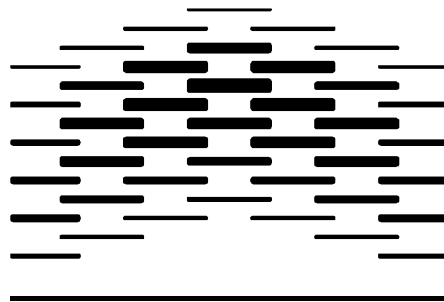


Bundie Moombe Kabanze

*Whose Policy Is It Anyway*

A study examining the factors that have influenced the  
formulation and reform of language-in-education policy (LiEP) in  
Zambia



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## **Abstract**

Four decades after independence, debates on the medium of instruction in Zambian schools still exist. English was adopted as a national language as well as a medium of instruction at independence in 1964. Unique to this decision was the historical absence of English as an indigenous language in the country, its minimal use in the first few years of the colonial education system, the small percentage of first language speakers of English, and its virtual non-use as a language of wider communication. Studies conducted earlier have shown how detrimental the use of English has been on the academic development of students. Arguments about the appropriateness of decisions to continue with the English-medium policy, in light of all research evidence, have been a main feature of all education policy reform exercises.

This study took a step back and examined the process of making the language policy to reveal the influences that act upon the exercise. The study offers an historical analysis of how policy-making and reform in education has occurred from the time formal education was introduced in the country. Qualitative research methods, including interviews, document analysis and audio recordings were utilized to understand the salient influences on policy formation over the years.

The results suggest that pedagogical reasons have not featured as primary considerations during policy formulation and review. Even when issues of pedagogy have featured on the negotiating table, their influence on policy has been negligible. The impact of political and economic considerations has, however, been very noticeable. Furthermore, the study has shown that the ability to influence policy among all the stakeholders is uneven. While politicians, the elite and donors have leverage to bend policy towards their orientations, the masses' contributions barely make it to the negotiating table.

Though not out of the woods yet, it is encouraging to note that the process of policy-making is moving in a positive direction; from total rejection of the inclusion of local

languages in the 1960s, to partial recognition in the 1970s and, eventually, formal recognition as media of instruction in the 1990s.

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Bundie Moombe Kabanze

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## Acronyms

<b>BSAC</b>	British South Africa Company
<b>CDC</b>	Curriculum Development Centre
<b>CSO</b>	Central Statistics Office
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>ECA</b>	Europe and Central Asia
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FoL</b>	Focus on Learning
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product
<b>GRZ</b>	Government of the Republic of Zambia
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>LiEP</b>	Language in Education Policy
<b>MMD</b>	Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MoI</b>	Medium of Instruction
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NRC</b>	National Reading Council
<b>ODA</b>	Overseas Development Administration
<b>SAP</b>	Structural Adjustment Program
<b>UDI</b>	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNIP</b>	United National Independence Party
<b>UNZA</b>	University of Zambia
<b>ZPC</b>	Zambia Primary Course

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background to the study**

Language remains the single most important tool by which information is disseminated. Knowledge that is crucial for any society's wellbeing - economical, cultural, social, political or scientific, and in any form - verbal, electronic or written, is transmitted through language. Not only is it a means of communicating thoughts and ideas, it forges friendships, cultural ties, and economic relationships. Language has power, and in linguistically diverse societies, fights about status and discrimination of one language or another often exemplify power struggles (Wodak, 1989). However, in the same way that language is a backbone for societal wellbeing, it can be, and has been, used for what Phillipson (1992) calls 'linguicism'. Linguicism has to do with "ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47). Pütz (1995, p. 3) weighs in on the argument by adding that in Africa "the main tool of ideological control is language, in particular the communication medium which was selected to be the official language of education".

Given the crucial role that language plays in any society, it is expected that those entrusted to oversee the affairs of the general populace will pay particular attention to ensure that the decisions they make do not benefit only a few and disenfranchise the majority. Unfortunately this has not been the case in Africa where more than 80 per cent of the population is not competent in the selected official languages (Heine, 1990). This is a result of making decisions that have favoured the adoption of ex-colonial languages as official languages while local languages have been relegated to regional use in instances when their recognition has been accorded. European languages' high status over local languages is a legacy of the colonial experience of the continent. European subjugation, invasion, and occupation required a substantial amount of political influence and control (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994) and language played a significant

part in the process. The colonial language policies appeared in many forms, one of which was a proactive imposition of the colonizer's language on the colonized.

Today, more than forty years after independence, most African countries still bear the colonial badge in the form of European languages still performing higher order functions such as in government, education, commerce, judiciary, media and science and technology (Pütz, 1995). The main reasons proffered by those in charge of public policy fall under the porous umbrella of national-building and development education (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). An outcome of this European linguistic dependence is a number of language-related problems that Pütz (1995) outlines as:

- The educational underdevelopment of the majority of citizens of these states, in terms of the demands of a technologically advanced modern world. Knowledge and skills have not been democratized.
- A potential of manipulation, discrimination and exploitation on linguistic grounds. The ex-colonial language at advanced or near-native-speaker level has become the prerogative of a very small minority who take part in the political, industrial, and commercial decision making processes.
- The possibility of linguistic and cultural alienation in each of these states, with the further likelihood of language and cultural decay and death (diglossic inferiority).
- Unresolved or heightened language-related ethnic conflict and inability to promote national unity (Pütz, 1995, p. 3)

The problematic language situation in Africa, often finds manifestation in the education systems (Pütz, 1995). This is because education systems are often never about learning alone. Since the early twentieth century, the purpose of schooling has been a contested issue. Different sectors of society have had different expectations of what school should be about.

### *1.1.1 Education System - A multitasked sector*

In today's world, schools are social institutions that are a microcosm of society. Mainstream educational discourse is substantially fashioned within the parameters of a nation's dominant social, economic, cultural and political arrangements (Stanley, 1992). Haupt (2010) highlights the case in South Africa where the events that defined the history of the nation not only had a direct influence on the content of what is taught in schools, but also on teaching methodology and the broad framework of education policy

and legislation. While it may generally be understood that “academic mastery in subject-matter achievements is an important goal of modern schools” (Good, 1999, p. 383), a cursory analysis of the education system of various countries reveals several other objectives that the system is expected to perform. Below are various examples of the many aims that education systems of selected countries are expected to achieve:

The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life – United Kingdom (“The Department for Education,” n.d.).

To guide the provision of education for all Zambians so that they are able to pursue knowledge and skills, manifest excellence in performance and moral uprightness, defend democratic ideals, and accept and value other persons on the basis of their personal worth and dignity, irrespective of gender, religion, ethnic origin, or any discriminatory characteristic - Zambia (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. xi).

Schooling provides a foundation for...intellectual, physical, social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development. By providing a supportive and nurturing environment, schooling contributes to the development of students' sense of self-worth, enthusiasm for learning and optimism for the future - Australia (Curriculum Corporation, n.d.).

All the above goals point to a tenacious confidence that the education system has the potential to improve society and solve social problems (Adler, 1982; Pinar, 1988).

The multiple functions that the education systems are expected to perform are not a new phenomenon. As early as 1938, John Dewey, after twenty years of experience with progressive schools and twenty years of criticism of his theories, wrote “it would not be a sign of health if such an important social interest as education were not also an arena of struggles, practical and theoretical” (Dewey, 1997, p. v). What Dewey was pointing towards is that the education system mirrors society and vice versa and therefore such an important institution should be also an arena where solutions that affect the wider society should emanate.

In non-homogeneous speech communities, the function that language performs in achieving the multiple goals of education is crucial. Language is inseparable from academic, economic, cultural and political functions. The challenging issue in multilingual societies, as is the case in most African countries, is that the language that

performs, for example, economic functions may not necessarily be the language that achieves cultural and/ or academic goals. The global economic environment in which African countries have to operate in favours those who have a good mastery of the English language. However, studies (Cummins, 1981; Richard-Amato & Snow, 1991; Rosenthal, 1998; Spurlin, 1995) have shown that for countries where they not indigenous, languages have little or no chance of aiding academic development, let alone cultural appreciation. Academic development and cultural appreciation are a prerogative of indigenous languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The question that arises in the case where the education system is expected to achieve all of society's goals then is 'what language should be chosen for instruction in schools'? Do the various selected languages to be used in education in multilingual societies equally represent the various demands that are placed on the education system?

Like most other countries, Zambia has an education system that is charged with a sundry of responsibilities. At independence in 1966, the task, among other demands, was:

...fostering the growth and expansion of knowledge, wisdom, skills, and a high degree of competence...[in the youth, maximizing the]...capacity of the student to contribute to the growth of society...in agriculture, commerce, in industry, in administration..., [to]...open greater possibilities for accelerated advancement in science and technology..., preservation of human values..., [and]...training for citizenship (Kaunda, 1968, p. ix–xi).

More than forty years and three reforms later, the task is to produce an individual who will;

...uphold a set of civic duties..., be analytical, innovative, creative and constructive..., create and apply scientific thought, action and technology..., respect and uphold individual liberties and human rights..., [and] appreciate Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and traditions, and upholding national pride, sovereignty, peace, freedom and independence" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 5).

The policy regarding the language that should be used for instruction in education to achieve these goals has however not been without controversies. A former British colony, Zambia adopted English as the official language at independence, and the debates have been around whether to maintain English as a medium of instruction

throughout the education system or to adopt the use of 10 major Zambian languages out of the 73 language varieties spoken in the country. Those supporting the continued use of English reason that not only has the former colonial master's language "played a significant role in promoting a sense of national unity" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 39), but also the fact that the country is not operating in a vacuum but a globalized world where telescoping economic development and handling of current revolutions in all sectors belongs to those who can easily function using 'global languages'. Those advocating for the use of indigenous languages argue that using foreign languages in schools blocks access to knowledge and therefore "language becomes a mechanism of social stratification" (Altbach, 1984 in Holmarsdottir, 2001, p. 6).

## **1.2 Relevance of study**

Holmarsdottir (2005) cites Akannaso, 1993; Bangbose, 1984; Benson, 2004; Obanya, 1980; and Williams, 1998 among others to show that the use of the vernacular as a medium of instruction in education remains controversial in spite of several studies that have highlighted the benefits of doing so. The studies also point to a mixed extent of language reform implementation from success to failure. Furthermore, Obanya (1980 as cited in Holmarsdottir, 2005, p. 4) points out that several mother tongue education programs, including those categorized as success stories, have not gone beyond the experimental phase with some being terminated soon after regime change, even though they had been highly publicized.

All these studies either focused on continuing to prove that the mother tongue is really beneficial to learning, or have been preoccupied with implementation analysis, that is, analysing what happens after decisions have been made and policies are put into action. These studies have been limited by a conventional assumption about the instrumental nature of policy activity, the perceived view of policy as the construction of instruments designed to address public needs. In this perceived view, policy is understood as a form of "utilitarian (goal seeking) behaviour in which there is a direct, logical connection between instruments of policy and specific objectives" (Rosen, 2009, p. 267). A result of this is that policy analyses have focused on the purposes and functions of policies and the extent to which they produce stated outcomes, that is, fidelity to policy designs.

Failure of policy is always blamed on the implementation stage rather than the formulation stage because design and implementation are treated as two distinct processes. In my view, focusing on what went wrong at implementation and leaving the design stage unproblematized during times of policy failure is looking for solutions in the wrong place. The studies have all rested on the here and now, ignoring the crucial aspects of policy formulation that ultimately have an influence on the implementation process.

At a time when the environment of public-policy making is changing, with the global Education for All movement as an example, and “when supranational institutions are expanding their influence over ‘national’ policy making, especially in the third world” (Vavrus, 2004, p. 142), it should be more important than ever to analyse how policy-making is affected by these agencies and try to identify factors that stimulate or hinder policy initiatives taken. More than forty years of debates about the language in education issues in Zambia with similar results in light of all the evidence showing what is wrong with the current system and a clear idea of what should be done calls for an inquiry on what happens at the decision-making stage.

### **1.3 Aims and objectives of the study**

Education has been one of the most persistent concerns of mankind throughout history and every society has its own system of training and educating its youth (Bray, Clarke, & Stephens, 1986). Views regarding the overall functions of schools differ across peoples and societies and may evolve over time. While this may be so, democratic societies assert that “the purpose of schooling should be determined through public deliberation within diverse communities, with many different voices taking part in the discourse in the formation of purpose” (Feldmann, 2005, p. 10). The education sector is however very wide and has a lot of components. I have limited the scope of my study on the language of teaching and learning because I feel it reveals a wider set of underpinnings of what the education system is intended to achieve. My project aim is to explore and examine how the language in education policy in Zambia has developed and evolved over time. Considering that Zambia is a republic and education is supposed to be a public good, I intend to investigate the extent to which the public and other



interest groups have been involved in determining the language in which teaching and learning would be conducted.

The research will further be guided by the following research questions:

- How has the language in education policy in Zambia developed and evolved from the time formal education was introduced in Zambia?
- What have been the ideological underpinnings and/or discourses behind the discussions and decisions about the language in education policy in Zambia?
- What has been the role of external factors (including various international agencies) and internal factors (including Zambian elites) during the times of language in education policy reforms?

#### **1.4 Outline of the study**

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 has presented the background to the study. In here the crucial role that language plays in all aspects of society as well as the linguistic dilemma in which most African countries find themselves in is discussed. The section also discusses the societal burdens that the education system is expected to solve. Reference is made to the role that the language of instruction plays in fulfilling the expectations. The last sections state the research problem, research questions, and the significance of the study.

In Chapter 2 I account for my choice of study methodology used in the study. A description of sample design, sampling techniques used and data collection methods is done together with data analysis and matters of trustworthiness and authenticity

Chapter 3 contains the framework used to analyse the collected data. I begin by making a distinction between language policy and language planning. Since my interest is on the decision-making process, I discuss Cooper's *Language as a decision-making framework* that I later utilize as an analytical tool in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 analyses and discusses the study results of the study. The chapter begins by first presenting the language situation as it occurs in Zambia. This information is seen

as an important background to understanding language issues in the country. The framework from Chapter 3 is later utilized to bring out all the components involved in the language in education policy-making process.

Finally the thesis winds up with Chapter 5 that summarizes and concludes the salient points emanating from Chapter 4.

## **2 Methodological Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this study is to examine the factors that have interacted in formulating and revising the language policy in Zambia. The debate on language in education has come up throughout the history of education reform in the country, as evidenced in the various policy documents (Ministry of Education, 1977, 1996, 1998). The current official education sector documents acknowledge the role of the mother tongue in children's academic development while at the same time holding on to English as a language of classroom instruction. Policy-making requires that many factors and options are considered and ideally choosing the best option. This requires that the various players concerned with education are consulted and every voice heard. Currently, participants in educational provision in Zambia include the government, communities, religious, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals. The study examined how these various actors as well as other non-provider specific factors interacted at various times in language in education policy-making.

The basic purpose of research is to make an original contribution to an already vast existing body of knowledge. To convince audiences that the contribution is authentic, researchers have to show not only how the data was obtained and analysed, but also an understanding of what knowledge is and how it is developed. However, rather than being a chapter that provides a superficial discussion of methodologies and paradigms, the focus here is on the choice of research methodology and data collection methods, sample selection as well as the techniques used in analysis. Issues concerning reliability and validity for this study will also be discussed.

## 2.2 Research Strategy

The language issue in education is not a new area of study. Searching through what has already been done in the field, I realized that existing studies of language policies (Holmarsdottir, 2001, 2005; Igboanusi, 2008; Serpell, Baker, & Sonnenschein, 1976; UNESCO, 1953) have concerned themselves with implementation. They have predictably focused on what had actually been done in terms of implementation against what was supposed to be done, as well as the reasons for the discrepancy. Villiamy (1990) asserts that research methods typically used in developing countries, for example, traditional quantitative input-output studies notably those conducted by the World Bank, have a tendency to reproduce the rhetoric of policies. In contrast, this study took a holistic view of the policy-making process, “bound not by tight cause-and-effect relationships among factors, but rather by identifying the complex interaction of factors” (Creswell, 2006, p. 39) that have played a role in formulating, developing and reforming the language in education policy in Zambia. The intention was to get an understanding of the context in which the policy was being made. Since this was in the past, the only way this was possible was through talking to people who were involved in the process as well as those with intimate knowledge of the subject area. A qualitative study was therefore considered suitable as it allows environmental factors believed to affect the policy making process to be considered. “The stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants” (Bryman, 2008, p. 266). Creswell (2006) further argues that the approach offers the researcher an understating of the contexts or settings in which participants address an issue. Understanding a setting requires that thick and rich description that “presents detail, context, emotion, and webs of social relationships...” (Denzin, 1989 as cited in Creswell, 2006, p. 194) of the phenomenon under study. As opposed to quantitative methodology that is preoccupied with measurement and quantification, qualitative methodology is being used because of its roots in interpretivist epistemological assumptions. Interpretivism “requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2008, p. 16). The interpretive element of qualitative research offered me an opportunity to give a description of the policy making process before attempting to interpret and understand the process.

Some researchers argue that the interpretative approach is ‘scientific’ (e.g. Stevenson and Cooper, 1997; Sherrard, 1997), while others insist that it is not scientific (e.g. Morgan, 1996). Of prime importance in this study was the recognition that both quantitative and qualitative approaches have their own characteristic strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, to avoid the argument trapped in obscure jargon definitions and taxonomies, it suffices to say that qualitative research was chosen, not because it does not have weaknesses, but because it provided the comprehensive list of elements that were appropriate for the particular focus of the study.

### **2.3 Research Design**

As competing philosophical systems may be substantially different but have their individual justifications from different perspectives, there is no right or wrong in the research approaches in themselves. Yin (1994:19) is of the view that a research design is “an action plan for getting from here and there”. He further defines it as a “blueprint” of the research, which deals with four problems: (1) what question to study, (2) what data is relevant, (3) what data to collect, and (4) how to analyse the results. The relevance of a research design is, therefore, to avoid collecting data that is not relevant to the research question. However, the choice of the research methods mainly depends on the purpose of the study. And since doing research is not cast in stone, it is difficult to suggest a general statement of how it is to be done. A methodological review cannot explicitly suggest the approach that should dominate, but does provide a comprehensive understanding of what can be done and the possible weaknesses involved. It seems to come back to the cliché of choosing appropriate methods for specific research.

With this in mind and considering the topic under study, I have chosen to not strictly adhere to one specific research design. I drew elements from various designs within the qualitative research paradigm, but a heavy emphasis was placed on historical research. Gall, Gall and Borg (1996) define historical research as “a process of systematically searching for data to answer questions about a past phenomenon for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of present institutions, practices, trends, and issues...” (p. 64). This is not a mere accumulation of facts and dates or even a description of past events, but rather what historian Joan Burstyn (1987 as cited in Gall et al., 1996, p. 644)

calls “constructed reality”. Accounting for the past is produced from empirical investigations of primary sources, historical documents, records, artefacts, biographies, eyewitness accounts and other texts. Through these investigations, events that resulted from choices of historical agents of the period of investigation can then be ascertained by use of inferential analysis. Historical research is therefore a flowing dynamic account of past events that involves an interpretation of these events in an attempt to recapture the nuances, personalities, and ideas that influenced these them (Cronon, n.d.).

Historical studies are generally considered a particular type of qualitative research because, like other qualitative methodologies, their emphasis is on the study of context, the study of behaviour in natural rather than in contrived settings, appreciation of the wholeness of the experience, as well as the centrality of interpretation in the whole research process (Gall et al., 1996). “Methodologically, the conventional historian relies on inferential analysis, deduction, and induction to portray actual past events and social reality, as well as on going critical assessment of evidence” (Munslow, 2000, p. 137).

Physical presence in the setting under study offers an experience that is unlikely to ever be captured by any second hand description. It therefore becomes imperative for any social researcher to have direct contact with the people under study if s/he intends to holistically grasp the phenomenon. Fieldwork makes this possible because, as Patton (1990) argues, in the field the scholar is able to have direct contact with the people under study in their natural surroundings.

Data collection for the study was done in Lusaka over a period of five weeks during the months of August and September 2011. Lusaka is the administrative capital of the country. Entry to the field was established through what Laurila (1997) calls ‘personal access’, that is informal emails and phone calls to a lecturer who had done research in the same field and shared the same supervisor. His past and present associations within the field of study made it easier to locate potential informants. In addition, because the person whose identity was familiar within the research field referred me, access to relevant information was mostly based on trust. Some of the interviewees were the colleagues of the contact and requests for interview sessions were easily met. In fact I sometimes felt that these respondents felt obligated to help with the research. I was not really surprised by this sense of obligation. In a way, I would say that I was expecting it

because, as Juntunen (2000) contends, a sense of kinship is one of the strongest forces that controls social relationships between people in communities in Africa.

## **2.4 Sources and Methods of Data Collection**

One of the most challenging things about doing historical research is that the past doesn't exist anymore (Cronon, n.d.). Unlike other field investigations that describe the world as it exists right now, the past survives only in fragments that remain from a time that is no more. Documents are what describe these remnants of the past. The written word is, however, prone to different interpretations. The meaning of a document or record can change from reader to reader and from one historical period to another. Documents should therefore not be used in isolation; they must be placed in the context of conditions of production before appraisal of the message can be made (Scott, 1990). Interviews were consequently also used to collaborate as well as contextualize the documentary data.

### *2.4.1 Interviews*

Part of this study was carried out using interviews with key informants who were deemed to be very conversant with the language policy. The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Though based on daily life conversation, it is professional in that it is systematic with a view of constructing knowledge through the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. As opposed to the positivist structured standardized interview in which the interview is aimed at quantification and mainly reflects the interviewer's concerns (Bryman, 2008), the qualitative interview is based on a phenomenological epistemology and thus aims at deriving hidden meaning in what is said as well as how it is said. Interviews with academics, curriculum development specialists and directors at the Ministry of Education provided an opportunity to explain the interactions that existed during discussions of the language in education policy and the motivations behind what was finally adopted.

#### 2.4.2 *Selecting Respondents*

I chose the participants for the study using purposive sampling, a method that entails “selecting cases/participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed” (Bryman, 2008, p. 263). Arguing for purposive sampling, Patton (1990, p. 169) maintains, “the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.” Language specialists at the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) were selected to get information on the role the centre has played in the language-in-education policy-making process. National directors at the Ministry of Education were selected because of their responsibility in the area of curriculum development and maintenance of education standards. Lecturers from the University of Zambia were also chosen because of their intimate knowledge about languages and the language policy through their involvement in research. The lecturers that were selected have had several publications in the area of languages in education and the language in education policy. On that account, purposive sampling of these various groups was done in attempt to achieve a variety of views, as each of the categories was perceived to have a different perspective of the subject under study.

Given my limited knowledge on who the appropriate people to interview were, my starting point was to contact the one person I knew had knowledge on the subject. Based on the questions that I asked, he pointed me to people that could elucidate certain aspects better. This type of purposive sampling is what Patton (1990) refers to as snowball or chain sampling. It is an approach used to locate interviewees that are relevant to the study and thus reducing time spent on prospective interviewing.

Interviews conducted with the above mentioned groups were the semi-structured thematic kind. Tentative interview guides (Appendices 1, 2 and 3) were developed and discussed with the supervisor prior leaving for Zambia and later revised after the first few interviews as I became more familiar with the subject. Patton (1990) is of the view that the use of interview guides is important in order to assure that the same categories of information are obtained from a number of people about the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 1990). He elaborates this when he argues:



The interview guide provides topics or subjects' areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversation style but with focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined (Patton, 1990, p. 63).

The length of the interviews was partly determined by the quality of the knowledge that was being constructed during the interview session. The interviews also seemed to get longer as the interview process progressed. This could be attributed to the confidence I gained as well as the new areas to be explored that emerged during preceding interviews. The latter interviews were more focused than those done earlier. I realized after interviewing lecturers that they were providing exactly the same information that sounded like a recital of facts that could be found in publications. What also emerged is that the interviewees that were involved in the policy reform process talked more passionately about the phenomenon. I sometimes got the feeling that the interviews gave them an opportunity to vent the frustration they had with the policy-making process.

All interviews were tape-recorded though there arose a time when a government official asked to talk off record at which time the recorder was switched off. I wrote down the salient points of the off record conversation at the end of the interview. I, however, did not use the information from this part of the interview because of ethical considerations. Recording an interview enables one to focus on the actual interview instead of worrying about whether some of the vital information has not been captured during the interview. Apart from the said government official, the interviewees expressed their views openly and none were concerned about issues of confidentiality and anonymity. I also got the feeling that the respondents were in familiar territory, talking passionately about things that they deal with on a daily basis, their motivations in doing so as well as their frustrations. They also treated me as a colleague with similar concerns regarding the language policy. This was important to maintain because respondents in an interview will give responses based on the setting and the role they are positioned (Scott & Usher, 2000). My familiarity with the research site also facilitated the information gathering process. Familiarity with interviewees' cultural practices (calling

them Mr., Ms, or Dr.), values, and languages helped greatly in obtaining the relevant information for the study.

The original idea was to conduct 7 interviews consisting of 2 academicians, 2 academics, 2 government officials and 1 from a Non-Government Organization (NGO) involved in literacy. However practical issues of availability and duplication reduced this number to 4 consisting of 2 academics, 1 senior official from the Ministry of Education (MoE) headquarters and 1 from the Curriculum Development Centre. The quest to get access to academicians who had spend a considerable amount of time researching and writing about the language in Zambia proved futile for reasons of availability while some were health related.

#### 2.4.3 Documents

Document analysis mainly concerns interpretive reconstruction of a focal event based on descriptive records set in the context of guiding purposes and commitments (Patton, 1990). Although the point for using documents has been argued as “to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (Yin 1994, as cited in Holmarsdottir, 2001, p. 101), they were the main source of understanding the policy-making process in my research and were the basis upon which interviews were conducted. The choice of using documents as the principal source of data was inevitable in light of the historical nature of the study. I was trying to understand an activity from a bygone time. Scott (1990) uses the terms ‘*proximate*’ and ‘*mediate*’ to describe the relationship, in terms of access, between the observer and the observed. He states that mediate access depends on inferred material traces of what happened in the past in contrast to proximate access where the observer and the observed have a the same spatio-temporal location and thus making direct witness of action possible. Mediate access depends on two types of data sources, that is primary and secondary, both of which were used in the study. Gall et al (1996) differentiate between the two sources by saying that primary sources are records that are generated by people who personally witness or participate in the event of interest while a secondary source is a document in which an individual gives an account of an event, but was not present at the event.

Using authorship as a basis for categorization, personal and official documents were used as sources of data in the study. Classifying of data sources by authorship refers to “the origin of the documents, and its applicability is clearly dependent upon the existence of a separation between the ‘personal’ and the ‘public’ or ‘official’ spheres...” (Scott, 1990, p. 14). These documents include;

#### 1) Official documents:

- National Parliamentary Hansards (1965-1966)
- Reports - *Annual Education Report* (1965), *The Zambia national reading forum: final report and recommendations* (1995), *Focus on learning: strategies for the development of school education in Zambia: report of the team appointed to review investment strategies in education* (1992)
- Ministry of Education’s *Background to Education Reform* (1977)
- *Education for development. Draft statement on educational reform* (1976)
- *Educational reform: proposals and recommendations* (1977)
- Policy documents - *Educating our future: national policy on education* (1996); *Focus on learning: strategies for the development of school education in Zambia: Report of the team appointed to review investment strategies in education*

#### 2) Personal documents

- Theses – Simwinga (2006 PhD); Lawrence (1990 PhD); Lungu (1998 MA)
- Conference papers - Muyebaa (2004) *Challenges of making and implementing policy in multilingual state of Zambia*
- Journal articles – Kashoki (1997) *Variety is the Spice of Life: The place of multilingualism in the concept of 'One Zambia, One Nation'*; Kashoki (1976) *Does Zambia Need One National Language?*; Kasonde-Ng’andu (2003) *The evolution of education policy in Zambia*
- Books - Kelly (1999) *The origins and development of education in Zambia: from pre-colonial times to 1996: a book of notes and readings*; Mwanakatwe (1968) *The growth of education in Zambia since independence*; Ohannessian and Kashoki (1978) *Language in Zambia*

## **2.5 Data Analysis**

Authorities in the field of research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Patton, 1990) argue that data analysis tends to be an iterative process in qualitative research, that is there is no distinct stage where data collection and analysis begins. Analysis is rather an on-going activity through out the study. “There is a repetitive interplay between the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2008, p. 539). This interplay works like a feedback mechanism, helping to “make sense of what is going on” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 209) and thereby influencing the direction of the data collection process.

Analysis for this study involved a process of discovery, searching through the data and inferring that certain events and instances have the same underlying theme or pattern. This type of analysis has been referred to as inductive analysis (Patton, 1990), analytic analysis (Bryman, 2008), or interpretation analysis (Gall et al., 1996). Disregarding the specific names given to the process, all the authors agree that the primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies.

In this study, constructs, themes, and patterns were identified from the transcribed interviews as well as document texts, with an aim to use them in the description of the phenomenon under study (Gall et al., 1996). What was learned from each interview and document text was summarized using salient points that were coded as themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

## **2.6 Validity and Reliability**

Reliability and validity of research are important issues in assessing the quality of research (Bryman, 2008) as they indicate the extent to which study findings reflect the world that they are seeking to explore. Referring to Guba and Lincoln (1985) Bryman (2008, p. 377) contends that the traditional reliability and validity standards have limited application to qualitative research as they have a realist presupposition that there is a single absolute account of reality and the job of researchers is to explain this truth.

Since my study had a qualitative research bias and was concerned with generating deeper understanding of the environment in which the formulation and reform of the language policy rather than a narrative account of the process, I chose to use the concepts of trustworthiness and authenticity suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1985). These terms are analogous of the mainly positivist and quantitative biased criteria of reliability and validity. Thus trustworthiness of a research depends on the issues, quantitatively, discussed as validity and reliability. Authenticity on the other hand is responsive to the reformulated philosophical premises of phenomenological, constructivist, or interpretivist inquiry. It uses principles of fairness and balance, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity to judge the fidelity of phenomenological or interpretivist qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Guba and Lincoln (1985) reason that there can be no validity without reliability, and thus a demonstration of the former (validity) is sufficient to establish the latter (reliability). In conducting my research, I was aware that the validity of the study was dependent on my credibility and abilities as a researcher because I as was the instrument. I ensured that all the data I used in the study is authentic and none of is falsified. This is because, unlike quantitative research whose credibility depends on instruments used, Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) content that validity in qualitative research has a moral aspect on top of the methodological meaning. The authors add that the integrity of the researcher including his/her moral integrity and practical wisdom come under consideration when evaluating the quality of the knowledge produced.

Another method that serves to validate the collected data is triangulation (Gall et al., 1996; Patton, 1990; Yin, 2008). Triangulation involves using multiple data sources to connect and confirm individual pieces of text. In this study, I used interviews, and document analysis to collect data that would enable me to understand both how and the environment in which the language in education policy developed. The use of triangulation is more significant in historical research where the researcher may not be sure of the context in which a particular document was produced. Arguing for triangulation, Patton asserts that

Multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective on the programme. By using a combination of observations, interviewing, and document analysis, the field worker is able to use different data sources to validate and crosscheck findings. Each type and source of data has strengths and weaknesses (1990, p. 244).

## **2.7 Reflexivity**

The beginning of wisdom is the recognition that “scientific” detached objectivity in such research is not possible, since researchers always begin with particular experiences or positions on what the social “good” might be and what sorts of changes in social policy might advance a particular vision of that good (Riccio, 2006, pp. 11–12)

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher is an active participant in the process, being the research instrument par excellence (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The questions being asked, the way they are put and the interview site can all influence what the informants tell or do not tell (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). All this does not make the observations or the interviews invalid, but my presence and its possible impact on the study must be taken into consideration when analyzing the findings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

This study was a result of a long period of frustration towards how politicians act in self-interest to marginalize the very people that put them in the positions of power. I was aware that these emotions had the capacity to influence the way I interpreted the results of the study. As a result of this awareness, I strived to remain impartial in my analysis and interpretation of data. Although I strived to be unbiased, I cannot absolutely claim that I did not see the world through my own glasses colored by my preconceptions and emotional baggage. The personal interests of the researcher might intrude in everything from choosing the research site, formulation of research questions, choice of methods, analyzing and interpreting data, and in the end, the conclusions (Bryman, 2008). I however would like to claim objectivity of the study on the basis of my awareness of my biases throughout the process. Inasmuch as research cannot be totally value-free Bryman (2004) emphasizes that the degree of objectivity may be improved if the researcher is constantly aware of and also open about his/her background, views and values.

Additionally, I presented my findings as well as my analysis and interpretation of the data I collected during fieldwork in peer seminars. This afforded me an opportunity to get feedback from peers, my supervisor and other academic staff on potential biases in the interpretation of the data

## **3 Theoretical framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

*A Stocktaking Study on Mother Tongue and Bilingual education in Sub-Saharan Africa* by the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) revealed that for the last 100 years educators and linguists have insisted that mother tongue education is necessary for students to be able to succeed across the whole school curriculum (Alidou, Heugh, Wolff, Brock-Utne, Boly & Diallo., 2006). In spite of this knowledge, several studies (Afolayan, 1976; Akanniso, 1993; Bangbose, 1984; Obanya, 1980 as cited in Holmarsdottir, 2005) have shown that throughout Africa, the use of mother tongue in education generally remains a contentious issue. I would assume that the first question that would come to anyone presented with these facts would be why an issue that sounds so straightforward remains debatable.

In this chapter I will endeavour to present theories that have guided my quest to answer this question. I will begin by utilizing the language planning and decision-making framework presented by Robert Cooper (1989) and then proceed by putting forward some pre-decision making stages of the policy making cycle. After that the typology of language policies as proposed by Fishman (1972) is presented. This will highlight the context in which newly independent states formulated their language policies.

### **3.2 Defining Language Policy and Language Planning**

There is a long-standing debate on the definition and parameters of language planning and language planning. Cooper (1989, p. 29) asserts that “there is no single, universally accepted definition of language planning”, and further intimates that the term language policy has even served as a synonym for language planning. For some authors such as Herriman and Burnaby (1996), Haugen (1987), as well as Appel and Muysken (2006), language planning is an extension of language policy, that is, language planning is seen as a factual realization of language policy. Herriman and Burnaby (1996) reason that to



the extent that policies are deliberately and consciously created, they usually involve some form of planning. However, others like Schiffman (1998) and Haddad and Demsky (1995), seem to prefer to treat the two processes separately. Although discussing policy making and planning, Haddad and Demsky (1995) see policy to be concerned with how policy alternatives are identified and final choices made while planning is seen as being more about designing, implementing and monitoring. Schiffman (1998) utilizes Bugarski's definitions of language policy and language planning to distinguish between the two. For Schiffman therefore;

*Language policy*...refers...to the policy of a society in the area of linguistic communication – that is, the set of positions, principles and decisions reflecting that community's relationships to its verbal repertoire and communicative potential.

*Language planning* is...a set of concrete measures taken within language policy to act on linguistic communication in a community, typically by directing the development of its languages (1998, p. 3)

Language planning as a term in literature was first introduced by Haugen (1959) who defined it as “the activity of preparing normative orthography, grammar, and dictionaries for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogenous speech community” (1959, p. 8). Different definitions of language planning appeared after Haugen's 1959 article as the debate on the parameters of the activity continued. Cooper (1989, p. 31) examines the merits and demerits of twelve definitions offered by various scholars and discusses them under the question “Who plans what for whom and how?” after which he offers his own definition. He defines language planning as “*deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes*” (Cooper, 1989, p. 45 [emphasis original]). The definition is fitting because it:

...neither restricts the planners to authoritative agencies, nor restricts the type of target group, nor specifies an ideal form of planning. Further, it is couched in behavioural rather than problem-solving terms. Finally, it employs the term *influence* rather than *change* inasmuch as the former includes the maintenance or preservation of current behaviour, a plausible goal to language planning, as well as the current behaviour (Cooper, 1989, p. 45).

This definition is in tune with my study of language in education policy-making because influencing behaviour entails putting down a principle or course of action that governs the way people should conduct themselves. Functional allocation of a language for the education sector involves a process that will be at the heart of this study. For this reason, this will be my working definition as I look at the factors that have influenced the formulation and reform of the language in education policy in Zambia over the years.

In the current world where human requirements and needs seem to be increasing and are progressively competing for attention and space, planning becomes a critical feature to restore order. When it comes to bringing orderliness in the language field, three different types or domains of language planning exist: status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. A detailed discussion of these domains can be found in Cooper (1989, chap. 5–7). Here, only a brief overview of these types of planning will be presented and will suffice for the study purposes.

Status planning as an object of language policy refers to “deliberate efforts to influence the allocation of functions among languages” (Cooper, 1989, p. 99). It addresses how languages function in multilingual societies, e.g. official national language, community language, medium of instruction in schools, or school subject language. Corpus planning as an object of language policy refers to activities with respect to language form. This may mean the standardisation of a language, including its pronunciation and spelling. This aspect of corpus planning is linked closely to status planning because the standardisation of one dialect over another has obvious implications for the status of both dialects. On the other hand, acquisition planning is directed at “increasing the number of users – speakers, writers, listeners, or readers - ...” (Cooper, 1989, p. 33). In general terms, this is where decisions about the types of programs suitable for teaching the language to the community will be determined, such as whether it is possible to implement a school-based language revival program. Status planning is more analogous with this study than the other two domains. The activities and processes of the domain that exist in choosing a language to be used for teaching and

learning are what the study is concerned with. For this reason, it is the discussion of this type of planning that will recur through out the thesis.

### 3.3 How to Analyze Policy

Doing research in a field that is not entirely new is about looking at the same situation through a different lens, a lens that is made of our own beliefs about reality. Researchers employ these lenses, or descriptive frameworks as Cooper (1989, p. 99) refers to them, to facilitate concentration on aspects of the same behaviour. “Descriptive frameworks are molds wherein behaviour may be poured to cool and harden for analysis. The same behaviour, poured into different molds, takes on different shapes” (Cooper, 1989, p. 58).

Language planning activities never occur in a social vacuum (Cooper, 1989; Paulston & Heidmann, 2005; Tollefson & Tsui, 2009) and it therefore becomes difficult to evaluate their effectiveness (Cooper, 1989). Cooper (1989) states that it is seldom simple to determine the degree to which a given goal has been met, and even harder to determine what factors contributed to success or failure. He suggests that the reason for this situation is that there is no comprehensive theory or generally accepted framework for the study of language planning owing to the fact that the field is still “at the stage of discovering behavioural regularities” (Cooper, 1989, p. 57). He therefore proposes that looking at descriptive frameworks developed by other disciplines can be helpful “not only to understand language planning better but also to forward the development of a framework particularly suited for language planning” (Cooper, 1989, p. 58). Borrowing descriptive frameworks from four different fields, Cooper (1989) suggests that language planning can be analysed as (1) the management of innovation, (2) an instance of marketing, (3) a tool in the acquisition of power, and (4) an instance of decision making. Each of these frameworks can be reduced to one question:

- Apropos of *language planning as the management of innovation*, the question is: “who adopts what, when, where and how?” (Cooper, 1989, p. 60).

- Apropos of *language planning as marketing*, the question has to do with: “developing the right product backed by the right promotion and put in the right place at the right price (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971 as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 72).
- Apropos of *language planning as a tool in acquisition of power*, the question is: “who gets what, when and how” (Lasswell, 1936 as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 87).
- Apropos of *language planning as decision-making*, the question is: “who makes what decisions, why, how, and under what conditions and with what effect?” (Cooper, 1989, p. 88).

A combination of these questions forms the core of Cooper’s accounting scheme for the study and analysis of language planning. For this study however, I utilize the *language planning as decision-making* framework as it is a more fitting approach to the review of the language in education policy in Zambia with regard to the factors that have influenced its formulation and reform. This framework is described in detail in the next section.

### **3.4 Decision Making Theory Framework**

Edwards and Tversky (1967) define decision theory as “an attempt to describe in an orderly way what variables influence choices” (as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 87). Cooper (1989) incorporates Easton’s (1968) theme of the central focus of power in political science to demonstrate the locus of power in the formulation and implementation of public decision with respect to the allocation of valued things in society that are at a premium. Easton (1968) regards politics as “that behaviour or set of interactions through which authoritative allocations (or binding decisions) are made and implemented by society” (as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 87). The fact that psychologists and economists can also utilize the approach in understanding cognitive and economic behaviour led Cooper to conclude that the theory is an interdisciplinary field of study and can thus be applicable in the analysis of decision making in language planning.

Cooper (1989) contends that two schools of thought about decision analysis exist; one dealing with the ideal situation and the other explaining the actual. The first is the prescriptive tradition, and referred to as the *normative theory*, which determines how

people *should* act in order to realize the best results. This is contrasted with the *descriptive theory*, and known as behavioural decision theory, which is used to determine what people *actually* do to arrive at the decisions they make, regardless of what they may be. At this point Cooper refers to Bauer (1968) to put across the point that normative proposals must be consistent and not exceed the capabilities of people and institutions. The plans that are made should not exceed the capacity to fulfil them. Studies of actual decision-making must therefore fulfil both normative and descriptive aims.

Cooper (1989) maintains that when decisions are made, they cannot be assumed to always come from one source. He goes on to identify three hubs from which decision can emerge: (i) the individual, in his or her capacity as consumer, entrepreneur, gambler, or voter; (ii) the organization, particularly the business organization, through which decisions are taken; (iii) and the public arena in which policy is formulated and implemented. When this model is applied to language planning, what will emerge is that all the three focal points are fitting. Language planning can be the product of individuals working outside the framework of formal organizations, the product of formal institutions such as publishing houses, churches or schools, to mention but a few, the product of governments or even the product of all three foci at once. This being the case, what then has to be resolved when analysing a particular policy is how the decision was arrived at, that is, isolating the focus that was responsible for the chosen option. To do this, Cooper (1989) utilizes Dye and Robey's (1980) framework that defined public policy as "finding out what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes" (as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 88). He extends the framework by removing the restrictions of decision making to government to make it "who makes what decisions, why, how, under what conditions, and with what effect?" (Cooper, 1989, p. 88)

#### 3.4.1 *Who makes policy decisions?*

When I travelled to do my research in Zambia, the question of what I was researching on was usually the concomitant outcome of my mentioning that I was conducting research. My standard response was that I wanted to find out who was responsible for the language in education policy that we had in the country. As expected, this response

drew confused countenances because “everyone knows that the government makes policies”<sup>1</sup>. It became very clear to me that very few people take time to critically look at the behind-the-scenes of policy making. Shaping public policy is a complex and multifaceted process that involves the interplay of numerous individuals and interest groups competing and collaborating to influence policy a particular way. Involvement in status planning activities is not restricted to particular official bodies or groups of people and communities, and it can be carried out by almost anyone. There is however a possibility that some individual or particular institution may hold exclusive power over the agenda. These individuals and groups use a variety of tactics and tools to advance their aims. Governments, however, with their access to both resources and policy-making and legislative functions are in a position to make “the most wide-ranging (but not necessarily the most successful) decisions that influence language” (Fasold, 2003, p. 251).

Those involved in language planning outside of government, including educational bodies and agencies, non-government organisations, community groups and linguists, usually do not have the same influence and resources at their disposal. Fasold (2003) asserts that these groups are thus forced to use other means, such as political lobbying, to put pressure on government to support their language planning activities and policy recommendations. Cooper (1989) incorporates Ellsworth and Stahnke’s (1976) distinction of *formal elites*, *influentials*, and *authorities* in recognizing those who are involved in policy decisions. Formal elites refer to those officially delegated to make policy decisions and may include elected officials in government, chief operating executives, principals, and teachers. Influentials represent those that are privileged in society, “those who get the most of what is there to get” (Cooper, 1989, p. 88). Authorities, on the other hand, typify those who actually make policy decisions, and these may or may not be formal elites, influentials or both. It should however be noted that the demarcation between influencing and making decisions is not as unambiguous in practice as it is in theory. “The influentials are persons who promise, threaten, advise, beg, or bribe but do not decide. Only when they order and obtain compliance are they authorities. Yet influentials sometimes force the decision. When a mugger says, ‘Your money or your life!’ does the victim ‘decide’ – does he or she really have a choice?”

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<sup>1</sup> This is but one of the many responses that I got after mentioning what my research was generally about.

(Ellsworth & Stahnke, 1976 as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 88). Although referring to racism, van Dijk (1993) also puts forward the argument that various elite groups enact or contrive discourses that are sometimes subtly and indirectly promoted to national policy. Cooper (1989) alleges that influentials, which are often divided into different groups and with competing interests, more or less end up playing their role only. On the other hand, if influentials have the ability to make recommendations that cannot be contested, then they are likely to be de facto policy makers (Ellsworth & Stahnke, 1976 as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 88).

Now that we have identified those involved in making decisions, the focus now turns to finding out what decisions they make.

#### *3.4.2 What decisions are made?*

Public policies can, as stated by Cooper (1989), be put into five major categories. He uses Leichter's (1979) categorization to identify (1) distributive policies – those that allocate goods and services such as health, welfare and educational benefits, and tax and credit subsidies; (2) extractive policies – those that provide for the payment and collection of taxes; (3) symbolic policies – those that allocate status and acknowledge achievement, such as the determination of professional licensing requirements; (4) regulatory policies – policies that aim to some aspect of human behaviour, such as the regulation of abortion, and alcohol consumption; and lastly (5) administrative policies – policies that concern the organization or administration of government.

Language policy planning fits in more than one of the above stated policy types and assignment to any of them is dependent on the objective of the planning. Given that, from the working definition, all language planning aims at influencing behaviour, then it may be classified as a regulatory policy. But if language policy planning is done for the sole purpose of allocation of status to the available languages, then it may be classified as symbolic. However, if the intention is for the provision of education services, as is the stated case of the present study (Ministry of Education, 1996), then it should be viewed as a distributive policy.

Policy decisions can also be categorized using Frohock's (1979) substantive-procedural dichotomy (see Cooper, 1989, p. 90). In simple terms, this dichotomy may be said to be the 'hopes and dreams - ways and means' distinction. While substantive policies are an expression of intent (e.g. language standardization, elimination of sexist usage, eradication of illiteracy), procedural policies spell out the means by which the expressed intent will be realized (e.g. the use of vernacular languages to promote adult literacy or their use as medium of instruction in schools). Cooper (1989) contends that unless the means of implementation is specified, substantive policies will remain nothing more than just a show of good intent. This is on the understanding that the two processes of policy making and implementations are intrinsically intertwined and cannot be separated (Kaul, 1997).

The decision makers have been identified, the decisions they make explored, and now the next step is to determine the motivation behind the decisions they make.

### 3.4.3 *Why are decisions made?*

A change in needs and preferences is generally a concomitant result of human interaction with the environment. When it comes to public policy, new policies are usually generated when the present situation is perturbed by a problem or a political decision (Haddad & Demsky, 1995) that threatens the legitimacy of those in power (Cooper, 1989). This is an affirmation to Ellsworth and Stahnke's (1976) assertion that "stress is the primary motivation for the formulation of public policy..." where stress is defined as "the impairment of the authorities' ability to govern" (as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 91). This explanation of public policy is congruous with Hudson's (1978) notion that "nothing is valued in politics unless it is believed to be useful as a means of keeping a stronger group in power or of embarrassing or defeating one's opponents" (as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 91). Cooper (1989) suggests that while this present or potential stress propels both elites and non-elites to make decisions, the motivations behind the decisions may not necessarily be the same. Non-elites are more inclined to make decisions that aim at avoiding potential damage of public confidence and thus "impair the authorities' ability to govern" (p. 91). Elites on the other hand make decisions that maintain or extend their privileges. Van Dijk (1993) maintains that through their



influential text and talk, elites manufacture the consent needed for the legitimization of their own power, leadership and dominance.

#### *3.4.4 How do they arrive at decisions?*

In Utopia, decisions are made on the rational basis of maximizing benefits and minimizing costs. Rational decisions are made by:

a single decision maker or decision making unit, with a single set of preferred outcomes, knowledge of a reasonably full range of alternatives and their consequences, the intention of selecting that alternative which maximizes benefits and minimizing costs, and the opportunity, willingness and ability to make the necessary calculations (Cooper, 1989, p. 92).

Decisions are made according to the following sequence: (1) identification of the problem, (2) search for information relevant to the problem, (3) production of possible solutions, (4) choice of one solution, (5) implementation of the solution, and (6) a comparison of predicted and actual consequences of action (Brim et al. 1962, as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 91). This model is congruent with Haddad and Demsky's (1995) systemic model that is characterized by three operations of generating data, formulating and prioritizing options and finally refining the options. Conversely, in reality, policy making is a concatenation of messy and overlapping episodes in which a variety of people and organizations, each with diversified perspectives and interests, are actively involved either technically or politically, or even both (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). And because of this, the history of the world in general, and the education field in particular, is replete with reforms and plans which were never implemented because the interests of certain key stakeholders were not accommodated, financial and human resources for implementation had not been carefully evaluated or the system's managerial capacity had not systematically been taken into account (Haddad & Demsky, 1995).

To show how complex the process is, Cooper (1989) shows how even the first step, identification of the problem, can be difficult. "That something is wrong may be clear to all, but exactly what is wrong is generally not clear" (Edwards & Sharansky, 1978 as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 87). What is considered a problem heavily depends on the ethical, social, political, and cultural norms that are valued and adhered to by members

of a certain community (Cooper, 1989; Kroon, 2001) It therefore comes as no surprise that the identification of ‘problems’ in this sense can differ depending on the societal group that take the lead. Cooper (1989) suggests that what is viewed as a problem ultimately guides the policy that is designed to solve it. When the problem has been identified, time and financial resources to embark on gathering information about the problem at hand may limit those responsible for decision-making. Haddad and Demsky (1995) hold that there is need to relax the assumption of adequacy of information when assessing policy-making. Cooper (1989) alleges that even when information is accessible to decision makers, they may not know how it is relevant to the problem. Furthermore, even when relevant data can be distinguished from the irrelevant, much of the data available may be inaccurate.

Once the problem has been identified, the available alternative options can be evaluated in terms of desirability, affordability, and feasibility. (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). But sometimes the sense of urgency of the problem at hand necessitates a quick response thereby limiting the time that decision makers have to explore all the possibilities. Cooper (1989) alleges that policy makers may also sometimes be unwilling to explore options that may prove to be inimical to their interests. He further maintains that after appraising the available alternatives, decision makers often cannot settle for a single solution since the impact of any given option on the various interest groups or stakeholders may be difficult to ascertain and also because the prospects of each outcome are unknown.

It can therefore be generally agreed that rather than conforming to the rational paradigm of decision making, policy making is “a political activity characterised by self-interest, political bargaining, value judgement and multiple rationalities (Haddad & Demsky, 1995, p. 22). It is necessary that a description of both the overt and covert activities of the planners of the language in education policy in Zambia be analysed, that is, how they selected and weighed their options as well as the outcome of their appraisal (Cooper, 1989).

### 3.4.5 *What conditions influence policy decisions?*

The conditions within which policies are made are another aspect that must be considered when analysing policy. Cooper (1989, pp. 93–97) suggests the use of Leichter's (1979) accounting scheme that builds on the work of Alford (1969) to examine the context in which policies are made. The scheme proposes four main categories of conditions that can influence policy-making: situational, structural, cultural and environmental factors.

Situational factors are temporary conditions or events that have an immediate impact on policy. Included in this category are violent events such as wars and riots; political events such as change in government and achievement of independence, as well as economic cycles such as depression, recession and inflation.

Structural factors refer to things in society that are relatively long lasting. Among these are political elements such as type of regime, form of government and prior policy commitments; economic factors like type of economic system, the economic base and national wealth and income. Also included in this category are social, demographic, and ecological factors such as population, degree of urbanization, natural resources and geographic location. Cooper (1989) expands this category by adding constituencies, a term introduced by Ellsworth and Stahnke (1976) to signify those that are affected by a given policy. "Decision makers must weigh the relative interests of all affected parties, the utility of their continued support, and the probable intensity of their reactions as they make policy" (Ellsworth & Stahnke, 1976 as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 95). Leichter (1979) is of the view that the fact that structural factors are relatively long lasting makes their impact on policy more sustainable and predictable.

Cultural factors cover attitudes and values held by those that make up a community. These include, among other things, the political culture that cover norms regarding political participation, like involvement of individuals for example, what is proper and mandatory for a government to do, and political ideology – Marxist, fascist, democratic (Alford, 1969, as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 94). Leichter (1979) extended the scope of cultural factors to include institutions and arrangements such as sex roles, marriage, family, and religion. Ellsworth and Stahnke (1976) introduced two additional factors,

regime norms and socialization of authorities that, by definition, can be included in the cultural factors. They state that “taken together, regime norms define the areas of social life in which authorities may act – they define the mode of official operation – and prescribe relationships between various public officials as well” (as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 94). Socialization of authorities on the other hand is thought to encompass histories, expertise, prejudices and blinkers that decision makers bring while making decisions, and these are influenced by their past experiences, associations, and group affiliations.

Environmental factors concern events, structures and attitudes that, though external to the community, influence decision making within it (Cooper, 1989). Included in this category are the international and political environment, emulation or borrowing of policy ideas from other nations, international agreements, as well as obligations and pressures of loans and donations from international corporations.

Views on which of these factors has a bigger influence on a particular policy make up for lively debate. While some like Hudson (1978) argue that “nothing is valued in politics unless it is believed to be useful as a means of keeping a stronger grip on power or of embarrassing or defeating one’s opponents” (as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 91), others hold that even if state and public officials are active, it is possible that globalization processes influence policy processes (Gornitzka, Kogan, & Amaral, 2005). Steiner-Khamsi argues that:

...in low-income countries, the external pressure to reform in certain ways, and with reference to an international community that exerts such a pressure, are not self-induced as in economically developed countries. On the contrary, the pressures from the international community on low-income countries in the form of international agreements...are real... (2004, p. 5).

Cooper (1989) refers to Leichter (1979) in concluding that different analysts, in accounting for public policy, emphasize different factors, and that this is dependent on policy area and the historical period. He declares that “it would be extraordinary if a single factor...was found to be responsible for all policies, at all times, in all nations” (Leichter, 1979 as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 95), a case that seems to be true in the case of language planning.

#### 3.4.6 *What are the effects?*

Kroon (2001) declares that it should be noted that oftentimes there is a disparity between rhetoric and practice in the field of language policy, between pronouncements in policy papers and what is done in the actual field. He further maintains that at some point in history, many states have formulated eloquently worded language policies without really being able or wanting to put these in practice. Cooper (1989) suggests policy makers deliberately avoid comparing the predicted with the actual outcomes of policies. It is expected that this should happen considering that policy-making does not conform to the rational paradigm of decision-making. He further lists six reasons to explain the variance between policy and practice: (1) the effect of some policies may not be known for many years, (2) data gathering is expensive and time-consuming, (3) policy makers may be more interested in the appearance of purposive activity than in the consequences of that activity, so long as such consequences do not arouse opposition to their continuance in power, (4) policy makers may suspect that their policies have failed (or at least not succeeded very well) and thus may avoid confirming their suspicions, (5) it is often exceedingly difficult to disentangle the effects of a policy from the effects of all other variables which might have influenced the projected or desired outcome, and (6) problems rarely stay solved: changing conditions tend to unsolved problems that may once have been solved (Ackoff, 1978, as cited in Cooper, 1989, p. 96).

### **3.5 The Policy Making Cycle and Models of Language Diversity**

Although decision-making is a crucial event in the policy process, it is preceded by analytical and/or political activities. This is more true in language policy because of the shared understanding that language policies are never simply and only about language (Paulston & Heidmann, 2005) and therefore their interpretation, and debates surrounding them, must be situated in their socio-political contexts (Tollefson & Tsui, 2009). The identification, definition and prioritizing of problems discussed in the section 3.4 are some of the main stages of the policy cycle – not a description of actual activities, but rather a conceptual model to extract and specify those elements that can be detected and analysed (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). Kroon (2000) utilizes his earlier

work with Jaspaert (1991) together with the publications of van de Graaf and Hoppe (1992) as well as Hoogerwarf (1993) to identify and distinguish eight consecutive stages of policy making: (1) ideology formation, (2) agenda formation, (3) policy preparation, (4) policy formation, (5) policy implementation, (6) policy evaluation, (7) feedback, and (8) policy termination. Only the first two stages, ideology formation and agenda formation are of relevance to the discussion on language diversity for this study and will consequently be the only ones to be presented. This is because the study is concerned with what happens before the actual policy is made. For a full description of all the stages see Kroon (2000, pp. 15–23).

When considering language in multilingual societies, the ideology formation stage concerns negotiating an agreement on the question of whether the existence of multilingualism in a society has to be considered a positive or negative characteristic, a resource or a problem. Whatever is chosen between the two positions inescapably leads to different policies with respect to language. Societies that view language diversity as a negative characteristic are more likely to opt for a model that promotes one language as official language at national level and suppresses or ignore the rest. On the other hand, societies where language diversity is considered a resource will most likely opt for policies that promote the development and use of as many languages as possible (Ozolins, 1996).

The second stage in the policy-making cycle is agenda formation. This is the point where prioritization of problems identified in the first stage takes place and are presented to the public and/or policy makers to get their attention. A very important aspect of this stage is trying to influence the definition of the issue or the problem that is put on the agenda. It therefore follows that whoever has monopoly in defining problems at this stage ultimately determines the final outcome of the policy that will be formulated. Kroon (2001) asserts that “when it comes to minority language policy, for example, it makes a lot of difference whether the issue is put on the agenda as ‘the problem of ethnic minority languages in education’ as opposed to ‘the role of ethnic minority languages in education’” (p. 113).

### **3.6 Typologies of Language Policy Decisions**

In order to appreciate the context in which independent societies, in their search for socio-cultural integration and operational self-management, formulate their language policies, reference is made to an accounting scheme developed by Fishman (1972).

#### *3.6.1 Type A decisions*

This type of decisions is made by societies that do not have a common cultural heritage that can serve as a unifying force for the new nation at nationwide level. The need for integration, as well as the need for nationism (operational integrity of the nation), also referred to as wide communication, dictates the choice of the language of wider communication (LWC) as the official language. Fishman (1972) states that more often than not, the language that is selected to be used for all nationwide functions tends to be the language of the former colonial administrators. In Type A decision situations, considerations of operational efficiency often lead to the adoption of local and regional languages for immediate operational purposes. In this case therefore, bilingualism and biculturalism is accepted, but only as a transitional stage towards producing a monolingual society where the young are expected to give up their local languages completely in exchange for the adopted LWC. The end result of such a decision is that “a western trained and modernly oriented elite has usually continued and favoured in positions of authority in all basic government services as well as industry, commerce, education, and culture” (Fishman, 1972, p. 93).

#### *3.6.2 Type B decision*

Fishman (1972) asserts that Type B decisions tend to be made by societies with long established socio-cultural entities exhibiting a single tradition and single local indigenous language affiliated with the established tradition. The associate language is selected as the national language and, with time, is developed into a language of wider communication. Meanwhile, since the nation needs to modernise itself in the fields of science and technology, it still needs immediate instruction in the language of wider communication. Like Type A societies, this language usually turns out to be the language of the former rulers. An example of Type B society is India where Hindi was

selected as a national language, while English was to serve as the language of wider communication during the time that Hindi was being developed as the language of wider communication. The ramifications of taking the Type B path is an emergence of a stable and widespread bilingual and bicultural society whereby an ideal citizen is one who is comfortable with the home tradition, but is at the same time able to present an international image when required.

### 3.6.3 *Type C decisions*

This decision applies to cases where there are a number of sufficiently established great traditions with associated languages. Each of the traditions is “numerically, economically, and ideologically strong enough to support separate and large scale socio-cultural and political-operational integration” (Fishman, 1972, p. 203). Selection of any one of the associate languages as a national language would be regarded as practicing tribalism in favour of tribes that speak it at the expense of those that speak other languages. In cases where this has happened, leaders have selected a neutral language as a working language at national level to avoid “constant rivalry for greater national prominence among various contenders...” (Fishman, 1972, p. 204) and sometimes in conjunction with an indigenous language. Again here, the language that is selected is usually the language of the colonial administrator. Regional languages are however officially recognized for each region to serve operational purposes. The preferred goal in Type C situations is a stable state of triglossia, where a citizen is able to function in at least three languages: the western language at national level, the recognized regional language at regional level, and the mother tongue at home (in cases where it is different from the regional language)

## 3.7 **Summary**

In this chapter I have presented theory of decision making as applied to public policy in general. I have also presented the contexts that various newly independent nations have to make language policies. These discussions are important for the study exploring the factors that influence language in education policy. The theory of rational decision-making has been presented as being challenged as there are many other considerations



and interests from various stakeholders when it comes to public policy. While public policy is supposed to be a result of a decision-making process where all alternatives are considered and the best alternative, that which maximises benefits and minimises costs, in reality this is rarely so. Policy usually reflects the orientations and wishes of those that have the means to influence decisions.

These theories will assist me in making sense of all the data from the various sources that I used. They offer me a perspective of all the factors that were at play when decisions concerning language of classroom instruction were made. The models also offer me a reference point against which points of convergence and divergence with the data from the field can be observed in attempt to make amends to the models that already exist.

## 4 Findings, Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction

“Language policies for education are highly charged political issues, seldom, if ever, decided on educational grounds alone” (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 186). They have the power to determine which groups have access to political and economic opportunities and which groups are disenfranchised. LiEP is “ a key means of power (re)distribution and social (re)construction, as well as a key arena in which political conflicts among countries and ethno-linguistic, social and political groups are realized” (Tollefson & Tsui, 2009, p. 2). In Zambia this is attested by the way discussions on language policy have centred much on language in education, which is supposed to be only a part of the overall language policy. This is not surprising if one considers that “among the most powerful devices for implementing language policy is the education system, particularly if the most widely desirable rewards are given to those who pass through it” (Whiteley, 1970, p. 4). Within the education sector, the issue featuring in all the post independence education policy documents, that is, 1966, 1977, and the current 1996, has highlighted the centrality of language in education. This can probably be attributed to the fact that education failure is often, in a very general and rather deep sense, language failure, that is, a child who does not succeed in the school system may be one who is not using language in the ways that is required by the school system (Webster, 2006).

In this chapter I present my analysis of the policy that has guided the implementation of language in education from the time formal education was introduced in the polity that is now called Zambia. I focus my analysis on the elements that influenced the outcome of the policy discussions during the colonial era as well as in the three time periods after independence (1966, 1977, and 1996) during which an attempt was made to devise a well rounded language in education policy. I examine the negotiations, or lack thereof, and developments leading to the language in education policies. In my analysis, I will attempt to ascertain the political discourses in the various periods under study in the quest to highlight the *what, who, why, how, and conditions* under which the policies were made. The periods will be discussed independently in order that understandings of

the issues that lie therein are highlighted. This is necessitated by considerations of different ideological underpinnings present in the negotiations at each time period. An attempt is also made to determine what consequences these policies have had on the primary beneficiaries, that is, the students. As an old African saying goes, *when elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers*. Before proceeding, let me begin by presenting the linguistic setting in Zambia.

#### **4.2 The language situation in Zambia**

The question of how many languages there are in Zambia would elicit an assortment of figures ranging from twenty to over eighty, depending on whom you ask. The difficulty in responding to this seemingly straight-forward question is that the present boundaries of the polity and the composition of the people within have to a larger degree been shaped by recent colonial history so that neither geographically nor ethnically, nor from the point of view of language, does the nation present a unified whole (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978). Added to this situation is the fact that generally “we do not, within the rigours of science, possess fool-proof instruments for determining what is a language and what is not a language, or ‘dialect’ as opposed to ‘language’” (Kashoki, 1997, p. 33). An added complication in the Zambian context is that the distinction between language and tribe is almost non-existent (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978). The most common form of ethnic identification is by tribe where a chief is a leader. Based on this ethnic taxonomy, the number of tribes given by both the 1990 and 2000 censuses<sup>2</sup> is seventy-two. Tribe is however not invariably synonymous with language (CSO, n.d.), and there are fewer languages than tribes. Using lexical and grammatical similarity as well as mutual intelligibility, Ohannessian and Kashoki (1978)<sup>3</sup> distinguished twenty-six dialect clusters or languages (excluding European, Indian, and Khoisan languages) from a variety of eighty-three (Table 4.1). These are further grouped into sixteen clusters.

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<sup>2</sup> Census of population and housing in Zambia is conducted after a period of 10 years. The last census was therefore conducted in 2010. However, the full results of the census were not yet published at the time of writing and hence the reason for using dated figures.

<sup>3</sup> The statistics of more than 30 years ago are used here because no sociolinguistic survey of this magnitude has been conducted in Zambia since then.

**Table 4.1 Language groups and dialect clusters in Zambia**

Group	Dialect Clusters and Location
A	Aushi, Chishinga, Kabende, Mukulu, Ngumbo, Twa, Unga, Bemba, Bwile, Luunda, Shila, Tabwa (Northern province) Bisa, Kunda (border of Northern and Eastern provinces) Lala, Ambo, Luano, Swaka (Eastern and Central provinces) Lamba, Lima (Copperbelt and Central provinces)
B	Kaonde (North-Western province)
C1	Lozi (Western province)
C2	Kwandi, Kwanga, Mbowe, Mbumi (Western province) Simaa, Imilangu, Mwenyi, Nyengo, Makoma, Liyuwa, Mulonga (Western province) Mashi, Kwandu, Mbukushu (Western province)
D	Lunda, Kosa, Ndembu (North-Western province)
E	Luvale, Luchazi, Mbunda (border of Western and North-Western provinces) Chokwe (North-Western province)
F	Mambwe, Lungu (Northern province) Inamwanga, Iwa, Tambo, Lambya (border of Northern and Eastern provinces)
G	Nyiha, Wandya (border of Northern and Eastern provinces)
H	Nkoya, Lukolwe (or Mbwela), Lushangi, Mashasha (North-Western and border of Western and Southern provinces)
I	Nsenga (Eastern province)
J	Chewa (Nyanja) (Eastern province)
K	Tonga, Toka, Totela, Leya, Subiya, Twa, Shanjo, Fwe (Southern and border of Western and Southern provinces) Ila, Lundwe, Lumbu, Sala (border of Southern and Central provinces) Lenje, Twa (Central province) Soli (Central province)
L	Tumbuka, Fungwe, Senga, Yombe (Eastern province)
M	Goba, Shona (Central province)
N	Chikunda (Central province)
O	Swahili (Northern and Copperbelt provinces)

*Source: Ohannessian and Kashoki (1978)*

On top of the 26 indigenous Bantu languages, the survey by Ohannessian and Kashoki (1978) also noted that some European and Asian languages such as English, German, French, Hindi, Gujarati, Italian, and Urdu were also spoken in Zambia.

The languages found in Zambia differ considerably in terms of demographics. The 2000 census revealed that the main languages spoken, in the order of number of speakers, are Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi and English as shown in Table 4.2. The data show that

Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, and English are spoken by more than 10 per cent of the population<sup>4</sup> as either first or second language. What is also revealed in the table is that some smaller languages, such as Luvale and Lenje are spoken more as second languages rather than as first languages while others like Ila have the same number of people speaking them as first and second languages. It should, however, be noted that the data in Table 4.2 are based on the dialect cluster level, a level that is rarely used to discuss language in Zambia.

**Table 4.2 Language by percentage of speakers (2000)**

Use as Predominant Language	Lang	Use as Second Lang	Use as Predominant Language	Use as Second Lang	Lang
Bemba	30.1	20.2	English	1.7	26.3
Nyanja	10.7	19.5	Luvale	1.7	1.9
Tonga	10.6	4.4	Lenje	1.4	1.5
Lozi	5.7	5.2	Namwanga	1.3	0.8
Chewa	4.7	2.3	Ngoni	1.2	1.2
Nsenga	3.4	1.6	Mambwe	1.2	0.9
Tumbuka	2.5	1.3	Bisa	1.0	0.4
Lunda	2.2	1.3	Ila	0.8	0.8
Lala	2.0	1.0	Lungu	0.6	0.4
Kaonde	2.0	1.8	Senga	0.6	0.2
Lamba	1.9	1.4			

*Source: CSO (2000)*

In Zambia language is discussed at group level, where reference to a particular language includes a number of its related varieties<sup>5</sup> e.g. when someone speaks of Tonga, it is not meant in its singularity (Table 4.1), but as Tonga and its varieties such as Toka, Totela, Leya, Subiya, etc. When viewed in this manner (Table 4.2), the significance of Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi, and English becomes more discernible. Table 4.3 compares data over a period of three decades and shows that Bemba has been and continues to be the

<sup>4</sup> 8,702,932 is the total number that was considered for first language speakers and this excluded children under the age of two years and persons with speech impairment. 3,385,745 were considered for second language speakers. This directly implies that the population reported to speak a predominant language cluster is less than the total population of the country. The population speaking a second language of communication is therefore even smaller, probably a reflection of the fact that the census recorded people's perceptions of their linguistic capabilities rather than actual linguistic behaviour (CSO, n.d.).

<sup>5</sup> The 2000 census recognizes seven language groups (excluding English) that coincide with broad ethnic groups; Bemba, Tonga, Lozi, Nyanja, Kaonde, Luvale and Lunda (CSO, n.d.)

largest language group spoken as a first language (the issue of multilingualism is explained later in the chapter). When compared to other languages, the use of Nyanja and English as second languages has increased the most over the last 30 years.

**Table 4.3 Language dialect cluster use by census year (1980–2000)**

Percentage of Total Population						
Language Group	1980		1990		2000	
	1 <sup>st</sup> lng.	2 <sup>nd</sup> lng.	1 <sup>st</sup> lang.	2 <sup>nd</sup> lng.	1 <sup>st</sup> lng.	2 <sup>nd</sup> lng.
<b>Bemba</b>	39.7	24.4	39.7	27.5	38.5	24.1
<b>Nyanja</b>	19.0	18.0	20.1	25.5	20.6	25.0
<b>Tonga</b>	13.3	7.8	14.8	8.1	13.9	7.7
<b>Lozi</b>	8.0	7.5	7.5	8.4	6.9	6.4
<b>English</b>	4.6	0.8	1.1	17.8	1.7	26.3

*Adapted from CSO (2000)*

Table 4.2 also shows that in 2000, Bemba, Nyanja, and Tonga were each spoken as a first language by more than 10 per cent of the population, and collectively by more than 70 per cent. On the other hand, more than 75 per cent of the population speak Bemba, Nyanja and English as a second language. Less than 10 per cent of the population speaks Lozi as either a first or second language. English possesses the unique characteristic of having a huge margin between those that speak it as a first language (1.7 per cent) and as a second language (26.3 per cent). This may be because it enjoys the status of national language though not being an indigenous language. This will be discussed in more detail below. The distribution of language use in table 4.3 shows a rise in the use of all the three indigenous languages and English as first languages between the 1980 and 1990 censuses. This may be attributed to the fact that some small languages are becoming extinct, that is they are being swallowed up by bigger languages (CSO, n.d.). For example, people who speak Tabwa or Chishinga are increasingly referring to Bemba as their mother tongue. By contrast, the period 1990 to 2000 saw a decrease in the number of first and second language speakers of Bemba, Tonga and Lozi. Marten and Kula (2008) attribute this trend to smaller languages that may have been recorded under the major groups in 1990 finding a following in 2000. Examples are Lungu, Bisa, and Nsenga, which were not recorded independently in the 1990 census, but recorded figures of 0.4, 0.4, and 0.2 respectively in 2000. Nyanja remained unchanged while English recorded a significant increase in usage as a second language. The picture that

manifests from the tables, at both dialect and language level is one of a complex and dynamic multilingual situation.

Another significant feature that requires mention in the linguistic situation in Zambia is that not all languages enjoy the same political and social status. In spite of what the figures suggest about the spread of languages, English is the official language. This means that it has the legal status to serve as the language of administration in government. It is also the language of business, recognized and approved language in the media, in education, and in most formal and non-formal contexts. English became the official language at independence and is the only recognized official language in the 1991 constitution. Seven other indigenous languages (sometimes referred to as regional languages) have national language status and work alongside English in a number of contexts such as local court<sup>6</sup> proceedings, dissemination of health information, and police interrogations. These are Tonga, Lozi, Kaonde, Luvale, Lunda, Nyanja, and Bemba. They represent the language clusters found in various parts of the country. They are therefore used as mediums of wider communication in formal contexts such as lower level administration in specific regions of the country. Their usage as languages of teaching and learning in lower grades of schooling is becoming more widespread (Carmody, 2004).

Though only spoken by less than a third of the population as can be seen in table 4.3, English is not geographically restricted and is therefore the language of wider communication, albeit more in urban than in rural areas. The predominant use of English in administration, education, and business implies that not only does it have a high social status, but also mastery of the language is advantageous to anyone who wants to reap the benefits of what there is to offer.

The above account has shown that many languages other than English and the seven national languages are spoken in Zambia. What can also be said is that there exists a complex situation of language use in most parts of the country where some languages are spoken as first or second languages or both, where smaller languages are sometimes

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<sup>6</sup> The local court is the lowest court of law in a hierarchy dominated by the magistrate, high, and supreme courts.

limited to geographical areas but sometimes have more wide usage than some of the national languages. Most speakers in Zambia are either bilinguals or multilingual (i.e., speakers of more than one language in the dual commonly accepted sense of the term). As Kashoki (1997, p. 33) puts it:

Confronted with a multiplicity of languages in their midst and challenged to communicate with a wide spectrum of compatriots as differing situations and circumstances require, the response of the average Zambian is to acquire a command of not just one but two or more languages as a coping mechanism. ...In this sense, they have embraced diversity as their guiding philosophy in responding to a complex linguistic situation in their country.

Code switching and code mixing<sup>7</sup> is a way of life for people that have to navigate through the complex linguistic jungle that is Zambia.

### **4.3 The colonial education policy**

Formal education in the region that constitutes Zambia today can be traced back to the late 1800s with the advent of the missionary enterprise to the territory. Formal education here is taken to mean learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment and is explicitly designed as learning (in terms of objectives, time and resources) (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), 2008). Learning in this case is intentional from the learner's point of view.

#### *4.3.1 Setting the scene*

The first mission station, and by extension the first school, was built by the Paris Evangelical Mission Society in 1885 at Sesheke in the western part of Zambia. Sixteen more missionary societies were providing education in the forty years that followed (Department of African Education, 1965 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 30). The main objective of the education offered by the mission schools was evangelism. The schools intended to train African evangelist teachers who would be instrumental in the expansion of each missionary society's area of influence in the territory. Almost all

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<sup>7</sup> Code switching is a bilingual strategy consisting of alternative use of two languages within the same speech context while code mixing occurs when a speaker of one language applies elements or rules of a different language to the base language (Hamers & Blank, 2000 as cited in Holmarsdottir, 2005, p. 110).



missions considered schools to be their most important means of Christianisation (Henkel, 1989). The Bible played a central role in evangelizing and the missionaries wanted the Africans to have access to it. Access meant that it had to be in a language that was understood by the intended recipients. It therefore comes as no surprise that the first thing that the missionaries did was to learn the language of the people of the area around the mission stations and put it down in writing (Henkel, 1989). After this was achieved, the next task was opening schools where reading and writing, first in the local language and then in English, was done. If policy in general is taken to mean a guiding principle used to guide decision making under a given set of circumstances within a framework of objectives or goals (Sandford, 1987), then the approach taken by all the mission societies, albeit unwritten, regarding teaching can be said to have been the first language in education policy.

Although the effectiveness of teaching in the local language as opposed to English is not explicitly mentioned, the assumption that can be drawn is that the missionaries understood the benefits of mother tongue education. What is mentioned though is that, measured by the extent of their influence, missions that placed emphasis on education had an advantage over the others and it lasted for several decades. Perhaps the most telltale indication of the effectiveness of the teaching model comes from the decision to continue with it when the Colonial Office took over the responsibility for the administration of the territory in 1924.<sup>8</sup>

#### *4.3.2 The first formal education policy*

Discussing the language in education policy during the colonial period cannot be done outside a discussion of general policy making in the whole education sector. This is because the education system was mainly used as a conduit through which the ideology of the time was transmitted. Therefore, the policy will be presented not as an end in itself but as means to the goals and objectives envisioned for the education system.

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<sup>8</sup> Before 1924, the territory was under the administration of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) on behalf the British government. The BSAC had little interest in promoting native education but did not discourage missionary groups from setting up schools.

I should also mention that getting a detailed explanation and thus understanding of policy-making during the colonial period (from my preferred perspective) from the interviews was a futile exercise. My efforts to steer the interviews with my informants towards colonial time policy-making always yielded responses eulogizing the language policy on pedagogical reasons. A curriculum specialist at the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) of the Zambian Ministry of Education said:

The policy [language in education] at that time was straightforward. It was two years of mother tongue education, first two years of school. Completely no English during that time. English decoding started in third year. By then you were grounded in mother tongue. I am a product of the old generation. In 1961 when I went to Sub A<sup>9</sup>, the first grade, we learned in the local language. And tell you what, by the end of that one year, we were able to write letters to our parents. And that's why at independence most of the Permanent Secretaries where Form two or Standard 6 which is present day Grade 7. And they did extremely well (Mr Chibamba, 19<sup>th</sup> August).

Asked the same question, Dr Kasamba, a lecturer in the Department of Languages at the University of Zambia (UNZA) also discussed policy making from a pedagogical standpoint. He said:

The planners at that time understood that education is about moving from the known to the unknown. There was a three-tier system where pupils grew from learning Chitonga or Chinyanja<sup>10</sup> or whatever language they spoke in the area, to learning in the regional language and then English. The concepts had already been developed. What was *jamba* [Tonga name for hoe] became known as a hoe. Children could already think in Chitonga and translate that to English (Dr Kasamba, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2011).

The above responses probably underscore the attitude that is taken by most people when referring to the colonial era – an unquestioning acceptance of a period of non self-determination. For this reason, most of the data for analysis for this period is drawn from documents that chronicle colonial era decision-making.

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<sup>9</sup> The pre-independence school grading system in Zambia was different from the present system. The present system runs from Grade 1 to Grade 12. The old system run as such: Sub A = first grade, Sub B = second grade, Standard I = 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Standard II = 4<sup>th</sup> grade.....up to Standard 10 which is 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

<sup>10</sup> Technically, the prefix “chi” (or “ci” or “si”) is used before the name of the tribe to indicate the language spoken by its members (e.g. Chitonga is the language spoken by the Tonga tribe; Silozi is the language of the Lozi tribe, etc.)

#### 4.3.2.1 *The policy makers*

In the year that it assumed administrative responsibility of the territory, the Colonial Office, through the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa, set up guidelines for African education in all British Colonies. The guidelines were derived from the Phelps-Stokes Commission's findings and recommendations. Among the recommendations dealing with education were the following:

- Appointment of a Director of Native Education whose work would be to “coordinate and unify the educational activities of the numerous missions”.
- Appointment of an Advisory Committee on Native Education with representatives of the government, missionaries, and settlers. Provision should be made as soon as possible for the representation of Native opinion (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, pp. 276–7).

These recommendations were honoured in 1925 when a sub-department of Native Education was created as part of the Department of Native Affairs and the appointment of Geoffrey Latham as the first Director. In the same year, an Advisory board that held its first meeting in July was appointed. These were in essence the formal elites (Ellsworth & Stahnke, 1976) who were officially tasked with making policy decisions in the native education sector. They formulated policies, with approval from His Majesty's Government approval, determined what would be done with regards to education. However, using Ellsworth and Stahnke's (1976) distinction of actors in policy making, other groups that influenced policy decisions can be identified. Mwanakatwe (1968) asserts that the voice of the elected members of the Legislative Council<sup>11</sup> representing the interests of Europeans was highly effective from the earliest days of colonial rule in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>12</sup> This group would form the ‘authorities’ category in the distinction of actors in the policy making process. Another group that can be identified during this period is that of the influencers, those that promise, threaten, advise, beg or bribe but do not decide (Ellsworth & Stahnke, 1976). It is reported that “white Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council representing European interests used every conceivable opportunity to press officials to accept measures for improving European education in the territory” while showing “reluctance

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<sup>11</sup> The Legislative Council was higher than the Department of Native Affairs in the Colonial administrative structure.

<sup>12</sup> Northern Rhodesia was the name given to the territory that is now Zambia.

to raise in debate issues in Annual Reports on African education which were tabled in the Council from time to time (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 25). During the times that Council Members discussed African education, their motives were not always benevolent. The covert methods of undermining African education employed by the unofficial members were described thus by Coombe (1967):

The impression which the leaders of settler opinion created upon those responsible for African education policy was bound to be confused. It is significant that no cuts were made in the African education budget at the instance of elected members; that on the contrary some cuts may not have been made in the African education budget because of their intervention; and that for 1935 the most influential members of the Legislative Council had become outspoken supporters of African education. There was unquestionably a strong if not unstated element of *quid pro quo*: concern for African education went hand in hand with concern for European education, and the requirements of European education entailed a severe limitation upon the money available for the education of Africans (p. 199).

As early as this pioneer period in policy making in Zambia, we observe the absence of the opinion of the people for which the policy is intended, the Natives. Mwanakatwe (1968) affirms that there were no African members in the Legislative council until shortly after the Second World War. The absence of natives<sup>13</sup> raises questions on the legitimacy of the policy among policy researchers who accept the political principle that people who experience the consequences of policy should have a bigger part to play in the policy-making process (Morris & Williams, 2000). This ethical and moral principle derives from the normative theory stating that:

You put the responsibility for decisions on the shoulders of those who anyhow will suffer the consequences...[and by doing so]...you stimulate the participants who have to make up their minds in practical discourse to look around for information and ideas that can shed light on their situation – which can clarify their understanding of themselves (Habermas, 1992, p. 202).

The question that comes to mind here is: How do you go ahead and start solving problems of someone who does not recognize them as problems in the first place? Furthermore, not involving the recipients of the policy results in the decision-making process is the moral equivalent of giving someone fish to eat rather than teaching them

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<sup>13</sup> In this study, the use of the terms 'native', 'locals', and 'indigenous do not carry with it any value judgment, and invites none. They are used to simply mean endogenous. It will interchangeably be used with the term 'Africans'.

how to catch the fish. It robs them of the opportunity to understand their circumstances and seek ways of improving them. Mwanakatwe (1968) reports that even when Africans finally had representatives in the Council, they were too few and their influence negligible.

#### *4.3.2.2 What they decided*

One of the recommendations from the Phelps-Stokes Commission was that there should be “sound objectives for education, in particular a better adaptation of education to the needs of the people” (Phelps-Stokes Commission, 1924 as cited in Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 277). Following this advice, the Advisory Council adopted a dual education system for Africa. The dual system of education that had its beginnings in the days of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) consisted of education for the masses and European education. Education for the masses was simple, utilitarian and agriculture rooted (Carmody, 2004), while the education of the European settlers was oriented towards preparing its pupils for white collar jobs as well as for the highly ‘developed’, competitive and sophisticated society in Europe (Mwanakatwe, 1968). The education for the masses, the natives, was based on the philosophy of adaptation. What was presented in the education policy document was that:

Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and health elements in the fabric of their social life... Its aim should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life, whatever it may be, and to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture, the development of native industries, the improvement of health, the management of their own affairs, and the inculcation of the true ideals of citizenship and service (Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies, 1925 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 35).

The enemy to this desirable order was an educated African who had shed his/her ties with his/her origins and therefore could not contribute to its welfare (Coombe, 1967).

Recognizing the significance of language in this philosophy of education, both African and European languages (English in the case of Zambia) would be used in the education system. It was perceived that both languages had a greater contribution to make beyond

that of the mere transfer of knowledge. Inclusion of the indigenous language had the element of the inherent right of all people to their native tongue. Native languages were part of the cultural heritage of Africans and where a means of preserving African customs, ideas and ideals and above all, for preserving the self-respect of Africans (Coombe, 1967). With this in mind, it was considered vital to include native languages in education because it was through these languages that the African mind could be reached, African character developed and interest in agriculture and industry aroused. European languages on the other hand were included on the basis that they were agencies for acquiring information. In addition, these languages were considered a means of uniting Africa with the perceived great civilizations of the world and thus the need for Africans to know at least one of the languages of the civilized nations (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978). To this effect, the Committee suggested that preparation of vernacular textbooks be done by scholars with aid from the government and Missionary Societies. Regional languages were to be sent to the International Institute of African Languages and cultures for orthography with a view of standardizing them to be used in schools. English would be taught “wherever a competent teacher is available, as soon as the mechanical difficulties of reading and writing in the vernacular have been mastered, and provided that the teaching of essential subjects in the syllabus is not thereby affected” (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 288)

With these elements considered, what culminated was a ‘three-tier model’ where the tribal language was used for the elementary grades (Sub A and Sub B), a lingua franca of African origin (regional language)<sup>14</sup> was introduced up to standard five (if the area was occupied by a variety of Native groups speaking a variety of languages) and teaching of English in the upper grades. The assumption was that the four principal

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<sup>14</sup> Confronted with the fact that territory did not have lingua franca for the whole territory (Mwanakatwe, 1968) and probably with an aim of simplifying the administration job (Posner, 2003), the Advisory Board decided that the territory would be divided into four zones and a lingua franca for each zone be adopted for administrative and educational purposes. In this regard, four principle native languages were adopted as regional languages: Sikololo (Silozi) for Barotseland, Chitonga-Chila for North-Western Rhodesia, Chibemba for North-Eastern Rhodesia, west of the Luangwa River and Chinyanja for North-Eastern Rhodesia east of the Luangwa River (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978). The government estimated that these four languages could be used in the earliest stages of education for 55% of the natives of Northern Rhodesia. For another 25%, books in these languages could probably be introduced without difficulty from standard I onwards. These and another 20% would have to continue to rely on primers and translations of Scriptures produced by local missionaries for the first five years of schooling (*Northern Rhodesia Annual Report Upon Native Education for the Year, 1927*)

languages, together with English, would become the sole languages of instruction in schools with the passage of time.

To effect this policy, the Board established the Africa Literature Committee and tasked it to publish native school texts in each of the four principle languages. Four hundred and eighty-four (484) titles were published or reprinted between the period 1934 and 1959 by the Committee and its successor, the Joint Publications Bureau of Northern Rhodesia and Nyansaland (Posner, 2003), most of them in Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi or English<sup>15</sup>

#### *4.3.2.3 Policy intentions*

By any standards, the intentions of the Advisory Council as expressed in the education policy seemed noble and their hearts were in the right place. The ‘adaptation’ policy and its associated three-tier language policy would be eulogized by any casual observer for being relevant to the immediate needs of the natives. However, Shohamy (2006) warns that language-in-education policies can be powerful political and ideological tools, which need to be interpreted in their socio-political and economic contexts, possibly revealing hidden agendas.

Carmody (1992) argues that the educational policy designed to foster a rural school system and preparing the masses to work in a rural setting was meant to consolidate a conservative social order and protecting the interests of the settler class. This argument is supported by Mwanakatwe (1968, p. 22) who states that “among government officials the view was prevalent that advanced academic education for Africans would inevitably pose a threat to the interests of white settlers, especially those who had not received adequate education”. Coombe quotes a settler voicing his opinion on African education:

Education should be available to the native, but only as far as his economic position warrants. It should not be to advance his position as this might tend to develop a class of ‘Babu’ natives-all book and no desire to work - dissatisfied with their position and a nuisance to everybody else (1967, p. 395).

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<sup>15</sup> The Bureau reported that although the figures included a small number of books published for the Nyansaland market, the majority of these books were published in Nyanja and were usable in Northern Rhodesia.

It should be understood here that what is meant by ‘work’ is what was mentioned in the educational policy and not gainful employment.

The school system was also designed in such a way that the barest minimum number of Africans got what could be considered an education, and even a smaller number to advance in the education system. The ‘adaptation’ project was not only reflected in the intended curriculum but also found expression in the effort and resources that went towards developing the education system for Africans. Mwanakatwe (1968) reports that the number of school buildings that are on record to have been built between 1924 and 1938 wholly or partly with government funds is scandalous. He further states that “it is obvious that the educational planners during the colonial era were usually too complacent, too ready to be satisfied with minimum expansion of facilities for the education of Africans” (p. 23). To curtail even the few Africans that managed to get into the school system, education facilities tapered off as one progressed in the academic ladder. This objective is reflected in a statement by the Director of Native Education in 1934 who wrote that “it is the advance of a great multitude of villagers rather than the higher education of a selected minority that must be our aim” (Coombe, 1967, p. 189). Coombe further holds that any form of education that was likely to prepare Africans to compete with local Europeans for employment raised an outcry and the government’s consistent reaction to this was to buttress this with a cautious attitude towards the advance of Africans in education. The result of this aim is captured in the Report of the UN/ECA/FAO Economic Survey Mission (1964) that stated that:

...the 1963 School system implied that of every 100 Africans who start school, 82 would reach fourth year, 42 sixth and 21 would complete their full primary course. Of this 21, only six would find a place in secondary school, of them only three would enter a senior secondary form and only two would end up with a school certificate (Coombe, 1967, p. 189).

When this is compared to the “free and compulsory education” that “was provided for every European child living within three miles of a government school” (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 24), red flags of conspiracy between the government and the settler community, possibly unknowingly, to ensure that Africans work on the land or in lower positions of the wage economy emerge. Reducing the number of Africans with an education would prevent the emergence of a poor white community in the territory. Carmody (2004) sums it up by saying that preservation of the status quo meant



protection of settler interests vis-à-vis those of the African population. The government ensured that the Africans did not provide undue competition in the wage economy by only providing rudimentary education to them.

An interesting feature in the modification of the education system in Zambia for the most part of the colonial period is that stress, as is defined by Ellsworth and Stankhe (1976) was never a factor in determining policy. Stress was defined as “the impairment of the authorities’ to govern” (Ellsworth & Stahnke, 1976, p. 7) and can range from a threat “to a single authority’s tenure of office to a regime, to threat to the entire political order” (Cooper, 1989, p. 91). This is surprising when one considers that colonialism was about dominance and the education system “is among the most important institutions involved in the reproduction of contemporary society” and “its reproductive functions are manifold and extend from acquisition of knowledge and sociocultural norms and values to the inculcation of dominant ideologies” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 197). With this understanding in mind, one would assume that the colonialists would use the school curriculum extensively to spread the ideology of dominance. Probably why this never happened can be explained by Coombe (1967) when he mentions that to the colonialists the thought “that Africans might one day participate in, let alone control, the central institutions of government was a possibility almost grotesque in its remoteness” to the extent that “it had no effect on education policy” (p. 395). It would seem that the planners were so preoccupied with the thought of preventing the creation an educated African who would compete for jobs in the labour market to think of a class of discontented educated but, unemployed Africans whose methods of disrupting the social order would be more ruthless.

Tollefson and Tsui (2009) conclude that “no matter whether the colonial language or indigenous languages were used as the medium of instruction, the goal remained the same – to subjugate the colonized” (p. 3).

#### *4.3.2.4 Modus operandi*

The study of how policies are made generally considers a series of steps of processes that occur in a neat step by step sequence. However, policy making has been described as a complex and messy process that defies the neat process model (Cooper, 1989; Dye, 2011; Moran, Rein, & Goodin, 2008). And all of the authors agree that all policies come into being through being put on an agenda, “a notional list of topics that people involved in policy making are interested in, and which they seek to address through developing, or exploring the possibility of developing policies” (Page, 2008, p. 208).

An issue first has to be defined as a problem for it to warrant being on the agenda list. The power to decide what a problem is, and consequently a policy issue, is more important than deciding the solutions (Page, 2008). That this is more than a theoretical possibility is shown in the way the white unofficial members of the Legislative Council used every opportunity to conspicuously show reluctance in raising and debating issues in the Annual Reports of African education that were tabled in the council from time to time (Mwanakatwe, 1968). By not affording the issue of African education a place on the debate table, they successfully managed to make it a non-policy issue (albeit not for long). The excessive power and monopoly of these de facto policy makers on agenda setting resulted in them achieving the desired result of retarding African education. The absence of African representation in the Legislative Council to advance the native cause falls into one of the myths of oppressor ideology, an ideology that Freire (1996) refers to as absolutizing of ignorance. This myth is used to ensure that the dominant position of the oppressors is not threatened. Absolutizing of ignorance implies:

The existence of someone who decrees the ignorance of someone else. The one who is doing the decreeing defines himself [sic] and the class to which he belongs as those who know or were born to know...The words of his class come to be the “true” words, which he imposes or attempts to impose on others, the oppressed...Those who steal the words of others develop a deep doubt in the abilities of the others and consider them incompetent. Each time they say their word without hearing the word of those they have forbidden to speak, they become more accustomed to power and acquire a taste for guiding, ordering, and commanding (Freire, 1996, p. 115).

I therefore argue that the exclusion of natives in the Council is not only a reflection of the wish to suppress the importance of the Native education issue but also an expression of the settler views on the intellectual abilities of the natives as a people.

What is also clear regarding policy making during this period is the over-arching idea that nothing should be done that would threaten European dominance. Coombe (1967) holds that any consideration of policy options that would improve the education standard of Africans to the level of them participating in the labour economy was regarded by some whites with hostility and with others with suspicion. This is in line with what Cooper (1989) insists in his discussion about how policies are made. He states that even when decision makers know what the problem is and have sufficient time or resources to explore all the possibilities, they may not be willing to explore options that may prove detrimental to their own interests.

#### *4.3.2.5 Decision-making context*

Features of context help to “mould the manner in which policy formulation is conducted” (Collins, Green, & Hunter, 1999). They may directly influence the scope and design of policies as well as the actors’ interests and roles with policy change processes. Leichter (1979) states that the number of factors determining what governments do or do not choose to do are virtually infinite and suggests their categorization to make them manageable.

One category that Leichter (1979) suggests is structural factors which according to him pertain to relatively unchanging circumstances of the society such as the economy, demographic and political system. Zambia was under colonial rule from 1899 to 1964. Colonialism is “the practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d.). The colonisers reject cultural compromises with the colonized population and are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule (Osterhammel, 2005). With this attitude in mind, the colonizers justified the offering of an education based on the philosophy of adaptation to the natives that was fitting to their role as subjects. The Phelps-Stokes Commission in recommending education with an adaptation bias quoted a report of the London Missionary Society Deputation to the Protectorate that read:

We teach them reading, writing, arithmetic, most of which they have forgotten within three years of leaving school. In our normal and high schools we turn out poor teachers, fair store boys, and indifferent clerks. What has all this to do with the life of the people? The education that forgets that this people is an agricultural people misses the mark badly (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 277)

This approach to education for the Natives unfortunately is not innocent of what Freire (1996) considers the attitude of the oppressor. His ideas find sympathy from sceptics who are suspicious of anything a oppressor does, no matter how magnanimous the intentions may seem. According to Freire, dominators justify adapted education because:

However spacious in theory the project might be of giving education to the labouring classes of the poor, it would be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other laborious employments; instead of teaching them subordination it would render them fractious and refractory... it would render them insolent to their superiors and in a few years the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power against them (Freire, 1996, p. 112).

Seen through Friere's ideas and against the backdrop of colonialism, the intentions of the colonialists take a whole new meaning. This becomes even more consolidated when one considers the expectations that the natives had from the education system. In his book, Thompson (1994) quotes Ndabaningi Sithole, a long time freedom fighter in the then Southern Rhodesia, who argued that:

At our homes we had done a lot of ploughing, planting, weeding, and harvesting. We knew how to do these things. What we knew was not education; education was what we did not know (p. 41).

This implies that the Natives were being put in a position where they had to learn what they already knew as opposed to the opportunity structure that they associated with acquisition of education. Carmody (1992) therefore asserts that the education was not intended for white collar jobs but for working the land or "in the lower echelons of the state and the unskilled jobs in the wage economy" (p. 49). Doing any different would put the natives in direct competition with their superiors and this would undermine the dominant role of the Whites.

Another factor that would fall under the structural category is the linguistic diversity that was present in the territory and a lack of a lingua franca for the whole region. The colonial government inherited an education system that was already more or less consolidated on teaching in Zambian languages (from the Missionaries). It is however also apparent that the government was aware of the power of language in control and domination (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). This was expressed in the insistence to begin teaching in English as soon as the mechanical difficulties of reading and writing in the local language have were mastered (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978). While respecting the right of people to their native tongue, English was a considered a civilized language that would be a means of uniting Africa with the great civilizations of the world. In fact teaching in English earlier than Standard V only seems to have been impendent by the lack of qualified people to the language. That is why in the end the Central Advisory Board of the Colonial Office adopted that the teaching of English should be done wherever a competent teacher is available (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978). Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) is only too familiar with the thought pattern of reproduction of unequal power relations through stigmatisation. She contends that the processes of domination find expression in stigmatisation and devaluation of “subordinated groups, their languages, cultures, norms, traditions...etc., so that they are seen as non-civilised, primitive, non-modern, traditional, backward, not fit for or able to adopt to postmodern technological ...information” ( p. 196).

Leichter (1979) also suggests cultural factors as possible influencers of policy. These are values and commitments held by those within a society. These include political culture, political ideology and may also be extended to institutions and arrangements such as family and religion. During the colonial era, education planners “seldom appreciated the need and importance of giving the African education for its own sake” (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 23). This was partly because Africans were not considered as having any right to education. Any education provided to them was regarded as a favour.

Yet another contextual influence to policy-making is environmental factors. As opposed to the other factors, environmental factors exist outside the system but influence decision-making within it. One example cited that falls under this category is emulation

or borrowing of policy ideas from other nations. The emphasis on an adaptation-based education and the dual education system exaggerated an important and persistent strain of British Colonial policy in Africa. The concept that was popularized by the Phelps-Stokes Commissions had pleased the colonial government and its eminent advisors on its apparent mischievous consequences in the past in India and West Africa (Coombe, 1967). The Colonial government engaged the Phelps-Stokes Commission, an American company, on the premise that the problem of natives in Africa was similar to the Negro situation in America (Carmody, 1992). It was envisioned that if the concept worked in America, it would work everywhere else.

The above account has shown that several rather than one contextual factor was responsible for the language policy during the pre-independence era. Cooper (1989) asserts that the policy context involves a simultaneous interplay of various factors and that some factors are more significant than others in yielding the final policy decision.

#### **4.4 The 1966 English Medium policy**

After thirty-three years of Company rule, twenty-nine of Colonial Office rule, and ten years as part of a federation, Zambia gained sovereignty on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1964. Typical of every newly independent nation-state faced with an education system that has to cope with unprecedented economic conditions and internal heteroglossic dynamics of difference and diversity (Lin & Martin, 2005), the leaders of the state had to ask the inevitable “where to now?” question.

##### *4.4.1 The state of affairs*

Among the issues that had to be dealt with were building of a relevant and sustainable education system, residual and adjacent colonial powers, immediate and practical demand for reform of systems of governance, local and situated forces of globalization, basic material infrastructure, manpower needs and viable economies for communities (GRZ, 1964, 1966). Fore-wording a book by Mwanakatwe (1968), the first republican president Dr Kenneth Kaunda accentuated the centrality of education in all aspects of the reconstruction project when he stated that;

In the process of Zambia's development since independence, education has had a very high priority among competing interests...Only through a sound educational system can self-reliance be achieved; only through good education can we guarantee the building of a decent society in which every individual has a fair share of national wealth and services (Kaunda, 1968, p. ix).

Elucidating on other factors that made it imperative to build a sound education system, he asserted that Zambia needed to build a person-centred non-racial, non-ethnic society using a national philosophy of 'African Humanism' that embodied a number of Christian-informed ethical principles. The education system had to foster a sense of nationhood and promote national unity (Ministry of Education, 1965). Furthermore, Zambia was not an island and therefore had a contribution to make as a member of the unfolding international community. It was imperative that the capacity of Zambians be improved "to understand in scope and depth their problems and other international issues which directly or indirectly influence their destiny" (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. xi). Scientific and technical education had to be emphasized so that the available resources could be organized in an effort to modernize and industrialize at a fast pace. Finally, there was recognition that the geographical position of Zambia in relation to Southern Africa<sup>16</sup> imposed special responsibilities to the nation. The nation had "to demonstrate in practical terms the fallacies and futility of apartheid and allied doctrines" (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. xi). All these factors entailed adjusting the education system, and aligning the teaching and attitudes created within it, to the developmental needs of the country.

The centrality of language in the development process was well recognized and "the development of a workable language policy that would help to bring about national unity, economic progress, educational advancement, and administrative stability in the particular setting of a newly independent Zambia" (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 271) became a crucial and top priority. What is apparent from the wishes of those tasked with managing the affairs of the country is that language policy had to achieve two main tasks; national pride and unity on the one hand and economic development on

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<sup>16</sup> Zambia is a landlocked country surrounded by eight neighbours. At independence, Zambia had four unfriendly neighbours; the Portuguese colonies Angola and Mozambique, South Africa occupied Namibia and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), which after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 became Rhodesia and under white minority rule and turned from unfriendly to positively hostile.

the other. The policy was to be developed by repudiating what colonial rule did with regard to policy goal (national pride and solidarity) and by retrofitting skills and knowledge needed for an industrial economy. Given the language situation inherited from previous administrations, the logical language policy for attaining the first objective (national pride and solidarity) would have been to replace the colonial master's language (English) with a native language. All the respondents were in agreement regarding what should have been done at independence to signify political autonomy. A lecturer at UNZA mentioned that:

I have a son. The day he will tell me that he has grown up and wants to find his own place, have his freedom to do as he wants, I don't expect him to be coming everyday to be sleeping at my place, to be eating there. It is the same with us. If we were true to ourselves in wanting to cleanse ourselves of colonialism and everything it stood for, we should have given our languages a chance. It would have been a symbol of total independence (Dr Kasamba, 29 August, 2011).

On the other hand, the most favourable recommended language policy for achieving the second goal (industrial economy) would be to retain English since having English as a lingua franca would "provide the road to technical knowledge of modern inventions which Africans are so anxious to secure" (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 213). A respondent who is a senior official at the Ministry of Education supports Mwanakatwe's reasoning. She argued as follows;

The truth of the matter is that at independence we had to continue with English. The mining business we were inheriting had been doing business in English. The business in offices we were inheriting had been conducted in English. We were a landlocked country. We still are. We needed our neighbours. We were not producing everything... Yes, we were happy to be free. But we had to look at the big picture. Unfortunately that meant swallowing some of our pride and do what had to be done (Ms Mulube, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2011).

The situation above presents an inherent incongruence between the two propositions in an education system that intends to prepare the citizens of the country for their cultural and economic lives (Lin & Martin, 2005). But a decision that would potentially achieve both had to be made. I use the term potentially here to emphasise the fact that in such situations, decisions are not always rationally made as expounded by the decision making theory. In situations where there are contrasting demands, negotiations and sacrifices have to be made, there are no quick and easy solutions. Whatever decision is



made, there is a group that will feel disfranchised. Lin and Martin (2005) hold that disputed push and pull demands placed upon new governments, economics and education in postcolonial and globalizing conditions may require very edgy hybrid decisions of policy and practice as well as curriculum and pedagogy that do not jump out of the pages of canonical postcolonial theory or educational theory. They further hold that these combinations may not sit well on the academic whiteboards of linguists or anthropologists. Given this situation and a determination to have the best possible outcome from the situation at hand, the Zambian government resolved to consult.

#### *4.4.2 Searching for solutions*

In discussing this subsection, I will be moving back and forth between the national (official) language policy and the language in education policy. This is so because the “choice of national or official language has implications for the education sector because the national language most of the time becomes at least one of the mediums of education” (Paulston & Heidmann, 2005, p. 298). This view was also expressed by one of the correspondents who said:

Every education system is influenced by the politics of that country. If at independence they said the official language would be English, you don't expect English to be absent in education. Because you are simply implementing the policies of a party in government, in this case UNIP (Mr Chibamba, 19th August, 2011).

The above sentiment emphasizes the fact that policies in education cannot be understood in isolation. They reflect the political forces acting on the local contextual situation. The resultant language policy in education can therefore not be separated from the national language policy.

In mid 1963, the North Rhodesia government asked UNESCO to study the education system and recommend measures for improvement. Following the request, UNESCO sent a team of Australian educationists led by Dr W. Radford. After spending weeks examining the education system of what was to become Zambia, one of the recommendations read (in part):

The medium of instruction should be English, from the beginning of schooling and as soon as possible a Pilot Scheme should be set up to commence the introduction of English as medium of instruction (UNESCO, 1963, p. 105).

The Hardman Report, a document prepared by a language officer seconded to Zambia by the British government to investigate the problems of teaching English to Africans in primary schools, endorsed the Radford recommendation in 1965 (Muyebaa, 2004). The principal rationale for recommending English in both reports was that education at secondary school and higher education was conducted in English, and therefore early exposure to the language would reduce the handicaps that had been observed among many African students.

It is surprising to note that despite the desire to seek autonomy, the national leadership did not look for solutions from among the citizens but continued seeking advice from the very master that they wanted to be free from. That the Government did not consult from among its citizenry is mentioned in the way it wished conduct the subsequent education reforms of 1977. The Government mentioned that the manner in which the 1977 education reform exercise would be conducted would differ from previous policy making in that a deliberate effort was being made to achieve a “collaborative and participatory process involving the people as a whole, in the belief that the “nation’s education is not the property of the Ministry of Education alone, nor the government as a whole, but rightfully belongs to all the people” (MoE, 1977 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 136). This is an acknowledgement that earlier policy-making cannot be said to have been participatory. One respondent suggested a possible explanation for why decision-making was done at the level that did not involve the citizens when he said that:

We still had the colonial master, neo-colonialism if you want call it that. Most of the people that ran our system were British. Some of these officers from the British Government earned their living because they were language specialists or advisors. It is possible they were offering to give advice that would secure their jobs (Mr Chibamba, 19<sup>th</sup> August).

It would probably be unfair to harshly criticize the path of decision-making that was taken by the government of the day. Zambia had just gained political independence and expectations for tangible change from citizens after such a momentous event were high. If crisis demands decision and not debate (Giandomenico, 2008), the choice to make

quick decisions, with consultation with the people perceived to have the expertise in the field, becomes excusable. And time doesn't seem to have been the only resource that was at premium for the new government. Personnel and expertise may also have played a major part in the decision-making process. At independence, Zambia only had 1500 citizens with a School Certificate and 100 university graduates (Chondoka, 2007), a situation that prompted the UN/ECA/FAO Economy Survey Mission to conclude that "the Zambian population...is in terms of education one of the least prepared populations in the whole of Africa" (UN/ECA/FAO, 1964 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 59). But the fact remains that the very act of consulting the British on policy leads to the conclusion that though the colonial master had departed, he was still holding a significant place in the political and educational scene of the new nation state.

What is not surprising though are the recommendations that the Zambian government received from the two commissions. They exemplify what Lin and Martin (2005) refer to as the most robust and suspect theoretical move of western philosophy. The West assumes "historical, temporal and spatial synchronicity – that indeed we might live in a 'universal' world where singular theoretical constructs and textual conceits might have generalizable explanatory and practical power" (Lin & Martin, 2005, p. xv). The recommendations were proposed in the early 1960s; at about the same time that language planning was establishing itself as an independent branch of sociolinguistics (Ricento, 2006). Fishman (1972) asserts that the new breed of sociolinguists viewed the multilingual developing nations (a category in which Zambia fell) as indispensable and intriguing fieldwork locations to test the prevailing ideology of cultural homogeneity and monolingualism as a necessary requirement for social and economic progress, modernization, and national unification. Furthermore, there was conviction that in order to have access to advanced, that is, Western, technological and economic assistance, countries had to use a major European language (usually English or French) in the formal and specialized domains, while local languages could serve other functions (Ricento, 2006). Language was viewed as a finite, stable, standardized and rule governed tool for communication (Ricento, 2006), all the attributes that Western languages were assumed to possess and native languages didn't.

#### 4.4.3 *Matters of concern*

The monolingual recommendation found a receptive audience in a government that already viewed the linguistic diversity situation as divisive and would work against national integration and national unity. Kashoki (1997) argues that the tendency towards integration “stems from the mortal fear of that dreadful pestilence, referred to in sociological, anthropological, and political journals as TRIBALISM [emphasis original]” (p. 73). In line with this argument, one respondent mentioned that;

In my opinion, the fear of tribalism determined most of what happened after independence, not just in politics. Everything was done for fear of tribalism. Staff in government ministries were deployed to places where they did not come from. One of the questions I was asked when I was employed as a teacher was which town I came from. You know my name is in both Tonga and Luvala. They wanted to make sure I did not go to the province I was from. They wanted to mix and match all tribes (Dr Kasamba, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2011).

Tribalism is a highly charged word in Zambia because of it often being regarded as an auto-explanation for conflict. Ohannessian and Kashoki (1978) mention that public assertions of ethnicity in the years following independence were subdued because of the stigma attached to them. The fear of tribalism seems to have led to the sole political project that the United National Independence Party (UNIP) government has come to be identified with - the establishment of a new nation with a single national identity. The push towards integration and oneness transcended all aspects of the UNIP administration from the national motto ‘One Zambia, One Nation’, the choice of the lyrics in the national anthem, ‘land of work, joy and unity’, ‘let us all people join together as one’ ‘all one, strong and free’, songs chanted at political and national meetings ‘Tiyende pamodzi’ (let us walk together), to naming of infrastructure e.g. Pamodzi Hotel. Industries were spread to different provinces to make areas dependent on each other. The national motto was frequently evoked as a prohibition on discussions of positive cultural values attached to Zambian languages (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 432). In the administration’s persuasion and orientation, diversity was supposed to give way to uniformity because there was unity in uniformity and disunity in diversity. This philosophy was a big determining factor in the choice of national language and language in education. The preference for national integration taken by the government was not unique to Zambia. Lin and Martin (2005) state that unification,

at least at the level of administration was the overriding concern of politicians in most of the multilingual ex-colonial countries.

However, by expressing veritable paranoia of ethnolinguistic rivalry, the government of the day failed to appreciate the multicultural and multilingual society that Zambia had been for centuries. In the words of one respondent;

If you want to focus on tribalism, blame God for creating a Tonga, a Bemba, a Kaonde. He created these people. Who are you to want to change this when people have been living like this for thousands of years? Why not learn how they utilized this difference to their advantage? (Dr Nchimunya, 19th August. 2011).

Reference to creation as a source of the many tribes signifies a situation that is viewed as natural and not recent, a situation that has always existed and therefore cannot easily be changed. The correct response to it would be to embrace diversity and make the most out of it.

An aspect of tribalism that emerged is that tribes do not come in conflict because of the mere fact that they are incomprehensible and thus incompatible. It would seem that the source of the conflict is the competition for recognition at the national level. During the interviews, it was mentioned that:

This ethnolinguistic rivalry that you keep hearing about is nothing more than people's egos. It has nothing to do with which language is spoken more widely in Zambia. People want to believe that their language is more superior than other languages and therefore should be spoken by everyone in the country by default. And you will observe that it is not these big tribes, if you may call them that, which are opposing that a Zambian language be promoted to national languages. It's the small languages (Ms Mulube, 8th September, 2011)

Some of our policy makers came from tribes whose languages were not selected as national languages and had fear of being dominated by other local languages. For them it was better to have a neutral language. In some areas of this country, certain ethnic groups are being swallowed up. For example, if I was Mbunda, for fear of being dominated by Silozi, I would say better English. In Luapula Province, you have heard of the Lunda of Mwatakazembe. Those people are Lundas but the language they speak is Chibemba. If they had to speak Lunda, it was going to be original Lunda from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Mr Chibamba, 19th August, 2011)

What is implied here is a problem that can be traced to pre-colonial times when missionaries selected and imposed languages to be used in translating Biblical texts in native languages. Assigning statuses such as official, national and non-official languages is argued to impose a power and status hierarchy not only among the languages, but also among the speakers of the languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). It would therefore be understandable that those languages that were not selected, the small languages, might have felt disfranchised, a feeling that spilled over to the colonial period when the four languages (Lozi, Tonga, Bemba and Nyanja) were selected as regional languages and at independence when only seven languages were proclaimed as national languages. This view is in congruence with Fishman's (1972) view where he states that it is most often the users of a dominant language who play a role in language planning and may be in a position to use it as means for social and political change. The presence of policy makers from minor languages can therefore be said to have acted as a check that prevented the continued dominant role that the selected languages were starting to establish themselves as. The fear of small languages being swallowed up is justified if we consider the increase in the number of speakers of some languages as shown in Table 4.3.

The argument that has been propagated to advocate for the ascribing of status to some of the languages in Zambia is that there are too many languages and by extension there is an implied inherent chaotic situation that would result from non-designation. But as elucidated earlier, the definition of language and dialect is itself a matter of intellectual controversy. "The appeal to '73' very often is intended to reinforce or exploit the idea (what some solemnly refer to as "causing alarm and despondency" in the nation) that one cannot encourage 'extreme' diversity without running the danger of exacerbating tribal differences" (Kashoki, 1976, p. 74).

#### *4.4.4 The policy decision*

Working mainly on the premise of a country lacking a common cultural heritage and associated language that could serve as a unifying force for the new nation and that the diverse linguistic situation would be a cause for disunity in the country, a Type A decision from Fishman's (1972) typology of language policies was chosen, probably with a view on creating a monolingual state. As stated earlier, Type A decisions are

made by nations whose need for integration and operational integrity dictates the choice of language that is adopted as the national official language. While national unity was a primary consideration, there was also a perceived need to foster a sense of pride in Zambian cultures and languages. The solution to resolve the seemingly contradictory needs was to give a statutory recognition and elevation of English as a medium in all domains of power such as public administration, law and education while allowing for indigenous regional languages to be taught as compulsory subjects in scheduled schools where they were originally not taught. In the education sector, the decision was passed into law through Statutory Instrument 312 that constituted the Education Act of 1966. The act states, “The English Language shall be used as the medium of instruction in all schools” and also that “Unless the Minister otherwise directs, in any particular case, the vernacular language or language appropriate to the area shall be used as the medium of instruction in Grades I, II, III, IV at that school” (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 1966 as cited in Simwinga, 2006, p. 59). The English medium scheme was officially called the Zambia Primary Course (ZPC).

I however reason that if the priority was to foster a sense of national pride and unity as outlined by the first republican president, then the most logical and desired decision would have been a Type B decision. Type B decisions give priority to development of local languages to status of languages of wider communication by selecting them as national languages while allowing the initial language of wider communication (a colonial language in most cases) to continue in the short term for purposes of modernity in science and technology. But it is understandable that a Type B decision was taken by Zambia because of a perceived lack of a suitable local language that would replace English as a language of wider communication. However the question that arises concerning this perception is how the lack of a suitable local language was determined since no report of a socio-linguistic survey exists. Confirming this assertion, one respondent mentioned that:

No sociolinguistic survey was done to act as a basis for not adopting any of the local languages in 1966. The fear of ethno-linguistic rivalry was an assumption driven by politicians to give weight to their push for English (Dr. Kasamba, 29th August).

Such a view suggests that for any argument or suggestion to be considered legitimate, it has to be backed by empirical evidence. More so if one considers the magnitude of what was at stake in terms of the fate of various languages available in the country. Referring to Ferguson (1966), Cooper (1980, p. 117) supports this when he says that “while language policy decisions are often made on irrational grounds, decisions presumably are sounder if they are based on accurate and relevant information”. Rather than base the decision on a sociolinguistic survey, the policy makers outlined a number of arguments, both political and pedagogical, to justify their selection. I present the arguments here and their counter arguments.

#### *4.4.5 Justifying the policy decision*

One consideration that was put forward for selection of English as national language and medium of classroom instruction was, as outlined earlier, the fear of ethnolinguistic rivalry. To this end, John Mwanakatwe (Minister of Education in the 1960s) argued that “the imposition of one indigenous language upon the nation would undoubtedly arouse the gravest political and social resentment...” (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 214). English was considered a neutral language, unbiased and therefore would be accepted by all the divergent language groups in the country. He further mentions that “...even the most ardent nationalists of our time have accepted the inevitable fact that English – ironically a foreign language and the language of our former colonial masters – definitely has a unifying role in Zambia” (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 213). It would seem that by the careful use of terms such as ‘ardent nationalists’, Mwanakatwe uses the significant other, in the sociological use of the term, as a proxy to win over those that may have been undecided or unconvinced about the choice that was made. Use of the significant other to validate decisions is a well-known practice in the psychology field. Activating mental representations of significant others facilitates evaluations of situations and issues (Zayas & Shoda, 2012).

Despite the assumption of conviction by fervid patriots, unification through monolingualism is questionable, let alone using a language that is not indigenous. If we have to equate national linguistic diversity to disunity and uniformity to unity, then nations with few languages should be more united than those with many. One does not need to search far to discredit this argument. If the argument were true, Ruanda and



Burundi with one language, Kinyarwanda in Rwanda and Kirundi in Burundi (Twagilimana, 1997), are supposed to be more united than India with 216 mother tongues and 1652 dialects (Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, n.d.). If a common indigenous language cannot be relied on to unify people as policy makers wanted everyone to believe, what are the chances of achieving this goal by using a non-indigenous language? Spencer (1963) dismisses the integrative ability of English by arguing that:

While English may serve as an effective tool for internal and international communication, and while it may be a significant factor in the development process, its role as an integrating tool, socially and culturally remains rather superficial and marginal even for the minority that uses it. The imported language, which is necessary for at least a generation or so in the interest of rapid development...is a non-indigenous language and therefore cannot arouse that sense of linguistic loyalty among the people which can be a most useful contributory factor for welding together a new nation (Spencer, 1963, as cited in Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 215).

When the above quote is considered together with the case of Rwanda and India, it becomes clear that the reason that was being put forward was flawed at more levels than one. It is clear that language alone cannot be relied upon to unite a people. The contribution that language could make in the unification process is further reduced when the language being considered fails to galvanize allegiance from the citizens.

But again it is easy to understand the attraction towards the use of language for purposes of unity when one recognizes that there is usually confusion, especially in political circles (Kashoki, 1976), between political integration with sociocultural integration. Political integration is concerned with “operational efficiency” i.e., “effectiveness in the realms of public order and public service, as well as industrially, commercially, educationally, diplomatically, and militarily” (Fishman, 1969, p. 111) while sociocultural integration is about cultural identity or “ethnic authenticity” (Kashoki, 1976, p. 72). Just because English could aid efficient communication between communities that are linguistically different and also national administrative efficiency, it is assumed that it is ipso facto an appropriate tool for integration. The extent to which this assumption is true in post-independence Zambia can be observed in the arguments given to defend the choice of English as a national language. Immediately after

mentioning the irony of the unifying role of a language of the former colonial master, Mwanakatwe defends his argument (unifying role) by saying that;

It is the language used by the administration at all levels - central, provincial and district. In parliament, in the courts, at meetings of the city and municipal councils, in the more advanced industrial and commercial institutions – the banks, post offices and others – English is the effective instrument for the transaction of business... It is a language of wide communication. The improvement of communications in Africa will bring the various peoples of the vast continent closer together than in the past (Mwanakatwe, 1968, p. 213).

The quote makes it clear that administrative efficiency was being used while attempting to justify the role English played in unification. The mistake seems to be the assumption that the two are synonymous and can be achieved using the same tactics and strategies. What may be mentioned without fear of reproach is that a government requires an efficient means of communication. Since integration was not separated from effectiveness, operational efficiency was advanced as a reason for the choice of English over indigenous languages.

It was felt that given the number of languages present in the nation and what that entailed regarding teaching and learning resources in education as well as materials needed for the administration of the country, it would be more practical to pick one language. Coupled with concerns of national unity, it was felt that a neutral external language was better placed to yield the desired result. During one parliamentary session, a Mr. Magnus (Member of Parliament) contended that:

...for the foreseeable future, the language of Government in this country must, of necessity, be English...therefore, I would urge, again plea that, as soon as possible, at all stages of education, the medium of instruction be English. That does not mean to say we neglect our tribal languages, I am suggesting that...there is no question here of choosing particularly one language against another. It is simply a question of ordinary simple fact where the practical position is that we have to use that language. Therefore it behoves all our citizens to learn that language as early as possible and the earlier they begin to learn it the better it will be and that is why I have stated, purely on practical grounds, a plea that the language of instruction in our schools for the earliest practical stage ought to be English (GRZ, 1965, pp. 434–5).

The view suggests that while having an indigenous language as a medium of instruction was desirable, English was preferable because of the amount of resources it would

require to produce and distribute indigenous literature that would facilitate learning. What is also worth noting here is that it did not matter whether one or many indigenous languages existed or were chosen. The task of literature production in these languages would still have been more taxing than settling for the English option. The situation does not only affect linguistically diverse communities but all communities where the choice is between a local language with limited, if at all available, literature and a foreign language with a rich heritage of literature behind it. When compared to indigenous languages, former colonial languages possess an unfair advantage in terms of the availability of literature. Mwanakatwe (1968) attributes the inadequate range of publications for young children in vernaculars to the infancy of authorship among indigenous people. A result of this is two-fold; first being that even teachers that are capable and enthusiastic about teaching are constrained. Second, the mental horizons of children at the time when they are receptive are inhibited from expanding because the same literature is reused even in higher grades.

Another factor to be considered in using a local language for instruction is availability of teaching staff. Selecting a local language was considered impractical because doing so would presuppose the availability of sufficient numbers of teachers throughout the country to teach in the chosen vernacular, a supposition that was seen as unrealistic (Mwanakatwe, 1968). Supporting this perception are the results of a limited language census in 1966 that revealed that out of the twenty-four teachers who taught the forty-two first grade classes in Lusaka where the designated language of instruction before independence was Nyanja, only two were Nyanja-speaking (Mwanakatwe, 1968).

Yet another reason presented for the choice of English was that learning through multiple languages as was practice in the early years of formal African education through the three-tiered system presented the child with daunting difficulties that tended to retard progress (Mwanakatwe, 1968). As presented earlier, during the colonial era, education began in the tribal language, and then later to a regional language (official vernacular where the mother tongue was not one of the regional languages) usually after three years. In the fifth year, a gradual shift was made to English as medium of instruction and by the sixth or seventh year, the vernacular was completely replaced. It was argued that the change in medium of instruction could ruin a child's educational career completely because of the emotional disturbance that came during the periods of

switching (Mwanakatwe, 1968). This argument makes logical sense on the surface in as far as a compartmentalised approach to language is adopted. The reality in most multilingual societies is that languages do not 'belong' to particular ethnic groups or regions and that multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception in these regions (Mytton, 1967 as cited in Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 436). Research conducted in Zambian schools indicated that children in urban areas (Serpell et al., 1976) and in some rural areas (Carter, 1969) display extraordinary versatility in coordinating several linguistic codes. This view is in line with what was said by one of the respondents who mentioned that:

The argument that it would be easier to come up with concepts in one foreign language rather than several indigenous languages is completely tosh. Children should be grounded in decoding language and this can best be done in mother tongue. When you are able to ride the Zambian bicycle, you can then ride the English bicycle. When I say Zambian bicycle I do not mean the Kaonde, Nyanja, Bemba or Tonga bicycle. It becomes a Zambian bicycle because all these languages are Bantu languages and have a similar and permanent vowel system. 'ma' is pronounced as 'ma' in whichever word in a Zambian language. Take the same combination in English and see what happens, for example when it appears as part of the word 'mat' and 'make'. Same letter combination, different pronunciation. So how do you harmonise this with what children speak everyday (Mr. Chibamba, 19th August, 2011)?

What the respondent seems to be pointing at is that learning in languages that may be considered different but have a vowel system that is consistent and thus mutually intelligible is easier than instruction in a language whose vowel system is largely different from that of the language of play. Kashoki and Ohannessian (1978) support this when they argue that using English exclusively to teach Zambian children exposes the children to a largely incomprehensible situation that results in their inability to apply what they have learned at home to the learning tasks and skills at home because the two are phrased in mutually unintelligible terms. Some have even further argued that in reality there are no real differences in the Bantu languages. The strong writing differences that have formed around the languages are a result of different missionary groups who used different orthographies while translating evangelical writings even where languages were essentially the same (Prah, 2009). That similarities exist among African Bantu languages is not a recent discovery as evidenced by Hailey (1938) who, more than seventy years ago, wrote that:

Great as is the seeming multiplicity of languages, there is not an equal measure of real diversity: the tendency of closer examination has been to reveal significant and essential similarities not only in the sound system and vocabulary, but even more in structure and idiom (p. 37).

What I am labouring to put across here is that the argument that children would learn much more easily if they were consistently taught in one language is true but that assertion becomes questionable when the language under consideration is different from that which is familiar and is used in everyday life. By comparison, learning would even be more effective in languages that we have been made to believe are different when in fact they are more familiar than they are different.

The proponents of the English-medium education also reasoned that it was accepted by all that the English language had become “along with the colonial styles of housing, cars and to a lesser extent, clothing, a symbol of power and prestige” (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 433). This being the case then offering English to all from first grade would be equalizing the benefits of whatever came with belonging to the elite class, even to those who are not in the elite class. While this might be a convincing argument, one also has to consider that allowing English to have a monopoly based on this reasoning would be to legitimise the misconception that “nothing of social value or of economic significance can or should be expressed in the Bantu languages” (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 434). This is consistent with Nieto’s (2002) view who states that the belief that associates European languages with progress and non-European languages with stagnation is one that still carries tremendous weight in decisions about policy making. Simon Kapwepwe (Vice President of Zambia 1967-1970), had earlier expressed the self-depreciating impact of English on the national self-confidence when he said:

We should stop teaching children through English right from the start because it is the surest way of imparting inferiority complex in the children and the society. It is poisonous. It is the surest way of killing African personality and African culture (Kapwepwe, 1970 as cited in Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 431).

Therefore, rather than instilling confidence in the children, what would result after creating little Englishmen (Mwanakatwe, 1968) is an African elite who cannot fit back

in their indigenous communities and thus defeating the purpose of intending them to contribute to the wellbeing of the societies they come from.

All the reasons given by the government were said to have educational advantages as they would lead to improvement in the general educational development of pupils (Mwanakatwe, 1968). But again, just like the confusion between integration and unity alluded to earlier, the policy makers seem to have been mistaking, intentionally or otherwise, the economic and political agenda of the language of instruction with the pedagogical. All the reasons given for the preference of English are good reasons, good reasons of teaching the English as language but not using it as a medium of instruction. To dispute that English in the language of commerce would be to portray denial and to deny children to learn a working knowledge of the language and this would probably be limiting their chances of networking with the rest of the world. But it is one thing to have English as a subject and quite another to have it as a medium of classroom instruction. It is therefore fundamental that those charged with making education policies comprehend the distinction and the role that the medium of instruction plays in the quality of education (Qorro, 2009). When one considers that the policy makers at independence acknowledged cognisance with the pedagogical and cultural benefits of mother tongue education while giving a preference for English, then it becomes clear that the language in education policy was made primarily from political and economic considerations while pedagogical considerations were secondary. The observation concurs with Gorman's (1974) viewpoint stating that:

decisions on language use in a particular society are almost inescapably subordinated to or a reflection of underlying political and social values and goals. Even in the educational domain, pedagogical considerations, while relevant, are seldom primary in influencing decisions relating to the use of particular languages as media or subjects of instruction, and this is to be expected (as cited in Simwinga, 2006, p. 59).

This view is further compounded by the general atmosphere of that time that seemed, from the pronouncements of individuals as high up as the vice president, to have favoured the use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction.

The political and social achievements of the policy are beyond the scope of this paper, but pedagogically, by all accounts, the policy was a disaster. Although the policy was

being eulogized by ministers in statements such as that made by Sikota Wina in Parliament saying that English medium classes were showing returns in the form of accelerated comprehension among pupils (GRZ, 1968), and Bryson McAdam (Director of the English Medium Centre from 1969 to 1971) concluding that the “advantages of the use of English as a medium of instruction appear to be attainable without any serious educational loss” (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 433), the facts on the ground proved otherwise. The Ministry of Education acknowledged in 1977 that the effects of the post-independence changes in education were causing some misgivings among educationists and the public at large (Kelly, 1999). A study by Dr Sharma, *The reading Skills of Grade Three Children* also showed how reprehensible the reading skills of children under the ZPC were. “Only about 18 out of every 100 can manage all the Grade One words while only 7 out of every 100 can read all the words at the levels of Grades One and Two” (Sharma, 1973 as cited in Easaw, 1980, p. 8). Another study by Sharma and Henderson on the numeracy of Grade Three children showed that results of the children under the ZPC scheme were poorer than those of children under the old syllabus. The gross retardation of the ZPC pupils was ascribed to learning in the English medium (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978). Even McAdam himself at some point conceded that the non-English medium pupils were superior to English medium pupils in Grade Four problem solving mathematics (Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978).

All the results from the studies were to be expected. Psychologists (Egan, 2004; Elkind, 1976; Saracho, 2012; Wertsch, 1991) generally agree that a foreign language cannot be the language of early concept formation and socialization. Easaw (1980) maintains that when the language is foreign, the children may mime adult concepts without any appreciable contribution toward their own conceptual growth. This is confirmed by one of the respondents who, while praising the introduction of English, mentioned that “by the time they brought *Oxford English Reader for Africa: Standard I*, we were able to read, we were able to memorize” (Mr Chibamba, 19<sup>th</sup> August). Easaw further states that if children cannot express ideas or discuss them with their peers, conceptual growth may be stunted or impaired. Therefore, education systems that introduce foreign languages as medium of instruction before children have had time for concept formation in their languages of socialization gamble with the possibility of producing students with a mechanical verbal knowledge that is unrelated to the environment. English was described by the Sri Lankan *Sunday Times* newspaper as the “window to the world”

(2009), an apt description because it allows you as a non-native speaker to see the world. Its ability to be used as a door to reach the world unseasonably (Easaw, 1980) remains doubtful.

By 1971, public dissent on certain areas and components of policies, of which language policy was one, began to acquire greater publicity and greater sophistication. It became clear to the government that there was need for an overall re-orientation of the whole education system if the growing social concerns were to be met. It is to this period of education policy reform that the discussion now turns to.

#### **4.5 The 1977 education reforms policy**

In 1975 the Ministry of education embarked on an exercise to appraise the education system in response to growing social concerns and subsequent misgivings with the education system from the public. Study Tour Groups comprising of educators and administrators were dispatched to various countries in the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa and Asia to study the education systems. To gauge public opinion and encourage popular participation in policy-making, the government drafted proposals in a document entitled *Education for Development: Draft Statement on Educational Reform* using input from the study-tour reports and these were put out for public debate. Ohannessian and Kashoki (1978) hold that, much to the chagrin of those concerned with issues of language in Zambia, the importance given to medium of instruction was disappointing considering that it was only addressed in less than half a page of an 81-page document.

##### *4.5.1 In pursuit of solutions – policy borrowing*

It is interesting to note that at this point the government decided to borrow policy options rather than rely on the recommendations of an institution as had happened at independence. In *The background to Policy Reform*, the government mentions that it had “considered and rejected the use of external experts from multilateral agencies, preferring to place its confidence in the collective experience and judgement of educationists and others within the country” (MoE, 1977 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 135). The government however also acknowledged the need for the local knowledge to



be supplemented by expert advice and experience from outside the country and hence the need to borrow. I use the word “borrow” to describe “the processes involved when policy makers in one country seek to employ ideas taken from the experience of another country (Phillips, 2004, p. 54). Policy borrowing is neither exclusive to Zambia nor is it a new phenomenon. Phillips (2004) reports that as early as the mid 1800s, policy makers in England are said to have explored experiences of other countries in a bid to deal with the question of religion in education.

Among the stimulants for cross-national attraction and possible policy borrowing that Phillips provides are internal dissatisfaction which may be manifested by parents, teachers, students and inspectors, negative evaluation such as PISA and IIE studies and new configurations and alliances, whether planned (e.g. UNESCO, African Union Policy) or not (globalizing forces). All the three situations played a part in triggering the search for policy solutions from outside the country. An exception though is that while Phillips (2004) holds that the negative evaluation is external, in the Zambian case the negative evaluations were internal as shown in studies mentioned in the previous section. The Sharma and Higgs (1973), McAdam (1973), and Sharma and Henderson (1974) studies all validated the dissatisfaction with the English medium education that had been expressed since independence. The internal conditions finally found external catalysts from the 1974 Inter-African seminar on *Educational Alternatives for African Countries* and Sixth Commonwealth Education Conference. The government representatives found the discussions from the gatherings “highly suggestive” (MoE, 1977 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 133) and prompted a review of the policy that was in effect. I should again mention here that the reform was of the entire education system policy and not the language aspect only.

#### 4.5.2 *Proposed policy reforms*

The recommendations on language contained in the *Draft Statement on Educational Reform* document were not different from the arguments that had been put forward at independence to oppose the use of English in schools, but they could be said to have been a radical alteration to the existing structure and content of the school system. The document took cognisance of the importance of English in national unity through enabling communication between people with differing mother tongues. An emphasis

was placed on the role education played in developing and shaping of the attitudes and values of every child. It was stipulated that education should ensure that:

...every child master the essential learning skills on which he can build as he proceeds with further education or as he joins the life of work. The school should therefore assist him to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, morally, and spiritually; he should be enabled to acquire learning and practical skills so that he is able to apply knowledge intellectually (Kelly, 1999).

To this effect, the document identified language skills as crucial in this learning process. The three areas where the skills would be directly involved were:

- Speech where “pupils should be able to express themselves and communicate through speech and writing”,
- Reading where “pupils should be able to develop the art of reading well and communicating effectively”; and
- Writing where “pupils must develop the skill to write properly and without mistakes in order to communicate accurately” (MoE, 1977 as cited in Simwinga, 2007, p. 191).

In light of the above stated required skills, coupled with the knowledge of the importance of the mother tongue in child development, a recommendation was put forward that “the child must be introduced to formal education through the medium of a familiar language in which he can communicate easily” (MoE, 1977 as cited in Simwinga, 2007, p. 191). As such, “the seven Zambian languages which are presently prescribed as languages of education will become media of instruction from Grades 1 to 4” (MoE, 1976 as cited in Ohannessian & Kashoki, 1978, p. 438). Auxiliary arguments for local languages were; the widespread existing social functions performed by these languages; their role as vehicles of the nation’s cultural heritage; the need for them to be encouraged to expand to cover the subject matter of modern civic institutions, science and technology; and their use as lingua francas in urban areas. English would be gradually introduced as a subject from Grade 1 to prepare students for its use as a medium of instruction from Grade 5 onwards.

### 4.5.3 *The deliberations*

Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, then president of Zambia, launched the national debate on the draft statement of educational reforms. Summaries of the document were published in the seven official languages and distributed throughout the country. Nation-wide seminars were organized and there was a mass media information campaign to stimulate public dialogue on the proposed policy issues. A total of 1,412 submissions were received from individuals, associations, churches, trade unions, and educational institutions (Daka, 1986 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 140). The government took pride in supposedly making the process collaborative and participatory as expressed in the concluding section of draft document where it was stated that “the collaborative and participatory nature of the exercise may need no further comment” (MoE, 1977 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 136). However, some elements of the process suggest that the exercise was not as participatory as the government made it to look like.

First of all, the government had made it clear that the Central Committee of the party in government (UNIP) would “make the final decision on the proposals for the educational reform” (MoE, 1977 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 134). The statement raises questions on how open the government was to contributions that, no matter how popular they might have been, were contrary to the party agenda. As Stalin is famously known to have said, “The people who cast the votes decide nothing. The people who count the votes decide everything” (Biography of Joseph Stalin, n.d.)

I argue that it didn't matter what the majority said, that in cases where public opinion conflicted with the party policy, the views of the party's preferences had leverage to prevail since the party had the final say. More so that the reform exercise was carried out during the period of a one party state system that had been introduced by the president when he realized that his popularity and that of the party had started waning. This is a period that is associated with victimization, intimidation, marginalization, exploitation and brutalization of dissenting and critical voices (Chabatama, 2007). With this in mind and the fact that everyone knew of the paranoia that the government had about tribalism, it is probable that a lot of people embraced the culture of silence or conformity even when they had views that were contrary to the English-medium

curriculum vis-à-vis the national unity project that was associated with the UNIP government.

I could also argue that the purpose of the exercise was not to solicit public opinion but to bolster the image of the government as a listening democratic institution. The request for participation may well have been a result of short-term political concerns. One factor that should be noted here is that even after introducing the one-party state in 1973, the political system still operated on the precepts of liberal democracy, allowing group activity to influence policy. However, it is not uncommon to hear of dictators wanting to mask the image of tyranny by projecting democratic tendencies. Christian Gobel<sup>17</sup>, a democracy researcher at the University of Lund, is of the view that an authoritarian regime that is at least partly perceived to be of use to its citizens does not need to resort to violence to establish legitimacy (Björck, n.d.). One way of projecting usefulness is to keep being informed of the needs of the people, and to meet these needs to a certain extent. I have already mentioned that one of the reasons for the reform exercise was to gauge public opinion on the state of the education system. It is possible that the public opinion got from the reform exercise could have been intended to be used for propaganda to legitimize the decisions that the state made, as is the case in China (Gobel as cited by Björck, n.d.).

A second reason that casts doubt on the participatory nature of the reform experience is the “nature and context of the debates that favoured elite groups” (Lungu, 1985, p. 151). 42,000 copies of the draft reform document written in English and an unspecified number of summaries in the seven official Zambian languages are said to have been circulated to parents, teachers, students, businessmen, Parent-Teachers Associations, churches, labour leaders and Farmers Associations, to mention but a few (Ministry of Education, 1977a). Considering the levels of literacy in the country at the time, it is difficult to imagine how the government could have hoped for mass participation in the debates. English was a language understood, let alone spoken, by very few Zambians. Of course making the document available in the seven local languages would make a morally compelling argument, but the issue is not only about the language of print, but also of the literacy of the people that should have read it. Participation in decision-

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<sup>17</sup> Gobel is sited on a university web page and no year is attached to the reference on the site.

making requires negotiation, bargaining, compromising, and organizational skills, elements that exist in very low degrees among the poor and illiterate peasantry especially in the countryside (Lungu, 1985).

Yet another reason for challenging the claim of full collaboration and participation on the side of the citizenry is the existing media infrastructure at the time of the reform exercise. Ministry of Education (1977a) reports that the national debates on the proposals were broadcast on both television and radio while newspapers reported debate proceedings, gave critical comments and requested for written opinions on the deliberations. Again, all these forms of communication favoured the affluent members of society, especially those in urban areas. Lungu (1985) maintains that television debates were only watched by a few viewers because only a tiny minority of Zambians could afford a television set at the time. He further states that the two national daily newspapers – *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail* - were not only an urban phenomenon but were also published in English. Radio is the only medium that can be said to have had the widest coverage because it was very popular in villages. But we have to remember that the debates were being done at a period when there was a shortage of foreign exchange in the country caused by the falling of mineral prices at the London Stock Exchange. This deficit had led to an acute shortage of various consumer goods of which radio batteries/ cells were a part. This then reduced the number of people who could be reached via radio and concomitantly, the number who participated in the debates.

Lastly, even without the media infrastructure constrictions, full participation could still have been constrained by prioritization of concerns. Extrapolating Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs to the education system, I would argue that the poor were more worried about how to send their children to school than being keenly concerned with the technical aspects of the curriculum. It is therefore highly unlikely that they had full information, let alone participated in the debates of the issues that were being raised during the reform process.

All the factors at play during the reform process point towards a situation where only the minority elite group or the well-to-do sections of Zambian society, and especially the ruling elite, actually participated in the reforming of the education policy despite the

picture of all-inclusive participation that was painted by the government. Both the participation in the debates clearly affirmed the dominant role of elites and thereby making the orientation of the resultant policy almost predictable.

#### 4.5.4 *The policy decision*

After supposedly “evaluating the reports summarizing the public’s views” (Ministry of Education, 1977a, p. 4), the government through the Ministry of Education produced a document entitled *Educational Reforms: Proposals and Recommendations* in 1977, a statement policy document that was adopted as official government policy in 1978.

In the document, the government recognized that while English had been the sole medium of instruction in the country from first grade since independence, the practice had its challenges. Among other things, it was noted that pupils found it problematic to grasp concepts presented in English since the majority came from homes where the language is not used. Consequently, teachers had been inclined to use one of the seven official Zambian languages to elaborate the concepts. Despite this impediment, the government came to the conclusion that “overall, the use of the English from Grade 1 has been a great success” (Ministry of Education, 1977b, p. 32). But as Simwinga (2007) observes, the extent of this success is not indicated. The Government went on to acknowledge that “it is generally accepted by educationists that learning is best done in mother tongue”, but observed that “this situation is found to be impracticable in multi-lingual societies such as Zambia” (Ministry of Education, 1977b, p. 32). On this basis and that of the observed ‘success’ of English, the government decided that:

- The present policy, where English is a medium of instruction from Grade 1 should continue; but if a teacher finds that there are concepts which cannot be easily understood, he may explain those concepts in one of the seven official languages, provided the majority of the pupils in that class understand the language; and
- The teaching of Zambian languages as subjects in schools and colleges should be made more effective and language study should have equal status with other important subjects. (Ministry of Education, 1977b, p. 33)

Justifying the continued use of English and it was argued in the document that the use of local languages was undesirable because:

- Such a policy would cause problems in instances where “a child is transferred from one province to another”;
- Such a policy would cause teacher placement problems as “not all teachers may be conversant with languages spoken in areas where they may be sent”;
- There would not be enough appropriate educational materials and literature in the Zambian languages. “There is thus a lot of work to be done in language development not only at the level of the school but also at the level of the university if we are to see a meaningful change in the study of Zambian languages as subjects and in their use as media of instruction.” Concepts in mathematics as well as Science and Technology that do not have equivalents in local languages were cited to demonstrate how use of local languages would be highly inadequate (Ministry of Education, 1977b, p. 33).

These recommendations were not only a negation and rejection of the 1976 draft statement, but also an extension of the existing education system. Just like the arguments that were put forward for the need to change the medium of instruction, the reasons for maintaining the status quo were similar to those presented during the policy-making period at independence. One might be tempted to ask why there was no major reform in the medium of instruction section when there was acknowledgement from the government itself and concern from many a contributor about how the system was problematic. Why maintain the status quo if the aim of the exercise was to “embrace meaningful reform in the curriculum leading to its enrichment and being made relevant to the needs and aspirations of the individual and society” (Ministry of Education, 1977b, p. 6)?

First of all, it is probably easy to chastise the decisions that were made considering that it is “axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is in his [sic] mother tongue” (UNESCO, 1953, p. 11) and in Zambia this had been argued about since independence. But the policy makers had comfort in the knowledge that they had backing from the same organisation. The paragraph that advocates for mother-tongue education ends with a rarely cited “it is not always possible to use the mother tongue in school and, even when possible, some factors may impede or condition its use” (UNESCO, 1953, p. 11).

The conditions are further outlined of being of political, linguistic, educational, socio-cultural, economic, financial or practical in nature.

Another thing to note is that the proposed changes in the policy were in contradiction with the on-going national unity project that was being advanced by the party in government. Since the final decision was to be made by the party executive, the outcome was not surprising. As Paulston and Heidemann (2005) maintain, no language policy is likely to succeed if it contradicts the socio-cultural forces acting on the local context.

Furthermore, apart from the arguments that have been presented earlier regarding the process of the reform exercise itself, the full rationality of the final decisions can only be understood in context of the convictions of the reformers themselves, that is, the elite section of society whose representation dominated the exercise. At the beginning of the reform exercise the Ministry of Education rightly observed “the reformers of the education system are products of the system they want to change. We should be conscious of this paradox and try to understand its implications” (Ministry of Education, 1975 as cited in Kelly, 1999, p. 126). Since influential Zambian groups greatly valued the educational standards that British colonialism had bestowed to the country (Lungu, 1985), they had every reason to be jittery over the recommended changes in the 1976 *Draft Statement on Education Reform*. The proposals were disapproving of the way the education system had started exhibiting tendencies of “rejection for the majority, rewards for the few” (Ministry of Education, 1976, p. 1). The proposals were radical in that they proposed a very different system of education that would transform society in a way that would threaten the privileged pedestal on which the elite were comfortably positioned.

Dye et al. (2011) refer to the tendency of the elite to conspire to influence public policy as the elite model of policy-making. The elite model holds that public policy does not reflect the demands of the masses, but rather the prevailing values of the elite. After examining the whole national debate on the draft statement, Daka (1999, p. 141) concludes that the debate was “full of ‘mutual adjustments’ so that there was no one group or institution which had its way in all the issues”. His statement is true with regards to individual issues. But what he seems to forget is that the overriding impact of



elites on policy matters does not in itself suggest that they are a homogenous group or that they enjoy concurrence on all policy issues. But they are fundamentally in agreement on the salient norms of the system and on the continuation of the system itself. “Only policy alternatives that fall within this shared consensus will be given serious consideration” (Dye et al., 2011, p. 11).

The elites were in consensus in the preference for a cautious approach to educational policy changes, not only regarding medium of instruction, but the whole education structure. They understood the salient linkages between the education system and the socio-economic structure that existed in Zambia. They also therefore understood that elevating local languages to the level of media of instruction was not only a technical move but would have socio-political-economic dimensions for them; it would level the playing field and mean that in some way, their children would be competing at the same level with the masses. Viewed this way, then the defensive behaviour exhibited by the elite in in the reform process becomes expected. As Haddad and Demsky (1995) contend, any bid to alter the system, which is discerned by one group or another as jeopardizing the chances of their children to progress economically or socially, will meet strong resistance. The solution therefore was settling for minor changes to the existing policy by allowing little accommodation of the use of Zambian languages, only when explanation of concepts in English had failed as opposed to the initial proposal to completely overhaul the system to elevate Zambian languages to be used as official media of instruction.

#### *4.5.5 Policy outcomes*

The 1977 English-medium policy had “clear administrative advantages in facilitating the posting of teachers and transfer of public servants” (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. 27) as well the educational advantage of emphasising the need for competence in the official language of commerce and public life. However, the principal purpose of a school system is neither of these things. The Ministry of Education mentions that the school system is about student learning, that is:

...learning to think, investigate, question, reflect, discover, appreciate, achieving competency in the essential skills in reading, writing and numeracy; acquiring

knowledge and skills that enhance the quality of life...” (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. 27).

Therefore, if administrative advantage and highlighting the need for English competence were the only achievements that the policy could boast of, then it wouldn't be entirely inaccurate to say that it was a failure. Fifteen years after the policy was implemented, the Ministry of Education (1992) observed that the policy had created a crisis where a whole generation of young people had been deprived of a worthwhile education. It was noted that the existing policy:

- impaired most children's subsequent learning because of hazy and indistinct concept formation in language, mathematics, science and social studies;
- downgraded the value of local languages through instilling the “English equals education” mentality. This destroyed the appreciation for one's cultural heritage;
- isolated the school from the community because the two were ‘speaking different languages’; and
- alienated students from their traditional society ways of life and areas of employment.

It was then felt that the above concerns were an indication of the need to fundamentally and substantially reform the curriculum. The Ministry felt that:

In the absence of such a reform, other measures aimed at improving the quality of primary school education may have their effect but their end result will be improvement in the external forms of learning only and not the acquisition by students of authentic understanding and competence (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. 28)

Again at this point we see an instance where the government reaffirms the importance of mother tongue education. All these point to the fact that what had been lacking all along is knowledge on the part of those responsible for making final policy decisions but either lack of will or misplaced priorities. However, another opportunity to remedy the language in education problem was presented in the form of the declarations of the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) held in 1990.

## 4.6 The 1996 ‘Educating our Future’ policy

### 4.6.1 *Focus on Learning (FoL): the forerunner policy*

In 1990, the World Bank, UNESCO, national ministries of education and various international organizations gathered in Jomtien, Thailand to evaluate the state of the state of education in the world. The appraisal on the African education system was depressing (Ball, Sinfrey, Smitherman, & Spears, 2003) and it was recognized by the whole world that this was, among other things, attributed to the languages of instruction on the continent. A call for investments that take into account the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the people was made, and developed countries pledged increased financial and technical support. For their part, African governments produced policy papers renewing their interest in designing policy reforms to influence, among other things, the use of national languages as media of instruction and to promote the education of girls.

Following the participation at the Jomtien conference, Zambia held its own National Conference on Education for all in 1991. Participants of the conference included politicians, academics, teachers, church representatives, labour leaders, and donor agency representatives. The culmination of the conference was a number of proposals and strategies summed up in the document *Focus on Learning: Strategies for the Development of Education in Zambia*.

Notwithstanding the administration difficulties, such as changes in learning materials, hours of instruction, and transfer of public servants, that would have to be faced, the Ministry of Education resolved to review the curriculum to “establish the main local language as the basic language of instruction in Grades 1-4” (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. 30). Cabinet officially sanctioned the *Focus on Learning* document in 1992, thus replacing the 1977 policy. However, despite mounting research evidence indicating escalating reading disability in both English and local languages and spending money on an already small education budget, government made no attempt to implement the new policy (Lineham, 2004).

A possible explanation for government interest in EFA recommendations and spending huge amounts of money on a conference and a document that it eventually did not implement is that, apart from them addressing the problems that were present in Zambia, much of the country's previous education expansion had been funded through donors that had ratified the conference recommendations. Funding preferences of donors can influence strategies and priorities of national governments whose bulk of the annual budget is donor funded. Donor aid recipient countries have sharpened their negotiating strategies by resonating their ideological and political orientations to those of donors. They have learned over the years that their ability to construct themselves in the mind of donors as potential success stories of development aid by expressing a clear vision of where the nation is going and the contribution of policy to achieving this outcome is a better bargaining chip of receiving aid than resisting donor preferences and defending individual policy (Fraser & Whitfield, 2008). In 1992, 36.1% of Zambia's Gross National Product (GNP) was from foreign aid (World Bank, 1999). A study by Fraser and Whitfield (2008) indicated that Zambia was among the countries that had the weakest negotiating abilities with donors because of its economic situation. The authors found that a country such as Zambia spends most of the time responding to donor demands, rarely introduces its own policy innovations and nearly always takes a subordinate position during talks. It might therefore be expected that a re-orientation of policy to take account of the donors' latest thinking after the EFA conference would improve the nation's standing for future funding.

Another possible explanation for the quick adoption of the EFA recommendations is that the existing government was new in office. Having been ushered in office just a year before, 1991, in the first democratic election since independence, the government might have been keen to establish its legitimacy by trying to deliver on the promises they had made during campaigns. There was eagerness to infuse new thinking and revive an education system that was facing a crisis of access, crisis of confidence, crisis of quality and crisis of financing (Kelly, 1999).

I should probably mention here that it is not all strategies in the document that never saw the light of day. Several investment strategies of the proposed strategies, such as rehabilitation of primary schools, increased donor engagement and support as well as private sector and community participation in education provision, were implemented.

The fact that the language in education section of the policy strategy was unimplemented gives some indication of how even in a democratic state, the issue of language was still considered sensitive in political circles; how, despite the pedagogical implications of the issue, political considerations still reign supreme.

Another reason that might have resulted in the non-implementation of the 1992 policy is that the policy was adopted at the time of the IMF/World Bank-championed structural adjustment programme (SAP). Since 1991, the government, with support from World Bank/IMF and other donors, adopted a 'fast-track' approach to implementing structural adjustment reforms. SAP included, among other things, the adoption of discipline in monetary and fiscal policies. This necessitated considerable cutbacks in real public spending. Government had to reduce disbursement of funds to ministries in order to reallocate domestic revenues to debt servicing. The effect of this on education was that investments in teaching-learning material such as textbooks reduced dramatically. Kelly (1999) reports that public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP reduced from 5.16 in the early 1970s to just 2.62 in the early 1990s. Public education expenditure as percentage of total public budget reduced from 11.56 to 8.77 over the same period. This situation couldn't have come at a time much worse than a period when a change from the English medium policy necessitated the costly creation of suitable materials in local languages for use in schools.

One thing I have been unable to conclusively ascertain is whether the *Focus of Learning* document should be considered a stand-alone policy or a draft policy. Some authors refer to it as a 'original draft policy' to the subsequent 1996 policy (Muyebaa, 2004; Simwinga, 2007). Others (Kasonde-Ng'andu, 2003; Lineham, 2004; Manchishi, 2004; Tembo, 2001) discuss it as 'a policy that replaced the 1977 policy document' and thus imply that it is a stand alone policy with its own focus. Probably the cause of the non-recognition of the policy emanates from the fact that it seemed to have been a response to an event (EFA conference) rather than a change that ensued from within. But whatever the case may be, most ideas contained therein, with the exception of the language in education section, guided what was done in the education sector until 1996 when a new national policy on education came in effect.

#### 4.6.2 *The crisis of quality*

At independence, the concern of those responsible for education was quantitative expansion of the education system to cater for the rapid demand of the service. However, by 1978, the focus started shifting to include a concern about what was happening in the classroom. The 1977 policy, among other things, aimed at ensuring that “every child can master the essential learning skills on which he can build as he proceeds with further education” (Ministry of Education, 1977b, p. 16). One of the objectives of the 1992 policy was that every child should have “a thorough and sound intellectual formation, which includes a growing ability to reason effectively, logically and critically” (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. 6). All the above aims require that the child be actively engaged in the learning process and comprehend what is going on; that children go beyond copying, recitation, and rote memorization of curriculum content.

After thirty years of English-medium instruction, research results on student academic capabilities were depressing. A study sanctioned by the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) on the reading levels of Grade 3, 4 and 6 pupils in both English and a selected Zambian language, Chinyanja, showed that on average, the pupils could not read texts that were two levels below their own grade (Lineham, 2004). Another study in 1995 by the Ministry of Education revealed that only 25 per cent of Grade 6 pupils could read at a defined minimum level, and only three per cent could read at defined desirable levels (Ministry of Education, 1995). It had become evident that rote learning was the only approach to a situation where understanding was absent in school, with mindless repetition replacing problem solving and inventiveness (Lineham, 2004). A growing awareness within the Ministry of Education on the pedagogical advantages of teaching and learning in the language familiar to the child led to the formation of the National Reading Committee (NRC) in 1995 with a task to improve reading levels in primary schools. The NRC conducted a “lengthy and broadly based consultation process” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. ix) that involved extensive participation of personnel from other government ministries, the teaching profession and universities, communities, private sector, churches, non-governmental organizations, international aid donors as well as reading experts and senior educators from a number of countries from the Southern Africa region and the United Kingdom (Ministry of Education, 1995). This assemblage of people was charged with the task of examining the reading

problem and proposing solutions. Through the interactions, it became very clear within the group that the literacy question involved the thorny language of instruction issue.

#### 4.6.3 *The policy position*

The product of this wide consultation process was a page under the sub-heading ‘language of instruction’ in the 1996 national education policy document *Education our Future: National Policy on Education*. It is recognised in the document that learning in a language that children have very little contact with outside the school, English, had been a major contributing factor to the backwardness in the reading capabilities of students. The medium was also blamed for “fostering rote learning, since from the outset the child has difficulties in associating the printed forms of words with their real, underlying meaning” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 39). Furthermore, the document acknowledged that literacy skills are easily and successfully acquired through the mother tongue and that these skills can be quickly and easily transferred to a second language.

But just as it had happened in all the previous times of policy reform, the role that English played in national unity featured again as well as it being the language of business and public life. And finally the cost-and-complexity-of-implementation card was played. It was stated that:

...introduction of a language other than English as the official medium, of instruction would encounter insoluble implementation problems and would entail enormous costs both in developing and producing materials and in training teachers to use them (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 39)

A possible solution to the dilemma was to isolate medium of instruction from language of initial literacy. This way, a child would learn how to read and write in a familiar language but within an English medium school system. Allowing pedagogical innovation within a stable linguistic context satisfied both the political and academic points of view (Lineham, 2004).

Following this negotiated position, the 1996 policy states that:

...all pupils will be given an opportunity to learn initial basic skills of reading and writing in local language; whereas English will remain as the official medium of instruction. By providing for the use of a local language for initial literacy acquisition, children's learning of essential reading and writing skills should be better assured. By providing for the use of English as official language of instruction for other content areas, children's preparation for the use of this language in school and subsequent life will be facilitated, while the implementation problems of changing over to other languages will be avoided (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 39)

This decision, according to one of the respondents, was just an act of sanctioning what had been happening in most rural schools ever since English was pronounced the official medium of instruction. Dr Kasamba mentioned that:

...the teacher on the ground has always been employing this tactic. This is the only way that any learning has happened at all in our villages. Do you really think a child who has never had an encounter with English would get anything out of school were it not teaching in local language (Dr Kasamba, 29<sup>th</sup> August)?

Put in other words, the teacher who is present in the classroom is best suited to determine what language is appropriate for use to ensure meaningful learning. The teacher has leverage to use any language beyond the prescribed seven officially recognised local languages. By promoting community languages, the 1996 policy becomes the most progressive policy as compared to the earlier policies (Simwinda, 2007) that placed emphasis on the seven officially recognised languages. The policy acknowledges the deficiencies of both English and the local languages and settles to utilize the strengths of both.

But not everyone has bought into this compromised solution of the policy. A number of loopholes have been identified that have led some to question the suitability of the policy to achieve the intended outcome of meaningful student learning.

#### 4.6.4 *Misgivings of the policy*

*Educating our Future* is a policy that is said to have been “a product of broad-based consultation and research, is not partisan” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. vii). A look at the process reveals that while the consultation and research part may be true, the product itself does not reflect the collective views of all the participants.



#### *4.6.4.1 Illusion of participation*

Authentic participation requires that all participants have equal footing and no one individual or group is privileged over the other (Habermas, 1975). The application of this principle during the 1996 policy-making process is questionable. Asked about who participated in the policy-making process and how representative of the views the final document is, one respondent said that:

We were involved. Everybody was involved. But what happens is that you are going there at different stages and with different statuses. As you gather at this meeting place, the donors would have already discussed with high officials at Ministry of Education and promised whether it's heaven on earth, so much pound, so much euro. The blue print has already been made. After they have already convinced our leaders: the ministers, Permanent Secretaries, directors at Ministry of Education, there is really nothing you can do. In short, we have participated, but your participation is limited to what you are able to contribute in terms of finances. You go anywhere, to anybody who has been involved. They will tell you "I did my part". You will even find our names on these policy documents but what was the contribution (Chibamba, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2011)?

It is evident from the respondent's laments that participation in an activity or process does not necessarily translate in being a party to the outcome. The "consultative" tag was needed to legitimise a public good in the new liberal democratic country, to show that the new government was not acting in the context of self-interest. It would have reflected badly on the government if public policies were to start to seem to be its sole responsibility. Having names of the contributing participants on the documents gives a sense of collective consensus and thus legitimacy to anyone who reads the document. In actual fact, the views in the final document reflect only the convictions of one group, the group that had the financial muscle to push their agendas through. As Crosby et al (1986) state, participation through normal institutional channels has little impact on the substance of government politics.

#### *4.6.4.2 He who pays the piper calls the tune – Foreign influence*

While discussing participation in policy-making, Mr Chibamba also mentioned how the value of the contributions during discussions was determined by one's financial contributions to implementation of policy. He elaborated this by saying:

When we participate, say Ministry of Education headquarters, Standards and Curriculum, universities, teacher training colleges, donor community, etc...in this gathering, the one, according to my experience, who controls the way forward is the one who got the purse to pay. And I cannot beat about the bush about this. If you are going to say let's have a language policy that favours local languages, the question they will ask you is if you have the money to make sure that you have books for all the subjects in all the languages. In 1996 we had advisors, Jurgen Stergen was here as advisor representing the donor community. He had more powers than the director of CDC. We had Lineham during the PRP as a coordinator who was answerable to the British Embassy, DFID department. I felt he was more powerful than the Permanent Secretary. And it's all because of money. That's how things are. They hit you at the point where you have no more strength to argue (Chibamba, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2011).

What is implied here is that sometimes the local intelligentsia have valid arguments that would yield intended results. But these arguments are overshadowed if they are not in tandem with the ideas of donors. In this case, the local consultants were pushing for a minimum of four years of local language classroom instruction as outlined in the 1992 policy. But this policy was contrary to the ideas of the donors. Ultimately the donor community carried the day as they had the capacity to finance their ideas. As stated earlier, when you have a weak bargaining power, your ideas never see the light of day.

To illustrate the extent of donor influence on policy, Mr Chibamba described occasions where donors threaten to withdraw funding in all other areas they are involved in when their demands are not met in one area:

At one time we had a programme for teacher education called FIBATA. We had done an assessment and found that it was the most suitable programme for our teachers. Our colleagues and donors from Denmark, who were at the time involved with teacher education, had another programme they wanted to implement called ZATEC. When teacher education department told them that ZATEC was not suitable for Zambia and what we wanted to achieve, they threatened to even withdraw funding from the roads project. Now, when that matter reached higher authorities even up to plot one [state house], we were in trouble. Our colleagues who constituted the education department that disagreed with the donor were removed and deployed to other departments and a new team was made. They immediately started implementing what the donor wanted. Donor influence is not something you can play with (Chibamba, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2011).

This arm-twisting just goes to show that there is no such thing as “agency-free” lending or borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Donor aid is rarely innocent of a particular approach of reform favourable to the financier. Comparative education is replete with examples of multilateral organizations and international non-governmental organizations advocating for a particular approach to educational reform that they subsequently fund (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Jones (2004) takes the World Bank and IMF as a case in point and mentions that very frequently, loan agreements go far beyond the scope of the project in question. Agreeing to policy prescription in other areas that may not be directly related to the intended use of the money being given determines the approval of the loan. Paired against such influence, the ideas and preferences of the local experts cannot compete, more so where the economy of the nation is heavily aid reliant. Mr Chibamba summarizes this by mentioning “as long as Zambia gets advice from external people, the policy will never change. As long as the British Embassy is here and funding projects through DFID, English will prevail” (19<sup>th</sup> August, 2011).

#### *4.6.4.3 A prophet is never without honour, save in his own country*

There is a worrying tendency of valuing advice from external consultants at the expense of local expertise in developing countries. Mr. Chibamba illustrated this by narrating an incident where he was summoned and admonished by the Permanent secretary for designing a language book that would address the gap left by the book designed by a named donor. He concluded by saying:

We have the capacity, the knowledge within the ministry, but it’s not put to use. We are never the first ones to be consulted. We [government] would rather listen to somebody just because, like in the Bible they say a prophet is not respected in their own area. Yet people come to respect someone who says CDC is confusing what the donor is doing. So you can see that we deliberately depend on outsiders by our own choice (Chibamba, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2011).

Reasons that account for this tendency may include trying to minimise antagonism with agencies that provide the funding for projects. The growing referential web of best practices also makes it hard for local experts to argue by using examples of what worked in the past and what may work in the future if these ideas are radically different from global trends (Vavrus, 2004).

#### *4.6.4.4 Political influence*

Political considerations have played a dominant role at all the times that an attempt to reform the language in education policy. The final decision, as reflected in policy, has always skewed towards political will. The 1996 policy is no exception. Lineham (2004) holds that even though it was pedagogically desirable, it proved impossible, for political reasons, to go as far as changing the medium of instruction to a local language. The year that the policy was being drafted was also an election year. Since English has been equated to education (Ministry of Education, 1976) since colonial times, politicians were weary of the consequences of adopting a fully fledged local language as medium of instruction policy. They thus “made it clear to senior education officials that unless a non-contentious formula could be found, the political preference would be to maintain the status quo, with English remaining in the same position since 1965 (Lineham, 2004, p. 7). Therefore, in 1996, just like all other times before, educational preferences were secondary to politics as far as LiEP was concerned. This practice, as one respondent mention, will remain as for as long as final decision-making in education is left to politicians. He says:

Even when we want to do the right things based on empirical research done by our own indigenous people, like ‘Why cant Zambian children read and write’ by Kashoki, politics has an upper hand and this is the way it has been since 1966. The discussions about the language policy since the 1966 Education Act have been a battle between what research has unearthed and politics. As long as politics remain with people that are unfortunately not privileged to be part and parcel of the education fraternity, it shall remain with us. Maybe never in the lifetime of some of us will we come up with a policy that will be very effective or that will support the education system as we want (Dr Nchimunya, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2011).

#### **4.7 Summary**

Policy-making is rarely a straightforward activity that follows neat consecutive stages. This has been evidenced in the about journey through LIEP making in Zambia from the colonial times until the making of the policy that is in effect at present. The exercise has involved navigating through, negotiating and making comprises of various and differing ideological, political and pedagogical views from a medley of individuals and institutions during the whole period. Various influences have been evident throughout

the process and the dominant view has manifested in the final policy document. Below is a table that shows a summary of the LiEP making from colonial times to present.

**Table 4.4 LiEP making in Zambia since the introduction of formal education**

	<b>Language in Education Policy</b>			
<b>Policy Analysis Category</b>	Colonial era policy	1966 (The English Medium Policy)	1977 (Educational Reforms)	1992/6 (Focus on Learning/Educating or Future)
What	-Indigenous languages as media of instruction (MOI)	-English as MOI	-English as MOI -Official local languages to be used to explain difficult concepts	-English MOI -Local languages for initial literacy
Who	-Formal elites (Advisory Committee) -Influentials (Settler community/missionaries)	-Formal elites (local politicians) -Influentials (consultants)	-Formal elites (politicians)	-Formal elites (politicians) Influentials (Donor community)
Why	-Maintenance of status quo -Pedagogical	-Political considerations (national unity) -Economic considerations (English as language of commerce)	-Political consideration (national unity) -Maintenance of status quo	-Political considerations (national unity, admin efficiency) -Donor community preferences
How	-Keeping the issue of education of natives off the agenda	-External consultation	-External consultation (study tour groups) -Internal consultation (national debates) -Ruling elites making the final decision	-Separating MOI with initial literacy -Response to international agreements
Conditions	-Colonialism	-Independence (One Zambia, One nation motto, Human Capital Theory ideology)	-One party state	-New political dispensation (Democracy) -Heavy reliance on donor aid (HIPC initiative) -Donors only pledging to fund policy decision that congruent with their
Effects	-Laudable reading and writing skills	-Copying, recitation and rote memorization -Reprehensible reading skills -Retardation in arithmetic skills	-Impairment of students' subsequent learning -Downgrading of local languages -Isolation of the school from the community -Alienation of students from traditional society way of life	

## 5 Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

The study sought to examine education policy-making in Zambia from colonial times through to the current policy. Though emphasis was on the Language in education policy (LiEP), it was sometimes necessary to examine sector-wide policy-making as language is but a section of a wider education sector. The investigation mainly examined the following question: (1) How has the language in education policy in Zambia developed and evolved from the time formal education was introduced in Zambia? (2) What have been the ideological underpinnings and/or discourses behind the discussions about the language in education policy in Zambia? and (3) What has been the role of external factors (including various international agencies) and internal factors (including Zambian elites) during the times of language in education policy reforms? Below is summary of the salient points emanating from the study and conclusions that have been drawn from them.

### 5.2 Conclusions

#### 5.2.1 *Question 1*

**How has the language in education policy in Zambia developed and evolved from the time formal education was introduced in Zambia?**

The study revealed that the language-in-education policy in Zambia could be divided into two main eras: the pre-independence “local language as medium of instruction” era and the post-independence “English medium” era. The first era, from missionary times through the colonial 1920s to early 1960s, is associated with a language policy that was well defined and non-ambiguous. During this period, the policy was an unadulterated use of local languages for classroom instruction the first three years of schooling. The post independence era, on the other hand, has been punctuated with three sets of reforms that began with a total rejection of the use of local languages for teaching and learning just after independence in the 1960s, limited and unenthusiastic appreciation of local languages in the 1970s and, eventually, to the sanctioned use of indigenous

languages in the 1990s. During this whole period, the factors affecting policy result have evolved. However, one factor, the need for national unity, has been consistent throughout post-independence Zambia and has been the dominant influence that has kept English as the official language of instruction.

Also, the number of recognized local languages to be used in schools has evolved. Between the early 1920s and early 1950s, only four local languages were recognized, one for each zone. By the late 1950s until about 1966, the number had increased to seven, coinciding with the number of recognized official local languages. Between 1966 and 1977, there was no recognition of the local languages for classroom instruction although practice did not adhere to the policy. The 1977 policy recognized the partial use of the seven official languages. In the 1996 document, there is no prescription on which local languages should be used. The educators are given liberty to use any language they deem fit to compliment English in aiding comprehension.

Furthermore, the language in education issue has, for the most part, been handled with kid gloves. Despite overwhelming preference for total reform to allow local languages to take centre stage in the education system, politicians have treaded softly on it fearing that radical changes to the English-medium status quo that began at independence would lead to ethnic instability in the country.

### *5.2.2 Question 2*

**What have been the ideological underpinnings and/or discourses behind the discussions and decisions about the language in education policy in Zambia?**

Data from the study has shown that the only time that a language in education policy in Zambia was primarily about the benefit of the learners was during the missionary period. From the time education was taken over by government, motives have been ulterior.

During colonial times, the philosophy of ‘adaptation’ was skewed towards preserving the superior social and economic status of the settler community. The same language in education policy that had worked well for the academic development of the African population during the missionary period was being used by the colonial government to



prepare them to work either in a rural setting or in the lower echelons of the wage economy. Decision-making was top-down because the languages to be used for teaching and learning were predetermined and the teacher had no liberty to choose what was most suitable. However, there is no denying that pedagogically, the policy was still much better when compared to all the post-independence policies.

Rather than being informed by research evidence, policy in post-independence Zambia has been informed by political ideology. Even when research evidence has been provided, politicians have ignored it in favour of what is deemed politically beneficial.

Language policies in education after independence have utilized symbolic rather than distributive considerations. They have mainly been determined by the national language policy that accords English the status of sole national language on political and economic grounds. This has overshadowed the consideration of equal distribution of education to all citizens.

The existence of many languages has been perceived as a problem rather than a resource and this has been the basis on which choices concerning language in general and language in education in particular have been made. Reasons given for choices made have been less subtle in showing that the principal orientation of the policy makers has been towards economic and political ends. Political reasons have not explicitly been given as a basis for sidelining community languages in education. Reasons for the choices made have mainly been logistical and economical. In the few times that pedagogical reasons have featured, they have been connected to the logistical complications that would arise if local languages were to become media of instruction.

### *5.2.3 Question 3*

**What has been the role of external factors (including various international agencies) and internal factors (including Zambian elites) during the times of language in education policy reforms?**

Language in education policy-making in Zambia has been an exclusive club of those with the ways and the means at the expense of those with hopes and dreams. Debates on policy have been between those with the power but not necessarily the knowledge and

those with the knowledge but not possessing any power to influence policy. Public participation in the policy-making process, especially after independence has been an excise of smoke and mirrors.

Results have shown that in the colonial era, the process of making policy was entirely an entitlement of the authorities with influence from the privileged settler community. The locals had no say on matters that affected them. The post-independence era has had more stakeholders. Those privileged to influence policy in real terms have often acted in self-interest to sustain the use of English medium of instruction.

Social elites, who more often than not are also in the ruling class, have taken advantage of the policy reform process that has favoured them to maintain their privileged social position. They have preferred the continued use of English as medium of instruction because it gives their children a competitive edge in educational and ultimately social advancement.

Politicians have used the argument of seventy-three languages and need for national unity since independence to defend their policy choices. They have ignored research findings that have demonstrated that there are in fact far less than seventy-three languages and that it is possible to have a local lingua franca. It has also been revealed that the attraction to the 'seventy-three languages' argument is a struggle for language preservation by those politicians whose mother tongues are not among the seven official languages. The neutrality of English in a multi-ethnic Zambia has political advantages to those in power. Politicians have also preferred the continued use of English for operational and administrative efficiency.

Donors for their part have used various ways to sway policy decisions towards their preferences. When they have not been afforded and utilized the opportunity of consultancy, they have resorted to arm-twisting through their superior financial position to achieve their ends. Donors have also at times taken advantage of the political 'too many local languages' argument to maintain the use of English, which also has a cultural aspect to it. Coupled with their ability to finance projects that favoured its use, donors have found it easy to sway policy in the English-medium direction.

The manner in which policy reform has been conducted has favoured the elite in society to the exclusion of the masses. While an illusion of participation has been given to the public, policy has often reflected the preferences and self-preservation orientations of political and social elites as well as those of donors.

### **5.3 Closing Remarks**

For a long time the way government has worked – top-down, top-heavy, controlling – has frequently had the effect of sapping responsibility, local innovation and civic action. It has turned many motivated public sector workers into disillusioned, weary puppets of government targets. It has turned able, capable individuals into passive recipients of state help with little hope for a better future. It has turned lively communities into dull, soulless clones of one another. So we need to turn government completely on its head. The rule of this government should be this: If it unleashes community engagement – we should do it. If it crushes it – we shouldn't (Cameron, 2010).

The consequences of public policies go beyond the confines of those that have been given the responsibility to make them. Primary concern should therefore be for wellbeing of the majority rather than the convenience of a privileged few. A relevant and suitable language-in-education policy in Zambia will only be achieved when there is a balance of technical expertise, the preferences and values of citizens, and the interests and advocacy of stakeholders. No one group should be seen to be holding more power than the rest.

Additionally, since political considerations seem to outweigh pedagogical rationality, community languages may only have a fair shot at attaining full media of instruction status when the discussions on language are not restricted to educational cycles. If the debate begins at the level of national language and progress is made at that level, the effects are likely to trickle down to the education system.

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# **Appendices**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Interview guide for academics involved in lecturing or doing research on languages in Zambia**

#### **SECTION A**

Name:

Position:

Institution/Department:

#### **SECTION B**

1. What is your comment on the development of LiEP in Zambia?
2. Do you think Zambia has had a satisfactory LiEP at any time in history? Why do you say so?
3. What are your views on the current policy?
4. What is your comment on the composition of the people that were involved in the formulation of the current LiEP?
5. How would you gauge the power relations among the people involved in policy formulation?
6. In your view, how would an appropriate LiEP look like? What would it take to have such a policy?
7. Looking at the history of policy-making in Zambia, what have been the main influences of policy?

## **Appendix 2**

### **Interview guide for government officials at the Ministry of Education**

#### **SECTION A**

Name:

Position:

Institution/Department:

#### **SECTION B**

1. What are the stages of policy-making process in Zambia?
2. In your view, would you say the current LiEP went through all the stages?
3. Who was involved in the process of making of the current policy? Where you personally involved?
4. Would you say all the stakeholders were adequately represented in the process?
5. What is your comment on the power relations among the various groups that were involved in the process?
6. Would you say the current policy is a fair reflection of the views of all the parties that were involved?
7. What prompted the discussion that resulted into the current LiEP?
8. Would you say that the concerns from the previous policy have been addressed in the current policy?
9. Is this the best policy that the country has ever had? Why do you say so?

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Interview guide for staff at the Curriculum Development Centre**

##### **SECTION A**

Name:

Position:

Institution/Department:

##### **SECTION B**

1. What is the role of this institution?
2. Judging by the advice that the advice dispensed and the advice used by MoE, how seriously would you say the government takes this institution?
3. Did this institution participate in any of the LiEP reform exercises? In what capacity was the participation?
4. How did you relate to the other participants during the policy reform process? What is your comment on the power relations during the process?
5. Is the current policy a reflection of the advice that this institution gave to the government? Why do you say so?
6. What would be the ideal LiEP for the country?