



The 2014 Zambian Revised Literacy Policy in Primary Schools: Were Teachers Prepared to Implement it?

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy in selected primary schools in Kitwe district on the Copperbelt. The objectives that guided this study were; to establish the extent to which in-service teachers were prepared to implement the revised policy and to establish the challenges teachers faced in the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy. The study employed qualitative descriptive design. Purposive sampling technique was used to come up with 134 respondents, that is, 103 classroom teachers, 30 lecturers and 1 District Resource personal. Data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions. Focus group discussions enabled respondents to give detailed views on the 2014 revised literacy policy while interviews were used to collect data from the district resource centre coordinator and college/school administrators. The study found that while some teachers were trained, others were not. Even after commissioning the policy in 2014, schools still lacked teaching resources with which they could implement the policy. Teacher training institutions were finding it challenging to comprehensively revise their teacher education programme because they did not fully understand the content of the 2014 revised policy. The study recommended wider consultation between policy makers and implementers during formulation and or revision of literacy policies.

Keywords: Zambia, Teachers, preparedness, policy implementation, Kitwe District

1. BACKGROUND

The language of initial literacy policy in Zambia has undergone several changes from the time the missionaries introduced schools in Zambia. During the missionary time before 1890, local languages were used to teach and learn literacy. However, the coming of the British South African Company to Zambia and the eventual British rule in Zambia around 1924 saw more English being introduced in the school system. In 1953, there was a three tier language in education policy. This meant that a local language which was not necessarily a regional official language was used as medium of instruction for the first two years while a regional official language was used in the third and fourth year of schooling. Thereafter, English took over. Although this policy seemed friendly to the local people, the policy changed in 1966 (in independent Zambia) where English became the sole medium of instruction from grade one to University. Although this was clearly not a suitable policy, the 1977 revised policy still maintained the use of the English while making provision for the use of local languages where necessary. Since then, several twists and turns have taken place (in 1992 and 1996). In 1998, the primary reading programme (PRP) was introduced. This policy provided that the medium of initial literacy was a familiar language which was practically a regional official language according to province. It is important to note that all these changes took place in a bid to find a more suitable language in education policy which would help improve literacy levels in Zambia (Simwanga, 2006; Banda and Mwanza, 2017; Mwanza, 2012).

As hinted above, the policy changes which took place did not improve literacy levels among Zambian learners as reported by many studies (Sharma, 1974; SACMEQ, 1995, National Reading Committee (NRC), 1997; 1998; Williams, 1998; Nkamba and Kanyika, 1998; Serpell, Kanyika, 1999 and Matafwali, 2005). These studies revealed that the reading and writing levels among Zambian learners had continued to be exceptionally low. For example SACMEQ (1995) revealed that 25% of the grade six pupils who were tested and were able to read at a minimum level of only 3% were able to read at desirable levels. Another example is Matafwali (2005) whose study showed that 26% of the children that were involved in the study had some difficulties in reading. The result is that the majority of

primary school pupils were unable to read and write at required levels in spite of having passed through school and at some levels having been declared good readers. Many recent studies continue to show this (Khadim 2003, Manchishi 2004, Matafwali 2010, Mubanga 2010, Chibamba 2012, Mulenga 2012).

The Ministry of Education expected learners to improve literacy levels in primary schools as well as to improve oral competence in English language following the implementation of the programme by the teachers but this proved not to have had an impact on the literacy levels (ZNAS, 2014; SACMEQ, 2013; EGRA, 2013). These studies have revealed that causes of low literacy levels include poor infrastructure, insufficient reading materials; inadequate teaching and learning materials as well as mismatches between LOI and language of play. However, none of the studies attempted to study teacher preparedness for policy implementation.

With the coming of the new government in 2011, a revised policy was put in place where regional local languages were to be used as media of instruction in all subjects from grade one to grade four with the English language being taught as a subject first orally and then in writing (National Literacy Framework 2013). Like other language –in-Education policies on literacy teaching, teachers were expected to implement this policy in order to help learners acquire the skills of early reading (NLF, 2013). Teachers were expected to be orientated or re-orientated so as to effectively implement the revised policy. The use of local languages for literacy and as medium of instruction is not an alternative but a major need for the Zambian citizenry. Thus, there is need to also consider teacher preparedness on the implementation of the policies. As stated above, literacy levels have not improved despite the several policy revisions and studies done so far have mainly reported lack of teaching materials and lack of adequate time for the use of mother tongue as possible reasons for low literacy levels. Banda and Mwanza (2017) argue that lack of translanguaging by teachers in multilinguals classrooms of Zambia is the explanation behind continued low literacy levels in the country. Still, the teacher factor in terms of preparation for literacy policy implementation has not been probed. Thus, this study sought to establish the preparedness teachers or their readiness to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Although the Ministry of General Education has revised the literacy policy in primary schools in Zambia, little is known about teacher preparedness to implement this 2014 revised literacy policy in primary schools. The Ministry of General Education has tried to embark on literacy programmes to help improve literacy levels but this has proved not to yield good results which have been quite low (ZNAS, 2014; SACMAQ, 2013; EGRA, 2013). These studies have revealed that causes of low literacy levels include poor infrastructure, insufficient reading materials; inadequate teaching and learning materials. However, none attempted to study teacher preparedness for policy implementation. Thus, it is not known whether primary teachers were adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy in order to achieve the objective of improved literacy levels in primary schools. Stated as a question, the problem under investigation was: Were teachers adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy in primary schools in Kitwe District?

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared for the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy.

1.3. Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy.
- To establish the challenges teachers face in the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy.

1.4. Research Questions

The research was guided by the following research questions:

- Were teachers adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy in Kitwe District?
- What challenges do teachers face when implementing the 2014 revised literacy policy?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study may help the Ministry of General Education become aware of the challenges teachers face in the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy. It would also help the policy makers to know the importance of preparing the implementers for any policy changes. It would help to provide information whether or not teacher preparation in Zambia for policy changes is a contributing factor to low literacy levels. Further the findings will contribute to the body of knowledge on the relationship between teacher preparation and education policy implementation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to fully understand teacher preparation, there is need to understand the two terms teacher and preparation. A teacher is a person who helps others to acquire knowledge, competencies or values www.google.co.zam whereas preparation is the activity or process of making something/someone ready for or ready for something. Therefore, teacher preparation is the process of making a teacher ready for something. In order to make the teacher ready there is need to undergo a variety of activities which will help him/her to help others acquire knowledge and or other skills. This therefore, means that for teaching to be effective, a teacher has to be provided with appropriate and intensive training to ensure that they know when and how to teach using specific methods (NRP, 2000). With is in mind, it is important then to ensure that the teacher who is a driver in the success of any teaching needs is prepared before implementation takes place.

A teacher plays an important role in the learner's acquisition of knowledge and development of skills needed in their future survival. It is also believed that competency – oriented teaching has become the most outstanding aspect of teachers' responsibilities. A teacher who lacks competencies will not deliver as expected. Konstantinos and Charl (2015) states that, the core of teacher's knowledge is firstly linked to the exhaustive mastery of his subject – matter and adequate methods and means to convey it. Teachers therefore, have a great role to play if children are to learn. This can only be achieved if the teacher has received proper training for him or her to deliver effectively. Once the teacher knows how to handle the learners, learning becomes easy. The education system in Zambia like any other country keeps on changing, because of the changing nature of education, teachers are themselves supposed to be perpetual learners. Currently the MoGE has come up with yet another policy hence the need to equip teachers with the knowledge necessary for the change. Goessi (2002) states that, in-service training is an effective means of keeping teachers alert to constantly adapting their teaching to the changing social environment. Therefore, the implementation of any given instruction depends on how knowledgeable the implementer is, hence the need for adequate preparation.

On the other hand, the practical theory also blends well for this study as it looks at intermingling of personal experience which transmits values, skills, and knowledge to learners. Teachers place great emphasizes on the content knowledge, skills and the knowledge that learners are supposed to learn (Darling, Hammond and Branford, 2005). It is believed that for any success in teaching to take place, the teacher needs to be more knowledgeable than his/her learners and hence the need to prepare them for any changes that take place in the education system. The practical theory focuses on the teacher's ability to be practical, stressing that every teacher possesses a practical theory of teaching. According to this theory, the strongest determining factor of a teacher is their experiences in terms of preparation (handal and Lauvas 1987 in Chella, 2015). Zeichner and Liston (1990:9) also support teacher preparation in their statement as they state, "teaching demands an approach to teacher preparation that reflects the complex and uncertain nature of the work." This theory also assumes that a teacher is someone who is practical and that he/she has sufficient knowledge in any given subject matter pertaining to his/her task. This therefore, means that for a teacher to implement any plan he/she must have knowledge and be able to apply the content practically for the success of that developed plan. Thus, whether or not teachers in Kitwe District were adequately prepared to successfully implement the revised literacy policy was not known and it will be shown in chapter four (findings) whether or not they were prepared.

In order for the study to be fully understood, it is important now to discuss the role a teacher plays in the implementation of any education policy. A teacher is an agent of change and helps others to acquire knowledge, competencies, values and skills. He/she is expected to be the more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, in order for any policy to be a success, there is need for the implementer to be knowledgeable and this knowledge can only be acquired through adequate preparation through training, orientation or re-orientation, or through in-service training (World Bank, 1980), Fullan, 1993 agrees with views from world bank as noted from the following statement which says that, effective curriculum change and implementation requires time, personal interaction, in-service training and other forms of people based support. Due to the changing nature of the education sector, teachers are themselves supposed to be perpetual learners. Consequently, this education and training ought to be conceived as a continuum, a lifelong, flexible process (Musset, 2010:12). In-service training for teachers is of great importance as it makes teachers more effective in their jobs, particularly after so many years of experience in teaching. Thus, teacher preparation should not be restricted to class room practice but should apply even when it comes to policy formulation related to education. Whether this teacher preparation took place or not in view of the revised literacy policy was the basis of this study.

Going by the current study which looked at the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy whose mandate was to teach initial literacy in a local familiar language (NLF, 2013), the teacher really needs to have the knowledge of the regional language to be used in a particular zone hence the need for adequate preparation. This view is supported by Scribner (1984) and Vygotsky quoted by John- Steiner and Mahn (1986) in Masatunya (2014) who says language is socially constructed and occurs within a social context and that more experienced members of the community play a big part in what the child becomes in future as they help that child develop higher order process. This will make the teacher help foster positive attitude towards literacy as he/she performs the role of a central element. He/she will also be able to engage other stakeholders in the application of the policy-parents in this case. A part from being a role model, he/she needs to act as a facilitator by providing a supportive and a stimulating environment; organizing purposeful activities and enabling learners to develop literacy skills. This can be achieved when the facilitator permits learners some freedom in stating what they would like to do and by providing a wide range of resources for learning such as audiovisual materials, books, and many others including the facilitator's own experience and understanding which learners may want to use in their self-directed learning (Yelon, 1977). The teacher will only be able to meet these demands if one has been adequately prepared for these tasks from planning through to implementation. If a teacher is involved from planning he/she would be able to effectively implement the policy. This is so because he/she will understand what the policy states in terms of when transition should take place from literacy in local language into literacy in English language as well as the aspects involved in teaching literacy at different levels.

In the section that follows, the study analysed literature based on teacher preparation in relation to policy formulation and its content and implication on the teaching and learning process in the class room. This review of literature is divided into three major parts-global, regional (continental) and local, that is, Zambian situations. We start with the global review.

Cheung and Wong (2012) conducted a study to establish the factors affecting the implementation of curriculum reform in Hong Kong. The findings showed that they were a number of factors affecting the implementation of curriculum reform. For example, teachers' professional development pertaining to the curriculum reform, teachers' mastery of learning, teaching and assessment strategies were some of the most important factors. This is in line with Ahmadi and Lukman (2015) who argued that teachers are the major hub around which the successful implementation of new curriculum revolves. In addition, the Nigerian National Policy on Education states that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (NPE, 2004). This means therefore that, teachers should be provided with sufficient professional development training in various areas if curriculum implementation has to be effective.

According to the Ahmadi and Lukman (2015) suggestions given were that, each teacher must gain ownership of the curriculum; develop an in-depth knowledge of the appropriate teaching methodologies and approaches and become familiar with the specific content objectives for each subject area. This is an indication that for any effective implementation of any curriculum or policy,

there is need for adequate teacher preparation as everything entirely depends on a teacher. Miller (2009) agrees with the above assertion as he state that, ensuring that teachers are rich in information and rich in skills that enable them improve student achievement requires focusing attention from leaders at all levels. This means that there is need for support from policymakers as well as other stakeholders if teachers are to effectively implement any given policy. It is within this context that that the researcher thought of looking at teacher preparedness on the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy in Zambian primary schools.

In Uganda, Letshabo (2002) conducted a study to evaluate Breakthrough to Literacy in Uganda, which revealed that the level of preparation by teachers was good but the only set back was that the preparation was not sufficient. According to the study, teachers lacked knowledge on how the learners where to proceed from one stage to another. The study further showed that many teachers had problems on how to follow stages in teaching of literacy to their learners especially the difference between stage 2 and 3 activities. It was established that where learners were supposed to be in different pace groups and stages in terms of activities, they were given activities that were suitable for learners at a lower stage or a higher stage. This suggests that teacher preparation is very important if learners are to succeed. Cheung and Wong (2012) argue that it is important to enhance teachers' understanding and build capacity if the implementation of curriculum reform is to be successful. While Letshabo's (2002) study evaluated the breakthrough to literacy in Uganda, it reveals that teacher preparation was inadequate. This study seems to provide a factor which this study was trying to establish although it does not clearly state how the policy implementation was done.

Most of the scholars conducted in Zambia have concentrated on looking at teacher training neglecting the teacher who is already in the field. For example, Chella (2012) carried out a study on preparedness of trainee teachers in initial literacy while on school experience in primary schools. Findings showed that the majority trainee teachers were not well prepared to teach initial literacy and this was as a result of teacher trainers not being competent on these literacy policy issues. This on its own suggests that most teacher trainers lack knowledge on how to impart literacy skills to trainee teachers which further points to inadequate preparation on their part.

Manchinshi and Mwanza (2016) conducted a study on teacher preparation at the University of Zambia where they wanted to establish whether peer teaching was still a useful strategy. In their findings they established that while peer teaching was useful, its implementation was faced with a lot challenges and inconsistencies which made it less effective. Some of the challenges pointed out where student teacher not being acquainted with the practicalities of teaching, time for practice was not enough, lack of adequate teaching staff to meet the huge numbers of student teachers and many others. From the findings, it is clear that teacher preparation is very important if teachers are to effectively deliver to the learners.

Other studies in Zambia, Manchinshi and Masaiti (2011), Manchinshi and Mwanza (2013), Mulenga and Luangala (2015) and Mwanza (2016) all report that teacher preparation at the University of Zambia is problematic. They state that student teachers often graduate with inadequate practical skills while most of the content is irrelevant to what is taught in schools. While these studies have focused on various aspects of teacher training, none of them has attempted to consider how adequate teachers are prepared to implement the literacy policies in primary schools in Zambia.

The problem at hand is how adequate were teachers (in-service teachers) prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy? Since the curriculum changed in schools, one expects that teachers were prepared or trained on what the policy was all about and how to implement it in the classroom. Thus, the findings of this study will show whether or not teachers were prepared and the implication which arise from the status of teacher preparation.

3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This study employed a qualitative design and data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions. The target population for the study comprised all primary school teachers from all primary schools from all the zones in Kitwe District on the Copperbelt Province, all primary schools in Kitwe district, the Kitwe District Resource Centre Coordinator (DRCC) who is in charge of in-service training in the district and all lecturers from primary colleges of education and all primary

Colleges of Education. The sample comprised two (2) schools per Zone which came to a total number of eight (8) schools as the researcher selected four (4) Zones out of the eight (8). For each school, a maximum of fifteen (15) teachers were sampled bringing the total to 120 teachers but the researcher only managed to collect data from 103 teachers. The district recourse coordinator and school/college administrators were interviewed while focus group discussions were conducted with teachers and college lecturers. Analytically, the qualitative data was coded into themes. In other words, thematic analysis would be used. Braun & Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a method of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data. This was used because it is a method used for qualitative data so as to help put similar data together for easy analyzing.

4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In the previous chapter, the methodology used in the study was presented and justification to its choice was given. In this chapter, the findings of the research are presented which have highlighted a number of issues in line with research questions and research objectives. Presentations of findings for this study, is done according to the objectives. These themes are presented both qualitatively and quantitatively through the use of questionnaires, interviews and lesson demonstration.

4.1. Teacher Preparedness to Implement the 2014 Revised Literacy Policy

Objective number 1 sought to establish whether teachers were adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy. This was important to determine whether or not teachers received adequate preparation for them to effectively implement the revised policy. In order to collect data for this objective, interviews and focus group discussions were used.

4.1.1. Teachers' Preparedness: Teachers' Views

On the type of training teachers received, the findings showed that most of them received training through GRACE meetings; others received their training through Continuing and Profession Development (CPD) while others still received training through workshops. The findings also showed that a few teachers were not trained as the people who went for training did not come back to train them. This is what one of the participants had to say:

Some of us did not receive any training because only the senior Teacher, the School In-set Coordinator and one Grade 1 teacher were invited for a workshop. These people when they came back they did not orient us but instead they asked us to observe the Grade 1 teacher teach. (Interviewee 1)
bambi (some of us) we were not trained but batwebelefye ati (we were told that) you should observe grade one teachers teach. (interviewee 4)

Another participant agreed with the first respondent on what was expected on the issue of training and had this to say,

We expected the Ministry of Education to train all of us because we all needed to have full information on the new literacy policy works but only teachers teaching Grades 1 and 2 so far have been trained.(interviewee 5)

On the follow up question of whether the training received provided adequate training or not, the respondents had different views. Some felt it was inadequate because the period involved in training them was very short, while others felt it was adequate. Those who felt the training they received was adequate based their argument on the fact that they had enough time to grasp the content of the revised policy. One of the participants for example had this to say.

I attended a workshop for three days and what was given was adequate as the trainer was able to go through all the steps for the Primary Literacy Programme(PLP) lesson journey. I feel

I was adequately prepared.(interviewee 7)

On the other hand, the interviewee who felt that the training was not adequate and had this to say.

One day CPD was inadequate as most of the things such as, Methodology was not adequately explained and most of the materials needed for the training were not available the time we were being trained.(interviewee 8)

During the focus group discussion, a lot of other issues were raised on the implementation of the revised literacy policy. All the respondents had a complaint on the issue of being consulted on the formulation of the policy. They expected the policy makers to involve them as people on the grass root. They felt that being involved in the initial stage of the policy would have lessened on the issues being experienced now as they are implementing the policy. Majority of them shared the following views with the interviewer. This is what another participant said;

We were not consulted and yet we are the grassroots and We are the contact persons who are with the learners and Know their abilities and what would work well for them and yet the policy makers have never consulted us in any change.(inter. 3)

Another group of participants agreed with the views of the first group on the issue of being consulted. The following people involved in the interview had this to say.

We are directly involved with the learners and for any policy to succeed teachers are supposed to be consulted because we know the best methods to be used on the learners...(inter.11) Being the key players it is important that we are consulted so that We lessen on the trial and error which goes on in the education system... (inter. 15) 'yes because we are not consulted the Ministry keeps on Changing even programmes which can work if only they are modified. (Inter.13).

On the follow up question of whether being consulted had any importance to the teachers. The answer was, Yes.

It is important we are the people on the ground and we have First hand information and knowledge over what is happening (Interviewee number 16)

At times some education policies are perfect and they do not need to be changed drastically (interviewee 15)

The policy makers do not know the challenges teachers and pupils face for example for the grade 1 programme for the literacy programme the weekly schedule does not exclude the holidays on the calendar as they Monday, Tuesday instead of day 1, 2, 3 etc. (interviewee number 14).

4.1.2. Teacher Preparedness: Views from District Resource Coordinator

In order to get full data on question one and the follow up questions one of the district resource personnel was also involved. This was done so as to have a representation from other Zones which were not directly involved in the interview. The findings from the participants showed that not all the teachers in the district were trained during the workshop which was held on the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy but that, only a Grade 1 teacher and a senior teacher from each school from all the Zones in the district were trained. The results further revealed that the teachers who were

trained were expected to go and train the other teachers who remained in schools. One of the interviewee had this to say.

The type of training the teachers received varied. When the policy was about to be rolled out in schools, the senior teacher, the SIC and one Grade 1 teacher were trained through a three days workshop. Thereafter the Zonal In-Set Coordinator together with his/her team was supposed to train the rest of the teachers as well as at school level, teacher who were not trained were supposed to do some lesson observation as well as receive training through CPD or GRACE meetings.(inter, 24)

Asked whether the respondent would say the training teachers received was adequate to enable them implement the policy and whether they were sure all the teachers received training in the various schools. The findings from the respondent showed that, all the teachers were adequately trained because each school had a representative during the training workshop. The results further showed that the people involved were those in charge of training such people as; the school inset coordinators (SIC) and zonal inset coordinators (ZIC) and the senior teachers. Therefore, this combination according to the respondent was assurance of all teachers being trained.

If there are teachers saying they were not trained then those are just reporting themselves. You know change is very difficult to adapt but all we know is that they all have been adequately trained and things are happening as seen through assessment. Where results are not showing it is just attitude. (interviewee 24).

The researcher wanted to know why only one teacher was trained and only one teaching in Grade 1. This was the response from one of the interviewee;

Teachers are too many here in Kitwe. We have eight Zones and because of finances schools could not afford to send all the teachers. We trained the Grade 1 teachers mainly because the new programme was using a phrasing out arrangement so first it was the Grade 1 teachers the following time the Grade 2's until the time we would train the Grade 4 teachers.(24)

Asked whether training three teachers per school was adequate or not. The interviewee indicated that on one hand it was and on the other it was not. The interviewee said that since the people who were involved in the training were in-charge of disseminating information on the changes which were taking place in schools there was assurance that information would trickle down to the other teachers who were not trained. On the other hand there was fear that some information may not be disseminated as presented and that may give challenges to the teachers who were not involved in the initial training. This is what was said.

Yes and no. Yes in the sense that each school has a SIC who is supposed to share whatever new programmes were on board. No in that if the trained teacher did not get the information correctly there would be some miscommunication. If we had the money we would have loved the lower section all the teachers trained, but like I said earlier attitude would hinder proper dissemination of information to the would be recipient.(interviewee number 24).

What comes out of the findings on teacher preparedness is that while most teachers stated that they were not adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy, district coordinators and officials claimed that teachers were adequately trained.

4.2. Challenges Teachers Face in Implementing the New Literacy Policy

The second objective sought to establish the challenges which teachers faced in implementing the revised literacy policy. In order to get more and valid data, qualitative method was used involving the teachers, lecturers and the District Resource Centre Coordinators (DRCCs) using semi-structured questions.

4.2.1. Challenges Teachers' face in Implementing the 2014 Literacy Policy: Teachers' Views

Most of the respondents said that there were a number of challenges which they were facing in the implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy. Some of the challenges highlighted were, inadequate training by the policy makers, lack of correct materials to use, rigidity on the part of those monitoring policy implementation, translation of content from English into Local languages, absenteeism by learners, use of local language for a long period of time, inadequate time to teach the stipulated sounds. Other findings mentioned were lack of understanding of the concepts used in the revised literacy programme, its content and many others. All these were attributed to lack of consultative meetings as well as involving the key players fully in the implementation process.

One of the participants had this to say:

Inadequate preparation on the part of training and availability of materials cause a lot of challenges on the implementation of the revised literacy policy. I say so because not all the teachers were trained for the revised literacy policy making it very difficult to help if the one who was trained is not in school. (Interviewee number 4) further added that this also makes us as teachers very uncomfortable as most of the literacy concepts look strange to some of us who were not trained.

Findings on the issue of lack of materials to be used for the revised literacy policy showed that the revised policy especially the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) was not well introduced as the organizers were not fully prepared citing inadequate materials to go with the training. one participant had this to say.

This new programme was not well introduced because the people Who came to train did not bring with them the required materials. So you would find that they are explaining things in abstract. The previous policy had all the materials readily available and it was very easy to follow even if one was not there. But this one was not well organised.(inter.15)

Furthermore, findings revealed that the materials for Grade3 and 4 were all written in English language except for literacy and Zambian languages which were rightly written in Zambian languages. Another participant also said,

the policy requires us to teach and write all subjects in local languages. And yet books which CDC has brought in schools are in English language. This is a serious problem because it is difficult for teachers to translate into local language. Translation has been left for individual teachers to do, making it difficult to translate as a result we end up teaching in local language and give activities in English as stipulated in the books we have received.(interv.12)

According to the respondents, time allocated to teaching the two sounds in a week proved to be another challenge. According to them most learners were unable to grasp the two sounds in the one week as a result teachers were made to re-teach the sounds over and over. This was also as a result of most learners being absent from school. This is what was said.

One hour is not enough if learners are to adequately acquire

the skill of reading. This programme is very good, but the only problem is that most of the learners miss lessons and as a result we are forced to go back to the sounds which were taught to their friends because moving ahead means those who were not present will have a problem so it is very difficult to strictly follow the schedule.(interviewee 16)

On the challenges highlighted, teachers said that on teacher preparation the issue remained in the hands of zones as well as school levels. Teachers were expected to receive more training through CPD and GRACE meetings and training was to be in phases that is, first the Grade 1 teachers followed by the Grade two teachers until the Grade 4 teachers. The findings showed that not all the grade one teachers were not trained at once due to lack of funds. The district resource officer acknowledged the challenge in terms of materials not being made available at once and attributed this to the economy of the nation. The officer further stated that the head teachers as well as colleges of education were however expected to secure materials to use for the implementation of the revised policy by themselves and not to entirely wait for Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). The findings also revealed that it was expected of teachers to be resourceful and make use of the other old materials which were available in schools and colleges of education. From the findings it was evident that it was only the methods which changed and not the content, and so most of the old materials were still valid.

One respondent had this to say,

Most of the schools as well as colleges of education have a lot of old books which they can still refer to in terms of content because what keep changing are the methods but the content remains the same. So these can still be useful.(inter. 24)

Another challenge which was noted by some teachers was the introduction of yet another language in the name of using local familiar language. It was observed that since the policy requires the teachers to use a local familiar language there was an introduction of another new language if not languages. Another participant had this to say.

It is sad that in this country we are now bringing more confusion to the learners by allowing teachers to change English concepts into Zambian local languages and call it familiar local language. I observed a student teacher teaching names of shapes in a language which I would say is not even local language, things like 'shikweya', for square, 'talayango' for triangle and things like 'litelashi' for literacy, 'Geledi' for grade. Really, you know this is something else. I don't know where we are going as a nation which has more than 72 languages.(interviewee 7)

In short, the findings have shown that most of the teachers were not adequately prepared to implement the 2014 Zambian language in education policy. Some of the challenges identified were inadequate training, lack of teaching and learning materials, insufficient time to teach the sounds, challenges of translating from English language into Zambian local languages and many more. The findings revealed that once these challenges are resolved, the 2014 revised literacy policy would be implemented effectively.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents an analysis of the findings presented in the previous chapter. Study objectives will guide the discussion. During the discussion, references will be made to similar or contrasting views from the other studies done elsewhere within the theme of teacher preparation for policy or curriculum reform implementation in the education sector. The following are the sub themes based on

the research objectives: to establish the extent to which teachers were prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy and to establish the challenges teachers faced in implementing the 2014 revised literacy policy. At the end of the discussion a summary is presented.

5.1. To Establish the Extent to which Teachers were Prepared to Implement the 2014 Revised Literacy Policy

From the findings presented in the study, it was clear that the teachers were not adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy while 36.9% of teachers reported that they were completely untrained. This in itself is very dangerous as it compromises quality and the objectives of the programme may end up not being achieved as planned (Onyeachu, 2008, Babalola, 2004 and Mpaka, 2005).

The findings revealed that the type of training the teachers received varied from GRACE meetings, CPD, to briefings. According to the findings 1 teacher = 0.9% participant received training through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and in-service training, while 8 teachers = 7.8% received through CPD and GRACE meetings. The results further showed that, 17 teachers = 16.5% received training through CPD only; 18 teachers = 17.5% received through GRACE meetings only while 21 teachers = 20.3% received theirs through a workshop. About 38 teachers = 36.9% did not receive any training. Some participants complained of short period of time for their training but this is in line with the requirements of the type of training they attended. CPD is a form of an in-service training which can be organised for a short period and often within the location of school (Konstatinos, 2015). The period of time for CPD depends on the type of training as observed from Fullan (1993) who suggests that effective curriculum change and implementation requires time, personal interaction and in-service training if implementers are to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and values. This is further supported by (Cheung and Wong 2012) in their study as they argue that, in order to help teachers enhance understanding and build capacity in the implementation of curriculum reform preparation has to be adequate, and that teachers should be provided with sufficient professional development training. This also resonates well with Goessi (2002) who states that, in-service training is an effective means of keeping teachers alert to constantly adapting their teaching to the changing social environment. Therefore, the implementation of any given instruction depends on how knowledgeable the implementer is, hence the need for adequate preparation. Moreover, lack of training and through understanding of the policy. As Mwanza (2017) noted, teachers' misconceptions about a method or policy negatively affect implementation as some teachers may not do what the policy requires.

During the discussion the participants had different opinions on adequacy of the type of training they received as those who were trained through CPD and GRACE meetings felt it was inadequate. From their responses, it seems they had misinterpretation on the role of CPD as observed from MoE (2002) whose observation on CPD was that there was need for regular on-going development in a process that is never complete. According to Ministry of Education, this is because teacher's professional life revolves around two areas of never-ending growth and progression. Thus, provision must also be made for the on-going development of each member of the profession. Therefore, the foregoing makes CPD mandatory for all practicing teachers. This resonates with what Manchishi and Mwanza (2013), Manchishi and Mwanza (2016) and Manchishi and Mwanza (2018) found that mostly, initial teacher training is not adequate for teachers and that even the teacher training strategies such as peer teaching are do not adequately prepare teachers for their dynamic job of teaching. Thus, this suggests that once there are changes in the education system there is need to conduct continuous professional development or other forms of training to continuously train and retrain teachers owing to the nature of the curriculum and the teaching profession.

Another participant informed the researcher that they were not trained by the policy makers but instead they were asked to observe the teachers who were trained teach. According to the researcher, this was not good because the implementers needed to interact with the information rather than observing a lesson where a teacher teaching would not adequately explain the concepts for the other teachers to fully understand if they were to implement. NRP (2000) recommends that for teaching to be effective, a teacher has to be provided with appropriate and intensive training. Intensive training prepares one adequately in terms of content and pedagogical knowledge. Another participant informed the researcher that the training was done through a briefing. One wonders whether a briefing could adequately prepare a teacher to effectively implement any policy or curriculum reform.

Manchishi & Banda (2015) in their writing also points out the importance of preparing teachers for the betterment of a learner as they state that the desired goal in the field of teaching learning process cannot be achieved until the teacher is properly trained. This is also supported by Matafwali (2010) who stresses that teachers should be accorded opportunities to acquire deeper understanding through activities that promote literacy skills. Further, MoE (1996:108) states ‘training and professional development underpins what a teacher can accomplish in school.’ The essential competencies required in every teacher are mastery of the materials that is to be taught, and skill in communicating that material to pupils. This seems to suggest that the teacher needs to be adequately prepared for him/her to help in achieving the intended goal and that the understanding of their field and how to teach requires lengthy and careful attention. A briefing, for example would not help deepen teachers’ understanding as these meetings are there just for brief announcements.

On the other hand, there were 38 teachers in the sample amounting to 36.9% of the participants who were not trained but they were expected to implement the revised policy. According to these participants, they were not in school when their colleagues were being trained and all they were asked was to observe the other teachers teach. They informed the researcher that due to their incompetence on the revised literacy policy they were not ready to handle lower grades. Here we see power being resisted and subtly being negotiated (Mwanza, 2016 and Fairclough, 2000). Instead of being in school to receive training, teachers were away and later, no training was organized for them. Instead, they needed to learn through observation. Here, we see the juxtaposition of the resistance and negotiation of power by teachers and trainers respectively. However, this has implications on learning outcomes. Teachers who did not attend training clearly lacked teacher competence to effectively implement the policy (Baumert et al, 2010; Darling – Hammand, 2000; Darling – Hammand, 2005). This implies that if learners are to achieve success in any field of study, the teacher who is the driver should have the expertise in that particular field so as to help them (learners) in the acquisition of the intended knowledge and this calls for adequate training on the part of the teacher. Despite teachers not being adequately prepared, the MoGE went ahead to roll out the 2014 revised literacy policy. This in itself results into what Wodak et al (1997) calls exploitation of power where the Ministry does not train a teacher but asks him/her to implement what he/she has not been trained for.

Apart from inadequate training, majority of the participants revealed that the policymakers did not consult them during the formulation of the literacy policy. Consultation according to the participants was very important as they (teachers) were the best people to advise policymakers on how literacy related issues were to be implemented as they were the ones on the ground. Obinna (2007) observed that in most cases, teachers are deliberately neglected when major decisions on education and matters concerning their welfare are taken. Mkpa (2007) remarked emphatically that as an important person in the programme of curriculum implementation, the teacher must be involved at all stages of the curriculum process. The above statements seems to suggest that for any successful curriculum or policy reform to take place the teacher as the major factor in the implementation exercise needs to be consulted and involved at every stage (Lassa, 2007 and Shulman, 2008). Lassa (2007) further suggests that ensuring that staff is qualified is a crucial stage in implementing any new policy or curriculum. This statement is in itself important as it shows that for any curriculum or policy to be properly implemented, the implementer must be adequately qualified.

In summary, the discussion on the extent to which teachers were prepared to implement the 2014 revised literacy policy it is clear that majority of the teachers were not adequately prepared while 36.9% were not trained. From the discussion it was clear that teacher preparation for the implementation of any curriculum or policy reform is very important if the desired goal in the field of teaching learning process has be to achieved. The discussion further revealed that teachers need to be accorded opportunities to acquire deeper understanding through adequate training and professional development which underpins what a teacher can accomplish in school. it was further revealed that although implementers were not consulted during the formulation of the literacy policy there was great need to do so if policy implementation was to yield good results.

5.2. Challenges Teachers Face in Implementing the 2014 Revised Literacy Policy

This study revealed a number of challenges among them were; inadequate materials, medium of instruction in the lower section, limited content and pedagogical knowledge on the part of teachers absenteeism among learners and many more.

5.2.1. Inadequate and Inappropriate Materials

Findings revealed that the revised literacy policy lacked materials to be used in teaching of literacy. It was observed that when the policy was rolled out in schools, materials to go with the revised policy were not in place. This made teaching very difficult as teachers were unable to teach effectively. Some participants cited grades 3 and 4 as grades which faced challenges as the materials were not available for teachers to use. This contradicts Ivowi (2004) who noted that to ensure that curriculum must be effectively implemented; tools and materials must be provided sufficiently. Further participants revealed that materials which were sent in schools especially for grades 3 and 4 were all written in English language as opposed to using materials written in local familiar language. This according to the participants was a challenge as teachers were expected to teach and explain concepts in a local language which meant therefore that, they were expected to translate from English language to local language. The paradox where the government introduces policy where teaching should be done in local languages but they provide materials in English a best be understood by Haugen (2009) who argues that education policies are normally not characterized by progression or retrogression but by contradictions. Unfortunately, this contradiction has serious potential to jeopardize effective policy implementation as most of the participants were unable to translate some concepts as they lacked skills of translation. This is in Masatunya (2014) in his study; shortage of materials had made teaching of literacy unsuccessful. It is also important to note that although the MoGE did not provide adequate materials in schools, teachers were also not resourceful in providing for example simple story books in a local language for grade 1 learners. Teachers needed to be creative and innovative in applying notions of semiotic remediation and resemiotisation in resource mobilization and use (Mwanza, 2016).

5.2.2. Medium of Instruction

Findings revealed that most of the teachers in the lower section were using both English and local familiar language to teach all the subjects. This was mostly observed from teachers handling grades 3 and 4. From the discussions it was clear that some teachers were teaching in both English and local language while some taught in local familiar language but gave activities in English language. This contradicts with what the 2013 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework suggests on the use of local Zambian languages as a media of instruction from early childhood to Grade 4. The use of either English or Zambian languages to teach all subjects in lower section but give activities in English language is confusion on the part of the learners. This practice by most teachers contradicts with what is stated by the Ministry of General Education (see MoGE, 2014: iv). This scenario is dangerous as it weakens the intended purpose of the policy in that the learners may end up not acquiring the reading skills as the teachers are not making use of the required tool of instruction correctly. It may also make the policy fail like other policies which have since been discontinued (see Tambulukani, 2004). This clearly shows that teachers were not well informed on what the revised policy says on language of instruction and that due to inadequate provision of materials for the revised policy teachers had no access to information on the difference between literacy instruction and medium of instruction (see ZECF, 2013; NLF, 2013; MoGE, 2014). It may also mean that teachers lack adequate proficiency in the official language of classroom instruction such that trans-languaging as practiced by the teachers is a result of language deficiencies in the language of instruction.

5.2.3. Limited Content and Pedagogical Knowledge on the part of Teachers on the Revised Literacy Policy

From the findings teachers generally displayed some knowledge of content and pedagogy. However, all the teachers interviewed showed some gaps especially on some concepts on PLP. For example on the components of PLP, it was evident from the responses that teachers lacked basic knowledge on Phonemic awareness, fluency as well as issues to do with when to teach literacy in English language. Other issues were to do with the PLP lesson procedure, were teachers were expected to teach learners starting from teaching sound awareness to sentence construction. From the lesson observed, most of the teachers were unable to follow the procedure which lacked consistence as teachers omitted the phonemic awareness stage. This contradicts with the National Literacy Framework (2013) guidelines which gives five components of literacy and explains what each of these components is and how literacy was to be taught using the PLP (phonic based) approach.

From the discussions with the teachers it was clear that while some orientations were done to them to prepare them for implementation of the 2014 revised literacy policy training was not adequately done. With such gaps in the teachers' knowledge on the revised literacy policy, it is not possible for one to effectively implement the policy. What this means is that, the policy will not achieve the intended purpose of helping learners in early grade reading. Ukeje (2006) writes that teachers are the pivot of any educational system. Lassa (2007) further views the teacher as key element to proper development of the child. In order for the teacher to help impart knowledge in a learner he/she must have both content and pedagogical knowledge. The success of any educational system in the world relies wholly on the teacher for it is on him/her that implementation of any programme relies. It is for this reason that Zambia's education policy, educating our Future attach great importance to the training of quality teachers for the attainment of quality education to be achieved (MoE, 1996).

5.2.4. Teaching Two Sounds in a Week

The PLP programme weekly schedule requires that teachers should teach two sounds in a week. From the findings, majority of the teachers interviewed explained that the teaching of two sounds in week was too much on the learners. From the discussions held teachers were of the view that teaching one sound was better and helpful in the acquisition of reading skills. According to them, learners needed more practice than rushing them through and end up achieving nothing. Observations by the teachers over the schedule were that it was rigid as they were supposed to follow it to the letter. They informed the researcher that Standard Officers and other monitors expected them to follow the schedule and that once they were found lagging behind schedule they were not ready to listen to their (teachers') explanation. Asked what they do to help the slow learners since they were to follow the schedule to the letter. Information was that teachers give force information to the Standard Officers so as to go with what they expect meanwhile what was on the ground was different. This on itself is not good as it does not show a good picture of what goes on in schools. This resonates well with Critical Discourse Analysis (2000) of power relations.

5.2.5. Absenteeism on the Part of Learners

Absenteeism posed a challenge on the acquisition of the literacy skills. The findings revealed that teachers were finding it difficult to help learners acquire the literacy skills as learners were not consistence in attending to lessons. The teachers informed the researcher that they were expected to teach two sounds in a week but this was a challenge as most of the learners were not in school regularly forcing them to repeat same sounds over and over again. According to the findings, teachers would teach for example forty learners today the other day when they are introducing another sound some out of the forty might miss the lesson making the teacher to repeat the same sounds twice or three times in a week. This type of scenario retards progression on the part of the learners and demoralizes the teachers' morale of teaching.

The findings of this study implicate the attitudes of teachers, policy makers, and district coordinators. While pupil absenteeism can be attributed to different reasons, lack of motivation (positive attitudes towards school) is another. Some teachers also did not attend the school based training because of attitudes they held about the revised policy and the peers who were supposed to train them. Further, policy makers and district coordinators and policy makers roll out the policy without providing the tools of implementation. This also implicitly that policy makers were not very reflective of their actions. In this context, there is need for positive attitudes towards the revised policy by all stakeholders if the policy is to succeed. As Mwanza (2017) states, attitudes are fundamental to the success or failure of any policy/curriculum.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings of the study have shown that teachers were not adequately prepared to implement the 2014 revised policy. Further, implementation of the policy is mired with challenges such as lack of materials and lack of teachers' familiarity with the policy. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Policy makers to consult and involve teachers during formulation and or revision of education policies.

- b. Ministry of Education to strengthen Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and re-training for the in-service teachers in literacy policy implementation.

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