

**AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF USING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ON
THE PROVISION OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS
MBALA DISTRICT**

BY

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**A Dissertation submitted to Chalimbana University in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of master's degree in Applied Linguistics.**

DECLARATION

I, NIZAH NANYANGWE, declare that the research report "A critical Evaluation of the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality Education in Selected Primary Schools Mbala district" is my original work and has not been submitted in any other institution for academic or professional qualification. The research is conducted in accordance with the ethical standards and guidelines established by Chalimbana University. I affirm that all sources used in this thesis are duly acknowledged and cited. Any borrowed ideas, phrases, or verbatim text are appropriately credited to the original authors through proper citation. I am aware of my responsibility to conduct this research with honesty, transparency, and diligence, adhering to the principles of academic integrity.

Date:22/9/2024

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation by Nanyangwe Nizah is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master in Applied Linguistics of Chalimbana University.

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ABSTRACT

This study critically evaluated the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality education in selected primary schools in Mbala District, Zambia. The research sought to

understand how teaching in local languages influences learning outcomes, student engagement, and overall academic performance. It also examined the challenges faced by teachers and administrators in implementing indigenous language instruction, as well as the strategies employed to overcome these challenges. Data were collected using qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews with teachers, school administrators, and pupils from three primary schools. The findings revealed that teaching in indigenous languages significantly enhanced students' comprehension and participation, particularly in early grades, by providing a familiar linguistic and cultural context. However, challenges such as limited educational resources, inadequate teacher training, and the transition to English as the medium of instruction in higher grades hindered the full realization of quality education.

The study concluded that while indigenous language instruction has the potential to improve learning outcomes, there is a need for more comprehensive teacher training, resource allocation, and policy alignment to ensure a smooth transition to English in upper grades. These findings highlight the importance of a balanced, multilingual approach to education that respects and incorporates indigenous languages while preparing students for national exams conducted in English. This study provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders, emphasizing the need for context-specific strategies to promote quality education in multilingual settings.

Key words: indigenous languages, multilingualism

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my loving and caring mother, father, my sisters, my brother and my children whose continuous effort, support and encouragements made it possible for me to do this work.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This study is a critical valuation of the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality education in selected primary schools in Mbala district. This chapter provides background information, statement of the problem, purpose of study, objectives, study questions, significant of the study, delimitation, limitation to study and the definitions of terms used in the study.

1.1 Background of the study

In Zambia, language and education was clear and straight forward throughout the colonial and much of the federal period (Linehan, 2004). Both the colonial and federal governments favored the use of the local languages to teach in the early years of school. After independence, however, the medium of instruction in the country changed to English from Grade One to the highest level of education which is University. The country has continued facing numerous challenges like low participation in class when the teacher is using English as a medium of instruction especially in the lower grades and this has been exacerbated by the fact that children come to learning English in schools and hence make them difficult to adopt easily. Children from their respective home speak in different mother tongues and hence find it very difficult to comprehend when the teacher is teaching in school and this has perpetuated the bad academic performance in the country leading to a higher number of dropouts.

The factors attributing to lower literacy level were ascertained by the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) in 2018, this was also concerned about the low literacy levels in Zambia (SACMEQ, 2018). The study conducted by SACMEQ actually revealed that 25% of Grade Six pupils could not read at a minimum level of proficiency and only 3% could read at a specified desirable level (MOE, 1995). To explain and justify these low literacy levels, the same study highlighted a number of reasons, one of which was the use of an unfamiliar language (English) when teaching literacy. This language factor was seen to be the

major reason for most Zambian children's backwardness in reading and writing skills (Kelly, 1995).

The challenge of literacy in Zambia has, for some time been a subject of concern due to the low literacy levels observed among Zambian pupils, particularly those in public primary schools. After realizing that using English as the language of instruction, particularly at the primary level, did not enhance educational gains (MoE, 1992), it was decided that initial literacy be done in a local language predominantly spoken in an area (MoE, 1996). The teaching of initial literacy using the local languages was advocated for because of the low reading levels among learners in Zambia. At present, initial reading in Zambia is done in the officially recognized local language of the region where the school is located. There are seven officially recognized Zambian languages: Bemba, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga.

Government in 2011 saw it necessary to revamp the using of English as language of instruction in the pre and lower primary level which is from grade 1-4 and introduced the use of Zambian local languages to be used in the pre and lower education as the medium of instruction to improve the quality of education in the country. This was proposed to happen in a way that depending on the location of the province and the type of local language they use in that particular area to make it neutral. Therefore, the idea was received with mixed feelings and people from different walks of life have reacted to the move by the government differently therefore, there is need to find out the role and effects of the use Zambia local languages on the provision of quality education in selected primary schools in Mbala urban.

It is pertinent to note that language is very important in the delivery of quality education. It is for this reason that the ministry of general education emphasizes the use of familiar languages in Zambia pre and lower primary schools. Language is the expression of ideas by means of speech sound combined into words. Dutton (1965) define language as a system of arbitrary and vocal symbol by means of which a social group cooperates with one another. Language and education are direct proportional. They move hand in hand in that proper usage of language will be contributing to high levels of understanding. The Zambia policy on education recognizes the use of familiar Zambian languages as the official languages of instruction in the preschools and early grades (grade1-4). This is because there is evidence that children learn more easily and successfully through language that they know and understand well. This is true because we think

and even dream in our local languages. In addition, the 2023 proposed policy, which is intended to be implemented from 2025 onward, does not put aside the importance of local language for early grades. The proposed curriculum for 2023 continues to emphasize the importance of multilingual education, with a focus on developing proficiency in both English and local languages (Miti, 2023). This approach aligns with research indicating that students learn well when instruction is delivered in a language they understand and are familiar with, especially at the primary level (Ball, 2022). Therefore, the curriculum may include provisions for using local languages as mediums of instruction in early grades, gradually transitioning to English as students' progress through the education system.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is an ongoing debate on the introduction of local languages in schools as the media of instruction coming from different stakeholders such as researchers, pupils, parents, ministry of education and none governmental organizations. Mandyata et all (2024), argue that the introduction of Zambian local language in primary school will disadvantage learners from impoverished families to switch to the official language English at the later stage. Phiri et all (2024), says children learn better when they get instruction in their mother tongue, thereby enhancing their academic performance. However, little is known about the contribution of local languages to quality education. Therefore, the current to endeavors find out the effects of the introduction of Zambia local language in the provision quality education in primary schools in Mbala distrct.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of the introduction of Zambian local languages on the provision of quality education in selected primary schools in Mbala district.

1.4 Specific Objectives

- i. To ascertain the effects of teaching in indigenous language on the provision of quality education.
- ii. To identify the challenges of introducing Zambian indigenous language in primary schools.

- iii. To suggest applicable solution to the government on the strategies that lead to successful implementation of teaching in local language.

1.5 Research question

- i. What is the effect of indigenous languages on the provision of quality education in pre and lower primary school?
- ii. What are the challenges of using the local languages in pre and lower primary school?
- iii. What measures can the government should put to address the issues of using local languages effectively in school?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant because not only will it ascertain the effects of using Zambian languages as a media of instructions in primary schools in Mbala it also pointed out the challenges that the teachers and learners face in teaching and learning in the local languages as a medium of communication. This study will benefit teachers, pupils and schools because it yields a wide range of benefits, including cultural preservation, enhanced communication and inclusivity, cognitive and linguistic development, improved academic achievement, promotion of multilingualism, and empowerment of indigenous communities. Embracing linguistic diversity in education enriches the learning experience, fosters social cohesion, and equips students with the skills and perspectives needed to thrive in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. The study will also contribute applicable solution to the government on the effectiveness of using local languages as a medium of exchange in primary schools. Curriculum developers may also utilize some of the findings to improve on the provision of quality education

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study is limited to a small geographical area of Mbala district and in selected numbers of primary school. The study will focus the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to a small geographical area of Mbala district. Therefore, the sample is too small to be generalized to other places because only 3 primary schools were selected. The findings are just unique to Mbala district and only to the 3 selected schools.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study will be guided by the sociocultural theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of introducing local languages in primary schools in Zambia, this theory suggests that learning should be situated within the cultural and linguistic context of the students. Teachers can scaffold learning experiences by integrating local languages into the curriculum, allowing students to build upon their existing knowledge and cultural experiences (Daniels, 2007).

Sociocultural theory, developed by psychologist Lev Vygotsky, emphasizes the importance of social interactions and cultural context in shaping human development and learning (Vygotsky, 1978). At its core, this theory posits that individuals acquire knowledge and skills through their interactions with others, particularly more knowledgeable peers or adults, within their cultural environment. Vygotsky proposed the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance or support from a more knowledgeable person (Vygotsky, 1978). According to sociocultural theory, learning occurs most effectively when learners engage in collaborative activities, receive scaffolding and guidance from more competent individuals, and participate in cultural practices that are meaningful and relevant to their social context (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). This perspective highlights the dynamic interplay between individual development and social interaction, underscoring the role of culture, language, and social relationships in shaping cognition, behavior, and identity.

Sociocultural theory has profound implications for education, emphasizing the importance of creating supportive learning environments, fostering collaborative learning experiences, and recognizing the cultural diversity and strengths of learners (Cole, 1996). Additionally, it underscores the significance of considering socio-cultural factors in educational practices and policies to promote equitable access to quality education for all students (Rogoff, 2003).

1.9 Definition of Terms

Language: is the method of human communication either spoken or written consisting of the use of words.

Indigenous languages: these are local languages predominant in a particular area.

Role: this is a function of something.

Quality: the value of something?

Grade one: The first grade level of education in basic schools in Zambia.

Initial literacy: The basic skills of reading and writing which a child learns in Grade One.

Reading: The ability to interpret meaning from print.

1.10 Summary

This chapter has provided background information, statement of the problem, purpose of study, objectives, study questions, significant of the study, delimitation, limitation to study and the definitions of terms used in the study. The next chapter will present literature related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the study. That is to ascertain the effects of teaching in indigenous language on the provision of quality education, to identify the challenges of introducing Zambian indigenous language in primary schools and to suggest applicable solution to the government on the strategies that lead to successful implementation of teaching in local language.

2.1 The effects of teaching in indigenous language on the provision of quality education.

The effects of teaching in local languages on the provision of quality education can be looked from a global perspective, region and national perspective.

Abebe & Ayalew, (2020) conducted a study on the Impact of Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education on Reading and Writing Skills: Evidence from a Quasi-experiment in Ethiopia. This study conducted in Ethiopia investigated the impact of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) on reading and writing skills among primary school students. The researchers compared the performance of students who received education in their mother tongue (Afaan Oromo) with those who were taught solely in the official language (Amharic). The findings indicated that students taught in Afaan Oromo showed significantly higher reading and writing proficiency compared to those taught in Amharic. Therefore, it can be seen that teaching indigenous language have an effect on learners reading. This suggests that MTB-MLE positively affects literacy outcomes among indigenous language speakers (Abebe & Ayalew, 2020). This research concentrated much on learners only while the current study concentrated on head teachers, teachers and learners.

While Abebe and Ayalew's (2020) study provides valuable insights into the positive impact of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) on reading and writing skills, it primarily focuses on a single language group (Afaan Oromo) and compares it with the use of the official language (Amharic) in Ethiopia. This focus raises questions about whether similar benefits can be observed in other multilingual contexts or with other indigenous languages, such as those present in Zambia's diverse linguistic landscape. Additionally, the study does not delve deeply into the long-term effects of MTB-MLE on literacy outcomes or how it influences other academic subjects beyond reading and writing. Therefore, there is a gap in understanding the broader implications of implementing MTB-MLE in different educational systems, particularly in regions with multiple local languages, such as Zambia. This research dealt two matters only that was reading and writing. Further my research explored the effectiveness of using local languages in various subjects, how it influences overall academic performance, and the challenges teachers face when implementing indigenous languages in such complex multilingual settings.

Furthermore, Jensen (2010) did a study from Bangladesh. The impact of language of instruction on student learning outcomes in primary education. It compared the performance of students taught in their mother tongue (Bangla) with those taught in English. The findings revealed that students who received instruction in Bangla performed better in math and reading comprehension tests compared to their peers taught in English. The study suggests that using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction can enhance student learning outcomes, particularly in early grades (Jansen, 2010). This study is important to the current study as it provides an insight of the effects of teaching in local languages in two subjects that is math and reading comprehension, while the current study proved an insight of the effects of teaching in local languages in all the subjects learnt from pre to lower primary school in Zambia.

Another study by Garcia et al (2017). This comprehensive review synthesized empirical evidence on the effects of bilingual education for indigenous children worldwide. The researchers examined studies from various countries, including Mexico, the United States, and Canada. They found consistent evidence that bilingual education programs, which incorporate indigenous languages alongside the dominant national language, contribute to improved academic outcomes, cultural preservation, and positive identity development among indigenous students (García et al., 2017). The review underscores the importance of bilingual education in promoting quality education for indigenous populations. This study is therefore relevant in the current study that seek to find out the effects of teaching in local languages on the provision of quality education in Zambia.

A study conducted by Hachintu, (2022) in Kabwe have shown that using local languages as the medium of instruction in early grades can lead to better learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Hachintu's (2022) study conducted in Kabwe provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of using local languages as the medium of instruction in early grades. The research found that students who received instruction in their local languages demonstrated improved learning outcomes, especially in literacy and numeracy skills. By utilizing familiar languages spoken in their communities, students were better able to grasp fundamental concepts, engage more actively in classroom activities, and develop stronger foundational skills essential for academic success. The study also highlighted the positive impact of culturally relevant instruction on student motivation, confidence, and sense of identity, as learners were able to

connect their learning experiences to their lived experiences and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, using local languages facilitated smoother transitions to learning in English or other official languages at later stages, as students had already developed a solid foundation in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of incorporating local languages into early childhood education to enhance learning outcomes and promote educational equity and inclusivity. This study is relevant to the current study as it helps the researcher understand that children often find it easier to grasp concepts when they are taught in a language they understand well, which is typically their mother tongue. Therefore, the gap is that the study was conducted in Kabwe that is Central Province and my study was conducted in Mbala, Northern Province.

The GRZ (2015) report, conducted as part of an educational evaluation in Zambia, indicates that teaching in local languages can significantly enhance community engagement in education. The study was carried out in various rural and urban regions across the country, where schools were observed to assess the impact of local language instruction on parental involvement and community participation. The findings revealed that parents and communities are more likely to be engaged in their children's education when they understand the language of instruction, which allows them to actively participate in school activities such as parent-teacher meetings and school events. This increased engagement often leads to improved school attendance, better support for teachers, and an overall higher quality of education, especially in areas where local languages are commonly spoken (GRZ, 2015).

2.2 Challenges of introducing Zambian indigenous language in primary schools

From a global perspective, García & Kleifgen, (2018) researched on Implementing Bilingual Education Programs in the United States of America. This systematic review examines challenges and strategies related to implementing bilingual education programs globally. The study highlights common obstacles, including the lack of funding and resources, resistance from stakeholders, and the need for culturally relevant curriculum development. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration between policymakers, educators, and communities to address these challenges effectively. These findings are of great importance to this study as it investigates the challenges relating to teaching indigenous languages in schools on delivery of quality education.

A study was conducted in Mexico on the challenges of implementing indigenous language with insights from the community perspective. Flores and Martinez (2019) explore the challenges of implementing indigenous language education in Mexico, drawing insights from community perspectives. The study identifies issues such as insufficient government support, limited access to educational resources, and the erosion of indigenous languages due to socioeconomic factors. It emphasizes the importance of community involvement and culturally responsive pedagogy in ensuring the success of indigenous language education initiatives. The findings are valuable to the current study as they provide guidance on what challenges implementing indigenous language across the world.

Asare, (2017) conducted a study in Africa, Ghana

Challenges and Prospects of Implementing Mother Tongue Education in Multilingual Africa. This study examines the challenges faced in implementing mother tongue education in Ghana, a multilingual African country. Findings indicate several obstacles, including the lack of standardized educational materials in local languages, insufficient teacher training programs, and resistance from communities accustomed to foreign language instruction. The study underscores the importance of addressing these challenges to effectively integrate mother tongue education into the national education system. These findings are important to this study in the sense that the current study will be conducted in a scope where a number of languages are spoken and proposed to be taught, so this similar situation may help the current study establish the challenges of teaching in indigenous languages.

Similarly, Ndhlovu, (2016) also conducted a study in Uganda. Ndhlovu's study focuses on Uganda's efforts to introduce mother tongue instruction in primary schools. It identifies challenges such as the shortage of qualified teachers proficient in local languages, inadequate teaching materials, and the dominance of English as the language of instruction in higher education and the job market. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive language policies and sustained government support to overcome these barriers. This study is related to the current study to think of the existing language policies in Zambia.

From a Zambia's perspective one of the challenges discovered by Chishimba, (2017) includes limited Availability of resources. One of the primary challenges in implementing teaching in local languages in Zambian schools is the scarcity of resources, including instructional materials

and trained teachers proficient in local languages. Research indicates that Zambia faces shortages of textbooks and teaching aids in local languages, which hinder effective instruction. Additionally, the country's linguistic diversity presents logistical challenges in producing and distributing educational materials tailored to each community's language needs. Without adequate resources, educators struggle to deliver quality education in local languages, impacting students' learning outcomes and perpetuating educational disparities.

According to Mubanga (2019), teacher training and capacity building are among the significant challenges faced in implementing teaching in local languages in Zambian schools. The study, conducted in several districts across the Eastern Province of Zambia, highlighted that a substantial obstacle is the shortage of teachers trained to teach in multilingual settings. Many teachers in these areas lack proficiency in local languages and the pedagogical skills necessary for effective instruction. Additionally, the research found that teacher training programs often prioritize instruction in English, which is the official language of instruction in Zambia, neglecting the needs of educators working in multilingual classrooms. This gap in teacher preparation undermines the quality of education delivered in local languages and hampers efforts to promote linguistic and cultural diversity in schools (Mubanga, 2019).

The other challenge in Zambia provided by MOE, (2014) is resistance and attitudinal barriers. Resistance from various stakeholders, including government officials, educators, parents, and communities, poses significant challenges to the implementation of teaching in local languages in Zambian schools. Some stakeholders may perceive local languages as inferior to English or prioritize English proficiency for socioeconomic opportunities. MOE also reported that the historical legacy of colonial language policies and the dominance of English in formal education perpetuate attitudes that marginalize local languages. Overcoming resistance and attitudinal barriers requires advocacy for inclusive language policies, community engagement, and awareness-raising about the benefits of mother tongue-based education.

2.3 Strategies that can enhance implementation teaching indigenous languages

Benson et al. (2013) propose building capacity for multilingual education and highlight the critical role of teacher training programs in its successful implementation. Their study was conducted in various multilingual communities across Mozambique and Ethiopia, where they examined the effectiveness of teacher training initiatives designed to improve multilingual

education. Through a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, the researchers assessed how training influenced teachers' ability to deliver instruction in local languages. They argue that investing in the professional development of teachers is essential for building their capacity to effectively teach in local languages. Training initiatives should focus on enhancing teachers' linguistic proficiency, pedagogical skills, and intercultural competence to meet the diverse needs of multilingual learners. By equipping educators with the necessary knowledge and skills, education systems can ensure quality instruction in local languages. These findings are of great importance to the current study, as they provide insights into existing solutions for the challenges of teaching indigenous languages and improving the quality of education (Benson et al., 2013).

García and Kleifgen's (2018) study, conducted in Latin America, underscores the importance of community involvement and support in bilingual education initiatives. The researchers conducted their study through a series of interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observations across several bilingual education programs in countries such as Guatemala and Mexico. Their findings revealed that engaging parents, caregivers, and community members in decision-making processes and program implementation fosters a sense of ownership and promotes the sustainability of language initiatives. The study showed that communities can contribute valuable insights into local linguistic practices, cultural traditions, and educational priorities, shaping the design and implementation of language-in-education policies that resonate with their needs and aspirations.

Similarly, Makoni and Pennycook (2017) conducted their research in several Asian countries, including India and Nepal, to explore the significance of supportive language policies in facilitating the successful implementation of multilingual education. Their study used a combination of policy analysis, interviews with policymakers, and case studies to understand the impact of language policies on educational outcomes. They advocate for the development of comprehensive language policies that recognize and promote linguistic diversity, protect minority language rights, and ensure equitable access to education for all learners. Their research highlighted how clear policy frameworks provide guidance to policymakers, educators, and stakeholders, fostering coherence and consistency in language planning efforts and promoting the integration of local languages into formal education systems (Makoni & Pennycook, 2017).

By adopting these strategies and drawing on the insights gleaned from empirical research, education systems can navigate the complexities of implementing teaching in local languages and promote inclusive and culturally responsive education for all learners. Effective implementation requires collaboration between policymakers, educators, communities, and other stakeholders to develop appropriate teaching materials, provide relevant teacher training, engage communities, and establish supportive language policies that recognize and value linguistic diversity.

2.4 Summary of the chapter

The research gap on strategies to address challenges with implementing teaching in local languages in Zambia is evident, as there is a scarcity of empirical studies specifically focused on the Zambian context. While global literature on multilingual education and language-in-education policies exists, little research examines the unique linguistic and sociocultural dynamics within Zambian communities and schools. This lack of context-specific studies limits the understanding of Zambia's challenges in promoting local language instruction, particularly in areas such as language diversity, community perspectives, and language attitudes. Without this understanding, it is difficult to design effective, culturally relevant language-in-education policies and strategies.

Additionally, there is limited research on the availability of educational resources and infrastructure needed to support local language instruction in Zambia. Areas such as the adequacy of teaching materials, teacher training programs, and the integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) remain underexplored. Furthermore, there is a lack of rigorous evaluation of existing language-in-education policies and initiatives, which restricts the identification of effective strategies and best practices. Addressing this research gap is essential for developing evidence-based solutions that promote inclusive and equitable education while preserving Zambia's linguistic heritage.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes how the study was conducted. This chapter focuses on the methodology of the study. The research approach used in this study is qualitative. It discusses the research design, target population, sample Size, sampling techniques, data collection techniques and finally the ethical considerations. The discussion also includes data collection techniques, data processing techniques and limitations of the study.

3.1 Study Design

The study employed descriptive design. A descriptive research design is a research method used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied without manipulating any variables (Siedlecki, 2020). It involves collecting data to answer questions about the "what," "when," "where," and "how" aspects of a topic, providing a detailed picture of the current state of affairs. This design helps researchers gather information about the conditions, attitudes, opinions, or behaviors of individuals or groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Common methods used in descriptive research include surveys, observations, case studies, and questionnaires. The study was conducted qualitatively as the use of research questions employed unlike the use of hypotheses and the views from respondents might be subjective.

3.2 Target Population

A target population refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, or events that a researcher aims to study and draw conclusions about in a research project (Babbie, 2020). It includes all the elements that possess the characteristics or traits the researcher is interested in investigating. Defining the target population is crucial because it ensures that the findings of the study are relevant and applicable to the group being studied. The target population can vary in size and may be broad or narrow, depending on the study's objectives. For instance, in educational research, the target population might include all students within a specific age group or educational level in a given region (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study targeted teachers, head teachers and pupils from all primary schools in Mbala District.

3.3 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of observations or respondents selected from the target population to participate in a study, representing a subset of the larger group (Taherdoost, 2016). Determining an appropriate sample size is crucial in research, as it affects the accuracy, reliability, and generalizability of the study's results. A sample size that is too small may not adequately represent the population, leading to biased or unreliable findings, while an excessively large sample size can be resource-intensive and may not yield significantly different results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Researchers often use statistical techniques, such as power analysis, to determine an optimal sample size that balances precision and practicality, ensuring that the sample accurately reflects the population being studied. The sample population was 3 schools, and the target was 24 participants of which 3 are Head teachers, 3 Teacher's from each school and 4 Pupil from each school

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Cluster sampling process was used and later purposive sampling. Cluster sampling is a method used in research where the population is divided into clusters or groups, often based on geographical location or other identifiable units. A purposive sampling of clusters is then made, and all individuals within the chosen clusters are included in the sample. This approach is practical when the population is large and dispersed, making it difficult or costly to reach every individual. Cluster sampling simplifies data collection by allowing researchers to focus on specific areas or groups, while still ensuring representation from diverse segments of the population. However, it may introduce potential biases if clusters are not homogeneous or if there is significant variability between clusters.

In this study, the cluster sampling process was employed by first dividing the target population into distinct clusters based on geographical locations, specifically selecting schools. These clusters represented groups of schools, ensuring that the study captured a broad representation of diverse educational settings. From the clusters, purposive selection was made to choose specific schools that would participate in the study.

Once the schools (clusters) were identified, purposive sampling was then applied to choose individual participants (head teachers, teachers and learners) within each selected school. This two-stage sampling process allowed the study to be both comprehensive and manageable and

ensured that the sample represented the broader population effectively while reducing potential biases and logistical challenges associated with reaching every individual in the target population.

3.5 Research Instruments

Data collection instrument is any device which is used to collect the data. Instruments can be presented in written, audio, or visual format. Responses can be gathered via paper and-pencil tests, computer administered tests, video camera, or audiotape recorder (Tavakoili 2012). Kasonde Ng'andu (2014) says these are tools that the researcher uses in collecting the necessary data. In this qualitative design, the researcher used interviews and classroom observation to collect data from the respondents. Teachers were observed as they were teaching and learners were observed too as they respond and participate during the teaching and learning process

3.5.1 Interviews

Interviews and observations were used as qualitative data collection tools to gather in-depth insights from participants about their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward teaching in local languages. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected teachers, school administrators, from the sampled schools to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies involved in implementing local language instruction. Observations were conducted on pupils regarding the a critical evaluation of the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality Education in selected primary Schools Mbala district.

The semi-structured format allowed for the preparation of a set of guiding questions while providing flexibility to explore additional topics as they emerged during the conversations. Each interview session lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was conducted in a comfortable and familiar environment for the participants, which encouraged open and honest responses. The interviews were recorded (with participants' consent) for accurate transcription and analysis. This approach provided valuable primary data, offering rich and detailed insights into the participants' perspectives on language-in-education policies and practices in their communities.

3.5.2 Observations

Observation is a research method that involves systematically watching, listening to, and recording behaviors or events as they occur in their natural setting. It provides firsthand data about a phenomenon, offering insights into real-world behaviors, interactions, and contexts. In the context of evaluating the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality education in selected primary schools in Mbala district, observations can be used to examine how teachers and students interact when indigenous languages are used, how language impacts comprehension, engagement, and participation, and to identify any challenges or successes in the teaching process. By directly observing classroom activities, researchers can gain valuable data on how language influences learning outcomes and educational quality.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection technique is a method used in the process of collecting data for analysis in the research. Data was collected by means of interviews. The researcher recruited participants and conducted interviews following the predetermined guide, probing for in-depth insights and perspectives.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity are concepts used to evaluate the quality of research. They indicate how well a method, technique, or test measures something. Reliability is about the consistence of a measure, and validity is about the accuracy of a measure.

3.10 Data Analysis

The data collected in the study were analyzed using thematic analysis, a qualitative method that involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within the data. After transcribing the recorded interviews, the researcher thoroughly read through the transcripts multiple times to become familiar with the data. This process helped identify recurring patterns, phrases, or concepts relevant to the study's objectives.

Next, the researcher coded the data by labeling significant segments of the text that corresponded to specific ideas or concepts. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflected

the main issues or challenges related to teaching in local languages. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the participants' perspectives. This approach allowed for a detailed and systematic understanding of the data, ensuring that the analysis captured the complexities and nuances of participants' experiences and insights.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are a set of principles that guide the researcher's designs and practices. All ethical considerations in this study such as: seeking permission from the district education board secretary (DEBS) and school authorities, issues of confidentiality was taken to account as well as other basic research. Ethical approval will be sought from Chalimbana University ethics committee prior to undertaking the study. The researcher further made sure there was confidentiality and anonymity during the research process. Participants were told that they are free to withdraw at any time they feel they cannot continue with the study.

3.12 Summary

This chapter described how the study was conducted focused on the methodology of the study. It discusses the research design, target population, sample Size, sampling techniques, data collection techniques and finally the ethical considerations. The discussion also included data collection techniques, data processing techniques and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study. In the evaluation of the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality Education in Selected Primary Schools Mbala District. The data is presented with reference to the research objectives.

4.1 Effects of teaching in indigenous language on the provision of quality education

The objective number one of this study sought to evaluate the effects of using indigenous languages in teaching on the provision of quality education in three selected primary schools in Mbala District. A total of 24 participants were involved, including 3 head teachers, 9 teachers (3 from each school), and 12 pupils (4 from each school). The findings are presented qualitatively, based on the experiences shared by participants from the three schools, labelled as School A, School B, and School C.

4.1.1 Benefits of teaching in indigenous language on the provision of quality education

a) Engagement and inclusivity

The participants were asked how teaching and learning in indigenous languages fosters engagement and inclusivity. It was established that the benefits of using indigenous language to teach in classrooms increased engagement and inclusivity. Feedback highlights that instruction in indigenous languages fosters greater participation among learners, particularly those who may struggle with English.

School A: Head teacher 1 said:

Teaching in the indigenous language has its limitations, especially in the higher grades. While early-grade learners seem to grasp concepts more easily, the transition to English presents significant challenges. Many pupils struggle with subjects like mathematics and science, where the terminologies do not always translate well into the indigenous language.

School A: Teacher 1 said:

Teaching in the indigenous language really engages pupils more effectively, particularly in the lower grades. They become more confident and active participants in class because they can easily relate to the language used. However, this increased engagement sometimes limits the complexity and depth of the discussions. For instance, certain abstract concepts, especially in subjects like mathematics and science, are difficult to explain fully in the indigenous language. This makes it harder for pupils to develop a thorough understanding of these subjects and limits their ability to think critically. While teaching in the indigenous language has clear benefits in fostering participation, it might unintentionally cap students' intellectual development if we don't supplement it with enough content in English.

School A: Teacher 2 said:

One issue I've observed is that learners tend to revert to their mother tongue outside of the classroom. Although indigenous language instruction helps them understand lessons during class, it creates disconnect when they have to switch to English, especially in more formal contexts like exams or external discussions. This disconnection often shows up when students struggle to adjust back to English-medium instruction as they move up through the school system. There needs to be a better balance between indigenous language and English, because relying too much on the former in early education could disadvantage students in the long run.

School A: Teacher 3 said:

I think the indigenous language should be used as a supplementary tool, not the primary medium of instruction. It certainly helps with early comprehension, but it also risks leaving pupils unprepared for the challenges they'll face in higher education. Since all national exams and most formal assessments are conducted in English, pupils need to be gradually exposed to English from an early stage to avoid facing a steep learning curve later. The indigenous language is useful for teaching certain subjects, but it's not enough when it comes to topics that require more technical or specialized vocabulary, such as science. So, I'd recommend using the indigenous language mainly for engagement and foundational understanding, while English should be prioritized for more complex topics to ensure pupils are better prepared for their academic future.

School A: Pupil 1 said:

Learning in my indigenous language makes it easier for me to understand subjects like social studies. I feel more comfortable participating in class discussions when we use the local language, especially when talking about our community, culture, and history. But when we switch to English, I struggle, especially in subjects that need a lot of vocabulary, like English language classes. I feel confident in indigenous language lessons, but when it comes to the broader school curriculum that relies on English, I face challenges.

School A: Pupil 2's Experience

I find English lessons really hard. Switching between our indigenous language and English confuses me a lot. Understanding things in my local language is much easier, but keeping up with English is difficult. The constant switching makes it hard for me to build a strong foundation in English, and I know it's important for future studies and exams. It's really tough, especially in English language classes where we have to read, write, and speak only in English.

School A: Pupil 3 and Pupil 4's Experience:

Pupil 3: I feel more comfortable learning in my indigenous language, but as I move to higher grades, it's becoming harder to keep up with English. I enjoy understanding lessons in my local language, but when it comes to English-medium subjects, I just can't cope as well, especially in subjects like science and mathematics.

Pupil 4: Yes, it's the same for me. The terms used in English are so unfamiliar. Learning in our indigenous language has been good, but now I feel unprepared for exams and the higher levels, where everything is in English. I'm worried that this will affect my performance in the future.

School B: Head teacher 2 said:

Teaching in the indigenous language really helps create an inclusive and active learning environment. It makes pupils feel more comfortable, especially those who don't speak English at home. I've noticed that pupils participate more when lessons are in their local language, and it helps them grasp foundational concepts without the added pressure of language barriers. But I

do understand the concerns from parents who are worried about their children's ability to handle the English curriculum in higher grades. They fear that their children might struggle when they have to transition to an English-dominated educational system, especially during exams and higher education.

School B: Teacher 1 said:

Using the indigenous language makes a huge difference in engaging pupils. Those who don't speak English at home are more willing to participate in class discussions and activities when lessons are in their mother tongue. It removes the intimidation factor that English creates, and pupils feel more at ease to ask questions and clarify their doubts. This is especially true in the early grades where I see more enthusiasm and involvement from them. The indigenous language really helps create a more responsive and interactive classroom, but I know that the transition to English later on will be challenging.

School B: Teacher 2 said:

I have serious concerns about the availability of teaching materials in the indigenous language. Yes, teaching in the local language has its benefits, but without proper instructional resources like textbooks, workbooks, and supplementary materials, the quality of education suffers. How can we effectively teach concepts in subjects like science and mathematics if we don't have the right resources in the indigenous language? Pupils miss out on a complete understanding of these subjects because of this. I believe the government and educational authorities need to invest more in developing and providing quality materials in local languages to ensure that teaching in the indigenous language doesn't lower the quality of education.

School B: Teacher 3 said:

Teacher 3 their frustration, expressed saying, the biggest problem is the slow pace of covering the syllabus. It's all because we have to translate every single lesson into the indigenous language. It just eats up so much teaching time. They continued, this issue is especially bad with subjects that have more complex terminology, like science. It's really hard to find accurate translations or even convey the meaning correctly. Teacher 3 concluded, in the end, this slow

pace means we can't keep up with the syllabus, and the pupils suffer when they have to switch to English. We need a more streamlined approach to avoid falling behind.

In conclusion, Instruction in indigenous languages helps students who may otherwise struggle with English to engage more fully in their learning activities. Teaching in indigenous language can remove intimidation for pupils who are not fluent in English, leading to greater participation. It was observed that it also increased confidence and engagement among pupils, particularly in early grades.

b) Foster great participation

The participants were asked how teaching and learning in indigenous languages fosters great participation. It was established that teaching and learning in their indigenous languages has enhanced learner participation in the primary schools of Mbala District. Instruction in indigenous languages helps students who may otherwise struggle with English to engage more fully in their learning activities.

School B: Pupil 1's Experience:

Pupil 1 shared, I feel more confident when we learn in my mother tongue. It makes everything easier to understand. They added, When we're taught in the indigenous language, I don't feel scared to ask questions or speak up in class. Reflecting on their experience, Pupil 1 said, I really like learning subjects like social studies this way. I feel more connected, and I actually enjoy the lessons.

School B: Pupil 2's Experience:

Pupil 2 explained, Switching to English is really hard. When the lessons change to English, everything becomes confusing. The things that were easy in my language suddenly feel so much harder. They added, in subjects like mathematics and science, the English words make it even tougher to understand. And during exams, it's like I'm seeing the questions for the first time. It's really frustrating.

In conclusion, the finding the significant benefit of using indigenous language when teaching. Using indigenous languages is particularly important for young learners who are still developing foundational skills in a second language. By using a language that students are familiar with,

creates an environment where children feel more at ease participating in class discussions and activities. This increased participation can lead to a more dynamic and interactive classroom setting, where students are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas more freely

c) Building Confidence and Sense of Belonging

The participants were asked how teaching and learning in indigenous languages builds confidence and sense of belonging. It was established that teaching and learning in their indigenous languages heightened sense of confidence and belonging in the classroom.

School B: Pupil 3 and Pupil 4's Experience:

Pupil 3 stated, *I like it when we learn in our local language. I understand things better that way. But when we have to take exams in English, it's a completely different story. The words are confusing, and I feel lost.* Pupil 4 echoed this, saying, *yes, it's the same for me. Learning in my language makes the lessons easier, but the exams are in English, and that's where I struggle. It's like we're not prepared for the switch, and it's stressful.*

School C: Head teacher 3 said:

Head teacher 3 acknowledged, *using the indigenous language helps pupils stay connected to their culture. It's important for them to have that sense of identity and pride. But I've noticed that when it comes to more complex subjects like science and mathematics, it gets tricky. They added, we need a balanced approach. Start with the local language in the early years, but gradually phase in English as they move up. This way, they won't be thrown into English without preparation.*

School C: Teacher 1 said:

Teacher 1 observed, *the pupils are more comfortable and willing to participate when we use their mother tongue, especially the younger ones. They're not afraid to ask questions or join in discussions. They continued, it really helps build a strong foundation for learning, but the challenge is always in the transition to English later on.*

School C: Teacher 2 said:

Teacher 2 shared, *one of the biggest challenges is the inconsistency in language proficiency among pupils. Some are fluent in the indigenous language, but others struggle, especially those from homes where different dialects are spoken. They explained, it's hard to maintain a uniform standard when some pupils excel and others lag behind. We need a clear strategy to address these differences.*

School C: Teacher 3 said:

Teacher 3 expressed frustration, saying, *there just aren't enough textbooks or materials in the indigenous language. Most of the resources are in English, and we're forced to translate as we go. It's not effective. They emphasized, it's particularly hard with subjects like science and mathematics. The lack of proper resources slows us down because we spend so much time translating and explaining. We really need more investment in developing teaching materials in local languages.*

School C: Pupil 1's Experience:

Pupil 1 expressed, *I enjoy lessons more when they're in my local language. It feels like I'm more connected, and I'm not afraid to participate. However, they admitted, Switching to English is hard, especially when we have to learn new words or concepts. It's confusing, and I feel like I'm not fully prepared for the higher grades where everything is in English.*

School C: Pupil 2's Experience:

I find it really frustrating, said Pupil 2. We learn everything in our indigenous language all year, but when it comes to exams, everything is in English! It's like they expect us to just switch suddenly, and it doesn't work that way. They added, I feel like I'm being set up to fail because while learning in my mother tongue makes sense in class, the exams being in English makes it hard to remember what I learned. It's unfair, and I wish the exams could be in the same language we learn in.

School C: Pupil 3's Experience:

Pupil 3 shared, *I like learning in my mother tongue – it feels more comfortable. But as I get to higher grades, I'm struggling. The moment things switch to English, I can't keep up. I'm worried*

about this because I know I need English to succeed later on. They should help us more with the switch instead of just leaving us to figure it out.

School C: Pupil 4's Experience:

Learning in my local language is great, said Pupil 4, but when it's time for exams and everything is in English, I'm lost. It's like everything I learned doesn't make sense anymore. They expressed concern, saying, it's going to be really tough in the future if we don't start using more English now. I think the school should help us balance both languages so that we're ready for higher education.

In conclusion, the findings shows the benefits of teaching in indigenous language on the provision of quality education, as it builds confidence and sense of belonging. The comfort of learning in a familiar language helped learners build self-esteem and reduces anxiety associated with learning in a second language.

4.2 Challenges of Introducing Zambian Indigenous Language in Primary Schools

The participants were asked the challenges they face because of the introduction of indigenous language in primary school. The challenges they gave includes not having enough resources such as teaching and learning material and qualified teachers.

School A

Head teacher 1 said:

The biggest issue, explained Head teacher 1, is that we don't have enough qualified teachers who are fluent in both the indigenous languages and the subjects they're teaching. It's one thing to have the policy, but without the right teachers, it's just not working. And the teaching materials – they're mostly in English! We have to translate everything ourselves, which slows down the lessons.

Teacher 1 said:

Sure, teaching in the local language helps the kids engage more, acknowledged Teacher 1. But when they have to switch to English later, it's like hitting a brick wall. Some of them become so dependent on their mother tongue that adapting to English is a real struggle.

Teacher 2 said:

There's no clear guidance for us, complained Teacher 2. We're expected to just start teaching in indigenous languages, but where's the training? How are we supposed to know the best way to do this if we don't get any workshops or support? Plus, many of the kids come from homes where they speak different dialects, and that makes it even more confusing.

Teacher 3 said:

It's hard to balance, said Teacher 3. We're supposed to teach the curriculum, but everything's in English, and then we're expected to translate into the local language. It takes so much time, especially in subjects like science where the terminology is really specific. By the time we're done explaining, half the lesson is over.

Pupil 1 said:

I like learning in my mother tongue, admitted Pupil 1, but when it comes to English, especially in math and science, I don't get it. The words just don't translate well, and I end up getting confused.

Pupil 2 said:

It's frustrating, said Pupil 2. One minute we're learning in our local language, then it's English, then back again. How am I supposed to keep up? And we don't even have books in our language to take home and study.

Pupil 3 said:

When I sit for exams in English, it's like everything I learned disappears, said Pupil 3. It's just not the same, and I end up not understanding the questions. It's not fair.

Pupil 4 said:

It's okay in the beginning, shared Pupil 4, but as we go up the grades, learning in the indigenous language isn't helping me anymore. I'm really worried about how I'll manage in secondary school when everything is in English. They need to help us switch over earlier.

School B**Head teacher 2 said:**

The biggest problem, explained Head teacher 2, is that not all the pupils speak the same dialect. Even in one school, you have so many variations. It makes teaching in the local language complicated. And then there are parents who want everything taught in English because they believe it's better for their kids' futures.

Teacher 1 said:

We just don't have enough resources, sighed Teacher 1. Most of the textbooks are in English, so we have to make do and translate as we go. It slows everything down, especially when you're trying to teach something like science or math. It's not easy to explain technical terms in a language that doesn't have an equivalent.

School C: Observations on teachers and pupils**Head teacher 3 said:**

Head teacher 3 emphasized the need to find a balance between preserving cultural identity and preparing pupils for a globalized world. *Using indigenous languages fosters inclusivity and encourages participation, they said. However, when pupils reach secondary school and have to switch entirely to English, they face significant challenges, especially in subjects like science and mathematics where English terminology is essential.* The head teacher expressed concern that while indigenous language instruction is beneficial in the early years, it often leaves pupils unprepared for higher education, stating, *we need to equip pupils with the skills to thrive in a global educational system.*

Teacher 1 said:

Teacher 1 addressed the challenges of translating educational concepts into indigenous languages, particularly in technical subjects. *The lack of precise terminology makes it hard for pupils to fully grasp complex ideas, they observed. For example, some mathematical and scientific terms just don't have direct translations in the local language, so we end up simplifying or explaining them in less accurate terms. This, they believe, leads to difficulties for pupils later on. When they transition to English instruction, they struggle because they haven't learned the critical technical vocabulary,* Teacher 1 added.

Teacher 2 said:

Teacher 2 identified the lack of adequate support for teachers as a major issue. *We're expected to teach in the local language, but there's not enough training or professional development for us, they explained. Many of us aren't fluent in the indigenous language ourselves, especially when teaching complex subjects like science and mathematics.* Teacher 2 stressed, *without proper training and resources, it's hard to deliver high-quality lessons, and the policy might not achieve its intended goals.*

Teacher 3 said:

Teacher 3 highlighted the inconsistency in the availability of learning materials. *Most textbooks and resources are only in English, they said, so we have to translate lessons on the spot, which can lead to inaccuracies. They expressed concern that this translation process dilutes the content, explaining, Pupils end up with a superficial understanding of key concepts. Without proper materials in the indigenous language, maintaining the same academic standards as English-taught classes is really difficult.*

Pupil 1 said:

Pupil 1 shared their experience, saying, *I understand lessons much better when they're taught in my indigenous language. I feel more comfortable participating in class. However, they admitted, when the lessons switch to English, especially in technical subjects, I get lost. I don't feel prepared for exams in English.*

Pupil 2 said:

Pupil 2 voiced frustration over the frequent switching between languages. *It's confusing when the teacher shifts between English and the indigenous language, they said. I understand the material in my mother tongue, but when we go back to English, I struggle. They suggested that a more consistent bilingual approach would make it easier to follow lessons.*

Pupil 3 said:

Pupil 3 highlighted their difficulty with exams. *When we have to take exams in English after learning in the indigenous language, it's really hard, they said. I'm worried about how I'll manage in secondary school, where everything will be in English. I need more support to improve my English skills.*

Pupil 4 said:

Pupil 4 echoed similar concerns, stating, *Learning in the indigenous language makes things easier now, but I'm not sure it's preparing me for the future. They expressed, I'm worried about secondary school. We need more English instruction alongside the indigenous language to help us transition better.*

4.3 Applicable solution to the government on the strategies that lead to successful implementation of teaching in local language.

Participants were asked on what they think are applicable solutions on the strategies that lead to successful implementation of teaching in indigenous language. The solution given includes enough teaching and learning materials and adequate training to all the teachers teaching in lower grades.

School A

Head teacher 1 said:

The government and curriculum developers should introduce a phased approach to implementing indigenous languages in schools, said Head teacher 1. We need to start with teaching in local languages but gradually introduce English as pupils move up to higher grades. This ensures that they gain early education benefits in their mother tongue while being adequately prepared for English-based learning later on. The head teacher also emphasized,

Teachers need more training programs to improve their proficiency in both English and the local language.

Teacher 1 said:

There is a severe lack of teaching materials in our local language, remarked Teacher 1. Curriculum developers should work with language experts to create comprehensive, culturally relevant materials for our pupils. If we had more textbooks and resources in the indigenous language, it would make lesson delivery much smoother and ensure all students receive a consistent, high-quality education.

Teacher 2 said:

Many teachers are not adequately skilled to teach in indigenous languages, especially in subjects like math and science, stated Teacher 2. The government must invest in continuous professional development programs so that teachers can confidently teach all subjects in local languages without compromising education quality. We should also have language-specific support networks to share best practices and resources.

Teacher 3 said:

Bilingual education should be emphasized, particularly in upper primary grades, suggested Teacher 3. Indigenous languages are great for teaching basic concepts, but we should gradually introduce English as pupils advance. This will help prepare them for national exams conducted in English. Teacher 3 added, Language training should also be incorporated into teacher education programs.

Pupil 1 said:

I find learning in my local language easier, but when it comes to exams in English, I feel unprepared, expressed Pupil 1. I think we should have more opportunities to practice English in class, so we can get used to it gradually.

Pupil 2 said:

I get confused when teachers switch between languages during lessons, said Pupil 2. I think it would be better if some subjects were taught entirely in our indigenous language and others in English.

Pupil 3 said:

We should start learning English from grade 4 onwards, suggested Pupil 3. That way, we can build our skills gradually and be ready for secondary school.

Pupil 4 said:

I think we need more extracurricular programs focused on learning English, recommended Pupil 4. It would help us improve and prepare for exams and future education.

Observations from School A

Teachers seemed to struggle with the lack of teaching materials in indigenous languages, leading to inconsistencies in lesson delivery.

Pupils appeared more engaged when taught in their local language but often showed signs of confusion when lessons switched abruptly to English.

School B

Head teacher 2 said:

We need a hybrid approach where indigenous languages are used for foundational learning and English is introduced gradually, advised Head teacher 2. Parents also need to be educated on the benefits of bilingual education to help them understand how it prepares their children for academic success.

Teacher 1 said:

The government should create teaching materials that align with the national curriculum, suggested Teacher 1. It's hard to teach effectively without proper resources.

Teacher 2 said:

Why not introduce regional language teaching hubs where teachers can collaborate and share resources? Proposed Teacher 2. This support would make teaching in indigenous languages much more effective.

Teacher 3 said:

Subjects like math and science should be taught in English from grade 4 onwards, said Teacher 3. This will help bridge the gap between local language instruction and English-based exams.

Pupil 1 said:

We need more opportunities to practice English outside of class, suggested Pupil 1. It's hard to switch between languages.

Pupil 2 said:

The way teachers switch languages is confusing, complained Pupil 2. It would help if they transitioned more gradually.

Pupil 3 said:

Why can't exams be in both the indigenous language and English? Asked Pupil 3. It would be a fairer way to test us.

Pupil 4 said:

We need more English exposure in upper grades, emphasized Pupil 4. It would prepare us better for secondary school.

Observations from School B

Teachers frequently mentioned the lack of resources, indicating a strong need for curriculum-aligned materials in local languages.

Pupils struggled with language transitions, highlighting a need for a more structured bilingual approach.

School C

Head teacher 3 said:

A balanced approach is necessary, with indigenous languages phased out gradually as pupils approach secondary school, recommended Head teacher 3. Curriculum developers should create a bilingual framework that transitions pupils from local languages to English by grade 5.

Teacher 1 said:

We need specialized training programs for teachers, suggested Teacher 1. It's hard to translate technical subjects into local languages, and we need more support to do it effectively.

Teacher 2 said:

Continuous training is essential for teachers to be competent in both languages, stated Teacher 2. We also need a network where teachers can share resources and strategies.

Teacher 3 said:

We need more learning materials in indigenous languages, emphasized Teacher 3. Without them, we end up simplifying or omitting crucial information.

Pupil 1 said:

We need more opportunities to practice English outside the classroom, said Pupil 1. It would make the transition easier.

Pupil 2 said:

Lessons should be taught in both languages, suggested Pupil 2. Switching between them is confusing.

Pupil 3 said:

Exams should be in both the indigenous language and English, said Pupil 3. It would be fairer.

Pupil 4 said:

There needs to be more focus on English as we move to higher grades, emphasized Pupil 4.

Observations from School C

There was a noticeable gap in teachers' ability to translate technical subjects into local languages.

Pupils struggled with English proficiency, indicating a need for more structured English practice outside regular lessons.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented findings on the evaluation of the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality Education in Selected Primary Schools Mbala District. The data is presented with reference to the research objectives.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of this study, evaluating the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality education in selected primary schools in Mbala District. The data is discussed with reference to the research themes as presented in chapter four above.

5.1 Benefits of Using Indigenous Languages in Early Education

5.1.1 Engagement and Inclusivity

The use of indigenous languages in early education offers significant benefits in terms of engagement and inclusivity. Feedback from head teachers and teachers in the primary schools of Mbala District highlights that instruction in indigenous languages fosters greater participation among students, particularly those who may struggle with English. This approach helps create an inclusive classroom environment where students feel more comfortable and confident, leading to increased interaction and a stronger sense of belonging. This finding is similar to what Hachintu (2022) found out that, by utilizing familiar languages spoken in their communities, students were better able to grasp fundamental concepts, engage more actively in classroom activities, and develop stronger foundational skills essential for academic success.

Both head teachers and teachers noted that instruction in indigenous languages fosters a more inclusive classroom environment. Head teacher 2 emphasized that teaching in local languages can remove intimidation for pupils who are not fluent in English, leading to greater participation. This aligns with the findings of Teacher 1, who observed increased confidence and engagement among pupils, particularly in early grades, when lessons were conducted in their mother tongue.

Cultural Relevance:

Instruction in indigenous languages helps maintain cultural heritage and instills a sense of identity among pupils, as noted by Head teacher 3. This aspect is similar to what Garcia et al, (2017) found that bilingual education programs incorporate indigenous languages alongside the

dominant national language, contribute to improved academic outcomes, cultural preservation, and positive identity development among indigenous students. The relevance of local language instruction in subjects like social studies facilitates deeper connections with the material. Pupil 1's positive experience highlights this aspect, as they felt more engaged when learning about community and culture in their local language.

5.1.2 Fostering Greater Participation

The use of indigenous languages in early education has been shown to significantly enhance student participation. In the primary schools of Mbala District, head teachers and teachers have reported that instruction in indigenous languages helps students who may otherwise struggle with English to engage more fully in their learning activities. This is particularly important for young learners who are still developing foundational skills in a second language. By using a language that students are familiar with, educators can create an environment where children feel more at ease participating in class discussions and activities. This increased participation can lead to a more dynamic and interactive classroom setting, where students are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas more freely. This finding is similar to what Abebe & Ayalew (2020) found out that students taught in Afaan Oromo showed significantly higher reading and writing proficiency compared to those taught in Amharic. Therefore, it can be seen that teaching indigenous language have an effect on learners reading. This suggests that MTB-MLE positively affects literacy outcomes among indigenous language speakers

5.1.3 Building Confidence and Sense of Belonging

When students are taught in their indigenous languages, they experience a heightened sense of confidence and belonging in the classroom. The comfort of learning in a familiar language helps students build self-esteem and reduces anxiety associated with learning in a second language. This sense of belonging is crucial for young learners, as it fosters a positive attitude towards education and encourages them to engage more actively with the curriculum. By creating an inclusive environment where students feel valued and understood, educators can promote a more supportive and effective learning atmosphere. This aspect is similar to what GRZ (2015) Report stated that teaching in local languages can significantly enhance community engagement in education. Parents and communities are more likely to be engaged in their children's education

when they understand the language of instruction, which allows them to actively participate in school activities such as parent-teacher meetings and school events.

5.1.4 Enhancing Educational Experience

Learning in one's mother tongue has been linked to improved educational outcomes. Research indicates that students who are educated in their native language are more likely to engage actively in classroom discussions and perform better academically. This is because they can grasp concepts more easily and participate more effectively when they are not hindered by language barriers. The use of indigenous languages allows students to build a strong foundation in their early years, which can enhance their overall educational experience and prepare them for future academic challenges. This finding is similar to what Jensen (2010) suggested that using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction can enhance student learning outcomes, particularly in early grades.

5.1.5 Creating an Inclusive Classroom Environment

The adoption of indigenous languages in early education also contributes to a more inclusive classroom environment. Students from diverse linguistic backgrounds benefit from being taught in a language they understand, which helps to bridge cultural and linguistic gaps. This inclusivity not only supports students who might otherwise feel marginalized but also fosters a sense of community within the classroom. When students see their languages and cultures represented in their education, they are more likely to feel respected and valued, which can lead to better engagement and academic performance. This aspect is similar to what Hachintu (2022) found out that the importance of incorporating local languages into early childhood education to enhance learning outcomes and promote educational equity and inclusivity.

5.1.6 Supporting Active Learning

Active learning is facilitated by the use of indigenous languages, as students are more likely to engage with the material when it is presented in a language they are comfortable with. This approach enables students to better understand and absorb the content, which can lead to improved academic outcomes. By using indigenous languages, teachers can ensure that students are not only learning but are also actively participating in the learning process, which enhances their overall educational experience and contributes to their long-term academic success. This

finding is similar to what Hachintu (2022) found out that, using local languages facilitated smoother transitions to learning in English or other official languages at later stages, as students had already developed a solid foundation in basic literacy and numeracy skills.

5.2 Challenges of Introducing Zambian Indigenous Languages in Primary Schools

5.2.1 Lack of Qualified Teachers and Teaching Materials

One of the most pressing challenges highlighted by educators in Mbala District is the lack of qualified teachers proficient in both indigenous languages and the subjects they teach. Head teacher 1 from School A emphasized that the gap between language policy and its implementation arises from this shortage of skilled educators. This issue is compounded by the scarcity of teaching materials, such as textbooks and learning aids, in indigenous languages. Teachers are often required to translate English materials into the local language, which not only slows down the learning process but also introduces inconsistencies in lesson delivery. This challenge aligns with broader research findings by Chishimba (2017) that indicate that one of the primary challenges in implementing teaching in local languages in Zambian schools is the scarcity of resources, including instructional materials and trained teachers proficient in local languages. Research indicates that Zambia faces shortages of textbooks and teaching aids in local languages, which hinder effective instruction. Additionally, the country's linguistic diversity presents logistical challenges in producing and distributing educational materials tailored to each community's language need.

5.2.2 Lack of Clear Guidelines and Professional Development

This issue underscores the broader problem of insufficient support for educators in implementing bilingual education policies. This challenge is similar to what Flores and Martinez (2019) found out that issues such as insufficient government support, limited access to educational resources, and the erosion of indigenous languages due to socioeconomic factors. Without adequate training and resources, teachers may struggle to effectively teach in indigenous languages, which can undermine the success of such programs. The challenge is exacerbated by mixed-language households, which complicate instruction and contribute to inconsistencies in students' language proficiency.

5.2.3 Balancing Indigenous Language with National Curriculum

Teacher 3 from School A and Teacher 2 from School B both discussed the difficulties of balancing indigenous language instruction with the national curriculum, which is predominantly in English. The discrepancy between classroom instruction and exam requirements creates a significant challenge for students who must navigate both languages. The need to translate complex concepts into indigenous languages can oversimplify the content and affect students' understanding, particularly in subjects with technical terminology. This challenge highlights the importance of developing strategies that align indigenous language instruction with national educational standards. This challenge is similar to Asare's (2017)

Findings which indicated that several obstacles, includes lack of standardized educational materials in local languages, insufficient teacher training programs, and resistance from communities accustomed to foreign language instruction. The study underscores the importance of addressing these challenges to effectively integrate mother tongue education into the national education system.

5.2.4 Inconsistencies in Language Use and Resource Availability

Teacher 3 from School C and Teacher 1 from School B both highlighted the inconsistency in language use and the lack of standardized materials as major obstacles. The frequent switching between English and indigenous languages disrupts the learning process and complicates instruction. This challenge is similar to what Mubanga (2019) who found out that, many teachers in these areas lack proficiency in local languages and the pedagogical skills necessary for effective instruction. Additionally, the research found that teacher training programs often prioritize instruction in English, which is the official language of instruction in Zambia, neglecting the needs of educators working in multilingual classrooms. Moreover, the unavailability of learning materials in indigenous languages forces teachers to translate content, which can dilute the quality of education and impede students' ability to study independently. This challenge underscores the need for comprehensive resource development and a more consistent approach to bilingual education.

In conclusion, while the use of indigenous languages in primary education in Zambia offers benefits in terms of engagement and inclusivity, it also presents significant challenges. These include a lack of qualified teachers and teaching materials, difficulties in transitioning to English,

and inconsistencies in language use. Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach that includes adequate training for educators, the development of appropriate resources, and strategies to support students through language transitions.

5.3 Applicable solution to the government or the curriculum developers on the strategies that lead to successful implementation of teaching in local language.

The findings from the interviews across the three schools reveal a range of perspectives on improving the implementation of teaching in local languages, alongside transitioning to English as part of the educational curriculum. These perspectives highlight both the challenges faced and the strategies proposed to enhance bilingual education, aligning with current literature on language instruction and bilingualism in education.

5.3.1 Development of Teaching Materials

The need for comprehensive teaching materials in indigenous languages emerged as a significant concern among teachers. Teacher 1 from School A and Teacher 1 from School B both highlighted the scarcity of culturally relevant textbooks and resources, which they believe hampers effective teaching. Collaborative efforts between the government and local language experts are recommended to ensure that educational materials are accurate and culturally appropriate, thereby supporting effective teaching and learning. This finding is similar to what Makoni & Pennycook (2017) stated, they said Effective implementation requires collaboration between policymakers, educators, communities, and other stakeholders to develop appropriate teaching materials, provide relevant teacher training, engage communities.

5.3.2 Teacher Training and Professional Development

Teacher training emerged as a critical area needing attention. Teachers across all schools noted the lack of adequate training for teaching in both indigenous languages and English. This finding aligns with the literature emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development for teachers in bilingual settings. Teachers need specialized training to effectively deliver content in both languages and to handle the challenges associated with bilingual instruction. The establishment of regional teaching hubs and teacher networks, as suggested by Teacher 2 in School B and Teacher 3 in School C, could provide essential support and facilitate the sharing of

best practices among educators. This finding is similar with the proposal that Benson et al. (2013) made, they proposed building capacity for multilingual education and highlighted the critical role of teacher training programs. Training initiatives should focus on enhancing teachers' linguistic proficiency, pedagogical skills, and intercultural competence to meet the diverse needs of multilingual learners. By equipping educators with the necessary knowledge and skills, education systems can ensure quality instruction in local languages.

5.3.3 Bilingual Education and Assessment

The issue of assessment in bilingual education was another area of concern. Pupils expressed frustration with the frequent switching between languages and suggested more structured bilingual education. Pupil 3 from School B and Pupil 4 from School C advocated for exams to be conducted in both languages to ensure fair assessment. Research supports the idea that bilingual assessments can help bridge the gap between instruction and evaluation, thereby providing a more accurate measure of students' knowledge and skills. This approach can mitigate the challenges faced by students who are more proficient in their native language but are tested primarily in English. This is aspect similar with what Makoni & Pennycook, (2017) advocated for they stated that the development of comprehensive language policies recognize and promote linguistic diversity, protect minority language rights, and ensure equitable access to education for all learners. Their research highlighted how clear policy frameworks provide guidance to policymakers, educators, and stakeholders, fostering coherence and consistency in language planning efforts and promoting the integration of local languages into formal education systems

By adopting these strategies and drawing on the insights gleaned from empirical research, education systems can navigate the complexities of implementing teaching in local languages and promote inclusive and culturally responsive education for all learners.

5.3.4 Community and Parental Involvement

The importance of community and parental involvement in bilingual education was also emphasized. Head teacher 2 suggested educating parents about the benefits of bilingual education, while Pupil 4 from School B recommended community involvement in language programs. This finding is consistent with literature highlighting the role of family and community support in the success of bilingual education programs. Engaging parents and

community members can help reinforce the value of bilingual education and contribute to a more supportive learning environment for learners. This is supported by the findings from García and Kleifgen's (2018) that revealed that engaging parents, caregivers, and community members in decision-making processes and program implementation fosters a sense of ownership and promotes the sustainability of language initiatives. The study also showed that communities can contribute valuable insights into local linguistic practices, cultural traditions, and educational priorities, shaping the design and implementation of language-in-education policies that resonate with their needs and aspirations.

5.4 Summary

In summary, the findings underscore the need for a balanced approach to bilingual education that includes phased implementation, the development of quality teaching materials, enhanced teacher training, and thoughtful assessment practices. Supporting literature validates these strategies, emphasizing the importance of gradual language transitions, comprehensive resource development, and community involvement in achieving successful bilingual education outcomes. Implementing these strategies can contribute to more effective teaching and learning in both local languages and English, ultimately preparing students for future academic and professional challenges.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study on an evaluation of the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality Education in Selected Primary Schools Mbala district

6.1 Conclusion

The discussion of the research findings study on an evaluation of the effects of using indigenous languages on the provision of quality Education in Selected Primary Schools Mbala district highlights a complex landscape of both opportunities and challenges. The study revealed that the teachers perceive the use of indigenous languages as a powerful tool for increasing classroom participation and preserving cultural identity.

The first research objective was to ascertain the effects of teaching in indigenous language on the provision of quality education. The findings revealed several key benefits and challenges associated with the use of indigenous languages in early education, particularly in Mbala District's primary schools. On the positive side, instruction in indigenous languages enhances student engagement and inclusivity by creating a more comfortable and confident learning environment. This approach helps foster greater participation, builds students' confidence, and provides a more culturally relevant educational experience, which can significantly improve overall educational outcomes. However, the challenges include a shortage of qualified teachers proficient in indigenous languages, difficulties in transitioning to English, and inconsistencies in language use and resource availability, which can hinder effective teaching and learning.

The second objective of the study was to identify the challenges of introducing Zambian indigenous language in primary schools. To address these challenges, the findings suggest several strategies. Implementing a phased or hybrid approach to language instruction, where indigenous languages are used in early years with a gradual transition to English, can balance cognitive and linguistic development while preparing students for future academic demands.

Additionally, developing comprehensive teaching materials in indigenous languages and providing targeted teacher training and professional development are crucial for effective bilingual education. Ensuring that assessments are conducted in both languages and enhancing community and parental involvement are also important strategies to support the successful implementation of bilingual education.

The third and last objective was to suggest applicable solution to the government on the strategies that lead to successful implementation of teaching in local language. The findings underscore the need for a well-balanced bilingual education approach that integrates indigenous languages and English, supported by adequate resources and training. By adopting these strategies, educators and policymakers can improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes, creating a more inclusive and supportive educational environment that respects and utilizes students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

6.2 Recommendations

1. **Enhanced Resource Allocation and Development:** The government should prioritize the creation and distribution of high-quality educational materials in indigenous languages. This includes textbooks, supplementary resources, and digital learning tools. Collaborations with local publishers and authors can ensure that these materials are contextually relevant and culturally appropriate. Leveraging digital platforms can help democratize access to educational resources, particularly in remote areas.
2. **Comprehensive Teacher Training Programs:** Implement comprehensive programs focused on bilingual education strategies and effective use of local languages in the classroom. This should include in-service training workshops, continuous professional development courses, and integration of local language teaching methodologies into teacher training curricula. Well-trained teachers are essential for managing classroom dynamics and facilitating meaningful learning.
3. **Strengthening Policy and Administrative Support:** Establish clear policies that mandate the use of local languages in early education, supported by adequate funding and administrative backing. This includes creating a monitoring and evaluation framework to

assess the implementation and impact of these policies, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement. Government commitment and support are crucial for translating policies into effective practice.

4. **Parental and Community Engagement:** Engage parents and the community through awareness programs that highlight the benefits of bilingual education and address concerns about English proficiency. Involving parents in school activities and decision-making processes can foster a supportive environment for local language instruction. Community involvement enhances the relevance and acceptance of educational initiatives and ensures sustainability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Interview Guide: Exploring the Effects of Indigenous Education on Quality Education

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gain insights into the effects of indigenous education on the quality of education. Your experiences and perspectives are valuable in understanding this important topic. The interview will take approximately 10 minutes. Please feel free to share your thoughts openly and honestly. Your responses will remain confidential.

1. Introduction and Warm-Up:

- Can you please start by introducing yourself and providing a brief overview of your background and experience related to indigenous education?
- What sparked your interest or involvement in the field of indigenous education?

2. Understanding Indigenous Education:

- How would you define indigenous education, and what does it encompass from your perspective?
- In your experience, what are some key principles or elements that distinguish indigenous education from mainstream educational approaches?

3. Effects on Quality Education:

- From your observations or experiences, what impact does indigenous education have on the overall quality of education for indigenous learners?
 - How do you believe indigenous education contributes to the academic, cultural, and holistic development of learners?
 - Can you provide examples or anecdotes illustrating how indigenous education practices have positively influenced the learning outcomes or experiences of students?
4. Challenges and Barriers:
- In your opinion, what are some of the challenges or barriers faced by indigenous education systems in delivering quality education?
 - How do these challenges affect the effectiveness and sustainability of indigenous education initiatives?
5. Integration and Collaboration:
- How do you think indigenous knowledge, languages, and cultural practices can be effectively integrated into mainstream educational curricula to enhance the quality of education?
 - From your perspective, what role should educational institutions, policymakers, and indigenous communities play in fostering collaboration and partnership to support indigenous education initiatives?
6. Cultural Preservation and Identity:
- How does indigenous education contribute to the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages, cultures, and traditions?
 - In what ways does indigenous education help promote a sense of cultural pride, identity, and belonging among indigenous learners?

7. Reconciliation and Understanding:

- How do you believe indigenous education can contribute to fostering greater understanding, respect, and reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples?
- Have you witnessed any instances where indigenous education initiatives have helped end tribal enmities or promote intercultural dialogue and understanding?

8. Future Directions:

- Where do you see the future of indigenous education heading, and what changes or improvements would you like to see in educational systems to better support indigenous learners?
- Are there any specific initiatives or strategies you believe could further enhance the impact and effectiveness of indigenous education programs?

9. Conclusion

- Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the effects of indigenous education on the quality of education?

Thank you for your time and valuable insights. Your input will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of indigenous education in shaping the quality of education for indigenous learners and beyond.

Appendix 2: Observation checklist

1. Language Used in Classroom:

- Is the indigenous language the primary medium of instruction?
- Are instructions clear and easily understood by learners?

2. Teacher-Student Interaction:

- Does the teacher use indigenous language to engage with students?
- Are students actively participating in discussions?

3. Student Engagement:

- Are students more responsive when indigenous languages are used?
- Do students ask questions or express themselves more comfortably?

4. Understanding of Content:

- Are students able to comprehend and follow lessons conducted in indigenous languages?
- Do they perform tasks and assignments correctly?

5. Teaching Materials:

- Are teaching materials available in indigenous languages?

- o Are visual aids or resources used effectively?

6. Student Performance:

- o How do students perform in activities conducted in indigenous languages compared to other languages?
- o Is there an improvement in comprehension or test results?

7. Challenges Faced:

- o Are there any difficulties teachers face in using indigenous languages?
- o Are there any misunderstandings or communication barriers observed?

8. Teacher Preparedness:

- o Does the teacher seem comfortable and fluent in using indigenous languages?
- o Are teaching methods adapted to the use of indigenous languages?



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ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Researcher: Nanyangwe Niza

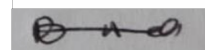
Supervisor: Dr. Mwinga C.

Title of research: A Critical Evaluation of the Effects of using Indigenous Languages on the Provision of Quality Education in Selected Primary Schools in Mbala District.

Thank you for application for research ethics clearance by Chalimbana University Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research.

The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to an applicable national legislation, professional code of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

Ethics approval is granted for the period July, 2024 to July 2025 on condition that the researcher will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved proposal by the supervisor. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date, July 2025.



Kind regards,

CHALIMBANA UNIVERSITY

Dr. R. Chikopela

Dr. A. D. Sikalumbi

Chairperson

Director

**Research Ethics Committee
Postgraduate**

Research, Innovations and



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12th July, 2024

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTORY LETTER- POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION

STUDENT NAME: NANYANGWIFE NIZAH

STUDENT ID NO: 227136638



Chalimbana University Directorate of Research Postgraduate Studies, Consultancy and Innovation would like to introduce the above named student pursuing Master ^{MED IN APPLIED} ~~LINGUISTICS~~..... The student is currently collecting data on the research study entitled "....." We request you to allow him collect data for his dissertation as it is part of the University requirements for the award of a postgraduate degree. ^{A critical evaluation of the effects of using indigenous languages of the provision of quality education in selected primary schools Mbata District.}
Your assistance rendered to the student will be greatly valued.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr. SIKALUMBI A. D.

DIRECTOR

RESEARCH, POST GRADUATE STUDIES, CONSULTANCY AND INNOVATION