

AN ANALYSIS OF SYNTACTIC ERRORS COMMITTED BY BEMBA-
SPEAKING HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS LEARNING FRENCH IN LUSAKA
PROVINCE, ZAMBIA

BY

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*A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts
in Linguistic Science*



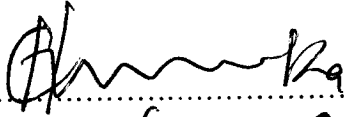
THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

Lusaka
2010

DECLARATION

I, Joseph Mukuka, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, and that it has not been submitted for a degree at this university or any other, and that it does not include any published work or material from another dissertation.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Joseph mukuka is a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistic Science of the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined syntactic errors committed by Bemba-speaking high school pupils learning French in the Lusaka Province of Zambia. This was aimed at testing the theoretical position that First language (L1) and Second Language (L2) interfere with the learning of Third language (L3). The study involved only pupils with Bemba as their mother tongue, English as their Second language and French as their third language.

The corpus was obtained by administering two sets of research instruments: the questionnaire and written essays. The first set involved administering a survey questionnaire to 80 participants in ten high schools. The second set involved conducting a written test with the participants in order to identify syntactic errors that are committed by these pupils in French.

Data were analysed through content analysis and descriptive statistics. Arising from the analysis, the study revealed four categories of syntactic errors most commonly encountered in the samples of Bemba-speaking high school pupils learning French in Lusaka Province. The four categories are: *agreement* (37%), *word order* (25%), *coordination* (22%) and *sentence structure* (16%). English, at 67%, was found to be the more interfering language than Bemba, at 33%. The specific syntactic errors caused by the more interfering language related to *agreement* (43%), *word order* (34%) and *sentence structure* (23%). However, no coordination errors were recorded as resulting from interference from English. The study also revealed that the predominant source of errors is interlingual (57%) rather than intralingual (43%).

The results suggest that both L1 (Bemba) and L2 (English) interfere with the learning of French because pupils use some L1 (Bemba) and L2 (English) structures to produce unacceptable L3 (French) constructions. This implies that these pupils use English more often than they do French and Bemba.

One of the major recommendations made is that a larger scale study, beyond the scope of the present one, should be carried out to include other Zambian languages as well as language levels in order to establish a clearer picture of the L2 and L1 interference phenomenon among learners of French in Zambia.

DEDICATION

To my family, the late father, Safeli and sister, Chisela .

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the the lecturers from the Department of Literature and Languages for suggesting positive adjustments to the proposal of this study. Your contributions helped to make the topic more focused.

My sincere gratitudes also go to French teachers in all the high schools that I visited for data collection for facilitating the task of data collection for me. Had it not been for their cooperation and commitment, it would have been impossible for me to mobilise the pupils to participate in the study.

I am also grateful to my friends who have been encouraging me especially those who edited* this work, particularly, Chimponda and Chilombo. Thanks a lot for your kind contribution.

Many thanks also to Dr. Simwinga for reading and critiquing this work. Your positive contribution helped a great deal in restructuring this document.

Finally, many thanks to Dr. Chishiba, who has been my guide. Through your socratic way of guiding you helped me back on the track whenever I lost my way. In short, this dissertation would have been less intelligible without you.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADD -addition	Loc -Locative
ADJ -Adjective	MA - Multilingual Acquisition.
AGR -Agreement	MAS -Masculine
CA - Contrastive Analysis	Mod -Modifier
CASAS – Centre for African Studies	NP -Noun Phrase
CDC -Curriculum Development Centre	OM –Object Marker
CLI - Cross Linguistic Influence	OM -Omission
CI -Noun Class	PL - Plural
CSO : Central Statistics Office	PREP -Preposition
DET - Determiner	PRE -Present Tense
DIS -Distribution	SG - Singular
EA - Error Analysis	SG -Singular
FEM -Feminine	SLA - Second Language Acquisition
FLA - First Language Acquisition	SLL - Second Language Learner
Fut -Future	SM -Subject Marker
FV -Final Vowel	SOV - Subject-Object-Verb language
IL - Interlanguage	SS - Sentence Structure
INF -Infinitive	SUB - Subject
L1 - Native or First Language	SVO - Subject-Verb-Object Language
L2 - Target or Second Language	UG - Universal Grammar
L3 - A third or other Learned Language	VP -Verb Phrase
LAD -Language Acquisition Device	TG -Traditional Grammar

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 General

French was introduced in 1954 as a minority language in Zambia. Being an anglophone country, Zambia has English as its official language as well as the medium of instruction in schools. Further, there are 73 indigenous languages from which background pupils are drawn into classroom (Chishiba, 2006: 11). Therefore, it is a well known fact that French is for the majority of Zambians, the third or fourth language (Katongo, 1981: 218). This means that pupils speak at least one or two local languages including English which is the medium of instruction in schools.

This Chapter introduces the investigation into types of syntactic linguistic interference encountered by Bembas learning French in Lusaka province. This investigation was based on the assumption that prior linguistic experience interferes with the learning of French in Zambia.

1.1 Background of the Study

The teaching of French in Zambia started in 1954 at Munali Secondary School (Chishiba, 1996: 7). However, the situation was boosted by the recommendations of heads of African states at meetings of heads of state in Yaounde, Cameroon in 1961 and Addis Ababa in 1963. At these meetings, the Heads of African States and Governments adopted the recommendation whereby the education systems of the continent were supposed to be training bilingual nationals (CDC:

2000). Responding to the recommendations of Yaounde as well as to the challenges posed by globalisation, Zambia is one of the countries that are trying to promote the learning of foreign languages such as French. By foreign language the author refers to any language acquired by a person in addition to his mother tongue ([http:// www. Linguistics Glossary. htm](http://www.LinguisticsGlossary.htm)).

Additionally, Zambia's membership to COMESA and SADC, both of which are bilingual Organisations, has left the country with no option but to implement the recommendations of Yaoundé and Addis Ababa. However, the implementation has registered a number of successes as well as obstacles as revealed in the next chapters of this dissertation.

Although a minority language in Zambia, French is generally recognised as a vital subject in the secondary school curriculum. However, its success as a foreign language in Zambia still remains critical (Chishiba & Manchishi, 1998: 47) because of the linguistic diversity of the Zambian society. Such a situation leads to linguistic interference of some sort, as Hoffman (1991: 82) put it : *"To use two languages familiarly and without contaminating one by the other, is very difficult"*. Therefore, the Zambian situation attests to this fact as demonstrated by a number of findings that many of the difficulties French learners have with the phonology, vocabulary and grammar. This is attributed to the interference from linguistic background (Katongo, *Ibid.*, 17). Therefore, any attempt to identify the interference phenomenon must take into consideration the several languages known by a pupil to establish the extent to which they "contaminate" their French.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Learners of French in Zambia face a number of obstacles, such as first or second language interference (Katongo, 1981: 8). A lot of effort and resources have been invested in the development of French in Zambia since independence. However, even after much language instruction and devotion to learning it, proficiency for many pupils and students remains low. These learners continue to display syntactic errors in French (Katongo, *Ibid.*, 216). Furthermore, even those who have succeeded in mastering it, to a significant degree, are still susceptible to linguistic interference. This situation poses a problem to those who teach French and to those who are interested in the evolution and development of French teaching in Zambia.

Research undertaken so far has drawn attention to the negative impact of this phenomenon. For example, Chishiba & Manchishi (1998: 47) observed that if the trend continues, French in Zambia risks being creolized forever. This point of view is also shared by Kwofie (1985: 24) who also fears that unless the question of interference was addressed, French in Africa would be creolized. In order to begin to address the situation, there was need to know in specific terms the major sources of syntactic linguistic interference. Stated as a question, the problem under investigation was : What are the major sources and types of linguistic interference among learners of French in Zambia?

1.3 Aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Aim

The overall aim of this project was to identify the major sources of interference encountered by

Bemba high school pupils learning French in Zambia.

1.3.2 Objectives

The above stated project's aim was achieved through the following specific objectives:

1. to establish, between English and Bemba the language that interferes more in the written texts of Bemba speaking High School pupils learning French in Lusaka Province;
2. to establish syntactic errors caused by the more interfering language in the writing of Bemba speaking High School pupils learning French in Lusaka Province;
3. to establish the types of syntactic errors that occur most frequently in the writing of Bemba speaking High School pupils learning French in Lusaka Province; and
4. to establish, between interlingual and intralingual, the predominant source of errors in the writing of Bemba speaking High School pupils learning French in Lusaka province.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What language interferes more in written texts of Bemba speaking High School pupils learning French in Lusaka province?
2. What syntactic errors are caused by the more interfering language?
3. What types of syntactic errors that occur most in the texts of Bemba speaking High School pupils learning French in Lusaka province?
4. What is the predominant source of errors between interlingual and intralingual in the writing of Bemba speaking High School pupils learning French in Lusaka Province?

1.5 Significance of the Study

According to Locke *et al* (1987: 5), the significance statement provides specific and accurate synopsis of the overall purpose of the study. The justification for this particular study lies in the fact that it comes at a time when the state of French in Zambia is experiencing a downfall trend (Chishiba, 2009: 2). Therefore, this study has five potential audiences: The Zambian government, The French Embassy in Zambia, Researchers, Teachers and Pupils. This study has both theoretical and substantive significance. First, the results of this study will extend existing knowledge on the situation of French in Zambia. Particularly, it will provide new information concerning some of the challenges related to interference that are faced by learners of French in Zambia. As such, this document will serve as reference book to the Ministry of Education, particularly, in terms of language policy making. Second, not all French teachers are Bembas. Therefore, having such knowledge available will provide teachers of French and pupils with the much needed insight into the interference from the Bemba language. All in all, this study will act as a catalyst to researchers for further enquiry .

1.6 Scope of the Study

The project solely focused on syntactic errors and their indirect impacts on the learner language. Succinctly put, the project measured syntactic errors that are committed by Bemba speaking High School pupils (Grades 10, 11, and 12) learning French in Lusaka Province. The other errors such as phonological, lexical and morphological were not part of this study. Further, the study was limited to Lusaka province. Even within Lusaka province, only 10 schools were sampled out to participate in the study. Both private and public schools were considered in the study. The

study was conducted in Lusaka because Lusaka is home to almost all the local languages in the country. In Lusaka, students meet from diverse ethno linguistic, cultural and economic groups. As a result, the possibility of getting pupils whose mother tongue is Bemba was high.

1.7 Methodological Framework

The study used Descriptive Survey Design. However, it applied qualitative and quantitative methods both in the collection and analyzing of data. Particularly, questionnaires, written texts and desk review techniques were used in the acquisition of data whereas content analysis and descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. The detailed description of the methodology has been presented in chapter three of this dissertation.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

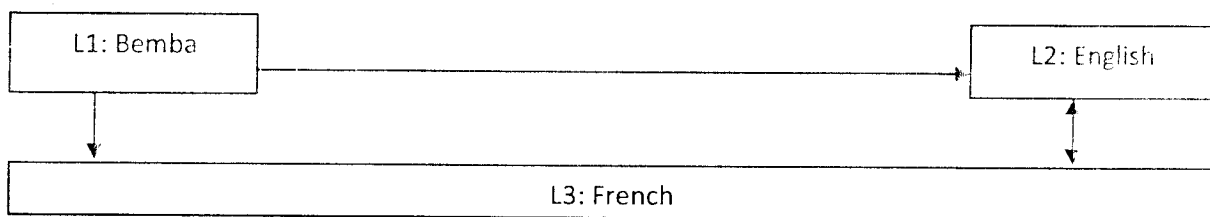
Uma Sekaran defines the conceptual or theoretical framework as a “conceptual model of how one theorizes or makes logical sense of the relationships among the several factors that have been identified as important to the problem” (Sekaran, 2003: 87). For the purpose of the present study, it is necessary to make a distinction between native language (L1) transfer and first foreign language (L2) transfer because learners analyzed are anglophones studying French as a second foreign language (L3) at different High Schools of Lusaka Province. These learners have some competence in more than one language. This is best described as *multilingual acquisition*, meaning “the acquisition of languages other than the first or second” (Brown, 2000: 18). Brown (2000: 18) points out that although multilingual acquisition is often considered as a variation of bilingualism and SLA, it is in fact more complex than the latter because it goes beyond the

factors and processes involved in SLA to include the effects of interactions between the multiple languages being learned.

Further, “there is also more diversity and complexity in multilingual acquisition if we consider other factors such as the age when the different languages are acquired, the environment in which each of the languages is acquired, or the typological distance among the languages involved” (Brown, 2000: 21). Therefore, this study addresses the question of interference in multilingual acquisition.

The basic framework of this study is built around the conceptual model below (Figure1). Bemba speaking High Schools pupils learning French in Lusaka are the target audience. However, the researcher was interested in researching on syntactic errors committed by Bemba speaking High School pupils learning French in Lusaka Province. Sources and types of syntactic errors therefore, represent the dependent variable that lends itself for investigation. The independent variables are L1 (Bemba) and L2 (English). However, there are other independent variables such as interest, methods of teaching, lack of learning materials and lack of programme which were not integrated in this framework because of the resources and time constraints.

Figure 1 : Multilingual Acquisition of Languages



According to the figure above, a variant of multilingual acquisition is third language acquisition which might be envisaged as a triad in which the interactions between L2 and L3 are reciprocal, whereas those between L1 and L2, L1 and L3 are probably unidirectional if L1 is the learner's native language because whatever influence L2 and L3 might exert on the mother tongue it might be less significant when compared to the influence of L1 on L2 and L3 (Brown, 2000: 38).

Third language acquisition is influenced not only by the factors mentioned above but also by the order in which the three languages are studied. With SLA, there are only two possibilities: L1 and L2 are studied either in succession or simultaneously. With L3 acquisition, there are at least four possible acquisition orders. First, the three languages can be acquired one after the other (L1→L2→L3), Second, L2 and L3 can be acquired simultaneously after L1 (L1→L2/L3). Third, L1 and L2 can be acquired simultaneously before L3 (L1/L2→L3), and lastly, the learner can be in simultaneous contact with the three languages (L1/L2/L3) (Brown, 2000: 42). It is worth establishing in subsequent research how the four acquisition orders affect the anglophones' learning process of French as an L3 as well as what relevance they have on L2 transfer. However, this study was not interested in the order of acquisition but in interference.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

According to Locke *et al* (2006: 203), a framework is simply the structure of the idea or concept and how it is put together. A theoretical framework, then, is an essay that interrelate the theories involved in the question. Therefore, this particular study was informed by the theories of grammar, namely ; Traditional and Generative Grammar. The author applied traditional grammar for the sake of parts of speech and their terminology as the basis for word classification. However, the study was about generative grammar.

1.9.1 Grammar

Grammar refers to the set of logical and structural rules that govern the composition of sentences, phrases, and words in any given natural language. Additionally, the term refers to the study of such rules, and this field includes morphology and syntax, often complemented by phonetics, phonology, semantics, and pragmatics (Bhela, 2009). Each language has its own distinct grammar, for instance, "English grammar" is the set of rules within the English language itself. "An English grammar" is a specific study or analysis of these rules. A fully explicit grammar exhaustively describing the grammatical constructions of a language is called a descriptive grammar, as opposed to linguistic prescription, which tries to enforce the governing rules of how a language is to be used (Pollock, 1998).

1.9.1.1 Historical Perspective on Grammar

The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by a new approach to grammar as suggested by linguists such as Ferdinand de Saussure and American linguists such as Frantz Boas,

Bloomfield and Edward Sapir. Their approach was known as structuralism. The aim of structuralism was to arouse a reaction against the approach of the traditional grammarians (Tognotti, 1997). Works on grammar were being written long before the advent of modern syntax. The works of Pānini are often cited as some of the examples premodern work towards the sophistication of a modern syntactic theory (Tognotti, *Ibid.*). In the West the school of thought that was latter to be known as "traditional grammar" began with the work of Dionysius Thrax.

For centuries syntax was dominated by a framework known as '*grammaire générale*'. This type of grammar was first expounded in 1660 by Antoine Arnauld in a book of the same title. According to Arnauld, language is a picture of thought. That means language is a direct reflection of thought processes and therefore, there is a single, most natural way to express a thought. It is through '*grammaire générale*' (Tognotti, *Ibid.*).

However, in the 19th century, linguists began to realize the diversity of human languages and to question fundamental assumptions about the relationship between language and logic. This was provoked by the development of historical-comparative linguistics. It became evident that there was no such thing as the most natural way to express a thought. Consequently, logic could no longer be relied upon as a basis for studying the structure of language (*Ibid.*).

The Port-Royal grammar shaped the study of syntax according to logic. However, large parts of the Port-Royal Logic were copied or adapted from the '*grammaire générale*'. For instance, syntactic categories were identified with logical ones, and all sentences were analyzed in terms

of "Subject – Copula – Predicate". It is only the 20th Century that can be considered the century of syntactic theory as far as linguistics is concerned. This is the period when the central role of syntax within theoretical linguistics became clear (Mathews, 2001).

1.9.1.2 Traditional Grammar

"Traditional Grammar" is the term applied to summarize the range of methods found in the pre-linguistic era of grammatical study. The whole approach of this method emphasizes on correctness, linguistic purism, literary excellence, the priority of the written mode of language and the use of Latin models. Traditional Grammar (TG) is the speculative work of the medieval and the prescriptive approach of the 18th Century grammarians. Basically, it refers back to the Aristotelian orientations towards the nature of language as it is shown in the work of the ancient Greeks and Romans. There are ideas about sentence structure deriving from Aristotle and Plato and ideas about the parts of speech deriving from the socio-grammarians (Mathews, *Ibid.*).

However, TG has a number of limitations. First of all, it is basically structured on Indo-European classical languages. Therefore, it is a poor model for the grammars of languages that differ from Greek, Latin and Sanskrit. Further, it does not discern between all linguistic levels such as phonetic, morphology, syntactic and semantic. In its essence it is normative and prescriptive rather than explicit and descriptive. What is correct and what is not correct is ultimately only a matter of what is accepted by society, for language is a matter of conventions within society. It rejects not only the contemporary usage but also the functional and social varieties of language. In its approach it is diachronic (Historical) rather than synchronic. Additionally, it tries to

incorporate a living language like a dead one. There may be about two hundred definitions of the sentence, yet they are not able to differentiate. Further, according to rules of the TG “noun” is the name of a person, place or thing yet it cannot include pink, blue and purple in the list of nouns although they are the names of colour. It is also noticed that traditional grammar gives importance to the written form of language whilst rejecting the fact that spoken form is prior to the written form (Lawrence, 2008).

Further, TG uses meaning as the primary tool of linguistic analysis. Total meaning of a language utterance cannot be analyzed in the present stage of our knowledge. TG has not an adequate notion of a linguistic rule. It appeals only to intuition. The rules are not adequate and wholesome. The learner has to use his own common sense or judgment in matters of unstated rules. This grammar concentrates on giving rules and defining terms but its rules and definitions are even not satisfactory and they are not scientifically sound (Lawrence, *Ibid.*).

Despite the fact that TG is informal, unscientific full of contradictions and inconsistencies, inexplicit, inadequate, prescriptive, uneconomical and unwholesome and it ignores spoken language, language change, contemporary usage and all the varieties of language, it is still a tool in language.

1.9.1.2.1 Modern Theories of Syntax

There are a number of theoretical approaches to the discipline of syntax. Many linguists conceive syntax as a branch of biology because syntax studies linguistic knowledge as embodied in the

human mind. Others, for example, Gerald Gazdar regard syntax to be the study of an abstract formal system. In addition, other linguists such as Joseph Greenberg consider grammar as a taxonomical device to reach broad generalizations across languages. However, for the sake of this particular study, we will only talk about Generative Grammar which is our main concern (Lawrence, *Ibid.*).

1.9.1.2.1.1 Generative Grammar

According to the theory of Generative Grammar, language is the structure of the human mind. Generative Grammar (GG) aims at making a complete model of this inner language known as *i-language*. This model could be used as a basis for the description of all human languages as well as predicting the grammaticality of any given utterance. In other words, this model could be used to predict whether the utterance would sound correct to native speakers of the language. The founding father of this approach to language was Noam Chomsky. Most generative theories, although not all of them, assume that syntax is based upon the constituent structure of sentences. GG are among the theories that focus primarily on the form of a sentence, instead of its communicative function (Tognotti, *Ibid.*).

In the mid 1950s Chomsky proposed that in any language each sentence had two levels of representation, namely, a deep structure and a surface structure. The deep structure was connected with the surface structure through transformations (Chomsky, 1957). One of Chomsky's transformational rules was what is known as the "Wh-Question formation Rule" for English. In addition, according to Chomsky (*Ibid.*, 1957), most of a person's knowledge is innate

and that means that a very young child will have a great deal of knowledge about the general structure of language and need only learn the “ idiosyncratic features” of the language that it hears around it. Chomsky further reintroduced the distinction between competence and performance (cf De Saussure’s *langue* and *parole*). Introducing the concepts of performance and competence and noting that mistakes made in linguistic performance were not relevant to the linguistic competence. That is the knowledge that lets people construct and understand grammatical sentences. This difference between competence and performance means that the linguist concentrates on an idealized version of language and this makes it easier to make linguistic analyses (Cenoz, 2003: 13).

In addition, Chomsky made a distinction between those grammars which he considered to have descriptive adequacy and those which had explanatory adequacy. The difference between the two is that a descriptively adequate grammar defines the infinite set of grammatical sentences in a language or, put another way, a descriptively adequate grammar will describe the whole language. On the other hand, a grammar which is explanatory adequate not only describes the infinite grammatical sentences, but it also gives an insight into the underlying linguistic structures in a human mind. Put another way, the grammar does not merely describe the grammar of a language but makes predictions about how linguistic knowledge is mentally represented. However, Chomsky has noted that linguists are far from even constructing a descriptively adequate grammar (Cenoz, *Ibid.*, 18).

One should emphasize that a generative grammar models only the knowledge that underlies the

human ability to speak and understand. It is not the process through which the human mind constructs and understands sentences (Tognotti. *Ibid.*).

1.10 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation has been presented in six chapters, namely; introduction, linguistic situation in Zambia, Literature review, research methodology, data analysis and interpretation, conclusions and recommendations. The first chapter presents the introduction of the entire study. Particularly, it has presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, methodological frame work, theoretical frame work as well as the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter two is focused on the description of the Linguistic situation in Zambia as well as the Bemba syntax. Particularly, it has described the different ethnic groups as well as their geographical distributions. Further, it has discussed the Bemba language syntax. It has particularly tackled elements such as nouns and their classification, phrases, the verb, word order and the case system.

Chapter Three is focused on the presentation of of the literature review. Particularly, it looks at theories and empirical studies that have been done locally and abroad on the question of second language learning.

Chapter four looks at the research methodology that was applied in the study. Particularly, it has

defined the design which was used, namely; descriptive survey. It has also shown the research instruments that were used for data collection, namely; questionnaires and written texts. In addition, it has presented techniques that were applied in analyzing the data, namely : content analysis and descriptive statistics. Finally, it has highlighted a number of limitations that were encountered in the study.

Chapter five presents the data analysis and interpretations based on the research questions that are asked in section 1.5 of this chapter. It has, particularly, presented the types of syntactic errors encountered by Bemba High School pupils learning French in Lusaka Province, the more interfering language between English and Bemba as well as the predominant source of syntactic errors between developmental and interference errors.

Chapter six is focused on the conclusions as well as recommendations that are needed to be put in place by the Zambian government as well as other stake holders in order to solve the situation.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the general introduction of the dissertation. It has presented the background of the research problem, the statement of the problem, the scope of the study, the aims, the objectives, the research questions, significance of the study, methodological framework, the conceptual and theoretical framework as well as the structure of the dissertation.

The next chapter presents the linguistic situation in Zambia.

CHAPTER TWO

LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN ZAMBIA

2.0 General

The previous chapter presented the general introduction of the dissertation. It has presented the background of the research problem, statement of the problem, scope of the study, aims, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, methodological framework, theoretical framework as well as the structure of the dissertation.

This chapter is focusing on the description of the linguistic situation in Zambia with particular attention to the different ethnic groups as well as their geographical distributions. It briefly discusses the Bantu syntax, Bemba in particular. This is aimed at presenting the linguistic context in which French is introduced as a minority language as well as the linguistic environment of the learner.

2.1 Ethnic Groups In Zambia

Zambia has more than 70 ethnic groups of Bantu languages. The Bemba people represent about 30 % of the country's population; they live in the Northern part of Zambia and is also used in the Copperbelt Region. The Lozi and the Tonga constitute the other two major groups in Western and Southern Provinces of the country respectively. Other languages include English (the official language) and Nyanja which is spoken in Eastern and Lusaka provinces. Almost 70 Bantu languages are practiced, particularly, those spoken by more than 100 000 speakers : The Bemba (22,7 %), The Tonga (11,2 %), The Nyanja (11,2 %), The Lozi (5,3 %), The Lala-Bisa (4,9 %),

The Nsenga (4,8 %), The Tumbuka (4,6 %), The Nyika (3,6 %), The Mambwe-Lungu (3.2 %), The kaonde (2,7 %), The Lunda (2.5 %), The Lamba (2,3 %), The Luvale (2.3 %), The Lenje (1,9 %), The Mwanga (1,9 %), The Mbunda (1,8 %), and many more (Williams,1998: 26).

2.2 Linguistic Families

Languages are not isolated entities, they belong to families. That means they belong to groups of languages related by descent from a common ancestor called the proto-language of that family (Morava, 2004). All Zambian Languages belong to the same language family, namely the Bantu language family. However, there exist some foreign languages such as English (Germanic language), Afrikaans (Germanic language), Chinese (Sino-Tibetan family), Portuguese (Roman language). For detailed presentation of the Zambian ethnic groups as well as the number of the population that practice them, please refer to table 1 of the appendices.

2.3 Geographical Linguistic Distribution

Although all Zambian languages belong to the same language family, they are distributed differently in different Provinces of Zambia. The following is a detailed presentation of language distribution in different provinces of Zambia.

Table 1: Geographical Linguistic Distributions

Luapula	Northern	Eastern	Central	Lusaka	Copperbelt	NorthWestern	Western	Southern
9	-11	-9	-8	-8	-4	-19	-19	-8
Aushi	Bemba	Ambo	Ila	Chikunda	Bemba	Chokwe	Ila	Tonga
Bemba	Bisa	Kunda	Kaonde	Gova	Lambo	Kosa	Leya	Ila
Shinga	Namwanga	Lala	Lala	Lenje	Seba	Kaonde	Lozi	Leya
Kabende	Iwa	Nsenga	Lima	Luano	Lima	Lamba	Lumbu	Lozi
Luunda	Lungu	Nyanja	Lamba	Nsenga		Luchazi	Lundwe	Lumbwa
Ng'umbo	Mambwe	Senga	Lumbu	Nyanja		Lunda	Nkoya	Lundwe
Shila	Mukulu	Tambo	Sala	Sala		Luvale	Toka	Nkoya
Twa	Nyiha	Tumbuka	Swaka	Soli		Mbunda	Tonga	Toka
Unga	Tabwa	Yombe				Mbwela		
	Wandya					Mashasha		
	Yombe					Ndembu		
						Seba		

Source: CSO

According to table 1 above, Western Province is the most multilingual province with 19 languages. Next is North-Western and Northern Provinces with 11 and 12 languages respectively. However, Copperbelt Province is the most homogeneous with only four languages, namely: Bemba, Lamba, Lima and Seba.

2.4 Bantu Languages

Zambian languages belong to the language family known as Bantu, particularly, the Niger-Congo languages. The Bantu languages' grouping is deep down in the genealogical tree of the Bantoid grouping, which in turn is deep down in the Niger-Congo tree (*Morava, Ibid.*). The term *Bantu*, simply means "people", as is reflected in many of the languages of this group. A common characteristic of Bantu languages is that they use words such as *mntu* or *mutu* for "person", and the plural prefix for human nouns starting with *mu-* (class 1) in most languages is *ba-* (class 2),

thus giving *bantu* for "people" (Morava, *Ibid.*).

2.4.1 Bantu language Structure

Every language family has its particular structure. That means every language family has rules of syntax that describe that particular language. These rules underpin the life of the language. In other words, syntax deals with the grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence (Mufwene, 1980: 248). The fact that all Zambian languages belong to the same language family implies that they have almost the same structure.

However, for the sake of this particular study, the author has only chosen one language, namely Bemba to be used as a language of reference. Therefore, following is a brief description of Bemba syntax. This brief description of Bemba syntax is aimed at understanding the structure of Bemba language. Additionally, this description serves as a basis to argue for or identify language interference.

2.4.1.1 Brief Description of Bemba Syntax

Bemba is a language of the Bantu language group in the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Kordofania language family. It is spoken in parts of Tanzania, Congo and Zambia (especially in the Northern part of Zambia). Bemba is ranked as the First most used local language in Zambia and therefore, it is said to be one of the main languages of Zambia (Givon, 1969 : 18).

In its structural organization, Bemba adheres very closely to the general patterns of Bantu

languages. Its nominal system comprises a number of gender classes characteristic of Bantu in general. The noun classes play a significant role in the agreement patterning of the language. Thus, modifiers of nouns agree with the head noun in the relevant features of gender and number (Mufwene, *Ibid.*).

ISBN
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First Edition 2006
BA (UNZA) MA (Wisconsin)
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2.4.1.1.1 Nouns

A noun is a member of a large, open lexical category whose members can occur as the main word in the subject of a clause, the object of a verb, or the object of a preposition (Morava, *Ibid.*). A description of nominal class system is crucial to the understanding of the structure of Bantu languages because it is upon nominal class membership that syntactically determined system of concordial agreement is based. The most prominent grammatical characteristic of Bantu languages is the extensive use of affixes (Mufwene, *Ibid.*). Nouns are made up of two parts; the stem and the prefix. For example, in a Bemba word *mulonga*, (river), *-longa* is the stem and *mu-* is the prefix (Givon, 1969: 235). Each noun belongs to a class, and each language may have several classes. Bemba has 18.

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2.4.1.1.1.1 Classification of Nouns

A major feature of Bantu languages is the classification of nouns into various classes. The term noun class refers to a system of categorizing nouns. Some authors use the term grammatical gender as a synonym of noun class. Generally, nominal classes are indicated by a prefix (Morava, *Ibid.*). Bemba displays the paradigmatic case of nouns maintaining, at the minimum, a bimorphemic structure. This consists in the nouns having a nominal stem and a nominal prefix.

The prefix encodes grammatically relevant information of gender (natural) and number. This plays a role in agreement between the nouns and other grammatical classes in construction with them (Givon, *Ibid.*).

Nouns belong to different classes based in part on their nominal prefixes but, more importantly, on the agreement markers which the nouns trigger on verbs, demonstratives, adjectives, and possessives. Whilst it cannot be said that the prefixes define gender, yet to some extent the signification and connotation of the word is indicated by its prefix (Craig, 1986: 34).

However, the number of nominal classes varies from one Bantu language to the other. The class is indicated by a prefix that is part of the noun and qualificative roots connected with the noun (Givon, *Ibid.*). The noun prefixes define the form which the whole sentence shall take. For instance, in the following sentences:

*Umwana alibamona abakalamba * Umwana alimumona abakalamba*

*Nali ba mona * Naliba mumona*

*Icitabo Icisuma * Icitabo musuma*

Due to the complexity of noun prefixes, as demonstrated in the aforesaid sentences, a thorough knowledge of these various forms needs to be mastered if one is to correctly understand and speak the language. These noun-classification systems are somewhat analogous to grammatical gender in other languages, but there are often a fairly large number of classes (often 10 or more), and the classes may be male human/female human/animate/inanimate, or even completely gender-unrelated categories such as places, plants, abstracts, and groups of objects.