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**THE CHANGE OF MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION FROM CHICHEWA TO ENGLISH IN
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI AND ITS IMPACT ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE**

Paul Ellimelech Kankhumbwa Chipanda (CHPPAU005)

**A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of Master of Education in Applied Language and Literacy
Studies**

**Faculty of the Humanities
University of Cape Town**

2007

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Signature

Date:

07/09/07

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Mercy and children Thandie, Chimwemwe and Paul Junior. You really inspire me quite a lot. I also dedicate this thesis to Dr. Wilfried Goertler, GTZ-BEP Team Leader for the wonderful and significant contributions he has made to the basic education sector for the seven years (2000-2007) he has worked in Malawi. He has been influential as far as funding the basic education programme is concerned. He has been a man of action not just of words. We shall all miss him. I am wishing him well wherever he shall go. "YATHA, YAMARA".

University of Cape Town

ABSTRACT

Malawi adopted a Free Primary Education Policy in 1994 with the ushering in of a multiparty system of government. Since then primary schools have been flooded with many pupils. The current language policy in Malawi, allows learners to be taught through local languages from Standards 1 to 4 and through English from Standard 5 upwards (Mtenje 2002). Teachers' guides for all subjects from STD 1 to 8 are written in English except for Chichewa as a subject. Teachers write their lesson plans for all subjects in English except those of Chichewa as a subject (Mchazime 1996). However, classroom observation suggests that teachers use Chichewa as a medium of instruction even in classes where they are expected to use English (Standard 5 onwards). Similarly, pupils fail to express themselves in English and they answer questions in Chichewa (Mtenje 2002). As a result, learners fail to participate and contribute fully during lessons. This scenario makes the teachers talk more than the learners; hence the lessons become teacher-centred. Pupils are largely passive in class. Many pupils are absent from school, they fail examinations and some drop out from school mainly when they reach the upper classes (Standard 5 to 8) of primary education.

This dissertation examines what effect the change of medium of instruction made in Standard 5 from Chichewa to English has on the academic achievement of the learners of Standard 5 pupils in primary schools in Malawi. Specifically, the study examines whether or not the use of English results in better academic performance of pupils and whether this change contributes to pupil attrition (the drop-out rate).

To investigate how the change of language of instruction affects the academic performance of Standard 5 learners, I used a case study methodology, with both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. Then data were collected through questionnaires administered to teachers and Standard 5 learners respectively; by comparing tests results in Mathematics and Social Studies of pupils who learnt through Chichewa in Standard 4 and through English in Standard 5, respectively; through classroom observations; and by interviewing teachers in two primary schools.

This work is based on the theory developed by Jim Cummins (1991) which states that learners should acquire a conceptual foundation in their first language to facilitate the acquisition of the second language to positively achieve academic performance.

The research came up with the following findings:

Firstly, Standard 5 pupils in Malawi performed better in Mathematics and Social Studies when they learnt through the medium of Chichewa than through the medium of English.

Secondly, Standard 5 learners lacked the necessary English proficiency to cope with the cognitive demands of Mathematics and Social Studies. As a result, the lessons observed were teacher-centred and pupils became passive participants in the learning process. Teachers agreed that pupils participated less in class when they were learning through the medium of English than when the same pupils were learning through the medium of Chichewa.

In addition, teachers and learners are not motivated to learn through the medium of English. Furthermore, teachers are not sufficiently trained in how to start teaching Standard 5 learners through English. As a consequence, Standard 5 pupils perform poorly in Mathematics and Social Studies. In comparison, Standard 5 pupils perform at a lower level in Mathematics than in Social Studies when they learnt through the medium of English.

From these findings it was concluded that Standard 5 learners, who are taught through the medium of English, are not sufficiently proficient in English to cope with the cognitive academic demands of learning content subjects like Mathematics and Social Studies in Malawi.

These results confirm my hypothesis. The results are also congruent with other studies already done in Malawi (Mchazime 2004, Kachaso 1988).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa.
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
BICS	basic interpersonal communicative skills
CALP	cognitive/academic language proficiency
CUP	common underlying proficiency
DEM	district education manager
ESL	English as a Second Language
F.P.	Full Primary (School)
FPE	Free Primary Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
L1	first language
L2	second language
LOITASA	Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MoI	medium of instruction
MT	mother tongue
NCE	normal curve equivalent
PEA	primary education advisor
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
Std	Standard
SUP	separate underlying proficiency
SYPP	Six-Year Primary Project
T.T.C.	teacher training college
T2	Grade 2 teacher
TOT	Trainer of Trainers
UDF	United Democratic Front
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Following a general introduction, the chapter discusses the background to Malawi's medium of instruction policies from the colonial era via the independence era to the current multiparty era. The chapter further presents the statement of the problem, the research question, my hypothesis, and the rationale, significance and relevance of the study.

The chapter continues by discussing the contextual validity of the study. Finally the chapter examines the limitations of the study, and concludes with an overview of subsequent chapters.

1.0. General Introduction

Language is very important for human beings because it plays so many different functions. As Smith (2002:3) says,

[I]language makes us human. Whatever we do, language is central to our lives, and the use of language underpins the study of every other discipline. Understanding language gives us insight into ourselves, and a tool for the investigation of the rest of the universe. Proposing marriage, opposing globalization, composing a speech, all require the use of language; to buy a meal or sell a car involves communication which is made possible by language; to be without language – as an infant, a foreigner or a stroke victim – is to be at a disadvantage.

The usefulness of language is supported by Mtenje (2002:6):

Indeed one can extend the importance of language in our daily lives to a number of other activities. For instance, conducting convincing political campaigns requires the use of appealing language. Musicians whose songs contain interesting language lines (e.g. proverbs, similes, idiophones, etc.) have registered better sales than their counterparts. Eloquent lawyers have been known to win legal battles even when the empirical content in their presentations may have had loopholes, just like linguistically gifted preachers have been seen to win great numbers of followers. Likewise, in order to convey to the masses basic information about voting or electoral procedures, health, good agricultural practices, traffic rules, security, community development work, fundamental human rights and other socially relevant information, the use of appropriate language is necessary.

Apart from the above-mentioned uses, language is used for education. Many countries, including Malawi, have bewailed the deteriorating standards of education. Many pupils do not even finish primary school education, there are high levels of dropouts, many pupils repeat classes, and there is a lot of absenteeism. One of the contributing reasons is the language used in schools for learning. The language used is either the mother tongue or a foreign language like English, or both, as is the case in Malawi.

It is axiomatic that the best medium of teaching a child is his or her mother tongue (Mtenje 2002, quoting UNESCO 1953). This system has psychological, sociological and educational advantages. Article 26 of the Constitution of Malawi allows every person to have the right to use the language, and to participate in the cultural life, of his or her choice. This includes the right to use the mother tongue in education, which Malawi is doing to some extent (Mtenje 2002, quoting Circular Letter dated 28th March, 1996).

1.1. Background of Malawi's Language of instruction Policy

The use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction in primary schools in Malawi started a long time ago. Mother tongue education was used during the colonial period (missionary era), post independent era under the one-party system of government, and in the present multiparty system of government. This section examines what happened in each era in terms of medium of instruction.

1.1.1. Colonial Era

Malawi, then Nyasaland, was a British colony from 1891 to 1963, during which period education was in the hands of the missionaries. The beginnings of formal education date back to 1861 when the first missionaries¹ arrived. Moto (2004:66) reports that the main aim of the missionaries was to convert people to their faith. To achieve this purpose, the missionaries translated their books and taught Malawians in the local languages for easy communication. The missionaries established orthographies and grammars of local languages (Chilora 2004).

During this time, the mother tongue was used as medium of instruction in primary schools in Malawi (Mchazime 1996). When Malawi became a British protectorate in 1891 the British

¹ The Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) was the first mission society to come to Malawi in 1861.

allowed the use of local languages as media of instruction in primary schools (Moto, 2004:61). The main local languages by then were Chitumbuka in the northern region and Chichewa (then Chinyanja) in the central and southern parts of the country. These languages were also taught as subjects (Mchazime 1996).

Text books and other teaching and learning materials were written in Chichewa (then Chinyanja) as far back as the 1930s and 1940s. According to Mchazime (1996), such textbooks and other materials covered subjects like Health and Hygiene (Retief 1936), Arithmetic (Frick 1944), Language and Social Studies. For instance, Samuel Timpuza wrote a book entitled *A Brief History of the Ngonis and their Culture* in 1941. This was part of his essay used in the Zambezi Mission class in Ntcheu District of the Central Region of Malawi. In addition, a writer by the name of Samuel Nthara wrote a book entitled *Mbiri ya Achewa* (History of Achewa) (Mchazime 1996).

As already mentioned, Chinyanja was used to develop literacy skills in primary schools. Some books for literary appreciation and cultural enhancement were even written in Chinyanja. For instance, a book entitled *Nthondo* (Man of Africa) won an award for author Samuel Nthara (ibid: 1996).

The use of Chinyanja as medium of instruction continued up to the 1960s. In the mid 1960s there was pressure to introduce English early into the primary school system. Among the reasons for this pressure were certain beliefs about the optimal age for learning a second language. It was believed that the earlier a second/foreign language was introduced in school, the faster and the better children would learn it (Stern 1983).

Consequently, English was introduced as a subject in Std 1. Unlike in Zambia, where English was introduced as a medium of instruction right away from Std 1 following independence, Malawi was careful not to start using English as a medium of instruction from Std 1 (Kishoki 1978). Instead, English started being used as a medium of instruction in the fifth year of primary schooling (Ministry of Education 1966, 1982).

Elevation of mother tongue in education

Some colonial administrators, called governors, had proposed that Chinyanja be made an official language as far back as 1918. It was also proposed that Chinyanja be taught as a

subject in all schools (Mchazime 1996). However, one of the colonial governors of Malawi (Nyasaland), Sir George Smith, turned down the proposal. His argument was purely political: the elevation of an indigenous language such as Chinyanja to official status would facilitate the unity of all the ethnic groups. Such unity would present a potential threat to colonial rule (ibid: 1996).

However, successor governors like Sir Shenton Thomas and Sir Harold Kittermaster in the late 1920s and 1930s argued against Smith's view. The government of Nyasaland subsequently declared that Chinyanja should be used as medium of instruction in all government and assisted schools in 1936.

Prior to that, the government had decided to promote Chinyanja as the lingua franca of Nyasaland. Mission schools in areas where Chinyanja was not the mother tongue were asked to introduce it as a subject in Std 3. It was announced that after 1934, the teaching of Chinyanja would be one of the conditions to be fulfilled before a grant was made to schools (see Malawi National Archives file S1/449/32). In the late 1950s, the language was offered as an examination subject on the Cambridge School Certificate Syllabus. This meant that an increasing number of educated indigenous people were ready to promote the development of the language (Mchazime 1996).

1.1.2. Independence Era

When Malawi became independent from Britain in 1964², Malawi inherited a language in education policy in which Chinyanja, Chitumbuka and English were recognized as media of instruction (Vail and White 1989). However, choosing a national language for the sake of national cohesion and national unity became a very important issue. According to Moto (2004), McKinley Chibambo and Musopole in 1963 and 1966 respectively, made a proposal to make Chinyanja a national language. However, this was rejected by Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, the then President of Malawi .

It was not until 1968, during the Malawi Congress Party annual convention in Lilongwe, that delegates unanimously agreed that both Chinyanja and English be declared official languages (Moto 2004:274). In addition, Chinyanja was also declared a national language while all the

² Malawi became independent on 6th July, 1964 under the Malawi Congress Party, with Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda as the first President.

other indigenous languages were to continue being used in private in areas where they were spoken (MCP 1983:6). Subsequently Chinyanja was changed in name to Chichewa (Mchazime 1996).

As a result, Chichewa became the only local language used as medium of instruction in lower classes (Std 1 to 4) of primary schooling. It was also taught as a compulsory subject throughout the entire primary school, secondary school and primary teacher training colleges from the 1969/70 academic year. English became a medium of instruction starting from Std 5 into university education and was made a compulsory subject throughout the entire education system (Kayambazinthu 1998; Kishindo 1998; Mtenje 2002). Chichewa orthography was revised (Chichewa Board 1976, 1980, 1990), and textbooks and grammar books were written (Loga 1972, Mangoche & Loga 1971). In addition, a Chichewa and Linguistics Department was instituted at the University of Malawi. Furthermore, a Chichewa Board was established, with its own secretariat in Zomba (the former capital). Later on a project on the development of a Chichewa Dictionary was launched. Vail and White (1989: 183) report that the exclusion of Chitumbuka from being used in schools did not please people from the northern region because their children were denied a chance of learning through a familiar language.

Preparation for the medium of instruction

After the government declared that Chichewa should be the medium of instruction from Std 1 to 4 in 1989, the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), embarked on the development and production of pupils' books in Chichewa. Pupils' books were written in Chichewa but the teachers' guides were written in English, thereby promoting classroom bilingualism. The reason behind such an act was that other teachers whose mother tongue was not Chichewa, might not have had the competence in Chichewa. Thus, for such teachers, it was thought useful to get further information through English (Mchazime 1996).

Sensitization workshops on the new curriculum for different stakeholders took place throughout the country in the education sector. Stakeholders such as Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), selected primary school teachers and primary teacher training college tutors were trained in the use of the new materials. These stakeholders became trainers of trainers (TOTs). Subsequently, Std 1 to 4 teachers including head teachers of all the primary schools in Malawi, were orientated to the new materials of the curriculum.

1.1.3. Multiparty Era

In 1994, Malawi became a multiparty country with Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Party as its first President. For the purpose of scoring political mileage³, the president declared Free Primary Education (FPE) in the same year. Many pupils enrolled in schools. As a result, there were a few classrooms, teachers and teaching/learning materials. Chichewa continued being used as a medium of instruction from Std 1 to 4. This was done without proper planning.

Then in 1996, the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education, issued a circular letter, dated 28th March 1996, in which it stated that from then, Malawi should adopt a mother tongue education where any local language widely spoken in a particular area, be used as a medium of instruction from Std 1 to 4 and English be used from Std 5 onwards as medium of instruction (Mtenje 2002). Though the policy sounded good, there were several things which needed to be done before such a policy could be implemented, such as the training of teachers in using local languages, decisions on the specific languages to be used and in which parts of the country a particular language could be used. It was generally observed that Chiyao was used in Mangochi, for example, Chisena in the Lower Shire Valley, Chitumbuka in the northern region, and Chichewa in most districts in the central and southern regions (ibid:2002).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Malawi's current language in education policy allows learners to be taught through local languages from Std 1-4 and through English from Std 5 upwards. Both Chichewa and English are taught and learnt as subjects starting from Standard 1 onwards.

Most textbooks in Standard 1 to 4 are written in Chichewa, with the exception of English language textbooks. All the teachers' guides are written in English except those for Chichewa as a subject. Classroom observations suggest that much code-switching and code-mixing is practiced in Std 5, where the MoI is supposed to be English but where learners and even teachers struggle with the foreign medium.

³ During campaign meetings, the UDF promised people that it would bring free primary education in the country once voted into power, the party had to fulfill it.

School records have also shown that many learners repeat Standard 5 and others drop out of school when they reach Standard 5. Among the many reasons for such a scenario are the lack of sufficient amounts of teaching/learning materials, unqualified teachers, high teacher-learner ratios, and the lack of motivation on the part of teachers, amongst other reasons. But an important factor is undoubtedly the language of learning, English, which is a second or even a foreign language to most.

This dissertation examines whether English is the most appropriate language of learning for Std 5 pupils in Malawi. Specifically, the study examines whether or not the use of English affects the academic performance of pupils.

The remainder of this chapter follows Maxwell's (1996) guidelines for writing theses. The chapter outlines the research problem, the rationale for the research, the conceptual or theoretical framework, the literature review, research design, the research findings, and the conclusions and recommendations.

1.3. Research question

Many studies have been done in Malawi concerning the language of instruction, by Kachaso (1988), Mchazime (2004) and many others (to be discussed fully in the literature review).

However, nothing has been done to find out whether the change of medium of instruction from Chichewa to English in Std 5 has any effect on the academic performance of the pupils, in a context where such language in education policies are politically motivated and are proclaimed without proper planning.

It was against this background that the following research question was formulated:

What is the impact of the change of medium of instruction from Chichewa to English on the academic performance of Standard 5 pupils in Malawi?

The research question had the following sub-questions:

1. How well were pupils performing in Std 4 when they were learning Mathematics and Social Studies through Chichewa, and how did they perform when taught the same subjects through English in Std 5?
2. Have Std 5 learners mastered the cognitive academic language proficiency necessary to achieve authentic language proficiency when learning Mathematics and Social Studies?
3. Are pupils motivated enough to start learning through the medium of English in Std 5?
4. How do teachers rate the participation of pupils when the latter are taught through Chichewa and English, respectively?
5. Are teachers trained well enough to teach through the medium of English in Standard 5?

1.4. Hypothesis

My main hypothesis is that pupils will perform poorly in Standard 5 where they start learning through a language they do not understand (English), compared to how the same pupils performed when they were taught through the first language. The teachers find it problematic to teach through the medium of English, when Std 5 pupils have not attained sufficient proficiency. As a result of the language and communication barrier, teachers will be prompted to codeswitch between the first language and the second language. My hypothesis is in line with results of other studies done in Malawi and elsewhere, which show the advantages of using the mother tongue, as opposed to using English, at this stage of learning.

1.5. Rationale

It is a common complaint nowadays in Malawi as well as in many African countries that the education standards have gone down (Mtenje, 2002). This is evidenced by frequent repetitions, absenteeism, and a high rate of dropouts, poor communicative skills in local languages as well as in English, among many indicators (UNICEF, 1999). In Malawi this scenario is mainly evidenced when children reach Std 5. There are several factors which have contributed to the falling standards of education. Mtenje (2002) states that some of the causative factors are: HIV/AIDS status, poverty levels, early pregnancies and marriages, lack of proper guidance, lack of resources in schools, lack of well qualified teachers, and many

others. But central to this problem is the issue of the language(s) used for instruction in primary schools.

Teaching and learning should be a two-way communication process between the teacher and the pupil, and between pupils. This communication takes place by means of language through which knowledge is transferred and negotiated. When the means of communication is not appropriate, the whole process of transferring and negotiating knowledge is void.

The current situation in Malawi, which provides for the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction from Std 1 to 4 (year 1 to year 4) and English thereafter, is an example of an early-exit bilingual education model. This is in contrast to the late-exit model, where the mother tongues or local languages are used as medium of instruction up to Standard 6 or 7 (Heugh 2004) (to be discussed fully in the Literature Review).

On 26th March, 1996, the Ministry of Education released the Circular letter which stated that from Standard 1 to 4 pupils will be taught in the local language dominant in a particular area. Prior to that, Chichewa was the only local language used as a medium of instruction. There were heated debates among Malawians about the circular (see Mtenje 2002:37-38). Generally some people were for it and some against it. Each party had its own reasons (to be discussed in the Literature review). Some still believe that it is this mother tongue policy which has contributed to the falling standards of education, since pupils are not linguistically competent in English (*The Nation*, 22nd May, 23rd May, 18th June 1996).

1.6. Significance and relevance of the study

In the current multiparty era in Malawi, the issue of language of instruction in schools is being foregrounded because there is a belief that it affects academic performance of Std 5 learners. The purpose of this research is to find out to what extent this change of medium of instruction in Standard 5 has an effect (whether negative or positive) on the academic performance of the pupils. It is hoped that the research will reveal some crucial issues which, if they are addressed, would assist the Malawian child to have access to proper and good education. This good education is a basic human right as enshrined in the Constitution of Malawi (Chapter 26) and the Bill of Rights of Children, which Malawi is a signatory to, and many other Conventions.

1.7. Contextual validity of the study

The study in question dwells on the theory developed by a Canadian scholar and bilingualism specialist, Jim Cummins. It is this very important theory which will act as a pillar on which the study rests. Consideration will also be given to critiques of the theory, such as those by MacSwan and Rolstadt (2001), amongst others.

1.8. Delimitation of the research

I am quite aware that in doing a study of this nature which dwells on how language of instruction affects the academic performance of standard 5 pupils in Malawi cannot be done without delimitation. Indeed, there are a number of factors which can contribute to either poor or good academic performance. As already indicated, such factors may include lack of resources, unqualified or unmotivated teachers, social-economic background of the pupils, teacher-pupil ratio, and many others. However, central to these factors is the language of instruction.

1.9. Overview of the dissertation

Chapter Two discusses the theoretical framework based on the work of Jim Cummins. It also examines the importance of using mother tongue in education and the relationship between first and second language learning, in line with Cummins' theory of the common underlying proficiency (CUP), and the key concepts of basic interpersonal language skills (BICS) and cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP).

Chapter Three comprises the literature review, specifically of language in education programmes and models. It examines in detail some studies on the use of mother tongue and of the foreign language in education, such as the Nigerian Six Year Primary Project, longitudinal studies from the USA, and studies done in South Africa, Tanzania, Cameroon, Niger and Malawi.

Chapter Four deals with the research design. Case studies will be discussed in some detail. These use both quantitative and qualitative data. The subjects involved and the justification

for including them in the research are discussed, and the different data collection instruments used are highlighted. These include a classroom observation schedule, tests results, interviews, and questionnaires for teachers and pupils, respectively. Chapter Five analyses the data and discusses the findings in some detail. Finally, Chapter 6 contains the conclusions and recommendations.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Introduction

There are many factors which influence learners' levels of academic performance. Among these factors, recent theories in the field of education propose that the medium of instruction could be the hub which determines whether learners perform well or poorly in their academic work.

However, the purpose of this study is not to underline the influence of other factors, but to find out if there is any evidence to support the theories of language of instruction as a major factor contributing to the academic performance of learners in schools.

This study is based on the theory developed by Jim Cummins (1991: 172-173), which says,

Students must be encouraged to acquire a conceptual foundation in their first language to facilitate the acquisition of English academic skills. Also academic skills in both the first language and the second language should be promoted through providing opportunities for students to use written and oral language actively for meaningful communication.

As in many African countries, the demand for learning English and through English is great in Malawi (see the next chapter). It has been observed that a key reason why many parents send their children to school is for them to learn English.

However, after learning English as a subject for 4 years as a second language, Standard 5 Mathematics and Social Studies lessons are punctuated by unsystematic code-switching, codemixing and frequent interpreting into the mother tongue. The question arises as to whether it is at all feasible for Standard 5 learners to perform well academically when they are taught through English. In the next chapter, we shall see that studies by Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins provide empirical evidence that language of instruction plays a very important role in the academic performance of learners (Young 1995:66).

For purposes of this dissertation, mother tongue refers to “the language (or dialect) that a child can speak fluently, [and that is] mostly perfectly mastered before going to school” (Obanya, 2004:5). The mother tongue is the most important resource a child brings to school. Mtenje (2002), in support of mother tongue education (MTE), says that a child learns faster in the mother tongue than in an unfamiliar medium of instruction. This is so because when a child is taught in a foreign language, he/she has to learn language first and then learn the content (concepts) next. This is equivalent to fighting a war on two fronts, namely the language and the content fronts (Kamwendo 1997). Pupils will easily understand new concepts taught in school through a familiar language. This underlines the need for teachers to make use of this important resource by teaching pupils through the mother tongue. Learning through the mother tongue acts as a foundation upon which the learning of the second language (English) is based.

Another important factor in MTE is that it facilitates learning. A child easily relates her classroom work to her home environment and is able to discuss her school work at home with her parents (Mtenje 2002).

As suggested by Obanya (2004), other reasons for MTE are that it improves collaboration between the wider community and the school, as there is no linguistic distance between them; the cultural resources of the language and those of the environment are more easily harnessed to enrich teaching and learning; teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions in the classroom will be increased and classroom activities will be participatory, all of which will facilitate learning.

2.2. The CUP and the Interdependence Principle

In his theory on bilingualism and cognition, Cummins (1993) in Baker (2001), rejects the so-called Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) model in favour of a Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP)⁴. The SUP theory states that a bilingual’s proficiency in the first language and second language develop separately and are unrelated. This means that a bilingual can only think in one language at a time. Many people, including parents, teachers, politicians and others believe this a true reflection of what really happens in a bilingual. However, Cummins

⁴ Possibility of transferring of cognitive/academic skills across languages

posits the belief that such a theory has been proved wrong by research. As summed up by Baker (2001:164),

When children are balanced bilinguals, the evidence suggests there are cognitive advantages rather than disadvantages for being bilingual. It is wrong to assume that the brain has only a limited amount of room for language skills, such that monolinguals are preferable. There appears to be enough cerebral living quarters not only for two languages, but for other languages as well. Another fallacy of the theory is that the first and second languages are kept apart in two “balloons” inside the head. The evidence suggests the opposite, which says that language attributes are not separated in the cognitive system, but transfer readily and are interactive.

This might mean that in Malawi, for instance, lessons taught through the medium of Chichewa do not necessarily feed a Chichewa part of the brain. Rather, lessons learnt in one language can readily transfer into another language, provided the latter is sufficiently well developed. Accordingly, the CUP model put forward by Cummins (1991:166-167) holds that

Although the surface aspects (e.g. pronunciation, fluency etc) of different languages are clearly separate, there is an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency which is common across languages. This “Common Underlying Proficiency” makes possible the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy-related skills across languages.

This CUP theory accounts for the transfer of cognitive/academic or literacy-related skills across languages. In other words, a learner can only successfully use L2 as a medium of instruction in the classroom if the L1 (e.g. Chichewa) as well as the L2 (e.g. English) are developed to a level where cognitive and linguistic skills can be transferred across languages without undue effort. This level of development in both languages can only be reached once the learner has progressed past ‘surface fluency’ to ‘cognitive fluency’ (thus an appropriate level of literacy for schooling) in those languages. The early-exit or subtractive multilingual programme followed in Malawi for local language speaking learners means that the L2 is not developed to a level where the transfer of literacy and academic related skills from the mother tongue can take place.

The CUP theory has in recent times been developed further as the Interdependence principle (Cummins in Baker 2001). This principle states that instruction in L1 is effective in promoting proficiency in L1, and that transfer of this proficiency to L2 will take place only when there is enough exposure to L2 (either in schools or at home) and enough motivation to learn L2. In the Malawian context, provided instruction in Chichewa is effective in promoting proficiency in Chichewa, transfer of this proficiency to English (L2) will occur as long as there is enough exposure to English either at school or at home.

In summary, Baker (2001:165-167) explains that this theory sees the four language skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking come from the same central engine. When a person knows two or more languages, there is one integrated source of thought. Bilingualism is possible because people have the capacity to easily store two or more languages. People can also function in two or more languages with relative ease so long as the first language is well developed, since the first acts as a foundation upon which the learning of the second language is built. Information processing skills and educational attainment may be developed through one or two languages. Cognitive functioning and school achievement may be equally fed through one monolingual or two well developed language channels because both channels feed the same central processor. The language the child uses in the classroom needs to be sufficiently well developed to be able to process the cognitive challenges of the classroom. In addition, the four language skills help the whole cognitive system to develop in the first or second language. However, if children are made to operate in an insufficiently developed second language, the cognitive system will weaken and impoverish the quality and quantity of what they learn from complex curriculum materials and can produce in oral and written form. When one or both languages are not functioning fully, cognitive functioning and academic performance may be negatively affected.

As we have seen, such a scenario is quite relevant to Malawi as far as the premature change of medium of instruction in Standard 5 is concerned. A hard lesson can be learnt from this situation.

2.3. The thresholds theory

Baker (2001) cites studies done by other linguists (Cummins & Mulcahy, 1978; Duncan & de Avila, 1979) and some others who suggested that the further the child moves towards balanced bilingualism, the greater the likelihood of cognitive advantages. But the question is how does one achieve that? In response to this question Toukoma and Skutnabb-Kangas (1977) and Cummins (1976) came up with the thresholds theory.

According to this theory, there are two levels/thresholds of language competency that have consequences for the child. The child has to competently reach the first level before moving on to the second level for positive achievements in bilingualism to take effect. The second level acts as yardstick to determine which children will have positive cognitive benefits from bilingualism. The thresholds theory is likened to a three-storey house. There are two language ladders which a bilingual child has to climb in order to pass through to reach the expected level of bilingual cognitive competence. On the bottom floor of the house are those children whose current competence in both their languages is insufficiently developed. A child on this level will not cope when processing information in class. On the middle level are those children with age-appropriate competence in one of their languages but not in both. A child at this stage is better off than the monolingual child for being partly bilingual. Then there is the third level where children have approximate balanced bilingualism in two or three languages. This is the level where bilingual children can have positive cognitive advantages over monolinguals. Baker (2001) reports that this theory is supported by a number of studies, amongst others that the level of bilingualism is decisive in determining the effect it will have on development.

As a result of these and other findings, Cummins (1978, 2000b) as cited in Baker (2001), came up with the Developmental Interdependence hypothesis which was derived from the thresholds theory. In this hypothesis, it is suggested that a child's second language competence is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the first language. This means that the more developed the first language is, the easier it will be to develop the second language, provided there is good teaching and learning.

2.4. BICS and CALP

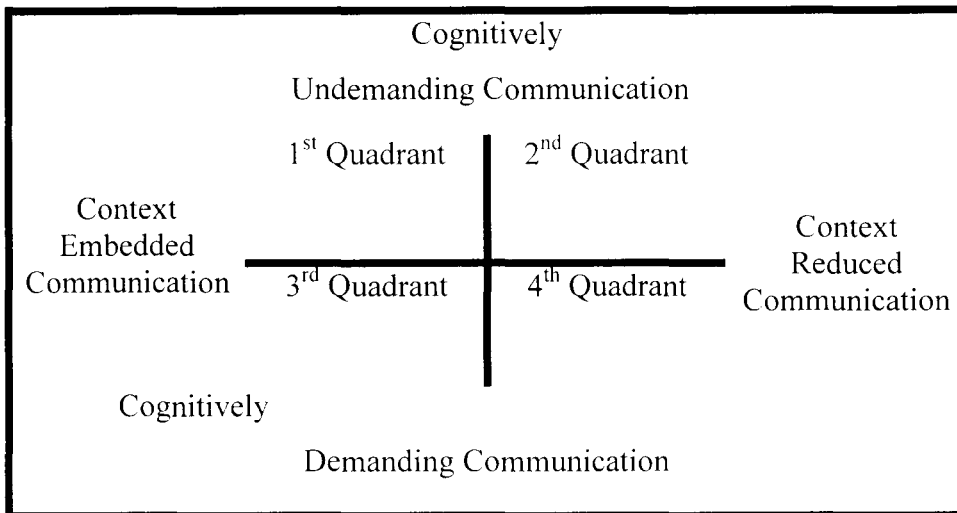
Before discussing BICS and CALP in this section, the issue of proficiency will be briefly discussed. When exactly can one be declared to be proficient enough to use a language for academic purposes, and how proficient must one be in a language before transfer to another language can take place?

Cummins (1991), in Baker 2001, talks of two important levels of language proficiency. These are the surface aspects proficiency and the cognitive/academic proficiency. These levels are formally known as the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), respectively. Pupils must acquire sufficient language competence (BICS) before facing cognitive/academic language proficiency so that they can cope with the demands of the curriculum. In order for a bilingual to achieve CALP status in L2, he/she must first achieve CALP status in L1. It is generally agreed that CALP level can be reached in L2 after approximately 5 to 7 years of adequate exposure to L2 (i.e. once an adequate level of proficiency for schooling has been reached in L2), and only once the CALP level in L1 has been reached.

Baker (2001:172-3) has extended the instructional implications of CALP in terms of three components which are cognitive, academic and language. He says that instruction should be done in such a way that it is cognitively challenging by using higher order thinking skills. The curriculum content should be integrated with language instruction so that pupils learn the language of specific academic areas. In Language, critical language awareness should be developed both linguistically and socio-culturally.

Following Baker (2001), the CALP theory has two dimensions which concern communicative proficiency, as represented in Fig.1.

Fig.1



The first dimension refers to the amount of contextual support available to a pupil. Context embedded communication exists when there is a good degree of support in communication, particularly via body language, to help the content of the message to be understood.

In context reduced communication there are very few cues to the meaning that is being transmitted; language exists almost alone in conveying the meaning.

The second dimension is the level of cognitive demand required in communication. Cognitively demanding communication may occur in a classroom where much information at a challenging level needs processing quickly. It is at this level where a pupil has enough mastery of the language skills to make for easy communication.

In a South African application of Cummins' four quadrants theory, Ramani and Joseph (2006) show that Cummins sees Quadrant 3 as the arena in which forms of support through scaffolding and mediation are provided both by teachers and learners. Such scaffolding occurs not only through written exercises, but more so through oral conversations which take place between teachers and learners in class. According to the authors, Cummins believes that it is in the contextually embedded by cognitively demanding Quadrant 3 that learners achieve Quadrant 4 proficiency.

Baker (2001) continues by saying that the surface fluency or BICS fits into the first quadrant (see Fig. 1) and is context embedded and cognitively undemanding use of language.

Communication that is cognitively and academically more advanced fits into the fourth quadrant (content reduced and cognitively demanding) which suggests that the second language competency in the first quadrant (surface fluency) develops relatively independently of first language surface fluency.

In comparison, context reduced, cognitively demanding communication develops inter-dependently and can be promoted by either language or both languages in an interactive way. Thus the theory suggests that bilingual education will be successful when children have enough first or second language proficiency to work in the context reduced, cognitively demanding situation in the classroom. Indeed the quadrants act as a guide for instructional planning. A teacher should take into account pupils' linguistic development and experience as well as their understanding of the topic.

In summary, the inwardly driven ability of native language speakers may enable Chichewa speakers, for example, to develop 'surface fluency' in their mother tongue without much effort. Chichewa L1 speakers receive mother tongue instruction until standard 4 and do Chichewa as first language subject from Std 1 throughout schooling. This enables them to develop 'cognitive fluency' in Chichewa. However, Chichewa speaking learners do not receive mother tongue instruction in learning areas such as mathematics and social sciences. The level of second language (English) learning by Std 5 could be so low that pupils cannot transfer linguistic and academic skills across these languages.

However, Baker (2001) points out that Cummins' (1981b) theory of the relationship between language and cognition has been criticized by a number of linguists. Some of the criticisms are that theories on the attainment of bilingualism need to consider other variables such as cultural, social, political, community and many others. In addition, Cummins' criterion of education success centres on dominant, middle class indices of achievement, yet there are many others like social and emotional development and creative thinking. Other criticisms are that the theory was produced as a *post hoc* explanation for a variety of research findings and not as a direct empirical investigation; the labels used are vague; the two dimensions are not necessarily distinct and may not be best represented by two maximally vertical (90 degrees) separated axes. They also say that a child with learning difficulties may be assisted by a teacher in simplifying tasks into smaller and more isolated steps and that attempting to achieve context embeddedness in any curriculum situation, however, requires empathic

understanding of a child's cultural background which is itself is dynamic and ever evolving. Finally they say that the theory does not make allowances for a child's cognitive strategies in learning, nor their learning style.

Despite these criticisms and many others, I am still persuaded to base the theoretical framework of this dissertation on Cummins' theory because it fits the current situation in Malawi. It would explain the negative impact of a premature switch to English as the medium of instruction on the academic performance of Std 5 learners. Learners may not fully have achieved the English proficiency to meet the cognitive demands of the content subjects (Mathematics and Social Studies).

2.5. Conclusion

This study focuses mainly on the academic performance of Standard 5 learners in relation to the medium of instruction in Malawi Primary Schools. Indeed, there is a mismatch between the medium of instruction and the home language. Theories such as the interdependence principle and the thresholds theory posit that there is a direct relationship between a bilingual's first language and second language. Cummins says that this relationship can have negative, neutral or positive effects on linguistic ability and academic development. In Malawi, this implies that if CALP is not achieved in Chichewa as the first language, for instance, and if a sufficient level of proficiency is not reached in English (second language), then very little transfer of linguistic proficiency and academic skills from Chichewa to English will be possible. While it remains very important for pupils to reach CALP in the first language, a sufficient level in the second language is required for the successful transfer of academic related skills. This being the case, the subtractive bilingual programme currently in operation in Malawi may have a negative impact on the academic performance of Standard 5 pupils. Thus knowledge of these theories can assist in the present study.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

The present chapter focuses on language-in-education models in order to explore notions of bilingual education in some depth. It also provides examples of relevant studies that have shown how medium of instruction affects the academic performance of learners at school.

3.2. Definition of the mother tongue

The term ‘mother tongue’ may be defined in many different ways. Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1989), for example, provide four different definitions of mother tongue based on four criteria, namely origin, competence, function and identification. The criterion of origin defines mother tongue as the language(s) one learnt first. The criterion of competence defines mother tongue as the language(s) one knows best. The function criterion defines mother tongue as the language one uses the most. Finally, identification criterion states that mother tongue is the language one is identified with as a native speaker of that particular language.

For the purpose of this thesis, the mother tongue can be defined as the language(s) that the child knows best when she/he first comes into contact with school. I am thus using a modified form of the second criterion mentioned above.

Mother tongue based education, therefore, is when the mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction throughout, either alone or alongside a second language. In an African context, for instance, it occurs when an African language is used as a medium of instruction, either on its own or alongside a foreign language such as English.

3.3. The importance of mother tongue education

Many linguists have written in favour of teaching children through their mother tongue. Scholars such as Ramirez et al. (1991), Cummins (1996), Baker (1995), Obanya (1999), Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1995), Bamgbose (2000), Mtenje (2002), and Macdonald (1990) have strengthened the case for our understanding of the mother tongue in primary education. However, others such as Cleghorn, Merritt and Abangi (1989), support the use of the second language (foreign language) on the basis of their studies.

Many people in Africa and some parts of the world have argued against the use of mother tongue based education. These views have been strongly opposed. For instance, Obanya (2004:23) has responded to what he calls fallacies against the use of the mother tongue in education. The first argument is that African languages allegedly cannot express scientific concepts. Obanya (2004:23) counter-argues that “All human languages are capable of coping with their immediate realities ...by borrowing, coinages and even by creation”.

Yet another argument is that it is costly to train teachers and purchase learning materials. Mtenje (2002:47) refutes this argument by saying that if pupils learn in a familiar language, pupils learn well and there is less repetition, less absenteeism and fewer dropouts, all of which is more cost effective in the long run than learning through a language which pupils are not familiar with.

In addition, there are too many languages; hence choosing one as language of instruction could be a problem. To counter-argue this fallacy, consideration of regional languages and lingua francas should be seriously considered.

A final argument is that an overemphasis on learning in the first language could be detrimental to student mastery of the official language, which remains the key to higher education and social mobility. This fallacy again is counter-argued by saying that it is a solid foundation in the first language which determines the better learning of the second language.

3.4. Language in education programmes

There are many language in education programmes. But for the purposes of this dissertation, I will discuss only four programmes, namely early exit bilingual, late exit bilingual, dual/two way, and mother tongue education. These programmes fall under two major bilingual models, namely subtractive and additive bilingual models. Before then, it may be useful to briefly give a synopsis of monolingual education programmes on which the foundation for bilingual programmes is laid.

3.4.1. Mainstream education programmes

The mainstream programme, also called single-medium or monolingual education programmes in some countries, involves using one language for instruction. This dates back from time in memorial. Ofelia Garcia (1997:405) writes: “Despite the great linguistic diversity in the world, educational systems have been largely monolingual, functioning in the language of the elite.” This was the same in ancient Europe where monolingual education was practiced by the Greeks and the Romans who ignored vernacular languages and preferred Greek and Latin as languages of schooling. She adds:

And so today, our Graeco- Roman traditions continue to uphold monolingual education in the language of the elite, as well as valuing those who speak the language of the elite over those who are sole speakers of local languages. It has been this monolingual educational practice along with the higher prestige of bilingual speakers of minority communities that have been responsible for the language death of many speech communities, including the Scottish Gaelic, one described by Dorian (1981), for the language shift of many ethno-linguistic groups and also for the language spread of many languages of higher prestige, such as English.

However, things began to change (ibid: 406): “During the 1960s ethnic identity became a concern of many groups throughout the world.” People wanted to be identified with their own language. This way of thinking came into being after many African countries gained independence, and when developed countries realized the importance of using the indigenous languages. The movement of people from one country to another also influenced change. Then European countries, such as Great Britain and Spain, adopted bilingual education for

regional minorities. Looking at this background, it is clear that monolingual education largely excludes language minorities from the society. This brings us to bilingual education.

3.4.2. Bilingual education

Bilingual education occurs where two languages are used for instruction. However, as Garcia, (1997:405) explains, the term has had a range of interpretations:

Beyond our definition of Bilingual Education as the use of two languages in education, the term, 'Bilingual Education' has been extended to also encompass educational programmes for students who are speakers of a minority language even when instruction is monolingual. That is, for most lay people, bilingual education encompasses both the use of two languages in instruction, as well as the teaching of a second language to speakers of another language, even when the instruction takes place in the second language.

The term originally meant the use of two languages as mediums of instruction. It included, but was not restricted to, the learning of two languages as subjects. Therefore it usually means the L1 plus an L2 as media of instruction. In South Africa bilingual education has historically been limited to the Afrikaans-English combination.

Advantages of bilingual education

There are many advantages of bilingualism and/or multilingualism for both language majorities and minorities. These include cognitive, social and psychological advantages. Firstly, research has shown that students who are bilingual and biliterate have performed better cognitively in terms of learning new concepts and how they communicate their ideas to others (see Garcia 1997:409). To achieve such performance, bilinguals must have very good competence in their two languages.

3.5. Categories of bilingual programmes

There are two main categories of bilingual education. These are subtractive and additive bilingual programmes, respectively.

3.5.1. Subtractive bilingual models

Baker (2001:114) defines subtractive bilingualism as a situation whereby when the second language and culture are acquired (e.g. immigrants) with pressure to replace or demote the first language. For example in Malawi, pupils used to being taught through the mother tongue of Chichewa are forced to start learning in English only.

Subtractive models have a negative impact on language acquisition because they remove the first language before the learners have had enough time, firstly, to develop their cognitive academic language skills in the first language and reach a point where they can transfer to the second language successfully, and secondly, to learn enough of the second language to be able to cope with the curriculum in the second language (Heugh, 2003).

Early exit and late exit transitional models are both examples of a subtractive bilingual approach. Heugh, (2002) says that the objective of these models is subtractive, namely a single target language at the end of school; the target is the official/foreign language. The learners may begin with the MT and then gradually move to the official/foreign language as Medium of Instruction (MoI). If the transition to the official/foreign language takes place within 3 years it is called an early exit transition model. If the transition is delayed to grade 5-6, it becomes a late exit transition model.

Early Exit Model

This model is where children from low status language backgrounds have initial mother-tongue education but are expected to switch to the dominant language of instruction by Grade 2 or 3. This is a subtractive model because the first language ceases to be used as a medium of instruction.

Whereas more and more “Francophone” countries in Africa are now starting to run experimental programmes based on early exit models, “Anglophone” Africa experienced MTE for the first 3-4 years of primary education followed by English as MoI, even during the

colonial era. In some cases, African languages have been used for up to six years followed by English as a medium of instruction.

There are many examples of countries which are practising the early exit programme. Malawi has over sixteen languages. But over 52% of Malawians speak Chichewa as their first language. This is partly due to the fact that Chichewa was declared a national language way back in 1968 and has been used a medium of instruction and as a subject ever since. It is worth noting that Malawi is currently reviewing the primary school curriculum. It is proposed that the mother tongue will be used as medium of instruction from preparatory class to Standard 2 (the current Standard 3), followed by English as medium of instruction in Standard 3 (a year earlier than the current situation).

Malawi's model of language in education falls under what Heugh (2004:247) describes as the early exit transitional bilingual model. Pupils learn all the content subjects in the mother tongue from Standard 1 to Standard 4. English is taught as a subject in these classes. However, the medium of instruction changes to English in Standard 5 in all content subjects except when learning Chichewa as a subject. This model is subtractive because the mother tongue is subtracted from being used as a medium of instruction.

Williams (1993) did a comparative study on performance of pupils at year 5, using different languages as media of instruction in Malawi and Zambia. He reported that Malawi has between 12 to 35 languages and Zambia has 80 dialects that can be grouped into more than 20 languages. In Zambia, the main language is Chinyanja, which is also a lingua franca or language of wider communication. Unlike in Malawi, Zambia uses English as medium of instruction from Stds 1 to 7 and uses one official language as a subject. This is typical immersion situation, i.e. where all instruction from the start is in the foreign or second language. Williams gave the pupils of both countries some reading assessments in which he modified cloze tests consisting of 30 items administered in English and local languages (Chinyanja in Zambia and Chichewa in Malawi). The pupils were both girls and boys from 2 urban schools and 4 rural schools in each country.

The results were that the overall mean score in English was higher in Malawi than in Zambia. Similarly, Malawian pupils, who did the tests through Chichewa, performed better than their Zambian counterparts who did them in Chinyanja. Williams concluded that children do not

appear to gain a lot from learning through the medium of a second language (English). Instead, they perform better when they are taught in a vernacular language, as in Malawi. However, while an early-exit programme may be marginally better than immersion in a foreign language, it remains subtractive in orientation. In Malawi, experimental studies by Kachaso (1988) and Mchazime (2004) confirm that pupils perform better in word problems in their mother tongue than in English.

In South Africa the language-in-education policy dates back to the 17th and 19th centuries when the country was colonised first by Holland and then by Great Britain (Alexander 1989). The language policies were established as part of overall economic, political and cultural strategies that were adopted by the colonial-imperialist powers. Under apartheid, policies for the so-called Bantu were transitional. Following the first phase of Bantu Education (1955-1975), MTE was reduced from eight years to four years in 1976, then to 3 years in 1992 (Heugh 2002). Heugh (2004:248) sums up research done in South Africa on the early exit transitional model that shows that pupils who receive only 3 years of MTE before the transition to English average only 30% for English by Grade 11 or 12. Their poor language ability means that performance across the curriculum, including mathematics, is generally poor. Macdonald (1990) reports on the Threshold Project (1986-1989) among Sepedi-speaking children, who experienced the shift in medium of instruction from the mother tongue to English after four years of schooling, with English taught as a subject from year one. Macdonald says that the standard of English of Std 3 [i.e. Std 5 in Malawi] pupils was poor and that pupils could not adequately learn content subjects in English. Clearly, early-exit bilingual programmes did not work in this context either.

The results of early-exit programmes are also felt higher up the educational ladder. Still in South Africa, studies done in the former Bantustan Bophuthatswana, show that many high school students have low competence in English; as a result, they find it difficult when they want to further their education (Amuzu 1992). In his research Amuzu found that primary school teachers in rural areas were teaching in Setswana, a local language, although English was the official medium of instruction. The teachers used code-switching and interpreting from English to Setswana, in Biology, Mathematics and Social Science because they claimed those pupils would not understand these subjects when taught through English alone.

Late-Exit Model

According to this model, pupils learn through their mother tongue for 6-7 years Garcia (1997:410). The second language is generally introduced as a subject early on, and could be phased in as a second medium of instruction alongside the mother tongue from Stds 4-7. Thereafter pupils learn in the second language. The aim remains to promote the second language.

As indicated earlier, although the late exit model is subtractive, it produces better results than the early exit model which Malawi and many other African countries. This model could be a point of departure, however, if bilingual mother tongue based education is to be a success. In an African context where early exit programmes subtract the mother tongue as the language of instruction by the end of grade 3, the late exit model is sometimes regarded as an additive model.

There are many examples of studies done on the late-exit model. What follows are examples from Nigeria, South Africa, the USA and Tanzania.

USA

The term late-exit (and its twin, early-exit) bilingual education was first used to refer to transitional bilingual programmes for language minorities in the United States. In the USA, an eight-year longitudinal study by Ramirez compared structured immersion with early-exit and late-exit bilingual programmes, as reported by Baker (2001). All three are “weak” forms of bilingual education, as “the programs have the same instructional goals, the acquisition of English language skills so that the language-minority child can succeed in an English-only mainstream classroom” (ibid: 249-250). Over 2300 Spanish-speaking students from 554 Kindergarten to Sixth Grade classrooms living in the different states of the USA formed part of the study.

- The medium of instructions in Grades 1 and 2 were different in such a way that ‘Structured Immersion’ (Submersion) contained almost 100% in English language.
- The Early-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education had two-thirds English and the remaining one-third was for Spanish at Grade 3

- Finally, the Late Exit Transitional Bilingual Education moved from three-quarters Spanish in Grade 1 to a little over half Spanish in Grade 2. Then by Grade 6, students were performing better in Mathematics, English Language and English reading skills.

The Ramirez studies had the following results: Firstly, reading skills in Mathematics, English Language and English reading skills were not very different by the end of Grade 3 in all the three models. There was little difference between early exit and the English immersion (submersion) students which resulted in weak bilingualism. As a result, pupils did not perform well in either the first or the second language. Secondly, Grade 6 pupils in late-exit programmes performed better at Mathematics, English Language and English reading skills than their peers in early-exit and structured immersion classes. Late-exit appeared to be a better model because parents also assisted their children to a greater extent. Nomlomo (2006), as alluded to above, emphasizes the importance of involving parents who can assist their children achieve more positive results. Baker (2002) reports that the late-exit programme was the most successful of the three on teacher behaviours in English, teacher questions, initiating and responding behaviours and the student responding behaviours. Ramirez et al. (1991:1) conclude,

When language minority students are given instructions in their home language, this does not interfere with or delay their acquisition of English Language skills, but helps them to 'catch-up' to their English speaking peers in English language arts, English reading and Mathematics. The data suggests that by Grade 6, students provided with English-only instruction may actually fall further behind their English-speaking peers. Data also documents that learning a second language will take six or more years.

Baker (2001), commenting on Ramirez's final report findings says that this is evidence to support 'strong' forms of bilingual education and support for the use of the native language as a medium of teaching.

Nigeria's Six-Year Primary Project

In Nigeria, the Six Year Primary Project (SYPP) as described by Bamgbose (2000) is a famous experiment which took place between 1970 and 1978 in the State of Ile-Ife and was based at the University of Ife in Western Nigeria. The project was designed to compare two systems: the traditional three-year mother tongue medium followed by three years of English

medium, on the one hand, against a full six-year mother tongue medium programme in Yoruba, the main language in the State of Ife and one of the three major languages in Nigeria. The project came about initially as a result of a survey conducted by the Ford Foundation, which wanted to find out ways of improving the teaching of English. Standards in English had been deteriorating. The main aim of the SYPP was to use Yoruba as a medium of instruction throughout the primary school in order to prove that primary education given in the child's language was likely to be more meaningful. Another aim was to develop a primary education curriculum that was complete in itself since primary education is terminal for the majority of children in Nigeria. A further aim was to enrich the primary school curriculum, develop better curriculum materials and more effective teaching of the English language through the use of specialist teachers of English (Dutcher, 1995). Apart from Yoruba and English, other subjects included Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Bamgbose (2000:91) explains: "The main differences between the experimental and the control classes were in the medium of instruction in the last three years of primary education as well as in the use of a specialist teacher of English for the experimental class". This specialist teacher was included with the view to providing the only model of English and with the expectation that the exposure would lead to great improvement in the pupils' mastery of English language.

The project had three hypotheses (Dutcher 1995:12):

- That the experimental children would not be worse academically than the children who followed the conventional route.
- That knowledge and performance in English language of experimental children would not be worse than those of children who followed the conventional route: and
- That the experimental children would be better adjusted, more relaxed, enterprising, and resourceful than the children who followed the conventional route.

In short, the results of the project showed several things. The first one was that from grade 4 on, the experimental classes did better than the control classes in most academic areas, and in all tests of English achievement. It was also observed that pupils taught in the first language were superior in the items that show full learner participation in classroom activities, compared to those pupils who were taught in English (Obanya, 2004). Another observation was that the same teacher who showed negative teaching behaviours while teaching in English turned out to be highly successful when s/he switched from English to the mother tongue (ibid: 2004). Furthermore, children who learnt in the mother tongue scored better

grades on items that measured subject mastery at the higher cognitive levels than those who learnt in English. It was concluded from the study that the mother tongue can be used successfully for education and that African languages can express scientific concepts. Secondly, the use of the mother tongue enhances cognitive development and facilitates the learning of the second language (Dutcher, 1995).

South Africa

In South Africa, late-exit programmes for African-language speakers have been limited to small-scale experimental studies. Nomlomo (2004:251-264) reports on such a study in the Western Cape modelled on the Nigerian SYPP. The study confirms that pupils learning in isiXhosa, their mother tongue, for six years, with English taught as a subject, did better in Grade 6 Natural Science than their peers who switch to English as medium of instruction after only three years. Of significance was the performance of pupils at the different percentage levels. For instance, 14 out of 25 pupils from both classes reached the 60% achievement range. Only four (28%) pupils in the English-medium class achieved this level, as compared to ten (75%) pupils from the isiXhosa class. In other words, late-exit programmes produce better results than early-exit programmes.

The late exit model thus tends to produce better results than the early exit model. In order to achieve the goal of education for all, stakeholders should demonstrate positive attitudes towards using the mother tongue in education. Nomlomo (2006:134) argues that parents should be given an opportunity to play an active role in schools, since they have a rich store of knowledge.

Tanzania

In Tanzania, several studies have been done on the country's late exit model. Tanzania has a population of 35 million and is a multilingual country. Many Tanzanians speak several of the languages of Tanzania. But in contrast to most countries in Africa, Tanzania has a unifying African language, Kiswahili, which is understood and spoken as either the first or a second language by almost 95% of the population (Batibo, 1995:68). Kiswahili is the language of parliament, of the Government and the lower courts, and is used as a language of instruction through all the seven years of primary school and some Teacher Colleges (Brock-Utne 2004). Despite this, it was found out that the transition from Swahili to English as medium of

instruction in secondary school was problematic, as pupils' English was too weak. As a result, teachers were code-switching for pupils to understand the concepts.

The Tanzanian situation is a good example in Africa where even a late-exit programme in which the transition from the first language (or lingua franca) to the foreign language as medium of instruction is delayed to the beginning of secondary school, has had a negative impact on the academic performance of the pupils. Brock-Utne (2004) reports on a six-week experimental study in two Tanzanian secondary schools in which the same Biology and Geography topics were learnt in English in the one school, and in Kiswahili in the other. In classes where English was used as the medium of instruction, there was chorus teaching or "safetalk" (see Arthur 2001), the teaching/learning process was much slower than in the Kiswahili-medium class, there was a lot of peeping by students in their notebooks to give the correct answers, and students were often punished for giving wrong answers. Students were passive, quiet, hardly raised their hands, never asked spontaneous questions and tended to answer in a single word or a few words only. By contrast, in classes where students were taught through the medium of Kiswahili, the use of the familiar language resulted in the expansion of students' vocabulary and greater understanding of concepts. Students were active, posed questions themselves and answered questions from the teachers eagerly, using many sentences. Teachers were relaxed, there was a give and take situation, and students were critical and lively and brought their own experiences and challenged teachers. Sometimes the students brought in some knowledge which the teachers did not have.

In conclusion, safetalk is more likely to be produced where the teacher and learners operate in an unfamiliar language. Learning is more likely to take place where the language of learning is familiar to both teachers and learners, resulting in full interaction.

Ethiopia

Finally, in Ethiopia, there is another lesson to be learnt. The ADEA/UNESCO report (Alidou et al. 2006) indicates that Ethiopia has a population of 62 million people with 11 written languages. Ethiopia radically changed its language policy in 1994 following a period of Amharic dominance. The advocacy of multilingualism resulted in the introduction of originally 17 African languages, now 21, as MoI in primary education (grades 1 to 6), next to Amharic, the former official language of the imperial period, and English. Vis-à-vis the rather elitist system of the past, the intensions of the 1994 language policy reform were to decrease

linguistic problems and to increase children's access to primary education, in addition to improvement with regard to literacy results and general academic achievement. A further target was to enhance the appreciation of local languages and cultures.

The study done by Nekeman (2005, cited in Alidou et al. 2006) indicates that Ethiopia has achieved considerable progress in the implementation of multilingual programmes, catering for trilingual models involving a local language, the dominant national language (Amharic) and the official language (English). However, severe problems with regard to teacher training and provision of materials and textbooks in the African languages remain to be solved.

3.5.2. Additive Bilingual Models

Additive Bilingualism is a process in which the first language is maintained in the educational process throughout school. The second (and often more) language(s) are added to supplement and complement the first language. There is no intention to replace the first language. The outcome is positive for all children i.e. there are a win-win situation (Heugh, 2002).

Indeed, in the additive education model, the objective is the use of mother tongue (MT) as a MoI throughout (with the official / foreign language taught as a subject) or to use the MT plus the official/foreign language as two (dual) media of instruction to the end of school. In the additive education model, the MT is never removed as a medium of instruction and generally used for no less than 50% of the day/subject. Therefore, the target is a high level of proficiency in MT plus a high level of proficiency in the official/foreign language. In Africa, the kind of additive models that are applicable would be either:

- Mother tongue throughout with the second or official/foreign language taught as a subject by a specialist teacher; or
- Mother tongue followed by dual medium: mother tongue to at least grade 4-5 followed by gradual use of official/foreign language for up to but no more than 50% of the day/subject by the end of school.

The first model, above, is commonly referred to as mother-tongue education (MTE), and will not be discussed further as it is well known and the dominant model of education the world over, as in China, Japan, and Germany. However, two examples of the latter model are given, below. In both models, the target is to develop high levels of competence in two languages.

The other example of an additive bilingual model is what Collier & Thomas (2004) call one-way developmental bilingual education. In this model, one language group is schooled bilingually. This model might be appropriate for most districts in the Malawi central region, which have one large Chichewa-speaking group that could learn through Chichewa and the second language (English) throughout.

Two-way/dual language education: USA

In the context of the United States, the two-way/dual language model is effective, provided it is well developed. Ideally it includes both the majority language and the minority language groups in the move towards bilingualism. Garcia (1997:414) explains: "Instruction most often involves linguistically heterogeneous groups. Both languages are used in the instruction with compartmentalization, often to do with time of the day, and sometimes with a different teacher". This model is sustained throughout the students' education, and allows language minority students to maintain and develop their first language and thus become bilingual and biliterate. Where children from two different language backgrounds learn in the same school it is often termed two-way immersion. The mother tongue of the language minority group (e.g. Spanish) is used with a gradual introduction of the high status mother tongue of the other pupils (English). Such programmes sometimes start with 90% time in Spanish and 10% in English in Grade 1, then 80-20; 70-30; 60-40; 50-50 by the fifth year (see Heugh (2004). Alternatively, such programmes use both languages on a 50/50 basis from the first year. In two-way programmes native-English-speaking students join their bilingual and English Language Learners (ELL) peers in an integrated bilingual classroom. These bilingual classes do not need to enrol exactly 50% of each linguistic group to be classified as two-way, but it helps the process of L2 acquisition to have an approximate balance of students of each language background (Collier & Thomas 2004).

The authors report astounding results from this programme at Houston Independent School District, Texas. The native-Spanish speakers (initially classified as beginning English as Second Language, or ESL. Students) in the two-way dual language (bilingual immersion) schools were at or above grade level in both English and Spanish in 1st to 5th grades. In English achievement, at all grade levels, ELLs in two-way classes outscored ELLs in the other bilingual programme types by 7 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCEs) or more, a very statistically significant difference. In this 90:10 model, these ELLs across all the three

programmes performed unexpectedly well in Spanish, achieving well above grade level at the 55th to 65th NCE (60th to 76th percentile) for Grades 1-5, with only the transitional students down to the 51st NCE by fifth grade (their Spanish instruction was being phased out). This high achievement in Spanish significantly influenced their high achievement in English in comparison with other school districts implementing little or no primary (first) language support.

In summary, two-way bilingual classes enhance second language acquisition; they resolve some of the persistent sociocultural concerns that have resulted from segregated transitional bilingual classes, can lead to a context where students from each language group learn to respect their fellow students as valued partners in the learning process, with much knowledge to teach each other (Baker 2001).

Dual-medium education: South Africa

A similar form of additive bilingual model has been operational in South Africa involving Afrikaans (before then Dutch) and English. Heugh (2002) says that bilingual education was the norm for Dutch-speaking children in South Africa during the 19th Century. The Cape Education Commission made provision for teaching in English or Dutch or both in the primary school. The British did attempt to force English-only in secondary schools. However, this generated resistance and exacerbated a distrust of the English, especially after 1873. The Dutch-speakers did not become averse to learning English even in the Boer Republics, while Dutch was used as medium of instruction for primary education. Very often both English and Dutch were used at secondary school. Many Dutch children were taught entirely through the medium of English in secondary school because the school-leaving examinations were offered in English only (until 1912). In 1907 and 1908 respectively two acts made provision for mother-tongue education for six years of schooling. The second language was to be introduced gradually and offered as a second medium of instruction (dual medium education) from the seventh year at school.

There were interesting results. Heugh (2002) reports that levels of bilingualism for 'white' South Africans in English and Dutch (later Afrikaans) increased from 42% in 1918 to 64% in 1936 and to 73% in 1951. In 1936, 69% of the white population in Orange Free State, where dual medium education was made compulsory in 1908, were bilingual. While the Cape Province favoured dual-medium/bilingual teacher training, the other provinces moved in the

direction of single-medium training which resulted in decreasing standards of second language proficiency.

The implications of a dual-medium model for a country such as Malawi are as follows. The first language, for example Chichewa, could act as a medium of instruction from standard 1 up to 4. Then there is a gradual introduction of the second language (English) as a subject for standards 2 to 4. After that, there is a gradual introduction of the second language as a medium of instruction for part of the day during grades 5, 6, and 7; for example, this could be done in music, singing, art and other similar subjects. This trend could continue in grades 8-12 where 50% of the curriculum is taught in the first language and 50% in English. In these grades, the mother tongue could be used as a medium for communication in Mathematics and Science. The second language (English) would also be used as a medium of communication for History and Geography. Both languages would be taught as subjects throughout. A third language, whether a local or a foreign language, would be taught as a subject only. Such a model would follow the systematic separation of languages (Heugh, 2002)

3.6. Importance of parent/community involvement

Thus far I have emphasised the importance of maintaining the mother tongue or first language in bilingual education. That apart, one of the most important factors in determining the success of such programmes is to involve the parents/communities. This is supported by studies from many contexts. For example, in her studies of four developing countries, namely Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Bolivia and Niger, Benson (2005:306) comes to the following conclusion:

Parental and community involvement is essential. Parents can, and do, provide vital resources for the process. Parents are more likely to be involved if their languages and cultures are recognised by the school and if bilingual programs do what they purport to do. Parents' and teachers' attitudes are important because they are not easily influenced. Parents can see the results of their children's schooling and judge whether or not these results are desirable and can compare the academic performance of their children who are in different bilingual programmes.

Heugh (2000:7) underlines the role of the community in implementing bilingual education programmes, saying it is important that the attitudes of civil society are taken into account, particularly those of parents when education is at issue. In South Africa, Nomlomo's (2006) study of mother-tongue education was aimed at soliciting views of parents on the two languages (English and isiXhosa) used in teaching of Grade 5 science in one school in the Western Cape. Nomlomo argues that when parents and other stakeholders participate actively in school activities, and get to understand their own rights and those of their children, their voices and influences can be invaluable assets in language policy implementation and monitoring in schools. It is worth noting that the current South African Language-in-Education Policy (DoE 1997) gives learners, via their parents, the right to choose the language of learning and teaching.

The results of the study reveal that 81% of the parents believed in maintenance of mother tongue, but felt English was needed for political, economic and educational reasons. Some parents chose English as medium of instruction. Others, however, chose isiXhosa as medium of instruction for the following reasons: parents' awareness of politics related to language rights and language equity; pride in using isiXhosa in modern technology like ATMs; associating isiXhosa with better academic achievements; the notion that isiXhosa is greatly needed for maintaining cultural identity; and parents' awareness of the benefits of maintaining the child's mother tongue in learning another language. Parents perceived the mother tongue as a good foundation for learning English, the first additional language.

Krashen (1996:49) confirms the validity of this perception in the context of bilingual programmes in the USA. He argues against the perception that most parents believe that the sooner their children are exposed to English as the language of learning, the sooner they will get proficiency in it .

If you ask people if they support the development of the first language at the expense of English and school success, nearly all say 'no'. But if you ask them if they support bilingual education, a surprising number say they do. Similarly, a large percentage agrees with the principles underlying bilingual education. When people do object to bilingual education, quite often it is on the basis of application, not theory.

Matiki (2006), quoting Spolsky & Irvine (1982), agrees with the idea of respecting community expectations for bilingual programmes to be successful. In regard to literacy he argues that literacy is likely to be accepted if domains and functions for written communication predate the introduction of the new writing system. The people should perceive literacy as being in keeping with prevailing cultural knowledge and traditions. Values that come with literacy should also be continuous with pre-existing sociocultural beliefs.

To sum up, it is important that parents should know the importance of using the mother tongue in education so that they can make informed choices on the education of their children. Indeed, parents can assist children in learning if the language of instruction is familiar to both parties.

3.7. Conclusion: the need for mother tongue based bilingual models

As will be evident from the above explanations examples, bilingual education programmes which are mother tongue based are possible and have many advantages. Heugh (2000:7), in support of bilingual education, says,

In a multilingual society where a language such as English is highly prized, there is only one viable option and this is bilingual education where adequate linguistic development is foregrounded in the mother tongue whilst the second language is systematically added. If the mother tongue is replaced, the second language will not be adequately learnt and linguistic proficiency in both languages will be compromised.

In what follows I will be looking at precisely such a situation of compromise in examining the effect on Std 5 pupils' academic performance of the change of language of instruction from Chichewa to English in Malawi.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1. Introduction

As stated previously, in this study I would like to investigate whether the change of medium of instruction from Chichewa to English which is done in Standard 5 really affects the academic performance of the pupils.

To achieve this, I used several approaches or orientations for data collection. The main orientation was qualitative in respect of case studies as a research orientation. The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the research design and methodologies. This was done to ensure that the information provided could make the research replicable; which means that it could be repeated by any researcher, any time and under similar conditions (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001:97).

Yin (1994) defines a case study as “a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. I followed a case study orientation because it best answers why, how and what questions.

4.1.1 Advantages of case studies

Yin (1994) says that case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points. One result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion. Case study has the following advantages. Firstly, it is preferred in examining contemporary events, only when relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated. Secondly, unlike historical studies, a case study adds two sources of evidence, which are direct observation and systematic interviewing. The case study researcher observes characteristics of a single case with the intention of investigating deeply and analysing intensively phenomena about this case (Cohen and Manion 1980:99). That is why I have singled out one aspect affecting academic performance of Standard 5 pupils in Malawi, namely the language of instruction. Furthermore, a case study has the ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artefacts, interviews and observations – beyond what might be available in the conventional historical study.

4.1.2 Disadvantages of Case Studies

However, Yin 1994 elaborates that there are a number of disadvantages of the case study orientation. Some of these disadvantages are as follows. Firstly, case studies have been viewed as a less desirable form of enquiry than either experiments or surveys. This is because subjects can exhibit inconsistent behaviour which can be detrimental to the results. However, this problem can be overcome with careful monitoring. Secondly, the case study investigator can easily become sloppy and allow equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. Every case study investigator must work hard to report all evidence fairly. A second common concern about case studies is that they provide little basis for scientific generalization. It is not possible to generalize from a single case. However, as scientific experiments can be generalized from several experiments, so can several case studies. Thirdly, case studies take too long, and they may result in massive unreadable documents. However, there are ways of avoiding writing lengthy narratives.

I used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. In the qualitative data analysis, I arrived at themes which I then analysed. The themes were taken from the observations and interviews I had conducted. In the case of quantitative data, I analysed the data collected from the tests pupils had written in Mathematics and Social Studies.

Questionnaires were administered to teachers and pupils. Data was collected from tests of the same pupils' performance in both Standards 4 and 5. I wanted to compare how the same pupils performed in Social Studies and Mathematics in Standard 4 when the medium of instruction was Chichewa and how the same pupils performed in Standard 5 when the medium of instruction was English, especially where the pupils were taught by the same teachers who taught them in Standard 4. This is important because the only difference was the language of instruction. The data which represented the mean performance of the pupils was presented in tables and in graphs. These helped in seeing how the medium of instruction affects the academic performance of the children.

I also compared the test results of the two groups after being taught in Chichewa in Standard 4 and in English in Standard 5. I represented data through bar graphs and used these to develop descriptions of my findings. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Microsoft Word Windows programme.

4.2. Collection of Data

There were several ways and procedures I followed before I went to collect data. Some of these were: identifying the steps to follow in collecting data, locating where to collect data, who could be the research subjects, the time frame, methods of data collection, and the research instruments used. The following timeline indicates when the data collection took place.

DATE	DATA COLLECTION
May 2006	Obtained permission from the Ministry of Education and all stakeholders involved to collect data
July 2006	Chose schools for data collection and pre-testing of data collection instruments.
September 2006	Did classroom observation in Mathematics in Standard 4
October 2006	Did classroom observation in Social Studies in Standard 4
November 2006	Administered end of year examinations to Standard 4 pupils. Results obtained from scripts formed part of my data.
December 2006	Collected end of year results of Standard 4 pupils
February 2007	Issued questionnaires to 10 teachers
March 2007	Did classroom observation in Social Studies in Standard 5
March 2007	Did classroom observation in Mathematics in Standard 5
April 2007	Administered questionnaires to 50 Standard 5 pupils
April 2007	Interviewed 4 class teachers
April 2007	Administered end of 1 st term examinations to standard 5 pupils when they learnt through English so that the results could be compared with the results the same pupils achieved when they were taught through the medium of Chichewa in Std 4.
April 2007	Collected end of term results

4.2.1. Process of Data Collection

First of all in May 2006, I wrote to the Secretary for the Ministry of Education asking for permission to conduct my research and a letter of introduction to use when contacting different stake-holders. I got both in the same month. After deciding where to collect data (Lilongwe - see below), I contacted two District Education Managers from Lilongwe, both from the rural districts. The Managers in turn advised me as to which schools to target for data collection. I subsequently met headteachers of the two primary schools to introduce myself and the aim of my research. The headteachers in turn introduced me to their staffs, who later introduced me to the pupils concerned. I had also written letters to parents to ask for their consent to involve their children in the research. I am pleased to say that all the parents responded positively to my request.

The advantage of my position was that it was easier to meet and to get the necessary approval from stakeholders since I was a fellow professional. The only problem was that I had to travel long distances – over 300 km from Blantyre to Lilongwe – which had cost implications. However, GTZ assisted me with some funds for the research.

4.2.2. Where data was collected

The District Education Managers concerned assisted me in choosing the schools according to my own criteria. The actual choice of the two schools, among the many which had similar profiles, was done on the basis of random sampling. The data was collected at two rural primary schools Wanje and Mbeng'ochi (not their real names) found in the Lilongwe District. These schools were chosen because, firstly, they were full primary schools⁵ and were in the same locality; therefore pupils in these schools had similar language backgrounds. Secondly, over 90% of both the teachers and pupils spoke Chichewa as their mother tongue, which was used as language of instruction from Standard 1 to 4; and both schools had English as medium of instruction from Standard 5. Thirdly, all the teachers in these schools were qualified and had a minimum of 5 years' experience. It is worth noting that the schools had a similar system in that when pupils are promoted to the next class at the end of the academic year, their teachers are also promoted to the next class for continuity's sake⁶. The focus was on the same Std 5 pupils who had been in Std 4 the previous year (where Chichewa was still their medium

⁵ There are schools that have all the eight classes from Standard 1 to 8. Other schools have only Standards 1 to 5. they are called Junior Primary Schools.

⁶ In this way pupils and teachers get used to each other, and the teachers use similar methods and language which create an environment conducive to learning.

of instruction) I did not include those pupils who were repeating Std 5 because their experience (one year plus) differed from that of the others. In both schools, two teachers are allocated to a class. The teachers equally share teaching subjects, as there is no specialization in primary teacher training in Malawi.

4.2.3. Stakeholders involved

In this study I examined how the role of medium of instruction affects the academic performance of the pupils after the change from Chichewa to English at the start of Std 5. Relevant stakeholders like teachers, pupils, and school administrators were involved as sources of information.

Teachers

Teachers were sources of evidence because they are the ones who teach these pupils and they had real experience on how pupils performed when learning through either English or Chichewa. These were originally Standard 4 teachers who taught all subjects in the mother tongue and moved up with their pupils to Standard 5 at the end of the academic year. These teachers thus had vivid insights into the academic performance of the pupils. Fortunately the teachers did not expect any payment from me. However, as a token of appreciation, I had given lunch allowances to the teachers concerned and enough writing pens for all the teachers in both schools. I gave these after I had collected all the data, to avoid influencing teachers with the token given.

Pupils

The pupils involved were the main subject of the research. These were Standard 5 pupils who were also involved when they were in Standard 4. There were 50 pupils involved – 25 from each school – who were chosen through random sampling. The pupils were involved because they were direct sources of information since they were the ones who were taught through the medium of Chichewa from Standard 1 up to 4 and through English, which was a foreign language, from Standard 5. Both Chichewa and English were taught as subjects starting from Standard 1. These were mainly pupils whose mother tongue was Chichewa. The pupils did not expect any payment from me for involving them in the research. I nevertheless gave them ballpoint pens and pencils, enough for all pupils at the two schools.

School Administrators

The school administrators included the Secretary for Education, Education Division Managers, District Education Managers, Primary Education Advisors and Head Teachers of the schools concerned. These school administrators were involved because it was ethical to let them know what was happening in their schools. As a result I wrote a letter asking for permission to collect data from the schools concerned, which was granted. The head teachers were also involved because they were the ones who kept progress reports of the pupils which I wanted to access.

4.2.4 Research Questions

The research design was aimed at answering the following research questions:

Main research question

“What is the impact of the change of medium of instruction from Chichewa to English on academic performance of Standard 5 pupils in primary schools in Malawi?”

The research question had the following sub-questions:

1. How well did pupils perform in Standard 4 when they were learning Mathematics and Social Studies through Chichewa; and how do they perform when they are taught the same subjects through English in Std 5?
2. Have Standard 5 pupils mastered the basic interpersonal communication skills and cognitive academic language proficiency necessary to achieve appropriate language proficiency when learning Mathematics and Social Studies?
3. Are pupils motivated enough to start learning through the medium of English in Standard 5?
4. How do teachers rate the participation of pupils when the pupils are taught through Chichewa and English, respectively?
5. Are teachers trained enough to teach through the medium of English at Standard 5 level?

4.2.5. Data collection instruments

Several instruments were used in data collection. These were in the form of tests (comparisons of examination results), classroom observations, interviews, questionnaires and examination results. Such data collection instruments were chosen for the purpose of helping to triangulate the data to enhance validity.

Classroom Observation

The researcher observed some lessons in Social Studies and Mathematics taught in the two schools. The main focus was on how both teachers and pupils participated in Chichewa-medium and English-medium lessons, respectively.

Social studies as a subject was chosen because it contains words which are used in ordinary conversations and words which are used specifically for the subject. Similarly, Mathematics was chosen because it has subject-specific terms which may not have equivalents in Chichewa or/and have English words which have been Chichewanised.⁷

I experienced both advantages and challenges as a researcher, given my background as a language teacher in primary schools, secondary schools and then as a teacher trainer. My advantages were that I knew what approaches are applicable in primary school teaching. I also knew how to assess both teaching and learning behaviours because it was part of my work as a primary school trainer; and I have reasonable command of both Chichewa and English. At the same time I had some challenges as a non-participant observer. Firstly, I was tempted time and again to advise the teachers on how to teach effectively through either the medium of Chichewa or English. However, I remained a silent observer. Secondly, as a stranger in the schools who was observing lessons, I had the power to change the classroom atmosphere. In this situation, I had to assure the teachers that my role was just to observe them, and that the data I had collected was merely for academic purposes and was not to put them at any risk. In addition, I observed 10 lessons of each teacher before the actual process of data collection with all my data collection support gadgets. This was done so that the teachers as well as the pupils could get to know me.

I came up with a checklist with different items on which teacher's and pupils' behaviours in the teaching and learning process were observed. The items included the following: how often were teachers giving directions, asking questions on previous lessons, giving information, expanding on information, supporting activities with proverbs and songs, demonstrating, giving inter-relationships, correcting language, scolding, marking during moments of inactivity in class work (see Appendices). On the other hand, the checklist also contained

⁷ For example when counting numbers. **one** in English is sounded as “**wani**” in Chichewa.

items on pupils' performance behaviours as they were learning. These included how often pupils were giving conventional responses to the teacher, volunteering in giving extra information, asking for further clarifications, giving full sentence responses, disagreeing with the teacher, non-verbal responses, group activity, incorrect use of language and many others (see Appendices).

I used a tape-recorder and video camera when observing the lessons. This was so because I could not write down all behaviours of both pupils and teachers within the teaching/learning period. I used a video recorder because it captures both visuals as well as sound in the teaching/learning process and acted as a back-up to the tape recorder. The use of the tape recorder and the camera could have been felt as a threat by the teacher and the pupils. I thoroughly briefed them as to the reasons why I had to use these instruments and I observed lessons for 3 weeks before starting to collect data. This was so that the pupils and the teachers could get used to me and the equipment so that they could behave in a normal way during the subsequent classroom observation.

The behaviours displayed by both teachers and pupils in the teaching/learning process contributed substantially to this study. Their classroom behaviours when teaching and learning Mathematics and Social Studies through Chichewa and English respectively had a direct impact on the academic performance of the pupils.

Examination results

The year-end examination results of 50 pupils were compared in Social Studies and Mathematics when they were taught through Chichewa in Std 4 and through English in Std 5. This would identify the language factor in their academic performances. The questions were carefully scrutinised and analysed for validity. The results were presented in graphs and the differences were also interpreted. The results were thoroughly scrutinized to avoid being manipulated.

The differences in grades in the two subjects was analysed to see to what extent they were the result of the language of instruction used when writing such examinations.

As the researcher I had to observe how the examinations were formulated, administered and marked to make sure that the teachers did not alter the processes of the examinations which could tamper with the results of my research.

Teachers' and pupils' questionnaires

I had two questionnaires; one for 10 teachers from the two schools and the other questionnaire for the 50 Standard 5 pupils from both schools. The questionnaires were formulated on the basis of a number of factors such as anticipated attitudes towards the use of either Chichewa or English as the language of learning in their teaching/learning process, the advantages and challenges teachers faced when teaching through the respective languages, and respondents' views on the impact of language on teaching/learning processes. Teachers and Standard 5 pupils answered the questionnaires basing on their experience in teaching/learning through both Chichewa and English. Both teachers and pupils were asked to respond, using their hands-on experience (see Appendices). Some questions alluded to or asked about the views of teachers on using Chichewa and English as medium of instruction. The attitudes one has towards a language of instruction affect one's academic performance. In which case, if one has positive attitudes, one may excel academically. Similarly, if one has a negative attitude towards the language of instruction, one may perform poorly academically.

The teachers' questionnaire was in English since English is the official language of Malawi. The pupils' questionnaire was written in both Chichewa and English. This was done to give pupils the chance to answer in a more familiar language in which they were more competent. That had also helped in determining in which language the pupils had a better command. The Chichewa questions appeared first on the questionnaire because I thought that the participants would better understand the instructions that way. Pupils were at liberty to answer either in Chichewa or English.

Both the teachers' and the pupils' questionnaires were pre-tested in other schools so that they could provide me with an opportunity to validate the questions before doing the actual data collection.

Interviews

I administered carefully planned interviews to 10 teachers who taught in Standards 4 to 6 from both primary schools. (See Appendix 5). There were five male teachers and five female teachers. Such a male: female ratio was important because I wanted to get well balanced gender data. These were the same teachers who had at least five years of teaching experience, and who also had experience in teaching pupils through the medium of both Chichewa and English. Ethnographic interviewing, which is similar to social interaction, is structured by both the researcher and the interview (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:112-113). I formulated specific questions to ask the teachers. I was, however, flexible enough to accept interviewees' inputs on issues. Similarly, I had supplementary questions as a follow up to how each individual responded, but without digressing much. I followed a claim made by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:107) that semi-structured interviews help to clarify certain concepts and problems, and also allow the discovery of new aspects of the problem by exploring the explanations given by the respondents.

4.2.6 Methodology

Some of the questions were open-ended so that interviewees had to come up with a range of responses. Other questions were close-ended so that interviewees had to respond objectively where I was looking for specific answers (see Appendix 5). I interviewed each teacher separately to secure independent responses – they might otherwise have been influenced by group responses.

I recorded the interviews so as to be able to revisit the responses, and in case I missed important information during the interviews. The teachers were not threatened by the presence of the recording equipment as they were used to it by then.

4.2.7 Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple and different sources to provide corroborating verification (Creswell 1995). Similarly, Cohen and Manion (1980:208) define triangulation as “the use of two or more methods of data collection”. I made use of four different sources of data in order to substantiate evidence gained from each source. These sources included two questionnaires (one for teachers and the other one for pupils), examination results, semi-structured interviews for teachers, and classroom observations of teaching and learning practices. Likewise, Hammersley & Atkinson (1983:24) also emphasise the advantages of

using multiple data sources as opposed to being reliant on only one kind of data. Indeed these instruments used assisted in triangulation for validity purposes of the study.

4.3. My hypothesis

My hypotheses was that pupils would perform badly in Standard 5 where they started learning through English, compared to their performance when they were taught through the first language. The teachers would also find it problematic to teach pupils who had not fully mastered English. Teachers would be influenced to codeswitch from the first language to the second language because they would otherwise not manage to communicate with the pupils across the linguistic barrier. My hypothesis was such because of strong research evidence in favour of MTE as opposed to use of the foreign language (English).

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. General Introduction

In this Chapter, I shall present and discuss research findings emanating from the data I collected from two primary schools in Lilongwe. Findings drawn from each of the research instruments are presented and discussed separately. However in some cases, reference is made to findings from one or more of the other instruments. Findings are discussed as they are presented, rather than later in the dissertation, so as to enable the reader to more easily follow the line of thought.

5.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

5.2.1. Introduction

Twenty teachers from two rural primary schools responded to the questionnaire. They were from Standards 3 to 7, and all had vast experience in teaching using both Chichewa and English as media of instruction.

Teachers were asked to respond to questions about their experience, motivation and attitudes as far as medium of instruction was concerned, with the main focus on Std 5. Their input contributed greatly to the present study on how the medium of instruction influences academic achievements in pupils.

5.2.2. General Information (Section A): Teachers' qualifications and experience re. medium of instruction

As already indicated, there were twenty teachers who filled in the questionnaire. Of these, 16 (or 80%) had the Malawi School Certificate of Education as their highest qualification. Such teachers are normally graded as T2 in Malawi. Note that this is the highest professional and academic qualifications one gets after qualifying as a primary school teacher. 20% had a Junior Certificate as academic qualification, which is a T3 professional qualification.

In essence, it was expected that teachers with such qualifications and experience would have good command of the two languages (Chichewa and English), and would have enough experience in using the languages as media of instruction. Their teaching experience ranged between 7 and 30 years, with the majority on 13 years. The teachers had questions to which they were expected to respond using a Likert-type scale (a little, well, very well and extremely well) for some questions, and a similar scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree) for other questions. Fourteen out of the twenty teachers (70%) indicated that Chichewa was their first language. However, all the others also had very good command of Chichewa, since it is the national language. Twelve out of the twenty teachers (60%) also indicated that they were able to read and write very well in both Chichewa and English, and 8 were able to write and read both Chichewa and English well. They all agreed that the language mostly spoken around the schools was Chichewa.

5.2.3. Section B (Questions 1-15): Teachers' attitudes and experiences re. medium of instruction

Fig. 2 below shows how 10 teachers responded to question 1 on whether mother tongue education lowers standards of education in Malawi.

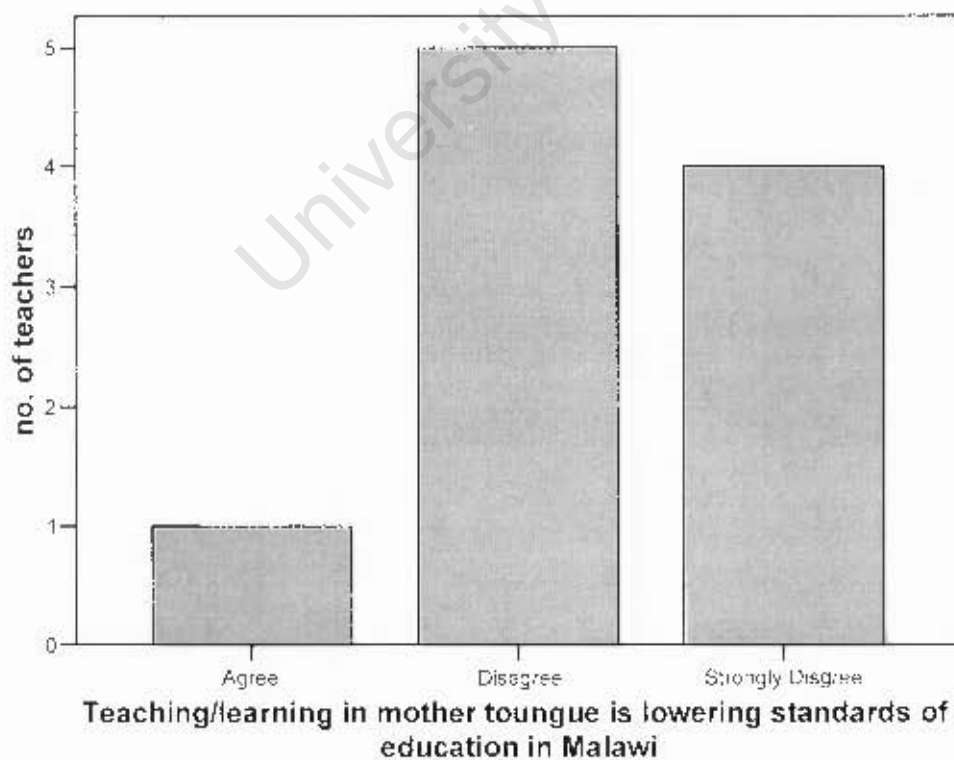


Fig.2

In their response to question 1 above, 9 out of 10 (90%) disagreed and 1 agreed. In this case, although the teachers disagreed with the conclusion that using the mother tongue lowers the standards of education in Malawi, they still taught through English in Std 5, thereby following the language policy in education. Otherwise, if given the choice, they might have preferred to teach in the mother tongue. Similarly, 70% of the teachers agreed that teaching/learning in the mother tongue increases the child's survival skills. This may be because, like Obanya (2004) and Mchazime (1996), when one is taught through the mother tongue one acquires literacy skills which would enable one to survive.

When responding to a similar question on whether teaching/learning in mother tongue leads to lower literacy rates, 80% of the teachers agreed to the suggestion while 20% disagreed. Indeed, it becomes easier for one to learn in mother tongue because one learns faster in a familiar language which is a resource one brings from home and one is able to relate what one knows already to new concepts one meets in a school environment (Obanya 2004).

When asked whether teachers should rephrase the points in English instead of explaining them in the mother tongue even when pupils fail to understand, 80% agreed with the suggestion. However, this was very theoretical. In practice, teachers did a lot of unsystematic code-switching, code-mixing and interpreting. This is a clear indication that teachers find it a problem to teach solely through the medium of English in Std 5 (Mtenje 2002).

Fig. 3 below shows how the teachers thought about the notion that children learn faster in the mother tongue than English.

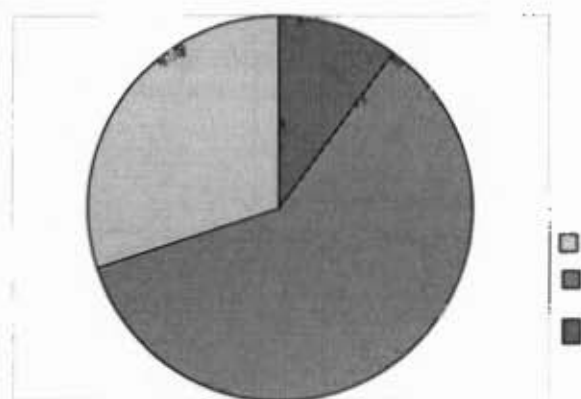


Fig.3

Out of 10 respondents, 1 disagreed, 6 agreed and 3 strongly agreed. In total those who generally agreed were 9. The result is no surprise, as pupils learn better in a familiar language than in an unfamiliar language (Mtenje 2002).

It is worth noting that most pupils were from the rural areas and came from a poor background where most parents do not speak English. Because the pupils had been learning through mother tongue from Std 1 to 4, it came as a shock to abruptly switch to English as a medium of instruction, without a proper transition. This situation tends to negatively affect academic performance because pupils' English proficiency is not enough to meet the cognitive demands of learning content subjects (Baker 2001).

Furthermore, 9 of 10 teachers generally disagreed with the proposition that teaching/learning in the mother tongue reduces chances for pupils to communicate in English. It is a well known fact that English is very important because it is an international language.

100% of the teachers agreed with the statement that pupils do not need to learn in English since most drop out after primary school. Reasons for dropping out include stiff competition for the limited number of places in secondary schools, and school fees. Unlike primary education, secondary education is not free in Malawi. It is reasonable to conclude that there is no need for such pupils to learn through English because they were not going to use it elsewhere.

Similarly, 100% of teachers disagreed with the statement that teaching/ learning in the mother tongue decreases chances for pupils to use the taught knowledge and skills after their primary education. The argument behind this is that the knowledge gained through the medium of Chichewa would still be used in their everyday life in such ways as letter writing, reading instructions on the roads, reading newspapers written in local languages, and reading articles on modern ways of farming.

Fig. 4 shows how teachers responded to mother tongue influences in the acquisition of literacy. 9 teachers out 10 generally agreed with the statement that teaching/learning in the mother tongue could improve pupils' numeracy, reading, speaking and writing (literacy) skills.

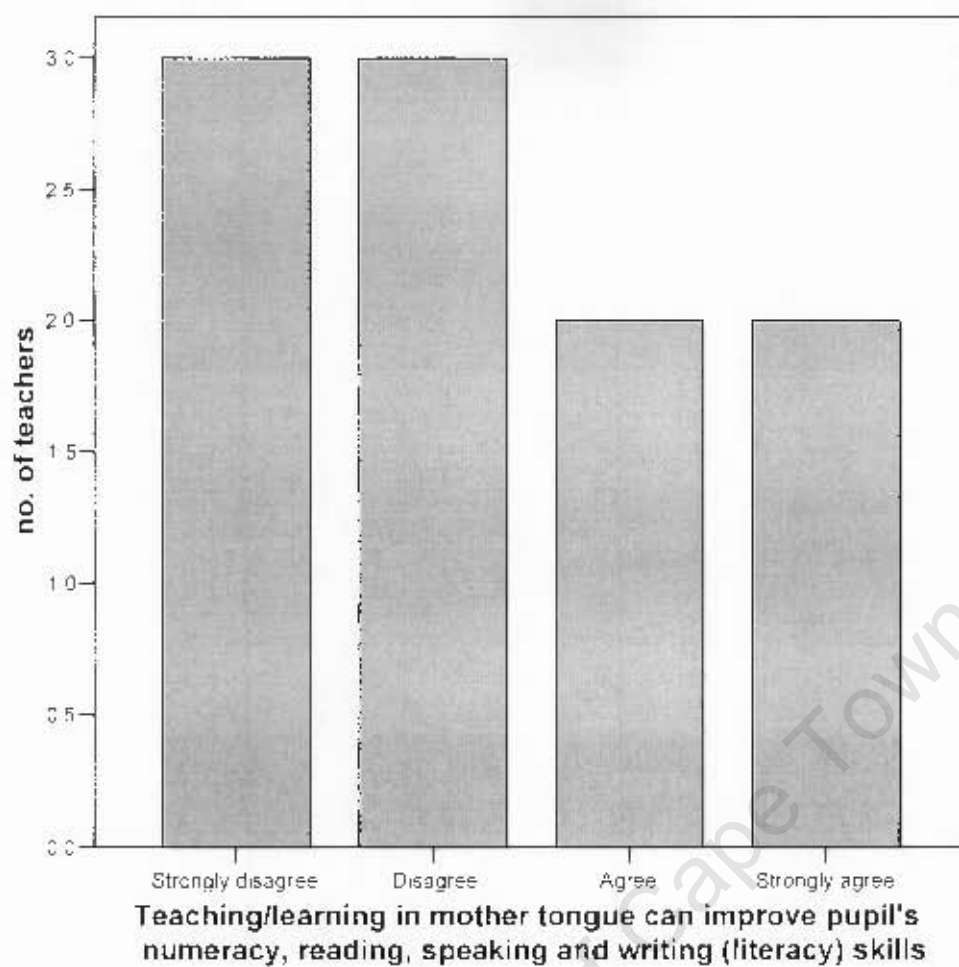


Fig. 4

In response to a question 10 whether teachers face more problems when teaching through the mother tongue than through English, 7 teachers out of 10 representing 70% disagreed. This means that teachers found it less taxing teaching through Chichewa than through English. Similar views were expressed by Std 5 pupils when they were asked the question. By implication, teachers find it difficult to teach effectively through English, with negative consequences for pupils' academic performance.

When asked whether teachers needed training to teach through the mother tongue (question 12), 70% indicated that they did not need any such training. If anything, teachers wanted further training for teaching through English, because teacher training programme currently did not provide them with skills to manage the transition.

In conclusion, it was found that teachers had positive attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction in Std 5 although the language policy dictated that English was the medium of instruction.

5.2.4. Section C (Questions 2 and 3): Grading with regard to medium of instruction

In question 2A, teachers were expected to respond to a statement which asked what would happen to those candidates who fail only English in their Malawi National Examination Board exams. 70% suggested that pupils should be promoted to the next grade only after passing English. This confirms the importance many Malawians attach to English. 90% of the teachers also indicated that children in Malawi should learn in Chichewa from Standard 1 to 7.

In their answer to question 3, teachers indicated that the introduction of English had to be done gradually. For instance, some subjects could be taught through Chichewa while others could be taught through English, as is done in dual or two way bilingual schools. Furthermore they also agreed that using the mother tongue would not hinder pupils' chances of office/business employment. The argument behind this reasoning is that not all people who are in employment or business use English; many may need only a little of English for communicating with people who do not speak Chichewa.

5.3. Pupils' questionnaire

5.3.1. Introduction

The pupils' questionnaire was formulated in such a way that pupils could respond to questions on how the medium of instruction influences their academic performance, according to their experience. These were Std 5 pupils who were taught in English after having learnt through the medium of Chichewa up to and including Std 4.

Some of the questions sought to establish pupils' attitudes towards the medium of instruction, as attitudes can have either a positive or a negative influence on academic performance. It is likely that a positive attitude towards the medium of instruction leads one to perform well. Conversely, a negative attitude is likely to lead to poor academic performance.

5.3.2. General Information: Pupils' language background

The respondents were Std 5 pupils from two primary schools in Lilongwe. Their average age was 12. Almost all (98%) had Chichewa as their first language. Chichewa was also the language the pupils spoke most to their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, best friends, grandparents, shopkeepers and in churches and mosques.

This meant that Chichewa was the most used language and the one in which the pupils had competence and proficiency.

5.3.3. General response to questions (Questions 1-10): Pupils' attitudes and experience with regard to medium of instruction

On the question of which language they spoke best, 44 pupils out of 50 (representing 88%) indicated that they spoke Chichewa best, followed by 4 who chose Chitumbuka and 2 pupils who chose English. All 50 respondents were aware that English was the language in which they learnt most subjects including Science and Agriculture. All the 50 respondents were also aware that they wrote their tests and examinations in English in all the content subjects.

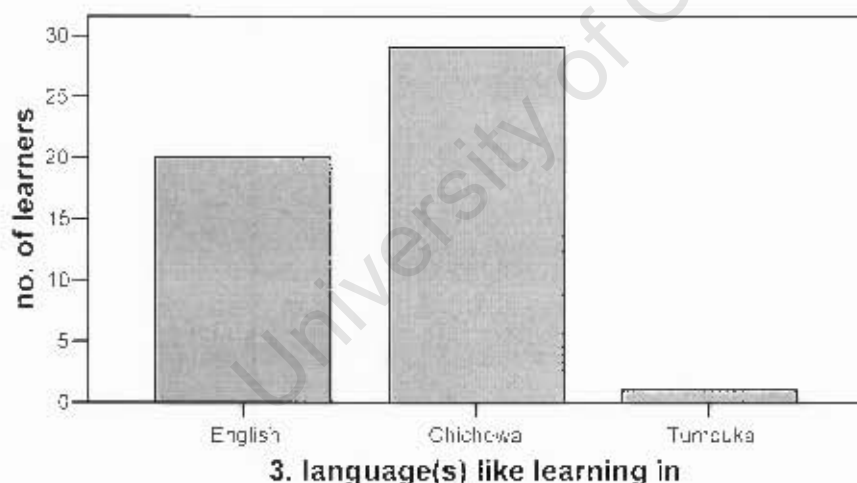


Fig.5

Fig.5 shows how pupils answered the question in which language they would like to learn most subjects. 29 of the 50 preferred learning in Chichewa (representing 58%) and 20 chose English (representing 40%) and 1 (representing 2%) chose Chitumbuka. In summary, 60% chose the use of local languages and 40% chose English. Similarly, 32 pupils out of 50

(representing 64%) chose to learn most of the content subject in local languages as opposed to learning them in English.

This could mean that since pupils have to learn all content subjects in English they do so with a negative attitude, which in turn could result in poor academic performance. However, the 40% who preferred learning in English, could have responded in this way simply because English is viewed as a language of prestige in Malawi. It may also demonstrate how parents influence their children without realising that it could have a negative effect on academic performance.

Fig.6 below shows how the pupils responded to the question in which language they understand Mathematics best.

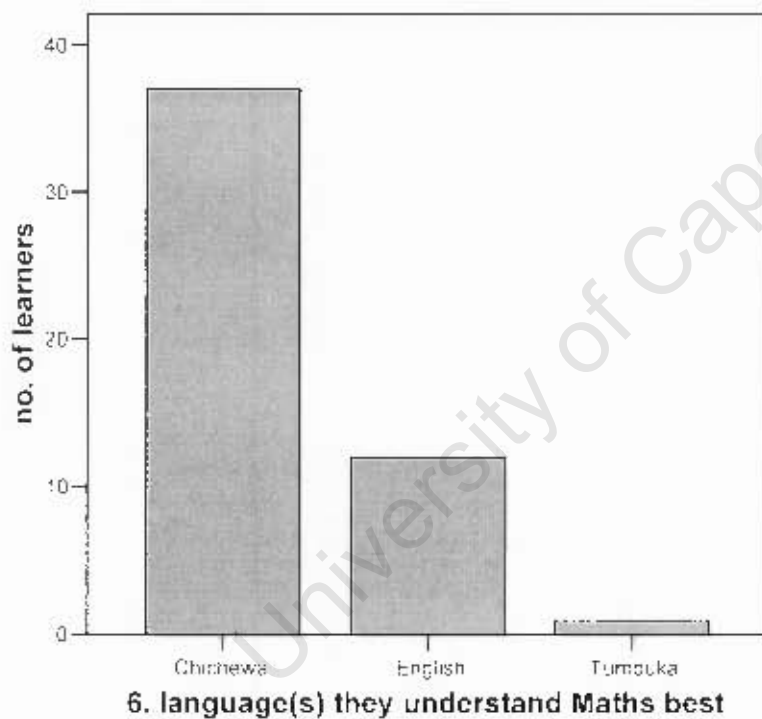


Fig.6

For question 6, 39 out of 50 respondents representing 78% said that they understood Mathematics better when they learned through Chichewa (mother tongue) than when learning through English. This was confirmed by the way the pupils performed in Mathematics examinations when they learnt in Chichewa and English in Std 4 and Std 5 respectively (see examination results, below). Over 60% of the pupils also indicated that they would like to

write their examinations and tests in Mathematics and other content subjects through the medium of Chichewa (mother tongue).

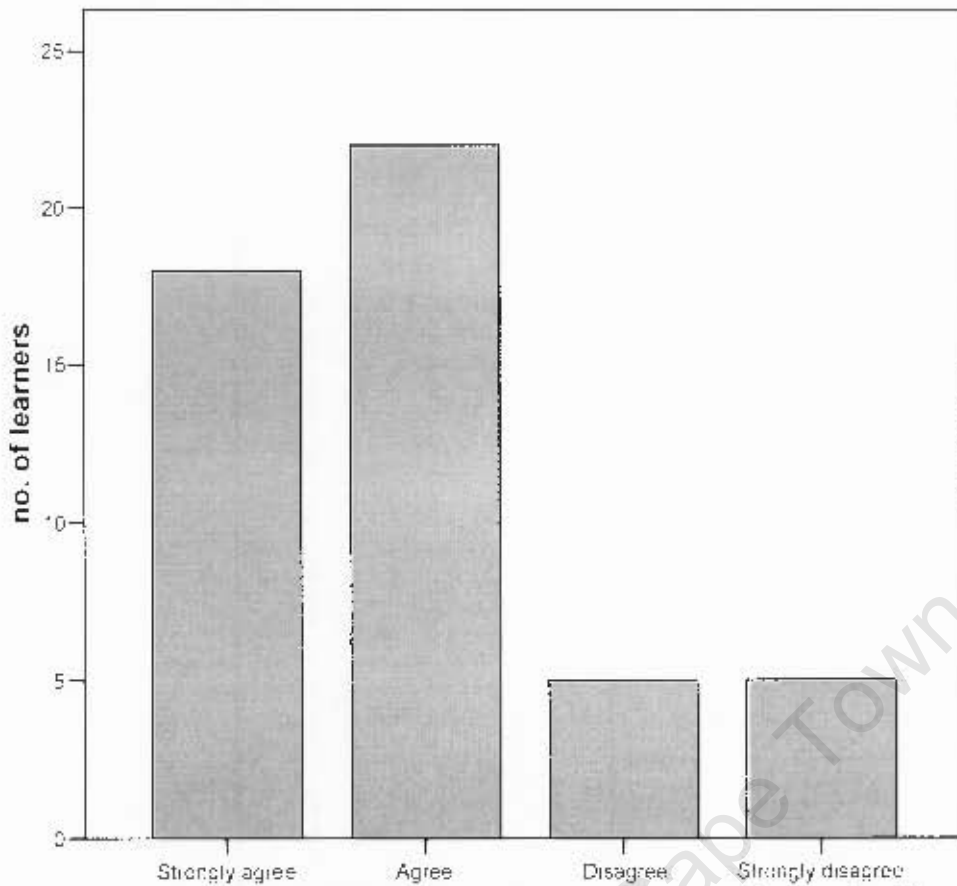
5.3.4. Questions 11-20: Learning experience re. medium of instruction

When responding to the statement that learning Science through English was better than learning Science through Chichewa, 31 out of 50 representing 62% agreed and 19 disagreed representing 38%. Similarly, in responding to question 12, 60% of the pupils preferred to learn other subjects through English. One reason for this preference may be that there are few scientific equivalents or terms in Chichewa. As a result, when teachers teach Science through the medium of Chichewa, they still use English terms. This is why pupils felt that it would be better to learn everything in English even if they don't understand the language very well.

However, the 38% who disagreed probably believe in learning Science in the mother tongue simply because they do not understand scientific language expressed in English. This brings with it a dilemma. There is a clear need to have scientific terminologies in Chichewa. The other subjects use general English which could be easily understood by the pupils. Pupils also agreed that being educated means to be good in English. This is a long-standing belief amongst both pupils as well as parents. English is taken as a yardstick to prove that one is educated.

In response to statement 13 (learning through Chichewa is better than learning through English), 54% agreed and 46% disagreed. Furthermore, 80% of the pupils agreed that learning through Chichewa improves reading and writing skills. Such skills are important for one to be literate and understand concepts learnt in any subject, thereby positively influencing academic achievement.

Fig. 7 below shows how pupils responded to a question which asked them whether Chichewa improves their writing and reading skills.



15. Learning in Chichewa can improve my reading and writing skills.

Fig.7

When the pupils themselves were asked to answer question 15, 80% of the pupils generally agreed with the assumption. Since both teachers and pupils agreed, it might be better if Std 5 pupils continue learning through Chichewa until such a time that English as a medium of instruction could be introduced gradually.

Fig. 8 shows whether teachers find more problems when teaching in English than teaching in Chichewa.

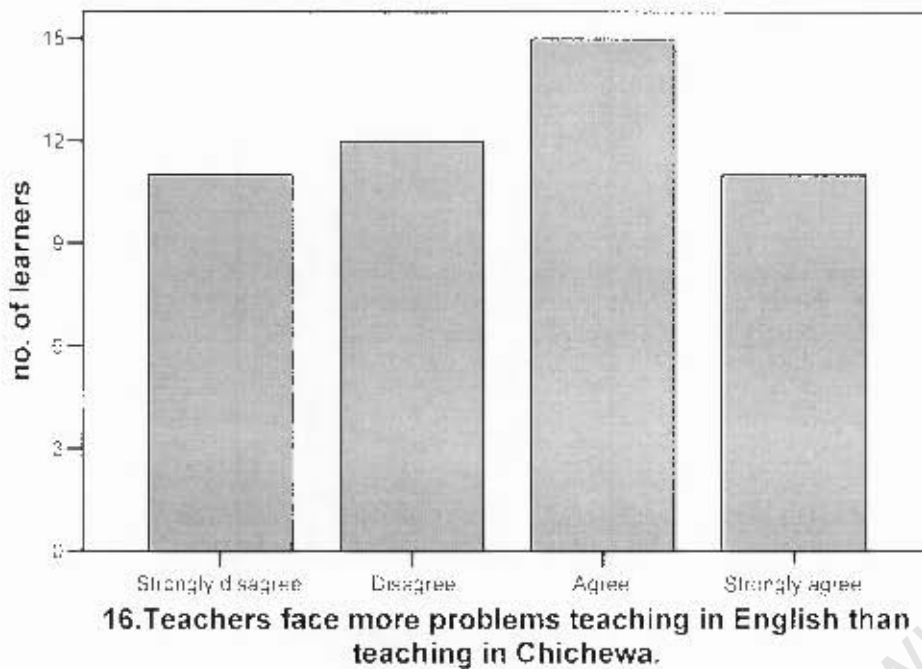


Fig. 8

In this question, 54% of the pupils agreed that teachers find it more difficult to teach through the medium of English than Chichewa. There could be two reasons for this. Some teachers are not sufficiently competent to teach through English at Std 5 level. And pupils themselves are not competent in English because of having a limited vocabulary in English. It should also be noted that most of these pupils are exposed to English only when they are at school. At home they never use English because their families and community members do not know English.

On the other hand, 70% of the teachers disagreed that they have more problems when teaching through English. One reason for such an answer could be an unwillingness to accept one's own weaknesses. Or it could be that teachers were simply afraid of being declared incompetent and thereby losing their jobs. Pupils can ably judge whether teachers have more problems when teaching through English than Chichewa. Such problems are manifested through frequent interpreting, unplanned code-switching and code-mixing. Teachers do this because they say that pupils fail to understand when they are taught through English. This blame-shifting tendency suggests that something is very wrong with the medium of instruction in Std 5.

Fig. 9 below indicates how pupils responded when asked whether they would like learn in both languages.

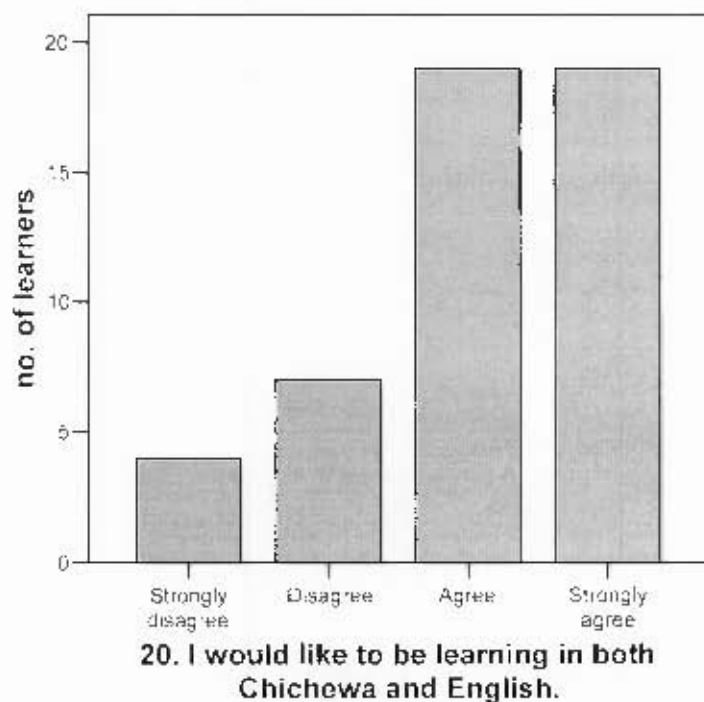


Fig. 9

When answering question 20, 78% suggested that they preferred learning in both Chichewa and English. In other words, the pupils would like to become competently bilingual. This is a very important point because it suggests pupils realise that there are advantages to being bilingual as opposed to being monolingual. It is important to learn English and through English, but how to achieve that is what matters.

5.3.5 Language of response

The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it had the same questions both in Chichewa and English. Pupils were asked to respond to the questions in a language in which they felt comfortable. It stands to reason that this would be the language they could easily understand.

Fig. 10 below shows how pupils responded in both languages.

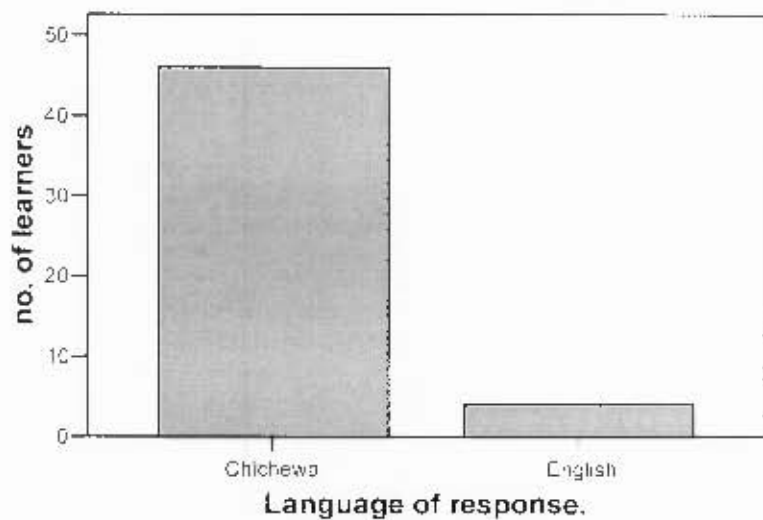


Fig. 10

Figure 10 shows that out of the 50 respondents, 46 answered the questions which were in Chichewa representing 92% against 4 who responded in English. One can easily conclude that pupils preferred responding in Chichewa because that was the language they could understand better. This suggests that pupils would do better learning all content subjects through the medium of Chichewa.

5.4. Classroom observation

5.4.1. Introduction

I observed 12 lessons, (three lessons per each subject Social studies and Mathematics respectively) of the same pupils while they were in Standard 4 where the language of instruction is Chichewa and when they were in Standard 5 where the language of instruction is English.

5.4.2. Checklist for teachers' classroom behaviour category

Teachers re: Medium of instruction

First of all I observed the teachers' behaviour when teaching through the media of both Chichewa and English. There were 13 categories of teachers' behaviours. As alluded to in the research design, these categories were adopted from Obanya's 2004 summary of McCauley's 1982 dissertation on the Nigerian SYPP.

Fig 11a reflects the results which show the extent to which teaching behaviour is influenced by the languages of instruction used by the teachers (1-13). The figures in each category were obtained by counting the number of times each category of behaviour was observed, then dividing the total by the number of lesson observations (i.e. six).

Teacher's classroom behaviour	Chichewa Language use (Std.4)	English Language use (Std.5)
1. Giving directions.	1,5	5,0
2. Asking questions on previous lesson.	5,0	12,0
3. Giving information	20,5	45,5
4. Expands information with additional examples.	20,5	5,0
5. Use of proverbs and songs to supplement activities.	10,5	1,0
6. Demonstrating activities.	5,5	2,5
7. Giving inter relationships	8,0	4,0
8. Incorrect use of language	1,0	15,5
9. Correcting language errors pupils make	0,0	21,0
10. Scolding pupils.	0,0	20,5
11. Rephrasing	0,0	14,5
12. Clear moments of inactivity	0,5	4,0
13. Teacher using code-switching	15,0	47,0

Fig. 11a

Teachers' classroom behaviour: English

Regarding teachers' behaviour during the teaching process in Chichewa and English respectively, the same teachers were forced to perform far more of the following operations when using English: :

- Giving directions (1) – since pupils could not understand English easily, instructions had to be given repeatedly.

- Asking questions on previous lessons (2). This was necessary because teachers were not quite sure whether pupils understood lessons taught in English. Also, pupils may have been giving wrong answers, forcing teachers to repeat or rephrase questions.
- Giving information (3) - In most cases teachers discovered that the pupils were not quite following the lessons and could not fully participate; hence teachers dominated the lessons by giving more information. Consequently, the lessons became teacher-centred.
- Incorrect use of language (8). It was observed that teachers were making more grammatical errors when teaching through the medium of English, clearly because they were not competent in the language. As a result it becomes difficult for pupils to properly grasp concepts, which eventually contributes to their poor academic performance.
- Correcting errors pupils made (9). Pupils found it more difficult to respond in English because they could not very well understand the language; as a result they tended to make a lot of errors which forced the teachers to correct their errors time and again.
- Scolding pupils (10) - pupils tended to give wrong responses because of language problems. So teachers became angry and started scolding pupils.
- Rephrasing (11)
- Clear moments of inactivity (12)
- Teachers using code switching (13)

The last three points all arose because of the same language of instruction problem. Teachers not only displayed unsystematic code-switching, but did unplanned code mixing and interpreting. Only half the work planned for a period of 35 minutes could be covered because time was wasted on translations and interpretations. In such a situation there was a high probability that teachers could not complete work prescribed in the syllabus per class per academic year. This could negatively affect the academic performance of the pupils.

In summary, teachers teaching through English were forced to use far more routine and classroom management behaviours than when teaching through the medium of Chichewa, resulting in a negative impact on learning.

Teachers' classroom behaviour: Chichewa

When the same teachers taught through the medium of Chichewa, they did many more teaching behaviours that have a positive impact on learning, than when teaching through English. These included

- Expanding information with additional examples (4).
- Use of proverbs and songs to supplement activities (5).
- Demonstrating activities (6).
- Giving inter relationships (7).

The same teachers operating in Chichewa performed better than when they taught through English in the above-mentioned points because both the teachers and the pupils were operating through a well known language. In other words, teachers' and pupils' higher proficiency in Chichewa resulted in constructive interactions, which in turn had a positive impact on the academic performance of pupils.

What was most striking was the fact that when teaching through the medium of Chichewa which was the first language, teachers hardly ever

- used language incorrectly
- scolded pupils
- rephrased
- saw clear moments of inactivity
- corrected language errors pupils made.

As mentioned above, this occurred because pupils and teachers were both operating in a familiar language. It is revealing that the same teachers who displayed positive behaviours when teaching through the medium of Chichewa in Std 4, displayed negative behaviours when teaching the same pupils in Std 5 when the medium of instruction was English.

5.4.3. Checklist for pupils' classroom behaviour

Language of instruction re: Pupils learning behaviours

Fig.11b shows how pupils behaved when taught through the media of Chichewa and English, respectively.

Pupils' classroom behaviour	Chichewa	English
14. Correct responses to teachers' questions.	15,5	1,0
15. Full sentence response	12,5	2,5
16. Monosyllabic response.	0,5	4,5
17. Pupils giving information voluntarily	8,5	1,5
18. Pupils initiating activities	4,0	0,5
19. Pupils disagreeing with the teacher	6,5	0,0
20. Language used during group discussions	9,5	2,0
21. Language used between pupils and the teacher	30,0	1,0
22. Learner asking for further clarification	9,5	0,0
23. Pupils relating lesson aspects to daily experience	17,5	0,5
24. Non-verbal responses.	0,5	15,5
25. Pupils code-switching	0,5	40,5

Fig. 11b

Pupils classroom behaviour: English

There were also very big differences in pupils' behaviour when taught through Chichewa and English, respectively. When learning through English, pupils showed superiority in the following:

- Pupils code-switching: Pupils often code-switched from English because they could hardly come up with a correct grammatical sentence in English. This was displayed when pupils were asking and answering questions and when they were doing group discussions. It is a clear indication that they had problems when communicating through English, which is an impediment to the learning process. Interestingly,

however, the pupils while in standard 4 used some English words when learning through Chichewa. This was evidenced mainly when they were learning Mathematics, particularly longer numbers such as 158 which (classroom observation showed) came more easily to pupils in English than in Chichewa.

- Non-verbal responses
- Monosyllabic responses

Pupils were forced to resort to non-verbal and monosyllabic responses in English because they found it difficult to give full responses since their command of the language was poor. It also showed that the pupils were passive in the learning process; hence the teachers were doing more talking, a fact which is likely to have negative consequences for academic performance.

Pupils classroom behaviour: Chichewa

Figure 11b shows that pupils who were taught through the medium of Chichewa were superior in most areas. These were items where pupils showed full participation, which is an important aspect of learner-centred education and normally has a positive influence of academic achievement. The pupils could demonstrate superiority in these items only because they were learning in a familiar language.

5.5. Examination Results

5.5.1. Language of instruction re. academic results

Introduction

Comparisons were made on how the same 50 pupils performed in Mathematics and Social Studies when they were taught through the medium of Chichewa in Std 4 (2006) and through English in Std 5 (2007). Pupils came from two primary schools in Lilongwe (25 pupils from each school) and were taught by the same teachers from one year to the next.

Maths examination results

Examination results in 2006 when the pupils were taught through the medium of Chichewa, indicate that out of the 50 pupils, only 9 pupils got less than 50% (representing 18%). In 2007, 19 pupils from the same group got less than 50% (representing 38%) when taught through English in the same subject. Therefore the 20% difference in the failure rate can be attributed

to the change in medium of instruction from the familiar language to the unfamiliar language (English). Figures 12 and 13 below show the results.

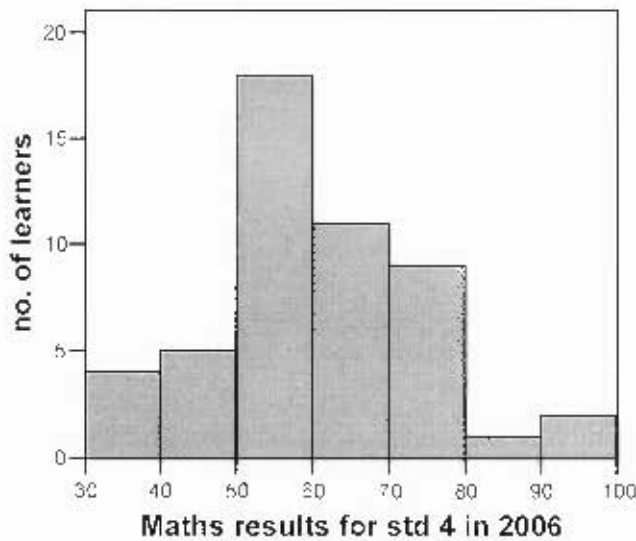


Fig. 12

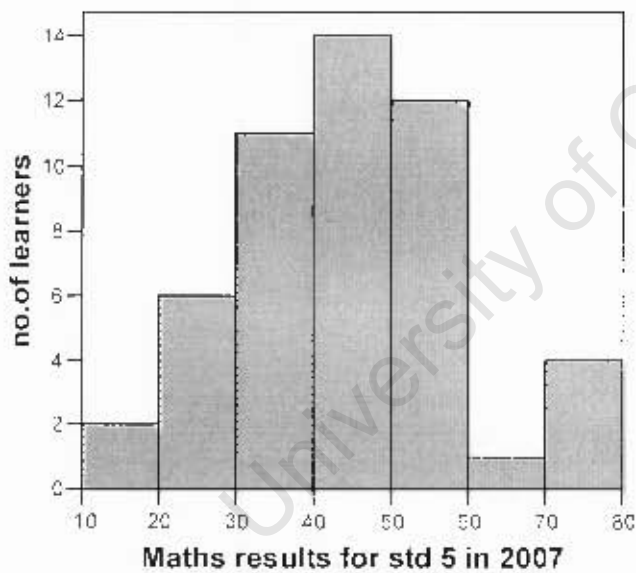


Fig. 13

Similarly, in 2006, 18 pupils (representing 36%) learning through the medium of Chichewa got between 50% and 60% for mathematics, while in 2007 only 12 pupils (representing 24%) learning through the medium of English got between the same 50% to 60%. The difference in performance of 12% favours learning mathematics through Chichewa. Similarly, when pupils were learning in their mother tongue, 3 pupils got more than 80% (representing 6%) while in 2007 when the same pupils started learning through English nobody got more than 80%.

When taught through the medium of Chichewa, 41 pupils (representing 82%) passed Mathematics, while only 17 pupils (representing 34%) passed the subject in 2007 when they were taught through the medium of English. The difference was 46% in favour of learning through the medium of Chichewa.

Conclusion

The above results are a clear indication that pupil performance in Mathematics was related to whether or not they were taught in their mother tongue. Pupils did well in 2006 because they could understand Mathematical concepts because these were taught through a familiar language. On the other hand, many pupils did badly in Mathematics because they were taught in an unfamiliar language, which was an impediment to their learning.

Social Studies examinations' results

Figures (14 and 15) below show examination results for social studies in 2006 and 2007 when the pupils were taught through Chichewa and English, respectively.

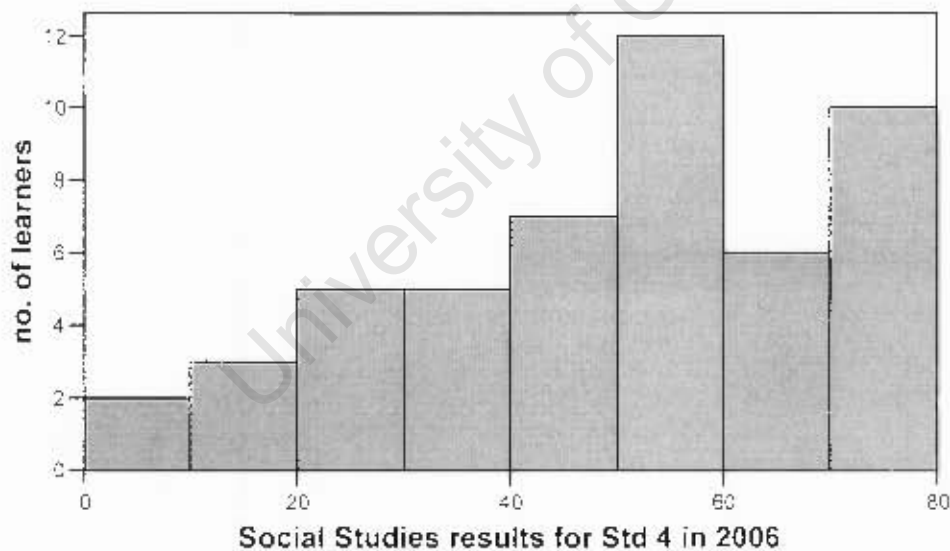


Fig. 14

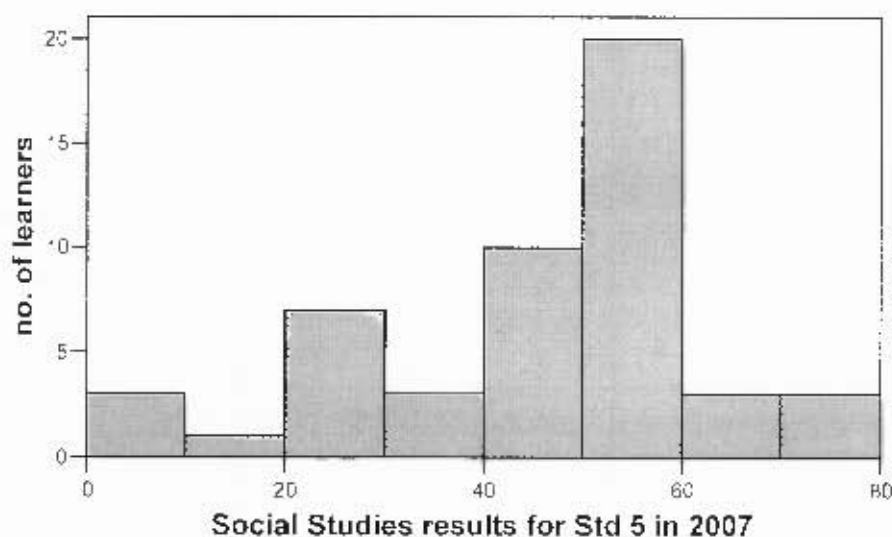


Fig. 15

When the pupils were in Std 4 (2006) and were taught through their mother tongue (Chichewa), 22 of 50 (representing 44%) scored less than 50% for Social Studies. From the same group, learning through English in 2007, 24 (representing 48%) got less than 50%. The difference of 4% in favour of those taught through the medium of English appears insignificant – as does the difference in the pass rate of 56% (through Chichewa) vs 52% (through English). However, 16 of 50 pupils (representing 32%) learning through the medium of Chichewa achieved more than 60% for Social Studies. In a similar situation, only 6 subjects (representing 12%) got more than 60% while learning through the medium of English – a significant difference of 20% in favour of Chichewa as medium.

Conclusion

In short, pupils learning Social Studies through the medium of Chichewa did much better at the higher end of the achievement spectrum than when learning through the medium of English. The marginal difference at the lower end of the achievement spectrum could be because of code-switching or interpreting done when taught through the medium of English.

Pupils' performance was higher when learning Mathematics through Chichewa than when learning Social Studies through Chichewa. In other words, it implies that learning Mathematics in English was more problematic than learning Social Studies in English. This means that English vocabulary for Mathematics impeded high performance of pupils, resulting in Std 5 pupils' acquiring few cognitively demanding concepts in Mathematics.

The substantial difference between Mathematics and Social Studies scores when learning through the medium of English implies that the vocabulary for Mathematics is more difficult than Social Studies English vocabulary.

5.6. Interviews

5.6.1. Teachers' views on language of instruction and academic performance

What follows is a summary of teachers' responses to questions about language of instruction and academic performance.

Responding to a question on the language teachers normally speak to pupils while at school and to explain why they did so, 100% of teachers reported that they spoke Chichewa. It was interesting to note that even those teachers who taught through the medium of English from Standard 5 to 6 confessed that they normally spoke to the pupils in Chichewa, both on an everyday level and when teaching Mathematics and Social Studies as subjects. The teachers revealed that they normally communicate in Chichewa for a number of reasons. One of the reasons was that pupils were not able to understand and communicate in English. In addition, the teachers said that Chichewa is the language widely spoken in these areas so the pupils are very used to that. Another reason was that some teachers found it difficult to use a level of English that the pupils could understand. All this evidence is a true reflection of what has been discussed in the literature review chapter, namely that children can learn better in a language they are familiar with. The pupils can use English when they have built a very good foundation in the first language.

Responding to another question on factors which influence the academic performance of pupils, the teachers indicated that some of these included the children's home environment, availability of resources, the availability of teachers, and many others. It was interesting to note that 100% of the teachers indicated that language of instruction was one of the reasons. They all agreed that if a child learns in a familiar language, one performs better academically. The reverse was also correct to say, namely that if the child is taught in a language in which his/her proficiency is low, the child is likely to perform badly.

Again, 100% of the teachers indicated that they did not receive any special training to manage the transition from Chichewa to English. They were taught the general approaches to the teaching of each as a subject. This scenario puts the teachers in an awkward situation. If teachers were not trained on how to manage the transition, then the whole process of the transition becomes an impediment to pupils' academic performance.

There were mixed reactions when the teachers were asked in which language they felt more comfortable to teach. 60% of the respondents said that they found it easier to teach through the medium of Chichewa and 40% said that they found it easier to teach through the medium of English. Those who preferred teaching through English were the ones who had taught Mathematics. They said that it was less demanding to teach Mathematics in English because the Chichewa terminology is not rich enough to express mathematical concepts. In counting to 100, for instance, Chichewa/ English equivalents are:

Number	Chichewa	English
1	modzi	one
8	zisanu ndi zitatu	eight
97	makumi asanu ndi anayi, zisanu ndi ziwiri	ninety-seven

As seen from the above examples, it appears more difficult to teach Mathematics in Chichewa. However, teaching Mathematics does not necessarily mean mentioning figures only. There is Mathematical language which is used to arrive at the concept of the figures and longer word sums, which become problematic in an unfamiliar language. For instance in one of the Mathematics lessons I observed, the teacher was teaching 'equivalent fractions' in Std 5. She asked the pupils,

Teachers: "What are equivalent fractions?"

Pupils: (the class was dead quiet).

Teacher: I say what are equivalent fractions? Simunamvepo? (Have you never heard this before?)

Teacher: Kodi ma equivalent fraction ndi chiani? (What are equivalent fractions?)

Pupils (almost half the class raised their hands to respond): Ma equivalent fraction ndi mafraction ofanana mu kukula kwao.

Teacher: Good.

In such a situation, learning Mathematics was a problem to the pupils because of the language medium. Unless their proficiency is good enough the pupils cannot perform well in Mathematics even if their teachers find it easy to teach in Mathematics.

Those who said that they found it easier to teach in Chichewa supported their statements by saying that both teachers and pupils understand each other easily since both the teachers and pupils speak in a familiar language.

All 6 teachers (representing 100%) agreed that they knew the language in education policy and said that the policy requires them to teach pupils from Std 1 to 4 in the mother tongue (Chichewa) and through English starting from Std 5. However, 100% of the respondents admitted that it is difficult to follow the policy in practice. What happens in practice is code-switching either from Chichewa to English or the reverse. They alluded to the fact that although they are supposed to teach in the mother tongue in the lower classes, the teachers themselves were required to write their schemes, records of work and lesson plans in English. It was this scenario which forced them to code-switch all the time, thereby affecting the pupils' participation and their academic performance in classes. This necessitates a change in either the policy or how the teachers write their lesson plans and schemes of work.

In the upper classes teachers said that they could not teach through English, as pupils had been learning through Chichewa from Std 1 to 4. Sometime teachers were tempted not only to teach through Chichewa where pupils were thought to not understand, but to interpret every sentence into Chichewa, resulting in time wasting. To some it seemed as if they were teaching two identical lessons within the same period. As a result teachers could not finish the prescribed syllabus for a particular class.

All 10 teachers admitted that there was a difference in academic achievement in Mathematics and Social Studies. Pupils performed better when they were learning through the medium of Chichewa than when the medium of instruction was English. Of course they could not rule out other factors influencing the situation, such as the different content of the curriculum. But language of instruction is the central factor in instruction.

When asked whether they agreed that pupils should start learning through English from Std 1, 70% disagreed. They proposed that it would be better if English were introduced in Standard 6 as a medium of instruction, as pupils performed better in the late exit programmes. 30% felt that it would be better to start learning through English from Standard 1 because then pupils would have mastered enough English by Std 5.

It is likely, however, that this situation would produce worse results, as seen in other studies reviewed above, as adding the strange language could make the child fight on two fronts at the same time. As a result, pupils may end up quitting school.

Finally in their response to the question of whether the teachers found any problems when teaching through English in Std 5, they generally felt that although the teaching in itself would have minimal problems, the learning process had a lot of problems. Therefore the following were suggested as solutions:

Firstly, pupils should start learning through English in Standard 7. Secondly, teachers who teach through English should only be those who have a good command of the language. Thirdly, some subjects could be taught in Chichewa and others in English.

In summary, each instrument managed to contribute to the findings. These results focused on how the medium of instruction affects the academic performance of Std 5 pupils in primary schools in Malawi. The languages involved were Chichewa (mother tongue) and English (foreign language). Interesting results were obtained. Conclusions and recommendations based on these findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

The aim of the study was to find out to what extent the change of instruction from the mother tongue (Chichewa) to the foreign language (English) in Standard 5 affects the academic performance of the pupils in certain content subjects. The conclusions stem from the findings, which were obtained by using the different research instruments. The instruments included a questionnaire for teachers, a questionnaire for pupils, classroom observations, and interviews. In addition, examination results in Mathematics and Social Studies were also considered. A range of instruments was thus used for triangulation purposes.

From the results it appears that the switch from the child's home language to English has a negative impact on the performance of Std 5 pupils in Mathematics and Social Studies. In the next section I will briefly comment on the findings deriving from each instrument.

6.2. Teachers' and pupils' questionnaires

In the perceptions of teachers and pupils, pupils learn Mathematics and Social Studies better and faster when learning through a familiar language, in this case Chichewa. The fact that most pupils answered the Chichewa questionnaire indicates that they understand Chichewa better than English.

Yet teachers and pupils insisted that Mathematics and Social Studies should be taught and learnt in English. Perhaps neither knew the difference between using English as a medium of learning and English as a language subject. In addition, they may have been influenced by the notion which equates English proficiency with being educated, or they may think that pupils are sent to school to learn English. Such attitudes could have a negative effect on the academic performance of the pupils.

6.3. Classroom observation

Although the teachers had vast experience in their teaching profession (13 years on average), most had Chichewa as their first language and found it difficult to communicate effectively with their pupils through English. As a result, lessons were punctuated by code-switching and interpreting for more than half of the period they were supposed to teach in English.

Most of the lessons taught through the medium of English were teacher-centred. It means that teachers dominated the teaching/learning process. Pupils were viewed as empty vessels which needed to be filled with knowledge. Such a scenario inhibits pupils from participating actively in lessons, resulting in poor academic performance.

However, the same teachers performed very well when they taught through the medium of Chichewa. Teachers acted more like facilitators of learning: one-third of the allocated time was used for speaking and initiating activities, while two-thirds were spent by pupils on speaking and on learning activities. This situation had a positive influence on the academic achievement of the pupils.

Pupils participated fully in the lessons when the language of instruction was Chichewa. These were indeed learner-centred lessons where the pupils had more opportunities to speak and do activities, which had a positive bearing on their academic achievement. Unfortunately the same pupils showed negative behaviour when taught through English, something which impeded their academic performance.

6.4. Examination results

Pupils performed better in both Mathematics and Social Studies when they had written examinations in Chichewa than when they did the same in English, because they were writing in a familiar language. The same pupils performed poorly when they were taught in English because their English proficiency was not good enough to understand key concepts. This was true particularly for Mathematics, which contained English vocabulary which could not be understood easily by Std 5 pupils..

6.5. Interviews

The teacher interviews indicated that teachers find it difficult to teach through the medium of English in Standard 5 because, firstly, pupils do not understand the language, and, secondly, because teachers are not specifically trained in how to manage the transition from the home language to the second language as the medium of instruction.

6.6. Conclusion

Triangulating results from all five instruments strengthened the conclusion that Std 5 pupils find it a problem to learn through the medium of English. Therefore learning through the mother tongue is the main issue to be addressed in educational reform in Malawi. It becomes easier to transfer knowledge learnt in the first language to the second language. Thus quality education can only be achieved when pupils learn in a familiar language.

Another point is that there is a fear among some linguists and parents that African languages will disappear or may not develop if they are not used for learning.

Research evidence on the use of the mother tongue shows that struggling to learn in a non-first language when the pupil's first language is not yet fully developed makes the act of learning drudgery, instead of its being a pleasure. It is clear that this scenario impedes the development of life-long learning skills.

To participate fully in a globalising world, it requires one who can think critically, communicate and develop an advanced ability for creativity – all these are possible only if one has mastery of one's first language.

It is possible to counter-argue that some people have excelled in education through the medium of English in Malawi. While this may be true for a small minority, the masses have failed to excel but might have done much better if the language of instruction had been their mother tongue.

In summary, starting to use English as a medium of instruction as early as Std 5 has a negative impact on academic performance. This early-exit programme which Malawi is going

through is not assisting pupils, since it prematurely subtracts the mother tongue from instruction. Results obtained in the present study are similar to those obtained in Malawi by Williams (1993), Kachaso (1988) and Mchazime (2004). It is clear that there is no meaningful learning or efficient communication between the teacher and the pupils where the medium of instruction is not mastered by either party.

6.7. Recommendations

1. Teachers should receive special training in the teaching of content subjects through the mother tongue and English to avoid negatively affecting the academic performance of pupils. This would also limit code-switching and code-mixing which is done from Std 5 where the medium of instruction is English.
2. The syllabuses, teachers' guides, and lesson plans for Standards 1 to 4 should be written in the mother tongue so that teachers are spared the trouble of having to translate from English to Chichewa when it comes to the actual teaching.
3. There is need to have a properly and carefully planned transition from using the mother tongue to using English as a medium of instruction. This transition could take place between Std 5 and Std 7. For instance, content subjects could be taught in mother tongue in one week and alternate to English the other week, or the change could be done in one monthly period. Alternatively, half the subjects could be taught in the mother tongue and the other half in English up to Standard 8 (dual medium). Similarly, some examinations could be in the mother tongue while others could be in English, or there could be papers in both languages and pupils could choose in what language to answer questions.
4. The language in education policy should be additive and not subtractive as is currently the case.
5. There is a need for more research on ways of teaching English if English is to continue being the language of instruction. Secondly, there should be more research on dealing with negative attitudes many Malawians have towards using the mother tongue as a language of instruction. Finally, further studies should be done to compare performance in other home languages apart from Chichewa, such as Citumbuka and Chiyao, with

those in English. The results may influence educationists to appreciate using more home languages in education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Questionnaire for teachers

TITLE: Medium of instruction in Primary schools in Malawi.

INTRODUCTION

This is a data collection instrument for my studies at the University of Cape Town. This questionnaire is for academic purposes and the information obtained will be confidential and will not be used to your disadvantage in any way. I thank you very much for your co-operation.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Do not write your name on the question paper.
2. Feel free to ask me where you do not understand

SECTION A: General information

- The name of my school is-----
- My highest academic qualification is-----
- My highest professional qualification is-----
- I have been teaching for -----years.
- My first language (mother tongue) is-----
- I am able to speak in the following languages (tick how well)
a. ----- (i) a little (ii) well (ii) very well (iii) extremely well

b. ----- (i) a little (ii) well (ii) very well (iii) extremely well

c. ----- (i) a little (ii) well (ii) very well (iii) extremely well.

- Most common language spoken around the school is-----

- Other languages spoken around the school are:

(i)-----

(ii)-----

(iii)-----

(iv)-----

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SECTION B: Tick in the box against a statement to indicate how you agree or disagree with it.

KEY: A= I agree SA= I strongly agree D= I disagree and SD= I strongly disagree.

No.	Item	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
1	Teaching/learning in mother tongue is lowering standards of education in Malawi.				
2	Teaching/learning in mother tongue increases the child's self-survival skills.				
3	Teachers should not explain points in mother tongue even when learners fail to understand. Instead teachers need to rephrase the points in English.				
4	Children learn faster in mother tongue than in English.				
5	Teaching/learning in mother tongue reduces chances for pupils to communicate in English.				
6	Teaching/learning in mother tongue will lead to lower literacy rates in Malawi.				
7	Pupils do not need to learn in English since they drop out of school after their primary education				
8	Teaching/learning in mother tongue can improve pupils' numeric, reading, speaking and writing (literacy) skills				
9	Teaching/learning in mother tongue decreases chances for pupils to use the taught knowledge and skills after their primary education.				
10	Teaching using mother tongue is easier than using English.				
11	Pupils ought to continue starting learning in English in Standard 5.				
12	Teachers need special training to teach using mother tongue.				
13	It is impossible to use mother tongue to explain some concepts in subjects like Science.				
14	Teacher education ought to also prepare primary teachers for teaching in mother tongue.				
15	Most teachers in Malawi face more problems when teaching in mother tongue than in English.				

SECTION C: Please tick against all the points/items that you agree with.

2. **A.** Candidates who fail only English by expected Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB)

Standard should:

- a. Only be promoted to the next grade after passing in it (English)
- b. Be allowed to proceed to secondary school.
- c. Be allowed to proceed to the University.
- d. Still be awarded certificates if they pass in other subjects.
- e. Be allowed to take public offices like being a Member of Parliament.

B. Children in Malawi should learn in Chichewa in:

- a. Not at all
- b. Std 1 only
- c. Std 1-2
- d. Std 1-3
- e. Std 1-4.
- f. Std 1-5
- g. Std 1-6
- h. Std 1-7
- i. Std 1-8

3. Fill in against each statement to show how you agree or disagree.

KEY: A=Agree. SA=Strongly Agree. D= Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree.

- 1. In my view, pupils ought to learn in English throughout primary school-----
- 2. Pupils will lose chances for office/business employment if they learn in Chichewa---
- 3. Pupils need to know English more than other subjects like Social Sciences-----
- 4. Pupils who learn in local languages learn more than those who learn in English-----

5. In my view pupils ought to start learning in both Chichewa and English from Standard 1-----

6. In my view, pupils do better in class in Standard 4 because they learn in Chichewa than in Standard 5 where they learn in English-----

7. In my view, it would be good to teach some subjects in Chichewa and others in English-----

8. Chichewa can explain some topics in Mathematics and Sciences-----

9. To be educated mainly means to be good and competent in English-----

10. Pupils ought to learn in Chichewa up to Standard 5 then in English from Standard 6-----

(Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. This information shall be treated with total confidentiality. Please hand this form to me personally as soon as you finish filling in this questionnaire.)

Appendix B1

MAFUNSO A OPHUNZIRA SUKULU

MUTU: Chiyankhulo chogwiritsa ntchito pophunzira m'sukulu za pulayimale m'Malawi.

MALANGIZO.

1. **Muyankhe mafunsowa mu Chichewa KAPENA mu Chingerezi/Chizungu kuseri kwa pepala lanu.**
2. **Musalembe dzina lanu pa pepalali.**
3. **Mukhoza kundifunsa pamene simukumvetsetsa.**

MBIRI YOFUNIKA

- a. Dzina la sukulu yako ndi-----
- b. Iwe ndiri mu sitandadi-----
- c. Iwe ndiri ndi zaka-----
- d. Chiyankhulo chako choyamba kuyankhula ndi-----
- e. Kodi ndi chiyankhulo chiti chomwe umayankhula-
 1. ndi abambo ako? -----
 2. ndi amayi ako? -----
 3. ndi achimwene ndi achemwali ako? -----
 4. ndi mzako weniweni? -----
 5. ndi agogo ako? -----
6. kutchalitchi/kumzikiti/kopemphera? -----
7. ndi ogulitsa zinthu ku sitolo?-----

MAFUNSO 1-10.

1. Ndichiyankhulo chiti chomwe umayankhula bwino kwambiri? -----
2. Ndi chiyankhulo chiti chomwe umagwiritsa ntchito pophunzira maphunzira ambiri? -----

3. Ukanakonda utamaphunzira mu chiyankhulo chiti? -----
4. Ndimchiyankhulo chiti chomwe umaphunzirira maphunzira ngati Sayasi ndi Zamalimidwe? -----
5. Ukanakonda kuphunzira maphunzira ngati Sayansi ndi Zamalimidwe muchiyankhulo chiti?-----
6. Ndimuchiyankhulo chiti chomwe ungamve kwambiri pophunzira Masamu?-----
7. Kodi mayeso ako umalembe muchiyankhulo chiti? -----
8. Ukadakonda kuti mayenso ako uzilemba muchiyankhulo/ziyankhulo chiti/ziti? -----
9. Ziyankhulo zina zomwe tikanamagwiritsa ntchito pophunzira ndi -----
10. Kodi ndi chiyankhulo chiti, ngati chilipo chomwe sumafuna ukuyankhula? -----

Mafunso 11-20**Muchonge monga momwe mukuganizira pa mfundo ina iliyonse ili munsimu. Monga:**

N=Ndikugwirizana nazo. NK=Ndikugwirizana nazo Kwambiri. S=Sindikugwirizana nazo
 SM=Sindikugwirizana nazo Mpang'ono pomwe

Nambala	Mfundo	N	NK	S	SM
11	Kuphunzira maphunziro a Sayasi m'Chingerezi/m'Chizungu ndi kwabwino kusiyana ndi kuphunzira m'Chichewa.				
12	Aphunzitsi azingotiphunzitsa maphunziro onse muChingerezi/muChizungu basi.				
13	Kuphunzira mu Chichewa kukadakhala bwino kwambiri kusiyana ndi Chingerezi/Chizungu.				
14	Kuphunzira makamaka mu Chingerezi/Chizungu kumasonyeza kuphunzira kwambiri.				
15	Kuphunzira m'chichewa kutha kuthandiza ana kuwerengandikulemba kwambiri.				
16	Aphunzitsi amavutika kwambiri pophunzitsa m'Chingerezi/Chizungu kusiyana ndi kuphunzitsa m'Chichewa				
17	Ndimafuna nditakhala katswiri pakuyankhula Chichewa chokha				
18	Ndimafuna nditakhala katswiri kuyankhula Chingerezi chokha				
19	Ndimafuna nditakhala katswiri kuyankhula Chichewa ndi Chingerezi chomwe.				
20	Ndimafuna ndikanaphunzira mu Chichewa ndi Mchingerezi momwe				

(Zikomo kwambiri pakutaya nthawi yanu poyankha mafunsowa. Chonde mubweze fomuyi kwa ine mukalembapo)

Appendix B2

Questionnaire for Pupils

TITLE: Medium of instruction in Primary schools in Malawi.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please complete either Chichewa OR English (overleaf) questions.
2. Do not write your name on the question paper.
3. Feel free to ask me where you do not understand.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- a. The name of your school is-----
- b. You are in Standard-----
- c. You are -----years old.
- d. Your first language is-----
- e. Which language do you often speak-
 1. to your father? -----
 2. to your mother? -----
 3. to your brother(s) and sister(s)? -----
 4. to your best friend?-----
 5. to your grandparents?-----
 6. in church/mosque?-----
 7. with a shopkeeper?-----

QUESTIONS 1-10

1. Which language do you speak best? -----
2. Which is the language of learning of most subjects in your class? -----
3. In which language(s) would you like to learn? -----
4. In which language(s) are your content subjects (e.g. Science, Agriculture)? -----
5. In which language(s) would you like your content subjects to be taught? -----
6. In which language(s) do you understand Mathematics subjects best? -----
7. In which language do you write tests and examinations in content subjects? -----
8. In which language(s) would you like to write your tests and exams? -----
9. Which other languages would you like to learn? -----
10. Which language, if any, do you not like to speak? -----

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QUESTIONS 11-20

Tick in the box against a statement to indicate how you agree or disagree with it.

KEY: A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree.

No. of Item.	Item	SA	A	D	SD
11	Learning Science subjects in English is better than learning in Chichewa.				
12	Teachers ought to be teaching all subjects in English.				
13	Learning in Chichewa could be better than learning in English.				
14	To be educated means to be good in English mainly.				
15	Learning in Chichewa can improve my reading and writing skills.				
16	Teachers face more problems teaching in English than teaching in Chichewa.				
17	I would like to be fluent in Chichewa only.				
18	I would like to be fluent in English only.				
19	I would like to be fluent in both Chichewa and English.				
20	I would like to be learning in both Chichewa and English.				

(Thank you very much for filling in this form.)

Appendix C1

Checklist for Classroom Observation Category (Teachers)

Teaching/learning behaviors	Chichewa Language use	English Language use
1. Giving directions.		
2. Asking questions on previous lesson.		
3. Giving information		
4. Expands information with additional examples.		
5. Use of proverbs and songs to supplement activities.		
6. Demonstrating activities.		
7. Giving inter relationships		
8. Incorrect use of language		
9. Correcting language errors pupils make		
10. Scolding pupils.		
11. Rephrasing		
12. Clear moments of inactivity		
13. Teacher using code-switching		

Appendix C2

Classroom Behaviours Category (Pupils)

14. Responding to teachers' questions.		
15. Full sentence response		
16. Monosyllabic response.		
17. Learners giving information voluntarily		
18. Learners initiating activities		
19. Learners disagreeing with the teacher		
20. Language used during group discussions		
21. Language used between learners and the teacher		
22. Learner asking for further clarification		
23. Learners relating lesson aspects to daily experience		
24. Non-verbal responses.		
25. Teacher code-switching		

Appendix E

Interviews Questions

1. In what language do you usually speak to your learners in your school?
2. From your teaching experience, what things do you think influence academic performance of learners? Do you think that language of instruction influences academic performance of pupils? If yes, how does that happen?
3. Did you receive training in teaching through the medium of English or Chichewa?
4. From your experience, in which language do you find it easier for you to teach? And which one do pupils find it easier when learning?
5. Are you aware of the language in education policy of the primary school? If so, what does it say?
6. Do you switch to English when teaching through Chichewa? If so why?
7. Do you switch to Chichewa when you teach through English? If so why?
8. Is there any difference in academic performance of pupils when they were learning through Chichewa and when they are learning through English in Standard 5? If any difference, why is that so?
9. Do you think learners should really start learning through the medium of English in Standard 5? Why?
10. Do you face any problems when teaching through English in Standard 5? If so, what can be some of the solutions to solve the problems?