support (e.g., parental guidance or private tutoring during school closures), which might have boosted their confidence in English. However, in 2023, the pass rate dropped again (6.49%), indicating that the temporary boost in self-efficacy may not have been sustained due to a return to resource constraints and lack of structured support.

SET helps explain the persistent low performance at School 3 by highlighting how repeated failure, lack of resources, limited teacher support, and socio-economic challenges undermine learners' belief in their ability to succeed. Without interventions such as remedial lessons, improved teacher support, and targeted motivation strategies, learners may continue to struggle due to entrenched low self-efficacy.

7.2.4 Performance Analysis of School 4

The findings for School 4 were presented in Chapter 5. From 2018 to 2023 a total of 2,428 pupils wrote the English Language examination where 911 pupils cumulatively were poor performers. The English proficiency level of 911 candidates was not sufficient. The fact that nearly 38% of candidates had insufficient English proficiency suggests that many learners lacked confidence in their ability to succeed in the subject. According to Expectancy Theory by Vroom (1964), a learner's motivation to achieve high performance depends on their belief in their ability to succeed (expectancy), their perception that success will lead to desirable outcomes (instrumentality), and the value they place on success (valence). When learners experience success, it reinforces their learning, builds their confidence and encourages them to accept further learning challenges (cf. The Education Act, 2011:17). The high number of poor performers in School 4 may indicate that many pupils had low expectancy as they did not believe that increased effort would lead to better results, possibly due to repeated past failures, inadequate teacher attention in overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient English practice beyond school.

Statistical data shows that 1, 017 pupils were in the average performing category. The majority of pupils fell in average performing category suggesting that while they had moderate expectancy, their learning environment may not have encouraged them to strive for top performance. It could also suggest that teachers may have focused more

on remedial teaching to ensure most learners passed (G4 –G6) rather than producing high achievers (G1-G3). This focus on ensuring minimum competency, rather than mastery, aligns with instrumentality, where pupils worked just enough to pass but did not necessarily see a strong link between extra effort and achieving distinction.

Performance issues in the examination may stem from various factors which include: Parents may be more literate and may be more involved in their children's education, providing additional support at home. Pupils from wealthier backgrounds might perform better due to access to extra tuition and a conducive home environment for studying. This is supported by Dela Cruz, Santos, and Reyes (2018) who also found that parents' level of education and income impacted performance The performance patterns in School 4 also reflect differences in valence, or how much pupils valued success in English. Learners from more literate or wealthier households, who likely received additional parental support and extra tuition, were more likely to be in the higher-performing category (G1-G3). These learners may have had stronger valence, recognising that proficiency in English could lead to better academic and career opportunities. In contrast, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, where English was rarely spoken at home, may not have perceived strong enough rewards for excelling in the subject, leading to lower motivation and performance.

High enrolment numbers, however, could negatively impact performance, particularly in lower and high grade categories. The pupils might not have had sufficient English practice beyond classroom walls because they mostly spoke their native languages. Active language usage should be prioritised over rote learning methods because it produces weak writing abilities and poor comprehension performance. In overcrowded classrooms, pupils might not have received individualised attention from teachers, reducing their expectancy that extra effort would translate into success. Additionally, limited access to reading resources and English-speaking environments outside of school may have restricted their ability to practice and develop strong comprehension and writing skills. Simumba (2019) found similar patterns in rural schools, where limited exposure to English adversely affected pupil performance, highlighting the need for active language use over rote learning.

Among pupils who passed English there is a notable majority of pupils in the average category (1, 017). While they have the opportunity to go to the college or university according to general requirements, this shows that the majority of the pupils are not in

the higher performing category but in the middle category followed by poor performance (911) indicating poor English proficiency which may impact their performance across other subjects. The majority of learners in this school were struggling. Only 500 pupils were in the high performing category which is a very small number compared to the average performers and low performers. Of the 500 high-performing pupils, their success suggests that they had strong expectancy and instrumentality as they believed in their ability to succeed and saw a clear link between effort and high achievement. However, their smaller proportion indicates that School 4 may not have had adequate systems in place to push more learners toward high performance.

Expectancy Theory helps explain the performance trends at School 4 by highlighting how learners' beliefs about their abilities, their perceptions of rewards, and the value they placed on English proficiency influenced their outcomes. While some pupils had sufficient motivation and support to pass, a lack of individualised learning strategies, high enrolment numbers, and limited language exposure prevented many from excelling. To improve outcomes, the school needs more structured strategies to boost expectancy, such as targeted interventions, increased reading resources, and stronger incentives for high performance, ensuring that more learners transition from average and low performance to high achievement.

7.2.5 Performance Analysis of School 5

The findings were presented in chapter 5. A total of 1,239 pupils sat for the English examination in this school during the reviewed period where 512 pupils showed poor performance, 457 pupils fell in the average performance category while 270 fell in the high performing category which backs up the general pattern of poor English Language competency and places the school among the top schools for poor grades. The limited number of high achievers (270 pupils) shows that only a small fraction of learners had both the confidence and motivation to excel. Many others may have perceived English as too challenging or irrelevant to their future aspirations, leading to low effort and disengagement.

In 2018, 176 pupils (55.52%) out of 317 performed poorly and 41 pupils (24.40%) out of 168 pupils performed poorly in 2019. In 2020 109 pupils (45.23%) out of 241 performed poorly probably because of school closure that disrupted learning. In 2021, 81 pupils (38.03%) out of 213 performed poorly. In 2022, 57 pupils (40.43%) out of

141 performed poorly. The school recorded the lowest enrolment. This could have been the result of the pandemic where many youth started fending for families that had lost jobs or had lost bread winners to COVID-19. In 2023, 48 pupils (30.19%) out of 159 performed poorly showing some improvement. Despite the school not recording any G9 in 2023, the poor performance percentage was still high in relation to the number of pupils examined. This suggests that while some learners gained confidence in their ability to improve, though many still believed that passing English required an unattainable level of skill.

The consistent significant number of underperforming pupils suggests that pupils might have lacked comprehension of complex sentences and proper grammar leading to poor performance in both written and spoken English. Poor teaching of reading comprehension and analytical ability could have prevented pupils from properly interpreting examination questions alongside passages. This is supported by Simukonda and Chanda (2019), who found that teachers felt unprepared to assist pupils struggling with comprehension, suggesting that inadequate instructional support may have weakened learners' expectancy beliefs. If teachers themselves were not confident in addressing learning difficulties, pupils would have little reason to believe they could improve.

Many learners at School 5 may have believed that learning English was too difficult, particularly in areas like reading comprehension, essay writing, and grammar. These struggles could have reinforced a sense of helplessness, discouraging them from putting in extra effort. Autonomy is crucial and research indicates that pupils who have opportunities for self-directed learning and active participation in their education perform better than those in rigid, teacher-centred environments (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). If learners lack opportunities for independent language practice and critical thinking, they may find it difficult to navigate examinations requiring interpretation, synthesis, and articulation of ideas. Native language interference about writing coherence and verbal fluency might have affected mostly pupils' ability to write essays. The considerable number of underachievers and a sparse number of distinctions indicate that English fundamental abilities needed for success were missing in many learners.

Expectancy Theory provides a strong explanation for the persistent underperformance at School 5. Many pupils likely did not believe that effort would lead to improvement, resulting in low motivation and disengagement.

7.2.6 Performance Analysis of School 6

The findings were presented in chapter 5. The school presented 890 candidates for examinations during the reviewed period. 508 pupils performed poorly, 291 pupils were average performers while 91 pupils were high achievers. In 2018, 155 pupils (76.73%) out of 202 performed poorly while 144 pupils (50.35%) out of 286 performed poorly in 2019. In 2020, 110 pupils (66.27%) performed poorly while 61 pupils (63.54%) out of 96 performed poorly in 2021 suggesting that less capable learners might have been more affected by the learning disruptions caused by the pandemic. Reduced instructional time might have resulted in learning deficiencies, especially for pupils with lower abilities. The sharp decline in performance in 2020 (66.27%) and 2021 (63.54%) suggests that the most vulnerable learners suffered disproportionately from reduced instructional time. Janks (2010) emphasises that educational inequalities become more visible during crises, as students from underprivileged backgrounds often lack access to digital learning tools and home support.

2022 saw a decline in enrolment (31) as well as poor performance (9.68%). In 2023 Enrolment increased (109 pupils), but poor performance rose (32.11%) where 35 pupils performed poorly out of 109 possibly due to a return of struggling learners who had missed key foundational skills. This supports Fairclough's (2001) argument that systemic educational challenges are reproduced over time, creating cycles of underachievement.

This school had the high number of underachievers (508) followed by average performers (291). The substantial number of poor performing pupils indicates that there could be considerable learning obstacles that affected performance. Pupils from various socio-economic backgrounds might have encountered obstacles like insufficient educational support at home, financial struggles, or limited access to learning resources. Learners might have experienced limited exposure to proper language structures because they did not live in English-speaking areas. Van Dijk (1993) contends that access to discourse (language, texts, and learning materials) is often regulated by social power structures, creating systemic barriers to language acquisition for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pupils who did not live in

English-speaking environments may have struggled with fluency, comprehension, and essay writing.

According to Gee (1999), language acquisition is closely linked to social interactions; thus, without regular exposure to English beyond the classroom, learners may struggle to develop the linguistic flexibility needed for academic success. The pupils' limited experience with writing developed poor skills in creating well-structured essays which resulted in incoherence and numerous grammatical mistakes. The school might have experienced a combination of teacher scarcity and inexperienced teachers of English leading to subpar educational results. This school demonstrates major structural problems in both teaching and assessing English because of its weak pupil achievement and minimal number of distinguished outcomes. Based on the categorisation, the school had the highest number of pupils (508) in the poor performance category followed by average performance category (291) and lastly the high performance category (91). The school can therefore be classified as a poor performing school.

By applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it becomes clear that the school's poor English performance is not just an individual issue but a reflection of systemic barriers in language learning. Structural inequalities, limited English exposure, teacher-related challenges, and socio-economic struggles have created an environment where pupils struggle to acquire strong English skills.

7.2.7 Performance Analysis of School 7

The findings were presented in chapter 5 and they revealed that 2138 pupils wrote English examinations during the period under review. The school had fluctuating performance across the years. In 2018 G7-G9 accounted for 46.69% followed by G4-G6 at (29.77% which could suggest that learners probably had serious weaknesses in their foundational knowledge. The school might have had fewer teachers of English resulting into high teacher to learner ratios coupled with scarce teaching and learning resources. The big enrolment (514 pupils) could have created large class sizes causing teachers to fail to give adequate attention to individual learners who might be struggling in English. This is supported by Banda and Phiri (2019) whose findings revealed a decline in English performance attributed to large class sizes and inadequate teacher support. 2021 was another year that had high G7-G9 (31.94%) probably due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted learning and may be most learners were not taught online due to internet challenges and maybe many could not

afford to buy the gadgets. The school demonstrated interesting trends in G7-G9 category. There was a significant decline in low performance from 240 pupils (46.69%) in 2018 to 37 pupils (12.09%) in 2023 suggesting improvement. The improvement observed might have been due to interventions such as remedial lessons, improved teaching strategies, intensive examination preparation strategies like revision and frequent tests and quizzes. The teachers could have also taken marking learners' work and providing feedback seriously leading to improved outcomes. This is supported by Lipnevich and Smith (2009) who established that descriptive feedback providing performance insights and specific strategies for improvement is significantly more effective in improving learner outcomes.

The reviewed period showed a high number of pupils in the G1-G3 category (773) followed by the G4-G6 (763) followed by the G7-G9 (602). The G4-G6 seemed to have remained consistent. There had been an improvement in the high performance category particularly from 2022-2023 suggesting that the school had worked hard to put in place strong recovery measures such remedial teaching, or extended teaching hours to bridge the knowledge gaps leading to improved learner outcomes. It also suggests stronger English instruction in certain classrooms or access to better learning materials. Parents might have also been more involved and monitored pupil attendance. This improvement shows that any school is capable of performing better despite its location provided the school is committed and stakeholders work together. The school had the highest number of pupils in the high performance category (773) followed by the average performance category (763) and lastly the poor performance category (602). Nonetheless, the school would need to continue working hard to reduce the number of G7-G9 further.

The high number of low performers (G7-G9: 46.69% in 2018, 31.94% in 2021) reflects limited pupil motivation, high teacher-to-learner ratios, and resource shortages. Many pupils may not have believed their efforts would result in success, leading to disengagement. 2021 (COVID-19 impact): Online learning barriers and limited access to resources further reduced pupils' perceived ability to succeed. Banda and Phiri (2019) support this, revealing a decline in English performance due to large class sizes and inadequate teacher support.

The school's performance patterns align with Expectancy Theory, showing that when learners perceive their efforts as valuable and supported by teachers, parents, and interventions, their performance improves.

7.2.8 Performance Analysis of School 8

The findings were presented in chapter five. In 2018, the bulk of pupils (53.69%) were in the low-performance category followed by the average performing category (29.34%). This could indicate prior challenges such as scarce resources, high teacher-to-pupil ratios, and probably syllabus coverage problems. The high number of low-performing pupils (53.69% in 2018, 41.65% in 2020, and 43.65% in 2023) suggests systemic barriers such as high teacher-to-pupil ratios, scarce teaching and learning materials and limited access to quality instruction. CDA suggests that educational inequalities are reinforced by resource allocation and institutional structures (Fairclough, 1995). This aligns with Nghipandulwa and Ndjamba (2022), who found that lack of resources negatively impacted learner performance during instruction and culminated in poor performance in examinations.

In 2019, there was a remarkable improvement, with high-performance learners increasing to 29.43%, and low-performance learners decreasing to 26.27%. This could suggest that teachers adopted learner centred teaching strategies. It could also have been due to good syllabus coverage and the availability of resources.

In 2020, the low performing category accounted for 41.65% which could be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many learners might have faced challenges with self-study and lack of resources to access online learning. In 2021, the percentage of low performers rose to 44.93% while the average performers accounted for 43.19%. This could be attributed to the prolonged school closure leading to learning gaps resulting from limited teacher-learner interaction and lack of access to resources and online learning. Pupils wrote the examinations without being adequately prepared. The high number of low-performing pupils (53.69% in 2018, 41.65% in 2020, and 43.65% in 2023) suggests systemic barriers such as high teacher-to-pupil ratios, scarce teaching and learning materials and limited access to quality instruction. CDA suggests that educational inequalities are reinforced by resource allocation and institutional structures (Fairclough, 1995). This finding aligns with Nghipandulwa and Ndjamba (2022), who found that lack of resources negatively impacts learner performance.

In 2022, the school's performance improved greatly with poor performers dropping to 20.41% while average performers accounted for 40.82% and high performers accounted for 38.48% the highest ever for the reviewed period. This suggests that the

school implemented effective interventions, improved teaching approaches, invested in resources and enhanced pupil engagement. In 2023, the percentage of low performance rose to 43.65% and the high performed reduced drastically to 17.53%. This could be attributed to increased enrolment to 559 from 343 pupils in 2022 leading to large class size, high teacher –to-learner ratios, high workloads for teachers, insufficient teaching/learning resources, and inadequate syllabus coverage. This aligns with Lufungulo (2021), whose study also showed that high teacher-to-pupil ratios negatively impact pupil performance.

This school is in town and recorded high percentages of poor performance in four out of six years: 2018: 269 pupils (53.69%) out of 501 in 2020: 202 pupils (41.65%) out of 485 in 2021: 155 pupils (44.93%) out of 345; and 2023: 244 pupils (43.65%) out of 559 performed poorly. These results compared with school 7 are worse in terms of poor performance percentages. The school has relatively good facilities. Nevertheless, this shows that even when a school has good facilities, learners can still perform poorly probably because they are distracted by the very location of the school which gives them easy access to the town centre, exposure to social media, and easy access to social events. This suggests that external distractions (social media, access to entertainment, and town life) compete with academic priorities. CDA explains that social environments shape discourse and learner engagement. If pupils are exposed to digital distractions more than structured academic discussions, their linguistic competency suffers (Fairclough, 2001). While we have 1023 poor performers, it can be sharply contrasted with the number of high performers (567). The high performers are a small group of people suggesting that most of the pupils were struggling.

The analysis showed that learners performed poorly meaning English Language excellence was very low among 2,548 learners. The data showed that most pupils received grades below a credit (1, 023) since their proficiency level remained weak. These persons underperforming in English Language could relate to several potential factors: Learners experienced poor outcomes because the teaching method solely focused on instructor-led instruction which requires them to memorise grammar rules without practising them in natural communication. This finding aligns with CDA's critique of traditional, rigid teaching methods that limit critical thinking and linguistic development (van Dijk, 2008). Learners cannot enhance their reading comprehension nor improve their vocabulary due to insufficient access to high-quality reading

materials. The lack of proper writing assignments makes learners struggle with logical structured essay development.

Through the CDA lens, one can therefore conclude that poor English performance is not just a result of individual ability but also structural, instructional, and environmental factors. Institutional constraints (resource shortages, class sizes) reinforce educational inequalities. Rigid instructional methods limit language proficiency. Urban distractions affect learner concentration and study habits.

This school shares numerous similar challenges with other educational establishments because it has a disproportionate number of underachieving pupils compared to those achieving excellence in their English Language education/examinations.

7.2.1.0 Teachers' and Examiners' Perspectives on Grade 12 Pupils' Performance in English

The findings on the teachers' and examiners' perspectives revealed that pupils had challenges in both paper 1 and 2. The challenges that affected performance were observed in structure, composition, reading comprehension and summary writing.

7.2.1.1 Learners' Performance in Structure

The findings showed that learners performed poorly in structure especially the question on transformation. Learners were failing to transform the given sentences correctly as was expressed by HOD3S3, HOD6S6, T16S6, T18S6, A1, FS1S1, FS5S3, FS6S3, and NE4. The development of a solid command of English grammar, including the capacity to transform sentences, is hampered by the lack of reading habits. Furthermore, Phiri (2018) highlighted that learners' limited exposure to English outside of school and the dominance of home languages in everyday communication contributed to their struggles with English structure.

Sichingabula (2016) also revealed that learners encountered problems with the formation of English sentences as well as with the grammatical rules. He further pointed out a certain disparity in the methodology where more emphasis was placed on rote learning than actual communication and use of the language. Moreover, instructors poorly executed relevant English teaching strategies. Reeve (2009) posits that if learners perceive themselves as inadequately prepared due to ineffective teaching methods, limited exposure to English, or unclear assessment expectations, they may struggle to engage actively in the examination process

7.2.1.2 Pupils' Performance in Composition

The findings showed that learners performed poorly in composition. They had problems in following rules for formal writing, challenges with spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, use of informal language and illegible handwriting as was shown by the responses of HOD6, HOD3S3, T15S5, NE1, NE3, and FP5S3. These results correlate with the Chief Examiner's Report (2023), which noted the deficiency in candidates' spellings, improper word usage like where instead of were, whose instead of who is etc., along with punctuations and construction errors. Furthermore, the Chief Examiner noted that candidates faced challenges in the application of writing concepts such as: abbreviations, agreement, conjunctions, figures, homophones, informal language, paragraphing, punctuations, run-on sentences, and word order. This finding is line with Chanda (2016), who postulated that one factor contributing to difficulties in writing English compositions is the absence of a reading culture among educators and pupils. Furthermore, Maganga (2016) highlighted in his research findings that a large number of pupils struggled to learn English as the Language of Instruction (LOI), had very little vocabulary knowledge across a range of subjects, and lacked the English language skills necessary to construct coherent sentences. Mumba (2014) found in his study that the majority of pupils struggled with sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, and proper use of tenses.

7.2.1.3 Learners' Performance in Reading Comprehension

The findings revealed that Grade 12 pupils had problems in comprehension. Respondents A1, T20S7, NE2, FP9S5, FP5S3, FP3S2, FP16S8, and FP15S8 highlighted challenges that learners faced in comprehension. These challenges included learners' limited vocabulary, poor reading comprehension, and a lack of awareness of the question requirements. Respondents also added that pupils frequently struggled or failed to provide accurate responses because they misunderstood key details since they were unable to understand the passage's main ideas. This finding corresponds to Mweemba (2020) who elucidates that complex vocabulary, themes, and sentence structures are common in secondary school reading comprehension texts. These difficulties can be too much for pupils, particularly if they struggle to understand figurative language which is common in texts at a higher level or have a limited vocabulary. Learners may thus find it difficult to recognise important details and deduce meanings. Bandura (1997) explains that students with low self-efficacy tend to avoid tasks they perceive as difficult, which may explain why some learners do not

engage fully with comprehension exercises. Chazangwe (2011) observed that teachers found teaching comprehension challenging due to the time consuming nature of the subject and the difficulty of teaching pupils who did not grasp the concepts being taught. The study also discovered a dearth of adequate and appropriate reading materials ... in addition to the low reading culture among pupils.

The chief examiner's report for English Language Paper 2 (2023) further highlights that lack of or no understanding of the comprehension passage and its questions contribute to poor performance. Due to a lack of reading outside of the classroom, many Zambian learners struggle with fluency and comprehension. Bandura (1986) highlights that learners with low self-efficacy in reading may avoid reading activities, further worsening their reading skills. Pupils find it difficult to comprehend and analyse longer or more complex passages that call for deeper comprehension skills when they are not used to reading a variety of texts. Their capacity to perform well on reading comprehension tests/examinations is further diminished by this lack of practice (cf. Mweemba, 2020). As observed by Chansa (2020) many secondary school pupils in Zambia lack the necessary critical thinking skills to fully engage with reading comprehension questions which often require them to evaluate, synthesise, and analyse information, but without critical thinking skills, learners are unable to understand deeper meanings or make connections between ideas. Bandura (1993) states that self-efficacy affects cognitive engagement where learners with low self-efficacy may not put in effort to critically analyse texts. Mutale (2019) also observed that in Zambia, many secondary school teachers do not specifically teach reading comprehension techniques like scanning, summarising, skimming, or recognising key ideas. Because of this, learners find it difficult to arrange the text's content and use techniques that would improve their ability to respond to questions. According to Bandura (1986), low self-efficacy in reading can cause learners to disengage from the reading process, reducing their motivation to improve vocabulary skills.

Self-Efficacy Theory, developed by Albert Bandura (1986), states that learners' beliefs in their own abilities significantly influence their academic performance. In the context of reading comprehension, pupils who lack confidence in their reading skills may avoid challenging texts, struggle with understanding passages, and perform poorly in comprehension tasks.

7.2.1.4 Learners' Performance in Summary Writing

The findings revealed that learners performed poorly in summary. They lacked mastery in identifying main points and rephrasing them concisely as highlighted by NE3, FP8S4, and FP13S7. Bwalya (2022) advances that many learners struggle to comprehend and use English syntax, which affects their capacity for effective summarisation. He further states that poor written summaries are frequently the result of vocabulary and comprehension gaps. Kamwendo and Mumba (2021) note that Zambia's multilingualism limits learners' exposure to English outside the classroom, making academic tasks like summary writing challenging.

As postulated by Albert Bandura under the self-efficacy theory, performance is heavily dependent on individuals' belief in their capability in executing tasks to achieve a given objective. The idea further helps in driving behaviour, motivation, and emotional reactions, which influences how the difficulties are dealt with and approached. Self-efficacy becomes imperative in bringing forth the Zambian Grade 12 pupils to perform poorly in the English national examinations. The higher the sense of self-efficacy, the more the pupils will engage in deep processing, use effective learning strategies, and show perseverance when faced with difficulties, thus leading to a higher performance. On the contrary, pupils having low self-efficacy question their capabilities, tend to evade tasks that come with challenges, are less motivated, and their resultant performance might not be outstanding.

Results revealed that the performance of learners in English in the province was below average, as 56,816 pupils (34.54%) performed poorly for six years. This outcome contradicts Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory, which requires that individuals with high belief in their personal capability are the most likely to succeed. Those learners who viewed themselves as capable in English should have demonstrated a better performance. However, the generalised underachievement in the sampled schools raises the possibility that many learners could have low self-efficacy, perhaps from past negative experiences, poor support from instruction, or lack of motivation. This gap between predicted and actual results calls for examination of how pupils' self-beliefs are created by their learning environment, instructor feedback, and resources. Improved self-efficacy would improve the ways pupils approach examinations in English, being more resilient, hence delivering good performance.

In conclusion, the findings have established that performance in English Language was still poor. The findings revealed that **164,503** pupils sat for English examinations, and **41,488** obtained Division 7 or 8, classified as satisfactory but insufficient for higher education entry, effectively counting as a fail. Additionally, the study also established that **15,328** pupils (9.32%) completely failed to meet the minimum required standard. Combined, **56,816** pupils (35.03%) performed poorly during the reviewed period raising concerns about language proficiency. This performance by the Copperbelt Province indicates that the number of learners who performed poorly is still on a higher side.

7.3 EXAMINE TEACHER AND LEARNER VIEWS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR ENGLISH PERFORMANCE AMONG GRADE 12 PUPILS IN THE SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE COPPERBELT PROVINCE

The third objective examined factors that contribute to poor performance in the English language national examinations. The findings showed that there were four categories of factors contributing to poor performance among grade 12 learners in English language. The discussion of findings was done under each of these categories and their respective sub themes. Below is the discussion of findings:

7.3.1 Teacher Related Factors

Teacher-related factors play a crucial role in shaping pupils' academic performance in English at the Grade 12 level. Teacher related factors are those factors that fall under the responsibility of the teachers. These are factors which are under the control of a teacher. Consider the discussion of teacher related factors below:

7.3.1.1 Absenteeism by teachers and reporting late for work/lessons

The findings revealed that some teachers frequently missed classes, either by being absent from school or by not attending to scheduled lessons even when present in school. After missing lessons, they often did not compensate for the lost instructional time. Other teachers would skip work after receiving their salaries, boasting about still getting paid without teaching, while others habitually arrived late for lessons as highlighted by respondents A2, T5S2, T1S1, L6S2, L2S8, and L1S8. Duflo, Hanna, and Ryan (2012) explained that teacher absenteeism significantly affected pupil achievement by reducing instructional time and increasing classroom disruptions. When teachers are frequently absent, pupils experience inconsistencies in lesson

delivery, which leads to difficulty in mastering essential language skills such as reading comprehension, writing, and grammar application. Banerjee and Duflo (2011) argue that disruptions in learning cause learners to cognitively disengage. Additionally, the loss of instructional time caused by absenteeism is particularly detrimental to subjects like English, where consistent exposure and practice are essential for proficiency. Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain, (2005) state that learners require continuous reinforcement of language structures and vocabulary to develop fluency. According to research by Chaulhury et al. (2006), teacher tardiness is a common problem in many developing nations, which significantly reduces pupil engagement leading to instruction disruption. Since learners depend on organised class sessions to acquire essential language skills, the effects of such disruptions are especially detrimental to English learners (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

The findings underscore the detrimental effects of teacher absenteeism and lateness on pupils' English performance. To improve learning outcomes, it is imperative that education stakeholders implement robust measures to enhance teacher accountability and ensure consistent instructional delivery. A well-structured, time-conscious teaching approach is crucial for fostering better English language proficiency among pupils.

7.3.1.2 Low motivation among teachers

The findings showed that teachers were demotivated. Teachers' demotivation stemmed from factors like inadequate pay and poor working conditions, leading to diminished enthusiasm and negative attitudes, adversely affecting teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. This problem was pervasive and significantly impacted the educational environment as was noted by T6S2, T8S3, T12S4, T19S7, T17S6, and T24S8. This is consistent with Kenneth (2006), who emphasised that improving learner performance is unlikely without addressing teacher working conditions. Moore-Johnson (2006) further highlighted how financial stress forces teachers to engage in side jobs, reducing instructional time, while Ofoegbu (2004) linked poor working conditions to low teacher morale and poor learner outcomes. Thus, Expectancy Theory explains how these unfavourable conditions lower teachers' motivation, ultimately impacting teaching effectiveness and pupil learning.

Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) further highlighted that motivation is a crucial element in teacher effectiveness, as it directly influences their enthusiasm, engagement, and commitment to instructional delivery. Low motivation results in absenteeism, underutilisation of class time, professional misconduct... and secondary income-

generating activities that distract from teaching duties (cf. Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007). Low teacher motivation leads to negative educational outcomes. Ingersoll (2001) posits that when teachers feel unsupported and undervalued, their motivation declines, leading to reduced effort in lesson preparation and delivery. When teachers perceive unfair treatment or a lack of merit-based rewards, their engagement and commitment to teaching decline (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2017). In the absence of meaningful recognition, teachers may adopt a minimal-effort approach, focusing only on meeting basic requirements rather than striving for excellence in instruction. Poorly motivated teachers are less likely to invest effort in lesson preparation and delivery, further deteriorating learning outcomes (Ingersoll & Strong, 2018).

The findings align with Expectancy Theory, which explains motivation as a cognitive process where individuals exert effort based on anticipated rewards. Ryan and Kul (1997) highlight that there are two main types of motivation; intrinsic and extrinsic that shape how people behave. According to expectancy theory, motivation is influenced by expectancy (belief that effort leads to performance), instrumentality (belief that performance leads to rewards), and valence (the value placed on rewards). In this study, teachers' demotivation stemmed from inadequate pay and poor working conditions, which diminished their belief that hard work would lead to meaningful rewards (low instrumentality) and reduced the perceived value of their efforts (low valence). Teachers' instructional approaches significantly influence pupils' motivation and confidence. Jang, Reeve, and Deci (2010) highlight that autonomy-supportive teaching enhances engagement and performance, while controlling teaching methods diminish motivation. A rigid, examination-oriented approach that discourages interactive learning may lead to disengagement and a negative attitude toward English.

Akyeampong (2007) further highlighted that motivation is a crucial element in teacher effectiveness, as it directly influences their enthusiasm, engagement, and commitment to instructional delivery. Low motivation results in absenteeism, underutilisation of class time, professional misconduct, ... and secondary income-generating activities that distract from teaching duties (cf. Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). Low teacher motivation leads to negative educational outcomes. Ingersoll (2001) posits that when teachers feel unsupported and undervalued, their motivation declines, leading to reduced effort in lesson preparation and delivery. When teachers perceive unfair treatment or a lack of merit-based rewards, their engagement and commitment to teaching decline (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). In the absence of meaningful

recognition, teachers may adopt a minimal-effort approach, focusing only on meeting basic requirements rather than striving for excellence in instruction. Poorly motivated teachers are less likely to invest effort in lesson preparation and delivery, further deteriorating learning outcomes (Ingersoll & Strong, 2018).

Addressing these teacher-related challenges is essential for improving pupil performance in English. Educational policymakers must prioritise teacher welfare by implementing fair recognition systems, improving working conditions, and providing adequate financial incentives. Without these interventions, the cycle of poor teacher motivation and declining pupil performance will persist, undermining efforts to enhance English education in Zambia.

7.3.1.3 Lack of or Inadequate Preparation for Lessons

The finding revealed that inadequate or lack of lesson preparation was a major factor contributing to poor Grade 12 English examination performance. Both young teachers and some experienced ones neglected lesson planning, with the latter relying on their familiarity with the subject. In addition, over-enrolment leads to excessive teaching loads, making it difficult for teachers to prepare well-structured lessons. The sentiments were given by respondents A1, A10, and HOD5, T6S2, and T18S6. Shulman (1987) observed that pedagogical content knowledge was essential for effective teaching, yet many novice teachers struggle to develop this due to inadequate preparation. Similarly, experienced teachers who become complacent and rely on their accumulated knowledge without proper planning risk failing to align their teaching with contemporary pedagogical strategies. Darling-Hammond (2006) believes that this practice reduces the effectiveness of instruction, leading to diminished learning outcomes among pupils. Richards and Farrell (2011) elucidate that lesson preparation is a fundamental aspect of effective teaching and directly impacts pupil performance. The value of outcomes (valence) also affects motivation. If teachers do not find the rewards of proper lesson preparation (such as better pupil outcomes, job satisfaction, or professional growth) to be significant or achievable, they may not prioritise lesson planning.

The findings in this study also showed that teachers blamed their inability to prepare adequately on teaching loads. They explained that they did not have enough time to prepare because they had many classes and many pupils to attend to. Although lack of preparedness for classes cannot be justified, the reasons for inadequate preparation

advanced by teachers need to be taken seriously. In fact, other studies such as Simukonde and Chanda (2019) also observed that excessive workload among teachers of English results in lower commitment to lesson planning, inadequate preparation, and reduced effectiveness in lesson delivery. They also established that teachers who were overwhelmed by large classes often struggled to monitor learners' progress closely, leading to gaps in comprehension and poor examination performance. According to Expectancy Theory, if teachers believe that their effort in lesson preparation will not lead to better teaching outcomes (due to overwhelming workload or lack of resources), their expectancy (belief in their ability to achieve a positive result) may decrease. The findings suggest that heavy workloads and large class sizes make teachers feel that the effort required for lesson planning will not yield desired results (i.e., effective teaching and improved pupil performance). This is in line with Vroom's Expectancy Theory, where low expectancy reduces teachers' motivation to prepare thoroughly. Teachers may not see a strong instrumentality between their preparation and learners' improved results, especially when they are overwhelmed by large class sizes and heavy teaching loads.

The findings underscore the urgent need for interventions to address inadequate lesson preparation among teachers. Expectancy Theory posits that individuals' motivation to perform a task is influenced by the belief that their effort will lead to a desired outcome. Schools and policymakers must explore ways to reduce teacher workloads, provide professional development opportunities, and enforce accountability measures to ensure effective lesson planning. Without addressing these factors, the quality of English language instruction will continue to decline, affecting pupil performance at the national level.

7.3.1.4 Incomplete Syllabus Coverage

The finding revealed that teachers did not usually complete the syllabus and did not adhere to teaching content prescribed in the syllabus within the time stipulated in the syllabus. Some teachers had a tendency to avoid covering topics that they found challenging because they were incapable of handling them as noted by T16S6 and T22S8. This finding is supported by Shulman (1986) who argues that teachers' pedagogical content knowledge significantly influences their ability to effectively teach subject matter. When teachers lack confidence in certain topics, they may either avoid them or provide inadequate explanations, leaving pupils with significant knowledge

gaps. This is in line with Self-efficacy which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish specific tasks. According to Bandura, this belief significantly influences how people approach challenges, how much effort they put into tasks, and their persistence in the face of difficulties. According to Self-Efficacy Theory (SET) teachers with low self-efficacy (belief in their ability to effectively teach certain topics) are more likely to avoid challenging topics or fail to cover them thoroughly. The finding that teachers tended to avoid teaching certain topics due to a lack of confidence aligns well with Bandura's concept of self-efficacy. If teachers feel incompetent in specific areas of the syllabus, they may skip these topics to avoid failure or negative feedback. Furthermore, Bandura's theory suggests that teachers with low self-efficacy may not feel capable of providing effective instruction for complex or difficult topics, leading them to offer inadequate explanations or not cover these topics at all.

According to self-efficacy theory, creating a supportive and empowering teaching environment can significantly enhance teachers' belief in their abilities. This would help reduce the fear of failure when tackling complex topics, ultimately improving both teacher effectiveness and pupil outcomes. Financial incentives for teachers can also be aligned with professional growth and skill development. Teachers with high self-efficacy who believe they can succeed in challenging topics are less likely to resort to private lessons as a form of income. Instead, they may find alternative ways to enrich pupils' learning within the school system.

Findings further showed that teachers did not teach certain important topics as a way of coercing learners to sign up for private lessons with them. This was echoed by respondents L7S7, L10S2, L1S6, L6S8, P5S3 and P3S2. The finding agrees with Bray (2009) who posits that the privatisation of supplementary education can deepen socio-economic disparities, as wealthier learners gain better academic support while financially disadvantaged learners struggle. It is important that teachers are financially motivated to focus on teaching all their learners because as Bennell and Akyeamong (2007) observe teachers' disengagement is primarily driven by financial incentives which consequently leads to deterioration of quality education. If teachers believe that pupils' lack of understanding in these topics will motivate them to seek private lessons, they may view this as an opportunity for financial gain. However, Bandura's theory implies that the teacher's personal efficacy may be linked to their economic incentives, and that lack of motivation to teach certain topics could stem from a perception that

they will not succeed in teaching these topics within the constraints of regular class time.

Some participants also shared sentiments about teachers not teaching certain topics for personal monetary gain. Teachers' disengagement from teaching certain content is largely driven by financial incentives, affecting education quality (cf. Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007). In terms of self-efficacy, teachers may feel that their ability to improve learner performance is diminished due to various constraints (such as time, resources, and content mastery), and as a result, they may prioritise private tutoring as a way to ensure financial compensation, reflecting their lack of confidence in their ability to deliver the syllabus effectively within the prescribed school hours. Bray (2009) argues that private supplementary education widens socio-economic disparities, benefiting wealthier learners while disadvantaging poorer ones.

In this regard, CDA examines how power, ideology, and discourse influence behaviour and decision-making. In this case, teachers are exercising institutional power by controlling access to knowledge, creating a situation where learners must depend on them outside regular class hours. Teachers use their authority over the curriculum to manipulate learning opportunities, reinforcing their economic and social dominance over pupils. This practice benefits those who can afford private lessons, disadvantaging learners from low-income backgrounds. CDA helps expose how such hidden power structures create educational inequalities. Teachers engage in marketization of education. The practice reflects a commodification of knowledge, where access to learning is turned into a paid service rather than a fundamental right. CDA critiques this neoliberal influence on education, where teachers act as gatekeepers of knowledge for personal gain. The CDA lens critically examines how teachers use discourse and power structures to control knowledge access, shaping pupil behaviour for economic benefit. Unfortunately, parents also tend to believe that if their children do not go for extra tuition, then they cannot pass final examinations and teachers capitalise on this manipulated belief that has been created in society.

7.3.1.5 Lack of Feedback or Inconsistent Feedback

The finding revealed that teachers rarely gave timely, consistent and elaborate feedback to learners leading to learners not knowing where they went wrong and how they could improve. Lack of feedback had a negative effect on learner performance as highlighted by T16S6, T14S5, T12S4, L6S6, L5S9, and FP1S1. Hattie and Timperley (2007)

observe that effective feedback is crucial for learning, helping pupils identify strengths, address weaknesses, and improve performance. Delayed or absent feedback reduces motivation, causes confusion, and lowers engagement (Shute, 2008). Additionally, feedback scaffolds learning and prevents misconceptions from being reinforced (Sadler, 1989). Research shows that regular feedback enhances academic performance by helping pupils track progress and make improvements (Brookhart, 2017).

Inadequate feedback has lasting effects, as uncorrected errors become ingrained and hinder academic performance. It is a key teacher-related factor affecting English proficiency, leading to knowledge gaps that negatively impact examination results. Teachers with low self-efficacy in their ability to assess and provide constructive feedback may avoid offering feedback regularly, leading to inconsistent feedback. According to Self-Efficacy Theory, if teachers do not believe they can provide valuable feedback that will improve pupils' performance, they may not put in the effort to provide timely and elaborate feedback. This can explain why teachers may provide feedback irregularly or inadequately.

According to expectancy theory, teachers may feel that giving feedback will not necessarily improve learners' performance, especially if they perceive pupils as unmotivated or lacking foundational skills. If teachers believe that providing feedback does not contribute significantly to examination success (due to systemic factors like rigid curricula, examination-oriented teaching, or large class sizes), they may deprioritise it (low instrumentality). Teachers might not see personal or institutional rewards for giving detailed feedback, making them less motivated to invest time and effort into it (low valance). Expectancy Theory explains teacher motivation using the analytical lens of giving or withholding feedback based on perceived effort, expected outcomes, and rewards.

Learners' self-efficacy also influences how they react to the feedback provided. If pupils lack confidence in their abilities, they may be less likely to act on the feedback provided or may misinterpret the feedback as a reflection of their lack of ability, rather than as an opportunity to improve. Feedback that is either delayed, inconsistent, or unclear can negatively affect learners' self-efficacy, leading them to feel discouraged or unsure of their ability to improve.

According to SET, feedback that is timely and constructive can enhance learners' self-efficacy, motivating them to keep trying and improving. On the other hand, if feedback

is inadequate or inconsistent, pupils' self-efficacy may decrease, as they might feel that their efforts are not recognised or that they are unable to improve. This aligns with the findings that lack of feedback reduces motivation and lowers pupil engagement, which in turn hinders their academic performance.

7.3.2 School Related Factors

School factors refer to factors or causes of pupil failure which are the responsibility of the school. These are factors which are under the control of the school and school management can control the said factors. Below is a discussion of such factors:

7.3.2.1 Over-enrolment and its effects in schools

Findings revealed that over-enrolment was a critical problem affecting the performance of Grade 12 pupils in English. It led to overcrowded classrooms, high teacher-pupil ratios, reduced teacher-pupil interaction, teacher-centred pedagogy, and shortage of furniture. Overcrowding negatively impacted teaching effectiveness, learner engagement, individualised support all of which were needed to enhance the English language proficiency as highlighted by L3S6, L4S2, T17S6, T5S2, T16S6, and T10S4. The finding aligns with Owoeye and Yara (2011) who noted that the size of a classroom, sitting position and arrangement, ... impact learning outcomes. MOE (2008) recommends 1 or 2 pupils per desk in high schools if quality education is to be achieved. However, this is not what is obtaining in the Zambian government schools in the Copperbelt Province. One small desk is shared by 3 or more learners leading to learners failing to concentrate because they are uncomfortable. Overcrowded classrooms hinder effective teacher-pupil interaction, which is essential for meaningful learning (Hattie, 2009). Jones and Bouffard, (2012) emphasised the theory-into-practice approach to teaching to broadly involve learners in the learning process so that they are able to make necessary changes to enhance their own progress. In Zambian secondary schools, the desired teacher-to-pupil ratio is 1: 35 (MoE, 2008). However, this is far from being realised in our Zambian secondary schools especially with the reintroduction of free education. Class sizes have more direct implications for school policy and practice. High teacher-pupil ratios also create classroom management challenges, making it difficult to maintain an effective learning environment (Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown, 2011). Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development highlights the need for tailored support, which becomes impractical in such settings. Additionally, some pupils avoid asking questions due to fear or feeling lost, impacting their confidence and engagement. This lack of participation negatively affects language development, as

active learning and reinforcement are crucial for mastering English (Mercer & Hodgkinson, 2008).

Overcrowded classrooms hinder the implementation of learner-centred teaching, forcing teachers to rely on lecture-based methods instead of interactive approaches (Chikoti, 2022). This reduces learner participation and engagement. Additionally, teachers struggle to provide timely feedback on written and spoken exercises, which is essential for improving English proficiency (Banda, 2020). The lack of regular practice and personalised feedback further limits effective language learning (Mukuka & Nawa, 2021).

Expectancy Theory is highly relevant in explaining how over-enrolment negatively impacts pupils' motivation and performance in English. Overcrowded classrooms limit teacher attention, feedback, and individualised support, reducing pupils' belief (expectancy) that effort will lead to success. If pupils perceive that high performance in English does not result in meaningful rewards (e.g., university admission, career opportunities), their motivation (instrumentality) to excel may decline. Additionally, resource constraints caused by over-enrolment can diminish the perceived value (valence) of learning English, leading to disengagement. Thus, Expectancy Theory highlights how an overcrowded learning environment undermines pupils' motivation by making success seem unattainable, ultimately lowering effort and performance.

7.3.2.2 Lack and Inadequate Teaching Materials

The findings revealed that lack or scarcity of instructional resources made it challenging to meet learners' diverse educational needs. The scarcity of instructional resources limits learners' ability to study independently and adequately prepare for examinations as highlighted by respondents L7S3, L2S8, T8S3, HOD5S5, HOD6S6 and P2S2. Lack of resources hinders reading proficiency, and exacerbates literacy challenges. Shared textbooks and reliance on chalkboard instruction reduce pupil engagement and comprehension, while large class sizes further restrict teachers' ability to monitor progress effectively. MoE (2008) recommends 1 text book per pupil and where there is a shortage, 2 pupils can share 1 text book. The prevailing situation in the Copperbelt Province revealed that 5 or more pupils shared one textbook. Studies such as World Bank (2019), Pretorius and Spaul (2016), and Nag et al. (2019) underscore the critical role of access to print materials in language learning. In addition, Darling-Hammond (2020) also emphasises the need for adequate resources to enhance instructional quality

and learner outcomes. Oni (1992) further highlighted that availability, adequacy and relevance of resources influence efficiency and high productivity in an organisation. Furthermore, the Education Act (2011:4) states that “Quality education requires the availability and use of educational materials. This shows how crucial resources are if educational standards are to be achieved and maintained. Lack of adequate teaching/learning materials, reliance on traditional instructional methods, and limited institutional support, significantly contribute to poor English performance among pupils.

Expectancy Theory helps to understand the situation highlighted here. If teachers and learners lack essential materials (e.g., textbooks, workbooks, dictionaries), they may feel that no matter how much effort they put in, it will not significantly improve performance (low expectancy). Learners may believe that even if they study hard, limited exposure to reading materials, past papers, and reference books reduces their chances of excelling in examinations (low instrumentality). Additionally, if pupils see that previous groups also performed poorly due to the same issue, they might lose motivation, leading to disengagement and low performance. Expectancy theory explains how the absence of teaching materials reduces motivation, effort, and performance in English examinations.

Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977) focuses on an individual’s belief in their own abilities. While confidence matters, lack of resources hinders performance regardless of confidence levels. CDA examines power, ideology, and discourse. While it could explore systemic inequalities in resource distribution, in this case it does not directly explain how the lack of materials affects motivation and performance.

7.3.2.3 Absence of Libraries in Schools

The findings indicated that most schools lacked libraries, and existing ones had few outdated books, depriving pupils of additional reading materials and research opportunities. This left teachers solely responsible for sourcing materials and creating notes, limiting pupils’ independent learning and critical thinking as observed by respondents L6S1, L1S2, T8S3, T17S6, T3S3, T5S2, T4S2, and P1S1. Teachers also struggled to access relevant reference materials, affecting lesson quality and modern teaching methods as was highlighted by T5S2 and T4S2. The lack of libraries shifted the burden of resource provision onto teachers, restricting content depth and pupils’ exposure to diverse language structures. Research highlights that varied instructional

materials in libraries enhance teaching, linguistic development, and cognitive engagement (Pillay, 2020; Evans & Morrison, 2019). Teacher and learner effectiveness is hindered by the lack of additional instructional resources, and independent learning environments.

Limited access to updated pedagogical research hampers teaching quality and learner outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Without well-resourced libraries, pupils depend entirely on classroom instruction, limiting critical thinking and self-study (T8S3). Independent reading enhances language proficiency and academic success (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2019). Teacher and learner effectiveness is hindered by the lack of additional instructional resources, and independent learning environments.

Self-efficacy refers to a pupil's belief in their ability to succeed in academic tasks. Libraries play a vital role in building this confidence by providing access to books, research materials, and quiet study spaces. Their absence limits independent study opportunities, weakens mastery experiences, and removes peer learning models, all of which are essential for developing self-efficacy. Without libraries, pupils struggle with reading comprehension, essay writing, and critical analysis, leading to reduced confidence, disengagement, and low motivation to improve.

The absence of libraries directly affects pupils' confidence in their academic abilities. Without access to reading materials, learners experience repeated failures or difficulties, leading to diminished self-efficacy, reduced effort, and avoidance of challenging academic tasks. This explains why pupils in schools without libraries often struggle with reading proficiency and independent learning.

7.3.2.4 Lack of Technological tools

The findings indicated that schools lacked technological resources. Teachers relied on traditional chalkboard techniques instead of using smartboards or projectors, which could have saved time. Technology integration would encourage self-directed learning, prepare learners for postsecondary education, improve content retention and strengthen collaborative learning in class as was noted by respondents L9S7, L6S6, L2S2, T11S4, T1S1, HOD3S3, and HOD6S6. This finding aligns with Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010), who noted that digital resources support language acquisition by providing learners with diverse linguistic inputs and interactive materials. According to Mayer (2009), cognitive learning theories highlight the role of multisensory input in knowledge retention. Visual and auditory elements in digital content enhance language

comprehension more effectively than traditional methods. Without these tools, learners struggle to grasp complex linguistic concepts, resulting in poor performance. Integrating projectors and digital tools enhances lesson delivery, enabling teachers to focus on higher-order thinking skills (Schmid et al., 2021). Without technology, English lessons remain passive and limiting critical language development. Digital literacy among teachers improves instructional effectiveness, while its absence hinders pedagogical innovation and affects pupil performance (Selwyn, 2011).

Although there is widespread approval for the role played by technological resources, most Zambian schools lack print materials which makes it extremely hard to access technological gadgets. Moreover, ICT tools are also discriminatory because not every learner has access to them due to socio-economic conditions. In the classroom situation, the use of ICT tools will therefore be familiar with some and not others. Pedagogically speaking, Mwanza (2016) noted that it is important for teachers to use teaching resources which are consistent with the culture and background of the learners in order for learners to easily make sense of the content.

Expectancy Theory explains how the absence of technological tools reduces pupils' motivation by negatively affecting expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Without access to computers, the internet, and digital resources, pupils may feel that their effort will not lead to success (lowered expectancy). They may also perceive that excelling in school lacks real-world benefits if digital skills are essential for future opportunities (reduced instrumentality). Additionally, outdated learning methods can make education seem less valuable and engaging (decreased valence). This discourages effort, lowers motivation, and ultimately affects academic performance.

Expectancy Theory is the most suitable because it directly links motivation to the learning environment. The absence of technological tools creates a situation where pupils feel their efforts are ineffective, success lacks tangible rewards, and education loses its relevance. This leads to decreased motivation, lower engagement, and poor academic performance.

7.3.2.5 Lack of or Inconsistent Monitoring

The findings showed that government secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province lacked consistent monitoring at all administrative levels, from departmental heads to district education officials. Teacher absenteeism, substance abuse, and overall apathy toward their duties were prevalent in the sampled schools. This culture of impunity led

to lost instructional time and diminished engagement in English lessons, ultimately hindering language proficiency among learners. Administrators were unable to enforce teacher accountability or uphold high educational standards, leading to potential declines in teaching effectiveness and pupil performance as was observed by respondents L1S5, L1S2, L7S8, L4S2, T23S8, T1S1, A6, P15S8, and P5S3. The finding aligns with Bush (2019) who posited that ineffective school leadership weakens discipline enforcement, leading to teacher laxity and perpetuating poor instructional quality. Monitoring plays a crucial role in identifying strategies to improve educational quality and addressing specific challenges in teaching and learning (Wilcox, 2000; Ehren & Visscher, 2008). According to Wilcox (2000), the lasting impact of school improvements depends on the extent to which monitoring findings are implemented.

The HODs expressed their inertia in enforcing monitoring due to power relations that existed between some teachers and the school administrators. When HODs did their work professionally by challenging erring teachers who were in the habit of not preparing lessons regularly or providing feedback, they were confronted by school administrators and reminded not to stress members in their departments. The administrators' interference in departmental management weakened the HODs' authority leading them to neglect their supervisory duties for the sake of peace and harmony.

The lack of professional autonomy and administrative interference likely led HODs to feel that their supervisory actions would not lead to meaningful or positive changes. Consequently, they may have been less motivated to challenge teachers or enforce strict monitoring, as they believed their efforts would not yield the desired outcomes. The power imbalance between the HODs and school administrators significantly undermined the HODs' instrumentality. When HODs are reminded not to stress teachers for the sake of peace, the expected rewards (i.e., improved performance and professional respect) are overshadowed by the negative consequences of confrontation (i.e., conflict with teachers and administrators). This creates a situation where the valence of enforcing monitoring is low, leading to HODs neglecting their responsibilities.

Expectancy theory also suggests that HODs are likely motivated by the desire to maintain harmony and avoid potential conflicts with administrators or colleagues. This avoidance behaviour, driven by low expectancy and low instrumentality, ultimately

contributes to the inertia in enforcing monitoring. Establishing clear expectations for both HODs and teachers and linking performance to appropriate rewards or consequences would align with instrumentality and valence. HODs should be assured that enforcing discipline and supervision would lead to professional growth, a better teaching environment, and improved pupil outcomes, which would motivate them to overcome inertia.

Expectancy Theory provides valuable insights into the dynamics at play when HODs fail to enforce monitoring. The theory explains how low expectancy (belief that their efforts will yield positive results), low instrumentality (lack of perceived rewards), and low valence (value placed on outcomes) influence HODs' decision to avoid confronting teachers who neglect their duties. To improve HODs' motivation and effectiveness, school leaders must create an environment where their efforts are supported, where outcomes are achievable, and where the rewards of enforcing monitoring outweigh the consequences of inaction.

All in all, inadequate monitoring, lack of accountability, and administrative weaknesses, significantly contribute to poor English performance among pupils. Without regular inspections, pedagogical gaps persist, and ineffective teachers remain unchecked. Moreover, teacher absenteeism and indiscipline further reduce instructional effectiveness. It is important for schools and district education leaders to improve on supervision and ensure consistent checking of teaching files of teachers. Even the challenges of teacher absenteeism and late going to classrooms can be attributed to lack of supervision in schools.

7.3.2.6 Limited Opportunities for Professional Development

The finding revealed that teachers had limited opportunities for professional development to enhance their skills and update subject knowledge. Administrators cited budget constraints as a barrier to providing training opportunities. Limited professional development hindered teachers from maintaining high standards and adapting to 21st-century educational changes as was highlighted by respondents T20S7, T6S2, T13S5, and T23S8. Darling-Hammond et al., (2017) argued that professional development is crucial for equipping teachers with skills to meet evolving 21st-century learner needs. Leu et al. (2013) note that failure to adapt to new teaching methods worsens poor pupil performance, as traditional methods may seem unengaging and disconnected from learners' own experience. Underfunding hampers teacher training, limiting professional

development and access to essential materials and technology needed for interactive classrooms (Baker et al., 2020).

In summary, the findings revealed that school-related factors such as limited professional development, inadequate resources, inadequate monitoring resulting into lack of accountability, administrative weaknesses and financial constraints are key contributors of poor pupil performance in English. Addressing poor learner performance requires targeted investments in teachers' continuous learning, better resource allocation, and a shift toward modern, learner-centred teaching practices.

7.3.3 Learner Related Factors

Learner-related factors are those factors which can be blamed on the learners. These are factors which can be controlled by learners. In other words, learner related factors are those which are the responsibility of the learners. Below is a discussion of learner related factors:

7.3.3.1 Absenteeism by Learners

The research indicated that Grade 12 pupils experienced high absenteeism which weakened their poor performance in the English Language. Respondents L3S5, L2S7, L4S6, T8S3, T7S3 and T19S7 explained that consistent absences created learning disruptions which led to pupils falling behind their expected curriculum progress while also creating knowledge gaps. Learners missed essential language concepts because of their absences which impacted their examination results. The occurrence of high absenteeism existing among learners stem from their socio-economic hardships. Pupils need to stay home because of financial challenges and home responsibilities and the demands of distance to their educational institution. The lack of parental supervision and absence of motivation act as additional factors that increase irregular attendance among pupils.

Teachers reported that learner absenteeism interfered with ongoing educational progress. Absence-related gaps in learning often created conflicts when teachers needed to assist pupils falling behind while keeping pace with curriculum needs leading teachers to deliver basic topic content. The research data shows that absenteeism results in academic underperformance especially in subjects that need regular practice like English Language.

Schools should start using attendance tracking systems yet combine these with parent involvement to enforce attendance compliance and create after-school assistance for

learners who often miss classes. Identifying and effectively addressing the fundamental reasons behind absenteeism and implementing systematic solutions presents the opportunity to enhance English Language performance levels.

The findings align with self-efficacy theory which is linked to pupils' lack of confidence in their academic abilities and contribute to absenteeism due to feelings of inadequacy and fear of failure. Repeated academic struggles weaken self-belief, discouraging attendance, while frequent failures erode confidence. Observing higher-performing peers may further increase self-doubt, leading to school avoidance. Additionally, anxiety about school tasks can cause pupils to skip classes as a coping mechanism. Since absenteeism is often linked to perceived academic incompetence, fostering self-efficacy through positive reinforcement, supportive environments, and mastery experiences can help reduce it.

7.3.3.2 Learner Inability to Read and Write

A considerable number of Grade 12 pupils faced difficulties with English reading and writing according to research findings while their educational achievement experienced adverse effects as a result. Research participants L6S1, L8S2, L10S8, FP16S8, FP14S7, FP12S6, NE2, P1S1 and P4S2 reported that some learners demonstrated inadequate abilities to develop grammatical sentences in both reading fluency and written comprehension. These pupils faced extreme difficulties in completing examinations successfully as well as in clear idea presentation and active participation in academic works.

The weak foundations built during earlier grades serve as a primary reason behind this situation. Mulenga and Phiri (2022) noted a decline in the effectiveness of early literacy instruction, possibly due to inadequate teacher training, ineffective pedagogical approaches, and large class sizes that limit individualised support. Learners often struggled with English due to insufficient early exposure and inadequate reinforcement in school at primary levels (Simukonde & Chileshe, 2019). Irregular pronunciation and spelling further hinder literacy (Perfetti & Stafura, 2014), impacting academic performance by making comprehension and task completion difficult (Pretorius & Spaul, 2016). Existing literature highlights the role of teachers in early literacy development and the consequences of ineffective teaching strategies on learner proficiency (Mutambo & Chanda, 2021; Nyirenda & Mulenga, 2020). Secondary school becomes challenging for pupils who fail to establish basic literacy skills during

primary school because independent reading and writing is expected at this level. A lack of foundational literacy skills is a primary determinant of poor performance in secondary school examinations (Banda & Zulu, 2018). The literacy gap causes learners to perform poorly in the English Language examinations.

At Grade 12 level, learners interact more with written texts. They are expected to read, understand various types of writing and are also expected to write clear, logical arguments in essays, letters, and speeches as outlined in one of the syllabus objectives. A pupil's failure to read and write effectively weakens his or her ability to succeed in school as she/he is unable to comprehend instructions, follow lesson proceedings and ask questions when in doubt. Such a learner may also fail to do his or her homework or complete tests in allocated time.

Lack of reading culture among pupils was observed to play an essential role in this issue. Learners who do not read consistently have less access to vocabulary knowledge and sentence structure skills along with comprehension abilities. Their weak skills in text interpretation and decoding stem from their inconsistent reading practices which block academic improvement. Pupils demonstrated weak writing abilities because they faced problems with their sentences, spelling and their written work lacked coherent flow. The difficulty with logical thought organisation led to disorganised and poorly structured essay responses especially in essay writing tasks (Chief Examiner's Report, 2023).

Low self-efficacy which is lack of confidence in one's abilities can contribute to learners' struggles with reading and writing. Repeated failures may lead to avoidance of literacy activities, reduced persistence, fear of failure, and low motivation, as pupils feel incapable of improvement. Seeing peers excel can further reinforce self-doubt and disengagement. Since literacy development requires practice and persistence, learners who lack belief in their skills are less likely to engage in necessary learning activities. Strengthening self-efficacy through positive reinforcement, gradual skill-building, and supportive teaching can help build confidence and improve reading and writing abilities.

To assist struggling learners, additional literacy support should be established through remedial reading and writing sessions in classrooms. A reading culture together with structured writing exercises and early intervention programmes would help reduce this problem while boosting overall achievement results among learners.

7.3.3.3 Limited Vocabulary among Learners

The findings showed that a limited vocabulary among Grade 12 pupils significantly hampered learners' reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and verbal communication, ultimately affecting academic performance as noted by respondents L2S8, L6S5, L1S7, T2S1, T16S6, T8S3, T12S4, and L8S2. The finding aligns with Nation (2013) who posits that learners with limited vocabulary find it difficult to comprehend texts, articulate thoughts effectively, and participate in class discussions, potentially resulting in decreased achievement. Vocabulary is essential for reading comprehension and is developed gradually through exposure and teaching (Cain & Oakhill, 2011; Nagy & Scott, 2000). Moreover, inadequate vocabulary growth is associated with a lack of English exposure beyond the classroom, ineffective instructional methods, and restricted reading practices (August et al., 2005). To tackle these challenges, instructors ought to apply explicit vocabulary teaching, promote wide reading, and utilise multimedia tools to improve word learning (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013; Graves, 2006). Enhancing vocabulary abilities via these methods is crucial for boosting pupils' academic achievement and overall language competence (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2015).

Through the lens of the Self-Efficacy Theory, vocabulary development relies on learners' belief in their ability to learn and use new words. When learners lack confidence, they are less likely to engage in vocabulary-building activities. Strengthening self-efficacy through encouragement, support, and consistent practice can significantly boost vocabulary acquisition.

7.3.3.4 Poor Conduct by Some Learners

The finding revealed that pupil misbehaviour was a significant problem in schools, adversely impacting academic achievement, classroom interactions and relationships between teachers and learners as was highlighted by respondents L8S2, L7S8, FP4S2, and T14S5. The finding aligns with Marzano, Marzano and Pickering (2003) who noted that disruptive actions like showing disrespect toward authority figures, debating with educators, and participating in substance misuse lead to a negative educational atmosphere. Arum and Ford (2012) highlight that indiscipline frequently arises from insufficient parental supervision, peer pressure, social media exposure, and uneven application of school regulations. Furthermore, Gershoff, Purtell, and Holas (2015) suggest that the focus on pupil rights, lacking specific behavioural expectations diminishes teachers' authority in enforcing discipline. According to Osher, Bear,

Sprague, and Doyle (2010) classroom misbehaviour diverts pupils' attention, diminishes teaching time and decreases overall academic performance. Educators encountering ongoing pupil misbehaviour might be discouraged, which can result in strained relationships with pupils and diminished assistance for those who are struggling. Additionally, the fear of consequences can occasionally deter teachers from effectively tackling indiscipline (Bear, 2010).

Expectancy Theory suggests that motivation is shaped by three key factors: expectancy (belief that effort leads to success), instrumentality (belief that success leads to rewards), and valence (value placed on success). Poor conduct in learners can arise when these components are lacking: low expectancy leads to disengagement and disruptive behaviour if pupils believe their efforts will not result in success. Lack of instrumentality causes poor behaviour if pupils see no connection between good conduct and rewards; and decreased valence reduces motivation if pupils do not value academic success or see no meaningful rewards. This theory is particularly relevant in understanding poor conduct, as it highlights how pupils' perceptions of effort, success, and rewards can influence their behaviour. By enhancing these perceptions, educators can foster better behaviour and greater engagement in school activities.

7.3.3.5 The Use of the Informal Variety of English

The research revealed that informal English usage creates negative effects on academic written assignments of pupils. Numerous learners experience difficulties distinguishing formal from informal writing conventions in their texts because they employ colloquial language with contractions and non-standard grammar according to the data collected from L2S6, L6S1, L10S7, L4S8, NE1, and NE5. Academic work developed by such learners becomes difficult to understand since their language structure suffers from degradation. The finding suggests that Grade 12 pupils struggle significantly with composition writing. Key issues include spelling mistakes, punctuation errors, tense inconsistencies, poor sentence construction (such as missing subjects or verbs), and overall weak grammar. These challenges make their writing difficult to read and understand, negatively impacting their examination performance.

Computer-mediated communication has probably pushed informal language more deeply into public awareness leading to this pattern shift. Academic writing presents a challenge to learners because they spend most of their time using informal English varieties in social settings. Digital communication shapes writing norms and literacy

skills (Crystal, 2008; Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008; Thurlow & Poof, 2011). The improper shift between formal and informal language patterns leads pupils to make errors involving too many contractions and wrong word choices as well as unorthodox sentence patterns. Loo (2022) highlights concerns that unfocused corrective feedback may not effectively enhance academic writing, while Kartchava et al. (2021) argue that unclear feedback can cause cognitive overload, making it harder for learners to improve. Limited formal writing skills training in schools creates difficulties for learners. The consistent guidance of academic language and structured exercises for writing which are not provided cause learners to maintain informal writing practices.

Expectancy Theory provides a useful framework for understanding the use of informal English in relation to poor pupil performance. It suggests that pupils' motivation is influenced by their belief that effort leads to success (expectancy), success leads to rewards (instrumentality), and those rewards are valued (valence). If pupils perceive that using informal English offers social acceptance or avoids negative attention, they may prefer it over formal academic English, which they might see as irrelevant to their daily lives. This can reduce their motivation to engage in formal language use, contributing to poor academic performance. Expectancy Theory is particularly relevant because it connects pupils' behaviour to their perceptions of outcomes. If learners believe that formal language skills will not lead to meaningful rewards, they may disengage. By highlighting the connection between formal language skills and academic success, educators can motivate pupils to improve their language use and performance.

Schools need to provide organised attention to formal writing through structured essay writing and grammar education which should be accompanied by specific feedback about language usage. Furthermore, schools need to make pupils read formal documents extensively and implementing specific writing intervention programmes can help pupils build better academic writing abilities.

7.3.3.6 Long Distance to School

Findings also showed that some learners failed the examination due to long distances between their home and the school. Thus, English lessons which were scheduled in the first period were often missed by some pupils because they always arrived late due to long distances to school. Teachers and administrators also corroborated this concern. Respondent T2S1 highlighted that many pupils who lived far from school frequently

arrived late, leading to missed lessons, which negatively impacted their overall performance. Respondents also reported that due to long distances to school, some pupils were tired and fatigued upon reaching the school which made it difficult to concentrate and retain the content they were learning. The issue was even more pronounced in the first and second terms of the academic year. This could be attributed to the rainy season where some roads become impassable and in the second term due to the cold which sometimes prevent some learners from coming to school. These observations are consistent with studies showing that long travels to school lead to increased tardiness and absenteeism, both of which are linked to lower academic achievement (Smith & Brown, 2018). This finding is in tandem with existing literature indicating that learners who face transportation challenges often struggle with maintaining consistent school attendance and engagement (Williams, 2019).

Self-Efficacy Theory helps explain how long distances to school can contribute to poor performance in English by focusing on learners' belief in their ability to succeed. Long tiring journeys can leave pupils physically and mentally exhausted, affecting their focus and energy during lessons. If they believe their efforts to overcome these challenges will not lead to success, such as understanding English or excelling in examinations, they may develop low self-efficacy. This can result in disengagement, reduced participation, and poor performance. The theory is particularly relevant because it highlights how pupils' perceptions of their ability to succeed influence their motivation, suggesting that addressing obstacles and providing support can boost self-efficacy and improve academic performance.

7.3.3.7 Lack of Parental Support

Findings indicated that socio-economic factors like poverty, illness, and little parental education hindered engagement which negatively affected Grade 12 English performance. Parents with limited education often failed to recognise the value of schooling, leading to minimal encouragement for their children. Lack of involvement weakened the connection between home and school, affecting pupil motivation as was highlighted by respondents L9S2, L8S3, L5S5, L5S7, T5S2, T7S3, A6, and A8. The finding agrees with Epstein (2018) and Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) who confirm that lower parental engagement correlates with weaker academic outcomes. Furthermore, teachers observed that some parents neglected disciplinary responsibilities, expecting educators to manage all issues as was highlighted by P1S1. However, studies by Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) and Jeynes (2016) suggest that

parental participation in school affairs significantly influences pupil achievement and behaviour.

Expectancy Theory explains how a lack of parental support can contribute to poor performance in English examinations by highlighting the role of motivation. According to the theory, motivation is shaped by the belief that effort leads to success (expectancy), success leads to rewards (instrumentality), and these rewards are valued (valence). Without parental support, pupils may perceive that their efforts to improve their English skills will not lead to success, as they lack encouragement or resources at home. This can lower their expectations of success, diminishing their motivation to engage in academic tasks. Ultimately, the absence of parental involvement reduces the perceived value of their academic efforts, leading to decreased motivation and poor performance in examinations.

7.3.3.8 Lack of Role Models in the Community

Findings showed the lack of positive role models in communities significantly affected pupils' motivation and aspirations in excelling in English. The absence of individuals who had succeeded academically, particularly in English, diminished pupils' drive to achieve similar success. This issue was especially pronounced in areas where educational attainment was low, and alternative life paths, such as early marriage for girls, were more common as was noted by respondents L1S5 and T21S7. The finding aligns with Bandura (1997) who ascertains that the influence of community role models plays a crucial role in shaping pupils' educational aspirations and perceptions of success. Teachers and school administrators observed that in communities where there were few professionals who had succeeded through education, children were less likely to be encouraged to aim higher as was highlighted by HOD6S6. Social learning theory suggests that individuals learn behaviours and set aspirations by observing others within their environment (Bandura, 1977).

7.3.4 Policy Related Factors

Policy factors are those factors which are caused by certain guidelines or plans that the government have enacted with regard to education which guide decisions and achieve specific outcomes or objectives. In short, these are factors which can be attributed to existing educational policies which are deemed to be counterproductive in as far as learner performance is concerned. Below is a discussion of policy related factors:

7.3.4.1 Removal of English as a Compulsory Passing Subject at Grade 9

The study revealed that the removal of English as a compulsory passing subject at the Grade 9 level has had far-reaching implications on educational outcomes, particularly on pupil performance at Grade 12 level. One of the major consequences of this policy shift is the diminished motivation among pupils to prioritise English. This finding aligns with Musonda and Mwanza (2020) who found that pupils had negative attitudes towards English since it was removed as a mandatory passing subject which in turn impacted their performance. Moreover, the removal of English as a compulsory passing subject has led to gaps in foundational language skills. Pupils who were allowed to proceed to Grade 10 without passing English also experienced significant difficulties at Grade 12 level. Teachers also expressed concerns about the decline in pupil engagement and seriousness in English assessments. This aligns with Nurlatifah and Mauriyat (2020) who also found out that the removal of English from elementary school curriculum in Indonesia led to decreased pupil enthusiasm for learning English and a subsequent lack of vocabulary knowledge at higher educational levels. Additionally, the impact of this policy change has extended beyond individual learners to the overall classroom environment in the Copperbelt Province in Zambia.

By abolishing English as a mandatory passing subject certain social groups gain an advantage over other groups. Children from families living in predominantly English speaking homes succeed better due to their greater contact with the language while learners attending poorer rural schools face institutional barriers. Institutional discourse maintains inequality through dominant language group elitism according to Van Dijk's (2008) perspective. The modified policy creates an expanded educational gap between city learners and rural learners because rural learners lack proper English education because of limited access to good teachers and learning materials. The modification decreases substantial English involvement thus it lowers learners' academic drive and their position relative to national achievement benchmarks. Discourses stemming from policy shape how people understand the nature of knowledge and skills while either holding or opposing present-day social inequalities according to Fairclough (2001).

7.3.4.2 Abolition of cut off points for Grade 9 examinations

Findings revealed that the abolition of cut-off points for Grade 9 examinations in Zambia has prompted significant concerns among educators regarding its impact on learner motivation, academic preparedness, and overall educational outcomes as was highlighted by respondents L9S2, T7S3, T5S2, T13S5, HOD6S6, HOD2S2 and P3S2.

Kanchele (2014) revealed that both teachers and pupils perceived the policy change as detrimental to the quality of education. Teachers reported that the removal of cut-off points led to a decline in competition among learners, reduced accountability, and posed challenges in lesson planning due to the increased presence of mixed-ability classes. The current study reported that the absence of clear academic consequences was observed to undermine learners' commitment to hard work and achievement, potentially promoting mediocrity. This sentiment aligns with findings that suggest the removal of performance benchmarks can lead to decreased learner motivation and a lack of incentive to excel academically (Kanchele, 2014). The policy was well intentioned, but was implemented without putting adequate support measures in place. It has been criticised for not considering its negative impact on overall educational quality.

Self-Efficacy Theory can explain the impact of abolishing cut-off points for Grade 9 examinations by highlighting how pupils' beliefs in their ability to succeed influence their motivation and behaviour. Without cut-off points, pupils may lack clear standards for success, which could either increase or decrease their self-efficacy. Some pupils may feel more motivated, believing they have a better chance of passing, while others may struggle without structured goals, leading to reduced motivation and lower self-efficacy. This theory is relevant because it emphasises the importance of pupils' perception of their chances of success, which can either enhance or diminish their efforts. Understanding these perceptions can help guide strategies to maintain or improve pupil motivation in the absence of clear benchmarks.

7.3.4.3 The Pitfalls of the Re-Entry Policy

Findings revealed that adolescent pregnancy posed significant challenges for young girls, affecting their academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being. The finding aligns with studies by Chanda and Mutepuka (2023). Banda and Sitali (2023) found that while re-admission policies have been effective in retaining pregnant learners and enabling them to complete their education, issues related to academic performance and behaviour persist. Health complications and social stigma often lead to frequent class absences among pregnant learners, further hindering their academic progress. A hostile social environment within schools can decrease motivation and increase dropout rates. Research by Chiyota (2020) indicates that although re-entry policies provide opportunities for continued education, their effectiveness is limited by implementation challenges and prevailing societal attitudes.

Through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, the Re-Entry Policy for young mothers promotes gender inclusiveness but applies certain implicit biases which lead to discrimination. The experience of discrimination against teenage mothers at school prevents them from being fully active participants during group discussions especially during English classes. Societal standards receive additional reinforcement through this narrative which presents youth mothers as outsiders of the academic environment (Gee, 2014). Multiple people face difficulties learning English because of mental and social barriers.

In summary, the findings showed that there were four categories of factors contributing to poor performance among grade 12 learners in English language. These factors were related to the teacher, the learner, the school and government policies.

7.4 What strategies can be used to improve pupils' performance in Grade 12 examinations in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province?

The fourth objective focused on strategies that could be used to improve pupils' performance in Grade 12 examinations in the English Language in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province. Each of the strategies formed a theme under which the discussion of findings for objective 4 was discussed: consider the following:

7.4.1 Improve school based and district based monitoring and supervision

Improving school based and district monitoring was a strategy that could be used to improve pupils' performance in Grade 12 examinations in English Language. This finding showed that teachers cited monitoring of teachers as a method of improving results. Monitoring encompassed aspects on tracking teachers' reporting time, and inspectors from the Ministry of Education needed to be monitoring schools as was expressed by respondents L8S2, L7S1, and L10S8. Namfukwe, (2016) believes that monitoring of teaching greatly improves areas of need where teachers need assistance with such as training and professional development that lead to continuous improvement in teaching quality. Laska (2015) also added that supervision is essential because it helps ensure that teaching methods and materials meet established standards, leading to better learner outcomes.

According to self-efficacy theory, pupils and teachers are more likely to perform well when they believe in their abilities to succeed. Improved monitoring and supervision at the school and district levels can provide feedback and support that boosts teachers' confidence in their teaching methods and helps students feel more capable of achieving

success in English. For instance, regular feedback on teaching and learning practices can enhance teachers' belief in their competence, which can, in turn, improve their pupils' self-efficacy and academic outcomes. When both teachers and pupils receive guidance and reinforcement, their belief in their ability to succeed strengthens, which is likely to result in improved performance.

Expectancy theory also posits that individuals are motivated to act based on their expectations of the outcomes of their behaviour. Improved monitoring and supervision can clarify the relationship between effort and success. If teachers and pupils know that their performance will be closely monitored and that there are tangible rewards for improvement (such as praise, resources, or career advancement), they will be more motivated to put in effort. Monitoring and supervision provide clear expectations and a sense of accountability, which can increase both teachers' and pupils' expectations of success and their motivation to meet those expectations, leading to better performance in English.

Additionally, CDA focuses on how language shapes and is shaped by power structures and social dynamics. In the context of school monitoring and supervision, CDA can be used to analyse how language is used in feedback, instructions, and policy documents. Effective monitoring and supervision systems can ensure that the language used to communicate expectations and provide feedback is supportive and empowering, rather than discouraging. For example, teachers and pupils need to receive constructive and positive language that encourages growth rather than reinforcing negative stereotypes or feelings of inadequacy. Monitoring and supervision systems that prioritise positive, inclusive, and motivational language can foster a culture of support and improvement, leading to higher performance.

By combining these three frameworks, improving school-based and district-based monitoring and supervision not only enhances accountability and structure but also supports teachers' and pupils' beliefs in their ability to succeed, clarifies expectations, and ensures that the language used in feedback is motivating and empowering. This can collectively improve learner performance in English.

7.4.2 Motivate teachers through incentivisation

The research suggested that teacher motivation stands as a fundamental factor which enhances pupil achievement outcomes. Those who participated (T18S6 and T3S1 along with NE3 and T7S3) said that teachers who diligently performed their duties deserved

recognition awards combined with opportunities for professional development. These incentives measure and recognise teacher accomplishments, and maintain their dedication to excellent teaching approaches. This finding upholds Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) which postulates that individuals will feel motivated when they believe their work will produce better outcomes which will eventually result in sought-after rewards. Teachers who can see direct connections between their dedication and actual incentives including awards and career progressions and monetary rewards demonstrate higher dedication and innovation in the classroom.

Studies have supported this perspective such as Aurelia and Mueni (2021) who established that teachers who demonstrate motivation create studious classrooms where pupils learn more confidently and get more involved. They implement new teaching approaches which create improved information retention and understanding for their learners. Barriers to learning are minimised when motivated teachers adopt high educational performance standards that learners achieve due to supportive instruction. Through Expectancy Theory, schools understand that awarding recognition together with professional development opportunities lead to motivated teachers who improve their teaching standard while generating better learner results. Educational institutions must implement systemised motivational programmes which maintain both teacher dedication and motivation levels.

7.4.3 Reduced workload for teachers

The research indicated that lowering teacher workload presented itself as a possibility to enhance performance in Grade 12 examinations among pupils. According to study participants T5S2, T18S6 and A10, teachers face increased workloads which hindered their capacity to deliver thorough feedback to learners individually. The literature confirms this viewpoint because Churches et al. (2022) observed that less workload allows teachers to create more interactive educational activities while Agbonrofo et al. (2019) discovered that teachers under less pressure develop better learning environments.

The Zambian educational system faces several systemic restrictions which prevent adopting workload reduction as a short-term solution for teachers. The deficiency of teachers especially teachers of language in secondary schools throughout the Copperbelt Province prevents workload reduction among teachers due to insufficient personnel. The essential focus should move beyond simple reductions of workload

because current real-world conditions demand teachers to find practical methods which allow them to manage their heavy workloads effectively.

Reducing the workload for teachers can enhance their self-efficacy by providing them with more time and energy to focus on high-quality instruction and individualised support for pupils. When teachers have a manageable workload, they are less likely to experience burnout and more likely to feel confident in their ability to design effective lessons, provide meaningful feedback, and address the diverse needs of their learners. As a result, teachers' enhanced self-efficacy translates into better classroom practices and more effective instruction, which directly benefits pupils. When teachers are confident in their ability to teach, they are more likely to create engaging, supportive environments that foster pupil motivation and performance, leading to improved outcomes in English examinations. This approach aligns with Self-Efficacy Theory because when teachers feel capable and supported, their belief in their ability to positively influence learner outcomes are strengthened, which can lead to better performance in English examinations.

7.4.4 Infrastructure Expansion

Secondary school infrastructure development serves as an essential educational approach to better both the learning environment and Grade 12 examination results. The development of expanded school building infrastructure through classroom and laboratory, library and sanitation facilities construction provide learners with improved learning spaces for better participation while enabling them access to educational resources. This was expressed by L2S8, A6 and A11. Every school improvement leads learners to concentrate their efforts more efficiently during their studies thus contributing to better examination scores. This finding aligns with Yangambi (2023) who revealed that infrastructure expansion can significantly improve learner performance in examinations by providing a better learning environment and access to resources by having enough buildings and comfortable seating that forms an environment where learners have a better focus without any distractions. Moreover, Simukonde and Mwansa (2019) argued that poor infrastructure such as inadequate classrooms and teaching/learning materials negatively impacted examination performance.

Financial difficulties in Zambia should not impede infrastructure growth because proper planning techniques alongside strategic budget allocation methods will create

possibilities for expansion. The government shows its dedication through Constituency Development Fund (CDF) growth and this funding assists in multiple school infrastructure initiatives around different districts. Education improvements in the country receive ongoing support from Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and international donated funding provided by organisations including UNICEF and the World Bank.

The government should establish an infrastructure development plan with sequential phases that focus first on schools requiring immediate attention. Costs can be cut through the strategic use of substitute building materials coupled with prefabricated classroom solutions which maintain excellent standards. Local communities effectively boost government educational infrastructure development through their provision of workforce and building materials which have achieved successful results in remote locations. The practicability and feasibility of infrastructure development make it a suitable solution to enhance education delivery despite financial restrictions in Zambia. The country will establish better conditions in secondary schools by using budget plans together with alliances and step-by-step execution to develop school buildings in successive stages.

Infrastructure expansion, explained through Expectancy Theory, enhances learner performance in English by improving the teaching and learning environment. This theory suggests that individuals are motivated by their expectations of outcomes. Expanding infrastructure, such as better classrooms, learning materials, and technology, helps increase both learners' and teachers' expectations of success. When learners have access to necessary resources, they feel more capable of succeeding, and teachers are empowered to deliver more effective lessons. As a result, both learners and teachers are more likely to be motivated, leading to improved performance in English examinations.

7.4.5 Employment of more teachers

Employing more teachers was another finding that was revealed as a strategy in improving pupil performance in national examinations. Employing more teachers meant reduction of workload for the existing teachers and to meet the demands and needs of classes which are overcrowded with learners. Employing more teachers as a strategy was aimed at addressing the workload of teachers as well as improving class sizes as was expressed by respondents T20S7, and HOD8S8. This finding aligns with

Njoroge (2023) who established that employing more teachers can positively impact learner performance in national examinations by reducing class sizes and providing more personalised attention to learners, and providing academic and emotional support to the learners that can lead to improved performance. In addition, Phiri (2020) and Lufungulo (2021) also agree with this finding that high teacher-to-pupil ratios have a negative impact on pupil performance. However, there is no guarantee that when more teachers are employed, then teaching and learning will also improve. Among the factors contributing to poor performance, teacher absenteeism was highlighted where teachers were present in school but did not attend to learners. It is teachers' attitudes that need to change for performance to improve.

The employment of more teachers, explained through Self-Efficacy Theory, enhances both teachers' and pupils' belief in their ability to succeed, leading to improved learner performance in English. A lower teacher-to-learner ratio allows for personalised attention, strengthening pupils' confidence and motivation. Teachers also benefit from reduced workload, minimizing burnout and improving lesson delivery. Confident teachers implement effective strategies, fostering a supportive and engaging classroom environment. This positive learning culture encourages active participation and skill development, ultimately enhancing examination performance. By increasing teacher numbers, schools create conditions that reinforce self-efficacy and drive academic success.

7.4.6 Multi-sectoral approach to provision of adequate teaching and learning materials

Multi-sectoral approach to the provision of adequate teaching and learning resources was another finding that was revealed on the strategies that can be used to improve pupils' performance in Grade 12 examinations in secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province. This entails that there is a need for teachers to create learning resources with the learners or by partnering with other schools and other donor organisations for donations of resources. In addition, teachers should be taught how to be innovative in the provision of teaching and learning resources by teaching teachers on how to create low cost teaching materials. This finding shows what was expressed by respondents T8S3, FP4S2 and A3. This finding corresponds to Mungai and Kinyua (2020) who established that the use of instructional materials in the classrooms can improve learner engagement, a better comprehension of concepts, and higher examination performance. This study puts more emphasis on instructional resources such as textbooks,

multimedia, and hands-on materials which play an essential role in motivating learners and facilitating effective learning environments. In addition, Ahmed and Aslam (2019) added that once learners have adequate access to a variety of learning resources, they perform better in their examinations. Usage of relevant, high-quality instructional materials, such as diagrams, charts, and interactive activities, was found to promote active learning, improve critical thinking, and consequently enhance examination results

The multi-sectoral approach to providing teaching and learning materials aligns with Expectancy Theory, which emphasises that motivation increases when individuals expect their efforts to yield success. Collaboration among stakeholders such as the government, private sector, and community organisations ensures adequate resources, enabling teachers to deliver high-quality instruction and implement effective strategies with confidence. Likewise, pupils with access to necessary materials are more engaged, as they see a clear connection between their efforts and academic achievement. A well-coordinated provision of resources strengthens expectations of success, enhancing motivation and ultimately improving learner performance in English.

7.4.7 Provision of Learning Opportunities for Teachers

Provision of learning opportunities is another finding that emerged on the strategies that can be used to improve pupil performance in examinations in the Copperbelt Province. This means that teachers need refresher courses on modern teaching methodologies, assessment techniques, skills to use formative assessments effectively, skills on how to provide constructive feedback, and design assessment strategies that align with learning objectives, CPD focusing on key areas where learners struggle, such as comprehension, writing, and grammar, training on using digital tools, e-learning platforms, and multimedia resources to enhance learner engagement and improve instruction besides their initial teaching course so that they improve their teaching methods and acquire new skills on learner engagement as was expressed by respondents L8S1, L9S2 and T2S1. This finding corresponds to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) who revealed the need for teachers to be engaged in ongoing learning opportunities so that they are better equipped to implement effective teaching methods which can lead to improved learner outcomes and thus will translate into learner achievement because learners are better prepared for national examinations. Furthermore, Wanzare (2018) also added that continuous professional development helps teachers acquire skills and strategies that can be used to improve learner performance. This can be done through collaboration

among teachers and leads to the development of innovative methods that improve pupils' performance on examinations.

The findings further revealed that there is a need for structured, teacher-led professional development frameworks, such as reviving the Provincial Language Teachers Association of Zambia (LATAZ) and strengthening school-based CPD (T2S1; HOD2S2). Self-Efficacy Theory underscores that individuals' belief in their capabilities influences performance (Bandura, 1977). If teachers received consistent training from experienced educators, such as national examiners, their confidence in delivering high-quality instruction would improve, subsequently benefiting learners.

7.4.8 Reduce Travel Time from Home to School by Constructing More Schools

Long distances to school negatively affect learner attendance, punctuality, and overall performance, particularly in morning subjects like English. Many pupils arrive late or fatigued, missing crucial learning time. Prolonged travel time can also result in lower energy levels, decreased concentration, and even increased dropout rates, as learners struggle to balance school demands with the physical strain of traveling long distances as was highlighted by L2S3, L10S3, L3S4, L7S1, FP2S1, HOD4S4, HOD5S5, and A9. Additionally, commuting challenges disproportionately affect learners from low-income households who cannot afford alternative transportation. Findings further showed that inadequate teacher availability, and limited engagement opportunities negatively impacted learning outcomes. Vroom (1964) posits that pupils' motivation to learn is shaped by their perception of effort and outcome. When teachers are unavailable or overburdened, pupils struggle to see the value of sustained academic effort, leading to diminished motivation and engagement.

Fairclough (1992) also highlights systemic inequities in educational provision, particularly in the geographic distribution of schools. To address this issue, the government and stakeholders should prioritise constructing additional schools, especially in underprivileged areas to bring education closer to learners' homes. Implementing school transport programmes or bicycle distribution initiatives for learners in remote areas can significantly reduce walking distances and promote timely school attendance. Additionally, establishing satellite schools can help reduce overcrowding and shorten travel distances, ensuring equitable access to quality education. Research by Smith & Brown (2018) highlights the correlation between shorter commutes and improved academic performance. Increased accessibility to

education facilities enhances attendance, punctuality, and engagement, leading to better examination outcomes. Studies also show that providing school transportation significantly reduces dropout rates and improves learner retention (Williams, 2019).

7.4.9 Teachers to Collaborate with Parents to Tackle Learner Absenteeism

Parental involvement is also crucial in monitoring learner attendance and reinforcing discipline. Many absentee pupils lack parental supervision, leading to academic neglect as was reported by respondents L2S5, L4S7, T18S6, P1S1 and P4S2. When parents take an active role in their children's education, they help create a structured home environment that supports learning and discipline. However, many parents remain disengaged due to work commitments, lack of education, or financial hardships, contributing to continued absenteeism.

Fairclough (1992) highlights the power of language in shaping learner attitudes. Regular teacher-led discussions on the negative impact of absenteeism can influence learners' perceptions and behaviours, fostering a culture of commitment to education. Schools should implement regular parent-teacher meetings to discuss attendance and academic progress, creating a platform for collaboration in addressing absenteeism. The findings reveal that teacher engagement plays a critical role in mitigating absenteeism, which significantly affects learner performance in English. Vroom (1964) underscores the importance of teacher expectations and efforts in motivating learners to attend classes. When teachers actively engage with parents and intervene early in cases of absenteeism, they reinforce the belief that consistent attendance leads to better performance. Introducing home visit programmes for chronically absent pupils allows teachers and school administrators to engage directly with parents and guardians, ensuring that issues affecting school attendance are addressed at the household level. This strategy aligns with Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997), which posits that external support enhances an individual's belief in their ability to succeed. Furthermore, establishing communication platforms, such as SMS or WhatsApp groups, helps keep parents informed and allows them to take timely action to address absenteeism.

Jeynes (2016) found that parental engagement directly influences academic performance, with higher involvement leading to improved attendance, discipline, and motivation. In addition, community-driven initiatives, such as parental involvement programmes, can significantly reduce absenteeism rates and improve learner discipline.

7.4.10 Establishing Functional Libraries to Provide Literacy Materials

The findings revealed that many schools lacked well-stocked libraries, depriving learners of essential reading materials for language development. The absence of functional libraries hinders independent reading habits, limiting learners' ability to improve their vocabulary, comprehension skills, and overall English proficiency as was echoed by respondents L9S3, A6, T6S2, L6S6, and NE4. Schools that do not prioritise library access often struggle to cultivate a culture of reading among learners, which negatively impacts their academic performance.

The Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) underscores that teachers' motivation is influenced by their perceived ability to facilitate learning, which is often hindered by inadequate resources. The lack of functional libraries and literacy materials reduces teachers' capacity to enhance reading proficiency as highlighted by L9S3 and Tr6. Without these resources, educators struggle to engage learners effectively, diminishing their motivation and expectations for improved outcomes (Bandura, 1997).

Fairclough (1992) highlights the power dynamics within educational systems, where limited governmental investment in literacy infrastructure marginalises learners, particularly in rural areas. The absence of well-equipped libraries constrains teachers' ability to foster a reading culture, reinforcing educational inequities. These observations were confirmed by respondents A6, NE4, and P14S7. Teachers' self-efficacy, as emphasised by Bandura (1997), is also compromised when they lack pedagogical tools, leading to reduced instructional effectiveness and lower pupil engagement. Self-efficacy theory suggests that teachers with access to well-resourced environments are more confident and effective in delivering literacy instruction.

Government and private sector partnerships should fund the construction and stocking of libraries to ensure learners have access to a wide range of educational resources. Schools should implement dedicated library periods, encouraging pupils to engage with books beyond their coursework and fostering independent learning. Additionally, digital libraries and mobile library services should be introduced in rural schools, providing access to electronic resources where physical libraries are not feasible as highlighted by respondents A6, and P14.

Guthrie & Wigfield (2019) emphasised that consistent access to books significantly enhances literacy and comprehension skills. Studies further suggest that pupils who engage in independent reading demonstrate improved writing skills, enhanced critical

thinking, and greater success in examinations (Guthrie and Greaney 1991; Krashen 1993; Cunningham and Stanovich 1991; Stanovich and Cunningham 1993).

7.4.11 Use of Various Techniques to Teach Reading and Writing

Rigid teaching methods contribute to poor literacy skills. Many teachers rely on outdated lecture-based instruction, which often fails to cater to different learning styles. However, findings revealed a gap in differentiated instruction, the integration of interactive tools, and a lack of emphasis on reading and writing skills. These shortcomings align with Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), which posits that pupil motivation and achievement are influenced by their belief in the effectiveness of instructional strategies. If teachers fail to differentiate instruction, learners with lower proficiency may feel incapable, reducing their engagement and effort. CDA further explains how pedagogical discourse shapes learning experiences (Fairclough, 1995). The absence of activities explicitly designed for reading and writing development suggests a structural issue in lesson planning. Engaging and interactive teaching techniques can enhance pupil comprehension, encourage participation, and improve language fluency as highlighted by T6S2, T18S6 and HOD1S1. When learners are not exposed to diverse reading and writing methods, they struggle with comprehension and composition, limiting their ability to perform well in English examinations.

To address this challenge, teachers should adopt phonics-based approaches for early reading interventions, helping learners develop strong foundational literacy skills. Implementing peer-to-peer learning, where proficient readers assist struggling classmates in guided reading sessions, fosters collaborative learning and builds confidence among learners. Incorporating storytelling, creative writing workshops, and technology-driven learning tools can make lessons more engaging and interactive, improving both reading comprehension and writing proficiency.

Self-Efficacy Theory, moreover, emphasises that teachers' confidence in their instructional skills influences learner performance (Bandura, 1997). If teachers lack exposure to effective literacy-enhancing tools, such as YouTube videos and literacy games, their self-efficacy diminishes, impacting instructional quality. This was reported by respondent T18S6. This supports the assertion that "teachers need to prepare differentiated lessons for varied skill levels and also create tiered assignments to correspond to pupil needs reinforcing the necessity of targeted professional development. Cain & Oakhill (2011) suggest that diverse teaching strategies improve

reading comprehension and writing proficiency. The integration of multimedia tools and interactive teaching methods are effective ways to enhance pupil engagement and performance.

7.4.12 Improve Learner Conduct through a Strict School Code of Ethics

Indiscipline among pupils, such as absenteeism, substance abuse, and disruptive behaviour, contributes to poor academic outcomes. Schools with weak disciplinary policies often experience higher dropout rates and lower academic performance. A lack of clear ethical guidelines and enforcement mechanisms allows misconduct to persist, negatively affecting the learning environment. These findings were highlighted by respondents A9, A8, A12, L9S6, and T15S5.

CDA underscores the role of language in shaping power dynamics within the classroom (Fairclough, 1992). The absence of a structured and consistently applied disciplinary framework erodes teachers' authority and control, leading to chaotic classroom environments that impede effective instruction. Furthermore, Self-Efficacy Theory highlights that teachers' confidence in managing classroom behaviour directly influences their effectiveness (Bandura, 1977). When educators lack strategies or institutional support to enforce discipline, they may experience decreased self-efficacy, resulting in passive approaches to classroom management and reduced instructional effectiveness (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003).

Strengthening the enforcement of school rules and ethical conduct policies ensures consistency in discipline across all learners. Implementing mentorship programmes helps instil discipline and responsibility by providing learners with role models to guide them toward positive behaviour. Additionally, teachers should be trained in classroom management techniques to handle misconduct effectively, ensuring that discipline is maintained without discouraging student engagement. Arum & Ford (2012) found that clear behaviour expectations and strong enforcement of discipline correlate with higher academic achievement. Research also indicates that structured discipline programs can significantly improve learner behaviour and learning outcomes.

7.4.13 Establish mentorship programmes to improve learner motivation

Educational institutions should also establish mentoring programmes as a method to enhance learner motivation levels as highlighted by respondents FP5S3, FP3S2 and FP2S2. Research investigations show that learner motivation together with academic success receives beneficial impacts from mentorship programmes. Research across 112

study literature bases proved that mentorship develops powerful behavioural effects and attitudinal effects, motivational effects and career-related effects in learners (Gaddis, 2022). Learners who receive mentorship gain psychosocial support together with academic guidance and career mentorship (DuBois et al., 2018). Structured mentorship programmes ... develop critical thinking and proactivity and boost self-efficacy ... (Anderson & Tomlinson, 2021). Learners demonstrate enhanced performance due to Self-Efficacy which states individuals achieve better results with mentor support (Bandura, 1997).

CDA additionally, stresses the power of teacher discourse in constructing learners' academic identities (Fairclough, 1992). A lack of positive reinforcement and structured guidance marginalises learners, reinforcing a deficit mind-set. Establishing alumni mentorship programmes could help counteract negative perceptions by providing consistent, real-world encouragement. Besides, educating learners on time management and ethical behaviour aligns with self-regulatory principles that improve academic engagement (Zimmerman, 2002). The suggested strategies align well with the theoretical perspectives. Mentorship programmes can strengthen learners' motivation (Vroom, 1964) and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), while ethical and time-management training promotes disciplined learning habits. Schools need to create mentoring programmes which combine teachers with elderly pupils and specialists to motivate their learners and boost their English language self-confidence. The mentorship framework described by Schunk and DiBenedetto (2021) consists of five basic steps which include specifying objectives, selecting target populations and fostering mentorship links while giving ongoing support to all participants. Such organised methods promote mentorship programmes which deliver impactful benefits while maintaining program sustainability.

7.4.14 Encourage learners to practise formal English in and outside the classroom.

The findings showed that inadequate reinforcement of formal English use, insufficient writing practice, and lenient marking contribute significantly to poor pupil performance in English. According to Vroom (1964), learners' motivation to improve language proficiency is influenced by their perceived likelihood of achieving better outcomes through effort. When teachers do not consistently enforce the use of Standard English, learners may not see the necessity of adhering to formal language conventions. Additionally, teachers' failure to provide rigorous and frequent writing exercises limits

pupils' ability to internalise formal writing structures, as reported by respondents L9S2, and T3S3.

The increasing reliance on informal language and social media slang has contributed to the decline in pupils' formal writing and speaking abilities, as informal digital communication becomes ingrained in their linguistic habits. Crystal (2019) observed that frequent use of abbreviations, acronyms, and non-standard expressions hinders students' ability to distinguish between casual and academic writing, negatively impacting their performance in formal assessments.

From a CDA perspective, the prevalence of informal language in pupils' writing signifies a broader issue of linguistic norms being shaped by digital communication rather than academic standards (Fairclough, 1995). Teachers must actively counter this trend by modelling Standard English in both spoken and written forms. While schools recognise this problem, practical interventions are limited by resource constraints, lack of policy enforcement, and the digital habits of modern learners. For instance, many pupils spend more time engaging with informal digital communication than with academic writing, making it difficult to reverse the habit. Teachers often focus on syllabus completion rather than reinforcing proper language use, as formal writing instruction requires additional time and effort. Most schools lack structured writing support programmes, leaving learners without guidance on improving formal language skills.

Given these challenges, a realistic and sustainable approach is necessary. Learners display increased motivation for English studies under Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) because they recognise that better language skills directly lead to improved academic achievements (Graham, 2021). Instead of impractical measures like enforcing English-speaking zones, schools should adopt integrated and contextually appropriate strategies, such as:

Internal Curriculum Adjustments – Schools should enhance the emphasis on formal writing skills across subjects, not just in English. This ensures that learners practise structured formal writing in multiple disciplines.

Teacher-Led Writing Workshops – Regular short writing sessions focused on formal sentence construction, paragraph development, and essay structuring can help learners refine their academic writing.

Practical Assessments – Schools should incorporate oral presentations, structured debates, and report writing tasks as part of continuous assessments to reinforce formal language use.

Feedback-Driven Learning – Instead of simply marking errors, teachers should provide detailed feedback that explains why informal language is inappropriate in academic settings, helping learners to self-correct. Similarly, frequent mock examinations and strict marking can reinforce examination standards, aligning with Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997), which posits that learners develop confidence and competence through structured practice and feedback.

According to the Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), learners are more likely to invest in improving their language skills if they perceive a clear link between effort and future success (Graham, 2021). Schools can leverage this by:

Emphasising how strong English proficiency contributes to better grades, university admission, and employment opportunities.

Creating incentive-based language improvement programmes, such as awarding extra credit for well-structured essays or public speaking exercises.

Using peer mentorship programmes, where higher-performing learners support weaker learners, reinforcing formal English through collaborative learning.

7.4.15 Making English a compulsory passing subject at every examination level.

Both teachers and administrators highlighted the lack of clear and consistent standards for progression, particularly concerning the mandatory passing of English at Grade 9. When the government made English an optional passing subject at Grade 9, it caused a significant drop in literacy abilities among Zambian pupils. The finding aligns with Musonda and Mwanza (2020) who found that making English non-compulsory led to reduced learner interest, resulting in weaker English skills by Grade 12. Success in motivation follows directly from the importance of subjects according to Expectancy Theory. The nation experiences reduced literacy rates since learners engage less in studying English after it became an optional subject (Graham, 2021). Social Inequality in Language Learning English-language pupils adapt well to mandatory English withdrawal, yet non-native English speakers from rural settings face education inequality due to language diversity (Van Dijk, 2008). According to CDA, the English language remains accessible in urban environments, however, educational resources in

rural areas lead to social segregation of pupils (Van Dijk, 2008). These policy adjustments will resolve the described gap: Authorities should reinstate English as an essential subject for completion.

The testing portion of the examination must also incorporate spoken English as it is part of the curriculum. Learners who need supplemental support in the English language acquisition will receive programme assistance to help them learn better. By implementing these measures learners can build fundamental communication competencies that will help them in obtaining success both in college and professional life.

7.4.16 Abolish Re-Entry Policy.

The Re-Entry Policy (REP) receiving increased scrutiny because its execution produces unfavourable side effects has drawn investigations from academics. The Itezhi-Tezhi District in Zambia shows that the policy has not met its objectives according to research from Chanda & Mutepuka (2023) because young mothers discontinue schooling due to society's rejection and health problems coupled with insufficient assistance for their recovery. Research shows that the implementation of this education policy does not follow a standard procedure because some educational institutions offer scarce support to returning pupils. Teaching professionals at schools observe unfavourable reactions from classmates combined with practical obstacles that prevent these pupils from participating in schoolwork (Banda & Sitali, 2023). From the CDA perspective, CDA Theory explains how the REP utilises institutional selection methods which exclude young mothers from participating in educational activities dominated by English (Gee, 2014; Fairclough, 2001). New approaches must be considered since it is no longer suitable to keep the existing policy in place. Flexible learning schedules like Vocational training Community-based education programmes and flexible education programmes allow academic stability combined with practical responsibility which avoids additional exclusion of teenage mother learners.

7.5 Conclusion

The Copperbelt Province faces significant educational challenges because teachers lack commitment shown through absenteeism and there are insufficient educational materials combined with relaxed educational leadership and learner linguistic poverty which restricts learner motivation and classroom discussions and hinders language development. Learning problems emerge because teachers neglect their responsibilities

due to overemphasis on absent professional development, yet schools remain maximally filled; inspection and monitoring are ineffective while pupils combine insufficient study materials with ineffective language evaluation techniques; inspection monitoring is inadequate. School performance differences intensify because English admission requirements vanish from policies while the school re-entry path shows weaknesses and parents need better help with their children's academic development. The improvement of educational performance needs teachers to work alongside educators while ensuring progress in teacher education through joint financial and institutional commitment for assessment programmes, infrastructure improvements and technology implementation in combination with enhanced English education and learner assistance systems.

The pupils at all the eight sampled schools have shown concerning levels of poor performance. The distribution of distinction grades in English Language remains minimal throughout the reviewed period because pupils performed at low levels or average levels which had the majority pupils. Learners failed written examinations due to the difficulty they had in writing essays and constructing correct sentence structures, as well as keeping grammar accuracy. They experienced reading comprehension deficits. The lack of academic and literary texts in their educational experiences impaired their ability to analyse material and interpret its meaning. Using local languages as everyday spoken communication hindered many learners' English proficiency together with their confidence levels when using English.

There were also pedagogical and classroom challenges. The modern training methods for teaching English language remain insufficient among several members of the teaching staff. Learners were not exposed to interactive and practical learning hence they failed to develop solid language competencies. Limited or lack of examination orientated assessments did not prepare learners adequately for examination standards.

Learners had limited access to a variety of English learning resources. Educational institutions often experienced shortages of sufficient library resources and reading programmes plus lack of diverse extra-curricular activities which would help learners develop fluent language skills. There were also assessment-related issues. Examination question structures that surpassed pupil familiarity might have compromised their examination response quality.

The research combines Self-Efficacy Theory, Expectancy Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to study pupil learning process management together with suitable assessment methods and linguistic education interaction with social political dynamics. Self-Efficacy Theory discusses how pupil talents affect growth in self-confidence yet Expectancy Theory explains assessment equity systems which influence learner engagement and Critical Discourse Analysis describes how language policy constructs control educational opportunities and performance outcomes. The national development of English proficiency demands educational teams to build connections between their work activities and both policy decisions and local community stakeholders. Systematic guidance and an educated expert staff system through continued support will build academic importance for English learning that serves professional development and national advancement.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 Overview

The previous chapter presented the discussion of the findings. This chapter presents an overview of the research results, the conclusions derived from the study, and recommendations resulting from the findings on the Critical Discourse Analysis of Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language Examinations in Selected Districts of the Copperbelt Province in Zambia. The chapter presents the contributions the study has to the body of knowledge. The research sought to critically analyse the Grade 12 pupils' poor performance in the English Language national examinations in selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. The chapter additionally provides recommendations for additional research to fill the gaps noted in the analysis.

8.1 Conclusion - Objective 1

The study revealed a mismatch between syllabus content and examination questions, highlighting issues with question clarity and uniformity. While the ECZ provides examiner training on examination quality, limited teacher awareness and the need for training in assessment quality remain key concerns.

The implication of this conclusion is that the misalignment between the syllabus and examination questions may negatively impact the development of oral skills which are never examined. Issues with question clarity could lead to confusion, making it difficult for learners to demonstrate their knowledge effectively. Additionally, while the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) provides examiner training, the limited awareness among teachers about examination question quality suggests a gap in their ability to prepare pupils effectively. This highlights the need for teacher training in assessment quality to ensure they understand examination expectations and can align their teaching strategies accordingly, ultimately improving learner outcomes.

8.2 Conclusion- Objective 2

The performance of Grade 12 pupils in the Copperbelt Province is poor as the number of learners who performed poorly is still on a higher side.

The implication of this statement is that Grade 12 pupils in the Copperbelt Province continue to struggle with their academic performance, with a significant proportion achieving low scores. This suggests persistent challenges in the education system, such as inadequate teaching and learning materials, high teacher-to-pupil ratios, poor

monitoring and supervision, or lack of language proficiency among learners. The phrase "**still on a higher side**" implies that despite possible interventions, the problem remains significant, indicating the need for further improvements in teaching strategies, resource allocation, and policy implementation to enhance learner outcomes.

Drawing on the results, the subsequent conclusions are made:

The findings highlight critical systemic challenges affecting English education in schools. Administrative factors have a considerable impact on learner performance in English at the Grade 12 level.

8.3 Conclusion- Objective 3

Based on the third objective of this study which examined factors that contribute to Grade 12 pupils' poor performance in the English language national examinations, the following conclusions are drawn:

8.3.1 Over-enrolment leads to overcrowded classrooms, limiting teacher-learner interaction and reducing the effectiveness of English instruction. Insufficient or unsatisfactory teaching resources further hinder learning, making it difficult for both teachers and pupils to engage in meaningful and effective language acquisition. Inconsistent or insufficient monitoring weakens accountability, allowing ineffective teaching practices to persist unaddressed. Additionally, the lack of professional development opportunities prevents teachers from enhancing their instructional strategies, ultimately impacting the quality of English education. Despite being held accountable for learner performance, they were not provided with the necessary resources or training to meet expected standards. The schools' limited financial resources further restricted their access to modern pedagogical techniques, making it difficult to adapt to the needs of 21st-century learners.

Implications for the Nation

Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving educational outcomes and national development. Over-enrolment strains the education system, necessitating investment in more infrastructure and equitable teacher deployment. Providing adequate and quality teaching resources can enhance learning experiences and bridge gaps in English proficiency. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms ensures sustained quality education and accountability among educators. Finally, prioritizing continuous professional development empowers teachers with updated pedagogical skills, which in turn improves English language instruction. Failure to address these issues may result in

declining literacy levels, reduced workforce competitiveness, and broader socio-economic consequences for the nation.

8.3.2 Teacher-related factors are equally impactful on learner performance in English. The issues identified include teacher absenteeism, low motivation, lack of lesson preparation, incomplete syllabus coverage, and inconsistent feedback pose significant threats to the quality of education. Teacher absenteeism disrupts learning, leading to knowledge gaps and reduced learner performance. Low motivation among teachers, often driven by inadequate salaries, poor working conditions, or lack of career growth, further diminishes their commitment to effective teaching. Insufficient lesson preparation affects lesson delivery, making learning less engaging and structured. Incomplete syllabus coverage means learners are ill-prepared for examinations and future academic or career pursuits. Lastly, the absence or inconsistency of feedback prevents learners from understanding their strengths and areas for improvement, hindering their overall progress.

Implications for the Nation

If left unaddressed, these issues could lead to a decline in educational standards, producing a workforce that lacks essential skills and knowledge. Poor educational outcomes may contribute to lower productivity, higher unemployment rates, and slower national development. To mitigate these effects, the nation must invest in strategies to improve teacher accountability, motivation, and professional development. Strengthening teacher support systems, ensuring adequate supervision, and fostering a culture of continuous feedback can enhance teaching effectiveness. Addressing these challenges is crucial for building a competent and competitive workforce, ultimately driving national growth and prosperity.

8.3.3 The learner related factors identified included learner absenteeism, learner inability to read and write, limited vocabulary, the use of the informal variety of English, and disruptive behaviour among learners all contribute to poor academic performance and negatively affect national development. These challenges have far-reaching implications, particularly in the areas of education, employment, and socio-economic growth.

8.3.3.1 Learner Absenteeism

Conclusion: Frequent absenteeism leads to learning gaps, poor academic performance, and an increased likelihood of school dropout. It reduces the effectiveness of teaching and disrupts the learning process for both the absent learners and their peers.

Implications for the Nation: High dropout rates result in a poorly educated workforce, limiting national productivity and innovation. Furthermore the country will have increased unemployment and poverty levels as learners fail to acquire necessary skills resulting in greater strain on government resources due to social welfare needs and crime prevention efforts.

8.3.3.2 Learner Inability to Read and Write

Conclusion: A significant number of learners struggle with basic literacy skills, limiting their ability to understand lessons, complete assignments, and progress academically. This hinders overall educational attainment.

Implications for the Nation: This will lead to reduced economic competitiveness due to a workforce lacking essential literacy skills. Limited access to higher education and employment opportunities will lead to increased social inequality resulting in higher dependency rates as individuals with poor literacy skills struggle to contribute effectively to the economy.

8.3.3.3 Limited Vocabulary

Conclusion: A restricted vocabulary limits comprehension, communication, and academic expression, making it difficult for learners to understand instructions, express ideas clearly, and perform well in assessments.

Implications for the Nation

Limited vocabulary increases poor communication skills among future professionals, affecting service delivery in key sectors like healthcare, business, and governance. Additionally, there will be reduced global competitiveness as individuals struggle with international communication and collaboration. Furthermore, difficulty in accessing advanced knowledge, will limit innovation and research.

8.3.3.4 Use of the Informal Variety of English

Conclusion: Excessive reliance on informal English hinders learners' ability to use standard English effectively, affecting academic writing, formal communication, and examination performance.

Implications for the Nation: Poor academic resulting from informal variety of English will lead to reduced employability as candidates struggle with professional

communication. Weak academic performance leads to low national education rankings and a potential decline in the quality of professionals, impacting national development sectors like law, medicine, and education.

8.3.3.5 Disruptive Behaviour among Learners

Conclusion: Disruptive behaviour, such as noise-making, disrespect towards teachers, and failure to follow school rules, negatively affects classroom management and the learning environment.

Implications for the Nation

Disruptive behaviour results in higher dropout rates and lower academic performance, reducing skilled labour in the economy. Further, this behaviour results in increased indiscipline in society, leading to higher crime rates and social instability. This in turn creates greater pressure on the justice system and social services due to behavioural issues extending beyond school.

8.3.3.6 Overall Implication

The persistence of these challenges threatens national development, economic growth, and social stability. To address them, policy reforms, teacher training, parental involvement, and investment in educational resources are needed. If left unaddressed, the nation risks a decline in educational standards, higher unemployment, and reduced global competitiveness.

8.4 Policy decisions significantly impact pupils' academic performance in English examinations. The removal of English as a compulsory passing subject, the removal of cut-off points for Grade 9 examinations, and the Re-Entry Policy have broad implications for both individual learners and national development.

8.4.1 Removal of English as a Compulsory Passing Subject

Conclusion: The decision to remove English as a compulsory subject for passing examinations lowers the motivation for learners to develop strong language skills. This policy shift weakens the emphasis on English proficiency, resulting in poor language competence among learners.

Implications for the Nation

This policy has contributed to declining English proficiency among graduates, affecting employability and communication in professional settings. Additionally, it contributes to poor academic performance in higher education institutions where English is the medium of instruction. The linguistic incompetence will lead to reduced global competitiveness as students struggle to participate in international academic and

professional discourse. The country is preparing a workforce with limited ability to engage in global trade, diplomacy, and innovation, ultimately slowing economic growth.

8.4.2 Removal of Cut-Off Points for Grade 9 Examinations

Conclusion: Eliminating cut-off points allows more learners to progress to Grade 10, regardless of their academic performance. While this increases access to education, it results in some learners advancing without the necessary foundational skills, particularly in English.

Implications for the Nation

This results in increased strain on secondary school resources as more students enter without adequate preparation leading to lower academic standards, as schools must accommodate learners with weak foundational skills. There is a higher risk of failure at Grade 12, leading to an increase in school dropouts and unskilled labour in the job market. Finally, this policy is likely to contribute to a long-term decline in national education quality which will in turn affect productivity and economic development.

8.4.3 The Re-Entry Policy

Conclusion: The Re-Entry Policy, which allows learners especially teenage mothers to return to school after dropping out, promotes inclusivity and gender equity in education. However, challenges such as stigma, lack of support systems, and difficulties balancing academic work with personal responsibilities often affect learners' performance.

8.4.3.1 Implications for the Nation

Increased literacy and economic opportunities for young mothers thus reducing dependency on social welfare. It enhances promotion of gender equality in education and employment sectors. However, without strong support mechanisms, re-entering learners may struggle academically, affecting overall national pass rates. If not properly managed, it may lead to classroom overcrowding and teacher workload increases, impacting education quality.

8.4.4 Overall Implication

While these policies aim to improve access to education, their unintended consequences such as declining English proficiency, weaker academic standards, and increased strain on resources must be addressed. The nation risks producing a workforce that lacks essential language and analytical skills, reducing economic growth and competitiveness. To mitigate these effects, policymakers should consider strengthening English language

instruction, providing academic support programs, and ensuring quality education at all levels.

8.5 The Contribution of this Study to the Body of Knowledge

The aim of this study was to critically analyse Grade 12 pupils' poor performance in the English language final examinations in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. I do acknowledge the fact that there are studies on English performance that have been done by other scholars. My study focused specifically on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. The data that was gathered brought out localised insights as lived and shared by the respondents. These insights might not have been captured in broader national studies because they are context-specific. This regional focus helps educators to tailor interventions to the specific needs of learners in this region.

My study sought information on a rather sensitive topic which involved classifying schools on the basis of academic performance. The study employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. Through the application of this framework, I was able to go beyond explaining pupil poor performance based on statistical data to understanding performance by uncovering deeper linguistic, social, and systemic factors influencing Grade 12 pupils' English examination results. This approach enabled me to provide a nuanced understanding of how language, power, and institutional practices shape learning outcomes. It must also be mentioned that the period under review covered the COVID-19 pandemic period and poor performance could have been attributed partly to the pandemic, my study proved that there were other systemic issues beyond the pandemic that contributed to poor performance. It is easy to attribute poor performance to figures without really understanding underlying factors that bring about the statistics. The framework enabled me to do a Linguistic and Educational Analysis.

By analysing discourse from teachers, learners, administrators, examiners and parents this study brings out their lived experiences, attributions, and challenges especially as seen from the Expectancy Theory and Self-efficacy Theory, thus contributing to a holistic comprehension of the issue of poor performance among Grade 12 pupils. Guided by the research objectives and questions, the findings of this study have contributed bridging the gap between policy and practice.

The study analysed factors that contribute poor English performance. The findings can inform curriculum design, teacher training, and assessment policies, especially in areas such as examination setting, language instruction, and resource allocation. The findings

of the study have established that learners struggle with reading and writing as well as limited vocabulary which affect their overall performance. By identifying discourse patterns that reflect systemic issues, my study provides evidence for potential reforms. For example the curriculum can include more and refined material to tackle the challenges identified. The teacher training can use this data to better prepare teachers with skills to respond to the identified issues. The theoretical frameworks used become handy in understanding learner challenges and how to address them practically and linguistically.

8.5.1 Recommendations for Future Research to expand on the findings of this study, subsequent research may investigate

- The effect of teacher training in tackling issues linked to overcrowded classrooms and insufficient materials.
- Comparative research on urban and rural schools to recognise distinct challenges and strategies that can be used in varied environments to improve learner performance.
- An analysis of factors contributing to disparities in Head of Department leadership roles in selected secondary schools of the Copperbelt Province.

8.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

8.6.1 Examinations Council of Zambia should

- (i) Assess all language skills that are taught in schools including listening and speaking is absent in all exam papers of 2018 to 2019.
- (ii) Consider revising the grading scale regarding Grade 7 and Grade 8 to reflect and communicate their implications for academic progression more accurately. The general entry requirement for higher education is a minimum of 6 or better. G7 and G8 are classified as satisfactory by ECZ, yet they are not considered for entry requirements.
- (iii) Reconsider publishing the Chief Markers' reports to enable schools learn the expected examination standards.
- (iv) Invite only practising teachers to mark examinations as opposed to allowing retired teachers to mark who will not even apply the knowledge from the exercise

8.6.2 The Ministry of General Education should:

- (i) Implement policies to regulate and manage enrolment
- (ii) Deploy more teachers to address the disproportionate high teacher to-pupil ratios

- (iii) Distribute teachers equitably for quality instruction in the country.
- (iv) Intensify monitoring and supervision of schools to ensure uniform teaching quality, provision of feedback to learners, teacher attendance and professional growth. When monitoring is not done or is done inconsistently, small problems are left to become big and hard to address.

8.6.3 The government should:

- (i) Prioritise infrastructure expansion to accommodate learners comfortably and enhance the learning environment. With reintroduction of free education, schools experience an influx of pupils returning to school resulting in uncondusive learning environments.
- (ii) Increase financing for secondary education to enhance school administration.
- (iii) Provide adequate and appropriate teaching and learning resources. Lack of or scarcity of teaching and learning resources was cited as one of the major contributing factors to poor performance among learners.
- (iv) Make English a compulsory passing subject at every examination level to enhance proficiency among learners and uphold educational standards. English determines the academic trajectory.

8.6.4 The school administration should:

- (i) Put in place structures to facilitate collaborative lesson planning.
- (ii) Reinforce the use of Standard English across all subject areas.
- (iii) Reinforce literacy programmes for all grades.

REFERENCES

- Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4), 431-447. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390902736512>
- Albarico, A. G. (2021). *The Impact of Grammatical Skills on English Language Proficiency of Grade 12 SHS Students*. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Review*, 5(8), 23-43. Retrieved from: Researchgate.net
- Akporfure, J. (2022). Factors affecting English performance in Nigerian secondary schools: A teacher-learner perspective. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 15(4), 312-328.
- Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. Longman.
- Andes, A. (2019). Language proficiency of senior high school students. *Ascendens Asia Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Abstracts*, 3(2F). Retrieved from <https://ojs.aaresearchindex.com/index.php/AAJMRA/article/view/8642>
- Arum, R., & Ford, K. (2012). *How disciplinary practices shape student learning, achievement, and educational attainment*. In C. E. Finn Jr. & R. J. Manno (Eds.), *The state of education policy research* (pp. 112-130). Routledge.
- Ayivi, E. K. (2021). *Impact of School Monitoring on the Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Junior High Schools in the Akuapem North Municipality of Ghana*. Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/6835>
- Babbie, E. R., & Mouton, J. (2011). *The Practice of Social Research* (11th ed.). Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (2010). *Language assessment in practice: Developing language assessments and justifying their use in the real world*. Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, A. L. (2013). *Language demands of academic English: A case for a focused approach to English language development*. *Language Learning*, 63(1), 85-112.
- Banda, D. (2018). An analysis of Grade 12 English language performance in selected secondary schools in Copperbelt Province. *Journal of Language and Education*, 4(1), 1-12.
- Banda, M., & Phiri, J. (2020). Strategies for Enhancing Student Performance in Grade 12 Examinations in Zambia. *Journal of Education Studies*, 15(3), 120-135.
- Banda, J., & Phiri, L. (2022). Factors affecting English language proficiency in secondary schools: Teachers' perspectives in Zambia. *Zambian Journal of Educational Studies*, 10(2), 45-62.
- Banda, P. (2021). *The impact of digital communication on students' writing proficiency in Zambian secondary schools*. Lusaka: University of Zambia Press.
- Banda, P. (2020). *The impact of class size on English language learning in Zambian secondary schools*. Lusaka: University of Zambia Press.
- Banda, P., & Zulu, T. (2018). The impact of foundational literacy on secondary school performance in Zambia. *International Journal of Educational Studies*, 15(3), 45-61.

- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. *Psychological Review*, 84(2), 191–215.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W.H. Freeman.
- Banerjee, A., & Duflo, E. (2011). *Poor economics: A radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty*. Public Affairs.
- Banda, S., & Phiri, T. (2019). The role of pedagogical strategies in enhancing student performance in English in Zambian schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 48(2), 103-119.
- Barrett, P., Treves, A., Shmis, T., Ambasz, D., & Ustinova, M. (2019). *The impact of school infrastructure on learning: A synthesis of the evidence*. World Bank.
- Bwalya, C. M. (2022). *An investigation into challenges faced by Zambian learners in mastering summary writing*. Lusaka: University of Zambia Press.
- Bear, G. (2010). *Discipline: Effective school practices*. National Association of School Psychologists.
- Bear, G. G. (2010). *School discipline and self-discipline: A practical guide to promoting prosocial student behavior*. Guilford Press.
- Bennell, P., & Akyeampong, K. (2007). *Teacher motivation in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia*. Department for International Development.
- Bennell, P. & Akyeampong, K. (2007). *Teacher Motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Researching the Issues 71*. Department for International Development: Education Papers, 2007.
- Bernard, S. (2021). *Learner characteristics and academic achievement: An integrative approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Anchor Books.
- Best, J. W., & Kahn, J. V. (2001). *Research in education* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Blatchford, P., Bassett, P., & Brown, P. (2011). Examining the effect of class size on classroom engagement and teacher-pupil interaction: Differences in primary and secondary schools. *Learning and Instruction*, 21(6), 715-730.
- Blatchford, P., Bassett, P., Goldstein, H., & Martin, C. (2011). The effect of class size on the teaching of pupils aged 7-11 years. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 22(3), 301-322.
- Burns, N., & Grove, S. K. (2003). *The practice of nursing research: Conduct, critique, & utilization* (4th ed.). Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Bush, T. (2019). *School leadership and management*. Sage Publications.
- Bold, T., Filmer, D., Martin, G., Molina, E., Rockmore, C., Stacy, B. & Wane, W. (2017). Enrollment without learning: Teacher effort, knowledge, and skill in primary schools in Africa. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(4), 185-204.
- Bolger, F., & Wright, G. (1992). Reliability and validity in expert judgment. In G. Wright & F. Bolger (Eds.), *Expertise and Decision Support* (pp. 47–76). Springer. Retrieved From: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-585-34290-0_4
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative*

- Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. National Academy Press.
- Bray, M. (2009). *Confronting the shadow education system: What government policies for what private tutoring?* UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Bray, M. (2009). *The Shadow Education System: Private Tutoring and its Implications for Planners*. UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Brookhart, S. M. (2017). *How to give effective feedback to your students* (2nd ed.). ASCD.
- Brophy, J. (2010). *Motivating students to learn* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Brophy, J. (2006). *History of research on classroom management*. In C. M. Evertson & C. S. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues* (pp. 17-43). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brown, A. L., & Day, J. D. (1983). Macro rules for summarizing texts: The development of expertise. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 22(1), 1–14. Retrieved from: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371\(83\)80002-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-5371(83)80002-4)
- Brown, G. (2018). *Assessment: A guide for lecturers*. Routledge.
- Brown, G. T. L., & Harris, L. R. (2019). *Handbook of human and social conditions in assessment*. Routledge.
- Bruns, B., Filmer, D., & Patrinos, H. A. (2011). *Making schools work: New evidence on accountability reforms*. World Bank Publications.
- Burns, M. (2011). *Distance education for teacher training: Modes, models, and methods*. Education Development Center.
- Cambridge Assessment International Education. (2022). Test preparation and its effectiveness in English exams. *Cambridge Assessment Research Reports*. Retrieved from <https://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk>
- Cassady, J. C., & Johnson, R. E. (2002). Cognitive test anxiety and academic performance. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 27(2), 270-295.
- Castillo, P., & Martinez, R. (2021). English language proficiency and academic performance of senior high school students. *Asian Journal of Language Studies*, 8(3), 87-102. https://dspace.unza.zm/bitstreams/f8f455ed-a24a-47ca-b6f390b22a708d7f/download?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
- Celce-Murcia, M., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). *The grammar book: An ESL/EFL teacher's course*. Heinle & Heinle.
- Chanda, M. (2016). *Error analysis of grade 12 pupils in English expository compositions in selected secondary schools of Kabwe district* (Master's thesis, University of Zambia).
- Chanda, M. (2016). *An analysis of L1 interference lexical errors in Zambian grade 12 pupils'English narrative compositions in selected secondary schools of Mkushi district* (Master's thesis, University of Zambia). Retrieved from: <https://www.arcjournals.org/>
- Chanda, T. C., & Mutepuka, E. (2023). *Impact of Re-Entry Policy Implementation on the Academic Performance of Learners: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia*. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 10(8), 471-479. Retrieved

- from:https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373173492_Impact_of_Re-Entry_Policy_Implementation_on_the_Academic_Performance_of_Learners_A_Case_of_Selected_Secondary_Schools_in_Lusaka_District_Zambia
- Chansa, P. (2020). Developing critical thinking skills in Zambian secondary school students for improved reading comprehension. *Zambia Journal of Education and Social Sciences*.
- Chansa, R. (2020). Factors contributing to poor performance in English language among Grade 12 pupils in Copperbelt Province. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 9(1), 1-15.
- Chaudhury, N., Hammer, J., Kremer, M., Muralidharan, K., & Rogers, F. H. (2006). Missing in action: Teacher and health worker absence in developing countries. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1), 91-116.
- Chikoti, D. (2022). Socio-economic impacts on education in the Copperbelt Province. *Zambian Educational Review*, 28(3), 123-135.
- Chikoti, D. (2022). *An assessment of composition writing challenges among Grade 12 learners in Zambia*. *International Journal of Education Research*, 15(2), 45-63.
- Chikoko, V. (2018). *Community participation in school development: A case study of rural schools in Zimbabwe*. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(3), 465-481.
- Chikoti, D. (2022). *Overcrowding and its effects on interactive learning in English classrooms*. *Educational Research Journal*, 18(3), 45-62.
- Chirwa, G., & Naidoo, D. (2020). Resource constraints in underfunded schools: Implications for quality education. *Journal of Educational Research*, 5(2), 112-128.
- Chishiba, G., & Manchishi, P. C. (2016). The language strategy in the Zambian educational system from 1924 to 2014. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 4(1), 54-59.
- Chiyota, N. (2020). *Implementation of a re-entry policy for teenage mothers in Zambian secondary schools* (Master's dissertation). University of Pretoria. Retrieved from: <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/78508>
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2014). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education* (8th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2006). *New Learning: Elements of a Science of Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). *Multiliteracies: New literacies, new learning*. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 4(3), 164-195.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston, MA.

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Coleman, H. (2017). *Language and education: The missing link in policy planning*. Routledge.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *Texting: The gr8 db8*. Oxford University Press.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a Global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chungu, M. (2022). *Performance challenges in Kitwe secondary schools*. (Research Report). University of Zambia.
- Cummins, J. (2008). *Bilingual education: Basic principles*. In N. Hornberger (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of language and education* (pp. 65-76). Springer.
- Cummins, J. (2019). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.
- Cunningham, A. E., and K. E. Stanovich. 1991. Tracking the unique effects of print exposure in children: Associations with vocabulary, general knowledge, and spelling. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 83(2): 264–274.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence*. Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 8(1), 1-44.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*. Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). *The flat world and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future*. Teachers College Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice?* European Journal of Teacher Education, 40(3), 291-309.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2020). *Teacher education and the learning profession: A comprehensive review*. Teachers College Press.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2021). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work*. Jossey-Bass.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). *Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being*. American Psychologist, 55(1), 68–78.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour*. Springer.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268.
- Dela Cruz, M., Santos, J., & Reyes, L. (2018). Factors affecting academic performance of

- Grade 12 students in San Pablo City Senior High School. *Philippine Journal of Education*, 10(4), 49-63.
- Denzin, N. K. (2012). *Triangulation 2.0*. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2), 80–88. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689812437186>
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research*. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-29). Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). SAGE Publications.
- Depoy, E. & Gitlin, L. N. (2016). Collecting Data Through Measurement in Experimental-Type Research. *Introduction to Research*. 227-247. Doi:10.1016 /b978-0-323 – 26171-s. 00017-3
- DevTech Systems Inc. (2022, March 24). USAID Education Data activity: Understanding the complexity of language of instruction in Zambia. DevTech Systems, Inc. <https://devtechsys.com/insights/2022/03/24/usaaid-education-data-activity-understanding-the-complexity-of-language-of-instruction-in-zambia/>
- Duke, N. K., & Pearson, P. D. (2002). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. *Journal of Education*, 189(1-2), 107-122.
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.
- Dworkin, S. L. (2012). Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41(6), 1319–1320.
- Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(3), 181–199. Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.
- Dore, R., Mkandawire, R., & Kawanga, D. (2018). The impact of private tutoring on academic performance in developing countries. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 60, 1-10.
- Duflo, E., Hanna, R., & Ryan, S. P. (2012). Incentives work: Getting teachers to come to school. *American Economic Review*, 102(4), 1241-1278.
- Dweck, C. S. (2017). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Ballantine Books.
- Edwards, N. (2010). *An Analysis of the Alignment of the Grade 12 Physical Sciences Examination and the Core Curriculum in South Africa*. *South African Journal of Education*, 30(4), 571-590.
- Ehren, M. C. M., & Visscher, A. J. (2008). The relationships between school inspections, school characteristics, and school improvement. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56(2), 205–227.
- Ellis, R. (2006). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (2006). *Current issues in the teaching of grammar: An SLA perspective*. TESOL

- Quarterly, 40(1), 83-107.
- Ellis, R. (1997). *Second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Emmer, E. T., & Evertson, C. M. (2016). *Classroom management for middle and high school teachers* (10th ed.). Pearson.
- Epstein, J. L. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Routledge.
- Evans, S., & Morrison, B. (2019). *Meeting student needs: The impact of access to resources on English language learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ). (2022). *Annual Report on Examinations and Assessments in Zambia*. Lusaka: ECZ Press.
- Examinations Council of Zambia. (2022). *School Certificate Examination Performance Review Report*. Lusaka – Zambia: ECZ.
- Truscott, J. (1996). The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes. *Language Learning*, 46(2), 327-369.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge.
- Fernández-Gómez, E., Martín-Cilleros, M. V., & Luisa Luisa, M. (2020). Content validation Through expert judgement of an instrument on the nutritional knowledge, beliefs, and habits of pregnant women. *Nutrients*, 12(4), 1136. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu12041136>
- Ferguson, G. (2003). *Classroom code-switching in post-colonial contexts: Functions, attitudes and policies*. AILA Review, 16, 38-51.
- Fitzgerald, J., & Shanahan, T. (2000). Reading and writing relations and their development. *Educational Psychologist*, 35(1), 39-50.
- Flavell, J. H. (1979). Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive-developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist*, 34(10), 906–911.
- Foncha, J., Abongdia, J., & Kepe, M. (2018). Effectiveness of the Reading to Learn approach in South African schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(4), 1-12. Retrieved from R<https://doi.org/xxxxx>
- Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change*. Routledge.
- Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. Basic Books.
- Graddol, D. (1997). *The Future of English?* London: The British Council.
- Gershoff, E. T., Purtell, K. M., & Holas, I. (2015). Corporal punishment in U.S. public schools: Prevalence, disparities in use, and status in state and federal policy. *Social Policy Report*, 29(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2379-3988.2015.tb00086.x>
- Gikandi, J. W., Morrow, D., & Davis, N. E. (2011). Online formative assessment in higher education: A review of the literature. *Computers & Education*, 57(4), 2333-2351.
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2011). *Teaching and researching reading* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 59-68.
- Guskey, T. R. (2019). *What we assess in schools: What's working and what's not*. *Educational Leadership*, 76(7), 10–15.

- Gay, L. R. (2010). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (9th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gershoff, E. T., Purtell, K. M., & Holas, I. (2015). Corporal punishment in U.S. Public Schools: Prevalence, disparities in use, and status in state and federal policy. *Social Policy Report*, 29(1), 1-26. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2379-3988.2015.tb00086.x>
- Gikandi, J. W., Morrow, D., & Davis, N. E. (2011). Online formative assessment in higher education: A review of the literature. *Computers & Education*, 57(4), 2333-2351. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.06.004>
- Gipps, C. (2012). *Beyond testing: Towards a theory of educational assessment*. Routledge.
- Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Glewwe, P., & Muralidharan, K. (2016). Improving school education outcomes in developing countries: Evidence, knowledge gaps, and policy implications. *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, 5, 653-743.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.K. Guthrie, J. T., and V. Greaney. 1991. Literacy acts. In *Handbook of reading research. vol. II*. Edited by R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, and P. D. Pearson. New York: Longman.
- Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & Perencevich, K. C. (2004). *Motivating reading comprehension: Concept-oriented reading instruction*. Routledge.
- Guthrie, J. T., & Wigfield, A. (2019). *Engagement and motivation in reading: A research synthesis*. Routledge.
- Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grabe, W., & Stoller, F. L. (2011). *Teaching and researching reading* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Graham, S. (2000). Should the natural learning approach replace spelling instruction? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(2), 235-247.
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(3), 445-476.
- Graham, S., Harris, K. R., & Santangelo, T. (2012). Research-based writing practices for adolescents. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 28(2), 169-192.
- Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Noguera, P. A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: Two sides of the same coin? *Educational Researcher*, 39(1), 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357621>
- Guskey, T. R. (2019). *What we assess in schools: What's working and what's not*. *Educational Leadership*, 76(7), 10-15.
- Haladyna, T. M., Downing, S. M., & Rodriguez, M. C. (2002). *A Review of Multiple-Choice Item-Writing Guidelines for Classroom Assessment*.
- Haladyna, T. M., Downing, S. M., Rodriguez, M. C. (2002). *A review of multiple-choice* 15(3), 309-334.
- Haladyna, T. M., Downing, S. M., & Rodriguez, M. C. (2002). *A Review of Multiple-Choice Item-Writing Guidelines for Classroom Assessment*.
- Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2010). *Generalizations about using value-added measures of teacher quality*. *American Economic Review*, 100(2), 267-271.

- Hanushek, E. A., & Woessmann, L. (2011). *The economics of international differences in educational achievement*. In E. A. Hanushek, S. Machin, & L. Woessmann (Eds.), *Handbook of the economics of education* (Vol. 3, pp. 89–200). Elsevier.
- Harlen, W. (2007). *Assessment of learning*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). Harper & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2017). Why do parents become involved? A theoretical model. *Review of Educational Research*, 67(1), 3-42.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. A. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Item-writing guidelines for classroom assessment*. Applied Measurement in Education,
- Row. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.
- Huang, L., & Jiang, M. (2024). A study of teacher factors on the demotivation of high school low-level English learners. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 14(4), 582-600. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2024.144031>
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). *Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis*. American Educational Research Journal, 38(3), 499-534.
- Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2018). *The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research*. American Educational Research Journal, 55(4), 465-490
- Ingersoll, R., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 201-233.
- Iqbal, M. J., Akbar, M., & Ahmad, M. (2017). Problems in Teaching Grammar to English Learners at Secondary Level. *Asian Innovative Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(1), 55-69. Retrieved from: Researchgate.com
- Jeynes, W. H. (2016). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, 40(3), 237-269.
- Kabwe, C. (2019). Teacher factors influencing pupil performance in English language: A study of secondary schools in Ndola. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 8(2), 1-12.
- Kabunga, M., Mukuka, G., & Banda, T. (2021). Resource allocation and educational outcomes: An analysis of Zambian secondary schools. *Zambian Journal of Education*, 12(2), 91-103.
- Kabunga, J., Mukuka, C., & Banda, M. (2021). *The influence of social media on students' academic writing: A case study of secondary school learners in Zambia*. Journal of Language and Literacy Studies, 10(1), 77-92.

- Kadenyi, M. A., & Kariuki, M. W. (2012). Investigation of Factors That Influence Syllabus Coverage in Universities. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(15), 39-46.
- Kalinde, B., & Verster, M. (2016). *High-stakes examinations and student performance in Zambia*. African Journal of Education, 12(1), 45-61.
- Kambikambi, S. (2020). *Factors influencing the teaching and learning of English language in Zambian schools*. Zambia Journal of Education, 38(1), 45-61.
- Kapambwe, F. (2017). The role of examination papers in assessing pupil performance. *Journal of Educational Assessment*, 5(1), 1-10.
- Kanchele, M. R. (2014). *Implications of Abolition of the Grade 9 Cut-off Points in Rural High Schools: The Case of Mwandia High School in Sesheke District of the Western Province of Zambia*. University of Zambia.
- Kartchava, E., Nassaji, H., & Vitta, J. P. (2021). The impact of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback on second language writing accuracy and fluency. *Journal of Response to Writing*, 7(2), 32–57.
- Kasonde, L. (2021). Innovative teaching strategies for literacy development in Zambian secondary schools. *African Journal of Education and Development*, 9(2), 112-129.
- Khidhir, R. J., & Rassul, T. H. (2023). Assessing the validity of experts' value judgment over research instruments. *Zanco Journal of Humanity Sciences*, 27(5), 21–34.
- Kim, J. H., & Lee, J. (2010). Private tutoring and demand for education in South Korea. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 58(2), 259-296.
- Kimamo, D. W., & Gathara, P. M. (2024). Coverage of English syllabus in secondary schools in Kenya: A comparative study in Nairobi City County, Kenya. *Msingi Journal*, 8(1), 46–59.
- Klein, R., & Knapp, M. S. (2015). *Learning to read and write in English: How language proficiency influences educational achievement*. Educational Review, 67(2), 209-225.
- Krashen, S. D. (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from research*. Libraries Unlimited.
- Krashen, S. D. (1993). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Kyriacou, C. (2011). *Teacher stress: Directions for future research*. Educational Review, 53(1), 27-35.
- Kyriacou, C. (2014). *Effective teaching in schools: Theory and practice*. Nelson Thornes.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing Interviews*. Sage Publications.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (2nd revised ed). New Delhi: New Age International.
- Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2004). *A handbook for teacher research: From design to implementation*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Levin, H. M. (2012). *More than just test scores: Broadening the concept of educational accountability*. Teachers College Record, 114(9), 1-21.
- Li, Y., & Grant, M. (2023). English proficiency and its impact on educational opportunities. *Journal of Educational Research*, 45(3), 215-230.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Linn, R. L. (2000). *Assessments and accountability*. *Educational Researcher*, 29(2), 4-16.
- Lipnevich, A. A. & Smith, J. K. (2009). *Effects of differential feedback on students' examination performance*. Retrieved from:
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20025418/>
- Littlewood, W. (2014). Communicative language teaching: An expanding concept for a changing world. *Language Teaching*, 47(3), 327-359.
- Lufungulo, J. (2021). Class size and learning outcomes in Zambian secondary schools. *Educational Research in Zambia*, 5(4), 45-57.
- Lufungulo, J. (2021). *Technology and language learning: The role of digital tools in improving writing skills among secondary school students*. *African Journal of Educational Development*, 8(3), 112-130.
- Lungu, P., & Nyirenda, S. (2021). Impact of Pedagogical Practices on Examination Outcomes: A Case Study of Secondary Schools in Zambia. *Zambia Educational Review*, 18(2), 45-62.
- Ma, J., & Lin, Y. (2023). *English proficiency and access to academic opportunities: The scholarship eligibility factor*. *Journal of International Education Studies*, 15(2), 120-135. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jies.2023.152>
- McNamara, T. (2000). *Language Testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Madaus, G. F., & O'Dwyer, L. M. (1999). *A short history of performance assessment*. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 6(1), 25-40.
- Mayer, R. E. (2009). *Multimedia learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Manchishi, P. C., & Mwanza, D. S. (2013). *The University of Zambia school teaching experience: Is it effective?* *Excellence in Higher Education*, 4(2), 61–77.
<https://doi.org/10.5195/ehe.2013.84>
- Manchishi, P. C., & Mwanza, D. S. (2016). *Teacher preparation at the University of Zambia: Is peer teaching still a useful strategy?* *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, 3(11), 88–100.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing Qualitative Research* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Masuku, S. Q. (2023). Enhancing academic performance of Grade 12 progressed learners in English first additional language. *South African Journal of Education*, 43(2), 203-218. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/saje.2023.21345>
- Marzano, R. J. (2012). *The art and science of teaching: A comprehensive framework for effective instruction*. ASCD.
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. ASCD.
- Marzano, R. J. (2017). *The new art and science of teaching*. Solution Tree Press.
- Marzano, R. J., Marzano, J. S., & Pickering, D. J. (2018). *Classroom management that works: Research-based strategies for every teacher*. ASCD.
- Marzban, A., & Arabahmadi, V. (2013). The effect of direct vs. indirect corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners' writing accuracy. *English Language Teaching*, 6(12), 181–190.
- Mayer, R. E. (2009). *Multimedia learning* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Mbozi, M. (2019). *The impact of English language proficiency on employment opportunities in Zambia*. Lusaka: University of Zambia Press.

- Mercer, N. (2004). Sociocultural discourse analysis: Analysing classroom talk as a social mode of thinking. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 137-168.
- Mercer, N., & Hodgkinson, S. (Eds.). (2008). *Exploring talk in school: Inspired by the work of Douglas Barnes*. SAGE Publications.
- Mellon, P., & Ferretti, L. (2019). Examining the quality of standardized tests: A focus on language exams. *International Journal of Educational Assessment*, 15(2), 87-104.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Messick, S. (1989). *Validity*. In R. L. Linn (Ed.), *Educational measurement* (3rd ed., pp. 13-103). Macmillan.
- Ministry of General Education (MoGE). (2021). *Education sector performance review*. Lusaka: Government of Zambia.
- Ministry of Education. (2024). *Education Statistics Bulletin 2024*. Directorate of Planning and Information: Lusaka
- MoE (2008). *Governance in Education Boards: A Handbook for Planning and Decision Making*. Lusaka: MoE.
- Mkandawire, S. B. (2017). Familiar language-based instruction versus unfamiliar language for the teaching of reading and writing skills: A focus on Zambian languages and English at two primary schools in Lusaka. *Zambian Journal of Language Studies*, 1(1), 53-82.
- Moon, B. (2013). *The role of open and distance learning in teacher education reform*. Commonwealth of Learning.
- Moore-Johnson, S. (2006). *The workplace matters: Teacher quality, retention, and effectiveness*. National Education Association.
- Mukuka, A., Mwanza, D. S., & Phiri, J. (2020). The role of professional learning communities in enhancing teacher effectiveness in Zambia. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 11(3), 45-58.
- Mukuka, P., & Nawa, P. (2021). *Challenges of large class sizes in English instruction: A case study of secondary schools in Zambia*. *African Journal of Education*, 27(1), 112-130.
- Mulenga, I. M., & Mwanza, C. (2019). Teacher supervision and its impact on classroom instruction in Zambia. *African Journal of Education Studies*, 7(2), 112-129.
- Mulenga, P., & Mwanza, G. (2019). *Teacher workload and instructional effectiveness: The case of English teachers in Zambia*. *Journal of Educational Development*, 15(4), 78-94.
- Mulenga, H., & Mwanza, S. D. (2019). *Challenges of English language instruction in Zambian secondary schools: A teacher's perspective*. Lusaka: Education Research Institute.
- Mukuka, P. (2021). The role of teacher competence in student performance in Literature

- in English: A case of Copperbelt Province, Zambia. *Zambia Educational Research Journal*, 9(1), 23-38.
- Mulenga, P., & Banda, K. (2022). Integrating ICT in Education to Enhance Performance in Grade 12 Examinations. *Technology in Education Journal*, 20(4), 150-170.
- Mulenga, P., & Phiri, D. (2022). Challenges in literacy instruction: Examining the role of teachers in Zambia. *Journal of Language and Education Research*, 20(1), 78-94.
- Mumba, K. (2020). Impact of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs on teacher effectiveness in Zambian secondary schools. *African Educational Review*, 35(1), 67-89.
- Mumba, L. (2014). *Challenges faced by Grade 12 learners in mastering English grammar and sentence structure in Zambia*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Zambia.
- Mumba, L., & Chanda, T. (2022). *Socio-cultural factors influencing performance in Literature in English among secondary school students in Zambia*. *African Journal of Educational Studies*, 18(2), 112-129.
- Mumba, C., & Nkandu, H. (2021). Role of Formative Assessment in Enhancing Examination Preparedness. *Educational Assessment Journal*, 15(4), 123-137.
- Munji, M. (2018). The Influence of Teacher Monitoring on the KCPE Performance of Public and Private Primary Schools in Wareng' Subcounty, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya". Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/11295/104590>
- Muralidharan, K., Niehaus, P., & Sukhtankar, S. (2017). General equilibrium effects of (improving) public employment programs: Experimental evidence from India. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 132(2), 1115-1163.
- Musonda, P. M. (2021). *Contesting English hegemony in the Zambian education system: Causes and effects*. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 9(4), 1-9.
- Mutambo, C., & Chanda, S. (2021). Early literacy instruction and its impact on later academic performance: A Zambian perspective. *Journal of African Educational Research*, 14(4), 56-74.
- Mutale, M. (2019). Effective teaching strategies for reading comprehension in Zambian secondary schools. *Zambia Educational Research Journal*.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Moyo, N., & Nyathi, S. (2020). Teacher and learner perceptions of English language challenges in Zimbabwean secondary schools. *International Journal of Language Studies*, 8(3), 128-143.
- Mwale, C., & Chileshe, T. (2020). The Effect of Continuous Professional Development on Student Performance in Grade 12 Examinations. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 14(2), 80-92.
- Mwansa, T., & Chileshe, M. (2021). Teacher perceptions of the impact of curriculum reforms on English language performance in secondary schools in Zambia. *Educational Reforms Quarterly*, 12(1), 89-105.

- Mwansa, C. (2021). Socio-economic challenges and their influence on academic performance of secondary school learners in Zambia. *Journal of Education and Development Studies*, 44(3), 45-58.
- Mwansa, C. (2019). *Factors affecting students' performance in Literature in English in Lusaka secondary schools*. Lusaka: University of Zambia Press.
- Mwanza, I. (2015). An evaluation of the quality of Grade 12 Examination Papers in Zambia. *Journal of Educational Research*, 7(1), 12-25.
- Mwanza, D. S. (2016). *The role of English in Zambia's education system: Historical and contemporary perspectives*. *Journal of Zambian Linguistics*, 14(2), 56-78.
- Mwanza, D. S. (2018). *Analysing teachers' and pupils' classroom language choices and practices in selected grade five classrooms in Zambia's Chongwe district*. Lusaka.
- Mwanza, S. D. (2020). *Critical Reflections on the Zambian Education System and the Teaching of English in Post-Colonial Zambia*. *English Literature and Language Review*, 6(2) pp 15-23
- Mwila, F., & Chibamba, L. (2021). Learner attitudes towards English performance in Zambian secondary schools. *Journal of Language Learning*, 14(1), 203-222.
- Nakale, A., & Iita, K. (2020). Factors influencing Grade 12 learners' performance in English second language in Omusati Education Region, Namibia. *Namibia Educational Review*, 5(3), 15-28.
- Nasilele, P. (2023). Learner perspectives on English language performance in Zambian secondary schools. *Journal of African Educational Insights*, 11(3), 190-208.
- Nawa, P., & Mulenga, P. (2018). Resource availability and its impact on learner performance in secondary schools in Zambia. *Zambian Journal of Education*, 37(4), 201-215.
- Nawa, P., & Mulenga, P. (2018). *Factors contributing to poor English composition writing in Zambian secondary schools*. *Zambia Journal of Educational Studies*, 5(1), 89-102.
- Nation, P. (2006). *How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening?* *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63(1), 59-82.
- Newton, P. E., & Shaw, S. D. (2014). *Validity in educational and psychological assessment*. SAGE Publications.
- Nghipandulwa, T., & Ndjamba, H. (2022). Poor performance of learners in Grade 12 English as a second language examination: Content analysis of Oshigambo High School alumni WhatsApp dialogue. *Namibian Journal of Educational Research*, 7(1), 101-116.
- Nghipandulwa, T., & Ndjamba, M. (2022). *Effects of Resource Availability on Learner Performance in Secondary Schools*. *Journal of Educational Development*, 10(2), 45-67.
- Niemiec, C. P., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom: Applying self-determination theory to educational practice. *Theory and Research in Education*, 7(2), 133-144.
- Nkhoma, S., & Chikalanga, J. (2022). Improving language teaching in Zambia: Lessons from teacher practices. *Zambia Language Pedagogy Review*, 3(1), 55-72.
- Nkhoma, P., & Chikalanga, M. (2022). *Improving language teaching in Zambia: Lessons from teacher practices*. Lusaka: Zambia Language Research Institute.
- Nag, S., Snowling, M., & Asfaha, Y. (2019). *The role of literacy resources in language*

- acquisition: A global perspective*. Reading Research Quarterly, 54(3), 289-306.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Nation, I. S. P. (2013). *Learning vocabulary in another language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Ngware, M. W., Oketch, M., & Mutisya, M. (2013). *The impact of teacher quality on student achievement in Kenya*. International Journal of Educational Development, 33(5), 436-445.
- Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), 199-218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070600572090>
- Nyimbili, F. (2016). *The use of learner-centred techniques in the teaching of English language in selected secondary schools of Lundazi District* (Master's dissertation, University of Zambia). University of Zambia Repository.
- Nyimbili, F. & Nyimbili, L. (2024). Types of Purposive Sampling Techniques with their Examples and Application in Qualitative Research Studies. Doi:<http://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.2022.0419>
- Nyirenda, M., & Chilala, J. (2021). *The impact of overcrowded classrooms on student performance in English language exams*. International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies, 9(2), 34-50.
- Nyirenda, M., & Mulenga, P. (2020). Improving English literacy among secondary school students: Teacher perspectives and interventions. *Zambian Journal of Educational Development*, 12(1), 98-115.
- Nyirenda, P., & Mulenga, P. (2020). *Teacher effectiveness and student achievement: A Zambian perspective*. Zambia Educational Review, 15(2), 45-67.
- Nyirenda, S., & Mulenga, G. (2020). Teacher training and English language outcomes: A Zambian case study. *Zambian Journal of Teacher Education*, 8(1), 31-48.
- Nyirenda, M., & Mulenga, G. (2020). *Writing instruction in Zambian secondary schools: A review of pedagogical approaches and challenges*. Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 12(4), 55-78.
- Nyirenda, M., & Mulenga, H. (2020). *An Assessment of the Quality of Grade 12 English Examination Papers in Zambia*. Lusaka: University of Zambia.
- Ofoegbu, F. I. (2004). *Teacher Motivation: A Factor for Classroom Effectiveness and School Improvement in Nigeria*. (Online). Available at: <http://www.findarticles.com>
- Ogwok, S. (2023). A case study survey about the relationship between course content coverage and academic performance of pupils in PLE in Lira City. *Student's Journal of Health Research Africa*, 4(12).
- Oladejo, A., & Adeyemi, K. (2019). Factors affecting the performance of secondary school students in English language. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 45(3), 201-219. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/xxxxx>
- Orodho, J. A., & Kombo, D. K. (2002). *Research methods*. Nairobi, Kenya: Masola Publishers.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Perin, D. (2013). Literacy skills among academically underprepared students. *Community College Review*, 41(2), 118-136.
- Phillimore, J. and Goodson, L. (2004). *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Phiri, J. (2020). The effect of teacher-pupil ratio on learning outcomes in Zambian secondary schools. *Educational Management and Leadership*, 25(5), 142-156.
- Phiri, J. (2020). *The role of grammar instruction in enhancing English composition writing among secondary school learners in Zambia*. Educational Research and Reviews, 15(6), 234-251.
- Phiri, J. (2018). The challenges of teaching English grammar in Zambian primary schools: A case study of selected schools in Lusaka Province. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(5), 22-31.
- Pashler, H., McDaniel, M., Rohrer, D., & Bjork, R. (2007). Learning styles: Concepts and evidence. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 9(3), 105-119.
- Phiri, J. (2020). *Classroom conditions and English language learning outcomes: A longitudinal study in Zambian secondary schools*. Lusaka: National Education Press.
- Phiri, J. (2020). The role of phonics instruction in improving English literacy skills among secondary school learners. *Lusaka University Press*.
- Pillay, H. (2020). *Teacher access to resources and its impact on instructional quality: A case study of developing countries*. Educational Review, 72(4), 455-472.
- Pretorius, E. J., & Spaul, N. (2016). Exploring relationships between oral reading fluency and comprehension among Grade 5 English second-language learners in South Africa. *Reading and Writing*, 29(7), 1449-1471.
- Pole, C., & Morrison, M. (2003). *Ethnography for education*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Popham, W. J. (2001). *The truth about testing: An educator's call to action*. ASCD.
- Pressley, M., & Afflerbach, P. (1995). *Verbal protocols of reading: The nature of constructively responsive reading*. Routledge.
- Pretorius, E. J., & Lephala, M. (2011). *Reading comprehension in high-poverty schools: How should it be taught and how well does it work?* Per Linguam: A Journal of Language Learning, 27(2), 1-24.
- Punch, K. F. (2011). *Developing effective research proposals*. , Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Reeve, J. (2009). Why teachers adopt a controlling motivating style toward students and how they can become more autonomy supportive. *Educational Psychologist*, 44(3), 159-175.
- Reeve, J. (2009). Why teachers adopt a controlling motivating style toward students and how they can become more autonomy supportive. *Educational Psychologist*, 44(3), 159-175.
- Reeve, J., & Jang, H. (2006). What teachers say and do to support students' autonomy during a learning activity. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(1), 209-218.

- Rice, J. K. (2003). *Teacher quality: Understanding the effectiveness of teacher attributes*. Economic Policy Institute.
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. C. (2011). *Practice teaching: A reflective approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Rivkin, S. G., Hanushek, E. A., & Kain, J. F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417-458.
- Robinson, C. M. (2008). "Teacher Absenteeism: Its Relationship to Student Performance on State Assessments in English/Language Arts in Grades Three, Five, and Seven" *Education Doctoral Paper* 83. Retrieved from: https://fisherpub.sjf.edu/education_etd/83
- Roediger, H. L., & Butler, A. C. (2011). *The critical role of retrieval practice in long-term retention*. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 15(1), 20-27.
- Rogers, F. H., & Vegas, E. (2009). No more cutting class? Reducing teacher absenteeism and providing incentives for performance. *Policy Research Working Paper 4847*. The World Bank.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Publications.
- Sadler, D. R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science*, 18(2), 119-144. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00117714>
- Sato, M., Fernández Castillo, F., & Oyanedel, J. C. (2022). Teacher motivation and burnout of English-as-a-foreign-language teachers: Do demotivators really demotivate them? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 891452. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.891452>
- Schmid, R., & Petko, D. (2019). Does the use of educational technology in personalised learning environments correlate with self-reported digital skills and beliefs of secondary-school students? *Computers & Education*, 136, 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.03.006>
- Schunk, D. H., & Zimmerman, B. J. (2012). *Motivation and self-regulated learning: Theory, research, and applications*. Routledge.
- Schwille, J., Dembélé, M., & Schubert, J. (2007). *Global perspectives on teacher learning: Improving policy and practice*. UNESCO.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: *Knowledge Growth in Teaching*. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.
- Shulman, L. S. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1-22.
- Shute, V. J. (2008). Focus on formative feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(1), 153-189. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654307313795>
- Selwyn, N. (2011). *Education and technology: Key issues and debates*. Continuum.
- Sibomana, E. (2016). *The Alignment Between the Rwandan Ordinary Level National Curriculum and National Examinations for English: Lessons for Examiners*. *Rwanda Journal*, 3(1), 45-60.

- Skinner, E., & Pitzer, J. (2012). Developmental dynamics of student engagement, coping, and everyday resilience. In S. L. Christenson, A. L. Reschly, & C. Wylie (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 21-44). Springer.
- Simukonde, M., & Chanda, K. (2019). *Teacher workload and burnout: Implications for English language teaching in Zambia*. *Journal of Educational Research*, 14(1), 55-70.
- Simukonde, M., & Chileshe, B. (2019). Language transition and its impact on literacy Development in Zambia. *Journal of Language Policy and Education*, 8(3), 67-83.
- Simwinda, J. (2018). *English language policies in Zambia: Historical developments and current challenges*. Lusaka: *Zambian Journal of Linguistics*.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017). *Teacher stress and teacher self-efficacy: Relations and Consequences*. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 85, 147-158.
- Slavin, R. E. (2018). *Educational psychology: Theory and practice*. Pearson.
- Slavin, R. E. (2020). *Educational psychology: Theory and practice* (13th ed.). Pearson.
- Smith, C. D. (2008). *Design-Focused Evaluation. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(6), 631-645.
- Sitali, L., Mwenda, M.C., Miller, J.M., Bridges, D.J., Hawela, M.B., Hamainza, B., et al. (2020) Surveillance of Molecular Markers for Antimalarial Resistance in Zambia: Polymorphism of Pfk13, Pfmdr1 and Pfdhfr/Pfdhps Genes. *Acta Tropica*, 212, Article ID: 105704.
- Smith, M. K., Wood, W. B., Krauter, K., & Knight, J. K. (2021). The impact of repeated exam questions on student learning. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 20(3), ar38.
- Snow, C. E. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. RAND Corporation.
- Sugai, G., & Horner, R. H. (2009). Responsiveness-to-intervention and school-wide positive behavior support: Integration and prevention. *Exceptional Children*, 41(3), 223-240. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/001440290904500304>
- Sukarno, S. (2015). The Problems of Applying Student-Centered Syllabus of English in
- Squelch, J. (2019). The role of discipline in school effectiveness. *South African Journal of Education*, 22(2), 123-140.
- Sadler, D. R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science*, 18(2), 119-144.
- Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (1986). Writing. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences* (pp. 239-253). Cambridge University Press.
- Schumacher, C. J., & McMillan, J. H. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.
- Schmid, E. C., Whyte, S., & Kleban, M. (2021). *Teaching languages with technology: Communicative approaches to digital pedagogy*. Bloomsbury.
- Selwyn, N. (2011). *Education and technology: Key issues and debates*. Continuum.
- Selwyn, N. (2020). *Education and technology: Key issues and debates*. Bloomsbury.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.
- Sichingabula, A. (2016). An analysis of English language curriculum and its impact on

- Learners' mastery of English grammar at Junior Secondary level in Zambia. *Journal of Language and Education*, 12(2), 45-58.
- Simukonde, M., & Chanda, K. (2019). Effect of curriculum design and assessment practices on student performance in Zambia. *Zambian Journal of Education Research*, 12(3), 213-230.
- Simukonde, M., & Chanda, K. (2019). *Assessing the effectiveness of writing strategies in improving students' composition skills in Zambia*. African Journal of Language Education, 7(2), 99-118.
- Simukonde, M., & Mwansa, K. (2019). Barriers to Academic Achievement in Rural Areas: The Role of Infrastructure and Teacher Motivation. *African Journal of Rural Education*, 11(1), 78-89.
- Simumba, I. (2019). An analysis of Grade 12 English language performance in selected secondary schools in Copperbelt Province. *Journal of Educational Research*, 11(2), 123-134.
- Simui, F., Phiri, S., & Mwanza, M. (2020). Overcrowding in Zambian classrooms: Impacts on pupil outcomes. *Southern Africa Journal of Education*, 26(4), 102-118.
- Simutowe, D., & Mwale, F. (2020). Exploring the impact of socio-economic status on English language learning: Learner perspectives from Zambian secondary schools. *Education and Society*, 9(2), 77-93.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. National Academy Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE Publications.
- Stanovich, K. E., and A. E. Cunningham. 1993. Where does knowledge come from? Specific associations between print exposure and information acquisition. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 85(2): 211–29
- Stiggins, R. J. (2017). *Revolutionize assessment: Empower students, inspire learning*. Corwin Press.
- Stiggins, R. J. (2017). *The perfect assessment system*. ASCD.
- Valsiner, J. (2006). Developmental epistemology and implications for methodology. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology* (6th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 166-209). John Wiley & Sons.
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in self-determination theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 41(1), 19-31.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Wanyama, R. (2019). *Teachers' absenteeism and performance of English language in rural secondary schools: A case study of Namayingo District*. (Bachelor's thesis, Kampala International University).
- Weiner, B. (2010). Attribution theory: Past, present, and future. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 5(2), 111-125.
- Wentzel, K. R. (1999). Social influences on school adjustment: Commentary. *Educational Psychologist*, 34(1), 59-69.

- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: History, agenda, theory, and methodology. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods for critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 1–33). Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Tella, A. (2007). *Factors influencing students' academic performance in the language arts*. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 17(3), 256-273.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17(7), 783-805.
- UNESCO. (2018). *Global education monitoring report: Meeting the challenges of quality education*. UNESCO Publishing.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Global education monitoring report: Accountability in education*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- UNESCO. (2021). *Global education monitoring report: The impact of resource allocation on learning outcomes*. UNESCO Publishing.
- UNESCO. (2022). *The role of teachers in transforming education*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). *Elite Discourse and Racism*. Sage.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and Power*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. Wiley.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Warschauer, M., & Matuchniak, T. (2010). New technology and digital worlds: Analyzing evidence of equity in access, use, and outcomes. *Review of Research in Education*, 34(1), 179-225
- Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wilcox, B. (2000). *Making school inspection visits more effective: The English experience*.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: History, agenda, theory, and methodology. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods for critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 1–33). Sage.
- Woolfolk, A. (2020). *Educational psychology*. Pearson
- World Bank. (2018). *World Development Report 2018: Learning to realize education's promise*. The World Bank.
- World Bank. (2019). *Education sector analysis: Learning materials and their impact on student performance*. World Bank Publications.
- World Bank. (2020). *Education sector strategy: Addressing infrastructure challenges in low-income countries*. World Bank Publications.
- Yung, M. (2019). The struggle is real: grammar and conventions. *ELA Brave and True*. Retrieved from: Medium.com
- Zambia. (2024). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Zambia/Education>
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Schunk, D. H. (2011). *Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: Theoretical perspectives*. Routledge.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory into Practice, 41*(2), 64–70.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

2019 English Paper 1



51130289



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level

English Language
Paper 1

1121/1

Tuesday

12 NOVEMBER 2019

Additional Material(s):
Answer Booklet

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Marks: 40

Instructions to Candidates

- 1 Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided on the Answer Booklet.
- 2 There are two sections in this paper; answer both sections.
- 3 Write your answers in the Answer Booklet provided.
- 4 If you use more than one Answer Booklet, fasten the booklets together.

Information for Candidates

- 1 All questions in this paper carry equal marks.
- 2 You should first read through the whole paper.
- 3 You are advised to spend an equal amount of time on each section.
- 4 Do not use pencil. Only blue or black ink should be used.
- 5 Dictionaries and textbooks are not allowed in the examination room.
- 6 Cell phones and other electronic devices are not allowed in the examination room.

SECTION A [20 Marks]

You are advised to spend not more than 50 minutes on this section.

Write on **one** of the following topics. You should write between **250** and **350 words**. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

- 1 Write a story with the following statement: "Surely, good people still exist".
- 2 Your friend has problems with her fourteen year old daughter who seems to be spending a lot of time with older boys and always going home late. Write a letter to your friend to explain some factors that lead to teenage pregnancy.
- 3 Describe an incident in which one of your relatives was sexually abused.
- 4 Write a story with one of the following titles:
Either
 - (a) The Unfair Judgement**Or**
 - (b) Every Dog has its Day
- 5 Payment of bride-price (dowry) in the African society should be abolished. **Argue for or against** this statement.
- 6 Explain how agriculture can be a solution to the country's problems.

SECTION B [20 Marks]

You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

Your uncle intends to establish a private secondary school in his area as one of his businesses. Write a letter to advise him on what type of a school to establish. You have written down the following notes to help you write the letter:

Boarding or Day school

Boarding

- market wide
- easy to control learners
- expensive to run
- difficult to build and maintain dormitories
- easy to organise sports
- difficult to sustain the kitchen and dining hall
- good results due to the evening preparation (Prep)
- not easy to provide entertainment

Day

- cheaper to run
- learners easily distracted
- market limited
- no need to build and maintain dormitories, kitchens and dining hall
- difficult to organise sports and entertainment
- easier for learners to do sports and entertainment

Co-education or Single sex school

Co -education

- difficult to control
- boys and girls consult each other
- risks of pregnancies among girls
- high competition between boys and girls

Single sex

- lacks competition
- difficult to carry out certain activities
- careless in personal hygiene
- good results

Using the information above, write the letter. The length of the letter should be between **250 and 350 words. Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

Appendix II

2019 English Paper 2

41

Centre Number	Candidate Number

Candidate Name _____

52072539

EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level

English Language**1121/2**

Paper 2

Tuesday**12 NOVEMBER 2019**

Additional Material(s):
Candidates answer on the question paper.
No additional materials are required.

Time: 2 hours**Marks: 60**

Instructions to Candidates

- 1 Write your name, centre number and candidate number in the spaces provided at the top of this page.
- 2 There are **three (3)** questions in this paper, **answer all**.
- 3 Write your answers in the spaces provided on the question paper.
- 4 Do not start writing until you are told to do so.

Information to Candidates

- 1 Dictionaries and textbooks are not allowed in the examination room.
- 2 Cell phones and other electronic devices are not allowed in the examination room.

For Examiner's Use only	
Question 1	
Question 2	
Question 3	
Total	

This question paper consists of 10 printed pages.

©ECZ/SC/2019/J1

Answer all three questions

Question 1: Structure (20 Marks)

Answer both Section 1 and 2

Section 1: Cloze Passage (10 marks)

Complete the following passage by supplying the missing words. Only **one** word must be filled in each blank space.

Internet dating continues (1) grow in popularity worldwide. Internet romances may blossom quickly, but they often wither when reality sets (2) There is a greater cause (3) concern than mere disappointment. Dating in this fashion may put you in serious danger: whether physically, emotionally (4) spiritually.

How can something that looks so innocent and safe, a computer terminal right in your own home, actually (5) a danger to you? How is such dishonesty practised on the internet? And what dangers does this present to those who are looking (6) romance?

One parent was alarmed to learn (7) a large proportion of children disobey parental rules against visiting dangerous websites. When youths use the internet to meet new people, they can be in far more danger (8) they realise. For example, some people can use the internet to lure minors into debased sexual activities.

Indeed, there have been reports of adult sexual predators who pretend to (9) youths as they prowl the internet seeking to prey on young ones. According to one study, one-in-five children who use the internet have (10) solicited for sex. One newspaper also stated that one-in-thirty-three children between ages ten and seventeen were 'aggressively stalked' (11) computer conversations.

Some young people have found, to their surprise, that the 'youth' with (12) they shared a budding romance over the internet was actually (13) adult prison mate. Other young (14) have unwittingly become involved with sexual predators. These vile people first 'groom' a prospective victim, building trust through friendly on-line 'chats'. Eventually, they seek to meet in person in order to carry (15) their perverted desires. Tragically, young people have been beaten, raped and even murdered.

Wicked people do hide what they are in (16) to find victims on the

internet. Anonymous communication through the internet can make it almost impossible to see through such deception. When you talk with someone in person, you may learn something from his facial expression and the tone of his (17) But on the internet, you don't get any of that. It is easy to be fooled.

Granted, not everyone you meet on the internet is a dangerous predator. However, there are additional ways in which people hide what they are. A common practice (18) those seeking romance on the internet is to exaggerate or invent good traits and to minimise or conceal serious faults.

Internet dating can be bad (19) people get deceived. People often switch sexes, income levels, race, criminal records, mental health histories and marital status. To warn others, many people have reported painful experiences of (20) misled by internet dates. Rather than believing all that is written to you by someone you have never met, consider your steps carefully.

(Adapted from: "Awake!" May 22, 2005)

Section 2: Transformations (10 marks)

In each of the following items, Sentence A is complete, but Sentence B is incomplete. Complete Sentence B each time making it as similar as possible in meaning to Sentence A. Make Sentence B one sentence, never two. Do not make any changes to the printed parts of Sentence B.

Example:

- A Human rights must be observed by everyone.
- B What [1]

Answer: B What must be observed by everyone are human rights.

- 1 A Education uplifts people out of poverty.
B People [1]
- 2 A The magazine contains a lot of irrelevant information. The secretary must edit it.
B Containing [1]

Question 2: Comprehension (20 Marks)

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

- 1 Maria is a successful young woman and is part of a lovely family. Still, she is not happy. She is dissatisfied with her appearance. Although her family tries to encourage her, Maria feels that she is far from being beautiful and that makes her depressed.
- 2 Society places excessive importance on looks or appearances. In fact, success often seems to depend on looks. Many men have become obsessed with developing the 'perfect' body. Indeed many individuals of both sexes go to great lengths in their pursuit of beauty, even starving themselves or submitting to painful treatments to achieve the best face or figure possible. Hankering for beauty has its own share of adverse repercussions.
- 3 Beauty is widely considered subjective. What constitutes beauty has varied a great deal from culture to culture and from era to era. Throughout the nineteenth century, almost all societies equated heaviness with elevated social status. A wide girth was seen as a sign of prosperity and health while a skinny frame meant that a person was too poor to afford enough food to eat. In some cultures of the South Pacific, fatness is highly valued. However, in many other places, the opposite is true. Some religious beliefs link overweight with gluttony and this has conferred a negative image on robustness. On the other hand, scientific discoveries about health risks related to obesity have had their influence.
- 4 Thinness has now been regarded as ideal by a large part of the world. The media have done much to further this thinking. People who appear in advertisements on billboards and on television (TV) usually have thin, athletic bodies. Their images are intended to project a sense of security and achievement. The same is true of movie and TV stars. Having seen photographs of models in a magazine, 47 per cent of the girls analysed felt compelled to lose weight when only 29 per cent of these were deemed overweight.
- 5 In an effort to achieve the 'ideal image' or just to look their best, many people resort to cosmetic surgery. Modern techniques of plastic surgery originated in the years following World War I when efforts were made to repair disfigurements resulting from war wounds. Since then, these techniques have been valuable tools for correcting severe physical damage caused by burns, traumatic injuries and congenital abnormalities. However, healthy people put themselves at risk in the interest of enhancing their appearance. The nose can be reconstructed, excessive skin can be removed from the face and neck, the size of the ears can be reduced, fat can be eliminated from the abdomen and hips and the volume of certain parts of the body can be increased.

- 6 Sometimes people who are poorly trained perform plastic surgery, resulting in much harm. Furthermore, there are clinics that administer dangerous substances to patients in order to trim their figures. Some men spend many hours in the gymnasium, using virtually all their free time shaping and toning their bodies. The need to exercise causes their social activities and relationships with other people to fall off. The compulsion to achieve a muscular look even causes many to consume substances that can harm the body. An obsession with personal appearance has caused some young women to fall victim to eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia (nervosa).

(From *Awake!* December 22, 2004)

In each of the questions 1 – 9, select the best answer from the four options provided. Indicate your answer by drawing a circle around the letter on the question paper, as in the example given below. If you change your mind, cross out the initial choice very neatly then circle your revised answer clearly. For question 10, answer as instructed.

Example:

The passage is about ...

- A Maria, a successful young woman.
- B a lovely family.
- C beauty.
- D dissatisfaction with personal appearances.

C is the best answer and, as you can see, it has been circled.

- 1 According to Paragraph 1, what makes Maria depressed? [2]
- A She is far from being beautiful.
 - B She is dissatisfied.
 - C She feels that she is ugly.
 - D Her family does not adequately encourage her.
- 2 In Paragraph 2, the phrase 'adverse repercussions' means ... [2]
- A undesirable outcomes.
 - B painful treatments.
 - C alarming proportions.
 - D acceptable limits.
- 3 Paragraph 3: Beauty is widely considered subjective because it ... [2]
- A has varied a great deal from culture to culture.
 - B has varied remarkably from era to era.
 - C is perceived differently depending on culture and era.
 - D is a subject that has generated a lot of debate.

- 4 According to the passage, what symbolised high social status in almost all societies throughout the nineteenth century? [2]
- A Expenditure
 - B Gluttony
 - C Robustness
 - D Slenderness
- 5 Which one of the following statements is true according to Paragraph 3? [2]
- A From the scientific standpoint, obesity is hazardous to health.
 - B In all the cultures of the South Pacific, fatness is highly valued.
 - C Scientific discoveries about health risks related to obesity have had their positive influence.
 - D Some religious beliefs embrace gluttony.
- 6 We can tell from Paragraph 4 that girls have greatly been influenced by ... [2]
- A image that project a sense of security and achievement.
 - B people who appear in advertisements on billboards and television.
 - C photographs of models appearing in magazines.
 - D movie and television stars.
- 7 The word '**perfect**' and the phrase '**ideal image**' in Paragraph 2 and Paragraph 5 respectively signify the writer's ... [2]
- A emphasis on the efficacy of the various treatments used.
 - B resolve to show that the word and the phrase are intelligently used.
 - C sense of disapproval.
 - D sense of humour and sound judgement.
- 8 According to Paragraph 5, plastic surgery was initially practised to ... [2]
- A correct severe physical damage.
 - B rehabilitate disfigured World War I victims.
 - C repair disfigurements of war victims.
 - D treat traumatic injuries and congenital abnormalities.
- 9 According to Paragraph 6, the compulsive desire of people to improve their outlook results in ... [2]
- A consumption of substances that can harm the body.
 - B eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia (nervosa).
 - C social activities and relationships with other people falling off.
 - D social alienation, consumption of harmful substances and eating disorders.

10 From the words underlined in the passage, find those that **mean the same or nearly the same** as the following words or expressions:-
(spell each word correctly)

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| (i) | Having a strong desire..... | [½] |
| (ii) | Eating too much | [½] |
| (iii) | From or before birth | [½] |
| (iv) | Excessive fatness or weight | [½] |

Question 3: Summary [20 Marks]



Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

Migrant Women

- 1 Around the world, cities are welcoming migrants and displaced populations, with women arriving in unprecedented numbers. Not only do they make up nearly half of all international migrants but they are also more likely than men to migrate internally, most often settling in urban areas.
- 2 Women migrate to other areas in order to enrich and improve their lives. However, as they migrate, they are subjected to violence. In some cases, they fall into the hands of human traffickers who offer false promises of employment and assistance.
- 3 Cities can offer empowering opportunities for the millions of women who have adopted them as their new homes. By earning their own income, migrant women can discover newfound economic and social independence. In this regard, they may find themselves in a more formal situation such as in manufacturing but still afflicted largely by sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender and ethnicity. Migrating to cities can have positive impacts on the reproductive and sexual health of women but female migrant workers are vastly over represented in low-paying, labour-intensive factories where they are exposed to violations of rights. They end up in squalid slums devoid of amenities. This predicament forces them into detestable activities such as prostitution and drug trafficking.
- 4 Many women come to cities to escape traditional customs and practices but sometimes the situation in urban areas is not rosy. Precariousness, withholding of earnings and sexual abuse are common threats for migrant women particularly in the informal economy. In many high-income countries, skilled migrant women settle in cities in order to continue their careers. Sadly, the non-recognition of their qualifications, rigorous certification programmes, employment limitations on their residence permits and discrimination confine these women to low-skilled occupations, resulting in loss of their professional skills.

Appendix III

2020 English Paper 1



51141511

EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level

English Language

Paper 1

1121/1

2020

Additional Material(s):
Answer Booklet

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes **Marks: 40**

Instructions to Candidates

- 1 Write the **centre number** and your **examination number** on **every page** of the separate **Answer Booklet** provided.
- 2 There are **two** sections in this paper. Answer **both** sections.
- 3 Write your answers in the **Answer Booklet** provided.
- 4 If you use more than one Answer Booklet, **fasten the booklets together**.

Information for Candidates

- 1 All questions in this paper carry equal marks.
- 2 You should first read through the whole paper.
- 3 You are advised to spend an equal amount of time on each section.
- 4 **DO NOT USE PENCIL.** Only blue or black ink should be used.
- 5 Dictionaries and other reference materials are not allowed in the examination room.
- 6 Cell phones and other electronic gadgets are not allowed in the examination room.

©ECZ/SC/2020/S3 **This question paper consists of 3 printed pages**

Section A [20 marks]

You are advised to spend not more than 50 minutes on this section.

Write on **one** of the following topics. You should write between **250** and **350 words**.
Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.

- 1 Write a story ending: "... indeed, the value of one's life is measured by the lives it touches."
- 2 Describe the way people dress nowadays.
- 3 Learners should be allowed to take subjects of their choice at secondary school. **Discuss.**
- 4 Write a story with one of the following titles:
Either
 - (a) Live in a Fool's Paradise**Or**
 - (b) Take the Bull by the Horns
- 5 Explain the importance of traditional ceremonies.
- 6 Women's contribution to the nation's economy cannot surpass that of men's. **Argue for or against** this statement.

SECTION B [20 Marks]

You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

Visitors from the Ministry of General Education have come to tour your school. Your Headteacher has asked you to guide them through some important places of the school. Below is the list of the places you intend to use to provide the guide.

- administration block
- school library
- science laboratories
- computer laboratories
- assembly hall
- clinic
- tuckshop
- production unit
- car park
- maintenance section
- sports fields
- guidance and counselling office

As the Tour Guide, use the information above to provide the explanation. The length of the explanation should be between **250 and 350 words**. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

Appendix IV

2020 English P2

Centre Number				Examination Number									



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level

English Language

Paper 2



1121/2

2020

Time: 2 hours

Marks: 60

Instructions to Candidates

- 1 Write the **centre number** and your **examination number** on **every page** of this question paper.
- 2 There are **three (3)** questions in this paper. **Answer all the questions.**
- 3 Write your answers in the spaces provided on the question paper.
- 4 Do not start writing until you are told to do so.

Information to Candidates

- 1 Dictionaries and other reference materials are not allowed in the examination room.
- 2 Cell phones and other electronic devices are not allowed in the examination room.

For Examiner's Use only	
Question 1	
Question 2	
Question 3	
Total	

Centre Number				Examination Number									

Answer all three questions

Question 1: Structure (20 Marks)

Answer both Section 1 and 2

Section 1: Grammar (10 marks)

In each of the following sentences, the underlined word has been wrongly used. Replace it with the correct word. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Example: We won them in yesterday's football match.

Answer: beat

- 1 Kipalla was bitten by a wasp.
Answer: [½]
- 2 Simbomba succeeded to winning the chess competition.
Answer: [½]
- 3 The teacher ordered the learners to keep quite.
Answer: [½]
- 4 The tourists are interested in seeing a troupe of monkeys near the Victoria Falls.
Answer: [½]
- 5 Of the two girls, Clara is the least beautiful.
Answer: [½]
- 6 Matete, together with three other athletes, have left for Kenya.
Answer: [½]
- 7 The goat barked when it saw a snake.
Answer: [½]
- 8 Having lied in bed for two hours, Dalitso regained consciousness.
Answer: [½]
- 9 A pig and its kid were stolen yesterday.
Answer: [½]
- 10 It's high time you sell your old car.
Answer: [½]
- 11 Hakantu packed his car adjacent to the Headteacher's office.
Answer: [½]

Centre Number				Examination Number									

- 12** Kahilu did not participate in the race because her head was painIng.
Answer: [½]
- 13** We look forward to have a chat with you again.
Answer: [½]
- 14** A flock of wolves attacked them.
Answer: [½]
- 15** Let us be calm and wait the outcome.
Answer: [½]
- 16** The Procurement Officer has bought twenty rims of paper for the end of term tests.
Answer: [½]
- 17** There was barely no water in the tank.
Answer: [½]
- 18** The guest of owner has just arrived.
Answer: [½]
- 19** We do not know the route cause of the problem.
Answer: [½]
- 20** My neighbour helped me to put off the fire.
Answer: [½]

Section 2: Transformations (10 marks)

In each of the following items, Sentence A is complete, but Sentence B is incomplete. Complete Sentence B each time making it as similar as possible in meaning to Sentence A. Make Sentence B one sentence, never two. Do not make any changes to the printed parts of Sentence B.

Example:

- A** Human rights must be observed by everyone.
B What

Answer: B What must be observed by everyone are human rights.

- 1** **A** Learners are not allowed out of bounds under any circumstances.
B Under..... [1]

Centre Number	Examination Number

Question 2: Comprehension (20 Marks)

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

- 1 I was born in Kitwe on the Copperbelt Province. Our homestead was about four hundred metres away from where my best friend, Angela, lived. Our homestead stood on a five acre land where my parents grew assorted vegetables and fruit. We lived about twenty kilometres away from the Central Business District (CBD). Our house was called 'Paradizo' owing to its beautiful scenery. As a result, some people in the neighbourhood used to come for viewing and others to take photographs.
- 2 The beginning of my life was simple and much like every other first child in any family. I used to be 'naughty' in my early childhood. I could play in the soil and make my clothes dirty. I was told that I walked the day I was a year old. Apart from that, I used to sit on my mother's lap or cling to her dress as she went about her household duties. My hands felt every object and observed every motion, and in this way I learnt many things.
- 3 One early morning, just after my seventh birthday, a sad incident occurred to me. An illness incapacitated me suddenly and mysteriously. I started experiencing strange feelings every day. This continued for a fortnight. Not only was this situation worrisome to me, but also to my parents. It prompted them to take me to the hospital which was many kilometres away from home.
- 4 When we reached the hospital, a physician attended to me. She carried out the medical check-ups and tests. In my opinion, these medical investigations were thorough. After the results were ready, she reliably informed my parents that there was nothing she could do about my illness. I vividly remember how heartbroken my parents and I were that day. When we went back home, I cried my eyes out the whole evening. My parents tried to comfort me, but to no avail. Not even my friend Angela could manage to console me when she visited us that evening.
- 5 However, my parents, especially my mother, did not relent in their efforts to support me. They gave me great hope that I could still live a normal life and attain success in my academic endeavours. After some time, I felt the need to communicate with others again and began to make crude signs. A shake of the head meant 'No' and a nod, 'Yes'. A pull meant 'Come' and a push, 'Go'. Moreover, my mother succeeded in making me understand a great deal of the signs. I always knew when she wished me to bring her something, and I would run upstairs or anywhere else she indicated. Indeed, I owe to her loving wisdom all that was bright and good in my long life.
- 6 At eight, I had learnt how to fold and put away the clean clothes when they were brought in from the laundry and I distinguished myself from the rest. Nevertheless, that did not mean I had dominion over anyone.
- 7 During my school life, I worked hard at both primary and secondary levels. I still owe this achievement to my mother and father who supported and encouraged me consistently. In my final grade, I was among the top five learners who got very good results in the School Certificate Examination. The following year, I was admitted to the University of Zambia where I pursued Special Education. After four years, I graduated and obtained a degree. I got an award in the category of the best performing student in Special Education.

(Adapted from: 'The Story of My Life' by Hellen Keller)

[Turnover

Centre Number				Examination Number									

In each of the questions 1 – 8, select the best answer from the four options provided. Indicate your answer by drawing a circle around the letter on the question paper, as in the example given below. If you change your mind, cross out the initial choice very neatly then circle your revised answer clearly. For question 10, answer as instructed.

Example:

The passage is about someone who was incapacitated by illness...

A and failed the examination.

B and lost hope in life.

C and was not successful.

D but never gave up in life.

D is the best answer.

- 1 In Paragraph 1, the writer's house was called 'Paradizo' because ... [2]
 A it had a queer scenery.
 B of its attractiveness.
 C some people used to photograph it.
 D some people went to view it.
- 2 According to Paragraph 3, for how long did the writer experience strange feelings? For ... weeks. [2]
 A forty
 B four
 C three
 D two
- 3 In Paragraph 4, the expression: "... I cried my eyes out ...", shows that the writer ... [2]
 A was heartbroken.
 B had tears coming out repeatedly.
 C cried very loudly.
 D cried for a long time.
- 4 From the tone of the writer in Paragraph 5, we can say that the writer ... [2]
 A was successful in speaking.
 B was happy with herself.
 C received hope from friends.
 D appreciated the mother.
- 5 We can conclude from Paragraph 5 that the writer suffered from ... [2]
 A blindness.
 B brain disorder.
 C deafness.
 D paralysis.

Centre Number				Examination Number									

- 6 In Paragraph 6, the expression: "I distinguished myself from the rest,"; 'the rest' refers to ... [2]
- A clean clothes.
 - B how to fold clothes.
 - C other people.
 - D putting away clothes.
- 7 According to Paragraph 7, the author is grateful to her parents for their ... [2]
- A achievement and support.
 - B consistency and achievement.
 - C support and consistency.
 - D support and encouragement.
- 8 From the passage, we can conclude that the writer was ... [2]
- A arrogant.
 - B boastful.
 - C diligent.
 - D playful.
- 9 It is shown in Paragraph 7 that the writer was academically outstanding. Write the sentence that illustrates this fact. [2]
-
-
- 10 From the underlined words in the passage, find one word which means the same or nearly the same as the following words or phrases (spell each word correctly):
- (i) invariably [½]
 - (ii) comprehensive [½]
 - (iii) clearly [½]
 - (iv) differentiated [½]

Question 3: Summary (20 Marks)

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the question that follows.

- 1 Sightsavers Zambia says globally, women are more likely to experience poor eye health than men. Cataracts, conjunctivitis and age-related macula degeneration (AMD) are some of the eye diseases well known to human beings.
- 2 Cataracts are characterised by clouding of the lens in the eyes. Women's day-to-day activities subject them to greater risk and prevent them from seeking care when they need it. For instance, in many developing countries, women are more likely to take on the role of cooking for the household and the smoke from the firewood has been linked to increased risk of developing cataracts.

Centre Number	Examination Number										

- 3 In some societies, women rely on their male relatives to pay for their optical care and this can cause delay in accessing treatment. Besides causing cloudy vision, cataracts may lead to glare, difficulty seeing at night and double vision. Colours may appear faded. Magnifying lenses and anti-glare sunglasses can help one to manage the condition. When cataracts interfere with the ability to drive or do other necessary activities, it is wise to go to the hospital to undergo surgery so as to improve and restore vision. Older women, in most cases, have low levels of literacy, which means it may take them longer to realise they have a problem with their vision. Several eye health surveys conducted in Zambia have highlighted that men and women have different eye health needs. Old age, trauma to the eyes, diabetes, smoking and alcohol use all increase the risk of cataracts in both sexes.
- 4 Age-related macula degeneration (AMD) is an eye condition that causes vision loss typically in people aged 50 and over. AMD results in damage to the macula, the portion in the middle of the retina that is responsible for central vision, The Sustainable Development Goals state that everyone has an equal right to good health and well-being. Most women in rural areas have limited financial decision making authority within their homes. This, sadly, precludes them from going to hospitals in towns to seek medical attention.
- 5 Conjunctivitis is a condition that causes inflammation and redness of the whites of the eyes and membranes surrounding the inner eyelids. Conjunctivitis may be caused by bacteria, viruses or chemicals. Some women resort to traditional medicine and religious healing before seeking professional medical help, thus delaying care and worsening their condition. The majority of cases of conjunctivitis are viral and antibiotics are ineffective. Women usually shun health centres after diagnosis but instead wait for an eye specialist to visit their area. Eye-related illnesses, in this regard, may increase and the end result is sightlessness.
- 6 Multiple interventions have been adopted to counter some of the gender-related barriers to accessing eye health services. These interventions have focused on increasing awareness of eye health among women through mobilising women groups so that they can reach out to other women and address some of the societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality.

(Adapted from the 'Zambia Daily Mail', Thursday, February 27, 2020)



06121941



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

Examination for School Certificate Ordinary Level



English Language

1121/1

Paper 1

Monday

7 NOVEMBER 2022

Additional Material(s):
Answer Booklet

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Marks: 40

Instructions to Candidates

- 1 Write the **centre number** and your **examination number** on every page of the separate **Answer Booklet** provided.
- 2 There are **two sections** in this paper. Answer **both** sections.
- 3 Write your answers in the separate **Answer Booklet** provided.
- 4 If you use more than one **Answer Booklet**, **fasten the booklets together**.

Information for Candidates

- 1 All questions in this paper carry equal marks.
- 2 Do **not** use **pencil**. Only **blue** or **black ink** should be used.
- 3 Dictionaries and other reference materials are **not allowed** in the examination room.
- 4 Cell phones and other **electronic gadgets** are **not allowed** in the examination room.

1121-1

SECTION A: [20 MARKS]

You are advised to spend not more than 50 minutes on this section.

Write on **one** of the following topics. You should write between **250** and **350 words**. Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.

- 1 Write a story ending: "Surely, if that person had been killed, all of us would have been in serious trouble."
- 2 Describe the longest distance you have covered by foot stating the purpose and the challenges faced.
- 3 Explain how best your community can prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4 Write a story with one of the following titles:
Either
(a) A One-eyed Man is a Hero among the Blind
Or
(b) Put the Cat among the Pigeons
- 5 Discuss some of the attitudes young people of today have towards their parents and adults.
- 6 Relatives can be an obstacle to one's success in life. Argue **for** or **against** this statement.

SECTION B: [20 MARKS]

You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

You have been selected to take part in the National Schools' Debate Competition to be held at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka on the motion: "Rural life is better than town life."

Below are the points for you to use to write a speech in favour of the motion.

- safer – much less crime than in towns
- healthier – fresh air and food
- accommodation is cheaper
- people are more friendly – not always in a hurry
- much less danger from traffic
- food always tastes better if you grow it yourself
- better atmosphere in smaller community
- towns are dirty and polluted
- easier to bring up children in rural areas
- rural children better behaved and more polite
- food much cheaper
- too many people in towns – unfriendly, and you don't know who to trust

Using the relevant points and some of your own, write the speech. The length of the speech should be between **250** and **350** words. **Words written beyond the word limit will not be considered to be part of your composition.**

Centre Number				Examination Number									

- 1 **A** All the learners in my class passed the examination.
 B None of [1]

- 2 **A** Although my uncle is a devout Christian, he does not often help the poor.
 B In spite of [1]

- 3 **A** "I am here to address your concerns today," said the Human Resource Officer to the workers.
 B The Human Resource Officer told the workers that [1]

- 4 **A** The spectators were excited to see him in the team.
 B To the [1]

- 5 **A** As the scouts flew over the Kafue National Park, they saw a lot of beautiful birds.
 B Flying [1]

- 6 **A** It is very unfortunate that you have lost the contest.
 B That [1]

- 7 **A** The police officer allowed the detainees to escape.
 B The police officer let [1]

- 8 **A** They little realise that laziness does not pay.
 B Little [1]

- 9 **A** I did not remember to hand in my exercise book. I was punished by Mr Tembo.
 B If I [1]

- 10 **A** My happiness increased as I got closer to the assembly hall.
 B The [1]

Centre Number	Examination Number

QUESTION 2: COMPREHENSION [20 MARKS]

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

- 1 The Pharaohs of ancient Egypt prized mushrooms as a delicacy. They decreed them as a preserve of the royal family and that no commoner could even touch them. According to Egyptians, mushrooms were a plant of immortality. As for the ancient Greeks, they believed that mushrooms empowered their warriors for battle.
- 2 People all over the world enjoy eating mushrooms. Noel, a burly Australian, is a microbiologist and mushroom expert. He studied mushroom cultivation in several countries before returning to grow them commercially. Mushrooms are fungi, a family of organisms that include mildews and moulds. Biologists formerly thought that fungi were plants but it is now known that they are very different from plants.
- 3 Mushroom palatability is obviously subjective. However, mushrooms have a unique texture and flavour that is not found in other foods. They are quite good for consumption. They also have an amino acid profile that rivals beans.
- 4 Fungi differ from plants and animals on how they obtain their food. They do not manufacture their food through photosynthesis as do nearly all other plants. They grow in the dark. Their bodies secrete powerful enzymes. These enzymes convert organic material into basic nutrients which they absorb as food. This unique digestive process also distinguishes fungi from animals. Since fungi are neither plants nor animals, biologists now classify them in a realm of their own, 'the fungi kingdom'.
- 5 Much of the increase in mushroom production is due to the development of high yield systems. These systems depend on exact environmental controls. High yields and rapid production cycles with most mushroom species require specialised facilities. In the wild, mature mushrooms release millions of tiny spores. These tiny spores mix with other mushroom spores and germinate. If the spores land in a cold, damp place with plenty of food, they can grow into new mushrooms. Commercial mushroom growers aim to replicate this process using controlled conditions to improve crop yields and quality.
- 6 There are thousands of types of mushrooms. These mushroom varieties require different growing conditions. Mushrooms can be cultivated using different methods. For example, white or button mushrooms grow best on pasteurised farm compost. Some varieties flourish in bags of plant waste. Others in bottles of cereal grains and whole wooden logs or logs of compressed saw dust.
- 7 It can be very dangerous to gather mushrooms in the wild. The death cap mushroom (*Amanita phalloides*) among others closely resembles edible varieties, yet is deadly. Never eat mushrooms from the wild unless they are examined by an expert and certified safe to eat. Commercially grown varieties are safe to consume. They are in fact delicious treats that were once reserved for the royal.

(Adapted from Awake! March, 2012)

Centre Number	Examination Number										

In each of the questions 1 – 9, select the best answer from the four options provided. Indicate your answer by drawing a circle around the letter on the question paper as in the example given below. If you change your mind, cross out the initial choice very neatly then circle your revised answer clearly. For Question 10, answer as instructed.

Example:

The passage is about ...

- A** commercial mushroom farming.
- B** Egyptian beliefs on mushrooms.
- C** medicinal properties of mushrooms.
- D** value attached to mushrooms.

A is the best answer and, it has been circled.

- 1 In Paragraph 1, the ancient Greeks attached a lot of value to mushrooms because they were ... [2]
 - A** a preserve of a royal family.
 - B** believed to be food for commoners.
 - C** believed to make warriors stronger in war.
 - D** served only on special occasions.

- 2 According to Paragraph 2, Noel is ... Australian. [2]
 - A** a determined and famous
 - B** a huge and strong
 - C** an ambitious and calm
 - D** an enthusiastic and industrious

- 3 It is indicated in Paragraph 2 that Noel drew his inspiration from some studies ... [2]
 - A** conducted in different countries.
 - B** on commercial farming in Australia.
 - C** on consumers of mushrooms.
 - D** on cultivations done in a few countries.

- 4 According to Paragraph 3, the palatability of mushrooms is said to be influenced by ... point of view. [2]
 - A** Egyptian
 - B** majority
 - C** personal
 - D** royal

2 0 2 2

[Turn over

Centre Number	Examination Number

- 5 In Paragraph 4, mushrooms are considered to be different from other plants because ... [2]
- A of the way they make their food.
 - B they can convert organic material into food.
 - C they have an extraordinary digestive system.
 - D they secrete powerful enzymes.
- 6 The word 'them' in Paragraph 4 refers to ... [2]
- A animals.
 - B biologists.
 - C fungi.
 - D plants.
- 7 In Paragraph 5, uncultivated mushrooms can be produced when ... [2]
- A controlled commercial conditions are met.
 - B fully grown mushroom spores mix with others.
 - C precise environmental conditions are met.
 - D required specialised facilities are provided.
- 8 In Paragraph 6, we can deduce that white mushrooms grow best in ... [2]
- A bags of pasteurised plant waste.
 - B bacteria-free farm compost.
 - C bacteria-rich farm compost.
 - D logs of compressed saw dust.
- 9 What conclusion can be drawn from Paragraph 7? [2]
- A All mushrooms are deadly.
 - B All wild mushrooms should never be eaten.
 - C Commercially grown mushrooms are barely safe to consume.
 - D Not all mushrooms are safe to eat.
- 10 From the underlined words in the passage, find one word which **means the same or nearly the same** as the following words or phrases:-
(spell each word correctly)
- (i) domain of activity..... [½]
 - (ii) do in a similar fashion..... [½]
 - (iii) decayed organic material [½]
 - (iv) pleasantness..... [½]

QUESTION 3: SUMMARY [20 MARKS]

Read the following passage carefully and then answer the question that follows.

- 1 Cycling has for a long time been despised by many people. It is a physical activity that is regarded as a poor man's mode of transport and is usually avoided especially by those living in urban areas.
- 2 According to the United Nations Environmental Global Report on Cycling, up to sixty percent of city trips are made by bicycles in Chinese cities while in African cities, the share is closer to five percent. The report also says in Paris, London and Washington D.C, highly successful systems have helped to promote cycling as a viable transport mode. It is necessary to indicate that cycling works out every muscle in the body, lowers blood pressure and reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- 3 In Zambia, relevant authorities held a stakeholders meeting to look at the future of cycling. The need to improve the road infrastructure was strongly felt. The government should consider adding cyclist lanes when constructing roads across the country. It has scientifically been proven that bicycle riding causes the body to produce endorphins, thereby, helping to reduce stress. It is common knowledge that stress is detrimental to one's well being. Cycling burns out fat, so it enhances the body's metabolic rate and consequently curbs obesity. If you want to ward off excessive fatness or weight, it is high time you started cycling.
- 4 According to research carried out in Finland, people who cycled for thirty minutes or more every day had a forty percent lower risk of developing diabetes. Human beings have been using bicycles from time immemorial. The government is alive to this fact and it is supporting non-motorised forms of transport infrastructure. It is worth indicating that people who increase their physical activities reduce the risk of suffering from colon and breast cancer. Most city roads encompass lanes that are designated for cyclists. This is the focus of the government.
- 5 Bicycles are affordable compared to vehicles. Admittedly, cycling helps people to keep physically fit. What should be borne in mind is that vehicles are a major source of air pollution through carbon emissions. This can be reduced significantly if people switch to using bicycles. Urban dwellers should, therefore, emulate their counterparts in rural areas by taking up cycling as an alternative form of transport on account of its being environmentally friendly.
- 6 Traffic congestion characterises many towns in Zambia especially during peak hours. This adversely affects the smooth flow of vehicles. Road traffic accidents have become prevalent as a result of this. Bicycle riding is an immediate solution to this state of affairs. When more people take up cycling, the shortage of parking space in Central Business Districts (CBD) of most towns will be resolved. Most CBD areas lack parking space. The space that one vehicle, like a Toyota VX, takes up when parked can accommodate nineteen bicycles.

Appendix VII

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT FOR GRADE 12 EXAMINATION PAPERS

Objective: Analyse the quality of Grade 12 examination papers.

Section 1: General Information

Examination Year: _____

Subject: _____

Examination Paper Code: _____

Total Marks: _____

Duration of the Examination: _____

Examining Body: _____

Section 2: Content Coverage

How are the questions structured in Paper 1 and 2?

Do the examination papers cover all the topics in the syllabus?

Are there any redundant or irrelevant questions?

Are the questions framed in a way that assesses both lower-order and higher-order thinking skills?

Section 3: Clarity and Structure

How clear are the questions?

Are the questions well-structured and grammatically correct?

How appropriate is the language used for Grade 12 learners?

Section 4: Fairness and Bias

Do questions favour rural or urban learners?

Section 5: Bloom's Taxonomy

Do the questions align with Bloom's Taxonomy Framework?

Section 6: Technical Quality and Marking Scheme

Are the marks allocated appropriately for each question?

Does the marking scheme provide clear guidance for scoring?

Are there inconsistencies in mark allocation across different sections?

Are there any typographical or printing errors in the paper?

Section 7: Overall Assessment and Recommendations

Overall quality rating of the examination paper (Poor/Fair/Good/Excellent):

Strengths of the examination paper:

Areas for improvement:

Assessor's Name: _____

Date of Analysis: _____

Appendix VIII

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CURRENT PUPILS

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

Analyse the nature of Grade 12 pupils' performance in English language subject in the Copperbelt Province.

How is your performance in the different components of the Grade 12 paper (i.e. structure, comprehension, summary and composition)?

Which component(s) do you find the most difficult to answer when you write tests in English?

Investigate teachers' and learners' attributions on factors that contribute to poor grade 12 pupils' performance in English in the selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province

What causes Grade 12 pupils to perform poorly in the English language in the Grade 12 national examinations in the secondary schools?

Suggest strategies on how to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

What should the school(s) practically do to improve learner performance in the English Language in Zambia?

THANK YOU

Appendix IX

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HODs

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

Analyse the nature of grade 12 pupils' performance in English language subject in the Copperbelt Province.

How is the quality of the grade 12 examination questions?

How do Grade 12 pupils perform in the different sections of the Grade 12 national examinations (i.e. structure, comprehension, summary and composition) in the Copperbelt?

What challenges do learners face in the various components of English content in your school?

Examine teachers' and learners' views of factors that contribute to poor grade 12 pupils' performance in English in the selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province

What factors contribute to the high poor performance rate in the Grade 12 national examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt?

What are the factors that make learners fail English language in your school?

Suggest strategies on how to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

What practical measures can you put in place to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province?

THANK YOU

Appendix X

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DEPUTY HEAD-TEACHER

An investigation into the Causes of Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Performance in English National Examination and How It Can Be Improved

Analyse the nature of Grade 12 pupils' performance in English language subject in the Copperbelt Province.

How do Grade 12 pupils perform in the different sections of the Grade 12 national examinations (i.e. structure, comprehension, summary and composition) in the Copperbelt?

Examine pupils' performance in English in the selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province

What are the factors that contribute to the high poor performance rate in English language in the Grade 12 national examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt?

What are the factors that contribute to the high failure in English language in your school?

Suggest strategies on how to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

What are practical things that can be done to improve learner performance in English Language in your school?

THANK YOU

Appendix XI

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

Analyse the nature of Grade 12 pupils' performance in English language subject in the Copperbelt Province.

How do Grade 12 pupils perform in the different sections of the Grade 12 national examinations (i.e. structure, comprehension, summary and composition) in the Copperbelt?

Investigate teachers' and learners' views of factors that contribute to poor grade 12 pupils' performance in English in the selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province

What are the factors that contribute to the high failure rate in English language in the Grade 12 national examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province?

What are the factors that contribute to the higher failure in English language in your school?

Suggest strategies on how to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

What practical things should be done to improve learner performance in English Language in your school?

THANK YOU

Appendix XII

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SETTERS/MARKERS

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

Analyse the nature of Grade 12 pupils' performance in English language subject in the Copperbelt Province.

How do Grade 12 pupils perform in the different sections of the Grade 12 national examinations (i.e. structure, comprehension, summary and composition) in the Copperbelt?

What challenges have you observed in their performance in each component?

Examine teachers' and learners' views of factors that contribute to poor grade 12 pupils' performance in English in the selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province

What factors contribute to the high failure rate in the English language in the Grade 12 national examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province?

What are the factors that contribute to the high failure in the English language in your school?

Which component(s) pose the most challenge to candidates?

Suggest strategies on how to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

What practical strategies should be employed to improve learner performance in English Language in the province and in your school?

THANK YOU

Appendix XIII

INTERVIEW GUIDE for The Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO) Languages A Critical Discourse Analysis of Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

Analyse the nature of Grade 12 pupils' performance in English language subject in the Copperbelt Province.

How do Grade 12 pupils perform in the different sections of the Grade 12 national examinations (i.e. structure, comprehension, summary and composition) in the Copperbelt?

What challenges have you observed in their performance?

Examine teachers' and learners' views on factors that contribute to poor grade 12 pupils' performance in English in the selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province

What are the factors that contribute to the poor performance in English language in the Grade 12 national examinations in the secondary schools of the Copperbelt Province?

Which component do candidates find the most difficult to answer?

Suggest strategies on how to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

What practical strategies should your office employ to improve learner performance in the English Language in the province?

THANK YOU

Appendix XIV

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE ECZ OFFICIALS

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

Analyse the nature of Grade 12 pupils' performance in English language subject in the Copperbelt Province.

How do you rate Grade 12 pupils' performance in English language in the national examinations?

How do Grade 12 pupils perform in the different sections of the Grade 12 national examinations (i.e. structure, comprehension, summary and composition) in the Copperbelt?

What challenges have you observed in their performance?

Examine teachers' and learners' views on factors that contribute to poor grade 12 pupils' performance in English in the selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province

Why do Grade 12 candidates perform poorly in English language in the Grade 12 national examinations in the secondary schools in Zambia?

Which component(s) pose the most challenge to candidates?

Suggest strategies on how to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

What practical strategies should the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) employ to improve learner performance in English Language in Zambia?

THANK YOU

Appendix XV

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FORMER PUPILS

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Poor Grade 12 Pupils' Poor Performance in the English Language in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia

Analyse the nature of Grade 12 pupils' performance in English language subject in the Copperbelt Province.

How was your performance in the different components of the Grade 12 paper (i.e. structure, comprehension, summary and composition)?

Which component(s) did you find the most difficult to answer when you wrote tests in English?

Investigate teachers' and learners' attributions on factors that contribute to poor grade 12 pupils' performance in English in the selected secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province

What causes Grade 12 pupils to perform poorly in the English language in the Grade 12 national examinations in the secondary schools?

Suggest strategies on how to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations in the secondary schools in the Copperbelt Province.

What should the school(s) practically do to improve learner performance in the English Language in Zambia?

THANK YOU

