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The Transitioning of Learners from Zambian Language Literacy to English Literacy in Grade Three in Livingstone District of Zambia: Were teachers prepared to manage it?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade three in Livingstone district. In line with this, it sought to establish the methods the teachers were using in teaching English literacy in Grade three and establish the challenges faced by teachers in managing the transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade three. The study employed a mixed method descriptive design which involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data was collected using questionnaires, lesson observations, interviews and document analysis. A random selection and a purposive sampling were used to select respondents for the study. The study found that the teachers were not adequately trained during in-set programmes such as workshops, Continuous Professional Developments and TGMs.. Another finding was that the teacher's attitude to the introduction of English in grade three differed. Some felt that English should be introduced in grade one, while others felt that it should be delayed at least up to grade four or five. Lack of funding at the school level to organise the school inset programs was another issue revealed in the study. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education (MOE) should introduce English literacy courses in colleges, specifically for the transition. It is also recommended that the MOE should provide Grade three English literacy materials and fund in-set programs in schools.

Keywords: medium of instruction, English, literacy, transitioning, Zambian language

Background

The quality of education around the world depends on the quality of its teachers because they are key human resources in determining the success of all education programmes. Mwanza (2016) points out that the education and wellbeing of schoolchildren depend heavily on the competence, commitment and resourcefulness of teachers. The Ministry of Education (1977) pointed out that a good teacher is not a product of chance. He is a product of good education both academically and professionally. Therefore, it is essential to provide the best professional development for teachers in schools. This is supported by the Ministry of Education (1996:108) which recognizes the link between training and improved performance by pointing out that “training and professional development underpin what a teacher can accomplish in a school. The preparation of teachers in the understanding of their field and in how they teach requires lengthy and careful attention”. With so much importance placed on literacy, teachers should be well prepared to teach literacy effectively as well as manage the transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in grade three.

Language and literacy policies have undergone a number of changes from the time missionaries came into Zambia. For much of the colonial period in Zambia, when most of the schools were run by missionary societies, the practice was to use the mother tongue in the first four grades of primary school and then an African lingua franca in the third and fourth grade, to English in grade five. However, when Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) became a British protectorate in 1924, the Phelps Stokes Commission on behalf of the British office in London examined the education system in its colonies in East and Central Africa. The commission recommended and emphasised the importance of teaching African languages as a way of preserving culture and a way of self-identity. It saw language as a right and recommended that African languages be taught in the lower grades (1 and 2) of the primary school starting with the mother tongue and moving to lingua franca in the middle grades (2 and 3). It also stressed the teaching of European languages starting from grade 5 for the sake of getting jobs and uniting Africa with the great world civilisation. In 1965, a year after independence the English from the start policy was introduced and was later enshrined in the 1966 Education Act. The government introduced English as a medium of instruction from grade I to university and Zambian languages were taught as subjects. English was chosen because it was a neutral language in a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society which Zambia is. It was also hoped that it would foster national unity. Although it was not a suitable policy, the 1977 revised policy still maintained the use of English while making provisions for the use of Zambian languages where necessary. From 1992 to 1996, several shifts and turns have taken place. In another reform initiative, the 1996 policy document (*Educating Our Future*) also retained the use of English as the official language of classroom instruction, and also recommended the use of familiar language to teach initial literacy in grade 1. (Ohannesian and Kashoki; 1978, Kelly, 1995; Banda and Mwanza, 2017).

The policy changes that have been hinted above did not improve the literacy levels in Zambia as revealed by a number of studies that have been done in Zambia, (Sampa, 2003; Mwansa, 2017; Banda et al (2012). In 1998 the New Break Through to Literacy was unveiled and appeared to work positive, however, it had some shortcomings. Mwansa (2017) stated that the transition from Zambian language to English which was in grade 2 disadvantaged the learners. He added that English literacy which was introduced in grade 2 led to the abandonment of Zambian

language. Mwansa (2017) also pointed out that the NBTL was ineffective in developing reading fluency in Zambian language due to the abrupt transition.

The 2013 Education Curriculum Framework proposed the following language strategy in Zambia: For grade one pupils, the document proposes that the medium of instruction in all learning areas be familiar local languages. For grade two, all learning areas to be taught in local languages, content subjects and literacy in Zambian languages to be in local languages while English language and oral literacy be in English language. For grade three, the framework proposed content subjects and literacy in Zambian languages to be taught in local languages while English language and literacy to be taught in English language. In Grade four, content subjects and literacy in Zambian languages should be taught in local languages. English language and literacy in English should be taught in English. Nevertheless, from Grade five to seven, content subjects should be taught in English. At this last level, only Zambian languages will be taught in local languages (MOE, 2013). This means that there is a transition from literacy in the Zambian language to English literacy in grade 3. So, the teachers were expected to be orientated or re-orientated, following all these changes.

The 2013 National Literacy Framework states that the medium of instruction in the first four grades of primary school in all learning areas should be in the familiar local languages. English is to be taught orally as a subject in grade two and literacy in English is introduced in grade three. This meant that the period for teaching initial literacy in local languages was extended by a year compared to the NBTL period where the transition to literacy was in grade two. This will also give children more exposure to literacy in Zambian languages since these will be the media of instruction in all subjects except for English. The learners are now transitioned from Zambian languages to English in Grade three; however, the problem is that it was not known how serving teachers were prepared through in-service training to transition learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy in the grade three in Livingstone district

This study may enlighten syllabus designers to come up with a suitable syllabus that will include the transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy. It may also help the policy makers know the challenges the teachers face in implementing changes in the education programmes

Research Questions

The research is guided by the following research questions:

1. Were the teachers prepared to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to literacy in English in Livingstone District?
2. What challenges did teachers face to the successful transition from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy?

2 Literature Review

This section reviews some studies that have been done on teacher preparedness to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy as well as challenges which literacy teachers face when transitioning learners. The aim of the Ministry of General Education (MOGE) is to improve teacher effectiveness by making sure that schools provide conducive environments and services to help learners acquire essential academic skills with particular focus on reading (MOE 2017). The (MOE 2017) further states that “one of the key indicators towards

attainment of improved quality of education is for learners to be able to read so that they learn more effectively in all subjects. Achieving this goal for the majority of learners requires teachers who understand and apply effective methodologies for teaching reading”.

The Ministry of General Education has made a concerted effort to provide initial reading instruction in Zambian languages beginning in grade one but with a gradual transition to English beginning in grade 2 with oral English and reading instruction in English in grade 3. Teachers are required to build upon the key reading skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, oral reading fluency and comprehension, which were addressed in teaching reading in Zambian languages. Additionally, teachers should begin with what learners know from their Zambian language that is the same in English, and thereafter, teach aspects that may be different. Teachers are also required to help learners transfer skills they gained in their first language to English (MOE 2017b). Linan-Thomson & Vaughn (2007) suggest that when teachers teach explicitly, they model the skills step-by-step as well as explain it in the best way they can. Another aspect that can help teachers teach effectively is literacy coaching, which is defined as supporting teachers in their professional development as teachers of teaching and writing. It “involves literacy teachers and coaches working together on an ongoing basis during the school year to continually improve the teaching of reading and writing in the classroom and learners’ ability to read and write” (MOE 2017a). Moss and Silk (2003) point out that in teaching, coaching is about developing a teacher’s skills and knowledge in order to improve performance, leading to effective teaching to improve learner performance. The expertise theory specifies how talent develops across specified fields of domain, focussing on cognitive task analysis, instruction and practice, and clearly specified learning outcomes. Expert performance reflects a person’s mastery of the available knowledge or current performance standards and relates to skills that master teachers and coaches know how to teach (Erickson, Krampe and Tesch-Romer, 1993).

Various studies have been conducted on teacher preparedness to transition learners and challenges that teachers face when teachers are managing the transition Letshabo (2002) conducted a study in Uganda to evaluate Breakthrough to Literacy. The study used an in-depth assessment elite and focus group interviews. The study also used questionnaire surveys which were used for cross validation of data obtained from context study. The findings revealed that teachers lacked knowledge on how the learners were to proceed from one stage to another. The study further showed that many teachers faced problems on how to follow stages in teaching of literacy to their learners, particularly the difference between stage 2 and 3 activities. It was established that where learners should have been in different pace groups and stages in terms of activities, they were given activities that were suitable at each level. This suggests that teacher preparation is important if learners are to succeed.

In Zambia, Kamangala (2010) conducted a study which sought to teacher preparedness to teach initial literacy in Zambian indigenous languages under the New Breakthrough to Literacy programmes. The study’s main focus was on how pre-service teachers were prepared in primary teachers’ colleges of education to handle initial literacy using Zambian local languages. The researcher used a case study research design at Solwezi College of Education while a survey research design was employed for the sampled schools basic schools in Solwezi district. The findings of the study showed that respondents’ opinions varied as regards the teaching of initial literacy in a local language. Some respondents strongly felt that, they were not well prepared through pre-service training in the college and in-service training in basic schools. a similar was conducted by Kombe (2017) to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to implement

the 2014 revised literacy policy in selected primary schools in Kitwe. The study revealed that while some teachers were trained, others were not. This was attributed to the fact that those who attended the training to later train others did not conduct the in-house workshops. The study further revealed that even after commissioning the 2014 policy, schools still lacked teaching resources with which they could implement the policy. The study also revealed that lecturers were finding difficulties in implementing teacher education programme because they did not understand the content of the 2014 revised policy. Mutolwa (2019) also conducted another interesting study in Zambia where she looked at Lecturer Preparedness to Train teachers of literacy and language education in colleges of education in Zambia. The study revealed that while all literacy and language lecturers were professionally trained either as primary school teachers or secondary school teachers, they were not fully prepared to train teachers in literacy and language education. This was due to the failure to interpret the literacy and language teacher education programme, the literacy and language teacher education curriculum not being totally in line with the school curriculum in most areas of literacy and language education and failure by the ministry to update literacy and language lecturers on the latest developments of the school curriculum and shortage of lecturers was among challenges. The study by Kombe (2017) may have looked at Teacher preparedness but focussed on the implementation of the 2014 literacy policy in general. Mutolwa (2019)'s study focussed on Lecturers in colleges of education while the current study focuses on serving teachers to find out why they were finding it difficult to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy.

Although several studies have been conducted on challenges faced by teachers when teaching literacy in primary schools, none has focussed on challenges faced by teachers when transitioning learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy in grade 3. Cheung and Wong (2012) conducted a study to establish the factors affecting the implementation of curriculum reform in Hong Kong. The researcher used purely quantitative to obtain information. The findings revealed that there were several factors affecting the implementation of curriculum reform. For example, teachers' professional development pertaining to the curriculum reform, teachers' mastery of learning, teaching and assessment strategies were some of the most important factors. This is in line with Ahmadi and Lukman (2015) who argued that teachers are the major hub around which the successful implementation of new curriculum revolves. In addition, the Nigerian National Policy on Education states that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (NPE, 2004). This means therefore that, teachers should be provided with sufficient professional development training to prepare them for any new programme in the education system .

In Uganda, Letshabo (2002) conducted a study to evaluate Breakthrough to Literacy in Uganda, which revealed that the level of preparation by teachers was good but the only set back was that the preparation was not sufficient. The study used in- depth assessment elite and focus group interviews as well as questionnaire survey which were used for cross validation of data obtained from context study. According to the study, teachers lacked knowledge on how the learners where to proceed from one stage to another. The study further showed that many teachers had problems on how to follow stages in teaching of literacy to their learners especially the difference between stage 2 and 3 activities.. Cheung and Wong (2012) argue that it is important to enhance teachers' understanding and build capacity if the implementation of curriculum reform is to be successful.

Mabale (2012) conducted a study on challenges faced by lecturers in the implementation of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) curriculum at Mopani South East FET College. The study revealed that while some teaching materials were available, some resources such as internet access, reference and research materials needed by lecturers were not available. The other challenges that lecturers faced were overcrowded classrooms and unprepared students. The current study aimed at establishing the challenges teachers faced in transitioning learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy whereas Mubale (2012)'s study aimed at finding out challenges lecturers faced in implementing the curriculum. Some of the challenges the lecturers faced were lack of teaching and learning materials, overcrowded classrooms and unprepared students.

In another study in Zambia, Mwansa (2017) conducted a study on the theoretical reflections on the teaching of literacy in Bantu languages. In his study it was revealed that English has more digraphs and trigraphs than Zambian languages. He cited examples that show how inconsistent the spelling system of English is, the digraph 'ch' representing the phoneme /tʃ/ in words like church, also appears as part of a trigraph in 'catch', but not in rich. The consonant clusters in English can be found in both initial and final syllable positions while in Zambian languages they are only in syllable initial positions. Mwansa states that theoretically, 'we would expect spelling in English to be even more difficult than in Zambian languages'. Mwansa suggests that this would pose a challenge in the transition (Mwansa, 2017:119). This means that the teachers may find it challenging to make the learners understand the inconsistencies between Zambian languages and English into which the learners in Grade 3 are transitioned. The point that can be picked here is that the Chitonga orthography is transparent whereas the English one is opaque.

Another challenge faced by teachers teaching literacy in primary school is the lack of teaching and learning materials. According to the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (2013:57-58), "learning institutions are encouraged to use and manage learning and teaching materials prudently in their institutions. They should expose learners to a variety of learning and teaching materials that can be used in learning and teaching process, taking into consideration the learners' needs. Allwright (1990) points out that materials should teach students to learn, that there should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction/learning, and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do. Weldemann (2001) in Mwanza (2012) asserts that effective language teachers invest a lot of time collecting interesting and attractive teaching and learning materials to liven up their teaching, and never spare a thought for the learners in the process of material development and teaching. In transitioning learners, the teacher will use any teaching material which will be deemed fit for use. They can use realia, charts, text books, radio, film, music, pictures and computers. Both visual and linguistic materials can be used.

3 Methods Of Data Collection And Analysis

The study employed a convergent parallel design. Both qualitative and quantitative data was co-currently collected. Both qualitative and quantitative data was concurrently collected and compared. The results provided answers to the research questions.

A purposive sampling technique was used to come up with 124 participants, that is 112 teachers, 4 Head teachers, 3 ZICS, 6 SICS AND 1 DRCC while simple random sampling was used to select schools where data was collected. Data was collected through questionnaires, interviews,

class observations and document analysis. The primary data obtained from questionnaires was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The main tools of data collection for this study were questionnaires, interview guides and lesson observation sheets. Qualitative data collected through interview guides and lesson observations was organized and grouped under identified themes guided by research questions. In short thematic analysis was used to categorize and analyse the qualitative data. Quantitative data was analysed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive statistical information in form of frequencies as well as percentages.

4 Results And Discussion

4.1 Establish how teachers were prepared to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade 3 in Livingstone district.

The first objective sought to find out if the teachers were prepared adequately to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade 3. This objective was cardinal because teachers, some of which were trained before the implementation of the revised curriculum are expected to implement the new programmes in the education system. Therefore, teachers in schools are expected to be abreast with any development in the education system so that they undergo in-set orientations in line with what is contained in the revised curriculum. Data for this objective was collected through interviews, lesson observations and document analysis.

4.1.1. Findings from interviews with the classroom teachers on preparation of teachers from Literacy in Zambian Language to English Literacy in Grade 3 in Grade 3.

On the types of training received, the findings show that most of the teachers received training through Continuing and Profession Development (CPD) and GRACE Meetings. Others received training through workshops. The findings also showed that some of the teachers were not trained at all because the few teachers who were privileged to attend the training workshops did not train the other teachers adequately. Others claimed that they were not trained at all. This is what one of the participants had to say:

I was not trained. Not all of us were trained. Only those who attend workshops are trained. Those who attend local workshops are not confident enough to train others. We are forced to teach grade three, yet they know that we are not trained to teach these literacy lessons (T1)

Another participant who agreed with the first one had this to say:

I did not receive that kind of training. Back then we were only trained on the surface. There are too many changes, and this is confusing. At least we should be sent for refresher courses so that we do the right thing. I don't even know if we are doing the right thing.(T2)

The other participant stated that the preparation was not adequate in that the approach to use when managing the transition was not well explained by the local trainers. This was what she said:

There is no adequate preparation in teachers on how to teach English literacy in grade three. Grade one has PLP which is Primary Literacy Program, in grade 2 we have oral English where learners learn English orally without seeing the print which they are exposed to in grade 3. The approach on how to teach English as a subject has not been clearly tabulated; there is no specific methodology for this transition.(T3)

Another participant said that she wasn't very sure about the right way to manage the transition and said:

For me preparation means a lot. It means having the right content, skills and methodology. In terms of training on transitioning learners from Zambian Language to English literacy, there was nothing. I just try this and that to help my learner. (T4)

Another participant added that lack of funding affected the quality of local workshops. This was what he said:

The training at local level is not really enough and we do not even take these so called workshops and CPDs because firstly, they are not funded and secondly, some teachers who are trained to train us do not even seem to understand how this transition should be handled (T5).

The findings from the teachers suggest that they were not prepared to transition learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy in Grade 3. Most teachers found challenges in handling the transition in that those who received training through CPDs claimed that the training was not adequate while others stated that they were not trained to handle the transition at all because they did not attend the in-service training.

However, as earlier stated, a few teachers were privileged to attend workshops and they stated that they were able to manage the transition. This is what they had to say;

I am able to handle the transition because I attended the workshops when this new programme was introduced. (T6)

I don't have a problem in managing the transition from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy because I understood what we learnt during the CPDs. When I am not very sure about anything, I consult the School inset Coordinator. (T7)

4.1.2. Findings from SICs on the preparation of teachers to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade 3

The School Ins-set Coordinators (SICs) who are in charge of organizing in-house training were also asked how teachers were prepared to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade 3. This was important because SICs always undergo some training each time there is a change in the curriculum. SICs, in turn organize local workshops and CPDs to train the teachers on all the new programmes. Some of the SICs said that the local workshops were not adequate because the time allocated to train the teachers was not enough. Others stated that it was challenging to organize local workshops and CPDs due to lack of funding. Some SICs also stated that some teachers had a negative attitude towards the local workshops. Below are the responses from the SICs:

Some participants stated that some teachers were adequately prepared to manage the transition because they were sent for refresher courses while others were not. She further stated that some teachers did not feel comfortable to teach lower classes due to challenges in the curriculum. SICs 1 and 2 said:

Some teachers are prepared, others are not. Some teachers have been teaching for a long time so, we send them for refresher courses. Some teachers don't feel comfortable teaching lower classes because they feel it is challenging due to changes in the curriculum. (SIC 1)

Another participant said that local workshops were conducted to train teachers that in turn trained others. She however stated that that lack of funding at local level made it challenging. This is what she said:

We do conduct some local workshops. The facilitators are teachers that have attended these workshops. I also facilitate but it is not easy because it is not funded locally. However, I try my best to ensure that these teachers are prepared to teacher literacy as well as transition learners from ZL literacy to English literacy. I also make sure that I monitor the activities so that our learners can improve in literacy. (SIC 3)

Other participants said that most of the teachers were not fully prepared due to lack of materials. They further stated that some teachers showed negative attitude because the programs are not funded at school level. This is what they said:

Most of these teachers are not fully prepared due to lack of materials. We find problems to train these teachers locally because most of them show a negative attitude towards the whole thing especially that they are not paid anything during these workshops or meetings. It's difficult to convince some of them because they know that when I attend these workshops; I am paid some allowances. They feel cheated and I don't blame them at all. So, in the end it's the child that suffers. (SIC 2)

We do try to organize local workshops but the problem is that most of these teachers have a negative attitude towards the local workshops. Some of the teachers practically shun these workshops because they feel that it is not that important. Some teachers are not even ready to be observed as they teach, making it difficult for me to see if they are doing the right thing. (SIC 3)

Another participant added that lack of funding made it difficult to organize the in-house workshops. He said:

The local workshops are organized but it is not easy especially when they are not funded. (SIC 4)

The other one stated that lack of books and other learning and teaching materials made it difficult to help teachers manage the transition. This was what he said:

The problem is that when this program came on board, we did not receive any books or other necessary learning and teaching materials to go with it. (SIC 5)

Another participant said that when the programme was introduced only teachers that were handling lower classes then were trained, so when the ones that were handling upper primary classes when the programme was introduced faced challenges. SIC 6 said,

Whenever there is change or new programme in the school curriculum, I do attend workshops. After that I try to organize workshops to train the teachers. The problem is that not all teachers attend these workshops. Sometimes we only target teachers in the lower primary sector, yet every year there are changes in class allocation. So, you find that a teacher who was not at lower primary last year is given a grade three class, so it becomes a challenge. (SIC 6)

The responses from the SICs showed that all the SICs do attend workshops to help them organize in-house workshops to prepare teachers to manage the transition in Grade three. However, they all stated that they found it challenging to train the teachers because some of them (teachers) show negative attitudes towards the local workshops, stating that they feel cheated because the workshops are not funded. Some SICs also stated that while the changes are good, the Ministry of Education did not provide books and relevant teaching and learning materials to manage the transition.

4.1.3 Findings from the ZICs on the preparation of teachers to transition learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy in Livingstone

The ZICs were also asked how prepared the teachers were to transition learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy in Grade 3. The ZICs were important in this study because they are responsible for in-set or in-house training at Zonal level. ZICs organize workshops in their zones to train SICs and some teachers who in turn train other teachers at school level. They also monitor what goes on in their zones to ensure that the programmes are implemented. The ZICs that were interviewed stated that workshops to train teachers and prepare them to transition learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy are organized every year to ensure that all teachers are captured. The following were their responses:

We organize workshops every year to train teachers to transition learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy in Grade three. However, the time allocate for such programmes is not enough. You find that the work that is supposed to be done in a month or so is compressed within one week due to limited resources. (ZIC 1)

One of the participants said that at zonal level, the trainers were trained adequately so that they could train the teachers in schools but some teachers did not take the in-house workshops seriously. ZIC 2 had this to say:

The workshops that we organize in our zones are very important, except that some teachers do not see how important they are. As far as I am concerned, we as ZICs do our part by training our SICs, school administrators and some teachers. It is up to the SICs and the administrators to ensure that the teachers in schools are also trained to handle the transition. It is pity that when we go to monitor how the transition is being handled; some teachers are doing things contrary to what they were trained to do. (ZIC 2)

The other ZIC stated that although the transition programme was challenging, the facilitators were adequately trained each time there was a new programme. He added that these workshops were conducted every year so as to capture the newly deployed and those that came into the district on transfer.

Our task as ZICs is to ensure that in-set training is conducted whenever there is a new programme on board. The transitioning of learners from Zambian language to English literacy is quite challenging but we are on course. We do conduct training to prepare our teachers every year so that newly deployed teachers as well as those who come on transfer are captured. (ZIC 3).

4.1.4 Findings from the District Resource Center Coordinator on teacher preparedness to transition learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy

The District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC) was also interviewed to give his views on how teachers are prepared to transition learners from literacy in ZL (Chitonga) to English literacy in Grade three. He said that teachers were oriented to begin teaching oral English in Grade two. The DRCC added that teachers in Livingstone district were trained to handle the transition, along with the use of the THRASS methodology. Consider the following response

In my district, I also ensure that every year we carry out trainings to help those that are newly deployed as well as those that come on transfer into the district. These trainings are done through workshops and CPDs. The only problem is that the programs are not funded at school level, so some teachers do not take the trainings seriously. (DRCC)

4.1.5 Findings from interviews with School Administrators on how teachers were prepared to transition learners from literacy in Zambian language to English literacy in Grade 3 in Livingstone district

The findings showed that in-service trainings were always conducted in the schools, although they felt that such important programmes needed experts such as lecturers and policy makers to conduct the trainings. They also felt that the programmes needed more time if they were to yield better results. Below are responses from the administrators:

The teachers in the lower sector were trained through CPDs to prepare them to handle the transition in Grade. (AD 1)

The teachers in my school were prepared through in-house workshops and CPDs. However, I wish experts such as lecturers in colleges would be involved in such programmes. (AD 2)

The findings from the school administrators revealed that while some teachers were prepared through CPDs to manage the transition, others may not have attended these trainings. Some administrators stated that it would be better if such programmes could be handled by experts such as lecturers, implying that some facilitators lacked expertise to train their peers.

4.1.6 Findings from teachers on their preparedness to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade 3 in Livingstone District – Quantitative data

The teachers were asked to provide data to concerning the in-house training provided by school to prepare teachers to handle the transition in Grade 3. This data was important for the study because it involved a bigger number of teachers who participated in the study. The responses are presented in the table below:

Table 1: The schools provide adequate in-house training for literacy teachers through CPDs, workshops and GRACE meetings

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	18	25.7	25.7	25.7
Disagree	29	41.4	41.4	67.1
Not really	23	32.9	32.9	100.0
		100.0	100.0	

From the data presented in table 1 above, 25.7 percent of the participants agreed that the schools

provide adequate in-house training for literacy teachers CPDs, workshops and GRACE meetings while 41.4 percent felt that the in-service training was not adequate. 32.9 percent were not very sure if the in-service training was adequate.

The teachers were also asked if they understood how the transitioning of learners from ZL literacy to English literacy is managed. This was done to get a general view from the primary school teachers who did not participate in the oral interview.

Table 2: I understand how the transitioning of learners from ZL literacy to English literacy is managed

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	18	25.7	25.7	25.7
Agree	11	15.7	15.7	41.4
Disagree	41	58.6	58.6	100.0
Total	70	100.0	100.0	

According to the data above, 15.7 percent of the teachers understand how the transitioning of learners from ZL literacy to English literacy is managed. Those who did not understand how the transition is managed was at 58.6 percent while those who said they knew completely nothing about how the transition is managed at 25.7 percent.

The researcher also asked these teachers whether they learnt how to transition learners from literacy in ZL to English literacy during training or if they only knew how to handle the transition after they had been deployed. Primary schools. the following table shows how they responded:

Table 3: I knew how to handle the transition from ZL literacy to English literacy during workshops and CPDs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	51	72.9	72.9	72.9
Disagree	10	14.3	14.3	87.2
Not really	9	12.8	12.8	100.0
Total	70	100.0	100.0	

The above statistics show that 72.9 percent of the participants stated that they only knew how to handle the transition from ZL literacy to English literacy during workshops and CPDs, 12.8 percent disagreed while 13 percent indicate that they did not really learn to handle it during workshops and CPDs.

From the responses above it can be argued that the in-house trainings conducted at school level were not adequate in that the most of the teachers (facilitators) the received the initial training were either not able to explain the concepts properly or they received negative attitude from some trainees; who failed cheated because there was no funding for workshops conducted at school level. The MOE (2002) observed that there was need for regular on-going development in a process that is never complete. According to the Ministry of Education, teachers' professional life revolves around two areas of never-ending growth and progression, so provisions must also be

made for the on-going development of each member of the profession. Ericson (1993)'s expertise theory acknowledges that one needs to master required knowledge and skills in order to become a master.

The Ministry of Education has always encouraged trainers to use CPDs in a bid to enhance capacity among teachers. MOE(2017:iii) states that the Ministry of Education has prioritized Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of teachers with heavy emphasis on provision of School Program of training for a term (SPRINT). To keep teachers with relevant information, skills and knowledge and to help them remain competent in their teaching profession, the Ministry's policy is to ensure that school-based training is strengthened...” some teachers on the other hand do not see this as a solution. Here we see power being resisted (Fairclough, 2000). Teacher competence can have substantial effect on the pupil achievement (Baumert, 2010). This statement seems to suggest that if learners are to achieve success in any field of study, the teacher, who is the driver, should have the expertise in that field so as to help learners successfully transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy and this calls for adequate preparation on the part of the teacher. Despite most teachers not being adequately prepared, the Ministry of Education went ahead and introduced Regional Zambian languages as language of initial literacy and later transition to English literacy in grade 3. This is what Wodak *et al* (1997), terms exploitation of power where the ministry does not train a teacher but asks him/her to manage the programme that they have not been trained for.

5. Establish challenges faced by teachers when transitioning learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Grade three in Livingstone district

The third objective sought to find out the challenges that the teachers faced when transitioning learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in Livingstone district. This objective was important because there was need to find out if the teachers were facing any challenges in managing the transition. Data was collected the face to face interviews with primary school teachers, SICs, ZICs, DRCC and school administrators. Teachers also responded to questions on the questionnaires in line with the objectives.

5.1 Findings from interviews with the teachers on the challenges that teacher were facing when transitioning learners from ZL literacy to English literacy in Grade 3.

Interview data:

Teachers were involved in the interview and findings from them showed that they faced different challenges in transitioning learners. Some teachers indicated that they found it difficult to make children understand some English sounds after the learners were used to the Chitonga sounds. The findings also revealed that some learners were pronouncing English word as though they were Chitonga words. The following are the responses from the interviews:

We do face some challenges when it comes to transitioning the learner from Zambian language literacy to English literacy because most of our pupils are stuck with the sounds they were introduced to in Chitonga. (T 1)

Another participant who partly agreed with the previous participant stated that the vowels in Chitonga do not change while in English some vowels sound differently in different words. She had this to say:

*You see, the problem I face is that, some of the vowels in English have different sounds in different words. So, I find it difficult to make my pupils that these vowels can stand for different sounds in different words, for example, in words like **mat** and **made**, they have the same vowel, [a] but in the word **mat** it has the /a/ sound while in the word **made** it has the /ei/ sound, so they still use the sounds they learnt in Chitonga, for example some pupils pronounce words like 'made' in Chitonga, ie. M+a+d+e to make **ma/de**. (T 2)*

The other participant said that some consonant sounds were difficult to explain to the pupils in that some consonants stood for the same sounds. Teacher 3 said:

*Some consonant sounds are difficult to explain to the pupils. At times different consonants can stand for the same sound. For example, in words like **cake**, **quick** and **come**, these underlined consonants have the same sound. So, I need to prepare adequately and also use the right methodology to make my pupils understand. It is not easy, but we are trying our best. (T 3)*

Another participant stated that learners found the new language (English) strange because they were only familiar Zambian language. She further stated that it took time for the learners to adjust to the new language as well as understand some diagraphs used in English. Teacher 4 said:

*The challenges faced are that, learners find the new language (English), strange. They are only familiar with the Zambian language and it takes time for them to adjust and know the English phonemes. For example, when a child who has learnt Chitonga in grade 1 and 2 is introduced to English, he will write the word **phone** as **fooni**. It takes time to understand that /ph/ can also sound like /f/. (T 4)*

Another participant with a different view said that the fact that the 26 letters of the alphabet represented 44 morphemes was confusing enough for the learners that were transitioning from Chitonga to English literacy as opposed to Chitonga that had 5 vowel sounds that never changes. She further stated that Chitonga had a transparent orthography while English had an opaque one. Teacher 8 had this to say:

According to my little knowledge, Chitonga has five vowel sounds. The most important element is to make the learners understand that English, 26 letters represent 44 morphemes, so if you are not careful, the children can be confused. Like when we use THRASS, sounds like /f/ in fish, /ff/ in coffee and /ph/ in dolphin sound the same. So, these should be taught properly because some learners go with the Chitonga sounds into English. In other words Chitonga has a transparent orthography while that for English is opaque. (T8)

From the responses above it can be argued that the learners teachers faced challenges in trying to understand the variations in sounds between the two languages. The difference in the orthographies between Chitonga and English paused a challenge to the successful transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in that the 26 letters of the alphabet represent 44 morphemes as opposed to Chitonga which is straightforward (letter sounds and vowel sounds never change).

5.2 Findings from interviews with the SICS on challenges that teachers faced when transitioning learners from ZL literacy to English literacy in Grade three in Livingstone district.

The School Inset Coordinators highlighted a number of challenges that the teachers faces to the successful transition of learners from literacy in ZL to English literacy in Grade three. They stated that the common challenges that the teachers faced were lack of books and over enrolment and to some extent the age of the children. The other challenge was on the use of certain terms that confused the learners. Some SICs also stated that the Chitonga and English orthographies differed, so it took time for teachers to ake the children understand the disparities in the sounds between Chitonga and English. They also stated that some books used in Chitonga contained wrong and confusing terms. The following are some of the responses from the SICs:

One participant stated that teachers lacked books for English literacy because the Ministry of Education did supply grade 3 English literacy books. She further stated that teachers were forced to use books that were used during the SITE and NBTL error:

The common challenges that the teachers have experienced are lack of books and other teaching materials. There are no books specifically for grade 3 English literacy. Teachers are using books that were used in the NBTL error. (SIC 1)

The other SIC stated that there was no syllabus to refer to. Teachers were relying on the learning outcomes that are contained in the National Literacy Framework (2013). This was what she had to say:

The teachers at my school rely on the learning outcomes that are in the National Literacy Framework because there is no syllabus to guide on how the transition should be managed. Additionally, some teachers are using the Step Into English (SITE) introduced during the Primary Reading Program era to teach English literacy while others feel comfortable using the Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS) cards. Even with these, they find challenges because the children don't seem to understand. (SIC 2)

Another participant highlighted the problem of over enrolment. She added that teachers found it challenging to create time for children that needed remedial work. SIC 2 said:

There is a problem of over-enrolment in most of these schools. Some classes are so large that it is very difficult to attend to every child's needs, especially those that needed remedial work. So, handling very large classes is quite a challenge for us. (SIC 3)

Another participant with a different view said that before the learners are transitioned they use books that are not written in standard Chitonga where some nouns are pronounced the English way after which when they start learning English literacy in grade 3, the spellings change completely. SIC 2 said:

Early transition to English literacy was another challenge that was highlighted by one of the participants. This was what she said:

For me, I think that the learners are too young to transition from familiar language to

English literacy. I feel that that transition period should be extended to grade 4 or 5 like in other countries. (SIC5)

Another challenge that was highlighted was that of the variations between the Chitonga and English orthographies. The participant stated that the difference in the writing system made it difficult for learners to understand the changes. SIC 4 said:

There are variations in the chitonga and English orthographies can give an example of months of the year. I'm a SIC and I am also teaching grade 3. The challenges that I face in managing the transition are that pupils sometimes find it difficult to read some English words because of the differences in orthography. As we all know, the Chitonga orthography is open while the English orthography is opaque. (SIC 6)

Another challenge that was mentioned was that some learners got stuck with the Chitonga sounds when they were transitioned into English literacy. This was what she said:

Our teachers have different challenges. From my observation when I observe their lessons, the learners are stuck with the Chitonga sounds, so they pronounce English words like they are Chitonga words. (SIC6)

5.3 Findings from the DRCC on the challenges that teachers faced when transitioning learners from ZL literacy to English literacy in Grade 3 in Livingstone district.

The DRCC stated that some teachers were not familiar with the regional Zambian language (Chitonga), so they found it challenging to handle literacy classes because he believed that teachers needed to be familiar with both Chitonga and English. He also stated that some classes were too big to properly handle.

The DRCC gave the following explanation:

I believe that for a teacher to be able to help the learners successfully transition from Chitonga literacy to English literacy, he/she should know both languages. The other challenge that I see is that, some classes are very large, making it difficult for teachers to have enough time for each learner. Additionally, some teachers do not seem to understand the importance of oral English in grade 2. I also feel that maybe the transition is too early. (DRCC)

5.4. Findings from School administrators on the Challenges faced by teachers to transition learners from ZL literacy English literacy in Livingstone district.

On the challenges faced by teachers when transitioning learners from ZL literacy to English literacy, the school administrators stated that the school lacked English literacy books. The other challenge they stated was that most of the teachers did not really understand how the transition should be managed. The following were responses from school administrators

Frankly speaking we do appreciate what the MOE is doing on the issues of literacy levels in our school but the challenge is that. We did not receive any syllabus or books for grade 3 English literacy and secondly, Our teachers have to use THRASS cards and the old books, I mean the ones used during the SITE error. The other problem that has come to my attention is that some learners get stuck with the sounds that they learn in Chitonga literacy. (Ad 1)

One administrator stated that the locally organized workshops had challenges due to lack of funding. He said:

The trainings that are done locally through CPDs and TGMs are not taken seriously because they are not funded at all. I think the programme is very good but it need a lot of time for it to work. (AD 2)

Another administrator added that the teachers were not sure about the teaching methods they were supposed to use in teaching English literacy in grade 3. This was what he said:

Some teachers are not sure about the methods they should use when teaching English literacy. So, they there is no uniformity in the delivery of lessons among the literacy teachers. (AD 3)

The other administrator talked about the issue of enrolment and how it affected the teaching of English literacy in grade 3. This was what he had to say:

The classes are overenrolled in this school because it is government policy that all children that are supposed to be in school. So, the teachers find it difficult to successfully manage the transition,

5.5 Quantitative findings from questionnaires by classroom teachers on the challenges that teachers face in transitioning learners from ZL literacy to English literacy in Grade 3 in Livingstone district

Table 5: Transitioning learners from ZL literacy to English literacy is challenging

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	38	54.3	54.3	54.3
Agree	20	28.6	28.6	82,9
Disagree	12	17.8	17.1	100.0
Total	70	100 .0	100.0	

Most of the participants find it challenging to transition learners from ZL literacy to English literacy by stating that they strongly agreed and this was at 54.3 percent while 28.6 percent showed that they agreed. The percentage of those who disagreed was at 17.1 percent.

Further the teachers were asked to provide data regarding the challenges they faced to help learners transition from ZL literacy to English literacy in Grade 3

Table 6: Non-availability of learning and teaching materials affects the transitioning of learners from ZL literacy to English literacy

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly Agree	50	71.4	71.4	71.4
Agree	18	25.7	25.7	97.1
Disagree	2	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total		100.0	100.0	

From the findings in the above table, it is clear that most of the teachers find it challenging

to handle the transition due to lack of learning and teaching materials. 25 showed that they agreed, 71.4 percent strongly agreed while only 2.9 percent did not agree.

The teachers were also asked to provide data concerning the learners, background knowledge. This was done to find out if the learners' background knowledge affected the management of the transition. The data was presented in the table below:

Table 7: The learners' background knowledge affects the transition from ZL literacy to English literacy

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Agree	40	57.1	57.1	57.1
Disagree	21	30.0	30.0	87.4
I don't know	09	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	

From the data presented in the table above, 57.1 percent agreed that the learner's background affects the transition from ZL literacy to English literacy while 30 percent disagreed. 12.9 percent did not know if the background of learners affects the transition.

On the challenges highlighted, the teachers said that on managing the transition, they needed to work extra hard to help the learners transition from Zambian language literacy to English literacy. The findings revealed that the training they have received through CPDs and workshops was not enough. They also stated that they did not have the proper materials to use during the transition. Some teachers also stated the difference between the Chitonga and English orthographies posed a challenge since the Chitonga orthography is open while the English one is opaque. They also added that the 26 letters of the alphabet represent 44 sounds in English. Mwansa (2017) pointed out that English has many more diagraphs than Zambian languages. This was a challenge because convincing learner on these sound representations was a big difficult. Another challenge was that teachers depended on the learning outcomes in the National Literacy Framework because there was no syllabus to refer to, so this in itself was a challenge. The other challenge was that some teachers that were handling literacy were not familiar with the Chitonga; this was a challenge because although literacy in Grade three is taught in English, teachers needed to make learners understand certain concepts in that they did not understand in English. The administrators also highlighted over-crowding in classes and lack of learning materials as challenges that teachers faced. Inyiega (1997) found that primary schools which had larger number of pupils faced indiscipline cases and experienced problems of insufficient educational facilities, equipment and supplies leading to over-use of some of the facilities that were available in schools leading to poor achievement of the curriculum objectives.

6. Conclusion

A number of issues were brought out regarding the preparedness to transition learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy in grade3. Teachers are the most important for the success of any education program. Therefore teachers need to be prepared adequately; both academically and professionally in order for them to handle any new programme introduced by the Ministry of Education. The findings show that most of the serving teachers were not prepared adequately through Continuing Professional Development meetings and Teacher Group Meetings

because the facilitators were not able to explain some of the concepts. This created a knowledge gap thereby leading to teachers lacking the knowledge base for handling the transition. The transitioning of learners from Zambian language literacy to English literacy needs to be well handled so that learners are able to break through. This can only be successfully done if teachers are adequately prepared. The transitioning of learners was also mixed with a number of challenges. The findings revealed the following as challenges: differences between Chitonga and English orthographies which makes it difficult for teachers to convince the learners during the transition, lack of the literacy syllabus to refer to, and lack of English literacy books. The other challenges include over-enrolment and unfamiliarity with the regional official languages by some teachers.

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