

**PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES  
OF USING INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES AS  
LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION IN EDUCATION –  
THE ZIMBABWEAN EXPERIENCE**

**By**

**WISEMAN MAGWA**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**By**

**WISEMAN MAGWA**

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**Promoter: Professor D. E. Mutasa**

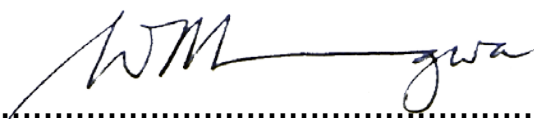
**Joint-Promoter: Professor P. A. Mulaudzi**

December 2008

# DECLARATION

**Student Number: 3590 680-4**

I declare that *Planning for the Future: Exploring Possibilities of Using Indigenous African Languages as Official Languages of Instruction in Education - The Zimbabwean Experience* is my own work, that has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

**Signature**  .....

**Date:** 27 December 2008

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## SUMMARY

The study sought to explore possibilities of using indigenous African languages of Zimbabwe as official media of instruction in the education system. The aim was to find out the extent to which indigenous African languages could be used as languages of instruction in primary, secondary and tertiary levels of the education system. The other objective of the study was to examine the attitudes of Zimbabweans towards the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction in schools.

A total of 1000 participants took part in this study, which included 200 teachers, 300 parents/guardians and 500 learners. Questionnaires and interviews were the main techniques used to collect data and the processing of the collected data was both qualitative and quantitative. Information collected from the questionnaires was mainly presented in tables and information from interviews was presented qualitatively in words.

The study revealed that Zimbabwe inherited from colonial Rhodesia a language policy that marginalizes the use of indigenous African languages in the education system. English continues to be the prestige-laden language enjoying high status while indigenous languages enjoy relatively low status. Study findings clearly show that the majority of the participants prefer English to be the medium of instruction in both secondary and tertiary education because it is a language that gives power and prestige.

The study concludes that Zimbabwe can never regain its dignity and cultural identity unless the education system is African oriented. The continued use of English as medium of instruction means that no scientific ideas can be formulated using African languages in the present schooling system leading to perpetual scientific bankruptcy. The study finally recommends the need for a linguistic revolution and calls for a change in the country's language policy so as to avoid the exclusion of the majority from public and national developmental discourse.

**Key terms**

Language

Culture

Language and development

Indigenous language

Mother tongue

Language policy

Official language

National language

Medium of instruction

Language planning

## LIST OF TABLES

|             |   |     |
|-------------|---|-----|
| Table 1.1:  | Distribution of informants by sex .....   | 22  |
| Table 1.2:  | Level of education: learners .....  | 22  |
| Table 1.3:  | Level of education: teachers/lecturers.....   | 22  |
| Table 1.4:  | Level of education: parents .....   | 23  |
| Table 3.1:  | A percentage summary of language policies in Africa.....  | 76  |
| Table 3.2:  | Informants' home language.....  | 78  |
| Table 3.3:  | Census information on indigenous language groups .....  | 79  |
| Table 3.4:  | Languages spoken in Zimbabwe.....   | 80  |
| Table 3.5:  | Zonal distribution of the Shona dialects.....   | 89  |
| Table 3.6:  | Tonga districts and traditional rulers in Zimbabwe .....  | 93  |
| Table 3.7:  | Composition of the present ChiKunda language .....  | 94  |
| Table 3.8:  | Location of mines with Chewa speakers according to towns .....  | 96  |
| Table 4.1:  | Learners' preference for language of instruction .....  | 128 |
| Table 4.2:  | Teachers and lecturers' preference for language of instruction.....   | 128 |
| Table 4.3:  | Parents' preference for language of instruction.....  | 129 |
| Table 4.4:  | Language that gives power and prestige in Zimbabwe .....  | 130 |
| Table 4.5:  | African languages can express educational and scientific concepts.....  | 132 |
| Table 4.6:  | Attitudes towards the use of African languages in all levels of the education system .....  | 132 |
| Table 4.7:  | Learners encounter problems when studying in English .....  | 134 |
| Table 4.8:  | Level at which indigenous languages should be used as media of instruction.....   | 135 |
| Table 4.9:  | There is willingness on the part of government to use indigenous languages as languages of instruction in education.....                        | 138 |
| Table 4.10: | Language associations contribute positively towards the growth and use of indigenous African languages as media of instruction in Zimbabwe..... | 138 |

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| <b>Contents</b>   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| Declaration .....   | i           |
| Acknowledgements .....  | ii          |
| Summary .....   | iii         |
| Key terms .....   | iv          |
| List of Tables .....  | v           |
| <br>  |             |
| <b>CHAPTER 1</b>  |             |
| <b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>                                       | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.1 The Problem .....   | 1           |
| 1.2 Background .....  | 5           |
| 1.3 Rationale .....   | 13          |
| 1.4 Study Objectives.....                                       | 18          |
| 1.5 Scope of the Study .....                                    | 18          |
| 1.6 Research Questions .....                                    | 18          |
| 1.6.1 Main Research Question.....                               | 18          |
| 1.6.2 Sub-Research Questions.....                               | 18          |
| 1.7 Research Design and Methodology.....                        | 19          |
| 1.7.1 The Design.....   | 19          |
| 1.7.2 Population and Sampling .....                             | 20          |
| 1.7.3 Background information on the research participants ..... | 21          |
| 1.7.4 Research Instruments .....                                | 23          |
| 1.7.5 Piloting .....  | 25          |
| 1.7.6 Data Analysis Procedures.....                             | 26          |
| 1.7.7 Time Frame.....   | 27          |
| 1.8 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.....            | 27          |
| 1.8.1 Language Planning Ideologies.....                         | 28          |
| 1.8.2 Types of Language Planning .....                          | 32          |
| 1.8.3 Language Planning Models.....                             | 33          |
| 1.9 Definition of Terms.....                                    | 40          |
| 1.10 Structure of the Thesis.....                               | 42          |
| 1.11 Conclusion.....  | 43          |



## **CHAPTER 2**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENT: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE .....</b> | <b>44</b> |
| 2.1 Introduction.....   | 44        |
| 2.2 The Meaning of Development.....                           | 45        |
| 2.3 The Role of African Languages in Development .....        | 51        |
| 2.4 Language and Education.....                               | 57        |
| 2.5 Conclusion.....   | 69        |

## **CHAPTER 3**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING IN ZIMBABWE: A HISTORICAL<br/>OVERVIEW .....</b> | <b>71</b> |
| 3.1 Introduction.....  | 71        |
| 3.2 Language Policy in a Wider African Context.....                              | 71        |
| 3.3 The Linguistic Situation in Zimbabwe .....                                   | 71        |
| 3.3.1 The Shona Language Cluster .....   | 80        |
| 3.3.2 The Ndebele Group.....   | 90        |
| 3.3.3 Sotho.....   | 91        |
| 3.3.4 Shangani (ChiChangani).....  | 91        |
| 3.3.5 Venda.....   | 92        |
| 3.3.6 Tonga.....   | 92        |
| 3.3.7 ChiKunda .....   | 94        |
| 3.3.8 Doma .....   | 95        |
| 3.3.9 Chewa (Nyanja) .....   | 95        |
| 3.3.10 Tshwawo (Khoisan).....  | 97        |
| 3.3.11 Tswana .....  | 97        |
| 3.3.12 Xhosa (Fingo) .....   | 98        |
| 3.3.13 Sena.....   | 98        |
| 3.3.14 Non-African Languages .....   | 99        |
| 3.4 Education and Language Policies in Colonial Rhodesia.....                    | 99        |
| 3.4.1 Policies Under the British South African Company (B.S.A. Co.) ....         | 100       |
| 3.4.2 The Legacy of Harold Jowitt and George Stark .....                         | 105       |
| 3.4.3 The Impact of Christianity on Language Policy and Planning .....           | 108       |
| 3.4.4 Road to Cultural Collision: The Period 1934-1979 .....                     | 111       |
| 3.4.5 R.F. Policy on Language in Education .....                                 | 114       |

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
| 3.4.6 | Language Policy and the Struggle for Independence (1965-1980) | 115 |
| 3.5   | Language Policy in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe.....                | 116 |
| 3.5.1 | Language in Law and Administration .....                      | 119 |
| 3.5.2 | Language-in-Education Policy .....                            | 120 |
| 3.5.3 | Language in Media and Society.....                            | 123 |
| 3.5.4 | Challenges .....  | 124 |
| 3.6   | Conclusion .....  | 125 |

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS ..... 127**

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
| 4.1   | Introduction .....  | 127 |
| 4.2   | Key Findings.....   | 127 |
| 4.2.1 | Attitudes of Zimbabweans towards the use of indigenous African languages as official media of instruction in education .....                      | 127 |
| 4.2.2 | Contribution by government institutions, organizations and language associations towards the growth and use of indigenous African languages ..... | 137 |
| 4.2.3 | Attitudes of teachers and lecturers towards orthography harmonization .....   | 139 |
| 4.3   | Conclusion.....   | 142 |

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION ..... 143**

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
| 5.1   | Introduction .....  | 143 |
| 5.2   | Language as a basic human right.....                                | 144 |
| 5.3   | Mother tongue medium education .....                                | 146 |
| 5.4   | Attitude problems.....  | 149 |
| 5.5   | English hegemony .....  | 151 |
| 5.6   | Promoting the use of indigenous African languages in Zimbabwe ..... | 155 |
| 5.6.1 | The ALLEX Project .....   | 155 |
| 5.6.2 | The African Languages Research Institute (ALRI).....                | 157 |
| 5.6.3 | The Great Zimbabwe State University .....                           | 158 |
| 5.6.4 | The Shona Language and Culture Association (SLCA).....              | 161 |
| 5.7   | Quest and impediments in the use of African languages.....          | 167 |

|     |                 |     |
|-----|-----------------|-----|
| 5.8 | Conclusion..... | 168 |
|-----|-----------------|-----|

## **CHAPTER 6**

|  |   |            |
|--|---|------------|
|  | <b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b> | <b>171</b> |
|--|---|------------|

|     |                   |     |
|-----|-------------------|-----|
| 6.1 | Introduction..... | 171 |
|-----|-------------------|-----|

|     |                          |     |
|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| 6.2 | Summary of findings..... | 171 |
|-----|--------------------------|-----|

|     |                 |     |
|-----|-----------------|-----|
| 6.3 | Conclusion..... | 174 |
|-----|-----------------|-----|

|     |                      |     |
|-----|----------------------|-----|
| 6.4 | Recommendations..... | 179 |
|-----|----------------------|-----|

|  |                        |            |
|--|------------------------|------------|
|  | <b>REFERENCES.....</b> | <b>188</b> |
|--|------------------------|------------|

|  |                        |            |
|--|------------------------|------------|
|  | <b>APPENDICES.....</b> | <b>210</b> |
|--|------------------------|------------|

|  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
|  | APPENDIX A: Questionnaire for learners ..... | 210 |
|--|--|-----|

|  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
|  | APPENDIX B: Questionnaire for teachers and lecturers ..... | 217 |
|--|--|-----|

|  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
|  | APPENDIX C: Questionnaire for parents/guardians..... | 225 |
|--|--|-----|

|  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
|  | APPENDIX D: Interview guide for teachers, learners and parents..... | 232 |
|--|---|-----|

|  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
|  | APPENDIX E: Interview guide for directors of language institutes and<br>organizations..... | 314 |
|--|--|-----|

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

“Failure to use a local language in teaching contributes not only to the erosion of the cultural values of society but also leads to more poverty and divisions in society” (Yahya-Othman, 2001:72).

### 1.1 THE PROBLEM

Until recently, African languages have received very little attention in terms of being used as media of instruction. This is because these languages are given little validity in the educational system and consequently the knowledge that children have of these languages is ignored (Letsie, 2002:202). The current educational policies in the words of Fhulu (1999:17) have been coined along European lines reflecting a culture of ‘apemanship and parrotry’ from which self-respecting Africans must keep a reasonable distance away.

It has always been felt by many African educationists that the African child’s major learning problem is a linguistic problem. Instruction is usually given in a language that is not normally used in his immediate environment, “a language which neither the learner nor the teacher understands and uses well enough” (Obanya, 1999:88). Therefore, those concerned about democracy and good governance in Africa should also be concerned about the fact that in many African countries, information from the government to the people is given in a language that 90% of the people do not speak and hardly understand.

Batibo (2005:18) asserts that the dominant languages of government and business in Southern Africa tend to be in most cases former colonial languages. Furthermore, there is self-denigration of African languages by speakers who believe that their indigenous languages are only fit to occupy the less prestigious primary domains of family, church and community. This study argues that there is lack of political will to promote African languages by a select group of individuals who have acquired a linguistic cultural capital and also neglect of the pursuance of progressive policies consistent with the aims of freedom and democracy. Information from the

government and even speeches from politicians are given in foreign languages, which most Africans do not understand. When language is used to exclude the majority from participating, then it becomes apparent that a country's language policy is part of the apparatus used to block access to democracy.

If the African child's major learning problem is that of language as purported by Prah (1995:49), then all the attention of African policy makers and aid from Western donors should be devoted to strengthening African languages as languages of instruction, especially in basic education. The concept of "education for all" becomes a completely empty concept if the linguistic environment of the basic learner is not taken into account. African governments are setting targets for universal literacy, but little thought is given to the language in which literacy should be achieved. The role of language in education is seldom considered.

In Zimbabwe, the language policy in education is to some extent confusing. A lot of policy documents on education in Zimbabwe hardly discuss the language issue at all. Chimhundu bemoans that Zimbabwe has no explicit or written language policy when he says:

The official neglect of language issues in post-independence Zimbabwe is deliberate and can be explained in terms of elitist 'rulership' and fear of the unknown (Chimhundu, 1997a:129).

He goes on to describe Zimbabwe as a country where English is the dominant language of business, administration, politics and media whilst African languages continue to be downgraded in the schools and vernacularised in the wider community.

Almost three decades of attempts at national development and prosperity since the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe still leave the country with mostly bleak economic and political statistics. An examination of the Zimbabwean linguistic situation indicates clearly that there is a linguistic discrepancy. The language of government is not the language of the governed. The language of the people does not feature much in the development discourse. Postcolonial Zimbabwe is an example of neglected multilingualism with an unbalanced bilingual behavior by its

citizenry. English has firmly entrenched itself as the language of government, business, the media, education, training and specialized information, as well as upward mobility and wider communication within and outside Zimbabwe's borders (Chimhundu, 1993:57). African languages are predominant in what are perceived to be the relatively unimportant family, social and cultural domains and continue to be downgraded particularly in the educational system and in public life.

Throughout the colonial era, African languages and African culture were denigrated and it is saddening to note that in a post colonial dispensation the only reference to language in the whole Zimbabwean Education Act of 1987 (as amended in 1990, 1996 and 2006) is Section 55, Part X1 which is headed "Languages to be taught in schools" (Nziramanga, 1999:64). The language policy adopted at independence, which is enshrined in the Education Act, enhances the importance of English as the language of business, administration and teaching international relations. The Act only allows the teaching of ChiShona and IsiNdebele from Grade 1 to University level as subjects. These national languages are not used at all as media of instruction in schools and their status is regarded as inferior to that of English. The English language thus remains the official medium of instruction in schools, a compulsory subject and also a requirement in all school certificates. The allocations for Shona and Ndebele languages in school timetables are at present half that allocated to English whilst teachers, lecturers, authors and students of indigenous languages are relegated to a lower status compared to their counterparts in other disciplines. A full O-Level certificate is defined by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture to mean five O-Level passes at Grade C or better including English.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe and the present Education Act are both characteristically colonial for they promote English at the expense of developing indigenous languages. The Constitution gives no legal status to indigenous languages and effectively deprives Zimbabweans of a sense of linguistic pride in their own heritage. Ironically the majority of Zimbabweans are barely literate in English, which is used as the medium of propagating constitutional matters, and vital information on development. Chimhundu poses pertinent questions when he says:

How can you guarantee democracy where the law of the country is not understood in the language of the people? How do you abide by what

you do not know? How can you use information to which you have only limited access? How can you fully participate in anything or compete or learn effectively or be creative in a language you are not fully proficient or literate in? Above all, how can a country develop its human resource base to the full without the language of the people? (Chimhundu, 1987:7)

The post colonial government of Zimbabwe appears to be more comfortable in using the same foreign language that was used in the past by a racist colonial minority to keep the majority Zimbabweans disempowered by making grassroots participation in national issues and debates difficult if not impossible (ibid). These defenders of the status quo advance the same old arguments of their former colonial master, which says English, French and Portuguese facilitate wider communication within and outside their own borders. They hide behind the unfounded myth that says promoting African languages would be equated to promoting “tribalism”. As a result of this mentality and the selfish designs of a minority that seeks to enrich itself in power, no serious attention is paid to language issues.

The colonial dependence syndrome in Zimbabwe manifests itself in the continued use of a foreign language, English, in all official business at the expense of indigenous languages spoken by over 90% of the population (Chimhundu, 1997:130). Zimbabwe is failing to progress socially, politically, technologically and economically because the country remains so overwhelmingly dependent on a foreign European language, for its philosophical and scientific discourse at all levels of learning and administrative domains. With the marginalization of the mother tongue, black Zimbabweans also lose their language, history and culture. The colonial system has alienated them from their language and uprooted their traditional way of life (Mkanganwi, 1987:4). Almost all newspapers in Zimbabwe for example, *The Sunday Mail*; *Sunday Mirror*; *the Independent*; *the Herald* and *The Chronicle* among others are written in English and this has a detrimental effect on the populace, the majority who speak ChiShona or IsiNdebele. It is again sad to realize that the only weekly paper in indigenous languages, *Kwayedza/Umthunya*, focuses mainly on sanctimonious and trivial items of no economic or developmental significance thus it is seen by many as a mockery and degradation of indigenous languages. Rusike (1990:15) argues that media forms such as the ones cited above

are the rocks upon which the social fabric of society is built and it irks the mind to note that media institutions are operating through the medium of foreign languages. This study is therefore an attempt to explore possibilities of using indigenous African languages of Zimbabwe, as official medium of instruction in the education system. A linguistic revolution is therefore necessary in Zimbabwe. The study is actually calling for a change in the language policies of Zimbabwe so as to avoid the exclusion of the majority from public discourse, development and other issues of national significance.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

While European and Asian countries are making significant progress in socio-economic development, the majority of African states are still dragging far behind. There is no encouraging sign that they will do better in the foreseeable future. Indeed, poverty is on the increase and the debt burden is growing heavier. Africa appears to be a peculiar continent in that although for several thousand years it has communicated with languages indigenous to Africa; currently its dominant languages are not African in origin. While having achieved political independence and striving for economic self-reliance, African countries have remained very much dependent on foreign languages in communication (Bruthiaux, 2002:276). Practically, all former colonial countries continue to carry out official communication with a foreign language and this is more of a de facto situation than an outcome of conscious political decision. As a result, Africans in general, all over, have a very low esteem of their own languages yet at the same time they have an incomprehensibly high esteem of languages such as English, French and Portuguese. After attaining political independence from their erstwhile colonial masters, a major pre-occupation for all ex-colonial African countries has been the formulation of national policies i.e. economic, political, educational and social considered appropriate to national development. None of these has proved more difficult to achieve than the formulation of language policies that reflect the complex multilingual contexts of most African countries (Kashioki, 1993:144).

Language policy issues have tended to generate a lot of heat and civil strife on the African continent and this problem has been particularly manifested in those



countries where language has been perceived to be closely linked with nationality and social stratification (Prah, 1995:7). Insurgents in Ethiopia for example, have over the years, placed the use of native languages at the centre of their demands for autonomy and self-determination. Sudan is another example where resistance to Arabism by the majority African population has found much expression in resistance to the use of the Arab language by Africans particularly in the southern part of the country. The view expressed in this study is that mother tongue education and use is the missing link in all development endeavors on the African continent.

Commenting on the introduction of new languages of power in colonial Africa, Bodomo (1996:57), says this did not only increase the multilingual repertoire of the continent but also created situations in which attempts were made to suppress the indigenous languages altogether, or at least relegate them to the confines of the informal sector of each country. The Cameroonian colonial government for example, did not welcome the use of national languages in public life, especially for official transmissions on the national television channel. Various bans over the use of indigenous languages in education had, long ago, been given legal form by the colonial administration. A 1920 issue of the *Journal Officiel* in which the colonial administration was making it clear to British and American missionaries, who dared to use indigenous languages as medium of instruction in schools had the following threats:

All schools shall be denied official recognition as long as they use a medium other than French (Silue, 2000:104).

Four years later, in 1924, the colonial administration was no less adamant and the same official threat was given as an explicit warning to schoolteachers against the use of indigenous languages in education, while it reinforced unequivocally the primacy of French.

French is the only language to be used in schools. Schoolteachers and their pupils are not allowed to make use of the mediums of the country... (Silue, 2000:104).

The diglossic picture where the foreign colonial languages were reserved for the formal sector and the indigenous languages for the informal sector is quite representative of the African linguistic scene before and after independence.

A large number of post independence African governments have found it easier to agree on the former colonial language as the official language and this became the basis of terminologies we often hear about African countries such as 'Anglophone', 'Francophone' or 'Lusophone'. These terms mask the reality that more than 90% of people in Africa use African languages in their day-to-day activities and it is only about 10% of the elite who use European languages profusely in their day-to-day affairs. It is these 'chosen few' who find it more appropriate to refer to African countries as 'europheones'. Chumbow (1987:19) and Herbert (1992:1) assert that most African nations have the overall structure of the language policies, which they have inherited from the respective colonial powers.

Zimbabwe is one of the many African countries that use foreign languages as their primary media of communication. It is a former British colony that is situated in Southern Africa with two major languages Shona and Ndebele being spoken as national languages. These two languages are spoken by over 90% of the population (Chimhundu, 1997:130). The Shona and Ndebele people living in Zimbabwe have been denied the advantage of utilizing their indigenous languages in matters of national development. English has unceremoniously replaced their mother languages in the mass media, education, business and many other spheres of life.

It is also poignant to note that many African nations are in the process of self-colonization in the name of empowerment, access to education and globalization. Namibia as an example has a predominant Ovambo population and its second most frequently spoken language is Afrikaans (Moodley, 2000:109). Though the country never was an English colony, English is nevertheless the only official language. There is mental self-colonization among Africans, which leads to a dependency syndrome as illustrated in a letter to the editor of the *Cape Times* by a correspondent.

The reason people like me choose English is very simple. There is an entire world of knowledge, skills, jobs, power and influence, which is

totally closed to us if we can only speak an indigenous language. How many books are there in Xhosa on physics, mathematics or history of art? What does a Sotho speaker do if they (sic) want to improve themselves and gain knowledge? How many encyclopedias are written in Zulu? What books are there on business skills in Pedi? The answer is obvious to anyone. If you do not have the language skills to access the huge store of information available in English, then you are in a prison. The door out of that prison is knowledge of English (Moodley 2000:110).

The relegation of African languages from high status to low status resulted in people thriving to learn the colonizer's language to be able to consume Western products. In Malawi for example, the general attitude of the people towards their indigenous languages is worrying many scholars. The attitude that clearly comes out is that if one learns in the local languages, one is not capable of doing anything else, because learning anything in a language other than English is a total waste of time. One Malawian citizen boldly said:

Let's face it. I think there is a problem here. Maybe the Ministry of Education should put emphasis on English (*The Nation*, 1996:9).

Another Malawian citizen remarked saying:

It does not require research to know that a child taught in English will learn better than a child taught in the vernacular (*The Nation*, 1996:10).

Such views are not only misguided but reflect on attitudes towards local languages. In a related incident, a Malawian Member of Parliament, Meki Mtewa, from Mangochi Central Constituency, challenged students at the Malawi College of Fisheries to take pride in speaking English while on campus. According to a story published in the *Weekend Nation*, 18 March 2000, the MP told the students that in all colleges, English should be the mode of communication and urged that nobody anywhere in the world would be interested to read a technological and research document written in ChiChewa. The local languages, he added, should be spared for letters to parents, girlfriends and boyfriends. This pronouncement epitomizes a totally linguistically colonized mind, vigorously refusing to liberate itself.

African governments are the ones that sabotage their own languages by affording more attention to foreign languages like English. The ruling elite feel safer by simply doing nothing to promote or develop the main languages of their own country although these may be called national languages. Furthermore, English has not yet reached the masses of the indigenous population thus it remains a minority language in most African countries. Very few rural Africans for example, are able to meaningfully make use of English in their deliberations. Herbert (1992:8) says 10% of the people of Francophone countries of Africa speak French and that only 1% or 2% can speak it fluently and can think in it. The situation is even more pronounced in countries such as Angola and Mozambique where less than one tenth of the national population is able to make use of the national official language (Portuguese). Indigenous languages, an important means of communication in African societies are not widely used in the formal educational systems. These same languages are not the languages of national government and the languages of mass communication are hardly the languages of the people. In Ghana for example, as much as 51% of the total amount of annual broadcast hours is reserved for English alone, leaving the rest for all the many Ghanaian African languages (Bodomo, 1996:57). It is this lack of an adequate linguistic communication system on the national level that has significantly contributed to the economic and technological stagnation and backwardness in most African countries.

In Kenya, English remains the dominant language of prestige in courts and elsewhere in the public domain. Ogechi in Ogutu (2004) comments on the draft constitution of Kenya saying:

The draft of the proposed constitution is silent on the language(s) to be used in law...This implies that indigenous languages including KiSwahili have not been accorded their rightful place in the law...So is justice being done to our language rights? (Ogechi, 2003:279)

Though KiSwahili is the national language, English remains the official language and in some spheres, these languages operate at par, but in most cases, English is given priority and greater prestige. For example, KiSwahili was not a compulsory examinable subject in primary and secondary schools until 1985 but English had been for decades (WaNjogu, 2004:16). Apart from declaring KiSwahili the national language in 1969 and a language of parliament in 1974, the Kenyan government has

yet to invest in developing the language. Although the language of instruction is supposed to be KiSwahili or the dominant language in a given area, many parents prefer to take their children to private schools, where instruction in English begins on the first day of formal schooling.

Only a few countries in Africa namely Tanzania, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Guinea have managed to pursue an active endoglossic language policy. A declared goal of nations of this type is to develop the local language or languages into media of all national concerns such as government administration and education, both primary and secondary. Foreign languages are reserved for highly specific domains such as international relations and university education. In Tanzania for example, KiSwahili is both the official and national language and it is widely employed in administration, trade unions, courts, radio, newspapers and in education from primary to university level (Herbert, 1992:37). The use of KiSwahili in these nations has enabled people to participate to the maximum in the political, socio-cultural and economic development of their countries. English remains the language for wider communication because all independent states belong to wider organizations such as the African Union (AU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) just to mention a few.

Somalia provides another example of innovation in mother tongue education. Afflicted by two systems of education, English in the north and Italian in the south, as a result of colonialism, and three forms of competing scripts, the country was able to break away from the inherited practices and embark on the use of Somali as a medium of instruction in education. Today Somali is not only the medium of all primary education but it is also the medium of all secondary education, except for the last two years (Bamgbose, 1989:30). From that point on to the university level, English becomes the medium of instruction, except for teaching of Somali language and literature.

Guinea is a good example of an African country that formulated a language policy, which should be adopted as a model by many African states. Guinea adopted an essentially endoglossic policy in 1958 and since then eight indigenous languages have been developed into official national languages. These languages were

introduced as early as 1959, as media of instruction in the first grades of primary education and by 1968 the written use of these languages was spread throughout the nation. The national languages of Guinea are not second-class languages. They do play an important role in national life.

Public signboards, certificates and documents for example are issued both in French and depending on the respective region in any one of the eight national languages. Ninety-five percent of the national radio broadcast is in national languages and competence in one of the eight national languages is a requirement for employment in the civil service and advancement in socio-economic status. Although French remains an official language for international relations, the political cultural and economic development of the nation is overwhelmingly the domain of the national language (Traore, 1997:265).

Sierra Leone is another typical example of a nation with an endoglossic language policy. Freetown, the capital city, presents a fine example of ethno-linguistic pluralism where nearly all sixteen languages spoken in the country have some sort of ethnic representation (Sengova, 1987:521). Four of these indigenous languages have been recognized as national languages and they are being used extensively in the mass media; on radio and television, in literary and formal education. These are Kriol, Limba, Mende and Temne. Kriol for example, is considered a national *lingua franca*, owing to its wide use throughout the country. Mende, Limba and Temne are similarly regarded as *linguae francae* in the Southern, Eastern and Northern regions respectively. The four major national languages have over the last decade been infused into the school system on an experimental basis at lower primary level as instructional media.

The bulk of Sierra Leone's business sector communicates in the medium of African languages and Kriol stands out prominently in this respect. Businessmen, women and petty traders from all parts of the country converge in the capital and other urban areas to buy and sell their goods. Their common language of contact and interaction is Kriol. Despite these developments, English remains the official language of Sierra Leone. It is used for all such purposes as formal education, government and administration, the judiciary mass media international communication and so forth. It

is the language of “officialdom” (ibid) and it appears there is no serious threat to its status from any one Sierra Leonean language. In addition to English, French is taught as a school subject throughout the formal school system and appears to have gained recognition as a functionally useful language of international communication. Arabic appears to be slowly emerging in parochial Islamic schools sprouting in various parts of the country and perhaps with growing relations with many Arab states, Arabic may become more widely used or even be accorded official status.

Elsewhere on the globe, Japan rose to dazzling industrial heights by the scientification of the Japanese language and making it the medium of its own industrialization. Korea is another country that has successfully scientified the Korean language and made it the medium of its own technological take off (Mutasa, 2002:241; Kangira, 2003:18). If Africa continues to maintain the primordial language policies that are dominated by European languages we liken this to “putting new wine into old skins” (Mutasa, 2002:239). African governments must demonstrate that they have linguistic interests of all the people at heart by democratizing language policies so as to respond to the needs and interests of all segments of the population (Chimhundu, 1997:136).

However, it is now common knowledge to many that a number of initiatives in favor of African languages are being launched by global organizations such as UNESCO and others. In 1997 for example, the Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa that was held in Harare set the development of policy frameworks and implementation strategies for the development of African languages. Recent decisions regarding African languages made by the African Union (AU) point to an increased awareness among African decision makers on the essential role to be played by African languages in development. The Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union in Khartoum proclaimed 2006 ‘The Year of African Languages’ and designated the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) to be the coordinator of language policy and planning on the African continent. This clearly shows that the question of language policy and planning remains central and an important matter on the African continent’s development agenda.

### 1.3 RATIONALE

The languages of a nation are its natural resources belonging to the same group just like its petroleum, minerals and other natural resources (Chumbow, 1987:18). Languages can therefore be harnessed and developed if carefully planned for the overall interest of the nation. Language planning is consequently as important as any other aspect of economic planning and the place of language planning is therefore in the National Development Plan as a concomitant of all other aspects of economic planning or national development.

Development, aimed at a general improvement of the quality of life in society should target the majority and not the minority at the exclusion of the majority. Attainment of such development according to Mahochi (2003:87) "...calls for involvement of people in making decisions as well as in the plans for their implementation." They will then feel that they own those efforts and participate more enthusiastically in efforts to achieve stated goals. This calls for an effective communication system to link the government and other development agencies on the one hand and the public on the other, enabling an appropriate flow of information between the two. Language therefore plays a very significant role in ensuring such a flow of information. It is always effective to reach people in their first languages, but when one considers the multilingual nature of the Zimbabwean society, the challenges are many.

Government and citizens are partners in development, a collaboration that calls for a productive working relationship. In establishing and maintaining such a relationship, communication plays a vital role (Mazrui, 1996a:113). The public should be kept informed with regard to how policies are reached and how they will affect them. Ideally, the public should also know what problems are being faced and what the future prospects are like. In this widespread dissemination of information, there is need to use a people's first language as a key component in providing a communication network. As tools of communication, indigenous languages have the potential to make a very big contribution in development, education, entertainment and information.



According to Miller (2003:36), the practice of denying the importance and value of a local language and its use serves to deny the rights of certain language groups the ability to speak and be heard. As a result, their voices are silenced, their home language marginalized and their potential power diminished. The author argues further to say the survival of an indigenous community is largely dependent on the function and value of its language.

The language that people in a community have must be seen as cultural capital that they possess (Vambe, 2006:8). That language should be used to place people in positions of power and economic strength, power to gain employment, power to function in a political environment and power to access government and business. Indigenous languages must be viewed as a resource and not as a problem. Instead of viewing indigenous languages as assets, they are viewed as liabilities in most African countries. Batibo (2005:37) also reiterates that language is a right and a resource. He further argues that a language has the right to life like any other living creature. The death of a language necessarily implies cultural dislocation or to put it differently, deprivation of a certain cultural identity, to which members of that cultural community have a right. A language can therefore play a central role in enabling citizens of a country to participate in the political, educational, social and economic life of that country (Desai, 2001:330).

Indigenous languages serve extensively in businesses, in market transactions and in social events. Only through empowering these languages can African governments ensure maximum participation of its populace in their socio-political and economic development. This is so because these are the languages that people use in their day-to-day interactions. Since most African countries are multilingual their governments must ensure that their citizens get information in the languages with which they are comfortable. Governments should also ensure that their people have the freedom to express themselves in whatever language they want. It is only after establishing this line of communication and freedom that a populace can be mobilized for engagement in development.

According to Moodley (2000:105), all major languages spoken in a territory need official recognition and state support. People need to be given choices as to what language they wish to have their children educated in. The 1951 UNESCO resolution asserts that the best medium for teaching a child is the child's mother tongue. Social justice in any society entails guaranteeing the rights of children to be educated in their home language (ibid).

Language is therefore one of the most precious possessions of mankind, for it is the principal factor that enables individuals to become fully functioning members of the group into which they are born (Mutasa, 2002:240). As such nations are able to develop because language provides an important link between the individual and his/her environment. Language is therefore one of the indispensable features of the cultural systems of all societies and it penetrates into all aspects of social economic, political and religious spheres. Ngugi (1986:13) says language has a dual character. It is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture. It is a means of interaction with society as well as a repository of a people's culture, values aspirations and beliefs. A nation cannot survive without a concurrent linguistic expression. Kishindo clearly affirms this when he says:

There is no country anywhere in the world (except in Africa) where the most important, most prestigious and the most powerful activities of the nation are conducted in what is for most of the citizens, a foreign language (Kishindo, 2000:15).

Mazrui (1997:198) argues further saying an indigenized approach to national development cannot be complete without great usage of African languages in the pursuit of scientific, artistic and cultural change. He further asserts that Korea, Japan and Malaysia have developed mainly because of the advantage of their own languages.

Furthermore, it should be noted that much of our thinking is facilitated by language. The thinking, which seems to involve language, is the reasoned thinking, which takes place as we work out our problems, tell stories and plan strategies. Language is not only used for purposes of communication but also to facilitate thinking (Ogotu, 2006:41). This demonstrates the need to have our own languages as the languages of media broadcasting, education and literature to mention just a few. If we use

indigenous languages, it naturally follows that our thinking patterns will be such that they conjure homegrown solutions that will be relevant to our context.

When in 1890, Europeans came to the land they later on named Rhodesia, they manipulated language and used it as a tool for the furtherance of their exploitative tendencies. According to Ngugi (1986:11), language is a vehicle that transports the complex whole of culture. It means then that the inculcation of the English language into the mind of the unsuspecting African created an avenue in his mind that allowed for the transmission of a Western culture into his thinking pattern and subsequent behavioral system. The process of decolonizing the mind can never be complete therefore without putting our own languages at the forefront of all our endeavors, be it economical, social, political or technical. As we continue with the reliance on English at the expense of our own languages, we open ourselves up to forces of cultural imperialism.

In Zimbabwe, and the rest of the African continent, there is a perpetual denial of our indigenous languages to be given a chance to flourish and help promote our culture and national identity, hence the need for an urgent redress of this anomaly. Linguistic imperialism in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, has actively distanced African people from their immediate environments and deliberately disassociated them from the language of daily interaction in the home and the community. Kangira (2003:12) argues that colonization imposes itself on a people through various ways and one of them is language, thus indigenous languages must be emancipated from linguistic imperialism if people are to think and initiate in their mother tongue. Development in Zimbabwe therefore cannot be achieved without greater utilization of the indigenous languages in the pursuit of scientific, economic and social change.

Sibeyan (1991:16) asserts that language is an emancipator weapon and therefore Africans should rally behind their indigenous languages so as to be emancipated from psychological and scientific blindness. Neo-colonialism and linguistic imperialism are forces that can only be destroyed and driven into oblivion through greater usage of indigenous languages.

At present, Zimbabwe as a nation desperately needs a “final push” towards the total de-colonization of the minds through the use of indigenous languages. The fervency demonstrated in the Agrarian Reform must be transferred to the language question in Zimbabwe. The country needs a kind of a Fourth Chimurenga, a justifiable fight to defend its language, culture and nationhood. If Africans are serious about the development of the African continent, then they need to give greater currency to African languages. This however, can only happen if indigenous African languages play a role in the “business of government” that is, at the legislative, judicial and executive levels. African languages should be seen as viable media of instruction if they are to play a role in the greater society. Such an enhanced role is likely to lead to the development of a healthy language industry that would benefit the speakers of African languages and this is only likely to be realized if ordinary speakers of African languages assert their language rights and agitate for greater use of these languages.

The Chairman of the National Commission for UNESCO, on the occasion of the official opening of the Ministers’ Meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, held in Harare, Zimbabwe commented saying:

People think and dream in their own languages and express themselves fully in them. Is it indeed not too much to demand originality and creativity from a toddler in a particular language? Let us develop our languages territorially and extra-territorially, promote them, accord them recognition and status, use them in social, political and economic arenas and accept that multilingualism is enriching without breaking our states into tiny warring principalities. (UNESCO, 1998:121)

He further asserted that teachers should give attention to the question of the medium in which one’s thought process is encapsulated. African governments should therefore take the question of language policy seriously because it has been found out that there is not a single country in the world that has developed with a language that is foreign to the land and is unknown to the vast majority of its citizens. Unless African languages are used in the primary domains of official government business, that is legislative, executive and judicial, they are not going to be regarded with pride by those who use them and will continue to have a low status. More importantly,

failure to use them in these domains will result in marginalizing the majority of citizens of that particular country.

#### **1.4 STUDY OBJECTIVES**

- To find out the number of languages spoken in Zimbabwe
- To examine the attitudes of Zimbabweans towards the use of indigenous African languages as official media of instruction in education
- To assess efforts by language associations, institutes and organizations in the promotion of African languages in Zimbabwe
- To examine people's attitudes towards the orthography harmonization programme in Zimbabwe

#### **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study was carried out to examine the attitudes of Zimbabweans towards the use of African languages as media of instruction in education. The study examined the opinions of learners; teachers, lecturers and parents with regard the efficacy of introducing local indigenous African languages as media of instruction in education. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, structured and non-structured interviews, participant observation and document analysis. Results were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Findings from this study can significantly contribute to the promotion of democracy in the country since use of local languages will widen the democratic base of society and ensure wider people participation in national politics and development.

#### **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

##### **1.6.1 Main Research Question**

What is the attitude of Zimbabweans towards the use of indigenous African languages as official media of instruction in education?

##### **1.6.2 Sub-Research Questions**

- (a) To what extent can indigenous African languages be used as media of instruction in education?
- (b) What are the socio-economic advantages of using indigenous African languages as official media of instruction in education?
- (c) What are people's attitudes towards the language harmonization programme in Zimbabwe?
- (d) What is the role of government institutions, language associations and organizations in the development of African languages in Zimbabwe?

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This section focuses on research design, population sample, research instruments and data collection procedures. The research data was collected during field trips to areas that the researcher was able to visit in the ten provinces of Zimbabwe. Data was collected by interviewing various people who included teachers, lecturers, pupils, students and parents. In addition to these interviews, that is the verbal and telephonic, questionnaires were administered to all the above-mentioned research participants. The collected data will be presented, analyzed and discussed fully in Chapters 4 and 5.

In an effort to cover as much of the country as possible, the researcher engaged student research assistants who collected information during the January-March 2008 semester break. The researcher also spent a lot of time observing how indigenous languages were being used in educational institutions of Zimbabwe. These observations were carried out from February to April 2008 and the aim was to assess the extent to which indigenous African languages were being used as languages of instruction in education.

The researcher also took advantage of the information and help, which was given freely by officials from the two Ministries of Education; Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture and Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, who interestingly showed a lot of interest in the educational language policy of Zimbabwe. In some instances, lively

discussions with language experts were held and the study profited much from these informal and semi-formal debates.

The data in this study was also gathered through the use of questionnaires and analysis of curriculum documents. The interviews allowed the researcher to probe deeper into some of the questions. Analysis of curriculum documents such as syllabi, schemes and teaching notes was done to establish the official policy with regards the use of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe's education system. The questionnaires and interviews with teachers, lecturers, parents and learners aimed at finding out the attitudes of Zimbabweans towards the use of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in education.

Findings from interviews clearly showed the efforts being made by the different language associations and institutes towards the development of African languages in Zimbabwe. Discussions carried out during interviews also focused on pre- and post-colonial language policy and practice. Attention was also given to the influence of colonial language policies on language practice in Zimbabwe. Questions on the three questionnaires for teachers, parents and learners elicited information on how language could facilitate development. The objective was to establish whether there is a close relationship between language, education and development.

### **1.7.1 The Design**

The descriptive survey method was used to collect primary data required in the study. It was found to be the most appropriate design for a study of this nature because Leedy (1993:67) says the design involves looking at phenomena of the moment with intense accuracy. It is sometimes referred to as the normative survey method since it regards what is observed within a given time and space as normal especially when the event occurs under the same conditions. It also affords the researcher the opportunity to participate as he or she observes phenomena.

The study was basically qualitative in nature and the researcher had to carefully record what was observed and discussed during interviews. Results obtained were quantified and finally described. The method used naturally places itself into the

ethnographic approach, which fits appropriately into the qualitative research paradigm. Ethnography relies heavily on observations and interviewing of participants to discover patterns and their meanings.

Borg and Gall (1996:315) state that the information from the descriptive survey method can be used to answer research questions by describing what exists. The main research question in this study is stated as follows: What is the attitude of black Zimbabweans towards the use of indigenous African languages as official media of instruction in education?

### **1.7.2 Population and Sampling**

According to Chiromo (2006), population refers to all the individuals, units, objects or events that will be considered in a research project. In this study, the population comprised of teachers, lecturers, pupils, students, parents and guardians. Representative samples from each target group were selected in all the ten administrative provinces of Zimbabwe to participate in the study. The provinces from which the samples were selected are; Masvingo, Manicaland, Midlands, Harare, Bulawayo, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Matebeleland North and Matebeleland South.

Sampling is a way of selecting a given number of persons from a defined population as representative of that population (Borg and Gall, 1996; Chiromo 2006). When sampling, the researcher draws a representative sample from a large population as this saves time and expenses incurred if one had to study the whole population. The other advantage is that the researcher reaches conclusions about an entire population by studying only a small sample. In this study, stratified random sampling was used to select the research informants from the ten administrative provinces of Zimbabwe. A sample size of 1 000 people (100 from each province) participated in the study. From each province, data was collected from school pupils, teachers, college students, university students, lecturers, and parents.

### **1.7.3 Background information on the research participants**

The table below shows the distribution of participants by sex.



**Table 1.1: Distribution of informants by sex (N=1000)**

| <b>Category</b>    | <b>Male</b>         | <b>Female</b>       | <b>Number</b>       |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Learners           | 321                 | 179                 | 500                 |
| Parents            | 140                 | 160                 | 300                 |
| Teachers/lecturers | 88                  | 112                 | 200                 |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>549 (54, 9%)</b> | <b>451 (45, 1%)</b> | <b>1 000 (100%)</b> |

Figures in the above table show that a total of 549 (54, 9%) males and 451 (45, 1%) females participated as informants in the study. There was a conscious effort on the part of the researcher to strive for gender equity and balance throughout the whole study. Furthermore, participants' level of education was distributed as shown in the tables that follow.

**Table 1.2: Level of education – learners (N = 500)**

| <b>Level</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Primary      | 136           | 27,2              |
| Secondary    | 222           | 44,4              |
| Tertiary     | 142           | 28,4              |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>500</b>    | <b>100</b>        |

**Table 1.3: Level of education – teachers/lecturers (N = 200)**

| <b>Level</b>        | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Untrained           | 30            | 15                |
| Diploma/Certificate | 18            | 9                 |
| Bachelors degree    | 69            | 34,5              |
| Masters degree      | 68            | 34                |
| Doctoral degree     | 15            | 7,5               |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>200</b>    | <b>100</b>        |

Figures in Table 1.2 above, show that 44, 4% of the respondents were learners from secondary schools. In Table 1.3, a total of 170 out of 200 teachers/lecturers were trained at various levels of the teaching profession. In the trained teachers category, 152 (76%) attained a degree qualification with 68 (34%) being holders of Masters Degrees. A total of 15 (7, 5%) are holders of Doctoral Degrees. This shows that informants in this study were from different levels of the academic and professional hierarchy.

Results shown in Table 1.4 below show that most of the parents who participated in this study were literate.

**Table 1.4: Level of education – parents (N = 300)**

| Level               | Number     | Percentage  |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| Below 'O' Level     | 48         | 16          |
| 'O' level           | 88         | 29,3        |
| 'A' Level           | 22         | 7,3         |
| Diploma/Certificate | 79         | 26,3        |
| Bachelors degree    | 39         | 13,1        |
| Masters degree      | 24         | 8           |
| Doctoral            | 0          | 0           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>300</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Only 63 (31, 5%) parents who participated in this study were degreed but with none having attained a Doctoral Degree. Those in the less educated category, 48 (16%) have obtained qualifications below the 'O' Level certificate. The demography of participants shows that all key stakeholders in Zimbabwe's education system were proportionally represented in this study.

#### **1.7.4 Research Instruments**

- (a) The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a form prepared and distributed to respondents to secure responses to certain questions (Borg and Gall, 1996:320). Furthermore, Chikoko and Mhloyi (1995:69) say questionnaires make it possible for the researcher to measure what a person knows, likes, or dislikes and what he or she thinks about an idea. A questionnaire is therefore a series of carefully planned and appropriately worded questions or items on a specific subject set down on paper and provided with spaces where the respondent can fill in the answers or select the answer by putting a mark in the appropriate space. In this study the questionnaire was used to extract data that was embedded deep in people's minds or within their attitudes, feelings or reactions. This instrument enabled the researcher to cover a wide area at minimum expense in money, time and effort. The instrument also allowed greater uniformity in the way the questions were asked and this enhanced comparability of the responses. The questionnaire instrument was self-administered and this gave the researcher and his assistants an opportunity to explain to the participants, the purpose of the research and other items that needed clarification.

(b) The Interview

Collins et al (2000:177) define an interview as "...a face to face meeting between two or more people in which the interviewer asks questions while the respondent answers back". This technique was also used to collect data in this study. Its main advantage is that it is flexible and adaptable to individual situations. It was used as the second instrument to cater for the weaknesses of the questionnaire. The interview method enabled the researcher to probe in where vague or inadequate answers were given by respondents. It also allowed the researcher to remain in command of the situation throughout the investigation. Face to face and telephone interviews were the types that were used in this study. All the interviews were audio recorded and conducted in Shona, Ndebele or English to suit the different linguistic backgrounds of the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes.

(c) Document Analysis

Documents in the different educational institutions written in vernacular were examined. This analysis helped to provide a useful framework to place the findings from the data obtained from interviews and questionnaires into perspective.

(d) Observation

According to Chiromo (2006:44), observation as a research technique consists of gathering impressions of the surrounding world through relevant human faculties. The technique has an advantage of not interfering with the people being studied. In other words, the hallmark of observation is non-interventionism. It has a shortcoming though in that it relies exclusively on the researcher's perceptions, which makes it more susceptible to bias.

### **1.7.7 Piloting**

In this research, a pilot study was carried out to test questionnaires and interview schedules so that they could be revised where necessary. A pilot study provides the researcher with ideas, approaches and clues not foreseen prior to the study (Neuman, 2003). The pilot study was used to test the usability of the questionnaires and interview schedules and to identify possible problems likely to be encountered when collecting data.

First, the researcher had to seek written permission to carry out research in Zimbabwe's educational institutions from the two ministries of education namely; Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture and Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. Since the research centered on government language policy, the researcher had to be cleared by the respective Ministers through their Permanent Secretaries. The permission and clearance to carry out research was finally granted during the month of October 2006. These clearance letters greatly facilitated the researcher's entry into all the selected institutions of learning.

The pilot study was carried out in the Gweru urban district where 100 participants randomly selected from the Midlands State University, Mkoba Teachers' College;

Gweru Poly-Technical College, Senga Primary School, and Fletcher High School were used for purposes of collecting data. Informants from the pilot district sample were to a large extent representative of the entire study sample to allow validation of the research instruments.

Primary data sources in this pilot study were interviews and questionnaires. The researcher also carried out informal conversational interviews, which greatly assisted him to learn about participants' experiential reality. During the pilot study, the researcher would take down notes in a field journal. Characterizing the informal interviews were open-ended, in-depth and probing questions. With granted permission from the participants, the researcher tape-recorded some of the interviews to get what Dzimiri (2004:42) calls "a correct, verbatim record essential for analysis."

Furthermore, he employed semi-structured interviews that provided more structured questions that focused on specific study objectives. Appendix D gives the interview questions that were used as a guide. As for the participants who portrayed visible signs of discomfort with audio-taping during interviews, the researcher relied more on inscriptions and word cues that he made in the field note book, and later fleshed out the notes to produce detailed descriptions soon after when it was quiet and away from the participants. Activities during the pilot study included, among others, filling in questionnaires, lesson observations, formal interviews, informal interviews, group discussions, and archival research in centers of documentation.

### **1.7.8 Data Analysis Procedures**

Processing of collected data was both qualitative and quantitative. Simple quantitative methods of data processing and analysis such as tables were used. However, the researcher, in most cases would describe in detail the results obtained from the different instruments. Percentages and frequencies were also used to analyze data. In an effort to process information from statements that required some ranking to be done, ranks 1 to 3 were considered to reflect a positive response whereas the categories disagree, slightly disagree and strongly disagree were considered to reflect a negative response. Information from both the questionnaires

and interviews was processed qualitatively as well as quantitatively with the aid of a computer. The tallying system for example was used to determine the frequency of common responses. The total number (N) for each coded category was entered in one column and respective percentages (%) in the other column as shown in the results chapters.

### **1.7.7 Time Frame**

This study was conducted over a period of four years from January 2005 to March 2008. Data was collected from October 2007 to March 2008. During fieldwork, the researcher devoted five days to each visited province to enable him to spend as much time as possible with the teachers, pupils, lecturers and students.

## **1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The debate on the role of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe's education system is not a novel one. Scholars such as Ngara (1982); Chiwome and Thondhlana (1992); Chimhundu (1998) and Mutasa (2004) have contributed significantly in this regard. However, the most significant contribution to language policy and planning in Zimbabwe was made by Emmanuel Ngara (1982). His study is an invaluable reference work for teachers and students that specialize in Southern African languages. Ngara is of the opinion that in a developing country like Zimbabwe, English or any other imported language of wider communication and the local languages should always complement each other. Chiwome and Thondhlana (1992) agree with Ngara (1982) that the coming of independence to Zimbabwe gave rise to a general cultural awareness and change of policy in language and education. Zimbabwe like most African countries is now putting more emphasis on African languages than was the case under colonialism though unfortunately it does not have a clear language policy, hence the need to carry out this study. This study aims to influence the thinking of the people of Zimbabwe and their Government positively in this regard and to guide them in adopting a comprehensive language policy which is in line with the goals of independence and nationhood.

Ngara (1982:128) recommends that:

The medium of education at the primary school level be the child's mother, in

so far as mother tongue here is understood to mean any of the three official languages of the nation...at secondary and higher levels English be the language of instruction.

This study challenges the above recommendation by strongly arguing for the use of indigenous African languages at all levels of the education system. Another weakness in Ngara's research to be corrected by this study was his inability to conduct a language survey on a larger scale due to the political situation that prevailed at the time he conducted his research. His analysis was therefore done on limited data.

Bamgbose (1989:27) asserts that at present, there is nothing in existence that may be called a theory of language planning. What we have currently is a growing consensus on the elements that should go into a model of language planning. However, language planning has certainly made great strides in the last two decades. Models of language planning have been established and refined and language-planning activities in several countries have been analyzed and described (Rubin and Jernudd, 1971; Fishman, 1974a; Haugen, 1969; Bamgbose, 1989). It is therefore necessary to examine the theoretical underpinnings of language planning in Africa that guided research activities for this study.

### **1.8.1 Language Planning Ideologies**

Ideological orientations are very important because they help to delimit the way a researcher views language and in this study, the different philosophical perspectives affected the basic questions that were raised and the conclusions that were drawn from the study. Language planning is usually influenced by the manner in which language planners view language. Ruiz (1984:4) defines ideological orientation to language planning as a complex of dispositions towards language and its role in society. He identifies three types of ideological orientations to language planning namely:

- Language as a problem
- Language as a right
- Language as a resource

(a) Language as a problem

In this ideology, language is viewed as a problem to communication or an obstacle standing in the way of incorporation of members of linguistic minorities into the mainstream. Thus, the language as a problem approach to language planning focuses mainly on problem solving, that is, it seeks to identify language problems and formulate alternatives for solving them. According to Haugen (1972:512), language planning is called for whenever there are language problems with no foreseeable program of language planning.

Although several scholars support this approach to language planning, its use is not without controversy. The first controversy is with regard to the question of what constitutes a language problem, followed by how are the language problems identified and finally how they are resolved. The quest to identify language problems is based on the assumption that language problems are universal phenomena, which occur in a large variety of forms (Ruiz, 1984:18). Although the identification of language problems has received much attention in language planning literature, there seems to be a problem with regards the definition of this concept. For example, a language planner trained in the European school tends to view monolingualism as the norm and multilingualism as a problem. On the other hand, an African language planner might see monolingualism as a problem and multilingualism as the norm.

Various types of language problems have been identified and these can be divided into two main categories viz linguistic and non-linguistic problems. In Canada for example, in the province of Quebec, the move to replace English with French in official domains and work places was not motivated by linguistic factors but by the aim to redress unequal access to work opportunities (Rubin and Shuy, 1973:60). The official status given to the use of English is viewed by French speaking Canadians as effectively depriving them of access to better positions in work places while benefiting English speaking Canadians. Linguistic problems may be regarded as those problems that are mainly



concerned with the structure of the language or its use whereas non-linguistic problems are language problems that are found within the social and political framework (ibid). Therefore, any attempt to provide solutions to language problems should go beyond the language itself to the community in which the language is used.

(b) Language as a right

This ideology takes into account the existence and recognition of language rights in the language planning setting. In this approach, different social groups claim certain rights, which need to be reflected by language planning e.g. minority groups in a community, may demand certain linguistic rights to protect themselves from domination by majority groups. This approach to language planning focuses on the sentimental aspects of language which deal with the individual and group emotions, beliefs, convictions and values for their language (Mutasa, 2004:30). Language is seen as the right of an individual and this is in line with the 1996 Barcelona Universal Declaration on linguistic rights, which emphasized non-discrimination, pluralism and community initiatives in language use. Ruiz (1984:22) states that language rights denote the opportunity to “effective participation in government programs” which includes such aspects as bilingual unemployment benefit forms, bilingual voting materials and instructional pamphlets and interpreters. Mackey (1979:49) claims that language rights include “the right to use ethnic language in legal proceedings and the right to bilingual education”. Macias (1979:88) adds two kinds of language rights, the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of language and the right to use your language in the activities of communal life. Mother tongue medium education, according to Mackey (1979) is viewed as an inalienable right. When people’s linguistic rights are acknowledged, the full participation of minority groups in all national activities such as judicial and administrative proceedings, civil service, examinations, voting and public employment is guaranteed.

(c) Language as a resource

The language as a resource model describes every language as an asset or a treasure. Linguists nowadays tend to be capitalist in their thinking and they draw a comparison between languages and natural resources. Like natural resources, languages are potentially valuable financial assets. McKay and San Ling Wong summarize this paradigm of thinking as follows:

We believe that linguistic diversity is a valuable resource rather than a problem...Language resources, like natural resources should be wisely conserved and developed (McKay and San Ling Wong, 1988: vii).

The two authors argue further saying the value of indigenous languages, like that of natural resources such as minerals and wildlife depends on a nation's ability to exploit them financially. Like endangered plants or animal species, languages also fall victim to predators, changing environments or more successful competitors. All languages can be threatened by the spread of consumerism, new technologies, globalization and other Western values.

This ideological orientation to language planning describes every language as an asset or treasure. Language choices in this approach are made on strictly economic grounds in much the same way as other resources in the nation's economy are planned and consumed (Jernudd and Das Gupta (1971:197). It follows from this concept that language like any other commodity, is also subjected to cost benefit analysis in which the cost of a language selected for a particular purpose can be measured in terms of what could have been gained by the choice of another language for the same purpose.

Such a cost can be calculated in macro-terms for the entire community or in micro-terms for an individual language user. For example, what does a country gain or lose by adopting an indigenous language as opposed to an imported language as its national language? For the individual, what sacrifice is someone prepared to make for learning a language as measured against the rewards? Thornburn (1971:256) argues that language, like any other

commodity can be bought and sold. When treated as an investment, it is a potential asset whose yield can be compared with other yields in a portfolio. If language is viewed as a consumer good, the decision to buy will depend on whether the benefits derived from buying outweigh the costs (Ridler and Pons-Ridler, 1986:48). We note however in this study that there cannot be an exact fit between language as a resource and other kinds of resources. Language involves attitudes and behavior, which may not necessarily conform to rational economic behavior such as usually postulated for non-language resources. Admittedly, the language as resource is the most appropriate strategy in resolving language problems in a multilingual society. This approach can enhance the status of subordinate languages, which implies that minority language groups can contribute substantially to the development of a country through the use of their languages.

Language planning in Zimbabwe could benefit immensely from these ideological orientations hence the research was guided to a very large extent by these theoretical dispositions as the researcher tried to articulate the many aspects of language planning and policy discussed in the different sections of this study.

### **1.8.2 Types of Language Planning**

Language planning may be divided into different types and the following are the language planning types that can be identified: status language planning, corpus language planning and acquisition language planning.

Status planning is concerned with the standing of a language with respect to other languages or to the needs of a national government. The term status may be used to refer to a position in the respective system or ranking in a hierarchy. Kloss (1969:15) says status planning focuses on the language's standing alongside other languages whilst other scholars like Fishman (1974b:80) suggest that status planning be called function planning since it is mainly concerned with the function allocated to the language.

Acquisition planning is a type of planning which is aimed at increasing the number of speakers of a language. In other words, the language acquires new speakers who used not to speak it. Cooper (1989:40) says acquisition planning goals may be achieved through programs or types of acquisition planning designed to improve opportunity to learn, those designed primarily to create or to improve the incentives to learn.

Corpus planning mainly focuses on the nature of the language itself that is, its structure and form. Fishman (1971a:293) describes corpus planning as, “The authoritative creation of new terms, at least for purposes of daily life, including daily technology.”

Corpus planning involves two aspects namely: codification and elaboration. Codification includes processes such as graphisation, grammatication, lexication and harmonization where as elaboration is simply modernization. This study falls squarely into the status language planning type since it is an exploratory survey on the possibility of using indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in education.

### **1.8.3 Language Planning Models**

Globally, the most dominant model of language planning is the Canonical Model. This is the model that should serve as a guide to developing countries like Zimbabwe. The Canonical Model relates language planning to all other forms of planning found in a country. Goals and objectives are formulated in the direction of national development. This model of language planning presupposes the identification of some language problem through fact-finding, a plan of how to cope with the problem and the possible outcomes such as policy decision, implementation or evaluation. In this model, language planning is seen as a reflection of the planning model generally. As in “economic planning” goals are established, means are selected and outcomes are predicted in a systematic and explicit manner. Chumbow (1987:16-17) lists some of the main features of the Canonical Model as follows:

- (a) The model emphasizes fact finding in terms of relevant socio-linguistic surveys and profiles, demographic, cultural and political considerations as input to policy decisions.
- (b) Policy is arrived at from a judicious choice of the ideal policy from among carefully articulated policy alternatives.
- (c) Cost-benefit analysis is envisaged and undertaken as an internal part of policy formulation. Adoption of a policy means acceptance of financial implications.
- (d) A central agency such as a government authority is required to coordinate all planning activities and maximize all efforts directed towards national development.
- (e) The planning model of language planning is future oriented in two ways:
  - (i) Strategies and policies, as well as procedures, cost and outcomes are specified in advance of action taken to implement the policy.
  - (ii) Planners are prepared to concede the effort, time and resource as an investment in a project whose results lie in a long-term future expectation.

Language planning within the Canonical Model follows stages as shown by Haugen (1969); Fishman et al (1971); Jernudd (1973) and Chumbow (1982) below:

- Haugen 1969
  - 1) Selection of norm
  - 2) Codification of form
  - 3) Elaboration of function
  - 4) Propagation
- Fishman 1971a
  - 1) Policy formulation
  - 2) Codification and elaboration
  - 3) Implementation

- Jernudd 1973
  - 1) Determination (of policy)
  - 2) Development (of Norm)
  - 3) Implementation
  
- Chumbow 1982
  - 1) Policy formulation
  - 2) Policy implementation

In this study, Chumbow's stages of language planning were adopted. Chumbow argues that there are basically two main stages in language planning namely: policy formulation and policy implementation. However, each of these stages consists of a number of ordered processes as shown below:

- 1) Policy Formulation
  - Socio-linguistic fact finding input
  - Policy decisions
  - Outline of implementation
  - Cost benefit analysis of planning
  
- 2) Policy Implementation
  - Codification
  - Elaboration
  - Reforms
  - Dissemination
  - Evaluation

Decision-making is an essential aspect of language planning and decisions may affect the status of a language or the language corpus, and the decisions may occur at any point in the planning process. They may be taken at the policy formulation or implementation stage (Bamgbose, 1989:28).

Language planning decisions are of two types, that is, higher level and lower level. Higher-level decisions are fundamental decisions taken by the government. A decision, for example as to whether a language should be a national language or an official one or whether it should be used as a medium of instruction in the school system is properly a higher-level decision that may involve the head of government, the cabinet and the legislature. Higher-level decisions tend to be political and in general less amenable to rational planning. On the contrary, lower level decisions are those taken by ministry commissions and committees or private institutions such as publishing houses, media houses and business firms to work out for example at which level approved languages may be used as media of instruction in education or to choose a language to keep company records.

Given the multilingual nature of African nations and the level of linguistic complexity in a country like Zimbabwe, much more pre-implementation activity is necessary than in the planning models of Europe or America for instance where only one language is dominant. It is also important to evaluate at every stage so that each of the processes can be evaluated independently and within the context of the overall planning enterprise. It is therefore obvious that there is a gap between what the “Canonical Model” of language planning requires as planning and what is actually practised in Zimbabwe today. Areas of disparity between the requirements of language planning theory and actual practice of language planning in Zimbabwe are as follows:

- Policy decisions in a majority of cases are taken without the benefit of the socio-linguistic fact-finding that ought to serve as input to policy formulation.
- Language planning activities are the result of personal efforts of individuals and private organizations, often without government support.
- Efforts are uncoordinated because of lack of recognized central agency empowered to give direction to all efforts of standardization, literacy etc.
- Amateurs and well-meaning enthusiasts without relevant training and with no sense of orientation sometimes undertake language planning activities hence the products of their efforts cannot qualify as results of language planning.

- Projects are often abandoned mid-stream because of lack of funds, which in turn is the result of the lack of appropriate cost benefit analysis of the project and consequent allocation or appropriation of necessary funds.
- Objectives, procedures and methods of planning are not clearly defined and outlined, thus making evaluation of progress at every stage very difficult and sometimes impossible.

Bamgbose (1987:8) observes that one factor responsible for this state of affairs is the general mode of decision-making process in Africa. Most African governments are either one party state or military dictatorships and this is in contrast with parliamentary democracies where issues are thoroughly debated before they are passed into law. Such situations should be tolerated temporarily, but ultimately, research findings should be made available for a subsequent reason of these decisions where necessary. Language planning in Africa therefore must recognize the different models of decision-making including those not based on prior consideration of alternatives and implementation strategies.

This study calls for a modification of the Canonical Model of language planning so that it suits the needs of African governments. There is an attempt in this study to adopt and adapt the Canonical Model of language planning to the needs of language planning in Zimbabwe. Although the Canonical Model of language planning views fact finding as a pre-planning activity that helps to formulate policy, in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular policy formulation precedes the pre-policy fact finding process.

If at all there is going to be fact finding before formulation of policy, there is need to expand the scope of fact finding in the language planning process. Three kinds of fact finding namely; pre-policy, pre-implementation and intra-implementation will have to be taken into consideration.

- (i) Pre-policy fact-finding characterizes non-arbitrary policy decisions (Bamgbose, 1989:30). It is the same thing as initial fact-finding, which may take different forms, such as a survey of the language situation in a country with information on number of speakers, extent of bilingualism, domains of



language use, a description of the different dialects or a dialect continuum from which a standard is to be selected, an evaluation of the effectiveness of competing media of instruction, or an examination of language needs in specific domains. The important thing about pre-policy fact-finding is that it forms an input into the decision making process that leads to the formulation of policy.

- (ii) Pre-implementation fact-finding differs from pre-policy fact-finding precisely because it arises as part of the effort to carry out a declared policy. A good example would be the long awaited change from using English as medium of instruction to a ChiShona or IsiNdebele medium for all schools, colleges and universities in Zimbabwe. Fact-finding will be necessary to determine the number of institutions involved, teacher requirements, teaching material required and so forth.
- (iii) Intra-implementation fact-finding is carried out when problems arise in the process of implementing language policy decisions after pre-policy and pre-implementation fact-finding have taken place. For example, resistance to particular changes or measures may necessitate fresh fact-finding about attitudes of people towards proposed innovations.

Although decision-making processes in the Canonical Model involve rational planning, it is worth noting however, that there are also arbitrary decisions for which the process of fact finding only occurs in the course of implementation. Status planning based on previous enquiry and decisions based on a consideration of appropriate recommendations is rather an ideal and not the norm in Africa. According to Bamgbose (1991:69), most language policy decisions taken in several of the developing African countries, with their one-party states or military dictatorships are more appropriately styled planning by decree and Zimbabwe is no exception. Status decisions do not necessarily have to follow the pattern of Western democracies with their parliaments, commissions of enquiry, planning commissions and bureaucratic procedures. In Zimbabwe, status planning decisions are usually carried out by non-language experts usually politicians and the considerations involved in the decisions are quite often political rather than socio-linguistic.

An example in which Western democracies with their bureaucratic procedures have influenced language planning is the adoption of the Official Language Act in Canada (1969) that was preceded by the setting up of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 (Bamgbose, 1987:6-14). In contrast to the above, the situation in most of the developing countries is very different. Quite often, no preparatory steps are taken to identify problems, consider alternative solutions and forecast possible outcomes. Rather decisions are simply taken and one is confronted with the problems of implementation. Zambia for example had a language policy that allowed for mother tongue medium education at the primary school level which was abruptly replaced by an English medium policy in 1965 (Gorman, 1974:398). It was only after the decision had been taken that any consideration was given to how it should be carried out. After the decision, mechanisms had to be developed for implementing it at the primary level, where the medium had formerly been the mother tongue. Language planning in most African countries does not conform to the ideal Canonical Model described earlier on in this chapter. In Africa, arbitrary decisions and decrees are supposed to be implemented with immediate effect. Nigeria is one such example where Hausa was reintroduced as a medium of instruction in the North Western State. The official policy had been an English medium from the first year of the primary school but on 25 April 1972, the military Governor of the State simply announced the reintroduction of Hausa as one of the highlights of his 1972/73 Budget (*The Nigerian Daily Times*, 1972:14). Hausa was also introduced as a principal subject in Advanced Teachers Colleges and the Hausa colloquial examination was reintroduced for all civil servants.

In Kenya, the decision to adopt KiSwahili as the national language was taken by the Governing Council of the ruling political party via a resolution at a party meeting (Gorman, 1973). Implementation steps included the requirement that all Kenyans were to speak KiSwahili at all times with fellow Kenyans, that Government business was to be conducted in KiSwahili, that all civil servants were to be required to pass an examination in the language and that KiSwahili be given greater prominence than English in schools.

Another example is that of Somalia. With three types of script (Latin, Arabic and indigenous) successive governments before the 1969 Revolution were completely

powerless to decide on a common script. However, on 21 October, 1972, the supreme Revolutionary Council decided in favor of the Latin script and proceeded to take measures to enforce it (Chumbow, 1987:15-22). Leaflets showing the new alphabet were dropped from helicopters. Civil servants and members of the armed forces were required to learn the new script within three months and the medium of all primary education was to become Somali instead of the former English in the north and Italian in the south. This revolutionary action hardly fits the Canonical Model of language planning. The Canonical Model of language planning has to be modified so as to take due cognizance of language planning practices all over the world. The ideal "neat pattern" of the Canonical Model has to be watered down so that it embraces a wide range of language activities at different levels involving governmental and non-governmental efforts. This approach is likely to make language planning a more meaningful and fruitful field of study.

This study acknowledges that the ideal Canonical Model of language planning is inadequate for Zimbabwe because it does not account for a lot of language planning situations particularly in the developing countries of the world. Furthermore, language activities in developing countries show that the Model cannot account for many developments in language policy thus it should be modified if language planning as a field of study is to be relevant to most language situations in Africa particularly in Zimbabwe.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

It is important that terms used in this study are given contextual definitions.

*Official Language* – is the language of government business and administration in a country. This business includes, for example, the civil service, formal education, the judiciary and the commercial sector.

*Lingua Franca* – is common language used or communication by people who speak different languages.

*Mother Tongue* – refers to the primary language a child learns as a medium of communication before going to school. It is the language with which a child feels most comfortable. A mother tongue is the language a person, is taught to speak from birth.

*Indigenous Language* – is a language that carries the history and culture of a given society or country. Imported languages such as English, French and Portuguese are not included in this category.

*National Language* – refers to an indigenous language given recognized status by a national government for use in various specified domains within the country.

*Language of Wider Communication* – refers to a language that facilitates communication among people from different linguistic backgrounds and nationalities.

*Dialect* – is a variation of a given language used by particular groups of people. Each dialect often has distinct vocabularies, pronunciation and spellings.

*Language Planning* – refers to an explicit and systematic effort to resolve (perceived) language problems and achieve related goals through institutionally organized intervention in the use and usage of languages.

*Status Planning* – is concerned with the role given to a language. It may involve the maintenance, extension or restriction of the range of uses of a language for particular functions, or even the introduction of an official language. It is usually carried out by non-language experts, usually politicians and the considerations involved in the decisions are quite often political rather than socio-linguistic.

*Corpus Planning* – is concerned with the language material and may involve vocabulary expansion, changes in language structures, simplification of registers, orthographic innovation, pronunciation, style and preparation of language material.

*Medium of Instruction* – is the language used for teaching the various school subjects such as History, Science, and Mathematics in schools. It may or may not be the

official language of the country. English for example can be used as the medium of instruction in schools in Portuguese speaking countries though Portuguese is the official language.

*Standardization* – refers to the process of making a language or dialect conform to a fixed standard, shape, quality and type. It is the formalization of a language according to specific norms of spelling and pronunciation.

*Orthography* – is the writing system of a language. This includes the selection of a script and the spelling of the language.

## **1.10 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter begins by outlining the nature of the problem giving its historical background. Study objectives, methodology, theoretical framework, limitations and delimitations are also discussed. Finally, the key terms used in the study are precisely defined.

### **Chapter 2: Language and Development: An African Perspective**

This chapter gives a theoretical analysis of how language can facilitate development. The objective is to demonstrate that there is a close relationship between language and development and that meaningful development cannot take place where linguistic barriers exist.

### **Chapter 3: Language Policies in Zimbabwe: A Historical Overview**

This chapter discusses language policies in pre and post independence Zimbabwe with particular attention given to language policies in education. The chapter begins by placing Zimbabwe's language policy in a wider African context, which unfortunately is dominated by the use of European languages in both the educational

and the business sectors. What follows is a discussion of the language use patterns and status of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe.

#### **Chapter 4: Findings-Data Presentation and Analysis**

The chapter presents and analyses the data gathered on the attitudes of Zimbabweans towards the use of the mother tongue as the official medium of instruction in education. An evaluation of the efforts being made by language associations and institutes towards the development of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe is also made.

#### **Chapter 5: Discussion**

In this chapter the researcher discusses the findings from both the questionnaires and interviews. A comparison is made during the discussion between similar studies carried elsewhere and this present study noting similarities and differences.

#### **Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the study based on the findings, analysis and discussion presented in Chapter 4. The chapter also outlines recommendations meant to enhance the use and development of African languages in Zimbabwe.

### **1.11 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the area of investigation was clearly outlined and the study objectives were stated in very clear terms. A variety of methods used to collect data were presented and the research design selected for this particular study together with the data gathering procedures were discussed. In addition, the theoretical framework that guided the researcher was examined. The next chapter discusses the relationship between language and development. It is argued in this coming chapter that there is a very close relationship between language and development.

## CHAPTER 2

### LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENT: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

“Language is an emblem that switches an individual from misery to plenty, from backwardness to progress and from backwaters to the centre of life” (Hurskainen, 2002:22)

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the study discusses how language can facilitate development. The objective is to demonstrate that there is a close relationship between language and development and that meaningful development cannot take place where linguistic barriers exist. It is further argued in this section that the present situation in most African countries particularly Southern Africa, slows down development since the parties involved in the development process cannot interact effectively. Through language, one begins to understand the idiosyncrasies of a people and their culture. Stripped of their language, a people cannot reach their full cultural and intellectual self-actualization. Language is therefore an important tool that people can use in grappling with concepts and ideas in their quest to improve their conditions.

The questioning of the usage of African languages in social intercourse at all levels of activity in Africa has become a hotly debated issue. Throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, the use of European languages of the former colonial masters is increasingly coming under serious and close scrutiny in as far as they enhance or arrest the processes of education, literacy, mass communication and development in Africa. European languages in Africa have tended to be associated with the elite and have so far failed to reach the rural population and urban underclass in any structurally coherent or scientifically viable form.

An understanding of the role of African languages in development should begin with a definition of the concept of development that all parties concerned can agree on. Development in Africa can never be achieved without serious considerations of the role of African languages. The Dutch scholar Hilbert Kuik cited in Prah (1993:16) aptly expresses absence of serious considerations of the role of African languages in

African development saying that when people speak of developing countries, they immediately think of economic backwardness.

## **2.2 THE MEANING OF DEVELOPMENT**

The term “development” is an elusive term meaning different-things to different groups of social scientists. Economic development is defined as changes in the use of resources that result in potentially continuing growth of national income per head in a society with increasing or stable population (Machlup, 1967). On the other hand, Goutlet (1971:23) defines underdevelopment as “...a sense of personal and societal impotence in the face of disease and death, of confusion and ignorance as one gropes to understand change” Because the term may mean different things to different people, it is important at the outset that some working definition or core perspective on its meaning is provided. Without such a perspective and some agreed on measurement criteria, it would be difficult to meaningfully discuss the relationship between language and development in this section.

The notion of development, which currently for obvious reasons is an overriding concern for African societies, is closely tied up with culture. The general contemporary discourse on African development has tended to overemphasize concerns with Gross National Product, Gross Domestic Product and Per Capita figures at the expense of non-economic criteria. If culture is scientifically conceived as the basis of all social activity, encompassing the economic, political, historical and psychological dimensions of human existence, it is then understandable that development cannot be properly conceptualized on essentially economic indices alone. Development must be reflected in all areas of human activity and its manifestation in the economy must be reflected in the other facets of social life, language included. While development planning and implementation may have in a specific instance an economic thrust or point of focus, its ultimate destination and impact is certainly wider and affects all areas including the social and cultural life of a society (Prah, 1993:21). In any case, few will deny the fact that economic advancement in itself cannot be understood to constitute societal advancement if it is not translated into quality of life and overall culture of a society. In other words, economic progress in society must manifest itself or rather is supposed to manifest



itself in the upliftment of the human condition. Kokora is perfectly justified in regarding the collective participation of the largest majority as a reliable indicator of development when he says:

A nation is considered to be developed when the vast majority of its inhabitants are offered the opportunity to take part in the development activities and also given the possibility of benefiting from the end products of the development process (Kokora cited in Silue, 2000:9).

The use of indigenous languages in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World must also be seen as a process, which empowers the masses, by giving them a voice in society and a window on to the wider world.

Development thinking in Africa in particular has been largely influenced by perspectives and models from Europe, which view development in the context of the catching up, trickle – down and modernization theories or westernization (Harrison, 1980; Verhelst, 1989; Makuvaza, 1998). These theories largely maintain that the underdeveloped nations display backwardness in comparison with the rich countries. The poor countries need to go through the same stages of development as the rich ones. Implied in the theories is the view that the North has reached the zenith of development, hence Makuvaza argues that:

What can further be deduced from the perspective is that development is unachievable, systematically elusive and a mirage for the not-yet developed countries. Unachievable (sic) because, as the South struggles to catch up, the North continues to advance (Makuvaza, 1998:40).

Some popular beliefs about development and underdevelopment are in actual fact stereotypes and assumptions about Zimbabwean cultures, which originate in colonial history. These imperial myths are part of a wider process of keeping indigenous people and their cultures in acquiescent positions. They are generated to camouflage unfair social, economic and political practices (Chiwome and Gambahaya, 1998:100). These myths stemming from outside the African community are handed down to the people at the grassroots through state institutions. It is therefore useful and necessary to take a wider look at development and some of its key constructs, since it cannot be limited in scope to economic aspects of life.

It has often been pointed out that development is a loaded construct that connotes economic indices in the first instance, followed by conformity with “modernization” and its characteristics such as universalism, centralization, and emphasis on individual achievement, scientific knowledge and technological progress (Harlech – Jones, 2001:28). Regrettably, national development cannot be limited in scope to socio – economic development. A wider and more satisfactory conception of national development is that which sees it as total human development. In this model of development, the emphasis is on a full realization of the human potential and a maximum utilization of the nation’s resources for the benefit of all.

Ansre (1971:18) argues that national development comprises of four elements namely: economic development, politico-judicial development, intellectual and educational development. In all these, he claims that the role of language is crucial. A minority official language at its best will only produce a wealthy few whilst on the other hand; a language shared by many should ensure greater productivity and fairer distribution. Law for example, can only be just and meaningful if the language in which it is couched is accessible to all. Development, whether socio-cultural, intellectual or educational, needs to have its roots in the language of the community.

However, some scholars continue to view development as an economic phenomenon. Todaro and Smith (2003:85) define development in strictly economic terms as the capacity of a national economy to generate and sustain an actual increase in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rates of perhaps 5% to 7% or more. But the experience of the late twentieth century, when many developing nations did realize their economic growth targets, but the levels of living of the masses of people remained for the most part unchanged, signaled that something was very wrong with this narrow definition of development.

During the 1970s, development came to be redefined in terms of the reduction or elimination of poverty, inequality and unemployment within the context of a growing economy. The usual questions to ask about a country’s development are the following:

- What has been happening to poverty?
- What has been happening to inequality?
- What has been happening to unemployment? (Seers, 1999:3)

If all three of these have declined, from high levels, then beyond doubt, this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development even if Per Capita Income doubled.

The World Bank took a broader perspective of the term development when in its 1999 *World Development Report*, it stated that development should be perceived as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of poverty. In essence, it must represent the whole gamut of change, an entire social system and desires of individuals and social groups within that system. It must move away from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory toward a situation or conditions of life regarded as materially and spiritually better (Todaro and Smith, 2003:116). Economic growth cannot be sensibly treated as an end in itself, thus development according to Sen (1999:27) has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy. He further argues that values such as, being adequately nourished, being free from avoidable disease being able to take part in the life of the community and having self-respect are basic elementary components of development.

Development implies change and the concept of development usually, is used to describe the process of economic and social transformation within a country. Goutlet (1971:8) outlines three basic components or core values in this wider meaning of development. These are life-sustenance, self-esteem and freedom. Life-sustenance is concerned with the provision of basic needs, thus no country can be regarded as fully developed if it cannot provide its entire population with such basics needs as housing, clothing, food and minimal education (Thirlwall, 1994:20). The major objective of development is therefore to raise people out of primary poverty and to provide basic needs simultaneously. The second basic component, self-esteem, is

concerned with the feeling of self-respect and independence. No country can be regarded as fully developed if others exploit it and does not have the power and influence to conduct relations on equal terms. The third component, freedom refers to freedom from the three evils of want, ignorance and squalor so that people are more able to determine their own destiny. No human being is free if he/she cannot choose and if also he/she is imprisoned by living on the margin of subsistence with no education and no skills (ibid).

Development can only occur when there has been an improvement in basic needs, when economic progress has contributed to a greater sense of self – esteem for the country and individuals within it and when material development has expanded the range of choice for individuals. Furtado (1970:71) claims that per capita income ( the total gross national product of a country divided by the total population) is the best single index to measure development for it has one positive advantage, namely that it focuses on the raising of living standards and the eradication of poverty (raison de être). Developing countries mostly in Asia, Africa and South America, defined so on the basis of a per capita income level are characterized by a high proportion of the labor force engaged in agriculture and low agricultural productivity, a high proportion of domestic expenditure on food and necessities; an export trade dominated by primary goods, a low level of technology; high birth rates coupled with falling death rates and savings undertaken by a small percentage of the people (Thirlwall, 1994:23).

However, there are other measures of development that make reference to non – economic social indicators such as gains in literacy, schooling, health conditions and services and provision of housing. In spite of the varied and conflicting interpretations, the consensus seems to be that development should improve people's standards of living as perceived by the target people. Development does not just involve the narrow-minded calculation of GDPs, GNPs and per capita incomes, but the complete transformation of the socio-cultural, political and economic belief systems of a particular society to suit its present needs (Fishman, 1989:26). The definition of development depends therefore on the context in which the word is used. Commenting on its multifacetedness, Kishor says:

It is a multidimensional process involving changes in social structures, acceleration of economic growth, improvement of quality of life and reduction of inequalities (Kishe, 2003:219).

On the contrary, the West has a tendency to think of development in strictly economic terms as “the path towards the maximization of goods and services per head” (Mountjoy, 1973:21). It is also understood as implying a state of underdevelopment and poverty of the poor countries as compared to the rich. In this context, development would be taken as a way of liberating oneself from underdevelopment while at the same time trying to catch up with the developed nations. In this catch-up theory, there is the notion that the West has already reached the zenith and hence it should monitor the development process in the Third World countries.

The above view appears to be based on a rather distorted view that the person has been made insignificant by things. What matters is the amount of goods produced or the profit margin. This Western perspective with its exclusive emphasis on economic growth is one that is being challenged in this study. This study totally rejects the narrow scope of the definition and the related implications on Third World countries. While economic progress is an essential component of development, on its own it is not a sufficient indicator. Mountjoy (ibid) points out that development is no simple straightforward process of economics but it strikes at the very roots of social and institutional patterns. It means fundamental changes in society, in ways of life, in political and institutional patterns and the grasping of new concepts and new sets of ideas.

From an African viewpoint, development should be complete, total and should affect the basic structures of society. The tendency to develop is inherent in all societies since every nation strives after development of one form or another. National development should always respond to the existential and expectations of society.

Since the needs of societies are not identical, no country is justified in either imposing its conception on another or disposing another development model. In the same vein, no country should unnecessarily copy, imitate or even adopt wholesale development patterns from other countries. The West has no right to force the Third

World to adopt in full or in part their conceptions and models of development, a stance they cunningly pursue through aid. Alexander says:

Each nation's path to development is to a certain degree unique. The individual characteristics of each country will determine what strategy of economic development its leaders will adopt (Alexander, 1976:19).

The underlining fact is that development is a multi-dimensional process involving changes in attitudes, structure and institutions in a given society. Each development paradigm therefore should speak to the unique existential circumstances of the particular nation. Third World countries should map out their development models and strategies guided by their needs. Where countries need assistance, they should get it without conditions that determine the course of development. A good model of development concretely addresses the needs of the people concerned.

There is need therefore for Africa to re-examine current dominant paradigms and perspectives of development with a view to moulding a new model, which evolves from African cultures. This study holds the view that development is total, processual, multifaceted, concrete, empowering, and also that "the purpose of development should not be to develop things but man" (Harrison, 1980:41). Africa needs home based strategies and models of development thus it should therefore desist from continuously turning to the West, which may be quite underdeveloped in terms of human values. There is neither reason nor justification for Africans to continue copying models from Europe and America.

### **2.3 THE ROLE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN DEVELOPMENT**

This section aims to discuss how language can facilitate development. The objective is to demonstrate that there is a close relationship between language and development and that meaningful development cannot take place where linguistic barriers exist. It is argued in this section that the present situation in most African countries particularly Southern Africa where communication relies heavily on foreign languages, slows down development since the parties involved in the development process cannot interact effectively (Kishe, 2003:220). Development in Africa can never be achieved without serious considerations of the role of African languages in

social, educational, economic and political processes (Prah, 1993; Chessa, 2001; Webb, 2002).

Development initiatives and projects couched in European languages for use by African masses have little chance of firm and meaningful implantation or acceptance. Such approaches, according to Prah (1993:30) ignore indigenous thought structures and reinforce neo-colonialism. He further argues that even the elite, which has facility in the usage of European languages, is not sufficiently well grounded in these languages to be able to technologically and scientifically create. The whole effort and discussion on African development through scientific and technological advancement must therefore be seen to have a possibility of take off, only if and when development on the basis of African culture is placed at the center.

This implies the elevation of African languages to a vehicular position in the exercise. African development cannot obviate African culture, the culture of the masses; rather it must sustain it and build on it. Scientific knowledge and practice must build on what has been formed within the culture of African people. Failure to do this reduces Africans to mere consumers of artifacts produced in the Developed World (ibid). Since the rural masses do not know European languages, obviously the best way of reaching them educationally for purposes of science and technological development is in their languages. Concepts and terminology in science should be constructed within indigenous languages and should engage the reality in which the rural population lives. Knowledge for the masses, must be knowledge which speaks to the masses in an idiom they know well, an idiom which is native to them.

Language is the key instrument of communication but it is also the principal means of establishing and sustaining social relations. Durkheim's view in this regard is worth noting. He asserts: "...without language, essentially a social thing, general or abstract ideas are practically impossible, as are all the higher mental functions" (Trudgill, 1986:19). Durkheim goes on to say that the system of concepts with which we think in everyday life is that expressed by the vocabulary of our mother tongue, for every word translates a concept. Language permits the process of socialization, and its precise usage is particularly crucial to education. Language structures our reality. It is possible to say that our command of language in general and vocabulary in particular

bears a direct relationship with the sophistication and intricacy of our perception of reality. We see and understand as much as our linguistic ability permits. Sapir asserts that:

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, alone on the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the “real world” is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group ... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation (Sapir, 1929:214).

While reality itself is universal, the world of affective reality, that is the language in which such phenomena are perceived and the structure of what is perceived, are historically and culturally bound. Each language has its own audience; the ultimate population base of the culture which that language defines. A specific language provides the key with which the speaker unlocks the heritage of a particular culture within which a language is constructed. Languages are thus specific cultural packages with relevance tied to definite histories and societies (Prah, 1993:45).

Language and development are so interrelated that it is impossible to talk about development without mentioning language. This is because language is often regarded as an integrating force, a means by which participation is facilitated or prevented. It is a vital tool in the promotion of nationalism. As such, it holds the key to the establishment of true democracy and equality (ibid). Since development is a process that involves the entire spectrum of the society with each individual making a contribution, the transfer of skills, new knowledge and any other vital information desired to effect production of quality goods and services can best be delivered to the target group through a person's first language.

The capacity to or responsibility for forming or fertilizing the germ which ensures the continuity of the history of a people lies in the language and the germ simultaneously ensures the prospects for evolution and progress of the community in question (Chinweizu, 1974:33). It is however unfortunate that African languages, have long lost that energy to propel the communities to continuity because the roots of these languages have long stopped plunging into the humus of the material realities of the



environments in which they are supposed to develop. The languages are deprived of any economic, scientific, technological and even political returns that are normally stacked against the dominant imperialist languages.

Fafunwa (1989:44) holds that one of the most important factors militating against the dissemination of knowledge and skills, and therefore of rapid, social and economic well being of the majority of people in developing countries is the imposed medium of communication. He claims that there seems to be a correlation between underdevelopment and the use of a foreign language as the official language of a given country in Africa. Roy-Campbell et al (1997) point out that no society in the world has developed in a sustained and democratic fashion on the basis of a borrowed or colonial language. Ali Mazrui raises this very same concern when he asks as follows:

Can any country approximate first-rank economic development if it relies overwhelmingly on foreign languages for its discourse on development and transformation? Will Africa ever effectively “take off” when it is so tightly held hostage to the languages of the former imperial masters? (Mazrui, 1996b:3)

Language according to Chimhundu (2005b:4) is at the heart of a people’s culture and it is imperative that cultural advancement of a people, economic and social development will not register significant gains without the use of indigenous languages. Dianna Mitchell echoes the same sentiments when she says “a language is a people’s greatest cultural inheritance and should be properly nurtured” (Mitchell, 2000:8). On the other hand Williams and Snipper (1990) argue that language encompasses not only communication, but also heritage, culture and feelings. It is therefore important to note that maintaining a speaker’s native language has an effective dimension, that of enhancing the speaker’s self concepts and their pride in their cultural background and identity (Ngugi, 1986:14).

Chessa (2001:16) also observes that cognitive and affective development occur more effectively in a language that the learner knows very well. The author further argues that learning in general occurs more effectively if the required cognitive development has already taken place through the use of a first language as a language of learning. It is important to speak to people in their own languages

because no meaningful change can occur without the full participation of the masses. Similarly, Bamgbose (1991:50) points out that language is a powerful symbol of society, particularly if its potential is fully recognized and exploited. It can be a key contributing force towards nationhood and national development if properly managed. African indigenous languages can be used as vehicles of national development if put into proper use. These languages need to be looked at not as stumbling blocks but as potential national resources. As with all other resources, they need to be allocated in areas where they can render the optimal utility (Fishman, 1971; Jernudd and Das Gupta, 1971). In this way, each nation should look for the optimization of the use of its national linguistic resource at the least possible cost.

The most proper way would be to regard the indigenous languages in a country as valuable resources like minerals and wildlife. African languages too need to be developed and managed properly and optimally. They should therefore be developed and used with the aim of fully involving their speakers cognitively, in the advancement of the nation as a whole.

A language can contribute in at least two possible ways towards nation building. First, it can serve as a symbol of a particular national political identity and help to establish and promote a national consciousness. A national language is like a national flag, anthem or dress in that it is a symbol of the political nation. Secondly, a national language can contribute to nation building when it makes political integration possible both horizontal and vertical integrations, through facilitating communication between groups of people and between the elites and non-elites (the masses) thereby breaking down the barriers which keep these entities apart (Webb, 2002:59). A language can be a facilitator within which national objectives may be realized. The power relations in any country can only be addressed in a meaningful way if its citizens can communicate effectively with one another. This is the only way in which social transformation can really occur, that is through communication and the consequent establishment of a commonality of values and norms, points of view, attitudes, loyalties and social practices. National communication can only become a reality if the citizens of a country know each other's languages.

African languages can also play a role in a country's democratization process. Participation in the political life of the state implies that citizens are (i) involved in decision making (ii) being consulted about issues that concern them (iii) being kept informed by politicians (iv) being able to communicate their views to political leaders. In Zimbabwe for example, the language set up does not allow for satisfactory citizen participation in the political life of the country. Firstly, the language of political debate in the country is mainly English, which means that more than 75% of the population cannot follow the arguments of politicians, evaluate their views or hope to influence political decisions in any way (Makuvaza, 1998; Dlodlo, 1998). Secondly, effective communication between the citizens and the state administration is not possible since the official language of state administration is also English, which once again heightens the marginalization of the majority of the country's citizens.

At its most elementary level, communication through a common language can ensure a flow of information on various aspects of a country's socio-economic life. An increased flow of information in a nation provides a climate for national development and this flow of information makes expert knowledge available where it is needed and provides a forum for discussion, leadership and decision-making. In agriculture for example, there is need to disseminate information on fertilizers, pesticides, high yield varieties of crops, appropriate planting seasons, irrigation and preservation as well as marketing outlets. In health programs, indigenous languages could be used to disseminate information on environmental sanitation, nutrition, preventative measures, first aid, immunization, family planning, antenatal and child care (Rao, 1966:27).

To rob people of their language is to rob them of not only their confidence and dignity but also of their creativity (Kamba, 1998:3). This is so because indigenous knowledge can only be conveyed in the language of the people who possess such knowledge thus people's lives can only be conveyed fully and vividly in their first language.

## 2.4 LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

Education helps to widen existential options for people and increases the possibilities for a society to tackle collectively identified constraints to development in a given society. The success of the educational process however depends on the extent to which it as a package reaches the masses. The primacy of the indigenous languages in this respect can hardly be denied.

In the field of education, language policy may be defined as a course of action adopted by governments, which is laid down in legislation ordinances and regulations and implemented through control measures such as financing, administration and inspection, with the general implication that such course of action is advantageous or expedient for the state (Hartshorne, 1987:44). Government policy in language, as in other aspects of education, will be most effective when it has the acceptance of “the user” and when the latter is involved and participates in the decisions about education, including those on language, which are taken. If this acceptance is not achieved, a crisis of legitimacy arises in which the authority behind the system and the policy on which it is based are questioned, challenged and ultimately rejected.

It should be noted that the education policy of any country reflects “its political options, its traditions, values and its conceptions of the future” (Faure, 1972:170). Education is seldom, if ever, neutral but is directed towards the achievement of certain purposes, behind which rest fundamental issues such as philosophies of life, views of man, religious beliefs, ideas about the state and society, political ideologies and the working of economic forces. It is in this context too that language has to operate in the education system. It too, (language) does not exist in a vacuum, for it is also the repository and means of articulation of values, beliefs, prejudices, traditions, past achievements and history. Language is the distinguishing characteristic of the human being, which is at the heart of a people’s culture. It is what makes people see themselves as different and it is related to issues of identity, position and power. Because of all these contradictions, language policies for education are highly charged political issues and seldom if ever, decided on educational grounds alone.

Children all over the world learn better if taught in their mother languages (Indakwa, 1978; Prah, 1993; Batibo, 2000a; Chessa, 2001). Subjects such as Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Geography to mention a few are very difficult mainly due to the failure by learners to understand concepts because they are explained in English, which is a foreign language to most African school children. If Africa is to make strides in economic developments, its people must participate using indigenous languages in the development of science and technology and be involved in the formulation of new ideas. It is in these languages that our people can create and become innovative. Such innovation and creativity are crucial not only for development in an economic sense, but also necessary for the flourishing of democracy at a cultural level. It is in these languages that knowledge intended for the upliftment of the larger masses of African society can be transmitted. Like societies in Europe and Asia, African countries are societies in which the lives of the greater number can be improved through the use of indigenous languages.

The language of instruction or the language, in which education is principally conducted, is one of the most far-reaching and significant features of any education system. The language of instruction, the language of educational formation, in any society is also the language of hegemony and power. It is the language in which basic skills and knowledge are imparted to the population and the medium in which the production and reproduction of knowledge takes place (Prah, 2005:24). Before colonization, the different ethno-linguistic groups in Africa did not have a language of instruction problem. Brock-Utne and Hopson (2005) explain in their book how at that time, each group used its own language to educate its children. They argue that the medium of instruction problem in Africa emerged in the late 1800 with the introduction of Western education in Africa. From that time onwards, African children received basic education in the colonial languages (Brock-Utne and Hopson, 2005:4). When Africans took over political control over their countries, most countries retained the colonial languages as languages of instruction. The retention of European languages as the dominant languages of instruction has had a serious negative impact on African education and on the academic performance of African learners (ibid).

While many African countries gained their political independence several decades ago, there has been little progress when it comes to the adoption of African languages as overall media of instruction in post-colonial African education. There has been much concern about education for all and the need to increase the literacy rate but little concern about the language in which education and literacy should take place. With rhetoric being focused toward the African Renaissance in the twenty-first century, the central role of language in the development and emancipation of the continent seems to take a back seat.

Many African governments fail to critically examine the role of language in education and public life in their country beyond political rhetoric and aid agencies purse strings. Since many countries on the African continent are operating with pre-independence and former colonial language policies, a large number of people, who because of the foreign language used, are not in the position to participate as democratic engines in their countries.

Where language of instruction is the same as the mother tongue, it affirms the developmental capacity of the mother tongue to grow as a language of culture, science and technology. It further gives confidence to a people with respect to their historical and cultural baggage. When a mother tongue is used as the language of educational instruction, it becomes an instrument for the cultural and scientific empowerment of people. In free societies, knowledge transfer takes place in the language or languages of the masses, the languages in which the masses are most creative and innovative, the languages, which speak to them primordially in their hearts and minds (Prah, 2005:26).

It is interesting to note that during the time of Bantu Education in South Africa when the mother tongue was phased in and maintained for eight years as the primary language of learning, the matriculation results of black students steadily improved, reaching their zenith in 1976 with an 83, 7% pass rate. In 1979, the Education and Training Act was passed and it reduced mother tongue education to four years of primary school and this reduction of the use of the mother tongue coincided with decreasing pass rates for African languages speaking students. Heugh (1999: 304) says “the pass rate dropped to as low as 48, 3 % by 1982 and 44% by 1992.”

Cultural freedom and African emancipation therefore cannot be cultivated, expanded or developed where the language of instruction is different from the languages or language the people normally speak in their everyday lives. Prah (2005:43) argues further saying where a colonial language becomes the language of instruction, with all knowledge and education fed into the people in the language of the former colonial masters, this removes and negates the development of confidence in home or original cultures. A language policy, which favors the use of colonial languages, entrenches the schism between the elite and the masses. It implicitly defines the culture and language of the masses as inferior and irredeemable and seeks in effect to replace it lock, stock and barrel with a new advancing language and culture which is seen as best articulated in his master's voice and direction. Having English, Portuguese or French as official languages prevents the development and crystallization of a national consciousness because the graduates have no vested interest in anything that could be called national culture. Furthermore, not understanding the official language, the ordinary people can neither identify themselves with the state nor acquire even the most rudimentary information about public affairs. Another consequence of this is that when one is compelled to use a language, which one does not command perfectly, one cannot say anything involved or subtle which aggravates the inferiority complex.

What needs to be said here is that societies with colonial pasts, which have been able to make a break with the use of colonial languages as media of education and instruction are those which make progress and development not only in the educational field but also in other areas of social life. One way to ensure the extinction of Africa languages is to avoid using them as languages of instruction. Ranaweera cited in Brock-Utne says:

The transition from English to the national languages as the medium of instruction in science helped to destroy the great barrier that existed between the science-educated elite and the non-science-educated masses, between science itself and people. It gave confidence to the common man that science is within his reach and to the teachers and pupils that knowledge of English need not necessarily be a requisite for learning science. The value of mother-tongue instruction is literally incontestable (Brock-Utne, 2000:153).

The point being made in the above quotation is that mother tongue medium of instruction should be mandatory for the first few years of education.

Development in Africa will not be forthcoming until the education system starts using indigenous languages as languages of instruction from the beginning to the end of the education process. The argument is that the whole of African education from primary to tertiary level should be conducted in local languages, home languages or mother tongues (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:61). This is the way that “all societies in the world that have managed to develop, or achieved developmental momentum, have done or are doing it” (Prah, 2005:36). Greek students for example study to university level in Greek. The French, Albanians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Danes, Poles, Koreans, Germans, Chinese, Indonesians and Japanese all manage their education from the beginning to the end in their own languages. Somehow when it comes to Africa, the logic breaks down and all sorts of reasons are found why in the case of Africa this should be different. It is the contention of this study that African nations can only regain their dignity, cultural identity and a place among the league of developed nations through making education accessible to more people. But Africa and its people cannot achieve this unless the education system is African oriented.

If Africa is to make strides in economic development, its people must participate using indigenous languages in the development of science and technology and be involved in the formulation of new ideas. The fact that all science courses in African schools are taught in foreign languages means that no scientific ideas have and can be formulated in an African language in the present schooling systems. This in turn means that there will be no growth in scientific vocabulary and no corresponding growth of original scientific ideas in Africa. Africans will continue to be scientifically and technically illiterate because they continue to be taught in languages that are not their own.

A strong positive justification in the use of the mother tongue in the early years of primary education is that by the time a child enrolls in a primary school at the age of six he/she would have developed a capacity to use one language or the other, in most cases his home language/mother tongue, or the language of the immediate community. Learning through such a language will provide a smooth transition from



the world of the home to the world of the school. Initial literacy should therefore be conducted in a language that the child already knows and depending on other factors such as state of development of the language, size of speakers and teacher availability, this language should continue to be used as a medium of instruction for as long as possible in primary education.

Bamgbose (1991:62) asserts that the importance of education in the context of developing a country does not require any elaboration since education is the basis of mass participation. It is a means of upward social mobility, manpower training and development in its widest sense of the full realization of human potential and utilization of this potential and the nation's resources for the benefit of all. It is therefore inevitable that the question of language should arise since it is mainly through language that knowledge is transmitted. The question of what language to use in education is a problematic one in any multilingual country, particularly one that has also been subjected to the inevitable imposition of a foreign official language arising from colonialism. Language may be used for three purposes in education namely; literacy, subject and medium of instruction. Literacy in this case is taken to refer to the introduction of a language to facilitate initial reading and writing in children or adults. A language may be taught as a subject without any implication of its further use as a medium of instruction. But for a language to serve as a medium of instruction at secondary and higher levels, it would have to be taught as a subject at the primary level.

Throughout Africa, the language of education includes a colonial language, which is a language of wider communication. Thus all former British colonies have English, all former French and Belgian colonies have French, all former Portuguese colonies have Portuguese and the only former Spanish colony has Spanish. In Cameroon, where the western part was a former British colony and the eastern part a French colony, English and French are both languages of education. It is interesting to note that African countries divide neatly into two groups which reflect past colonial practices. Mother tongue education is not practised in the former French and Portuguese colonies and this is simply a survival of their colonial policy of assimilation which encouraged their own languages and discouraged African languages. On the other hand, mother tongue education is practised in the former

British colonies and this is in accordance with the educational policy of the British which encouraged mother tongue education in British territories. Where mother tongue education was practiced, its role was limited to initial literacy medium of instruction at the lower classes of the primary school, and subject at primary levels.

Adult literacy was also typically conducted in an African language and this is precisely the prevailing situation in Africa today. The colonial role of African languages persists as does the role of French, English or Portuguese as media of instruction from upper primary or secondary to higher levels of education. Thus African languages as media of instruction are restricted to lower levels of education and foreign languages are reserved for higher levels. In spite of enjoying several decades of national independence, most African states find it difficult to break away from the established historical patterns which show persistence of the inheritance situation (ibid).

The overall effect of historical constraint is that African countries remain prisoners of the past. The established practices are so overwhelming that it becomes virtually impossible to break away from them. This is further reinforced by the argument that a language that is going to be needed for higher education, science and technology might as well begin to feature in the educational process as soon as possible.

According to Bamgbose (1991:63), the size of the population speaking each language is also an important factor in the assignment of roles. Other things being equal, a language spoken by ten million people is likely to have a greater role in education than one spoken by half a million people. This is because for such a language, a ready pool of pupils and potential teachers is easily available and materials can be provided on a more economical scale. This however should not be taken to mean that minority languages are to be ignored. It only means that the roles for major and minority languages will be different. No matter how large the population of speakers of a language is, it is only when the language has been reduced to writing and materials made available in it that it can be used in education. The state of a language becomes therefore a major factor in the selection of a language to be used in education. A language with a long literary tradition has an advantage over one that does not. In the absence of a written tradition, a decision to use a language

in education will at the same time involve deliberate language planning activities including devising of an orthography, production of primers and other reading materials, training of teachers just to mention a few. As these take time and also involve financial costs, quite often, such a language remains excluded from the educational process.

Another aspect to be considered in language development is the need to evolve adequate terminology for teaching school subjects. This will have to be done if African languages are to be used as media of instruction. Efforts should be made by all to ensure that a people's culture, which a language represents, is not ignored in the educational process. This means that at some point in the course of a child's education, he/she must have an opportunity of learning his language or learning in it. Bamgbose makes an assertion saying:

As this factor is often pitched against that of cost and need for technological development, it is sometimes suggested that a nation faces an unpleasant choice between the need for economic development and the desire for cultural survival (Bamgbose, 1991:73).

Use of indigenous languages as media of instruction in education shows recognition of linguistic and cultural plurality. If the major mother tongue is used as a medium with minority languages taught as subjects, this will create cultural harmony and co-existence. Use of languages of wider communication as media helps to promote international understanding and solidarity. The attraction of this sort of scheme is that it widens the scope of the cultural component of a language education to include not just the native culture, which supporters of mother tongue education tend to focus on, but cultures associated with all the languages used in the educational system.

The multiplicity of languages in Africa poses an economic constraint since it is costly to provide education in all of them. The strong version of the constraint is that there are far too many languages and many of them lack a written literature. To provide written materials in all of them is a practical impossibility. However, it should be noted that modern education requires instruction not in more and more languages but in the most effective language possible. Proponents of mother tongue education do not claim that it is possible to use all languages as vehicles of education at all levels. Rather, the claim is that varying degrees of mother tongue education are possible,

ranging from adult literacy or initial literacy to medium of instruction and the continuing need for a language of wider communication is emphasized.

The economic argument when used against mother tongue education tends to ignore the important role of education in development. Education should be concerned with the liberation of the human potential for the welfare of the community. School systems in the Third World countries have served only to train tiny elites to run a bureaucracy and the modern sector of an economy while neglecting the training of human resources capable of stimulating production in areas essential to the welfare of the majority of the population. For this situation to change grassroots education will be needed and the use of several indigenous languages in such education would seem to be inevitable.

One of the earliest pronouncements on deciding the language of education was advanced as a recommendation by the UNESCO Meeting of Experts which stated that:

On educational grounds, we recommend that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible. In particular, pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of mother tongue, because they understand it best and because to begin their social life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and the school as small as possible (UNESCO, 1953: 47 – 48).

This recommendation reinforced the practice of early mother tongue education in several countries and was used to support its introduction where it did not formerly exist.

In the Philippines, an experiment famously known as *Iloilo* was carried out to examine the relative effectiveness of using a local language called Hiligaynon to replace English as medium of instruction (Fishman, 1971a:15). Findings from the study showed that the experimental groups taught in the mother tongue performed better than the control group and even caught up with them in English within only six months of being exposed to English. The Six Year Primary Project in Nigeria is another famous example. It was started in 1970 with an objective to compare the traditional system of mixed media with a new system in which Yoruba, one of the three major languages in Nigeria, was used as a medium of instruction for the full six

years of primary education. The experiment began in 1970 at a rural school in Ile-Ife (St Stephen's school) with two experimental classes and one control group. The experimental classes were taught all subjects in Yoruba, except for English, which was taught as a subject by a specialist teacher. The control group was taught in Yoruba for three years and later in English.

Both groups were systematically evaluated from 1976 to 1978 and the results showed very clearly the superiority of the experimental groups over the control group, a superiority that could only have been due to the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction (ibid). The lesson to be learnt from the Six Year Project is that where a language is dominant, mother tongue education involving the use of an indigenous language as medium of instruction for the entire primary education can be achieved without compromising proficiency in English, which can be taught as a subject at all levels of education.

In many African countries, a large number of primary school teachers are either untrained or have received only minimal training. In particular, methodology for first language teaching is often neglected, the assumption being that if one can speak the language one should be able to teach it. The result of this is that mother tongue education is often carried out in a perfunctory manner. The political constraint manifests itself in several ways. First there is a general attitude by governments that language policy matters are sensitive. There is a general reluctance to change existing policies in Africa, particularly in the direction of increased mother tongue education. That is why only a few countries in Africa such as Tanzania and Somalia have succeeded in moving in this direction.

Governments generally find it more convenient to pay lip-service to cultural renewal and then quietly carry on with the use of a colonial language as medium. In spite of a resolution adopted in 1976 by African Ministers of Education to the effect that the requirements of authenticity and modernity in education dictate that national languages must be restored as languages of instruction and as vehicles of scientific and technical practice, "the educational practice of most African nations has remained unchanged in respect of the language of education" (UNESCO, 1997: 49–

50). All that one hears is that plans are being made to make changes, but no progress is made beyond such pronouncements.

The attitudes of those in power can influence both language policy and how it can be implemented. For example, the inclusion of Nzema as one of Ghana's nine approved languages is justified on the grounds that the choice had much to do with the fact that it was the native language of the then President Dr Kwame Nkrumah. Similar cases of intervention include President Senghor's vigorous views on Wolof orthography in Senegal; President Banda's virtual veto power on vocabulary innovations in ChiChewa in Malawi and the reported rejection of a grammar of Kabiye by President Eyadema of Togo on the grounds that it was not based on his own dialect (Bamgbose, 1991:79).

The preceding discussion of mother tongue education has concentrated on the primary school level. This is because this is the level at which it is most likely that indigenous languages will be used as media of instruction. The role of African languages in secondary education is limited to it being taught as a subject. But the teaching of African languages in secondary schools is generally beset by problems connected with the curriculum materials, time allocation, teacher preparation and prestige. The most frequently mentioned constraint is that of multiplicity of languages. Since there are so many languages, the question is; which ones are to be chosen and which ones should be ignored. For many people however, having many languages is an asset and the role assigned to each language will depend on a number of factors. The constraint of cost is one that has been belabored over the years. But with increasing technological development, the production of learning and teaching materials has been made cheaper.

In many African languages, the curriculum for the secondary school course is based on an original pattern designed for foreign learners of such languages as evidenced in the old Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or the London General Certificate of Education examination with their emphasis on comprehension, composition, translation and use of proverbs. Materials available for teaching African languages in secondary schools have largely been dominated by old-fashioned grammar-translation texts based on traditional grammar and in many instances African

languages fare badly in terms of time allocation on the timetable. Not only is the time allocation unfavorable but there is the added disadvantage that the periods allocated tend to be in the afternoon when it is quite hot and the pupils will not be very alert.

Perhaps the most serious obstacle in the teaching of African languages in secondary schools is the low prestige attached to it. Teachers of such languages are not much sought after and quite often students do not consider them as proficient academically as teachers of other subjects. Teachers of African languages often try to redeem their image by making sure that they are able to teach some other subject as well (Bamgbose, 1991:94). Since passing an African language is not compulsory for most post-secondary studies and employment, the question of low prestige will continue to affect the conditions and prospects of their teaching.

Developments in mother tongue education in several African countries have been due not to any deliberate policy decisions but rather to efforts made by post-secondary institutions especially the universities. The major impetus in this connection has been research and teaching in African languages carried out by Departments of Linguistics and African Languages. Research has covered practically all levels of language including phonetics, phonology, orthography, syntax, lexis, semantics and pragmatics.

Research on African languages has led to the introduction of courses in language and literature in several universities with the result that it is possible to pursue degree studies in languages such as Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo in Nigeria, KiSwahili in Tanzania, Shona and Ndebele in Zimbabwe, Zulu, Venda, Xhosa and Sotho in South Africa. As a result of the programmes provided by universities, a core of well-trained teachers is made available for teaching in secondary schools and colleges of education. Thus instead of just any teacher being assigned to teach an African language, the qualified teacher could not only get assigned, but also serve as a model to less qualified teachers.

The result is that higher standards of mother tongue teaching are being realized in many African countries. Nigeria for example, produced the first graduates of Yoruba in 1969 at the University of Ibadan. All of them went into teaching and tremendous

improvements have been felt in Yoruba teaching in schools as a result of the combined influence of graduates from all the universities. Since the teaching of African languages and literatures is carried out in the medium of the language concerned, a challenge is posed for teachers to develop the appropriate meta-language. The availability of a suitable meta-language means a widening of the base of possible textbook writers. There can be as a result, an explosion of publications particularly in literature.

Language in education as we have seen, involves different roles such as medium of instruction, subject and initial literacy in the non-formal system and the processes of socialization in the informal system.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the role of language in facilitating development was presented and it was noted that there is a close relationship between language and development. It was also noted in the chapter that development cannot take place in a linguistic vacuum since it is a process that involves the whole society. In order for every member of society to participate fully in the development process, it is essential that all the stakeholders involved in the development process understand the language used.

The discussion in this chapter also pointed at the need for Africa to re-examine current dominant paradigms and perspectives of development with a view to moulding a new model, which evolves from African cultures. This study holds the view that development is total, processual multifaceted, concrete and empowering. According to Harrison (1980:40), "...the purpose of development should not be to develop things but man." Africa needs home-based models of development and should desist from continuously turning to the West for guidance because they too might be quite under-developed in terms of human values. There is neither reason nor justification for Africans to continue copying models from Europe and America. The dilemma in Africa with regard development is that the elite, which is entrusted with the leadership in the development endeavor is created in and trapped by the culture of Western society. This results in them favoring the reproduction of the entire



Western images in African development. The elite in effect see Africa from outside, in the language, idiom, image and experience of the outsider. In as far as the African mind is concerned, it is unable to relate its knowledge to the realities of African society. Africans are now realizing almost as an after thought that development as a simple replication of Western experiences is not possible. There is no doubt that the unfettered use of African languages is the key, which will open the door to an African renaissance and development. If Africans are to develop as Africans in an African society, then such development will have to follow the route which all other successfully developing societies outside the West have followed (Prah, 2006: 27). Africans will have to trust their own genius and adapt modern Western rationality and secularism into an overwhelmingly African socio-cultural base. The main reason why we remain stalled in underdevelopment and reconstructed colonialism is that we have too easily accepted the balkanization of Africa and its related disunity in all spheres of social life. This reality blinkers our strategic vision and fetters our awareness of ourselves as a group, as Africans, as a nation. Therefore, if Zimbabwe is to make strides in economic development, its people must participate in the development process through the use of indigenous languages.

The next chapter discusses language policy and practice in pre and post independence Zimbabwe with particular attention given to language in education policies. Focus is given to the influence of colonial language policies on language practice in contemporary Zimbabwe. The chapter begins by placing Zimbabwe's language policy in a wider African context, which unfortunately is dominated by the use of European languages in both the educational and the business sectors. It then examines in detail the education and language policies Zimbabwe inherited from colonial Rhodesia. The main objective is to analyze how colonial politics shaped the language policies of Zimbabwe, as well as the impact these language policies had on post-colonial Zimbabwe's education system. Finally, the chapter discusses the status and patterns of language use in Zimbabwe.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING IN ZIMBABWE: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

“No greater injustice can be committed against a people than to deprive them of their own language” (Gerard, 1981:183).

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses language policies in pre and post independence Zimbabwe with particular attention given to language policies in education. Focus is on the development of colonial and post-colonial language policies, attributing changes to evolving philosophies in politics and administration. In colonial Rhodesia for example, it is argued that the language policies had as one of their key objectives, the development of a bilingual white colonial ruling class proficient in both English and at least one African language (Makoni et al, 2007:1). The chapter begins by placing Zimbabwe’s language policy in a wider African context, which unfortunately is dominated by the use of European languages in both the educational and the business sectors. It then examines in detail the education and language policies Zimbabwe inherited from colonial Rhodesia. The main objective is to analyze how colonial politics shaped the language policies in Zimbabwe, as well as the impact these language policies had on post-colonial Zimbabwe’s education system. The chapter also examines the role of Christianity in the codification and promotion of African languages and this analysis is followed by a discussion of the language use patterns and status of indigenous languages of Zimbabwe. The discussions are finally rounded off by means of a conclusion.

#### **3.2 LANGUAGE POLICY IN A WIDER AFRICAN CONTEXT**

The colonial experience brought with it what Roscoe (1977:1) calls a “cultural collision”. The result of such a clash meant that Africans could no longer just cling to their traditional past and this resulted in cultural and linguistic imperialism. Because of the views of settlers about Africa, certain Europeans believed, sometimes not through their own fault, that Africans had no cultural traditions, no religious, economic or political background worthy any serious attention and certainly no history of glory.

Colonialism imposed a totally different approach to the use of language in African education and the conduct of official affairs. Its object was to replace the sovereignty of the mother tongue with the language of colonial power (Prah, 1993:27). By so doing, a locally drawn cadre was formed who spoke the respective European language, and could be used in the service of colonial intentions and purposes.

German colonial education for example, drew a sharp line between Native education, German education, and other European education. The inferior type of education was directed to the education of Africans. Initially, the thinking had been that the use of German exclusively would close the cultural gap between the colonized and the colonizers, and would eventually facilitate the colonial project. The German Protestant Missionary Societies viewed the use of African languages at the elementary school level as vital to the success of their primary goal of religious conversion. Like the Germans, British and Portuguese, the French regarded education of the native in countries like Guinea and Senegal as a necessary evil. Albert Sarraunt, the then Minister of colonies, cited in Suret-Canale (1976:381) divulged that the education given to the indigenous people of Africa was only a duty but this fundamental duty was performed as an addendum to the obvious economic, administrative, military and political duties. The object of education was the cultivation and training of intermediaries in the French colonial administrative structure; hence the study of the French language was the prime object of education. He had this to say:

French is to be imposed on the largest number of the local people and to serve as the common language throughout French West Africa. Its study is to be compulsory for future chiefs and this measure constitutes a standing order. After forty years of occupation, it is essential that all the chiefs, without exception, with whom we come into daily working contact, should be able to enter into direct conversation with us (Suret –Canale, 1976:381).

In French Equatorial Africa, regular subsidies to mission schools were earmarked specifically for the use of French in education and instruction in African languages was not supposed to exceed one hour per day. In 1944, Felix Eboué, the black governor of French Colonial Africa, affirmed, "...education must be given in French, the use in teaching of local spoken dialects being absolutely forbidden both in private

and public schools” (Prah, 1993:32). On the other hand, the British system of indirect rule required a cadre of Western educated Africans who were not only competent in the English language but also familiar with wider Anglo-Saxon cultural practices. While vernaculars were taught in the primary schools, beyond that level English assumed increasing significance. The effects and peculiarities of colonial Westernization on the African tended to alienate the native from his or her language and cultural roots. In Portuguese colonies, where the language of instruction was Portuguese, the syllabus of schools in Portugal was followed and the same textbooks and charts were used.

Given such approaches, it is hardly surprising that many Africans educated during and after the colonial period from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present have an ambivalent attitude towards the superior role of the language of the colonial power to African languages. Obote clearly stated the hegemony of English saying:

Our present policy as a government is to teach more and more English in schools. We are not unmindful of disadvantages inherent in this policy ... English, therefore remains the national language. It is a language that the minority of our people can use for political purposes to improve their own political positions. Some of our people can use it in order to improve their economic status ... in spite of this reasoning; we find no alternative to English in Uganda’s present position (Obote cited in Prah, 1993:34).

The Afro- American nationalist, Alexander Crummell (1861) in his perceived role of English in African development, expressed at length, the opinion that there are definite marks of inferiority connected with African languages, which place them at a distance from civilized nations (ibid). Crummell argued further to say African languages are characterized by lowness of ideas, brutal and vindictive sentiments and a predominance of animal propensities. In fact the languages lack ideas of virtue, moral truth and distinctions of right and wrong. Such were views of African elites who were alienated from the cultures and realities of Africa. Colonialism in Africa therefore replaced the primacy of African languages with European ones. The object of colonial education was to create an African who, with an understanding of European languages would serve the intentions of colonial power and administration. Education therefore helped to create elites who distanced themselves from the usage of native languages.

When most of the African countries gained their independence between the late 1950's and the early 1960s, they were faced with many challenges in shaping their nationhood and stimulating national development towards modern states. The most challenging realities that most states had to grapple with according to Batibo (2000:12) were the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic phenomena prevailing in most of the countries. Most of them took a short cut by adopting exoglossic language policies, in which the colonial language was adopted as the official language and in some cases served also as national language. Only a handful of countries adopted endoglossic policies by promoting one or several major indigenous languages to play certain national roles. An endoglossic policy involves the promotion of an indigenous or several indigenous languages as official or national languages; while the exoglossic policy involves the adoption of the excolonial language, external to the country, as official or national language (Magwa, 2006:113). One of the many tasks that the newly independent countries of Africa faced in the early 1960s was the choice of an official language that would not only facilitate communication and therefore support the various developmental efforts but also provide the much needed unity among the many ethnic groups, numbering in some cases over a hundred.

Four categories of countries have emerged in terms of choice and implementation of official language policy. Firstly, there is a category that consists of those countries in which all official and national functions are performed by an indigenous language. The ex-colonial language becomes a mere foreign language in the country. Countries in this category are very few Arab countries in North Africa namely; Egypt and Libya.

The second category comprises those countries in which an indigenous lingua franca has been promoted to serve as both official and national language. However, the ex-colonial language has remained the language of some of the upper secondary domains such as tertiary education, science and technology and international communication. Batibo (1999:14) points out that, countries in this category are former socialist countries, which initiated rigorous programs to develop and effectively use the respective languages in promoting nationalistic sentiments and mobilizing the masses in national activities. In fact such an endoglossic policy was possible in these countries because political developments had created a favorable linguistic

ecosystem. Countries in this category are Tanzania (Kiswahili) Somalia (Somali) and Ethiopia (Amharic). The language of the colonizer in these countries plays a minimal role, mainly as a second official language. Besides the former socialist countries mentioned above, there are also Arab countries, which use Arabic as the dominant official or national language, but have retained the use of an ex-colonial language for some of the secondary domains. Such countries include Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.

Countries that constitute the third category are those in which the ex-colonial language plays a major role, often as the main official language, but an indigenous language (or languages) has been designated as a national language or allocated certain secondary public functions. The role of the dominant indigenous language may range from being a national or semi-official language to a mere symbolic role. Indigenous languages play a more symbolic role in countries which have declared all or several of the indigenous languages as national or even as official languages without necessarily effectively using them in any formal domains apart from lower education and a few other domains. Examples of countries in this category are Zambia, Namibia, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe (ibid).

Category number four is that of countries which due to the complexity of their language situations or colonial legacies have decided to make the ex-colonial language both official and national. Because of the colonial rule of assimilation used by the French and Portuguese, there is no dominant national language to assume the lingua franca role. In this case, no indigenous language is given the opportunity to play a national lingua franca role (Wolf and Igboanus, 2004). Countries, which have adopted an ex-colonial language as official or national language, include Angola, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Equatorial Guinea (Batibo, 1999:15). In these countries the ex-colonial languages are used in both primary and secondary domains.

One of the reasons why so many countries decided to adopt the ex-colonial languages as the only or main national medium particularly in the official and technical areas was that colonial languages were by the time of independence highly

developed and internationally used. Moreover, they were considered as neutral and therefore would not be associated with any ethnic resentment. A summary of the language policies among African countries is shown in Table 3.1 below:

**Table 3.1: A percentage summary of language policies in Africa**

|   | <b>Language Category</b>   | <b>Number of countries</b> |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| 1 | Exclusive use of an indigenous language as official/national medium.                                   | 2 (3, 6%)                  |
| 2 | Use of an indigenous language as official/national medium with limited use of an ex-colonial language. | 8 (14, 6%)                 |
| 3 | Use of an ex-colonial language as official/national medium with symbolic use of indigenous languages.  | 27 (49.1)                  |
| 4 | Exclusive use of ex-colonial language as official/national medium.                                     | 18 (32, 7%)                |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>55 (100%)</b>           |

Source: Batibo (2005:18)

Results in the above table show that most African countries have adopted exoglossic language policies and have also accorded minimal secondary functions to the indigenous languages. It can also be noted from figures in the above table that the majority of countries in Africa (81, 2%) rely heavily on ex-colonial languages for their official or national communication. Only a few countries 10 (18, 8%) use indigenous languages, either exclusively or dominantly in their national affairs. Such countries have traditionally been considered as model countries in using local media in formal domains. The net effect of the language policies in Africa is that they alienate the natives from their mother languages and cultural roots.

### 3.3 THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe does not have comprehensive information on the language situation within its borders. A research report presented to the Rhodesian government in 1931, according to Hachipola (1998: xx) is one of the main documents being widely used as the reference for the language situation in Zimbabwe. Also widely used are books written by Roy-Campbell and Gwete (undated), Fortune (1959) and Hachipola (1998) who carried out surveys on the languages spoken in the country. Unfortunately, statistical information obtained from censuses carried out before and after independence, which the authors relied on was based on estimates from only 10% population samples (Mutasa, 1995:87). There are therefore limitations in terms of accuracy of the total number of speakers for each language in the country. This prompted the researcher to carry out another survey in order to present more accurate figures of the languages spoken in Zimbabwe.

The following are the languages spoken in Zimbabwe as given by the informants:

- (i) Shona
- (ii) English
- (iii) Ndebele
- (iv) French
- (v) Sotho
- (vi) Shangani
- (vii) Tswana
- (viii) Kunda
- (ix) Nyanja/Chewa
- (x) Xhosa
- (xi) Tshwawo
- (xii) Venda
- (xiii) Portuguese
- (xiv) Afrikaans
- (xv) Chinese
- (xvi) Hindi
- (xvii) Doma
- (xviii) Greek



- (xix) Sena
- (xx) Italian

However, distribution of the languages spoken as home languages clearly shows dominance of English, Shona and Ndebele. Table 3.2 below shows that Shona is the home language to 60,6% of the people who took part in this study.

**Table 3.2: Informants' home language (N = 1000)**

| Language     | Number       | Percentage  |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Shona        | 606          | 60,6        |
| Ndebele      | 209          | 20,9        |
| English      | 167          | 16,7        |
| Others       | 18           | 1,8         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1 000</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Figures in the table show that 815 (81,6%) of the people who took part in this study speak either Shona or Ndebele at home. Those who speak English at home were only 167 (16,7%) and the remaining 18 (1,8%) speak other languages like Chewa, Shangani, Sotho or Venda as home languages.

Results from the interviews also confirmed that Shona and Ndebele are the home languages of most people in Zimbabwe. Commenting on the languages spoken in Zimbabwe, Makoni et al (2007:2) say there are several indigenous languages spoken in Zimbabwe plus a few foreign immigrant languages. The indigenous languages spoken in Zimbabwe and the number of speakers as recorded during the 1992 national census are as shown in Table 3.3 below.

**Table 3.3: Census information on indigenous language groups**

| Language Spoken  | Number of Speakers<br>(10% Sample) | Area Where Concentrated                           |
|------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Ndebele          | 117 747                            | Matebeleleland                                    |
| Shona            | 508 014                            | Mashonaland, Midlands,<br>Manicaland and Masvingo |
| Sena, ChiKunda   | 2 294                              | Mashonaland                                       |
| Shangani, Tsonga | 10 439                             | Masvingo  |
| Tonga            | 10 014                             | Kariba, Kazangula                                 |
| Venda            | 5 312                              | Matebeleleland South                              |
| Kalanga, Nambya  | 17 343                             | Plumtree, Hwange                                  |
| Sotho, Tswana    | 4 738                              | Matebeleleland South                              |

Source: Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office (CSO)-Census 1992 National Report

For administrative purposes, colonial Zimbabwe was divided into two main divisions namely Matebeleland and Mashonaland. The former is roughly the area Lobengula claimed suzerainty being bordered on the north by the Zambezi, on the south by Botswana and on the east by a line from the Kariba Gorge to Gweru. Areas that lie east of this line were generally termed Mashonaland including Manicaland (Doke, 1931:3). It should be noted however, that literature on the linguistic situation in Zimbabwe is still insufficient.

In this study, the identification of the languages by means of the questionnaire and the interview technique was quite easy but delineating the language boundaries posed a very big problem for example demarcating between Nambya and Tonga or Barwe and Hwesa. Findings of this study revealed that Zimbabwe is made up of many people who speak different languages. Each of the three questionnaires used in the study had an item (Questionnaire item No. 6), which specifically required the respondents to list the languages that are spoken in Zimbabwe. The respondents listed two categories of languages spoken as shown in Table 3.4 below.

**Table 3.4: Languages spoken in Zimbabwe**

| <b>African</b>    | <b>Non-African</b> |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Shona             | English            |
| Ndebele           | Portuguese         |
| Nyanja/Chewa      | Afrikaans          |
| Shangani          | Hindi              |
| Tonga             | Hebrew             |
| Chikunda          | Italian            |
| Sotho             | Greek              |
| Xhosa             | Chinese            |
| Sena              |                    |
| Tshwawo           |                    |
| Doma              |                    |
| Venda             |                    |
| <b>Total = 12</b> | <b>Total = 8</b>   |

The table above shows that Zimbabwe has got a total of twenty (20) languages spoken within its borders and eight of these are non-African.

### **3.3.1 The Shona Language Cluster**

A survey of the geographical position of the Shona speaking people has shown that they extend considerably into Mozambique on the north and east and overlap into Botswana in the west (Doke, 1931:11). The name Shona itself, according to Kahari (1990:16) is an artificial term used by linguists to refer to an agglomeration of mostly but not completely mutually intelligible dialects found within and outside Zimbabwe. The language is spoken in ten dialectical clusters in Zimbabwe, Botswana and Mozambique. The dialects that make up the Shona language are the following ChiKaranga, ChiManyika, ChiNdau, ChiZezuru, ChiKorekore, ChiKalanga, ChiNambya, ChiBarwe, ChiHwesa and ChiUtee also known as ChiTeve. The use of the word Shona in Mashonaland (present-day Zimbabwe) dates back to the ancient quest for gold in Africa. In a personal interview with a renowned historian, Stan Gorerazvo Mudenge, “Shona” or “Sonar” is a Pali (the language of the early Indian

Buddhists) word for “gold” and was brought to Africa by ancient Indian gold seekers before and shortly after the time of Christ. These Indian prospectors and traders called the land, which produced gold “Shona-bar” meaning “land of gold”. The Portuguese translated this to be “Bar do Ouro” and the British referred to this area of gold as Mashonaland.

Commenting on this same name Shona, Magwa (1999) says the term originated from the Ndebele group of people who referred to the western areas where non-Ndebele speakers had settled as “Ntshonalanga” and the people who stayed there as “amaTshona”. Biehler (1906a, 1906b) refers to the language spoken by the people of Mashonaland as “Chiswina” and the people who speak the language as “Masvina”. Another missionary, Reverend Pelly (1898) used the name “Chino” to refer to the language of Mashonaland, whilst Reverend Ethridge (1903) used the term “Chizwina” when he translated St Mark’s gospel into the language of Mashonaland.

Both terms “Chiswina” or “Chizwina” have some connection with *svina* or *tsvina* (dirt) and it has been connected with *shona* or *chona*, which simply means to despise (Doke, 1931; Gombe, 1998). Furthermore, Doke (ibid) states that the Zulu speaking raiders from the East-Coast used to describe their victims as people of the west or *shona* meaning “setting of the sun” and it has been stated that the Ndebele group in the Midlands Province called a hill to the west of Gwelo town (now Gweru) *Tshona* and the people beyond it *amaTshona* (Gombe, 1998).

The idea that the name is a contemptuous nickname is widespread but is always based on nothing more certain than these very uncertain etymological tales. All the informants (100%) agreed that the etymology of the word Shona is unclear and unsubstantiated. These sentiments and views expressed by the informants do agree to a very large extent with what Gombe (1998:24) said whilst commenting on the term Shona.

*Chokwadi chaicho hachina anonyatsoziva kuti zita iri rakabva nepi.  
Maduramazwi edu ose hapanawo rinopa tsananguro yenhoroondo  
yezwi iri kana kutsanangura havo kuti rakatanga kushandiswa rini.*

Nobody seems to know where this name originated. Our dictionaries also fail to give satisfactory explanations about the history of this

name, the real meaning of the word and there is no explanation as to where it originated from or when it was first used.

What we have in Zimbabwe according to Gombe (*ibid*) are mere hypotheses, which need further verifications. It was therefore true that the name Shona is not pleasing to the natives of Zimbabwe because it is a group name imposed on them from outside ignoring ethnic distinctions that exist.

Findings of this study however, differ slightly from those made by Doke (1931), Fortune (1972), and Hachipola (1998) who all say the Shona language cluster comprises only five (5) dialects namely Karanga, Zezuru, Korekore, Ndau and Manyika. In this study ten (10) Shona dialects were identified. Unlike Doke's (1931) recommendations, which totally excluded the Kalanga, Nambya, Hwesa Barwe and Teve dialectical sub-groups from mainstream Shona orthography, the present study accommodated the above-mentioned dialects into the Shona language cluster. The exclusion by Doke is indeed the major reason why the above-mentioned language groups, which were left out in the unification process started seeing their dialects as distinct languages.

During the study, it was very easy to identify the Shona speaking people from the other language groups because they have a unity of grammatical, phonetic and vocabulary items, which is very striking. The Shona dialects are to a very large extent mutually intelligible. The main points which were given by the participants to justify the grouping together of all the ten (10) dialects as dialects of the same language are somehow similar to what Doke (1931:29) described as the main points that bind into one language the many Shona dialects.

- (a) Underlying unity of vocabulary
  
- (b) Common sharing of particular phonetic features like:
  - (i) Five vowel system
  - (ii) Use of three significant tones
  - (iii) Employment of "whistling fricatives"
  - (iv) Phenomenon of velarization
  - (v) Employment of implosives (this however does not apply to the Western group)

- (c) Common sharing of particular grammatical features such as
- (i) Monosyllabic noun prefixes
  - (ii) Significant super-edition of prefixes to nouns
  - (iii) Uniform tense system
  - (iv) Single forms for “father” and “mother”
  - (v) Decimal enumerations
  - (vi) Form of relative construction
  - (vii) Vocalization of initial consonants of stems in class 5 singular
  - (viii) Locative formation, especially the non-inflection of place names

In an effort to demonstrate that all the ten Shona dialects are mere variations of the same language, representatives from each dialectical group were asked to translate a passage written in English into the different Shona language varieties and the similarities in the translations were amazing. Below are the translations as given by the informants.

### **The Story of the Zebra (English)**

The Zebra lacked horns on account of his gluttony. The maker of all things called all animals to distribute to them horns. When the Zebra heard that all animals had been called, he went off to eat by himself. He sent word to the other animals saying “You just get the horns for me”. The other animals arrived and were given their own horns, and the Zebra went without. When Zebra saw the others coming back with horns, he met them thinking “I have had the horns got for me by the others”. The others said “We have been given only our own”. Then off he went also. When he arrived there he found it said “They are finished because you are a glutton” (Chimhundu, 2005:156).

### **(a) Rungano gwaMbizi (ChiKaranga)**

*Mbizi yakashaiwa nyanga nokuda kwemakaro. Musiki wezvinhu zvose akadana mhuka dzose kuti agodzigovera nyanga. Asi Mbizi paakahwa kuti vakanga vadamwa wakainda kundodhla ari oga. Akaraira dzimwe mhuka achiti “Munondibatirawo nyanga”. Dzimwe mhuka dzakasvika dzikapuwa dzadzo nyanga Mbizi ikashaya. Mbizi payakavona dzimwe dzichivuya nenyanga, yakadzigamuchira ichifunga zvayo kuti “Ndabatigwa nyanga nevamwe”. Idzo dzikati “Tapuwa dzedu dzoga”.*

*Yakabva yaendavo ikoko. Yakati yasvika ikasvikowana zvonzi “Dzapera nokuti unonyanya kukara”.*

**(b) Lungano gwaMbizi (ChiKalanga)<sup>1</sup>**

*Mbizi yakaxaya nyanga nodlisa kwazo. Mbumbi wezwinhu zose wakadana mhuka dzose ewodzikovela nyanga. Ha Mbizi ihwa kuti tadan’wa ikandodla zwayo. Ikalayila dzimwe mhuka, ikati “Mundondibhatilabo nyanga”. Dzikaswika dzimwe mhuka, dzikapiwa dzadzo nyanga, mbizi ikaxaya. Mbizi ha ivona dzimwe dzivuya nenyanga ikadzixanganidza, iti “Ndabhatigwa nyanga ngedzimwe”. Dzimwe dzikati “Tapiwa dzedu dzoga”. Ikabe yoyendabo. Ikati iswikako, ikawana kuyi “Dzapela, ngove wakathowadlisa kwazo”.*

**(c) Ngano yaMbizi (ChiKorekore)**

*Mbizi yakashaigwa nyanga nonyaya yayo yokukara. Akasika zvinhu zvose wakadanidza mhuka dzose kuti adzikovere nyanga. Paya Mbizi akanzva kuti mhuka dzose dzakanga dzadaniwa, akainda kweja ogani. Akaraidza shoko kune dzimwe mhuka asiti “Menditorerawo nyanga”. Dzimwe dzasvika ndekupiwa nyanga. Mbizi akaona dzimwe mhuka dzisidzoka nenyanga. Akavatambira asiti “Vandivigira nyanga” Vanwe vakati “Tatambidziwa dzedu dzogani”. Akavha aindawo ndekusvikoudzwa kuti “Dzapera nekuti unekara”.*

**(d) Ngano yaMbizi (ChiManyika)**

*Mbizi yakashaya nyanga ngepamusana pekukara. Musiki wezviro zvese wakadaidza mhuka dzese kuti adziye nyanga. Apo Mbizi akazwa kuti mhuka dzese dzadaizwa iye wakaenda kuhoya hake. Akaraira soko kune dzimweni mhuka achiti, “Mundiunzirewo nyanga” Dzimweni mhuka dzapuhwa nyanga dzadzo asi Mbizi isakapuhwa. Apo Mbizi akaona wamwe waa kuuya nenyanga dzavo akanosangana navo achifunga kuti “Wamwe wandiunzirawo”. Wamweni wakati “Tapuhwa nyanga dzedu basi”. Akabva aendawo mbune. Apo akasvika, akaona pakazi “Nyanga hapachina ngekuti ungonnyanya kukara”.*

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<sup>1</sup> A variation of ChiKalanga (Lilima) from Botswana goes like: Mbizi yakashaya nyanga ngojisa kwazo. Mbumbi wezwithu zose wakadana mhuka dzose ewodzikovela nyanga. Ha mbizi ihwa kuti dzadang’wa ikayendoja zwayo. Ikalayila dzimwe mhuka, ikati “Mundondibhatilabo nyanga”. Dzikaswika dzimwe mhuka, dzikapiwa dzadzo nyanga, mbizi ikaxaya. Mbizi ha ivona dzimwe dzivuya nenyanga ikadzishanganidza, iti “Ndabhatigwa nyanga ngedzimwe”. Dzimwe dzikati “Tapiwa dzedu dzoga”. Ikabe yoyendabo. Ikati iswikako, ikawana kuyi “Dzapela, ngove wakathowajisa kwazo”.

**(e) Rungano rwaMbizi (ChiZezuru)**

*Mbizi yakashaya nyanga pamusana pemakaro ayo. Musiki wezviro zvese akadaidza mhuka dzese kuti adzipe nyanga. Apo Mbizi yakanzwa kuti mhuka dzose dzadaidzwa yakabva yaenda kunodya yoga. Yakabva yatumira shoko nedzimwe mhuka ichiti “Mugotorawo nyanga nedzangu”. Dzimwe mhuka dzakasvika dzikapiwa nyanga dzadzo, mbizi ndokushaya. Apo Mbizi yakaona dzimwe dzichidzoka nenyanga yakasangana nadzo ichifunga kuti “Yaive yaigirwa nyanga nedzimwe”. Dzimwe dzikati “Tangopiwa dzedu chete”. Yakabva yaendawo. Apo yakasvika, yakaona zvonzi “Dzapera nokuti unonyanyokara”.*

**(f) Rungano rwaMbizi (ChiNdau)**

*Mbizi yakatama nyanga nokuda kwekukara. Musiki wezviro zveshe wakadaidza mhuka dzeshe kuti adzipe nyanga. Asi Mbizi paakazwa kuti mhuka dzeshe dzadaidzwa akaenda kundodya ari ega. Akapangira dzimweni mhuka achiti, “Ndiunzireiwo nedzangu”. Dzimweni mhuka dzaguma kwaa kupuwa nyanga Mbizi ndokutama. Mbizi akaona dzimweni mhuka dzechipetuka akadzichingamidza eyifunga kuti “Vandiunzira nyanga”. Dzimweni dzakati, “Taashidzwa dzedu dzega”. Akaendeyo kwaa kubhuyirwa kuti hayi “Dzapera nokuti unokara maningi”.*

**(g) Lungano IwaMbizi (ChiNambya)**

*Mbizi wakashaiyiwa imbizho pezhulu polulyo. Umbumbi wezwinhu zwose wakashoba imhuka jose kuti ejikobele imbizho. Paakahwa kuti jimwe imhuka jashobwa, iye Mbizi wakaenda kumwe azwe kunolya. Wakalayila kuna jimwe imhuka eti, “Mundibuzilebo imbizho”. Jimwe imhuka jakaswika jikapuwa jajo imbizho. Mbizi ajakawana. Paakabona jimwe imhuka jizha nembizho, Mbizi wakayeya eti, “Bandibuzila imbizho jangu”. Jimwe imhuka jakati, “Tapiwa jedu chete”. Wakakwendazwe. Aswika, akabujwa kuti, “Japela nokuti una lulyo”.*

**(h) Ngano yaMbizi (ChiBarwe)**

*Mbizi akashaya nyanga nendawa yakukara. Muzimu adaiza mhuka zentse kuti azipase nyanga. Pache adabva kuti mhuka zentse zadaidzwa iye Mbizi adaenda hache kuyalya. Akatumira zina mhuka habvi, “Nditorereni zangu nyanga imwepo” Zina mhuka zidasvika bva zapasiwa zazo nyanga asi hazina kupasiwa zaMbiziba. Pache adaona zaikuhwirira nanyanga zazo adazimirira kuti, “Pena zapasiwa nazangu nyanga”. Zina mhuka zidati, “Ife tapasiwa zatu zega basi”. Adabva aikuendawo adabvi, “Nyanga zapera, unyanya kukara”.*



**(i) Ngano yaMbidzi (ChiHwesa)**

*Mbidzi idagomba nyanga nandawa yambayo. Muthangi wabzvinhu zventse adathana mhuka zentse kudzazikowera nyanga. Asi Mbidzi paadabva kutanwa kwawo adabva ayenda kuyazha ekha. Adatumira zinango mhuka achiti, “ Munadzandithanyirawo nyanga”. Zinango mhuka zidasvika bva zapiwa zazo nyanga. Mbidzi paidawona zirango zichuuya nanyanga idazitambira ichiyecheza bzvayo, “Ndathanyirwa nyanga nawena”. Izo zidati, “Tapuwa zathu zoga”. Idabva yaenda kweneko. Idati yasvika idawona zvobvi, “Zapera ndawa unanyanya mbayo”*

**(j) Rungano rwoMbizi (ChiUtee)**

*Mbizi yakatama nyanga ngondaa yokukhara. Mururi wozviro zvese wakadainza zvinyama zvese kuti azvipase nyanga. Asi Mbizi payakazwa kuti zvinyama zvese zvadainzwa kakutoenda hayo kootsvanga zvokudya iri yega. Yakatumira soko zvinyama zvimweni ikati “Mozonditorerao nyanga.” Zvinyama zvimweni pazvakaguma zvakapaswa nyanga dzazvo basi. Azvizi kupaswa dzoMbizi. Mbizi payakaona zvinyama zvimweni zvechiuya yakaenda koozvichachamidza yechirangarira kuti, “Zviri kundiunzirao nyanga dzangu.” Zvinyama zvimweni izvi ngopazvakazomubvunza kuti, “Tapaswa dzedu basi.” Mbizi kakuchizoendeyoo. Hino payakaguma yakabvunzwa kuti, “Nyanga apachina, dzapera. Wanyanya kukhara.”*

The above translations show a very high degree of mutual intelligibility hence there is not much difference between these Shona dialects. It is therefore justifiable to conclude that all the above dialects are indeed varieties of the same language collectively known as ChiShona.

Study findings also showed that ChiShona is an indigenous language of Zimbabwe spoken by more than 75% of the country’s population. As such, the language plays a key role in facilitating participation by all in the process of national development. About 90% of the informants agreed that educational, technological, cultural and spiritual levels could be raised if instruction was to be given in Shona. Further investigations through document analysis also revealed that the language (Shona) has been accorded national and official status and can be used as medium of instruction from grade one up to seven in all Shona – speaking communities (Education Act, 2006:16).

Each of the ten Shona dialects is made up of sub-dialects, which were identified by informants as follows:

(i) **ChiKaranga**

|           |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|
| ChiGovera | (Gutu)            |
| ChiJena   | (Nyajena)         |
| ChiMhari  | (Chivi, Shurugwi) |
| ChiDuma   | (Zaka, Bikita)    |

(ii) **ChiZezuru**

|             |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| ChiShawasha | (Chinamhora, Domboshava)   |
| ChiHarava   | (Seke, Chihota, Goromonzi) |
| ChiNohwe    | (Murehwa, Marondera)       |
| ChiHera     | (Buhera)                   |
| ChiNjanja   | (Chivhu)                   |
| Chimbire    | (Wedza)                    |

(iii) **ChiKorekore**

|            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| ChiTavara  | (Makonde, Hurungwe)      |
| ChiShangwe | (Sanyati, Gokwe, Guruve) |
| ChiTande   | (Dande)                  |
| ChiBudya   | (Mutoko, Mudzi)          |
| ChiNyongwe | (Mt Darwin)              |

(iv) **ChiManyika**

|            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| ChiGuta    | (Mutasa)         |
| ChiUngwe   | (Makoni, Rusape) |
| ChiJindwi  | (Zimunya)        |
| ChiBocha   | (Marange)        |
| ChiKarombe | (Nyanga)         |
| ChiBunji   | (Nyamaropa)      |
| ChiNyama   | (Nyanga)         |
| ChiBvumba  | (Vhumba)         |

- (v) **ChiNdau**  
 ChiGarwe (Mutambara)  
 ChiTonga (Gutu, Bikita)  
 ChiNdau (Chipinge, Chikore, Chimanimani)  
 ChiShanga (Beira, Sofala – Mozambique)  
 ChiDanda (Musirizwi – Mozambique)
- (vi) **ChiKalanga**  
 ChiLilima/Humbe (Tsholotsho, Kezi, Dombodema)  
 ChiNyai (Botswana)  
 ChiPeri (Botswana)  
 ChiTalahundra (Botswana)
- (vii) **ChiNambya**  
 ChiNanzva (Hwange)  
 ChiNyai (Jambezi)
- (viii) **ChiBarwe** (Nyanga, Nyamaropa, Nyakomba)
- (ix) **ChiHwesa** (Nyanga, Katerere, Nyangombe)
- (x) **ChiUtee** (Chimoio-Mozambique)

Western Shona varieties; Kalanga and Nambya are found in the western parts of Zimbabwe and the eastern varieties are those dialects spoken in the eastern districts. Central Shona varieties are those found in the central mainland of Zimbabwe and these are Karanga, Korekore and Zezuru. Eastern Shona varieties are Barwe, Hwesa, Manyika, Ndau and Utee found in eastern Zimbabwe and central Mozambique. Table 3.5 below shows the distribution of the Shona dialects in the three above-mentioned language zones.

**Table 3.5: Zonal distribution of the Shona dialects**

| <b>Zone 1<br/>Eastern Shona</b> | <b>Zone 2<br/>Central Shona</b> | <b>Zone 3<br/>Western Shona</b> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hwesa                           | Karanga                         | Kalanga                         |
| Barwe                           | Korekore                        | Nambya                          |
| Manyika                         | Zezuru                          |                                 |
| Ndau                            |                                 |                                 |
| Teve                            |                                 |                                 |

Gordon (2006) says there were 11 979 647 Shona speaking people in Zimbabwe at the time she carried out her study and the breakdown of the Shona population was then as follows:

|                 |          |                          |
|-----------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Karanga         | -        | 4 500 000                |
| Zezuru          | -        | 3 200 000                |
| Korekore        | -        | 1 700 000                |
| Manyika         | -        | 861 180                  |
| Ndau            | -        | 800 000                  |
| Kalanga         | -        | 700 000                  |
| Barwe and Hwesa | -        | 128 467                  |
| Nambya          | -        | <u>90 000</u>            |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>=</b> | <b><u>11 979 647</u></b> |

It is a historical fact that Doke (1931) is the one who formally recommended the official use of the collective term Shona for the cluster comprising of all the sub-dialects that had been identified as Shona varieties in Doke's linguistic survey. In so doing, Doke was acting on the recommendations of the Shona Language Committee that was composed of missionaries who had been appointed by the government to assist him (Chimhundu, 2005a:29). Doke stressed that a common term was needed for use with reference to the unified language that was spoken by the vast majority of the Africans in the country. He (Doke) actually estimated that "... there are more than six times as many Shona – speakers as there are Ndebele- speakers" (Doke, 1931:26).

Admittedly, the Shona speaking people did not have a collective term to refer to themselves preferring to identify themselves by their clans (madzinza) totem groups (mitupo) and chiefdoms (ushe) which existed in loose and perpetually expanding confederancies that nevertheless clearly belonged to a common ancestry, language and culture (Chimhundu, 2005a:29).

The language varieties that were identified by the missionaries and Doke as dialect clusters and sub-dialects did not actually belong to any political entities or chiefdoms as such although there were describable patterns of distribution. The etymology of the word as stated earlier on is very unclear and could very well have started as a derogatory term coined by outsiders but after Doke's report, the term Shona was readily accepted and today its unifying effect is well appreciated.

Decades of publishing in Shona under the name Shona as well as its use officially in education and in the media, have led to the general acceptance of the term. Chimhundu (2005b) states boldly that attempts made after 1980 by historians Aeneas Chigwedere and Solomon Mutswairo to promote the use of the term Mbire as a possible substitute for Shona were quite unsuccessful.

### **3.3.2 The Ndebele Group**

In Zimbabwe, Ndebele is mother tongue to most African people living in Matebeleland North and South provinces. Ndebele is the second major African language in Zimbabwe spoken by 16% of the country's population (Makoni et al, 2007:2). In the two provinces of Matebeleland, Ndebele is the recognized official African language meaning that it is the only African language to be taught in schools in the two provinces from primary to university level. It is also the only language recognized for communication purposes by the inhabitants of the above-mentioned regions. The language is however spoken side by side with many other minority languages in the regions or provinces where it is spoken. Because of this contact with other minority languages at local level, it should be logically expected that Ndebele varieties exist although they may be minor differences probably lying in pronunciation only (Khumalo, 2007:21).

The study informants articulated without any doubt that the Ndebele language in Zimbabwe has not yet been given a proper linguistic study to discover the social-linguistic and regional varieties of this language. At the vocabulary level, it was again made clear during interviews that Ndebele borrows vocabulary heavily from Kalanga, Tonga and Khoisan. The language therefore is a mixture of many other languages spoken in its vicinity. A number of informants asserted that Ndebele varieties exist but the differences lie mainly in pronunciation and they are minor. This is an area that needs further research in future.

### **3.3.3 Sotho**

Sotho is spoken in the southwestern part of Zimbabwe mainly in Gwanda South district. According to Hachipola (1998:16), the Sotho speaking people are concentrated in an area called Manama in the south and in Chief Nhlamba's area in the north. Fortune (1959) says Sotho is also spoken in Bulilimangwe district. The other localities where the Sotho people are found are the Beitbridge districts of Shashe, Machuchuta, Masera and Siyoka 2. In Kezi, the Sotho people are found in Mpoengs whilst in Masvingo they are found in Masema. Hachipola (1998) estimated that there were about 55 857 Sotho speaking people living in Zimbabwe.

The term Sotho is the cover term for a group of related dialects such as Kurutsi, Mangwato, Birwa and Sotho. In the Zimbabwean context, Sotho is closely related to Tswana linguistically. However, since the Sotho community is found in a province in which Ndebele is the official language, we find a situation now whereby the majority of Basotho being bilingual in Sotho and Ndebele.

### **3.3.4 Shangani (ChiChangani)**

The Shangani speaking community spreads out in four countries in Southern Africa namely; Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland. In Zimbabwe these people are known by the name Changani and they are found predominantly in Chiredzi district in Masvingo province in Southern Zimbabwe. Hachipola (1998) estimated that there were about 121 787 Shangani speaking people living in Zimbabwe.

The word “Shangani” simply means followers of Soshangana one of Zwide’s military leaders who were Tsonga. His followers came to be known as Shangani. In South Africa, the Shangani people are found in Gazankulu while in Mozambique they are found in Gaza province. The term used for the Shangani people in South Africa and Mozambique is Tsonga. According to one informant Mr. Burman Sithole who comes from Chikombedzi, the term Shangani incorporates such people as Ndaui, Chopi, Ngoni and Nyembani. These are the people Soshangana incorporated as he was moving north from South Africa.

### **3.3.5 Venda**

The Venda speaking communities are found in the southern part of Zimbabwe, in the Beitbridge area districts in the Matebeleland South province. Information collected from the participants has it that the present Venda people are an offshoot of the Great Zimbabwe Empire that migrated to South Africa and settled at Mapungubwe. The Venda speaking people are predominant in the following areas in the Beitbridge district: Siyoka, Mtetengwa, Masera, and Dite. The sub-dialects of the Venda language spoken in Zimbabwe are the following:

|          |                       |
|----------|-----------------------|
| Tshivi   | (Mtetenga, Mzingwane) |
| Mutete   | (Limpopo)             |
| Makhado  | (Mapili)              |
| Kwida    | (Pande)               |
| Mulaudzi | (Pande)               |

In terms of numbers, Hachipola (1998) says there were about 80 946 Venda speaking people living in Zimbabwe at the time he carried out his research.

### **3.3.6 Tonga**

Hachipola (1998:37) says the exact number of people speaking the Tonga language in Zimbabwe is not known. The Tonga people have been under counted over the years because of the misconception that Tonga speaking people are only found in the Binga district. Facts from this study however, prove otherwise. An informant at

Binga town told the researcher that there are Tonga people in Kariba, Omay, Nyaminyami, Hwange and Gokwe districts. Hachipola (ibid) estimated the number of Tonga speaking people to be plus or minus 200 000 in the year 1998.

The sub-dialects or groups that make up the Tonga cluster are Toka, Leya, Toko-Tonga, Plateau Tonga (which is the standard variety), Valley Tonga (also known as Gwembe) and Shangwe. Both ethnically and linguistically, the Tonga people of Zimbabwe are one and the same people as those found on the northern banks of Zambezi River in Zambia. Before 1957, the Tonga lived a fruitful life along the banks of this river, whose rich alluvial soils sustained them throughout the year. However, when the Kariba dam was built and the banks of the Zambezi River were flooded, they were resettled on the higher ground although some refused to move and were consequently drowned when the lake was flooded. Table 3.6 below shows the districts and chiefs where Tonga is spoken in Zimbabwe.

**Table 3.6: Tonga districts and traditional rulers in Zimbabwe**

| District                       | Chief  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Binga                          | Binga, Sikalenge, Sinansengwe, Sina--mpande, Sinakalenge, Siabuwa, Siamupa, Sinamwenda, Sinamunsenga |
| Omay-Nyaminyami (Kariba rural) | Mola, Negande, Marembera, Nebiri, Mayove, Chalala  |
| Hwange                         | Siachilaba, Saba, Pashu, Dobola, Siansali  |
| Gokwe                          | Simuchembu   |

The districts shown in the above table clearly show that the Tonga people are found in a very wide area of Zimbabwe. The Tonga people found in the Hwange district are known as the Dombe. This however is a derogatory nickname given either by the Ndebele or the Nambya people. It was acknowledged by some informants that this variety of Tonga in Hwange has got some differences with the Tonga spoken in Binga and Kariba. Shangwe or ChiShangwe is the Tonga sub-dialect spoken in Gokwe. The Tonga people found in Gokwe under Chief Simuchembu were brought in when the Kariba dam claimed their traditional homes along the Zambezi River. Since



Gokwe is a traditionally Korekore area, the Tonga became a minority group in this area and they had to speak the local variety called Shangwe.

The Tonga variety known as Toko-Tonga got its name perhaps derogatorily from its neighbours. As we can tell from the title, the people we are talking about here are found in Mudzi district in Mashonaland East province. They are to be distinguished from the Tonga people found in the Zambezi valley. The Toko-Tonga or Mudzi-Tonga group has almost entirely integrated into the Budja culture. They for example believe in the cult of *mhondoro*, which is generally understood to be a Shona custom.

### 3.3.8 ChiKunda

The Kunda (or AchiKunda) are found in Guruve district in Mashonaland central province. They are also found in Zambia on the northern banks of the Zambezi River in Luangwa district and in Mozambique in the Tete province. According to Chief Chapoto who is the overall chief in the area, the term *Achikunda* simply means “conquerors” or “soldiers”. These are the people who accompanied marauding Portuguese hunters who were pursuing elephants for ivory from Mozambique into Zambia and Zimbabwe (Hachipola, 1998:48). The Kunda were recruited to hunt and fight for the Portuguese. The majority of the Kunda are found in Mozambique. The table below shows the sub-dialects that constitute what we know as the ChiKunda language today.

**Table 3.7: Composition of the present ChiKunda language**

| Sub Group | Country of Origin |
|-----------|-------------------|
| Nsenga    | Zambia            |
| Tavara    | Zimbabwe          |
| Tanda     | Zimbabwe          |
| Ntserera  | Mozambique        |
| Nsuwa     | Mozambique        |

In Zimbabwe, the Kunda inhabit the lower Guruve area in the Zambezi valley in two main areas; Kanyemba and Chikafa. In terms of numbers, they are very few and it could not be established in this study how many Kundas there are in Zimbabwe.

### **3.3.8 Doma**

Local folklore has it that the Achikunda/Kunda and the Doma were once one people who separated from one another at some point in history. The Doma then moved to their present locality in Chiwore Mountain. Up till now, the Doma led a food-gathering life. Cutshall (1990) suggests that the Doma originally came from Chicoa near Kabora Basa Gorge. They came into their present place of residence led by a man by the name Nyamapfeka.

The Doma are people who mainly lead a nomadic life style and they are found in Chiramba, Chaukara, Chiyambo, Bandera and Kuhwe districts. They are indeed a marginalized minority group that rarely identifies itself as Doma. Rather they identify themselves as Korekore or Achikunda thus it was again difficult to collect information from them.

### **3.3.9 Chewa (Nyanja)**

The Chewa speaking people do not form a community in any part of this country. They came into the country as migrant labourers to work in every conceivable place where they could secure a job (Hachipola, 1998:54). Formal and non-formal discussions revealed that the Chewa (Nyanja) left their homeland (Nyasaland then) for the following economic reasons:

- Purchase of cloth, blankets and other imported necessities
- Payment of lobola and bride price back home
- Payment of school fees

This was so because skilled Africans in Malawi (Nyasaland) were poorly paid compared to Africans in the then Southern Rhodesia. Zimbabwe (Rhodesia then) offered immense opportunities for the “educated” people of Malawi. However, it was

not possible in this study to give accurate figures of the Chewa people living in Zimbabwe but estimates given by Hachipola (1998) give not less than 500 000. Again, in the absence of actual official census statistics, it is difficult to be assertive hence this figure should be treated with extreme caution.

The people of Malawian origin are found in all kinds of places where there has been need for employing a large workforce, skilled or semi-skilled. Thus one finds some Chewa-speaking people concentrated in mining centers as shown in Table 3.8 below.

**Table 3.8: Location of mines with Chewa speakers according to towns**

| <b>Mine Name</b> | <b>Location</b> |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Alaska           | Chinhoyi        |
| Trojan           | Bindura         |
| Wankie           | Hwange          |
| Shamva           | Shamva          |
| Madziva          | Shamva          |
| Mazoe            | Mazoe           |
| Acturus          | Harare          |
| Antelope         | Mhangura        |
| Renco            | Masvingo        |
| Mvuma            | Mvuma           |
| Mashava          | Mashava         |
| Shabanie         | Zvishavane      |
| Rio Tinto        | Kadoma          |
| Shurugwi         | Shurugwi        |
| Mimosa           | Zvishavane      |
| Hartley          | Chegututu       |

The Chewa people are also found in Agricultural centers such as Triangle, Mazowe and Hippo Valley.

Although people of Malawian origin come from different ethnic backgrounds such as Yao, Tumbuka or Chewa, the language they have come to identify themselves with outside their own country is Chewa. Malawians are one group of immigrants that has managed to make the language survive. This is highly commendable for immigrant people who have not had political or economic power in this country.

### **3.3.10 Tshwawo (Khoisan)**

This language variety is spoken mainly in the Tsholotsho district of Matebeleland North province although some are also found in smaller numbers in the Bulilimamangwe district. In Tsholotsho district, they are found mainly in Magamwini, Sinkende, Pumula, and Dombomasili whereas in Bulilimamangwe they are found in Siwowo (Hachipola, 1998:58). Like the Doma, the Tshwawo are a nomadic type of people whose life depends on gathering food and hunting animals. In Zimbabwe, the Tshwawo (Khoisan) constitute a very small community. It was not possible in this study to establish how many Khoisan people there are altogether. But according to the Tsholotsho District Council records for year 1996, there were about 2000 Tshawo speaking people in Zimbabwe.

The areas, which have traditionally been Khoisan areas have been fenced off as Game Reserves thus the Khoisan, have now been forced to live outside their traditional homes. Consequently, they have been deprived of their livelihood due to the government's fencing off of wildlife. Many are now working as cattle herders for the Ndebele and Kalanga people. Through the years, the Khoisan people have adopted other languages spoken in the Tsholotsho district namely Kalanga and Ndebele. Today there are not many people who speak this language because people who are not Khoisan look down upon this language.

### **3.3.11 Tswana**

People who speak this Sotho variety called Tswana are found in the Bulilimamangwe district in Matabeleland South province. The largest concentration of the Tswana are said to have come into Zimbabwe during the time that Mzilikazi was fleeing northwards from South Africa. Since the Tswana are a minority group in a largely

Kalanga speaking area, they learn the Kalanga and Ndebele languages for normal day-to-day functions. The variety of Tswana spoken in Zimbabwe has not yet been studied and there are no records of the number of Tswana people living in Zimbabwe.

### **3.3.12 Xhosa (Fingo)**

Xhosa people living in Zimbabwe are generally known as Amafengo or Fingo. History has it that Cecil John Rhodes moved this group of people into Zimbabwe when he moved from Cape Town to Bulawayo. Hachipola (1998:63) says Rhodes had employed them as workers and when he arrived in Bulawayo, the Fingos approached Rhodes and asked from him land where they could settle. They also requested that they be given title deeds for the land where they were to occupy. Rhodes allocated them a piece of land at Mbembezi outside Bulawayo.

The other concentration of this community is Fort Rixon. Because of population pressures, some have now moved out and can be found in such places as Goromonzi, Musengezi, Marirangwe and Gwatemba. All the Fingos speak Ndebele in addition to their home language.

### **3.3.13 Sena**

The Sena people are identified by different names depending on where they are found. The main homeland for the Sena people is Mozambique. In Mozambique, they are known as Nyangwe, Chikunda or Senda whilst in Malawi they are known as Manganja. But in Zimbabwe they all use the name Sena. As migrant labourers the Sena came into this country like the people of Malawian origin who came in looking for employment on farms and mines (ibid). This means that like the Chewa, there is no area in Zimbabwe, which can be said to be typically Sena. Since their population is very small, the Sena people have taken on the language of their hosts.

### **3.3.14 Non-African Languages**

There are a number of non-African migrant languages like English, Afrikaans, Portuguese, Hindi, Hebrew, Italian and Greek spoken in Zimbabwe (Chimhundu, 1993:57). While the distribution of all the indigenous minorities is regional, that of the non-African minorities is scattered but mainly in urban areas except for English which is the national official language. Although not more than one percent of the Zimbabweans can be mother tongue English speakers, English continues to dominate, not only as the language of business, administration, politics and the media but also as the language of instruction in the whole education system at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, while African languages continue to be downgraded in the schools.

### **3.4 LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION POLICIES IN COLONIAL RHODESIA**

This section examines the education system and the language policy Zimbabwe inherited from Rhodesia and how this system evolved. The main purpose of the section therefore is to provide a fuller account of events during an important period (colonial era) in the creation of an education system, which had policies that remained largely unchanged in post independence Zimbabwe. Now that language planning and policy in a multiracial Zimbabwean society is under consideration, there seems to be a special need for wider historical perspectives than have hitherto been available for the attraction of educationists and sociolinguists. The colonial experience cannot be regarded as entirely irrelevant in this regard.

Another aim in this section is to show that the brutal civil war that ravaged Zimbabwe, the former British colony of Rhodesia from 1966 to 1979 was a culmination of rapidly moving events that began to unfold with the inception of the colonial government in September 1890. The discussions that fall under this section also show that conflict emerged between the colonial government and the Africans as a result of policies defined by the former in a conflicting cultural setting (Mungazi, 1992:8). Zimbabwe inherited from Rhodesia a racially structured system of education in which two parallel systems existed. The European system was designed to serve and promote white interests and ensure white domination and superiority over blacks while African

education was really an education designed to perpetuate the subjugation of blacks by whites (Zvobgo, 1986:16). Educational institutions and systems that were established in colonial Southern Rhodesia were either overtly or implicitly designed to sustain a domineering political, economic and social order over the black majority.

#### **3.4.1 Policies Under the British South African Company (B.S.A. Co.)**

The British South African Company is one of the major organizations that played a key role in the political history of Zimbabwe. This section therefore examines the way the B.S.A. Company constructed and implemented its educational and linguistic policies and also critically discusses the role African languages played in such policies.

The education and language policies in colonial Rhodesia were deeply influenced by the ideals of the father – figure, Cecil John Rhodes whose vision and determination were chiefly responsible for bringing the European settlement north of the Limpopo into being. Rhodes held a fervent belief in the superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture and institutions over blacks in Africa hence the European community in Rhodesia thought of themselves as a people apart, separated from the African “tribes” around them by the traditions of a superior civilization. Immediately following the British occupation in 1890, English was made the official language (Smith cited in Chikombah et al, 1986: 142). Indeed, during the B.S.A. Company rule, there was a tendency among educated people to regard African languages as crude and uncivilized (Ngara, 1982:23). English occupied a central position in the curriculum, whereas African languages received scant attention in black schools and none at all in those for whites. English was taught in the first year of primary education and it gradually assumed a more prominent role in the second year, and finally became the language of instruction throughout the curriculum by the third year.

Policies in Southern Rhodesia were not directed from London but rather by local officials who were answerable initially to British South Africa Company (BSA Co) shareholders and then to local white settlers as from 1923. The thinking that underpinned native education and language policies was determined by European perceptions of African culture, aspirations and potential, and their own aspirations for

the indigenous population (Jeater, 2005:1). However, their models of African society constantly drew on ideas from their European cultural backgrounds. Africans were perceived through many different lenses, most of which distorted rather than clarified their view of the African people in front of their own eyes (Mungazi, 1991:12).

Europeans who came to Southern Rhodesia in the 1820s believed that the native was very much like a child and this inscribed the white people as paternalistically responsible for African education and employment (Zvobgo, 1986; Mungazi, 1992). The Native Affairs Department (NAD) of the 1920s consistently described African society as unsuited to self-regulation without white supervision. Any education for Africans in Rhodesia according to Bone (1969) had strong and powerful opponents since giving education to the laboring classes of the poor would be prejudicial to European morals and happiness.

It (i.e. education) would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture or other laborious employments; instead of making them subordinates, it would render them fractious and refractory. It would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolvent to their superiors (Trevelyan, 1931:162).

For well over 100 years, the grounds of the opposition remained substantially unaltered, since that opposition was deeply rooted in fears and repugnancies. Europeans feared that Africans might compete with Europeans economically. In his annual report for the year ending 31 December 1909, the Chief Native Commissioner for Mashonaland wrote saying:

The policy (i.e. education) should be to develop the native's natural proclivities first, on lines least likely to lead to any risk of clashing with Europeans (Bone, 1969:21).

Since it was labour which the European masters wanted most in Southern Rhodesia, it was logical that the native who could read and write would not work on the farms and mines, but would rush to the towns to obtain employment where he could exhibit his knowledge and training.



There was further the view that the native in his ignorance, almost invariably abused a purely book education, utilizing it only as a means of defying authority and oppressing his "raw fellows" (CNR, 1904:14). Contrary to colonists' policies, Reverend Bathe wrote saying that he was sorry that on the part of the whites there was a certain reluctance to encourage education amongst the natives, under the impression that they will not be useful as servants when they could read and write. He suggested that education of some sort was inevitable and that the true policy was supposed to direct the education rather than to hinder it (B.S.A Company Report, 1898 – 1900:328). Missionaries were convinced that the first reasonable step towards the civilization of the native was to provide a course of careful industrial training, which would precede the teaching of dogma.

In 1904, the Chief Native Commissioner for Matabeleland made a startling proposal urging the establishment of industrial schools under government supervision in all Native Reserves. His colleague in Mashonaland gave his view that "...a purely literary education should not be considered for years to come" (Bone, 1969:22). He strongly favored government control of native education, commencing by establishing agricultural and other industrial school in certain selected parts, under carefully selected instructors.

African education under the B.S.A Company rule was directed under three main lines namely: religious, literary and industrial. Provision of industrial training was not in doubt since many sincerely felt that systematic industrial training produced the most powerful and beneficial influence governing the native. However, many colonists would stop providing training at the stage at which the native would have been trained as an intelligent assistant whether at a farm, mine or general work (ibid). The Education Ordinance of 1903 repeated the insistence that industrial work must be systematically taught and it also stipulated that pupils were supposed to be taught to speak and understand English.

On the other hand, the European system of education conformed closely to contemporary British ideas on education but it was also greatly influenced by unique local circumstances. The most influential of all the local features that affected the European system of school was the racial factor. According to Challiss (1980), the

main objective of the colonial system of education was to ensure that all European settler children received what was considered to be the best possible kind of education, the underlying assumption being that only Europeans would rule the territory. Special steps were taken to implement a policy of separate development well before 1923 and European settlers were encouraged by the B.S.A Company and Imperial authorities to believe that only they (whites) were fit for education on Western lines and that this education should ensure their suitability for superior status in the affairs of the territory. The fact that education in Rhodesia remained segregated by race until the end of the December 1979 helps to explain how strongly the colonial officials wished those cultural differences to be maintained.

The myth that the Africans were intellectually inferior to the whites provided a justification for the British colonization of Southern Rhodesia in accordance with the specification of the Berlin Conference of 1884 (Zvobgo, 1986). No consideration was given to the objections of the Africans to the intrusion of their society because they were considered "...incapable of formulating opinions and to define positions consistent with the application of human logic on important issues" which required a high-developed intellect (McIntyre, 1966:106). This is exactly the reason why throughout the colonial rule, Africans remained nothing more than "...a commodity of raw materials to be employed in the service of the white man" (Knorr, 1964:378).

The architect of British colonial adventure and policy in Southern Rhodesia before 1925 was none other than Cecil John Rhodes who in 1889, argued in the Cape Parliament saying, "The natives are children and we ought to do something for their mind" (B.S.A. Co., 1889:24). By adopting this attitude as a basis of his policy, Rhodes effectively eliminated the Africans from any form of dialogue. The B.S.A. Company designed a policy that was intended to produce laborers so as to maintain a socio-economic distance between the races. It is clear that the colonial officials were really not interested in any other form of education for Africans except manual labor and practical training. In a fashion that was typical of the attitude of the colonial government, one official explained the reason for this policy as a means of controlling the education of the Africans.

The native is and should always be the hewer of wood and the drawer of water in accordance with the specification of the Berlin Conference of 1884 (*The Rhodesian Herald*, 1912:10).

This is evidence to show that the colonial government and the white community feared the academic educational development of Africans more than they feared anything else in their relationship with them.

One of the first women to sit in a colonial legislature, Ethel Trawse Jollie, argued during a parliamentary debate saying whites did not intend to hand over the country to the natives or to admit them to the same social or political position as whites. She bluntly said: "Let us therefore make no pretence of educating them in the same way as we educate whites" (Mungazi, 1991:11). But George Duthie, the schools inspector who was appointed on 26 November, 1901 did not subscribe to these colonists' attitudes towards African education particularly the policy of practical training. It is not surprising that he resigned as inspector of schools at the end of the year 1901 because the influence of his conscience was stronger than the urge to retain his position of power in a system of education that had such great potential for future racial conflict.

However it is interesting to note that the B.S.A. Company regarded expertise by Europeans in the local language as a valuable tool in the exercise of colonial power, particularly by the police and in criminal courts (Jeater, 2001:451). Proficiency in local African languages was regarded necessary in order to enforce colonial orders and to collect hut taxes, as well as when enquiring into native law and custom. Expertise in African languages also enhanced the B. S.A. Company's ability to control Africans.

The colonial powers, to a very large extent felt that it was necessary to impose their own languages on the local population. This is apparent in the naming practices of the colonial period. The names given to cities/towns for example reflect a tendency to Europeanize the African names for towns.

...names like Salisbury for Harare and Fort Victoria for Masvingo are examples of the imposition of European names on African names (Makoni et al, 2007:18).

The B. S. A. Company's promotion of African languages, if any was meant mainly to gain control of the African population. By and large, the company relied on interpreters who had acquired African languages through informal contacts with Africans, a majority of whom were Afrikaans speakers. The B. S. A. Company felt that good interpretation played an important role in the delivery of justice to Africans, particularly in court trials. Between 1925 and 1935, the company introduced a new policy that defined language expertise as an ability to analyse a language. As a result, language competence was defined in terms of textual skills, which could not readily be acquired through interaction with Africans. Missionaries too regarded expertise in African languages as an indispensable tool for missionary work in colonial Zimbabwe. For example, the American Mission Board (AMB) insisted that missionaries and their wives would be denied the right to vote in elections until they passed examinations in the vernaculars (Jeater, 2001).

What is clear in this discussion is that the missionaries and the B. S. A. Company were enforcing a bilingual language policy amongst Europeans during the early phases of colonial rule. Colonial bilingualism during that era simply meant the learning of a second language by the dominant group.

### **3.4.2 The Legacy of Harold Jowitt and George Stark**

The colonial philosophy of African education was rekindled by Duthie's replacement, Herbert Keigwin, who argued that academic education for Africans would not produce good laborers but instead, would produce political agitators who would exploit the ignorant and uneducated masses to excite racial friction (Zvobgo, 1986:30). He too was replaced by Harold Jowitt, a man who had fourteen years experience in African education. Jowitt was brought from the Natal Province of South Africa to be the first director of the Department of Native Education in 1927.

In Jowitt, Southern Rhodesia had an educator of stature, a dynamic figure alive to new ideas that gave shape to African education (Parker, 1960:84). He was a relentless negotiator and a cunning diplomat, whose approach was a breath of fresh air for the missionaries, who felt that under Keigwin, their influence was diminishing. The new director seemed to have healthy relations with the communities involved in

African education. With respect to the education of Africans, he tried to mediate in the conflict between political philosophy and the reality of human existence, between past policies and a new idealism.

He tried to balance between politically expedient programmes and what was real, between the African desire for a good academic education as a means of eliminating the old colonial stereotypes and the shackles that bound their minds and the colonial intent to have them provide cheap labor. He tried to satisfy both Africans' desire for a good education and the expressed wish of the white entrepreneurs to sustain their economic and political power base through cheap labor, which only the Africans could provide (ibid). Under Jowitt's administration, as director of the Department of Native Development, the Shona vernacular dialects, which were written using various orthographies, were for the first time unified. The government in 1929 at the request of the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference (SRMC) hired a linguist, Professor Clement Doke of Witwatersrand University. Professor Doke's report was accepted by the SRMC in 1931 and a unified Shona orthography came into use. Jowitt succeeded in getting government subsidy for the publication of an African vernacular newspaper, the *Rhodesian Native Mirror*, freely distributed to teachers. He emphasized the use of the vernacular as the language of instruction in "kraal" schools. However, he appreciated the need for English and advocated that it received progressively more attention up the school ladder (Parker, 1960:86).

Jowitt had personal drive, a social view and a burning spirit of dedication to African welfare. Whilst missionaries viewed the African as a backward church member and the government viewed him (African) as a laborer needing to be looked after and controlled, Jowitt, aware of the African's weakness, saw him as a normal human being and a potential citizen (Parker, 1960:89). He then established his own set of aims for African education. These included, among others, breaking down the separate compartments, creating a working balance between academic education and practical education, seeking full cooperation between the missionaries and the government, returning the benefits of African labor to improve the school system and designing the curriculum so that students would be adequately prepared to relate what they learned to seeking solutions to problems of political and socio-economic injustice (Report of the Education Committee, 1943:52).

This was an impressive list of things to be done and objectives to be fulfilled. Jowitt was certainly trying to do things that no previous official had tried to do in African education. The colonial government could not allow that to happen and still hoped that the whites would continue to exert their traditional claim of exclusive political and socio-economic superiority. Jowitt's inability to convince his superiors that both practical training and academic education had an important place in education was the gusty wind that threw him off balance and brought his act to an untimely end only seven years after it had started (Mungazi, 1991:30). This situation spelled a parting of ways between Jowitt and the colonial hierarchy. He had given his best but it was not good enough. In 1933, the relationship between Jowitt and his superiors had deteriorated to the point where it was impossible to restore and he had to tender his resignation in November 1934. Jowitt had a vision of Zimbabwe of the future but he could not fit in the system of which he was a part.

After Jowitt's resignation the colonial government appointed George Stark to strengthen its policy of practical training for Africans (Zvobgo, 1986:15). George Stark's ideas were very similar to those of Herbert Keigwin because his philosophy of education for Africans was radically different from that of Jowitt. Stark had an entirely different idea of relating the school to the human condition and he strongly believed that the fundamental objective of African education was to bind more closely the ties between the school and tribal life. In other words, Stark wanted to confine Africans to tribal life and train them to function as cheap laborers. For Stark, schools were there to confine Africans to tribal settings whilst for Jowitt; the schools were there to train Africans to assume responsibility in a larger social context (Mungazi, 1991:36). Stark's aim of reducing the educational process for Africans to a tribal setting did not permit the formulation of an educational policy that would elevate them to a level where they would understand the context or the character of a society of which they were part. The policy simply meant reducing education for Africans to a tribal level that did not allow them to participate in national affairs except to function as cheap laborers.

As soon as Stark took office, the education of the Africans began to deteriorate rapidly. Under Jowitt, the ratio of teachers to students was 1:40, but under Stark it was 1:45 (Stark, 1935:18). Jowitt had proposed that the annual aid grants to school

be \$45.00 per school per student based on average daily attendance, as originally provided in the Education ordinance of 1899 but under Stark the grant was reduced to \$40.00 by 1935 because he did not feel that such an amount should be allocated for the kind of education offered to Africans. When he said, "...the salaries of teachers have to be cut and many have to be turned away", Stark proved to be a true colonial bureaucrat whose solutions to the problems of African education were often based on what he considered to be in the best interests of the whites and of the colonial government (ibid).

Three essential elements formed Stark's philosophy of education for Africans, all of them consistent with the traditional colonial attitude (Mungazi, 1991:34). The first was that education must be simple, practical and must not include academic material beyond basic literacy. The second was that African education must be confined to helping the African population to relate to tribal life. The third element of Stark's philosophy of African education was the introduction of basic and writing to enable the students to carry on the process of practical training. In advancing his argument that African education must be closely related to tribal life, Stark stressed in his policy that Africans must never have contact with an urban white environment because it would have an artificial influence on their tribal life. For Africans, from Stark's point of view, good education did not come from books, meaning of course that academic education was bad for them because it did not relate to tribal life.

In the Annual Report of the Director of Native Education for the year 1938, George Stark had to say:

Character is the most important aspect to the development of the African in his emergence from barbarism. Education for natives must equip them to deal with their environment and fit them to live in their own conditions of life (Stark, 1938:16).

As the Director of Native Education from 1934-1954, George Stark operated under a set of principles that the colonial government formulated for the first time in 1899. The demand for cheap labor, combined with the Victorian negative perception of Africans forced him to conclude that because they were considered inferior, the only form of education for Africans was practical training and manual labor. Basing his policy on

this belief had a special appeal to Huggins' government, which was in power from 1933 to 1953.

### **3.4.3 The Impact of Christianity on Language Policy and Planning**

Although both the BSA Company and the missionaries sought to foster development of expertise in African languages, they had different if not conflicting conceptualizations about the nature of language particularly during the early phases of colonial rule (Makoni et al, 2007:21). The BSA Company was interested in the ability of Europeans to know meanings of words to enable them to understand the natives whilst the missionaries on the other hand were more interested in "...the textual skills of Europeans, particularly the ability of Europeans to translate from English into African languages" (Makoni et al, 2007:21).

The missionaries placed emphasis on written skills, particularly translation because they were interested in finding indigenous words such words as 'God', 'sin', 'salvation' and many more words in the Bible. According to Masagara (1997), the impact and effects of Christianity on language have been reported in other parts of Africa. Two closely related languages in Rwanda, namely: Kirundi and Kinyarwanda had a number of their vernacular words changing their meanings under the influence of Christianity. The general tendency among the Christians was to use existing words and to manipulate them so that they could have new meanings that were consistent with Christian beliefs. Khumalo (2004) gives an example of the word 'tshumayela' which means 'to be talkative' which had its meaning changed to mean 'preaching' despite the fact that there is no preacher in traditional Ndebele culture. The construction of African languages was, therefore of central importance if European phenomenology was to be clearly articulated to Africans.

For the religious conversion to be successful and for the conversion to have long-term effects, Pennycook and Makoni (2003) argue that it was necessary for the missionaries to articulate their worldviews in a medium that would achieve maximum effect hence the introduction of indigenous languages as subjects in schools.



The translation of the Bible and other religious texts into Shona and Ndebele languages for example, changed the way Africans viewed their languages (Jeater, 2001:456). It led them to view their languages as texts in which there was a stable relationship between language and meaning, a notion that subsequently led to the production of bilingual dictionaries. The impression that African languages were fixed texts also affected the natives' conceptualizations of their own languages.

Because of the restricted linguistic sophistication of interpreters, the missionaries produced literary texts that varied in terms of spelling conventions, word division and sounds used to mark phonological contracts. Some missionaries used a different type of spelling in which the morphemes were kept distinct from each other while the others fused them into single words. In a research on the problems of the Shona writing system, Magwa (1999) gives an example of lack of uniformity in word division when he makes reference to a section of the New Testament in Karanga, Zezuru, Manyika and Ndau as follows:

**Karanga:** *Va ka sike Yeriho, ipopo a chibuda Yeriho na vadzidzgwake vake na va zhinjizhinji, Bartimeo, mgana wa Timeo, rombe riri bofu, wa ka nga a gere pa zhira.*

**Zezuru:** *Bakaswika Jeriko, akati abuda Jeriko, pamwe na badzidzi vake na banu bazhinzhi, Bartimeo we bofu, mwana wa Timeu, wakanga agere mu ndzira achikwata.*

**Manyika:** *Wakasvika Jeriko, zwo akange achibuda Jeriko ne wadzidzi wake ne wanhu wazhinzhi, Bartimeo, wakange ari bofu, mwana wa Timelo, wakagara panzira achikumbira mari.*

**Ndau:** *Va ka sika ku Jeriko e i bva apo mu Jeriko na vadzidzi vake nembungano huru, Bartimoiosi mukororo wa Timiosi, bofu murombo inga a ka gara pamphiri penjira. (Old Testament – Bible)*

**English translation:** They came to Jericho and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

It can be concluded therefore that missionary work in Zimbabwe had a strong influence and effect on the socio-genesis of the Shona language as it had in other parts of Africa and the rest of the world.

#### **3.4.4 Road to Cultural Collision: The Period 1934-1979**

One of the most important conclusions from Freire's theory is that conflict becomes the only form of relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed (Mungazi, 1991:59). Freire suggests that this conflict comes as a result of a contradictory situation that forces both the oppressor and the oppressed to take diametrically opposing positions on important issues. By the very nature of their position, the oppressed interpret any action taken by the oppressor, political, legislative or social, as intended to reinforce their oppressiveness or to strengthen the position of the oppressor (Freire, 1989:92). The oppressed's continuous dialectical reflection of their situation helps them to consider their condition of dehumanisation when they begin to refuse to be mere objects at the control of their oppressor and to question those motives and actions. Their efforts to eliminate that situation becomes an instrument of their re-humanization hence their struggle for liberation (ibid).

Educational policy under B.S.A Company rule received firm support from Huggins who became Prime Minister in 1934. As an avowed racist, he was determined to protect white interests and set out to ensure that whites received a superior education. In a wide-ranging address to Parliament in 1937, he made this quite clear when he said:

I will go a little further and say that it is only by allowing our race the very best education and bringing out the latent talents there may be that we will enable our race to survive in Africa. I will go even further and admit that although our youth may be able to play rugby football and would protect their skin with differential legislation, they will not be able to preserve their white brain and if they are to survive, it will be by nothing but by superior education (Zvobgo, 1986:18).

Little assistance to African education was therefore forthcoming from government and the missionaries shouldered the greater burden. Even during the period of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953-1963) European education was given a vital advantage over African education by being placed under the responsibility of the Federal Government while African education was left to territorial governments. This meant that European education had the benefit of more funds from the richer Federal budget while African education was left to depend on territorial government's shoestring budgets, which funded other programmes of African development.

When Huggins resigned as Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia to become Federal Premier in 1953, Garfield Todd replaced him, perhaps the most 'liberal' white colonial Prime Minister this country ever had. With Todd in power, wide-ranging reforms were set out. The first step taken by his government towards improving African education was to seek greater cooperation between church and state. After Todd took over, more government assistance became available to African education (Report of the Director of Native Education, 1956:2). Combined government and missionary effort led to the establishment of eight new secondary schools between 1954 and 1958 bringing the total number from eleven to nineteen. This was more than two-thirds of all the African secondary schools established during fifteen years of secondary education under Huggins' government. This and other reforms cost Todd considerable support amongst whites and led to his replacement as Prime Minister in 1957. However, the new Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead (1958-1962) maintained Todd's progressiveness and further consolidated programmes envisaged under Todd's five-year plan. Despite the high degree of white opposition, Whitehead's government made very generous allocation of funds to African education as a whole.

Zvobgo (1986), states that it is worthwhile noting that although Todd and Whitehead made considerable effort to improve African education, they did not address themselves to the root of the problem of educational inequalities which was racism. As a result Africans were not satisfied with half measures and concessions intended to silence them. There was no intention on the part of either Todd or Whitehead's government to de-racialise and integrate European and African education because as leaders of a colonial system of government this would have conflicted with racial interests of the white Rhodesian colonial society which brought them to power in the first place. Criticism of Whitehead's policies continued to mount and in the 1962 General Election, he was defeated by an extreme right wing Rhodesia Front Party led by Winston Field. Soon after coming to power the Rhodesian Front (RF) government introduced a system of Community Development (CD) under which the government proposed the complete transference of the development and administration of primary education from missionary churches to African local councils (Report of the Secretary for African Education, 1966:3). The objective was to make Africans responsible for their own education and development in line with Rhodesia Front government's policy of separate racial development. The local councils, which had

not borne such responsibilities before, were required to administer and develop their local system of education, which regrettably had to imitate that of the Europeans through the imposition of English as the only official medium of instruction. It was their responsibility to raise most of the funds needed to run primary education from their own sources supplemented by grants from the central government. The first step towards implementing the policy was to order churches to hand over their schools to the local district councils.

Another aspect of the Rhodesian Front's educational policy, which came to be known as the New Education Plan, was the introduction of radical changes with regard to the selection process for pupil entry into secondary education. Under the New Education Plan, only 12.5% of all African children completing their primary education each year would be allowed to proceed to academic secondary education (F1). Another 37.5% was to be admitted to vocational secondary education (F2). The remaining 50% was left with no provision whatsoever for any form of secondary education within the formal school system. The only alternative left for this majority was to undertake private studies. Equally drastic was the change in the government's financial policy towards overall African education which reduced government expenditure on African education from 8, 6% of the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1962 to 2% in 1967 (Zvobgo, 1986:26). The cuts were severely felt in primary education, which had previously enjoyed 70% of the total education vote.

While African education was being subjected to all these policy changes, European education remained unaffected. F2 secondary education for example, had a stigma placed on it right from the time of its introduction. It was implicitly stated by the Judges Commission that the scheme would be for the less able, that is, those children who were considered by the selection process "...to be unfit or unable to cope with the rigours of academic work" (Report of the Southern Rhodesia Education Commission, 1962: 427). As a result, Zvobgo (1986:26) says, teachers, parents and pupils resented it particularly as they knew that a certificate in non-academic courses such as agriculture, carpentry, building, offered less employment prospects than one in academic subjects. Vocational secondary education failed to capture favour because it was seen as part of the Rhodesia Front's (RF) policy of separate racial

development and an attempt by the government to provide Africans with inferior education.

Murphree in a study carried out in 1975, showed that of the 10 360 Form 1 pupils in 1971, a mere 2 525 got to Form 4 and only 183 succeeded in reaching Form 6. Advancing in the educational ladder became a privilege for only a small proportion of the African children. So depressing was the situation in African education during the RF rule that one missionary summed the feeling of many churches saying:

The education system for Africans in Southern Rhodesia under the new policy had become such a depressing example of separate and unequal facilities between races that it is no longer possible for missionaries to remain silent (Zvobgo, 1986:27).

This was said against a background situation where provisions were more than adequate for European education. For example between 1961 and 1969, some 39 224 white children obtained four years of secondary education compared to only 7 676 blacks (District Synod Minutes, 1968). The overall effects of the RF's policies of racialism and discrimination in every socio-economic and political sphere at every level of education produced racial conflicts of an unforeseen magnitude, which engulfed this country in a protracted war of independence by Africans from the late sixties until the achievement of black majority rule in April 1980.

#### **3.4.5 R.F. Policy on Language in Education**

Education in Southern Rhodesia was conducted solely through the medium of English. While the language of a child's home could be used in the early stages of instruction, it was supposed to be given up after a period of six months. The Minister of Education was required to seek approval of Parliament before registering any school for the use of a non-English medium while existing non-English language schools were not to be allowed to grow (Atkinson, 1972:130).

At the end of seven years of education at the primary level, children were expected to be able to speak the English language fluently, read a newspaper with understanding, follow printed instruction such as those explaining how to register a parcel at the post office, how to use a telephone, how to follow instructions in a

pattern book, on a seed packet and the like (Report of the Committee of Inquiry into African Primary Education, 1974:9). The child was also expected to be able to give both orally and in writing, clear instructions about how to get from one place to another, to write a family letter involving description, explanation and narration of experiences and incidents and to write an application for a job. In one of their recommendations the Committee of Inquiry into African Primary Education stated that the home language despite it possessing ambiguous features deriving from local variation in speech could be used as the medium of instruction where this would lead to a better understanding of concepts and skills. But for selection into Form 1, only Grade 7 Mathematics and English results were used as the basis for selection whilst results for Shona/Ndebele and General Knowledge only provided supplementary evidence about the fitness of candidates for admission to the secondary schools or for employment.

The foreign invasion and power domination that started in 1890 introduced a new language of power that created situations in which attempts were made to suppress the indigenous languages all together or at least relocate them to the confines of the informal sector (Chimhundu, 1993:58). On one hand English firmly entrenched itself as the language of government, business, the media, education, training and specialised information as well as upward social mobility and wider communication within and outside Zimbabwe's borders. African languages on the other hand resultantly became predominant in what was perceived as being the "...relatively unimportant family, social and cultural domains and continued to be downgraded particularly in the education system" (Chimhundu, 1993:57). Mkanganwi (1992:9) concludes saying the colonial government of Southern Rhodesia did not attempt any meaningful language planning for Africans because the British rulers had a colonial linguistic policy which emphasised separate development for the different races.

#### **3.4.7 Language Policy and the Struggle for Independence (1965-1980)**

The de-facto language policies and practices of some national liberation organisations have strongly influenced language policies in post-independence Zimbabwe. This section analyses the language policies and practices of three major political parties in Zimbabwe namely: Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU),

Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and United African National Council (UANC). The language policies of the above mentioned liberation movements led to the introduction of new words or a reinterpretation of existing words. According to Makoni et al (2007:28), the liberation organisations differed in the degree to which they used English, Shona or Ndebele. The official documents of ZANU and UANC for instance relied heavily on a combination of Shona and English while ZAPU tended to use English and Ndebele for its official announcements and propaganda.

Unlike ZAPU and UANC, ZANU through its liberation army, ZANLA, held all night political rallies aimed at educating the peasants in areas where the army operated. The all-night political vigils were referred to as *pungwes* and the Shona language was the official medium of communication. During the struggle, the Portuguese language had a wide spread impact on the Shona language because of the association that had been created between Portuguese speaking FRELIMO soldiers and ZANLA militants in Mozambique. The popular usage of the word *povo* (*civilian population*) was again influence of Portuguese (Makoni et al, 2007:27). This is so because some Zimbabwean guerrillas received their military training in Angola and Mozambique both former Portuguese colonies and they brought back with them Portuguese words which subsequently entered into the Shona and Ndebele languages. The term *Chefe* (Portuguese) was also adopted during the Zimbabwean war to refer to someone holding a senior position of authority. The Zimbabwean guerrillas adopted it from their ally, the Mozambican Liberation Movement (FRELIMO) that used Portuguese as its official language of communication.

This analysis of the language policies and practices of the three major liberation movements has revealed the way language policies evolved within the liberation movements. The above discussion therefore helps to fill up an important gap in the study because it provides a new pair of linguistic lens that should be used to see the de-facto language policies formulated during the war of liberation.

### **3.5 LANGUAGE POLICY IN POST-COLONIAL ZIMBABWE**

Zimbabwe inherited from Rhodesia a racially structured system of education in which two parallel systems existed. The European system was designed to serve and

promote white interests and to ensure white domination and superiority over blacks, while African education was really an education designed to perpetuate the subjugation of the blacks by the whites. The inequalities in the provision of human, financial and material resources between European and African education were indicative of the racial basis of colonial education. It is this system and the racial policy on which it was based which compelled the first African government to effect changes in education and language policy soon after independence.

Zimbabwe can be said to be unique in that it is the only constitutionally trilingual state in Southern Africa. English, Ndebele and Shona are constitutionally equal (Mkanganwi, 1992:12). However, the *defacto* situation makes Zimbabwe just like other Southern African states where the language of the colonial power has remained the language of government structures, commerce, industry and education. This can be likened to putting new wine into old wine skins.

At the attainment of independence in 1980, the newly formed nation of Zimbabwe had a daunting task of choosing an official language that would not only facilitate communication but would also provide the much needed unity among the many ethnic groups. Such a medium was also expected to provide national identity and self-determination for the sovereign state. Unfortunately up to this day, Zimbabwe does not have a comprehensive piece of legislation that anyone can actually use as the defining instrument for the status and use of Zimbabwe's three main languages. It would appear that since the days of British rule, convention has entrenched English as the official language while numbers of speakers have given Shona and Ndebele a national character.

The national or official status of Shona and Ndebele is largely theoretical, as very little has been done so far to develop and promote these languages and to diversify their functions. It is now 28 years after it attained its independence and English continues to dominate, not only as the language of business administration, politics and the media, but also as the language of instruction in the whole education system at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, while African languages continue to be downgraded in the schools and vernacularised outside in the wider community. The



country has an overall structure of language policies, which it inherited from colonial Rhodesia.

Zimbabwe is one of the few African countries that do not have a comprehensive national language policy despite celebrating national independence for the past 28 years. The Director of the African Languages Research Institute (ALRI), Herbert Chimhundu, while giving a public lecture at the University of Zimbabwe, on April 2005, said:

The absence of a clear national language policy and the general lack of funding for language research are some of the major factors hindering initiatives in the research and documentation of local languages which had been deliberately denigrated to vernacular status by the colonial establishment (*Sunday Mirror*, 2005:12).

He bemoaned the fact that the standardisation of the Shona language was happening without official policy or planning, despite numerous attempts after independence to have a deliberate language policy and planning. Various initiatives have been mooted in Zimbabwe to draw up a national language policy such as the one by the National Language Policy Advisory Panel (NLPAP) that submitted a report on the formulation of a national language policy in 1998. The recommendations made for a comprehensive national language policy were well received, but nothing as yet has been done to supplement the recommendations (NLPAP, 1998:39-50).

Similarly, the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Stan Mudenge, speaking at an international conference, held on 18 January 2006 in the city of Masvingo called for the establishment of a comprehensive language policy that will make African languages more important in education and life in general. The Minister noted that the establishment of a language policy would help describe the diversity of languages in the country as well as define a multi-lingual framework in which each language finds its place (*Daily Mirror*, 2006:8). He bemoaned the fact that African culture had been marginalized by the colonial education system whose primary objective was to eliminate the so called 'primitive cultures'.

The pronouncements by Chimhundu and Mudenge clearly show that it is very difficult to find a comprehensive document in Zimbabwe that spells out clearly, the role and

function of indigenous languages in education. Language policy in this country is usually taken for granted and is often described at political rallies by government officials who prescribe the language or languages of instruction to be used at different levels of the educational system. Addressing a political rally in the Midlands Province on 20 June 2002, the then Permanent Secretary of Education, Sport and Culture, Thompson Tsodzo said:

Teachers can now use Shona and Ndebele as a medium (sic) of instruction in addition to the traditional English language during lessons...There is now more emphasis on the teaching of local languages. English remains the lingua franca (official language) but will share the same platform with Shona and Ndebele. The two local languages can now be used to teach other subjects (*Chronicle*, 2002:11).

Policy on language in Zimbabwe's education system is therefore obscure since there is no official document that clearly spells out government's position with regard the status of African languages in the different administrative and educational domains.

### **3.5.1 Language in Law and Administration**

In legal terms, English is entrenched by references to language requirements in Articles 82 and 87 of the Zimbabwean constitution. To be eligible for appointment as a judge of the High Court or the Supreme Court or for appointment to a tribunal, a legal practitioner must have been qualified for at least seven years and practising "in a country in which the common law is Roman Dutch or English with English as the official language (NLPAP, 1998:25). Implicit here is recognition of the convention that in Zimbabwe, law is practised in English and that, therefore English is the official language of the country. The only concessions allowed are to be found in Articles 13 and 18, which state that a person who is arrested or detained shall have his or her charge or reason for arrest or detention explained "...in a language that he understands" [Articles 13 and 18 (3) (b)] and shall be permitted to have without payment the assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand the language used at the trial, that is, English [Article 18 (13) (f)].

In administration, English is the language used almost all the time. It is used in official correspondence with regional and local governments as well as in regional and local

administrative offices. However, at political rallies and during elections campaigns, Shona and Ndebele are used a lot together with English. Again, English is used in legislation although occasionally individual Parliamentarians may opt to use Shona or Ndebele in the House of Assembly. Generally, Parliamentary debates are conducted in English and the language is used in the write up and promulgation of laws.

### **3.5.2 Language-in-Education Policy**

In 1980, when Zimbabwe became independent, the new elites who took over the management of the country were anxious to provide their children with educational opportunities that were previously the privilege of whites (Makoni et al, 2007:30). The new elites did so by enacting legislation that allowed their children to attend schools that had previously been reserved for white children.

Chimhundu (1987) argues that policy on language in schools and colleges is quite confused. Soon after independence, Shona and Ndebele were actually dropped from the list of examinable subjects at Grade 7, the last year of primary school. This earlier policy decision effectively downgraded African languages in the whole education system, even where they continued to be taught as subjects. The net effect of this decision was that no African language was made compulsory at any level in the whole education system, while English continued to be a requirement for all forms of education and training and for university entrance.

A few nominal changes in language policy were officially introduced in 1987 when a new Education Act was announced. The Education Act had a section which identified Shona, Ndebele and English as the three main languages of Zimbabwe that were to be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows:

- (a) Shona and English in all areas where the first language of the majority of the students is Shona or
- (b) Ndebele and English in all areas where the first language of the majority of students is Ndebele (Nziramasa Commission Report, 1999:628).

According to the 1987 Education Act, Shona and Ndebele were to be used as medium of instruction in lower primary schools before shifting to English in the fourth grade. This continued importance given to English even in post-independence Zimbabwe reflects a disconcerting continuity with colonial language policies in which English dominated African languages,

Currently, education policy makers are giving some recognition, though grudgingly, to five of the indigenous linguistic minorities. But application of this policy has been piece meal and at elementary school level only. Ethnic pressure groups continue to lobby for the introduction of these languages at higher levels despite the fact that teachers are not trained in them because Teachers' Training Colleges do not include them in their curricula while commercial publishers are reluctant to publish books in them because the market is too small and government policy on them is too vague.

In terms of general patterns of language use within the multi-lingual situation, English is the prestige-laden language enjoying high status (H), Shona and Ndebele enjoy relatively low status (L), whilst the minority languages enjoy even a much lower status. Chimhundu (1997:129) notes that there is neither explicit nor written language policy, hence the official neglect of language issues in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The lack of a national language policy is in fact the result of an implicit policy to, as the saying goes, "let sleeping dogs lie". The only reference to language in the whole Zimbabwe Education Act of 1987 (as amended in 1990 and 1996) is Section 55 part XI which is here quoted in full (NLPAP, 1998:27)

#### PART XI: GENERAL

##### Section 55

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, the three main languages of Zimbabwe namely, Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows:
  - (a) Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Shona.
  - (b) Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority of the residents is Ndebele.
- (2) Prior to the fourth grade, either of the languages referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) can be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

- (3) From the fourth grade, English shall be the medium of instruction, provided that Shona and Ndebele shall be taught as subjects on an equal time allocation basis as the English language.
- (4) In areas where minority languages exist, the Minister may authorize the teaching of such languages in primary schools in addition to those specified in sub-section (1), (2), and (3).

Although the Education Act of 1996 stated that either Shona or Ndebele languages be used as medium of instruction in the first three grades at school, in practice however, Shona and Ndebele are not really used as mediums of instruction in many schools and even where these two languages are predominant, no serious attempt is made to teach or use them.

This language policy in education was further amended in May 2006 under Section 62 of the Education Act, Part X11 which now reads as follows:

#### PART XII GENERAL

##### Section 62. Languages to be taught in schools.

- (1) Subject to this section all the three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely Shona, Ndebele and English shall be taught on an equal time basis in all schools up to Form 2 level.
- (2) In areas where the indigenous languages other than those mentioned in sub-section (1) are spoken, the Minister may authorize the teaching of such languages in schools in addition to those specified in sub-section (1).
- (3) The Minister may authorize the teaching of foreign languages in schools.
- (4) Prior to Form 1, any one of the languages referred to in sub-section (1) and (2) may be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.
- (5) Sign language shall be the priority medium of instruction for the deaf and hard of hearing (Education Act, 2006:16).

Interpretation and implementation of these provisions in the school system is confused and half-hearted in respect of both the national and the official minority languages. Although the Education Act states that either Shona or Ndebele may be used as medium of instruction in primary education, in practice however, Ndebele and Shona are not being used as the media of instruction in many schools. Even in those areas where the minority languages are predominant, no serious attempt is made to teach or use them. It is quite apparent that there is still a lot of confusion in

practice as there are no uniform arrangements or requirements for timetabling or in the use of the languages in question as media for instruction or as subjects. English on the other hand remains entrenched as the medium of instruction as well as the key to qualification for education and training at all levels and therefore becomes the key to employment and upward mobility.

### **3.5.3 Language in Media and Society**

Despite the twenty-eight years of political independence in Zimbabwe, English continues to dominate in both the electronic and print media, while Shona and Ndebele have continued to be vernacularised and the other local languages are hardly ever used. Although the situation seems to be improving, there are still very few television programs in Shona and Ndebele. Only three and a half hours each per week out of a total of ninety-two hours on ZTV1 were allocated to these so called vernacular programs in 1996 (NLPAP, 1998:30). Of the four radio stations, 3FM and Sport FM broadcast wholly in English and pay only minimal attention to African languages.

English is even more predominant in the print media, where the government controlled Zimbabwe Newspapers Limited (Zimpapers) dominates the newspapers published. The three dailies, *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and the *Daily Mirror*, the two Sunday newspapers, *The Sunday Mail* and *The Sunday News*, as well as virtually all the independent weekly newspapers, *The Financial Gazette*, *The Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard* are all in English. The only notable exception is *Kwayedza/Umthunywa* which is a weekly paper published in Shona and Ndebele respectively.

There are also a few small regional weekly newspapers such as *Masvingo Star*, *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Telegraph*, *Ilanga*, just to mention a few which like the big newspapers, publish in English. In a research carried out by Elias Rusike (1990) a total of forty independent weekly newspapers, regional newspapers, monthly magazines and professional or special interest magazines were listed as English publications. Virtually all of them are published in English, although a few particularly

the rural newspapers may sometimes include articles and advertisements in Shona or Ndebele.

It is also important for Zimbabweans to be educated about the fact that not every indigenous Zimbabwean is ethnic Ndebele or Shona in areas designated as Ndebele/Shona speaking. Zimbabwe's linguistic profile also includes Changana, Venda, Kalanga, Nambya and Tonga, as the five officially recognized indigenous minority languages, Chewa as the only officially recognized migrant minority language and Sotho, Chikunda, Sena, Xhosa, Tonga, Barwe, Hwesa and Tshawo as the other minority languages spoken in the country (NLPAP, 1998:3). In addition, there are other ethnic minorities speaking other languages, both African and non-African e.g. Fengu, Bemba, Hindi, Afrikaans, Portuguese, Italian and Greek.

#### **3.5.4 Challenges**

The main problem that arises is which of these languages mentioned above is to be officially recognized for purposes of developing the nation state of Zimbabwe. At this juncture, we need to stress the point that when making these decisions, Zimbabweans need to be educated about the difference between a comprehensive national language policy and a language policy in education. The current Education Act (see Part XII Section 62) is the one that approximates a national policy on language in education. As of now, Zimbabwe does not have a national language policy although it does have an Education Act with some reference to language.

The ZANU (PF) government in post-colonial Zimbabwe was hesitant to tackle the issue of national language policy during the 1980s. However, by the mid 1990s pressure had mounted mainly from the smaller language groups, both the so-called minority languages and Ndebele. For the former there is now strong resentment of exclusive recognition and domination of Shona over Changana in Chiredzi and Ndebele over Nambya and Kalanga in Hwange and Plumtree respectively. In these areas, in terms of ethnicity, the so-called minorities are actually the majority. It is a fact that in specific sections of Matebeleland it is Ndebele itself, which is the minority language in terms of ethnic speakers. Shona is also a minority language in areas such as Chiredzi and Chikombedzi.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

It has been argued in this chapter that Zimbabwe is a multilingual country whose linguistic situation is certainly less complex than those that obtain in other African countries including its SADC neighbors, Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa. However, the government generally ignores the multi-lingual character of this country and the colonial status quo is actually maintained. The language situation in Zimbabwe is still characterized by the dominance of English as the language of power and prestige. One might argue further to say mother tongue education will not appeal to the black people in Zimbabwe because of the stigma with which it was associated during the colonial era. In times of the British rule, mother tongue education was synonymous with inferior education and this stigma continues to haunt Zimbabweans and it has hindered efforts to promote African languages as languages of learning and teaching. There is therefore very little hope that national identity in Zimbabwe can be attained through the use of African languages in early education and in the mass media, particularly in print. Since English is the official language, most African parents tend to see it as a means of climbing the social and economic ladder. Knowledge of English is usually associated with high socio-economic status and the language is usually regarded as the key to success and a prerequisite for upward mobility.

It took Zimbabwe twenty-eight years after independence to heed the call to introduce African languages as medium of instruction in primary education. Two African languages, Shona and Ndebele can now be used as media of instruction in all grades of primary education. However, it is sad to note that no funds from the central budget are allocated towards the development of these indigenous languages.

The recent introduction of African languages as media of instruction in Zimbabwe may help change the status of indigenous languages but the lack of a clear language policy might make it difficult to bring about sustainable language development programs. Many critics therefore view the current language situation as a continuation of the policies adopted by the British during the colonial era. Language policy in Zimbabwe can therefore be likened to “new wine in old skins”. It is again sad to note that continued use of colonial languages, as media of instruction in education



will inevitably lead to more poverty and divisions in the Zimbabwean society. The country thus needs indigenous languages that would give the country a distinct identity in the world. An African lingua franca such as Shona or Ndebele will not only foster pride but will build bridges between the people of Zimbabwe, leading to mutual understanding and greater political and economic unity. Development in Zimbabwe therefore cannot be achieved without serious considerations of the significant role of African languages in education since language is at the heart of a people's culture and is also a people's greatest cultural inheritance that should be properly nurtured.

The next chapter presents and analyses the data gathered on the attitudes of Zimbabwean learners, teachers and lecturers on the use of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in education. An evaluation of the efforts being made by language associations and institutes towards the development of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe is also made.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS- DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

“Many people have come to accept that ‘real’ education can only be obtained in a world language such as English...because they see the products of an English-medium education getting rewards in terms of lucrative jobs and upward social mobility” (Bamgbose, 2000:88)

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Results that are going to be presented in this chapter are findings that were collected by the data gathering tools that were presented and discussed in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.7. 4. The chapter proceeds as follows: First there is an introduction that is followed by a detailed discussion of people’s attitudes and views towards the use of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in education. Contributions being made by government institutions, non-governmental organizations and language associations towards the growth and use of African languages will be analyzed. In addition, the attitudes of teachers and lecturers towards orthography harmonization of indigenous African languages will also be examined. Finally, the chapter winds down in the form of a conclusion.

#### **4.2 KEY FINDINGS**

##### **4.2.1 Attitudes of Zimbabweans towards the use of indigenous African languages as official media of instruction in education**

The questionnaire and the interview techniques were used to find out attitudes of Zimbabweans towards the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction in education. The responses to the research questions are as shown below.

**(a) What language do you think should be used as medium of instruction in schools, colleges and universities?**

When asked to indicate on the questionnaire the language or languages which they thought should be used as medium of instruction in education, the distribution of the responses was as shown in the tables below.

**Table 4.1: Learners' preference for language of instruction (N = 500)**

| <b>Language</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| English         | 304           | 60,8                  |
| African         | 196           | 39,2                  |
| Other           | 0             | 0                     |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>500</b>    | <b>100</b>            |

Figures in the above table clearly show that 304 (60, 8%) of the learners who participated in this study prefer English to be the medium of instruction. Only 196 (39, 2%) would want indigenous African languages to be medium of instruction in education.

**Table 4.2: Teachers and lecturers' preference for language of instruction (N = 200)**

| <b>Language</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| English         | 135           | 67,5                  |
| African         | 60            | 30                    |
| Other           | 5             | 2,5                   |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>200</b>    | <b>100</b>            |

Just like the learners, the teachers and lecturers too, prefer English to be used as medium of instruction in education. A total of 135 (67, 5%) teachers and lecturers indicated on the questionnaire that they would prefer English as opposed to Shona or Ndebele to be media of instruction in education. A similar pattern also emerged from the interviews where both learners and their teachers preferred English instead of the use of an African language as medium of instruction. It was 60% for teachers/lecturers and 70% for learners who indicated during the interviews that they

would want to use English as the official medium of instruction. The main reason given was that it is an internationally recognized language.

Parents too expressed attitudes similar to those of learners, teachers and lecturers. The table below shows their preference for language of instruction.

**Table 4.3: Parents' preference for language of instruction (N = 300)**

| Language     | Number     | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| English      | 176        | 58,6           |
| African      | 124        | 41,4           |
| Other        | 0          | 0              |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>300</b> | <b>100</b>     |

Table 4.3 above shows that 58, 6% of the parents want their children to learn using English as the official medium of instruction. Unlike teachers, quite a significant number of parents (41, 4%) indicated that they would prefer an African language to be used as medium of instruction in education.

When these parents were asked to give reasons why English should be the official language of instruction during interviews, the majority (70%), again said English is an internationally recognized language, which doubles up as the gateway to success. Some of the parents argued that Zimbabwe is a mixed society with so many languages being spoken; hence it is only English, which can be neutral when it comes to selection of the language of instruction in education. A parent in Masvingo province had this to say, "*Unofunga iwe mwana wangu angaita dhokotera kana akadzidziswa Science neChiShona kana ChiNdevere? Hazviiti!*" (Do you think my child will ever be a doctor if he/she learns Science in Shona or Ndebele? It doesn't work!)

Parents with at least an O-Level certificate and above also preferred the use of an indigenous African language as medium of instruction and they too were quick to say that this was the situation in all the developed countries where mother-tongue medium of instruction is the norm. They gave examples of the Chinese, Japanese,

British and Americans who have successfully developed through the use of their mother tongues as media of instruction in education. A businessman in Mashonaland Central province said, *“MaChina ari kubudirira nokuti anosevenzesa rurimi rwaamai kuita dzidzo zvose nebhizimusi. Havanyari kushandisa ndimi dzavo sezvatinoita isu muno muZimbabwe.”* (The Chinese are developing fast because they use their mother tongue as official language in both the education and the business sectors. They are not ashamed of using their mother tongue as we do here in Zimbabwe.)

**(b) Which language is likely to give you power and prestige in Zimbabwe if used?**

The table below shows the distribution of responses by parents, teachers, lecturers and learners.

**Table 4.4: Language that gives power and prestige in Zimbabwe (N = 1000)**

| Language     | Number      | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| English      | 656         | 65,6           |
| African      | 344         | 34,4           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1000</b> | <b>100</b>     |

The figures and percentages in the above table clearly show that English is the language that gives power and prestige in Zimbabwe. A total of 65, 6% of the respondents said English was indeed the language of power in Zimbabwe. Out of a total of 500 learners, 327 indicated on the questionnaire that English gives them power and prestige. Parents too believe that English is more powerful than African languages. A total of 188 out of 300 parents admitted the dominance of English over African languages. Teachers and lecturers too expressed the same view that English gives power and prestige as was given by the learners and their parents. A total of 70, 5% of the teachers and lecturers showed that English was associated with power and prestige.

During lesson observations, the researcher observed that most teachers and lecturers used English to teach indigenous languages. At most of the Universities and Teachers’ Colleges, instruction in the Departments of African Languages is in

English. Ironically, when teachers and lecturers were interviewed, most of them gave their responses in English despite being asked in Shona or Ndebele. This from my point of view is evidence of colonial bondage. English in Zimbabwe is still the language of business communication. Learners also told the researcher during focused group discussions that it was easier for them to communicate their ideas in English than to use African languages, which they allege, “fail to express ideas explicitly”.

The researcher, in an effort to establish a link between English and socio-economic development asked the following question during interviews;

“Do you think languages have a relationship with the social, economic and scientific development of a country?”

In response 92% of the learners, 52% of the teachers/lecturers and 87% of the parents answered ‘Yes’. The following were given by all the three groups of respondents as the reasons, which they thought, made it possible for a relationship between language and socio-economic development to exist.

- Language forms the basis of communication.
- Ability to use a language helps an individual to develop intellectual skills.
- Participation in economic and scientific development can only be meaningful through language.
- Some languages have got limited vocabulary, which prevent them from being used to express scientific concepts.

These reasons show that the research informants were very clear about the positive relationship between language and development.

### **(c) Can an African language express educational and scientific concepts?**

This question was asked to all the three categories of informants and the results are shown in Table 4.5 below.

**Table 4.5: African languages can express educational and scientific concepts (N = 1000)**

| Category           | Agree               | Disagree            | Total              |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Learners           | 205                 | 295                 | 500                |
| Teachers/Lecturers | 84                  | 116                 | 200                |
| Parents            | 112                 | 188                 | 300                |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>401 (40, 1%)</b> | <b>599 (59, 9%)</b> | <b>1000 (100%)</b> |

Results in the above table show that 59, 9% of the informants do not agree that an African language can express educational and scientific concepts. When asked to give reasons why they disagreed most of them indicated during interviews that African languages do not have enough vocabulary to express modern scientific concepts hence they rendered themselves unsuitable for use as media of instruction in education.

**(d) Would you be happy if all subjects from primary to university level were studied using indigenous African languages as media of instruction?**

The responses by all categories of respondents were distributed as shown in the Table below.

**Table 4.6: Attitudes towards the use of African languages in all levels of the education system (N = 1000)**

| Category           | Happy               | Not Happy           | Total              |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Learners           | 187                 | 313                 | 500                |
| Teachers/Lecturers | 123                 | 77                  | 200                |
| Parents            | 117                 | 183                 | 300                |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>427 (42, 7%)</b> | <b>573 (57, 3%)</b> | <b>1000 (100%)</b> |

Figures in Table 4.6 above, show that the majority of the informants (57, 3%) will not be happy if all subjects from primary to university level were studied using indigenous languages as media of instruction. The highest percentage in the **not happy** category (62, 6%) was from the learners themselves. The following were the reasons,

which made learners and their parents refuse to accept the use of African languages as languages of instruction in education.

- Use of African languages would create communication problems between Zimbabwe and other nations on the African continent and beyond.
- African languages offer limited vocabulary to scientific and educational concepts.
- Many of these languages have not been developed to meet educational challenges.
- Use of African languages reduces the marketability of university graduates.
- English is a world language that is internationally recognized.

Respondents in the **happy** category (42, 7%) listed the following as reasons why African languages should be used as media of instruction in all levels of Zimbabwe's system of education.

- If other countries like Japan, China, America, Britain and Germany just to mention a few are doing it then we should also do it.
- Concepts will be easier to understand if the language used at home becomes the language of instruction at school.
- Use of indigenous languages in education will promote African culture in Zimbabwe.
- Africans should be proud of their languages.
- Learners will find it easier to learn in their mother tongues.

Interview results and observations also showed similar reactions from parents, teachers, lecturers and learners.

**(e) Do learners encounter problems when studying in English?**

The distribution of the responses is shown in the Table below.



**Table 4.7: Learners encounter problems when studying in English (N = 1000)**

| <b>Category</b>    | <b>Agree</b>    | <b>Disagree</b>  | <b>Total</b>       |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Learners           | 352             | 148              | 500                |
| Lecturers/Teachers | 150             | 50               | 200                |
| Parents            | 168             | 132              | 300                |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>670(67%)</b> | <b>330 (33%)</b> | <b>1000 (100%)</b> |

\* The **Agree, Slightly Agree** and **Strongly Agree** categories of responses in all the three questionnaires were collapsed to reflect a positive response (agree) whilst the **Disagree, Slightly Disagree** and **Strongly Disagree** reflected a negative response (disagree).

Findings from both the questionnaires and interviews show that learners do encounter a lot of problems where English is used as medium of instruction. Figures in Table 4.7 above show that 352 learners out of 500 (70, 4%) agreed that they were finding it difficult to learn using English as medium of instruction. The teachers and lecturers who shared the same view were 150 out of 200 (75%) and they too confirmed that learners encounter problems when English is used as the only official medium of instruction in education. A teacher at a High School in Manicaland emphatically asserted this when she said, “*Mkwasha, rega ndikutaurire! Wana awa totowadzidzisa ngemutauro waamai kuti vanzwisise. Ukashandisa ChiRungu basi basi veshe wanofira bvunzo.*” (My son-in-law let me tell you this. We resort to teaching using the mother tongue in order for these pupils to understand concepts. If we are to use English throughout, they will all fail their examinations.)

The researcher further asked respondents whether the use of African languages in Zimbabwe’s education system was a national issue that required urgent attention. A total of 72% of the interviewees confirmed positively that the language in education question was indeed a national concern. A significant number of the respondents, 38% feared that the use of African languages, as official languages of instruction will have negative societal effects and they listed the following reasons:

- The process of choosing which African language to use is likely to degenerate into tribalism because Zimbabwe is a multilingual nation with more than ten African languages.

- Instruction in a selected African language will only benefit speakers of that language variety at the expense of the wider African community.
- Science subjects will be negatively affected since it is difficult to express scientific knowledge using African languages.
- African communities will be isolated and excluded from the global village, which communicates mainly in internationally recognized European languages.

Although learners encounter problems of comprehension when they are taught using non-African languages, there shall continue to be a bias towards the use of English because of its international recognition.

**(f) At what level of education should the medium of instruction be an indigenous language?**

All categories of the informants were asked this question and the results are as shown below.

**Table 4.8: Level at which indigenous languages should be used as media of instruction (N = 1000)**

| Category           | Primary            | Secondary           | Tertiary            | Total              |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Learners           | 295                | 123                 | 82                  | 500                |
| Parents            | 141                | 93                  | 66                  | 300                |
| Teachers/Lecturers | 152                | 20                  | 28                  | 200                |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>588(58, 8%)</b> | <b>236 (23, 6%)</b> | <b>176 (17, 6%)</b> | <b>1000 (100%)</b> |

Results in Table 4.8 above show that 588 (58, 8%) of the informants think that the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction should be limited to primary schools only. Very few informants (17, 6) prefer that African languages be used as media of instruction at the tertiary level of the country's education system. It is also interesting to note that (76%) of the teachers and lecturers confirmed that indigenous languages should be used as languages of instruction only at the primary school level of education.

A follow up to this was made through an interview with Professor K. K. Prah, the Director of the Centre for the Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) in Cape Town and he asserted that sustained development, in an overall sense, could reach the grassroots of African societies by building on indigenous languages. Language, Professor Prah argued further, permits the process of socialization and its precise usage is particularly crucial to education. It may be further argued that science and technological knowledge need first to be appropriated by the target group into their indigenous knowledge base. Other interviewees also made it very clear to the researcher that no African language at present has developed enough to be used as official medium of instruction at the level above the primary sector. There is need therefore, the teachers argued, to compile terminological dictionaries for the different subject disciplines and expand the vocabulary of these languages so as to cater for new developments in science and technology.

When the researcher asked the question, “Do you think teachers and lecturers in Zimbabwe are fully equipped to teach using indigenous African languages as media of instruction?” the majority of the respondents responded in the negative as shown below:

|                    |            |     |
|--------------------|------------|-----|
| Parents            | <b>Yes</b> | 113 |
|                    | <b>No</b>  | 187 |
| Learners           | <b>Yes</b> | 57  |
|                    | <b>No</b>  | 443 |
| Teachers/Lecturers | <b>Yes</b> | 64  |
|                    | <b>No</b>  | 136 |

The informants, learners (88, 6%), parents (62, 3%) and teachers/lecturers (68%) admitted that educators are not adequately trained and are ill equipped to teach using indigenous languages as media of instruction.

#### 4.2.2 Contribution by government institutions, organizations and language associations towards the growth and use of indigenous African languages

The respondents were further asked whether there was government will to formulate and implement language policies that favor the use of indigenous languages in education and again the answer was in the negative. The distribution of the responses was as shown below:

|                    |            |     |
|--------------------|------------|-----|
| Learners           | <b>Yes</b> | 142 |
|                    | <b>No</b>  | 358 |
| Parents            | <b>Yes</b> | 104 |
|                    | <b>No</b>  | 196 |
| Teachers/Lecturers | <b>Yes</b> | 47  |
|                    | <b>No</b>  | 153 |

When asked to justify why they thought there was no political will from the Government to develop African languages the informants stated that the absence of a clear comprehensive national language policy in Zimbabwe was a covert indication that the Government is not willing to develop African languages. Those who answered positively (20, 8%), had to make reference to the revised Education Act of 2006, which states that Shona and Ndebele may be used as media of instruction. This according to them is evidence at least to show the Government's commitment towards the use of African languages as languages of instruction in Zimbabwe's education system.

When asked to comment on whether there is political will to formulate and implement language policies that favor the use of indigenous languages in education (item 24) the responses were as shown in Table 4.9 below:

**Table 4.9: There is willingness on the part of government to use indigenous languages as languages of instruction in education (N = 1000)**

| Category           | No                 | Yes                 | Total              |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Learners           | 353                | 147                 | 500                |
| Parents            | 154                | 146                 | 300                |
| Teachers/Lecturers | 120                | 80                  | 200                |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>637(63, 7%)</b> | <b>373 (37, 3%)</b> | <b>1000 (100%)</b> |

Figures in the above table show that only 37, 3% of the respondents agree that the Zimbabwean government to some extent is helping positively in the promotion and use of indigenous languages spoken in the country. However, the Government does realize that promoting the use of African languages in Zimbabwe will contribute to the empowerment and improvement of the socio-cultural status of the indigenes.

Item number 25 of both the parents and teachers/lecturers questionnaire required respondents to agree or to disagree with the assertion that language associations contribute positively towards the development and use of indigenous African languages in Zimbabwe. A summary of the responses is given in the table below:

**Table 4.10: Language associations contribute positively towards the growth and use of indigenous African languages as media of instruction in Zimbabwe (N = 1000)**

| Category           | Agree           | Disagree         | Total             |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Parents            | 195             | 105              | 300               |
| Teachers/Lecturers | 145             | 55               | 200               |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>340(68%)</b> | <b>160 (32%)</b> | <b>500 (100%)</b> |

As shown in Table 4.10 above, 68% of the respondents in the study agreed that Language Associations (LAs) in Zimbabwe help in a number of ways to promote the use and growth of indigenous languages. The following were identified as the key players that contribute significantly towards the development of indigenous African languages:

- Shona Language and Culture Association (SLCA)
- Kalanga Language Development Association (KLDA)
- Nambya Language Development Association (NLDA)
- Hwesa Language Development Association (HLDA)
- Barwe Language Development Association (BLDA)
- Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZLPA)
- African Languages Research Institute (ALRI)

Amongst the perceived contributors, the Shona Language and Culture Association and the African Languages Research Institute were singled out by the respondents as the most effective in terms of language promotion and use in Zimbabwe.

#### **4.2.3 Attitudes of teachers and lecturers towards orthography harmonization**

Question 26 of the Teachers and Lecturers' Questionnaire and Question 9 of the interview schedule for the educators required them to state whether it was possible to unify the orthographies of related African languages. They were further asked to give reasons to support their choices and the results were as shown below.

Out of the 200 teachers and lecturers who responded to the questionnaire, 180 (90%) agreed that it was possible to unify the alphabets and spelling systems of related indigenous African languages. The teachers and lecturers to a large extent agreed that harmonization of related languages could go a long way towards the development and use of African languages for sustainable development. Unfortunately, there were a few (10%) who perceived and viewed harmonization with suspicion because of many linguistic and political factors at the design and implementation levels of the project. The Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Great Zimbabwe State University, Professor Herbert Chimhundu told the researcher (personal interview) that harmonization implies that all dialects would be unified into one language, and as one language they would share the same orthography. It also implies the determination of linguistic and orthographic norms that would be acquired through the school system, mass media and other communication forms.

Another language expert, Professor Kwesi Kwa Prah (personal interview) further affirmed that harmonization is not intended to abolish some languages or dialects but its aim is to abolish dialectical writing systems, which create unnecessary differences in the writing of African languages. Standardization of African writing systems will in turn help speakers of the different dialects to share resources with other related languages. The ultimate goal is to see a natural convergence occurring and a creation of a linguistic common identity.

Face-to-face interviews were held with language teachers and lecturers from High Schools and Tertiary Institutions and most of the interviewees indicated that they were familiar with the harmonization programme of the indigenous African language varieties in Zimbabwe that had been facilitated by the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Societies (CASAS), a non-governmental organization based in Cape Town, South Africa. Furthermore, the participants invariably stated that the institutions they represented welcomed the harmonization exercise for it would assist in the production of more reader – friendly texts in African languages, which would be shared by users of related varieties within a language cluster. They also said they believed harmonizing the orthographies of all related African languages in Zimbabwe would help to unite speakers of these varieties. Below are specific contributions from some of the people who were interviewed at selected key educational institutions.

Mr. E Mangoya, the Acting Director of the African Languages Research Institute (ALRI), which had hosted the first and second harmonization workshop in February 2006, said that ALRI fully accepted the unified standard orthography for Shona language varieties spoken in Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. He added that ALRI would henceforth use the recommended orthography in all the materials that they were going to produce. Furthermore, new editions of all their works produced prior to the publication of the new orthography would be revised to take into account the recommendations of the unified standard orthography. However, there was need for the orthography to be popularized in universities, teachers colleges, schools and communities through the distribution of sample primers and inter-disciplinary monographs. He also felt that it would be helpful to organize an all-inclusive Shona symposium that would bring together representatives of the varieties spoken in Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

The Chairperson, of the Department of African languages and Literature at the University of Zimbabwe, Dr N. E. Mberi, said that his Department has actively participated in the harmonization of indigenous language varieties and accepted the unified spelling system. He added that the Department was happy with the primers and monographs that had so far been published using the unified orthography. Furthermore the Department had incorporated the harmonization of the Shona and Ndebele orthographies into its curriculum at third year level. The challenge for universities in Africa, Dr Mberi went on to say, was for them to start producing works on harmonization and other reference materials written in African languages for tertiary institutions.

Officers at the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) were interviewed to establish their perceptions on the harmonization of indigenous language varieties in Zimbabwe and they all welcomed the harmonization programme in Zimbabwe. The CDU officers further endorsed the primers that had so far been produced in ChiShona for example, using the unified orthography. For this reason the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture had allowed the use of the Government logo on all the published harmonized primary readers. Since CDU worked closely with publishers, there would be no problem in convincing the publishers to follow the unified orthography in their publications. The only challenge the CDU officers foresaw was lack of funding for the production of enough primers to meet national demand.

Two members of the teaching staff in the Department of African Languages and Literature at the Great Zimbabwe State University, Mr. K. T. Gondo and Dr J. Mapara were interviewed. Both indicated that the Department had incorporated the unified orthographies of indigenous African languages into its Shona curriculum. They said, however, the only challenge would be lack of enough materials for circulation in primary and secondary schools.

At Mkoba Teachers College in Gweru the Acting Vice-Principal and lecturer in the Department of African Languages, Mr. S. Chikumira said that the College appreciated the unified orthographies developed by the language experts and has already incorporated orthography unification topics into their Applied Education courses. However, he said that the use of the unified orthographies in schools would



depend on the approval given by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. More interviews were held with staff at Masvingo Teachers College, Morgan Zintec College (Harare) and the United College of Education (Bulawayo) and the findings were strikingly similar to the ones discussed above.

There was consensus among teachers and lecturers that they were all happy to use the new harmonized African languages orthographies. In fact, students and staff including those outside the African Languages Departments were eager to participate in the writing of monographs using the new harmonized orthography

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

The results presented in this chapter show that many Zimbabweans still believe that only English can effectively serve as an official medium of instruction in education. This view stems from their perception of English as the key to success, socially, economically, politically and educationally. English as shown by the study findings, is firmly entrenched as the language of government, business, the media, education training and specialized information as well as of upward social mobility and wider communication within and outside Zimbabwe's borders. African languages are predominant in what are perceived as being relatively unimportant family, social and cultural domains. As a result, African languages continue to be downgraded particularly in the education system and in public. The harmonization of indigenous African languages has been received positively by many Zimbabweans and the programme is likely to be successful in Zimbabwe unlike in other nation states like South Africa where it is viewed with a lot of suspicion. Study findings have also shown that despite the negative attitudes displayed by speakers of African languages, Language Associations, Institutions and Organizations continue to play a positive role in promoting the growth and use of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe. It is interesting to note however that there are still a few individual Africans who continue to view African languages as key to all development programmes in Zimbabwe, Africa and beyond.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

“In order to rationalize the subjugation of an entire race of people and their subsequent enslavement, one must first deny the one element that makes them human, their language and, once it is discovered that they do speak, it further becomes necessary to do what is possible to hinder the use of that speech” (Ward, 2005:5).

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The attitudes of the people of Zimbabwe who participated in this study, regarding the choice of language to use in the school system can be placed in two opposing factions or camps. The first camp that emerged advocated for the use of a foreign European language as official medium and came up with an argument that such languages (foreign languages) are convenient alternatives to the presumed controversy that might arise in the choice of one of the native languages as language of instruction. Although African languages have a place in post-colonial Zimbabwe's language policies, speakers of indigenous languages continue to have a high regard for English. Study findings have shown that many Zimbabweans still believe that only English can effectively serve as an official or national language. This view, according to Mutasa (2004:109) stems from their perception of English as the key to success, socially, economically, politically and educationally. The research findings also confirm Crystal's (1997:40) observation that “Blacks saw English as a means of achieving an international voice and uniting themselves with other black communities.”

The camp also argues that a foreign language like English is universally economical and has been tested and found viable. In support of the above perception, 60% of the interviewees in the study admitted that African languages are inadequate for education and inapt for the dissemination of scientific information. Since most of the indigenous languages are poorly developed, Zimbabweans sometimes feel amused or even embarrassed when a native language is spoken in a very official context. To those who venture to speak African languages in offices when conducting business, they are always reminded accordingly, “*Tava kumusha here?*” (Literally meaning, are

we now at home?). This is to remind the speaker that he/she is in an official setting where it is the English language that should be used.

In contrast, the opposing faction or camp in this language of instruction debate questions the economic universality and viability of using foreign languages in African education. Members who belong to this camp claim that school subjects could be taught using indigenous languages because using a foreign language is elitist and that its use alienates children from their culture. Mchazime (1999:41) who argues that the first language helps the child to establish both emotional and intellectual closeness with his or her parents also echoes these views and attitudes. Since most parents communicate their feelings in their own language, they are also able to transmit aspects of their culture to the child in that language. It is apparent in these research findings that the attitudes of some parents, teachers and lecturers towards the use of indigenous languages in schools pose as a very big challenge to mother tongue medium education.

## **5.2 LANGUAGE AS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT**

The study findings concur with the principles outlined in the Barcelona Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights (June, 1996) in which language is seen as a basic human right. The Declaration emphasizes non-discrimination, pluralism and community initiatives in language use. The Barcelona Declaration of Linguistic Human Rights states that:

- All language communities have the right to use their language with full legal validity in economic transactions of all types such as the sale and purchase of goods and services, banking, insurance, job contracts and others.
- No clause in such private acts can exclude or restrict the use of a language in the territory to which it is specific.
- All language communities are entitled to have documents required for performance of the above-mentioned operations at their disposal in their own languages. Such documents include forms, cheques, contracts, invoices, receipts, delivery notes, order forms and others (Bamgbose, 2000:18).

For Mackey (1988:10-11), language rights denote the opportunity to “effective participation in governmental programs, which include aspects such as bilingual unemployment benefit forms, bilingual voting materials and instructional pamphlets and interpreters. Macias (1979:88) defines language rights as the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of language and the right to use your language(s) in the activities of communal life, especially the right of students to their own language. On the other hand, Mackey (1984) refers to linguistic rights as the right to mother tongue instruction. This study also views the use of the mother tongue in education as an inalienable right. Discrimination on the basis of language has negative repercussions in other spheres of life as noted by Mackey who asserts that:

Deprivations resulting from language discrimination may be devastating for skill acquisition. Language barriers have all too often worked to frustrate and stifle the full development of latent capabilities. When people are deprived of enlightenment and skill, their capabilities for effective participation in all other value processes are correspondingly diminished (Mackey, 1984:11).

When minority linguistic rights are acknowledged, the full participation of minority groups in all national activities such as judicial and administrative proceedings, civil service examinations, voting and public employment is guaranteed (Mutasa, 2004:31). It goes without saying therefore that, if linguistic rights are not recognized it is not possible for minority language groups to develop skills and participate in the social, economic and political life of their country.

Although a paltry 30% of the interviewees who participated in this study preferred the use of an African language as medium of instruction in education, the reasons that were advanced by these few were also similar to those found by Mutasa (2004:57) in a language study carried out in South Africa. The common reasons in both cases are as follows:

- Use of the mother tongue ensures creativity and interaction with our environment,
- Mother tongue instruction facilitates learning: Children do not battle with two things; that is the language and subject matter,
- It is a way of making sure that the languages do not die,

- Use of the mother tongue in education may lead to the promotion or better status for African languages.

It can be deduced from the above discussion that the mother tongue is undoubtedly the language through which the child is inducted into this world and more so; it is through this language that the child will understand his/her environment and concepts far better. Several scholars among them Afolayan (1976), Bamgbose (1976), Adegbija (1994) and Mutasa (2004) emphasized that mother tongue education ensures learners' performance at the maximal ability and psychological support.

### **5.3 MOTHER TONGUE MEDIUM EDUCATION**

Only a small percentage (27%) of the parents and guardians would want their children to be taught using an African language as medium of instruction. These informants strongly believe that indigenous African languages can only be used as media of instruction in primary education. In secondary schools and tertiary institutions, the medium of instruction should, according to the majority of the informants (73%), be English, an international language that boasts of all literature required to teach different skills in education. Regarding the choice of African languages that could be used as media of instruction in secondary schools, the majority of the participants (78%) preferred only two African languages namely; Shona and Ndebele. The obvious reason was that they at least want their children to understand the only two national languages officially recognised by the government. Respondents in a study carried out by Mutasa (2004:62) gave similar responses to those obtained in Zimbabwe. When parents and teachers were asked to comment on bilingual education involving English and an African language, some of the reasons advanced were as follows:

- We should strike a balance among languages,
- Using both languages helps students to pass easier at tertiary institutions,
- If the subject matter were explained first in the mother tongue, then English later, more students would do well.

Whilst Mutasa's respondents in a study carried out in 1995 say teachers feel that mother tongue medium education reduces proficiency in English, the international language, Letsie (2002) in contrast to what Mutasa found, asserts that learners who do not receive mother-tongue education experience reading problems as opposed to learners who do receive it. Problems are experienced in all the facets of reading namely; reading speed, reading accuracy and reading comprehension. Letsie (ibid) argues further saying learners should start their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue because they understand it best and because it enables the gap between home and school to be substantially reduced. Parents and teachers expressed in interviews that the shock children undergo in passing from home to school life is so extensive that everything possible should be done to soften it, particularly where modern methods of infant teaching have not yet been assimilated by the school. Instead of running about playing and shouting, they are expected to sit still and be quiet to concentrate; to do what they are told instead of what they want to do; to listen and answer questions. Almost everything is different from home and it is not surprising that many children find it difficult to adjust themselves to their new surroundings.

Learners clearly indicated that they found a lesson for example in geography or almost any other subject easier if they are taught in their mother tongue. Their feelings and attitudes are summed up by a response from a High School student who simply said, "To expect us to deal with new information or ideas presented in an unfamiliar language is to impose a double burden upon us." The use of the mother tongue, scholars and informants agreed, will further promote better understanding between the home and the school. Moreover, the parents will be in a better position to understand the problems a child has at school and in some measure help the child in his or her education. Study findings to a very large extent have shown that children benefit most emotionally and cognitively, if information in the early stages of primary education is delivered in the mother tongue.

The attitudes displayed by Zimbabweans in this study are to a very large extent similar to Moto's (2002) findings in Malawi in which he stated that linguistic discrimination in Malawi comes as a result of negative attitudes towards indigenous languages, which manifest themselves in a number of ways listed as follows:

- Pupils cannot progress from secondary school to university if they do not obtain a credit in English.
- Aspiring and eloquent speakers of Malawian local languages cannot become representatives of the people in parliament without having attained a full Junior Certificate of Education (J.C.E). Without this, they must pass an English Proficiency Test that has to be administered by the University of Malawi.
- Malawians cannot contest in local government polls unless they show evidence of a given level of proficiency in English.

Similarly, in many discussions pertaining to the use of indigenous languages in education in all the ten provinces of Zimbabwe, the researcher often heard comments about how educational standards have plummeted because school leavers, undergraduates and even some graduates fail to communicate effectively. Such comments according to Moto (ibid) indirectly imply that failure to construct a grammatical sentence and communicate effectively in a foreign language is symptomatic of lowered educational standards.

Because knowledge of English opens up opportunities for employment in Zimbabwe, it becomes logical for Africans in the country to realize that knowledge of spoken and written English is more useful and economically rewarding than enhanced knowledge of the local indigenous languages. Commenting on language attitudes, Kayambazinthu (1998) asserts that it is obvious in social circles that those who know how to speak and write the white man's language have more prestige than those who can only speak African languages. The negative attitude towards the use of African languages in Zimbabwe's ten provinces is representative of many African countries. This is so because in nearly all the countries,

English, the colonial language of "high-culture" and the language of the elite was and is still regarded as the most prestigious language used in parliament, legislature, education, government, science and technology and most academic writings and official correspondences. The colonial language is considered highly because of the historical processes that put it there and uphold it (Kayambazinthu, 2000:35).

The status of English remains what it is because most African governments do not put in place mechanisms for vigorously promoting indigenous languages.

When asked how the government of Zimbabwe will assure quality science and technology education through the use of indigenous languages, the immediate reaction to the question was that it is not possible to begin even dreaming about the provision of high quality science and technology education without initially discussing the medium of delivery for such a curriculum in both the formal and non-formal education sectors. One cannot agree more with Jegede (1998:161) when he writes saying “language plays an important role in teaching and learning science and technology.”

#### **5.4 ATTITUDE PROBLEMS**

As Bamgbose (2000) so clearly depicts, the existence of widespread negative attitudes to African languages among Africans of all walks of life is one of the major challenges to educational language planning in Africa. These negative prejudices are deeply rooted in the colonial experience and the downgrading of status. Africa’s indigenous languages rest on centuries of marginalization and ignorance combined with previous unhappy experiences on the part of the speakers themselves. All this creates a basically negative attitude because many people have come to accept that ‘real’ education can only be obtained in a world language such as English. Many so-called educated parents dispute even the idea that a child will benefit if his or her initial education is given in the first language. Parents who prefer an English medium education sometimes do so because they see the products of an English medium education getting rewards in terms of lucrative jobs and upward social mobility (Bamgbose, 2000:88).

Furthermore, Rubagumya (1990) has shown in his research studies that although secondary school students admit that they understand their teachers better when teaching is carried out in Kiswahili, the majority of them still think that English should be maintained as the medium of instruction. In a similar study carried out by Roy-Campbell (1992) it was noted that many students resisted the change of language of instruction from English to Kiswahili because they assumed that English was the best medium for science and technology, even though Kiswahili is the de facto medium of teaching in many schools. Such an anomaly can only be viewed as an indication of the perceptions of where power is located in African societies.



Obanya (1999) similarly lists eight fallacies or factors that hinder the use of African languages in education. These fallacies were also found to be present in responses from 75% of the participants in this study. The fallacies or factors, which hinder the use of African languages in education as given by Obanya and the study participants, are the following:

- (i) The multiplicity of languages within one country.
- (ii) The existence of multi-ethnic populations in urban areas.
- (iii) The level of technical development of African languages.
- (iv) The non-official status of indigenous languages.
- (v) The hostility of Africans towards studying their own languages.
- (vi) The lack of personnel and of appropriate materials.
- (vii) The high costs of implementing policies that favor African languages.
- (viii) The long-term ill effects of mother-tongue education.

It is however unfortunate that these factors do not stand the test hence the use of the term fallacy. Therefore there is no reason whatsoever Zimbabwe or Africa should be exempted from applying the expansion principle, which is the most basic pedagogical principle. This principle postulates that exposure to the familiar must precede exposure to the unfamiliar. This holds true for both language as medium of instruction and contents to be taught in any subject of instruction.

Pertaining to the 2006 Education Act that made Shona and Ndebele official media of instruction in primary schools, the participants in this study feared that;

- English will be marginalized
- Standards of education will go down
- African languages will not effectively transmit scientific knowledge plus many more unfounded fears.

Again, as pointed out in the above paragraphs, some of these factors do not stand the test of time hence we refer to them as mere fallacies.

## 5.5 ENGLISH HEGEMONY

More than 80% of the respondents in this study opted for 'English only' for all the subjects. The general assumption is that English is inherently superior and better suited for education. Kamwendo (1999:229) cited in Mutasa (2004:120) confirms this when he says "English is synonymous with sound education whilst education through African languages is given second class rating." Adegbija (1994:104) also summarizes attitudes to English in Uganda in a manner similar to the Zimbabwean situation. He says "provision of education in the vernacular rather than an international language (like English) aroused resentment among students and parents" (p.104).

To many African language speakers, the advantages of using English as the language of teaching and learning outweigh the merits of employing African languages in teaching and learning. Mutasa puts it more graphically when he says, "...the world can survive without South Africa but South Africa cannot exist without the world." (Mutasa, 2004: 121). Coming back home, one can only say that the world can survive without Zimbabwe but Zimbabwe cannot exist without the world.

Similarly, Moyo (2000:152) says English has many kinds of power, namely:

- Power to rule like the colonial powers did,
- Power to influence and initiate,
- Power to cause change,
- Power to free oneself from the claws of poverty, oppression, ignorance, homelessness and many more challenges.

To demonstrate the hegemony of English over other languages, the President of South Korea vehemently urged his people to learn it saying, "Learn English or face being left behind." (Mutasa, 2004:121). For the same reason, Malaysia, Japan and China also introduced English in their schools and made it a medium of instruction for science subjects. Gill (2002: 22) says Malaysia in the year 1999, replaced mother tongue tuition with English in science and technology. This came as a result of the realization made by the government, five years after introducing mother tongue

medium education. The phasing out of English had reduced the number of people who could speak English to unprecedented levels. Unfortunately, when investors came from Australia and other countries, they could only communicate with Chinese and Indians who had continued to run private schools in English (ibid). In the end, foreigners emerged as controllers in commerce and industry. Indeed this was a rude awakening, which all developing countries should try and avoid. As can be seen, a mother tongue medium education policy if not properly balanced can impact negatively on the development of the human resource potential of the indigenes. Based on Malaysia's experiences, it is therefore necessary for the Zimbabwean government to strike a balance between the use of African languages and English especially in education.

The dominance of English according to Rebecca Schwarz (2003:1) appears to be indisputable. Findings of this study also confirm this because the majority of the informants indicated on the questionnaires that English is a tool of globalization. English they argued dominates international politics and commerce and its privileged role is strengthened through such bodies as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and regional groups such as the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the European Union. Phillipson (2001: 187) divides the world between the English-speaking haves (80%) and the non-English speaking have-nots (20%). The teachers and lecturers who participated in this study acknowledged the hegemonising processes that tend to render the use of English 'natural' and 'normal' while marginalizing indigenous languages. Through the use of English, Western lifestyles are to be admired, envied and desired at the expense of local languages and cultures.

Sri Lanka's post-colonial language policy is worth noting in this study. Soon after colonization in 1815, the British administrative system developed higher status schools that taught in English and lower status schools that taught in local languages. The English medium schools levied fees and based instruction on Western educational traditions whilst the vernacular schools were free (Punchi, 2001:367). From 1945-1960, the Sri Lankan government instituted free education instructed in local languages and achieved positive results. These results included a literacy rate of 90 percent, higher life expectancy, a high gross enrolment rate for

primary and secondary education, gender equity in education and an increase of women in the labor force. Despite these achievements, the few English-speaking Sri Lankan citizens continued to enjoy a lot of advantages in privatization and economic liberalization because the private sector prefers English-speaking employees. Therefore, this means that the Sri Lankan language policy that favored the use of indigenous languages in education was defeated by globalization policies.

English continues to be the dominant language in education in many countries regardless of the fact that many African educators have complained that the World Bank, for example, does not promote teaching in indigenous languages beyond the primary level (ibid). A condition of accepting aid from such organizations like the World Bank is the adoption of certain restructuring policies, including changes to education policy with the goal of modernization and competitiveness in the global market place. The prestige of English therefore continues to discriminate against “the vernacularly educated” (Punchi, 2001: 373).

For the Sri Lankan government, English is essential for Sri Lankan development. However, it is also interesting to note that elsewhere in Norway, for example, proficiency in Norwegian is essential for securing employment in the public and private sectors. Another good example is Iceland that continues to use Icelandic at all levels from grade one to university (ibid: 375). Finland, Japan, Mongolia, South Korea and Indonesia are other countries that have continued to use their own languages as media of instruction at the highest levels of education.

Netherlands is another example where English has been adopted as a second and compulsory language for primary school learners. According to Booij (2001:348), the Dutch relationship with global English is less strained. Booij points out that the existence of bilingual secondary schools is intended to provide students with the advantages of an international career. English is preferred for advertisements because of its “snob appeal” (Booij, 2001:349). Most doctoral dissertations, television programmes, and radio programmes, just to mention but a few, are in English although Dutch remains the dominant language at universities. English has a very strong position in the Netherlands. It is however part of a structure of multilingualism in which it has its own place and function, leaving ample space for the national

language, other foreign languages and immigrant languages. Furthermore, for immigrants, Dutch acquisition remains a necessity providing access to Dutch culture, society and history. The important thing to note is that the use of English in the Netherlands does not threaten the existence of the Dutch language.

Alamin Mazrui (2002) asserts that English and other European languages have continued to mesmerize African policy makers as a direct consequence of the continuing effects of the legacy of colonialism. The result has been a disturbing unwillingness to commit significant amounts of resources to the promotion and development of African languages. By fostering a psychology of linguistic neglect and even linguistic fatalism among policy makers, and the general public in a rapidly changing world, the European language regime does in fact continue to pose a serious long-term threat to the future of African languages.

English according to Phillipson (1992:5) has become a lingua franca to the point that any literate educated person is in a very real sense deprived if he or she does not know English. At the present time, English, to a much greater extent than any other language, is the language in which the fate of most of the world's millions is decided. It has become the international language par excellence in the twenty first century. The language has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine, business, mass media and many other areas of human endeavor hence it becomes the most widely learnt foreign language. This non-exhaustive list of the domains in which English has a dominant place is indicative of the functional load carried by English. The spread of English is unique, both in terms of its geographical reach and as regards the depth of its penetration (Phillipson, 1992: 6).

Leaders in all parts of the world often articulate the demand for English. The Danish Minister of Education for example declared that English has advanced from being Denmark's first foreign language to being the "second mother tongue of the Danes" (ibid: 9). Similarly, a government Minister from Sri Lanka suggested that the teaching of English throughout Asia, Africa and the Pacific should be placed on the same level as the World Health Organization or UNESCO because according to the Minister, knowledge of English was both an educational and social panacea.

Although this study argues in favor of the use of indigenous African languages as media of instruction in Zimbabwe's education system, there is dire need to teach English as a second language in all levels of the education system in order to access information at a global level. However, it is the contention of this study that English does not belong to a particular country nor does a particular country own it. It should be used by all freely. The international community from the researcher's point of view should advocate for cosmopolitan English to be lingua franca and it should clearly be different from what native English speakers use in their daily lives. This study further advocates the development of a global English not connected to any country or culture, including an easily accessible international lexicon, neutralizing the lexical differences between varieties of English. This type of English will suffice as a means of international communication.

## **5.6 PROMOTING THE USE OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN ZIMBABWE**

In spite of the negative attitudes displayed by speakers of African languages in this study, Language Associations, Institutes and Organizations are playing a major role in promoting African languages through reworking orthographies, harmonization and terminology. This section of the study discusses the contribution made by four key players in language development in the country namely: The African Languages Lexical Project (ALLEX); The African Languages Research Institute (ALRI); The Great Zimbabwe State University (GZSU) and The Shona Language and Culture Association (SLCA).

### **5.6.1 The ALLEX Project**

The development of indigenous African languages in Zimbabwe has been advocated for with the intention of promoting and developing a Zimbabwean culture emphasizing national unity. The language policy adopted at independence which is enshrined in the 1987 Education Act enhanced the status of local languages while recognizing the importance of English as the language of business administration and international relations. English thus remained the official language, medium of

instruction in schools, a compulsory subject and also a requirement in all school certificates.

In an attempt to rectify this situation where students, teachers, lecturers and authors of literary works in indigenous languages were relegated to a lower status compared to their English counterparts, the Department of African Languages and Literature at the University of Zimbabwe came up with specific initiatives on indigenous languages with a view to their wider use generally and more specifically in the education and training systems in Zimbabwe.

The African Languages Lexical Project (ALLEX) was launched at the University of Zimbabwe on 21 September 1992. The main aim of the project was to lay down a foundation of the production of monolingual dictionaries in Shona, Ndebele and other minority indigenous languages of Zimbabwe. Three quarters of the ALLEX team was made up of students and staff at the University of Zimbabwe and the project received tremendous moral, financial and technical support from the Norwegian universities committee for Development Research and Education (NUFU) and the Department of Lexicography at the University of Oslo.

The ALLEX project is one of the several plans for development by the Department of African Languages and Literature (UZ), as it finds itself faced with the social demands and challenges of contemporary Zimbabwe. The Department continues to involve itself in social development by applying linguistic expertise to all areas where language is used and decisions on language use are made (Fortune, 1992).

The Department of African Languages and Literature (UZ) is working closely with the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture through the two language committees of Shona and Ndebele as examiners and moderators in the subject. Members in these language committees work as consultants in standardizing indigenous orthographies, the development of the written form and the teaching of African languages in schools. Three long-term development projects have been lined up. Firstly, there is ALLEX (African Languages Lexical Project), secondly, there is the minority languages survey and thirdly, the translation and terminology exercise. All three, have secured a

measure of support both from the University of Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology.

The ALLEX Project, according to Chimhundu (1992) is a long-term lexical computing project that aims at successive production of works of reference, mainly in the form of three monolingual Shona dictionaries at three different levels of completeness and complexity. The first dictionary is for the secondary school, the second for the primary school and the third for the colleges and universities of Higher Education. These provide the main target groups whose differing and special needs the dictionaries and supplementary reference works aim to meet. Ultimately, the programme is aimed at the creation of a language bank, a powerful instrument which will serve other works in lexicology, linguistics, translation studies and journalism.

Politically, the minority language communities have been lobbying for some sort of recognition since independence and the Department of African Languages and Literature feels that it is high time that the University as a neutral institution become involved to provide researched information for language policy and curricular revision in their regard. Such a survey would be of help to the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture in developing a language policy for the whole country which it still lacks.

The third project or exercise by the department under ALLEX is that of translation and term creation. This process of spontaneous term creation has been greatly widened and accelerated during the last half century owing to political, commercial and industrial developments. Since independence, Shona and Ndebele are being used more in business, central and local government, commerce, industry, mining, agriculture, education, health, advertising, broadcasting and television, all sectors which create pressure for term creation. These terms should be collected and published in monolingual dictionaries. The new terms, once recorded, need to be put into active circulation through the media, both the electronic and printed forms.

### **5.6.2 The African Languages Research Institute (ALRI)**

This Research Organization is based at the University of Zimbabwe and it is also located within the University premises thus it remains a unit functioning under the



University Act. ALRI started off as the ALLEX Project and it was run and fully administered by the Department of African Languages and Literature at the University of Zimbabwe. From the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2000, ALRI assumed a separate identity of being a national institution. It is an interdisciplinary non-faculty unit specifically for research and upholding African languages in Zimbabwe. The Research Institute is an offshoot from the Department of African Languages and Literature at the University of Zimbabwe and its main research agenda focuses mainly on corpus development and maintenance, computational lexicography and language technology applications. According to Chimhundu (2005), the Institute has a broad mandate to research, document and develop the indigenous languages of Zimbabwe in order to promote and expand their use in all spheres of life.

Efforts to raise the status of indigenous languages began in 1992 with the aforementioned ALLEX project which had two viable dictionary units namely Shona and Ndebele. In 1996 the ALLEX Project published its first research product; the first monolingual Shona Dictionary titled *Duramazwi ReChiShona*. Later in 2001, ALRI published a general monolingual Ndebele Dictionary, *Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele and Duramazwi Guru ReChiShona*. These dictionaries help speaker – writers to write correctly in the language, particularly with reference to spelling, word division, punctuation and capitalization. They also help the speaker – writers to appreciate language variation at different levels, especially dialectical and stylistic variation, synonyms and variants.

Apart from building electronic corpora, compiling dictionaries and doing other language reference works, ALRI aims at developing and offering a variety of language related services and products. Currently, according to (Chimhundu 2003:8), the sub-projects being under-taken by the institute are the following:

- Shona Children's Dictionary (SCD)
- Advanced Ndebele Dictionary (AND)
- Shona Musical Terms Dictionary (SMTD)
- Ndebele Musical Terms Dictionary (NMTD)
- Shona Dictionary of Linguistic and Literary Terms (SLLT)
- Shona Dictionary of Biomedical Terms (MEDICOM)
- Mathematics Dictionary in Shona and Ndebele (MDSN)

- Zimbabwe Sign Dictionary (ZSD)
- ALRI – SLCA Schools Reference Texts Project (SRTP)

The Institute's expanded research program prioritizes the setting up of lexicographic units in other Zimbabwean languages, which at present are not taught at the University of Zimbabwe such as Shangani, Kalanga, Nambya and Tonga. Individual members of the two existing units have already started some corpus work in Kalanga and Nambya. Research in minority languages is part of ALRI's agenda. A member has been recruited to assist in initiating a project in the Shangani language. The member has already done some reading; and has looked at books in Tsonga to see how the issue of Shangani Lexicography was handled in South Africa. In her research, the member is being assisted by some student research assistants.

ALRI plans to initiate and oversee projects in all the other local languages and to train mother-tongue researchers from the respective language communities to do the linguistic fieldwork and documentation that is required by the communities themselves. Important books that are out of print are photographed and published as photographic reprints which can also be made available on the web. So far, three important books have already been published in this preservation program. These are *Adoption and Adaptation in Shona* (Chimhundu, 2002), *Essays on Shona Dialects* (Fortune, 2004) and *Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects: A photographic reprint* (Chimhundu, 2005b). Copies of these have already been donated to colleges and universities in Zimbabwe and this will go a long way in enhancing the development of indigenous languages. In addition to the above mentioned achievements, ALRI has its own newsletter and it is currently planning to launch a new journal called Journal of African Lexicography (JALEX).

### **5.6.3 The Great Zimbabwe State University**

The Great Zimbabwe State University formerly known as Masvingo State University embarked on a mission to promote the use of African languages as media of instruction to achieve effective education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Gudhlanga and Makaudze 2005:1). The University (GZSU) is a state run institution that was established in 1999 as a result of the 1995 Chetsanga recommendations which

proposed the devolution of technical and teachers' colleges into degree awarding institutions. It is situated at Masvingo Teachers College, seven kilometres south east of Masvingo town along the old Great Zimbabwe road. On 22 December 2002, Masvingo University College became Masvingo State University through an Act of Parliament.

The University language experts, who are being guided by Vygotsky's language theory, which asserts that thinking is shaped and directed by increased language skills are working out a comprehensive package for mother tongue medium instruction with an understanding that if a child is forced to learn through a language he or she has not mastered, it becomes very difficult for that individual to conceptualize what he or she is learning.

Driven by this ideology, the Department of African Languages and Literature engaged in a twin process of decolonization and nation building through language. The process involves placing African culture and languages at the center of the learning process. Decolonization is meant to restore humanity and identity to a people who have been marginalized for nearly a century. The University is striving to be relevant to society by producing graduates that are not social misfits in a society where over 90% of the population is speakers of indigenous languages and so far an indigenous languages promotional committee has been launched with a sole goal of spearheading research and usage of African languages in education.

Personal interviews conducted by the researcher revealed that the newly formed language committee held successfully organized seminars and workshops at which informative academic papers on language matters have been presented. The Department has also made a bold statement to the effect that all courses offered by the Department, such as Phonology, Phonetics, Morphology, Literature and Syntax are being taught in the local medium. Despite the scarcity in resources and earlier set backs in the local language medium, instruction in the mother tongue seems to be bearing the relevant fruits. When writing assignments for example, students are being encouraged to use English texts as references but have to translate all ideas into the relevant local language. The Department Chairperson (personal interview) said that it was a University policy that all students studying Shona or Ndebele languages

should do courses in translation and lexicography. These are courses that focus on how to create terms and compile dictionaries. Furthermore, students in the Department also revealed during discussions that they do their research projects in either Shona or Ndebele. The project is selected from any of the courses that would have been studied during the course of the program. Cultural galas have also been staged to encourage students to showcase their talents using the local language medium. These cultural programs have helped to build up the knowledge base of indigenous languages. Video recordings of these galas have been used to teach courses such as "Oral Literature and Culture".

The Great Zimbabwe State University through its Department of Languages, Literature and Music continues to argue that African universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should move towards Afrocentric approaches in teaching and learning by using indigenous languages as medium of instruction.

#### **5.6.4 The Shona Language and Culture Association (SLCA)**

The coming into life of Language Associations (LAs) in post-independence Zimbabwe is partly a result of the collapse of state-directed language policies, a phenomenon that has generated new interest in the efficiency of African languages in education. Members of the LAs are serious about effecting change through popular participation. This means that people are involved, not as objects, but as participants in language research whose goal is to influence government policy. LAs are not only interested in collecting and analyzing data, but also in empowering language communities by educating them on language rights and duties, by exhorting them to mobilize their languages to their advantage, and by encouraging them to seek their reform where necessary.

Simala (1998) says LAs in Africa generally have been guided by the following objectives:

- To study indigenous African languages in order to understand them and subsequently to identify gaps if any, that renders them ineffective.
- To discover the views and attitudes of people towards indigenous African languages
- To report research findings in an objective manner.

- To disseminate the information so elicited to a wider audience including government institutions, with the aim of positively influencing societal attitudes and government policy and
- To equip African scholars with research capabilities.

LAs as a result, have sprung up in Zimbabwe in order to provide for the language needs of the people of this country. LAs derive their impetus generally from the burning desire or the just treatment of indigenous African languages. However, funding is perhaps the main obstacle critical to the success of any language activities in Zimbabwe. At present, funding of these language boards is very low or non-existent and the government is predictably not enthusiastic about funding them. At present, most of the funds that sustain such groups are derived from abroad. The Language Association whose activities shall be discussed in detail in this section of the study is the Shona Language and Culture Association here-in-after called SLCA.

The Shona Language and Culture Association (SLCA) is a professional organization composed of dedicated Shona language and culture practitioners working in universities, research institutes, teachers colleges, schools, publishing houses and other organizations that deal with Shona as a language and as a subject. It brings together people who are committed to seeing the Shona language being used in all walks of life for the betterment of its speakers.

The Association was established on 28 February 2003 with the sole objective of promoting the language and culture of the Shona speaking people of Zimbabwe through research and publication. It was formed (The Association) to pursue the aims and objectives of the now defunct Shona Language Committee and the Shona Teachers Association. The Shona Language and Culture Association had to be established in order to bring together all those people who are engaged in one way or the other, in the teaching, development and promotion of the various Shona language and cultural aspects relating to education and its development as a literary and official medium of communication. Membership of the Association is made up of people who are directly involved in the teaching and learning of the Shona language, literature and culture in different organizations and institutions.

The two Education Ministries officially approved the formation and operation of the Association as shown in the letters dated 18 June 2003 (Ministry of Education, Sport

and Culture) and 21 November, 2005 (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education). The major objectives of the Association as stated in the Constitution are as follows:

- To promote and ensure high professional standards in the teaching of the Shona language in all schools within the country and consequently raise the relative prestige of Shona as a national language.
- To advise the two Ministries of Education, Sport and Culture and Higher and Tertiary Education on the teaching of the subject in the primary schools, secondary schools, colleges of education and universities.
- To coordinate and collaborate efforts with the various bodies such as the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC), The African Languages Research Institute (ALRI), Departments of African Languages in all Zimbabwean Universities, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH), Publishing Houses, Media Organizations, National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).
- To carry out research on African languages and publish books for use in schools, colleges and universities.
- To foster the development of the new Zimbabwean culture, rebuilding the cultural traditional status of the Shona people.
- To increase the awareness of the local people of the wealth of cultural and traditional activities in the country.

The formation of the Association as was noted earlier on was indeed a significant development in the promotion of the various Shona language and cultural aspects relating to education and its development as a literary and official medium of communication.

Three Annual Conferences so far were held in Mutare (2004), Harare (2005), and Masvingo (2006). It was at the Annual Conference held in Masvingo on 9 - 10 October 2006, at the Great Zimbabwe Hotel that members of the Association agreed to harmonize and standardize the Shona writing system so as to accommodate all the Shona dialects in the spelling system. The Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Dr I. S. G. Mudenge graced the occasion as the guest of honour. Several papers were presented by the Permanent Secretary for Higher Education, Dr W.

Mbizvo (who was represented by the Director of Standards and Quality Control, Mr. F. Pesanai), the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture, Mr. A. E. Chigwedere (who was represented by the Provincial Education Director for Masvingo – Mr. O. Mujuru) the Permanent Secretary of the ministry of Information, Mr. G. Charamba, the Deputy Security General of UNESCO National Council, Mr. S. M. Machawira, the Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Societies, Professor K. K. Prah, the Director of the African Languages Research Institute, Professor H. Chimhundu and many other academics from universities, colleges and schools.

The Conference also put forward an agenda to establish a National Language Board for the Shona people. The Board as suggested would be the national language body with legal authority and powers to do with the use and function of Shona as a language and subject. At the time when this study was being conducted, the proposal document to register the Board was with the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Dr. S. I. G. Mudenge.

The advice of the Board would be sought in matters concerning

- (i) Language standards, dictionaries, terminology and literature where applicable
- (ii) Language promotion, development, and maintenance.

The Board will supply the Government with written advice on matters contemplated above and that advice is usually in the form of written recommendations aimed at empowering and promoting African Languages in general and in particular the Shona language. The Board will also act as the executive arm of the Shona Language and Culture Association with authority to see all matters relating to professional standards in the teaching of the Shona language and culture including subject content, books and materials that are used.

Members of the Shona Language and Culture Association have already successfully carried out several book-publishing projects. Currently, there are a number of research activities that are being carried out by members of the Association and the books are at various stages of completion. All these research activities are meant to explore language-raising efforts in Shona, which will eventually see the function of

the language greatly improved. SLCA's philosophy is that no language can develop without deliberate efforts to study and document it by its own speakers.

Among some of the research work that has been commissioned by the Association are the following titles:

- 1) *Uvaranomwe hweVatema: Bhuku roMudzidzi roKutanga* (A literature reference text for A-level Shona students)
- 2) *Uvaranomwe hweVatema: Bhuku roMudzidzi reChipiri* (as above)
- 3) *Dudziramutauro neMhenenguro* (A grammar book for A-Level Shona students)
- 4) *Duramazwi reMasvomhu eVana Vadiki* (A children's Mathematics dictionary in Shona)
- 5) *Duramazwi reVana Vadiki* (A general children's dictionary in Shona).
- 6) *Duramazwi roMutauro noUvaranomwe* (A dictionary for grammar and literary terms)
- 7) *Dudziramutauro neUmbamutinhira* (A phonetics and phonology reference text for University Shona students)
- 8) *Rondedzero neNzwisiso: Bhuku roMudzidzi* (A-level Shona composition and comprehension textbook).
- 9) *Duramazwi roUtano* (A specialized medical Shona dictionary)
- 10) *Mazviona* (A collection of Shona plays for secondary schools).

All the above books are being written, edited and reviewed by members of the Shona Language and Culture Association.

One of the major programmes that the Association has embarked on is the Shona Language Harmonization Programme. After Professor Chimhundu had met and extensively discussed the issue of harmonizing the Shona language dialects with the Director of CASAS, Professor K. K. Prah, the idea was sold to the Shona Language and Culture Association in January 2006.

The objective of the Harmonization Programme is to revitalize African languages through the use of common orthographies or writing systems for all the language varieties that belong to clusters of mutually intelligible dialects, regardless of which state or provincial boundaries the individual varieties fall in. The unified and standardized orthographies can then be used across these boundaries by larger groups of people, especially for grassroots communication and informal education in



a way that will empower ordinary people to improve their own lives (Chimhundu, 2007).

The first workshop on harmonization and standardization of the Shona language varieties was held in Harare at the University of Zimbabwe on 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006. The sole objective of the two-day workshop was to harmonize the orthographies of the following Shona dialects:

- ChiKaranga
- ChiManyika
- ChiZezuru
- ChiNdau
- ChiBarwe
- ChiNambya
- ChiKalanga
- ChiHwesa
- ChiUtee

This workshop was attended by linguists from universities in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana who discussed and made resolutions on vowels, consonants, verb forms, reduplication, ideophones, interjectives, borrowed words, and names of places and personal names.

At the end of the two-day workshop the participants came up with a single spelling system for all the Shona language varieties spoken in the three countries. This indeed was a landmark development of the Shona language for the mass education of Africans in Zimbabwe.

The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education has already approved the teaching of the harmonization of the Shona language varieties as a key topic in language courses in all state universities and teachers' colleges that offer Shona as a subject, module or course. These developments are indeed a clear signal that the Shona Language and Culture Association is contributing positively towards the development of Shona language and culture in Zimbabwe.

With regard to implementing the new orthography, universities and teachers colleges that teach Shona have been given books published in the new writing system as donations to be placed in libraries for easy circulation among learners. Workshops at the district level were conducted where church leaders, adult literacy teachers, community health and social workers were invited to attend.

## **5.7 QUEST AND IMPEDIMENTS IN THE USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES**

The decolonization process at the Great Zimbabwe State University for example, unfortunately could not take off without its share of problems. Students undertaking different programmes apart from African Languages and Literature persistently asked their colleagues why they were lowering university standards by learning in the mother tongue. Even lecturers in other Departments had to question, rebuke and even warned students in the Department of Languages, Literature and Music of running the risk of failing to pursue postgraduate studies in other universities where the medium of instruction is English. Gudhlanga and Makaudze (2005) revealed that inadequate financial resources tended to impede the production of up to date materials for teaching African languages. Non-governmental organizations, which have a long history of funding indigenous languages projects in Zimbabwe, had to withdraw aid from Zimbabwe citing lack of good governance as the main reason. A good example is the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the major funders of research in African languages, who withdrew their funding in 2001 (ibid). These and many more, pause as challenges to mother tongue medium education in Zimbabwe.

In order to go past these hurdles, the language experts at the Great Zimbabwe State University joined hands with the Shona Language and Culture Association (SLCA) and the African Languages Research Institute (ALRI) to produce relevant terminology for the various language courses being offered at the University. Workshops were organized and relevant stakeholders such as university and college lecturers, high school teachers, publishers, students, writers and representatives from language institutions participated. Language domains covered at these workshops included among others; phonetics, phonology, translation, lexicography, dialects and orthography.

It was also made very clear in this study that the government of Zimbabwe has decreed Shona and Ndebele to be compulsory subjects at both 'O' and 'A' level. The World Culture Day, 25 May has also been made an important calendar event in Zimbabwe showing the government's total commitment to the development of African languages and culture. The Zimbabwean government through the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe encourages all provinces in the country to show case African culture and talents on 25 May of each year. Study findings have also shown that although the majority of Zimbabweans seem not to see efforts by the Government to promote the use of African languages, a lot is being done by the government to uplift the status of African languages in Zimbabwe.

Teaching and learning cannot take place without the use of one's mother tongue. As correctly pointed out by Ayo Bamgbose (1991) language is the most important factor in the learning process, because the transfer of knowledge and skills is definitely through the spoken and written word. Command of a language that is for both the learner and the teacher is a prerequisite for the successful learning and teaching process. When teachers and learners cannot use language to make logical connections, to integrate and explain the relations between isolated pieces of information, what is taught cannot be understood and important concepts will not be mastered. The use of English as the medium of instruction in education disconnects the student's experiences. What they bring from home, whether it is an ethnic language or dialect is not built upon, instead it is wiped out and pupils have to start afresh with a 'clean plate'.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

The discussion presented in this chapter made it very clear that the continued use of the colonial languages, as media of instruction in Zimbabwe's education system will inevitably lead to more poverty and divisions in the country. The nation thus needs to use its indigenous languages so as to give itself a distinct identity in the world. An African *lingua franca* such as Shona or Ndebele in Zimbabwe will be the right option or choice since the two languages will be accessible to the majority of the population making them the best suited to articulate African culture. Such a language policy will

not only foster pride but will build bridges between its people, leading to mutual understanding and greater political and economic unity.

Development in Zimbabwe therefore cannot be achieved without serious considerations of the significant role of African languages in education. Cultural, economic and social advancement of the Zimbabwean people will not register significant gains without the use of indigenous languages. African languages are therefore the people's greatest cultural inheritance which should be properly nurtured. The use of African languages as medium of instruction in education will definitely make African people in Zimbabwe feel proud of being African and will also make them become less and less dependent on European languages thus enhancing their participation in national development.

It was again evident from the preceding discussion that Africans who attended colonial educational institutions are the ones who strongly believe and perceive that English is the language that is capable of expressing complex and abstract ideas in science education. An additional argument in favor of English is that it is the language, which children will require when they pursue further studies. The belief that English facilitates the expression of new concepts and ideas has also been put forward by some scholars who argue that learners for example, find it very difficult to express academic and technical issues in African languages. On the contrary this researcher strongly believes that if African languages are to attain realistic developmental and economical value there has to be a well thought out and carefully articulated policy on media of instruction. This is so because for as long as the languages that empower citizens to attain any meaningful levels of education are foreign, the masses will always be victims of poverty. It can therefore be concluded in this chapter that there can never be any meaningful advances in rescuing citizens from poverty if African countries continue to use foreign languages as media of educational instruction.

Finally, one would say it would be imprudent for policy makers in Zimbabwe to advocate for wholesale mother tongue medium education at the present moment because such a policy would be unrealistic in this era where a language of wider communication has become an essential component in national, regional and

international development. Just as Mutasa (2004:123) observed, mother tongue medium education can not be fully implemented at present because of crippling linguistic and sociolinguistic factors, the central ones being the attitude of the parents, teachers, lecturers, learners and lack of study material in African languages. Mutasa (ibid) summarizes these attitudinal problems by simply saying, "Our minds remain our number one enemy." As a result, the proposal to use indigenous African languages, as media of instruction will be met with resistance for quite some time in the nation state of Zimbabwe.

Although Zimbabwe needs to liberate itself from the vestiges of colonial legacy, the painful part is that people have lost the vigour they had prior to independence. At present, the battle to recognize the vitality and equality of African languages in the practical sense of the word is unfortunately a lost battle. It is impractical. What is needed is concerted effort from everyone in order to raise the status of African languages. It is a well known fact, according to Mutasa (2004:140) that "no army general can win a war if his soldiers are unwilling to fight, worse still if they are so scared that they would rather be under the leadership of the adversary than die." This means that the Government should devise means of empowering Africans as they engage in the process of revalorization in order to raise both the functional usefulness and the prestige or social status of indigenous languages.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“One can as well admit that the best vehicle of teaching is the mother tongue of the child” (Unesco, 1953: viii).

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a brief summary of the findings will be given, followed by conclusions that go with the study findings. The chapter therefore attempts to collate the findings from observations, interviews and questionnaires with respect to each research question. From these findings, recommendations to improve the status and use of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe are made and these should be seen as suggestions that would improve the general status and policy framework of all languages spoken in the country.

#### 6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that Zimbabwe inherited from Rhodesia a racially structured system of education in which two parallel systems existed. The European system according to Zvobgo (1986:16) was designed to serve and promote white interests and ensure white domination and superiority over blacks, while African education was really an education designed to perpetuate the subjugation of blacks by whites. Consequently there was a tendency among educated “Rhodesians,” during the BSA Company rule to regard African languages as crude and uncivilized. English occupied a central position in the curriculum, whereas African languages received scant attention in black schools and none at all in those for whites.

The foreign invasion and power domination that started in 1890 introduced a new language of power that created situations in which attempts were made to suppress the indigenous languages altogether or at least relocate them to the confines of the informal sector. It is clear from these findings that the colonial government of Southern Rhodesia did not attempt any meaningful language planning for Africans.

After independence, Zimbabwe became constitutionally a trilingual nation with English, Ndebele and Shona being constitutionally equal. However, Mkanganwi (1992:12) asserts that the *defacto* situation is that the language of the colonial power remains the language of government structures, commerce, industry and education. The national or official status of Shona and Ndebele is largely theoretical, as very little has been done so far to develop and promote these languages and to diversify their functions.

In administration, participants unanimously agreed that English is the language used almost all the time. In terms of general patterns of language use within the multilingual situation, English is the prestige-laden language enjoying high status (H) while indigenous languages enjoy relatively low status (L). Despite being stated in the Education Act of 1996 (revised in 2006) that either Shona or Ndebele languages be used as media of instruction in the first three grades at school, in practice however, Shona and Ndebele are not really used as media of instruction in many schools and even where these two languages are predominant, no serious attempt is made to teach or use them.

In addition to Shona and Ndebele, the following are the other indigenous African languages spoken in Zimbabwe: Tonga, Nyanja, Shangani, Xhosa, Sotho, Venda, Sena, ChiKunda, Tshwawo, and Doma. Furthermore, there are eight non-African languages spoken in the country and these are English, Portuguese, French, Afrikaans, Hindi, Greek, Chinese and Italian. Study findings clearly revealed that Zimbabwe is made up of many people who speak different languages.

Findings from all the three questionnaires showed that the majority of the participants (60, 8%) prefer English to be the medium of instruction in post-independence Zimbabwe. When asked to justify, the majority (96%) argued that English is an internationally recognized language hence it is the gateway to success. Others said since Zimbabwe is a mixed society with so many languages spoken, it is only English which can be neutral when it comes to selection.

Findings have also shown that English is the language that gives power and prestige in Zimbabwe. Teachers and lecturers as shown during observations, use English to

teach subjects like Shona and Ndebele. This practice is rampant in universities and teachers' colleges. The “culprits”, meaning those who teach indigenous languages in English, defended their practice arguing that it was easier for them to communicate their ideas in English than in indigenous languages which in the majority of cases fail to express ideas explicitly.

It was again interesting to note that 59, 9% of the participants did not agree that African languages could express educational and scientific concepts. The main reason put forward by many such thinkers was that African languages do not have enough vocabulary to express modern scientific concepts rendering themselves unsuitable for use as media of instruction in education. Interview results showed that 57, 3% of the parents will not be happy if all curriculum subjects from primary to university level were taught using indigenous languages as media of instruction. The following were given as some of the reasons that militate against the use of African languages as official media of instruction in education:

- Use of indigenous languages would create communication problems for those who might want to study outside the African continent.
- African languages offer limited vocabulary to scientific and educational concepts.
- Use of African languages reduces marketability of the graduates etc.

When asked to indicate the level of education at which indigenous languages could be used as media of instruction, a total of 588 (58, 8%) of the informants asserted that the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction should be limited to primary schools only. Very few people would want to see African languages being used as media of instruction in tertiary institutions. The teachers and lecturers made it very clear to the researcher that no African language at present has developed well enough to be used as official media of instruction at the level above the primary sector.

There is need therefore, according to the teachers and lecturers, to compile terminological dictionaries for the different subject disciplines and expand the vocabulary of these languages so as to cater for new developments in science and



technology. They went further to say the majority of the teachers in Zimbabwe are not adequately trained to use indigenous languages as media of instruction. In addition, they said, the absence of a comprehensive national language policy is a clear indication that the government is not doing much to develop African languages.

However, some participants indicated on the questionnaires that some positive developments pertaining to the use of African languages are being realized. Currently there are languages associations that promote the use of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe and the following were listed as the associations/organizations and institutes that are working towards the development of indigenous languages spoken in the country.

- Shona Language and Culture Association (SLCA)
- Kalanga Language Development Association (KLDA)
- Nambya Language Development Association (NLDA)
- Hwesa Language Development Association (HLDA)
- Barwe Language Development Association (BLDA)
- Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZILPA)
- African Languages Research Institute (ALRI)

Members of the above-mentioned associations/organizations and institutes are currently carrying out a number of research activities, which are meant to explore language-raising efforts in Zimbabwe. These efforts it is hoped will see the function of indigenous languages in official domains greatly improved.

### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

This study was an attempt to explore possibilities of using indigenous African languages spoken in Zimbabwe as official media of instruction in the education system, the rationale being that African languages are given little validity in the education system of Zimbabwe. Educational policies in the country on the other hand, have been coined along European lines in order to maintain European hegemony over Africans resulting in the marginalization of African languages in official domains.

It was evident from the study findings that there is a linguistic discrepancy in Zimbabwe because the language of government is not the language of the governed. The language of the people does not feature much in the education system of the country. Findings also reveal that indigenous African languages are the key facilitators of development. Results from both the questionnaires and the interview affirmed the generally held view that development cannot take place where linguistic barriers exist. The majority of the informants in all categories agreed that development could never be achieved without serious considerations of the role of African languages in the education system. These languages, according to the study informants, should be at the heart of any development program carried out in any African society.

The participants in this study also stressed emphatically that learning in general occurs more effectively if the required cognitive development is taking place through the use of a first language as a language of learning. The primacy of indigenous languages in the education process was continuously echoed. If Zimbabweans would want to make strides in both educational and economic development, children should actively participate using indigenous languages in the development of science and technology. It is in these indigenous languages that knowledge for the upliftment of the masses of the Zimbabwean society can be transmitted. A language of instruction, which is the home language or mother tongue, is an instrument for the cultural and scientific empowerment of people. Cultural freedom and African emancipation therefore cannot be cultivated expanded or developed where the language of instruction is different from the home language or the language people normally speak in their everyday lives.

Since the rural populace does not know English, the best way therefore to reach them educationally for purposes of science and technological development is in their languages. Concepts and terminology in science should be constructed within indigenous languages and should engage the reality in which the rural population lives. Knowledge for the masses must be knowledge which speaks to the masses in an idiom they know well, that is an idiom which is native to them. Durkheim's ideas cited, by Trudgil (1986: 19) become relevant here. Durkheim says that the system of

concepts with which we think in everyday life is that expressed by the vocabulary of our mother tongue because every word translates a concept.

Language permits the process of socialization and its precise usage is particularly crucial to education. We see and understand as much as our linguistic ability permits (Sapir, 1929:214). We share in these concluding remarks the views of Roy-Campbell et al (1997) who point out that no society in this world has developed in a sustained and democratic fashion on the basis of a borrowed or colonial language. In the words of Ali Mazrui (1996b: 3) no country can “approximate first- rank economic development if it relies overwhelmingly on foreign languages for its discourse on education and development.” Accordingly, Zimbabwe as a nation should look for the optimization of the use of its national linguistic resources at the least possible cost. The best way to do this would be to regard the indigenous languages of this country as valuable resources like minerals and wildlife. Indigenous languages would need to be developed and managed properly and optimally. They should therefore be developed and used with an aim of fully involving their speakers cognitively in the advancement of the nation as a whole.

But the most serious obstacle in the teaching of African languages in schools, colleges and universities is the low esteem and negative attitudes amongst Africans themselves. Mr. K. T. Gondo, the Chairman of the Shona Language and Culture Association when asked to comment simply said, “We are our own enemies.” He went further saying that teachers of African languages have got a very low opinion of themselves and students likewise do not consider them as proficient academically as teachers of other subjects. While many African countries gained their political independence several decades ago, there has been little progress when it came to the adoption of African languages as overall media of instruction in post-colonial African education. Zimbabwe is one such country where there has been much concern about education for all and the need to increase the literacy rate but very little concern about the language in which education and literacy should take place. The government is failing to critically examine the role language plays in education and public life beyond political rhetoric.

Another eminent scholar, Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2006), asserts that Africans live in a world in which the physical environment has been linguistically and definitionally alienated from them. Names such as Lake Victoria, Orange River, Victoria Falls, Kruger Park, Thompson Gazelle and many others are names, which define reality according to the Whiteman's taste and wisdom. The Westerner has culturally and linguistically redefined our reality and our place in this reality. By extension of this logic, we have become creatures of the Western imagination. But we can't go on blaming the colonialists eternally for all our problems. Yes they have set up the system but it is us who have failed to change it. The march towards African emancipation must continue. It is a process which rolls on inexorably, in crooked ways and straight, and with excessive pain and suffering of the broad masses

However, it is pleasing to note that there is greater tolerance among Africans in Zimbabwe for the teaching of African languages as subjects in the curriculum. This is despite the fact that there are a number of problems that go along with the teaching of African languages as subjects in schools, colleges and universities. Teachers of African languages for example, are not given the same rigorous training in methodology when compared with teachers of English (Bamgbose, 2000: 55). In fact, in several countries, no special training is required for a person to teach an African language as a subject and the prestige of teachers of African languages is very low among colleagues on the teaching staff as well as students.

What is even worse is that the self-esteem of the teachers is also low as they struggle to "redeem" their image by striving to show that they can also teach some subjects in addition to the African languages. This way they will not be labeled exclusively as teachers of African languages. Furthermore, attitudes to African languages as subjects on the curriculum are still negative in some educational institutions. The languages are seen as soft options or where their teaching is made compulsory, an unavoidable drudgery. Even where an African language is a compulsory subject, it is rarely made compulsory for purposes of certification or admission to the next level of education.

In spite of the afore-mentioned problems, there are areas of innovation regarding policy and training which can have the effect of improving the use and development

of African languages in Zimbabwe. For example institutes such as the African Languages Research Institute have been established to carry out advanced research in African languages. The Zimbabwean government also approved in 2003 the formation and functioning of the Shona Language and Culture Association (SLCA), a language body that is championing the use of indigenous languages in education. Recently, the Education Act was amended in 2006 to make Shona and Ndebele languages compulsory subjects in secondary schools. The two national languages have also been made official languages of instruction in both primary and secondary school education.

Admittedly, much of the progress made in the teaching of African languages in the last few years has been due largely to the efforts of universities and colleges of education, which have been in the vanguard of training of teachers, basic research, and development of materials, terminologies and meta-language. Apart from the obvious contribution through the training of language teachers, members of the teaching and lecturing staff have produced textbooks for teaching African languages.

The point being emphasized here is that mother-tongue medium education should be mandatory in all basic forms of instruction. Development in Zimbabwe will not be forthcoming until the education system starts using indigenous languages as languages of instruction from the beginning to the end of the education process. It is the contention of this researcher that African nations, Zimbabwe, included, can only regain their dignity, cultural identity and a place among the league of developed nations through making education accessible to more people. But this cannot be achieved unless the education system is African oriented. The fact that all science courses in this country are taught in English, a foreign language for many people, means that no scientific ideas have and can be formulated in an African language in the present schooling system. This in turn means that there will be no growth in scientific vocabulary and no corresponding growth of original scientific ideas in Zimbabwe. Our people will continue to be scientifically and technically illiterate because they continue to be taught in languages that are not their own.

To conclude this section, it is necessary to say that what has been proposed in this study as a framework to promote the use of African languages in education should

be viewed as a significant contribution to the definition of a language policy at the national level.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section presents what the researcher considers to be the most important recommendations emanating from the study, which are as follows:

### **6.4.1 The Need For A New Language Policy Model**

Zimbabwe up to this day does not have a comprehensive piece of legislation that anyone can actually use as the defining instrument for the status and use of the country's languages. It would appear that since the days of British rule, convention has entrenched English as the official language. It is now almost three decades after attaining independence and English continues to dominate not only as a language of business, administration, politics and the media, but also as a language of instruction in the whole education system. Since policy on language in Zimbabwe's education system is obscure with no official document that clearly spells out government position regarding the status and use of African languages in education, this book strongly recommends that the country adopts an endoglossic language policy model which will promote the use of indigenous languages as the major media of communication throughout the most important domains of the society.

The nation state of Zimbabwe needs a language policy framework that emphasizes the use of the child's most familiar language and other indigenous African languages at various levels of social organization, while allowing for a concurrent use of European languages at national and international level. The language policy model being recommended in this book is called the 'Integrated Trilingual Education Model' (ITEM). It is a model that is trilingual in its application at all levels of the education system. The Model for example, makes it possible to accommodate all of Zimbabwe's languages using them as essential tools of communication for development purposes irrespective of the number of speakers.

The Model begins by recognizing the fact that the Zimbabwean society is broad and diverse. It is a nation made up of many people answering to different ethnic identities and nationalities. The Model recognizes the diversity and socio-linguistic peculiarities of each speech community in the country, thus it does not attempt to specify a particular and specific mother tongue for all people at all times. What it does is to address the general diglossic situation prevalent in the country and to propose the promotion of the use of indigenous languages in all sectors and levels of the social organization. This new language policy would require children to learn first their immediate home language, second, a national or regional African language with a wider reach, and third, an international European or Asian language hence the 'trilingualism'.

The mother tongue, which in most cases is the child's most familiar language and usually the language of the community, will have at least three essential functions namely:

- To allow the transmission of knowledge and the cultural heritage of the community.
- To contribute to the formation of a symbolic identity in the child.
- To ensure a basic knowledge that is culturally integrated.

Education in the child's most familiar language or mother tongue should be for basic primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. In concrete terms, a good application of this model will allow Shona children for example, to be educated in Shona, Ndebele children in Ndebele, Shangani children in ChiChangana and so on. By national or regional language for integration purposes, we mean a language, which warrants some flexibility at the national level. This indigenous African language would function to widen the linguistic possibilities of adaptation to the national or regional context. This regional/national language would not be taught as a carrier or medium of knowledge but quite simply as a subject. In concrete terms, this national/regional language would be taught from primary school up to the final year of secondary education.

When in Grade 3, transition towards a foreign European or Asian language as a school subject for purposes of international communication should begin. The teaching of English for example as a subject from Grade 3 upwards will allow geographical mobility, allow the learner to participate in national and international life and finally will allow the teaching of specific knowledge. The integrated multilingual education model does not restrict education to one European language only. Quite to the contrary, other foreign languages such as Chinese, French, and Portuguese to mention a few would be taught not as media of instruction but as curriculum subjects as needed by the learners. Teaching of these languages will be determined by the needs of the learners in their endeavors to adapt to various socio-economic contexts. An average Zimbabwean citizen for example, who has gone through basic education, would be functionally competent in spoken and written discourse in at least three languages namely;

- the mother tongue/ home language
- a wider national/regional African language
- an international language such as English, French, Chinese or Portuguese.

The 'trilingualism' however will be different from community to community with different mother tongues at the local district levels but more and more similar languages at the national and regional levels.

#### **6.4.2 The Need For A Relevant Language Planning Model**

Language planning models in Africa differ substantially from those in the developed countries of Europe and America in a number of ways. As was discussed elsewhere in this thesis the most dominant model of language planning is the "Canonical Model" which should serve as a guide to developing countries like Zimbabwe. This is so because the model relates language planning to all other forms of planning or national development.

This model of language planning pre-supposes the identification of some language problems through fact-finding plans how to cope with the problem and then suggests possible outcomes. Like in "economic planning" goals are established, means are



selected and outcomes are predicted in a systematic and explicit manner. Language planning within the Canonical model can be structured as follows:

- (i) Policy formulation
- (ii) Policy implementation.

Each of these stages consists of a number of ordered processes given as follows:

#### Policy Formulation

- Sociolinguistic fact finding input
- Policy decisions
- Outcome of implementation
- Cost-benefit analysis of planning

#### Policy Implementation

- Codification
- Elaboration
- Reforms
- Dissemination
- Evaluation

However, there is need for language planners in Zimbabwe to adjust the Canonical model of language planning to match the language needs of the country. In the proposed "Modified Canonical Model" policy decision or formulation would precede fact finding. It is when policy had been decided that evaluation takes place, leading to necessary fact-finding and thereafter implementation. The reason behind all this is that language planning that is based on previous inquiry and fact-finding is rather an ideal and not the norm in Africa. Language policy decisions taken in several developing countries in some African countries, with their military dictatorships are often styled as decrees and Zimbabwe is no exception.

### **6.4.3 The Need To Harmonize and Standardize Related Language Varieties**

When one speaks about using African languages as official media of instruction in education, the first challenge faced is how these languages could be developed in the sense of adapting them to new requirements so as to enable them to be used for the new needs of speakers. These requirements call for the harmonization, standardization and modernization of these languages.

Harmonization and standardization of related language varieties could go a long way towards the development and use of African languages for sustainable development. Unfortunately, the concept of harmonizing related languages has often been viewed with suspicion because of many linguistic and political factors at the design and implementation levels. But what exactly is implied by this new harmonization concept?

Chebanne et al (2008) say harmonization implies that all related language varieties would be unified into one language and as one language they would share the same orthography. It also implies the determination of linguistic and orthographic norms that would be acquired through the school system, mass media and other communication forms. Harmonization is not at all intended to abolish some languages or dialects except that it aims to abolish dialectical writing systems, which create unnecessary differences in the writing of indigenous languages.

The harmonization and standardization of the Shona language varieties identified in this study for example would help speakers of the different Shona dialects to share resources. The ultimate idea is to see a natural convergence occurring and a creation of a linguistic common identity.

The other objective of the harmonization program is to revalorize indigenous languages spoken in Zimbabwe through the use of common orthographies or writing systems for all the language varieties that belong to clusters of mutually intelligible dialects regardless of provincial boundaries the individual varieties fall into. The unified and standardized orthographies could then be used across boundaries by

larger groups of people especially for grassroots communication informal education in a way that will empower ordinary people to improve their own lives.

However, it is important to emphasize that the prevailing spirit of the harmonization process should be that of cooperation and not conquest. No variety in whatever circumstances should view itself as more important than the other in this unification exercise. The process should be a democratic participation of equal partners in a language deal.

### **6.4.3 The Need To Establish A National Language Council**

Language policy decisions are ultimately political decisions taken by the Government, which in the end will enact the necessary legislation. Such decisions must be informed by research and advice from academics, language workers, officials and others. Therefore on the basis of the findings in this study, the researcher highly recommends the Zimbabwean government to establish a National Language Council (NLC) which should be set up by an Act of Parliament specifying its objectives, composition, powers and programs.

The National Language Council (NLC) will be a body with legal authority and powers to do with the use and functions of all languages spoken in the country. As a regulatory National Language Council, with a national character, the Minister of Education is the one who should specify its objectives and functions within the national context.

The main responsibility of the National Language Council should be to advise on the standard forms, use, promotion and development of all languages spoken in Zimbabwe. The Council will have a special responsibility of monitoring the implementation of national language policies. The National Language Council shall be made of members who should have the following qualities:

- Specialists in respect of language matters
- First language speakers of the language they represent
- Passion for and commitment to contribute to language development.

The advice of the Council will be sought primarily in matters concerning language standards, dictionaries, terminology, literature, language promotion, development and maintenance. The Council is therefore the final quality control authority on all matters pertaining to language. Furthermore, the Council has the power to authenticate learning support materials for use in the general education and training in schools in consultation with the two Ministries of Education and also to review any product published using Zimbabwean languages.

#### **6.4.5 The Need To Change People's Negative Attitudes Towards African Languages**

No matter how interesting language policies could be, they may not be successfully implemented if people in Zimbabwe continue to have negative attitudes towards indigenous languages. There is therefore an urgent need to engage people in a mental paradigm shift with regard the negative perception and the very low esteem, in which Zimbabweans hold their indigenous languages. In the sub-conscious and even the consciousness of many Zimbabweans, European languages are considered as exclusive driving belts of knowledge leading to progress.

Only these languages are supposed to offer, in the eyes of authorities and many Africans, the best guarantee for a balanced development as well as for the promise to ensure, in the medium term to each citizen, equal starting chances. To change this old paradigm is to move away from the colonial ideology and accept that African indigenous languages are not sub-languages since they can perfectly be modernized to fulfill roles of prestige with a view to develop a nation. Idiata (2006: 155) points out that indigenous African languages must be used as training devices for the acquisition of essential contents of a school syllabus which is functional without being alienating. The access to basic knowledge, via African languages, he goes to say, is the keystone of any education system.

#### **6.4.6 The Need to Introduce the ITEM Language Policy Program into Zimbabwe's Education System**

The Integrated Trilingual Education Model (ITEM) of language policy should be tested in a few pilot schools selected from the ten administrative provinces of Zimbabwe. The chosen schools should apply the ITEM framework in its trilingual format for a period of not less than fifteen years. Children would learn mathematics, history, geography etc in their most familiar language or mother tongue, thus placing the mother tongue at the centre of a new education system, which is culturally integrated. The national experiment should begin soon with at least two experimental schools and one control group in each province. The experimental classes should be taught all subjects using the child's most familiar language whilst the control group classes would be taught in a foreign language like English, French or Portuguese. All the classes in the experiment would be systematically evaluated after five years to establish whether the use of an indigenous language as medium of instruction has a significant effect on the learning abilities of school pupils. These experiments have been carried out elsewhere on the African continent hence the Zimbabwean experiment should not be seen as unique. Nigeria for example, could be used as a reference model country.

The advantage of using the ITEM language policy framework instead of other models is that concepts in mathematics and science for instance, would be more easily grasped than if they were taught in a foreign language. The use of the child's most familiar language or mother tongue will enable the children, who are future leaders of the community, to completely grasp the beliefs and knowledge systems of the society. Use of the mother tongue/home language at all institutions situated in a district i.e. schools, offices, district parliament and other community gatherings will enable the chiefs and people of the community, achieve maximum participation, in terms of the ideas and information they receive and provide. They will be able to react to new ideas in the most intelligent way possible. The home language is intimately tied to this level of the social structure and ought to be the most appropriate tool for achieving the development goals of the particular society. Any important goal of the educational system at this level should be to ensure that primary school graduates are well grounded in the home language and can use it to

speak and write about any grade level theme, be it in religion, mathematics or science. Workers coming into the district, who do not have competence in the local indigenous language should be given proficiency courses in that language so that they serve the locals more competently.

Zimbabwe therefore needs a language policy model that would give it a distinct identity in the continent and in the world. A new policy that places indigenous languages at the centre would be the right option because the national official language would be accessible to all people. The use of indigenous languages in official matters and day-to-day business will definitely make Zimbabweans feel proud of their nationhood and more importantly enhance their participation in national development. Multilingualism in Zimbabwe, rather than being seen as a hindrance to development should instead be seen as a resource that can be harnessed for Zimbabwe's renaissance, if not Africa and the world.

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  - Bondolfi Teachers College
  - Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College
  - Hillside Teachers College
  - United College of Education
  - Seke Teachers College
  - Morgan Zintec Teachers College
  - Nyadire Teachers College
  
- Report on the Shona Harmonization Workshop hosted by the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) at the African Languages Research Institute (ALRI), University of Zimbabwe on 23<sup>rd</sup>- 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006.
  
- Report on the CASAS/ALR/MSU Workshop for writers and teachers in the use of the new Shona orthography held at Twin-Peaks Chalets, Gweru, Zimbabwe on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007.
  
- Report on the first national symposium to sensitize stakeholders on the language harmonization program held at the Jameson Hotel, Harare, Zimbabwe on 17 August 2007.

- Memorandum of understanding made and entered into by and between the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Societies (CASAS) and the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture.
- Old Testament - Bible
- The Shona Harmonization Programme in Zimbabwe: Implementation, monitoring and Evaluation, Strategic Plan (Draft Document).
- An assessment report on exposing villagers to literature written in African languages.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

This questionnaire is designed to collect information on the attitudes of Zimbabwean learners (i.e. pupils and students) towards the use of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in education. Kindly complete the questionnaire by inserting your answers in the boxes and spaces provided. In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, please do not write your name. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only.

Please indicate the appropriate answer by placing an 

|   |
|---|
| X |
|---|

 in the appropriate box.

#### SECTION A

1. Sex

Male

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Female

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

2. Age

10 – 14

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

15 – 19

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

20 – 24

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

25 – 29

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

30 – 34

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Above 35

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

3. Level of education

Primary

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Secondary

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Tertiary

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

4. Name the language(s) that you speak at home.

.....  
.....

5. What is the name of your mother tongue?

.....

**SECTION B**

6. List languages that are spoken in Zimbabwe.

- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| (i)    | (ix)   |
| (ii)   | (x)    |
| (iii)  | (xi)   |
| (iv)   | (xii)  |
| (v)    | (xiii) |
| (vi)   | (xiv)  |
| (vii)  | (xv)   |
| (viii) | (xvi)  |

7. What language(s) do teachers/lecturers use to teach you the different curriculum subjects?

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| English             | <input type="text"/> |
| African language(s) | <input type="text"/> |

Other (specify) .....

8. What language(s) do you think should be used as language(s) of instruction in Zimbabwe's education system?

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| English             | <input type="text"/> |
| African language(s) | <input type="text"/> |

Other (specify) .....

Why? .....  
.....

9(a) Which language(s) is mostly likely to give you power and prestige in Zimbabwe if you speak it?

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| English           | <input type="text"/> |
| African languages | <input type="text"/> |

Other (specify).....

9(b) Do you think languages have a relationship with the social, economic and scientific development of a nation?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| Yes | <input type="text"/> |
| No  | <input type="text"/> |

Reason(s) .....  
.....  
.....

10. Do you think your mother tongue is able to express and explain educational and scientific concepts?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| Yes | <input type="text"/> |
| No  | <input type="text"/> |

11. If your answer to the above question is “**No**”, do you think it is possible for your mother tongue to be developed to express educational and scientific ideas?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| Yes | <input type="text"/> |
| No  | <input type="text"/> |

12. Would you be happy if all subjects from primary to university level were studied using indigenous African language(s) as a medium of instruction?

|     |                      |
|-----|----------------------|
| Yes | <input type="text"/> |
| No  | <input type="text"/> |



Reason(s) .....  
.....  
.....

13. Do you think learning would be easier if all the subjects were taught in an African language as a medium of instruction?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Reason(s) .....  
.....  
.....

14. Most learners encounter problems when studying in English

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly agree    |  |
| Slightly agree    |  |
| Agree             |  |
| Disagree          |  |
| Slightly disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |

15. The use of African languages as languages of instruction in education is a key national issue that requires urgent attention.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly agree    |  |
| Slightly agree    |  |
| Agree             |  |
| Disagree          |  |
| Slightly disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |

16. Are there any wider societal benefits you can foresee if education in Zimbabwe is to be carried out using indigenous African languages as languages of instruction?

Yes

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

No

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Specify .....

.....

.....

17. What negative societal effects would the use of African languages as languages of instruction have?

.....

.....

18. When you are being taught or examined in English, do you sometimes feel like expressing yourself in your mother tongue?

Yes

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

No

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Why? .....

.....

19. When you are brainstorming ideas preparing for an answer during a lesson/examination, which language do you use?

English

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Mother Tongue

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Other (specify).....

20. Do you like being taught in a language that is not your mother tongue?

Yes

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

No

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Reason(s) .....  
.....  
.....

21. English should continue to be used as the official medium of instruction in Zimbabwe's education system.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly agree    |  |
| Slightly agree    |  |
| Agree             |  |
| Disagree          |  |
| Slightly disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |

22. Are there any efforts being made to promote the use of African Languages in Zimbabwe?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Explain .....  
.....  
.....

23. At what level of education should indigenous languages be introduced as media of instruction?

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Primary   |  |
| Secondary |  |
| Tertiary  |  |

24. Do you think teachers / lecturers in Zimbabwe are fully equipped to teach using an African language as a medium of instruction?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Reason(s) .....  
.....  
.....

25. Is there willingness on the part of the government to use indigenous languages as media of instruction in education?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Why? .....  
.....

26. Is there adequate teaching material to conduct learning in African languages?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

What do you think should be done?  
.....  
.....

***Thank you for your cooperation.***

## APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS AND LECTURERS

This questionnaire is designed to collect information on the attitudes of Zimbabwean teachers and lecturers towards the use of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in education. Kindly complete the questionnaire by inserting your answers in the boxes and spaces provided. In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, please do not write your name. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only.

Please indicate the appropriate answer by placing an  in the appropriate box.

### SECTION A

1. Sex

Male

Female

2. Age

20 - 24

25 - 29

30 - 34

35 - 39

40 - 44

45 - 49

Above 50

3. Level of education

O – Level

A – Level

Diploma / Certificate

Bachelors degree

Masters degree

Doctoral degree

4. Name the language(s) that you speak at home.

.....  
.....  
.....

5. What is the name of your mother tongue?

.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION B**

6. List languages that are spoken in Zimbabwe.

- |        |        |
|--------|--------|
| (i)    | (ix)   |
| (ii)   | (x)    |
| (iii)  | (xi)   |
| (iv)   | (xii)  |
| (v)    | (xiii) |
| (vi)   | (xiv)  |
| (vii)  | (xv)   |
| (viii) | (xvi)  |

7. What language do you use to teach learners at your institution?

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| English             | <input type="text"/> |
| African language(s) | <input type="text"/> |

Other (specify).....

What subject(s) do you teach?

.....  
.....  
.....

8. What language(s) do you think should be used as medium of instruction to teach your subject?

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| English             |  |
| African language(s) |  |
| Agree               |  |

Other (specify).....

Reason(s) .....  
.....  
.....

9(a) Which language(s) is mostly likely to give you power and prestige in Zimbabwe if you use it?

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| English             |  |
| African language(s) |  |

Why? .....  
.....

(b) Do you think languages have a relationship with social, economic and scientific development?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Why? .....  
.....

10. Can an African language express educational and scientific concepts in your subject area?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

11. If your answer to the above question is **NO**, do you think it is possible for an indigenous African language to be developed to express educational and scientific ideas?

Yes

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

No

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

12. Would you be happy if everything from primary to university level was studied in African languages?

Yes

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

No

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Reason(s) .....

.....

.....

13. Do you think learners would find it easier if all subjects were taught using an African language as medium of instruction?

Yes

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

No

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Reason(s) .....

.....

.....

14. Most learners encounter problems when studying in English

Strongly agree

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Slightly agree

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Agree

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Disagree

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Slightly disagree

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Strongly disagree

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|



15. The use of African languages as languages of instruction in education is a key national issue that requires urgent attention.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly agree    |  |
| Slightly agree    |  |
| Agree             |  |
| Disagree          |  |
| Slightly disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |

16. Are there any wider societal benefits that you can foresee if education in Zimbabwe is to be carried out using indigenous African languages as languages of instruction?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If yes specify

.....  
.....

17. What negative societal effects would the use of African languages as languages of instruction have?

.....  
.....

18. When you are teaching or examining in English, do you sometimes feel like expressing yourself in the mother tongue?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Why? .....

.....

19. When you are brainstorming ideas preparing for a lesson or a lecture, which language do you use?

|               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| English       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mother tongue | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (specify).....

20. English should continue to be used as the official medium of instruction in Zimbabwe's education system

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slightly agree    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Agree             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Slightly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |

21. Are there any efforts being made to promote the use of African languages in Zimbabwe?

|     |                          |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Explain .....

.....

.....

22. At what level of education should indigenous languages be introduced as medium of instruction?

|           |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|
| Primary   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Secondary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tertiary  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

23. Do you think teachers/lecturers in Zimbabwe are fully equipped to teach using indigenous languages as medium of instruction?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Reason(s) .....

.....

.....

24. Is there adequate teaching material to conduct learning in African languages?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

If your answer is **NO** what do you think should be done?

.....

.....

.....

25. Language associations, institutes and organizations contribute positively towards the development and use of indigenous African languages as media of instruction in Zimbabwe.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly agree    |  |
| Slightly agree    |  |
| Agree             |  |
| Disagree          |  |
| Slightly disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |

Give examples

.....

.....

.....

26. Is it possible to harmonize the orthographies of all the Shona language dialects/varieties?

YES

NO

Give reasons

.....  
.....  
.....

***Thank you for your cooperation***

## APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

This questionnaire is designed to collect information on the attitudes Zimbabwean parents and guardians towards the use of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in education. Kindly complete the questionnaire by inserting your answers in the boxes and spaces provided. In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, please do not write your name. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only.

Please indicate the appropriate answer by placing an  in the appropriate box.

### SECTION A

1. Sex

Male

Female

2. Age

20 - 24

25 - 29

30 - 34

35 - 39

40 - 44

45 - 49

Above 50

3. Level of education

O – Level

A – Level

Diploma / Certificate

Bachelors degree

Masters degree

Doctoral degree

4. Name the language(s) that you speak at home.

.....  
.....

5. What is the name of your mother tongue?

.....  
.....

**SECTION B**

6. List other languages that are spoken in Zimbabwe

- |       |        |
|-------|--------|
| (i)   | (ix)   |
| (ii)  | (x)    |
| (iii) | (xi)   |
| (iv)  | (xii)  |
| (v)   | (xiii) |
| (vi)  | (xiv)  |
| (vii) | (xv)   |
| (ix)  | (xvi)  |

7. What language(s) do teachers/lecturers use to teach learners in educational institutions?

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| English           | <input type="text"/> |
| African languages | <input type="text"/> |

Other (specify).....

8. What language(s) do you think should be used as medium of instruction in schools, colleges and universities?

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| English           | <input type="text"/> |
| African languages | <input type="text"/> |

Other (specify).....

Reason(s) .....  
.....  
.....

9(a) Which language is likely to give you power and prestige in Zimbabwe if you use it?

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| English           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| African languages | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other (specify).....

Why? .....  
.....

(b) Do you think languages have a relationship with the social, economic and scientific development of a country?

|     |                          |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Why? .....  
.....

10. Can African languages express educational and scientific concepts?

|     |                          |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

11. If your answer to the above question is **NO**, do you think it is possible for indigenous African languages to be developed to express educational and scientific ideas?

|     |                          |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. Would you be happy if all subjects from primary to University level were studied using indigenous African language(s) as a medium of instruction?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Reason(s) .....

.....

.....

13. Do you think learners would find it easier if all subjects were taught using an African language as a medium of instruction?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Reason(s) .....

.....

.....

14. Most learners encounter problems when studying in English

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly agree    |  |
| Slightly agree    |  |
| Agree             |  |
| Disagree          |  |
| Slightly disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |

15. The use of African languages as languages of instruction in education is a key national issue that requires urgent attention.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly agree    |  |
| Slightly agree    |  |
| Agree             |  |
| Disagree          |  |
| Slightly disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |



16. Are there any wider societal benefits that you can foresee if education in Zimbabwe is to be carried out using indigenous African languages as languages of instruction?

Yes

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

No

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Specify .....

.....

.....

17. What negative societal effects would the use of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction have?

.....

.....

.....

18. When you are using English, do you sometimes feel like expressing yourself in your mother tongue?

Yes

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

No

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Why? .....

.....

19. When you are brainstorming ideas, which language do you use?

English

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

African languages

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Other (specify).....

20. English should continue to be used as the official medium of instruction in Zimbabwe's education system.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Strongly agree    |  |
| Slightly agree    |  |
| Agree             |  |
| Disagree          |  |
| Slightly disagree |  |
| Strongly disagree |  |

21. Are there any efforts being made to promote the use of African languages in Zimbabwe?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

Explain .....

.....

.....

22. At what level of education should indigenous languages be used as medium of instruction?

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Primary   |  |
| Secondary |  |
| Tertiary  |  |

23. Do you think teachers/lecturers in Zimbabwe are fully equipped to teach using indigenous African languages as a medium of instruction?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

24. Is there government will to formulate and implement language policies that favor the use of indigenous languages in education?

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| Yes |  |
| No  |  |

25. Language associations, institutes and organizations contribute positively towards the development and use of indigenous African languages as media of instruction in Zimbabwe.

Strongly agree

Slightly agree

Agree

Disagree

Slightly disagree

Strongly disagree

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

Examples are (i)-----

(ii)----- (ii)-----

(iii)-----etc.

26. What do you think should be done to promote the growth of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe?

-----

***Thank you for your cooperation.***

## **APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND PARENTS**

1. Is there any relationship between language and socio-economic development?
2. What are the socio-economic benefits of using indigenous languages as languages of instruction in education?
3. What are the problems that are likely to be encountered if Zimbabwe decides to use African languages as official languages of instruction in education?
4. Do you think it is possible to teach all subjects from primary to university level using an African language as a medium of instruction?
5. What do you think is the attitude of Zimbabweans towards the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in education?
6. Do you think English should continue to be used as the official medium of instruction in Zimbabwe?
7. Are teachers / lecturers in this country fully equipped to use African languages as a media of instruction in education?
8. Are there any efforts that are being made to promote use and growth of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe?
9. Is it possible to harmonize the orthographies of all the Shona language dialects/varieties? Give reasons.
10. What do you think should be done to improve the status and function of African languages in Zimbabwe?

***Thank you for your cooperation.***

## **APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DIRECTORS/HEADS OF LANGUAGE INSTITUTES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

1. What is the role and function of your institute, organization or association?
2. What are its main objectives?
3. What has it done so far to promote the growth and use of African languages?
4. Are there any challenges you are facing?
5. What do you think are the socio-economic benefits of using indigenous languages as languages of instruction in education?
6. Do you think it is possible to teach all subjects from primary to university level using an African language as a medium of instruction?
7. Are educators in Zimbabwe well equipped to teach using indigenous languages as a medium of instruction?
8. Is there any relationship between language and socio-economic development?
9. What negative societal effects would the use of indigenous African languages as a medium of instruction have?
10. What do you think should be done to improve the status and function of indigenous languages in Zimbabwe?

***Thank you for your cooperation***