

Teachers' Use of MTB-MLE Strategies in Multilingual Lower Primary School Grades of Chongwe Rural District

Clare Mwiinga

The University of Zambia, **Zambia**

&

David Sani Mwanza

The University of Zambia, **Zambia**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) strategies by teachers at Primary school level in Chongwe Rural District. The study is informed by Ruiz's three language orientation theory which views language as either being a resource, problem or a as a right depending on the users' language ideologies and conceptualizations. Adopting a descriptive research design, the study used qualitative research approach through focus group discussions, classroom lesson observations and document analysis. The sample size was thirty teachers of Primary from ten schools of Chongwe District. The participants were sampled using purposive sampling while thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that most teachers in Chongwe District used a variety of MTB-MLE strategies in the classroom including translanguaging, picture stories, songs and real objects to engender learners' multilingual identities. Based on these strategies, it was clear that majority of teachers recognized learners' multilingual backgrounds and used these strategies in order to help diverse learners to access learning. In so doing, teachers negotiated the monoglossic language policy in an attempt to make their lessons learner centric. The study recommended that Ministry of Education (MOE) should come up with a deliberate policy where teachers from time to time are capacity built on how to handle learners in multilingual contexts. In addition, teachers should be more liberal and innovative in the classroom by making use of other minority languages in their multilingual language practices rather than limiting multilingualism to official languages.

Keywords: Strategy, multilingualism, MTB-MLE, mother tongue, Language of Instruction (LOI).

1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the use of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) strategies by teachers in lower primary schools in the rural district of Chongwe.

Zambia is a multilingual, multi-ethnic state whose sociolinguistic landscape has been shaped to a large extent by historical factors of migration and colonialism. Regarding language in education or language of classroom instruction, the country has undergone significant shift in language policy, especially during the period 1964 to 2014.

Several changes have taken place in language policy and practice in Zambia. The 1966 pronouncement of English as sole official language at national level and as medium of instruction from Grade one to university level of education. The recommendations of 1977 educational reforms which, despite admitting the shortcomings of English as language of classroom instruction, endorsed its continued use while creating provision for the utilisation of seven Zambian official languages where necessary. Finally, the 1996 language-in-education policy which also maintains

the use of English as official language of classroom instruction but, in addition, proposes the making use of community languages for literacy and numeracy from Grade One to Grade Four (Masaiti, 2016). As a result of this, a number of innovations and proposals have been brought forward which culminated into the 2013 Literacy Framework. This recommendation came to realisation in 2014 when the National Literacy Framework was documented and implemented from 1st January 2014 as pointed out above. However, in the implementation of this recommendation, the language in education policy still prescribed one of the seven regional languages to be used as media of instruction depending on the region. This perspective meant that many learners would still be taught in unfamiliar languages because Zambia is a multilingual nation with many ethnic communities.

Several studies (Banda and Mwanza, 2020; Nyimbili and Mwanza, 2020; Mwanza, 2020; Mubita and Mwanza, 2020; Banda and Mwanza, 2020; Mwanza and Bwalya, 2019) have reported that in Zambia, classrooms are inherently multilingual and that the use of a regional language as stipulated in the language policy does not support or recognize the linguistic identities and capabilities of all the learners in the classroom. These studies have also reported that strictly adhering to the language policy of using only one language and exclude the rest of the languages often result into symbolic violence where some learners are excluded from learning despite being physically present in the classroom. It is in this context that Banda and Mwanza (2017) and Mashinja and Mwanza (2020) suggested that there is need for teachers to negotiate language policies in order to be inclusive in their teaching. These two studies suggest that translanguaging practices, for example, would be useful language strategies in these learning and teaching contexts. In practice, this would mean that teachers should contest and negotiate language policies in order to provide teaching and a learning situation which can be described as learner centred. In fact, Mwanza (2012) reported that in Lusaka which is a cosmopolitan environment, teachers used other languages such as Bemba and English to teach despite the language policy prescribing standard Nyanja.

It is from this background that this study was conducted to establish and analyze mother tongue based multilingual education strategies which teachers use in Chongwe district which is predominantly Soli speaking while the policy prescribes standard Nyanja to teach.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The use of Zambian languages in the first four grades of primary schools entails that some learners would be taught in unfamiliar languages since Zambia is a multilingual nation. Chongwe rural district is one such multilingual area with multilingual learners where the official medium of instruction is Chinyanja while the dominant familiar language is Soli. This implies that teachers use or need to use MTB-MLE in lower grades to enable all learners access learning. However, it is not known how teachers in Chongwe rural district make use of MTB-MLE strategies in lower grades of primary school to enhance breakthrough to literacy. In addition, there is no known study that has investigated the use of MTB-MLE strategies in Chongwe district and in Zambia. It is in this regard that this study investigated the use of MTB-MLE strategies by teachers in their classrooms in the rural district of Chongwe.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Arising from the problem stated above, the study sought to investigate the following objective:

- i. To analyse teachers' use of MTB-MLE strategies in lower grades of Primary school of Chongwe rural District.

4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was only conducted in selected schools in one district, Chongwe. Therefore, the findings may just be unique to this area and may not be generalised to other areas of the country.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was informed by the three-language orientation theory by Ruiz (1984) which operated as a basis for language in education policy and practice in multilingual contexts. Ruiz investigated language teaching and learning from the standpoint of language as a right, language as a problem and language as a resource. Ruiz contends that regarding the orientation “language as a problem,” English is considered as the language of importance, and monolingualism is regarded as the norm. When educational policies are shaped with this orientation, the objective is to eliminate multilingualism. From this standpoint, minoritized languages are deemed as threats to a unified national identity, and the inability to speak English is viewed as the cause of disabilities and social problems (Hult & Hornberger, 2016). Under this orientation, programmes for education emphasise on putting Racialized Emergent Bilinguals (REBs) in classrooms for English-only; therefore, this orientation points towards assimilative, deficit-based principles (Hult & Hornberger, 2016).

Regarding the “language as a resource” orientation, bilingualism is understood as an important element of a diverse society and considered as giving personal and societal benefits (Ruiz, 1984). This orientation falls within a neoliberal setting by alluding that in a diverse society, being bilingual can render people more competitive in a worldwide marketplace (Rosa & Flores, 2017). This theory posits that monolingual discourses founded on the dominant language is regarded suitable for instruction with the reasoning of inclusivity while multilingualism is perceived as a problem. Yet when diversity is perceived as a resource, heteroglossic discourse can be employed to help learners acquire basic reading skills and acquire knowledge. Therefore, how language is deciphered impacts on how it is utilised. The current language in education policy in Zambia supports the use of a familiar language as medium of instruction from grade one to four. In Chongwe District, Chinyanja was chosen as the language of instruction over Soli the indigenous language of the area due to its dominance. In this case, Chinyanja is deemed as suitable for use as the medium of instruction in the lower primary grades.

Under Ruiz’s (1984) third orientation of “language as a right,” orientation, the argument is that, speaking and maintaining one’s language (or languages) is a human right attached to one’s personal autonomies. That is to say, when language is professed as a fair, lawful prerogative, it is perceived as an influential arbitrator to having access to very important domains of society such as the labour force and health care (Hult & Hornberger, 2016). Principles and practices that ascribe to this orientation are motivated by the conviction that REBs identified as dis/abled are suitable to be bilingual since this is who they are and how they convey information genuinely in their communities.

5.1 Types of MTB-MLE Strategies

The following are MTB-MLE strategies that can be used in multilingual contexts to linguistic diverse learners.

5.1.1 Translanguaging and Bridging

Translanguaging is a strategy whereby multilingual individuals make use of their knowledge of multiple languages in the activity of learning. It is a pedagogical approach that facilitates the use of languages that bilingual or multilingual learners bring to the classroom to teach them language,

literacy and content. It encompasses all the various ways of our knowledge when transitioning from one language to another (Heugh et.al, 2019). The teacher can promote learning by making use of L1 (first language) and LOI interchangeably during lesson explanations, discussions and project work. The strategy provides a solid foundation of knowledge and communication skills in both languages. Teachers support the understanding of different languages by learners, that is, MT (Mother tongue) or LOI.

5.1.2 Sandwiching

Kotkov (2021) explains the Sandwich Technique as a method that can be used with our young children when introducing new vocabulary in the target language. The teacher would give explanation to learners by sandwiching LOI and learners' L1. First, the teacher explains in LOI then explains in L1 and in LOI again. For example, if your child's dominant language is Lozi, and you are trying to teach a new phrase in English, it might sound like this:

We are eating

Lwacha

We are eating

When we “sandwich” the familiar phrase between the new phrases, it helps the child integrate new vocabulary and conveys meaning quickly. Sandwiching can be used when giving instructions, for instance, open your book, look at me, listen to the story. It can also be used when giving explanations, for instance, vocabulary words and their meanings. Teachers can further use this strategy to social language phrases such as I'm fine, I need more explanation. Sandwiching is a structured way of presenting information across languages and supporting learners when transitioning to using the LOI when listening, speaking, reading and writing.

5.1.3 Visual Scaffolding

This strategy is one of the visual aids that are related to pictures, photos and any nonverbal tools the teacher makes use of during teaching and learning (Nurul & Misdi, 2018). The strategy involves the use actual objects, illustrations, photographs and drawings. The teacher can use visuals alongside LOI to help learners as they relate the words with the visuals. The strategy is helpful in supporting learners' comprehension of text with visuals, especially with vocabulary of which learners have little experience with. Visual scaffolding promotes active involvement of learners at the same time reinforcing vocabulary development as well as the building of background knowledge. Learners can better comprehend the meaning of a word or the function of an object when the actual object or picture is there to be seen. In addition, learners can relate what is said about the object, which is auditory input, with what the object looks like, which is visual input, and how it feels like, which is tactile input.

5.1.4 Language Experience Approach (LEA)

Language experience is a whole language approach that supports reading and writing by making use of personal experiences and oral language (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). Marty, Fersmere and Barnes (2020) submit that LEA begins by learners writing of an experience that is shared using their L1. In small groups learners record their experiences using L1. The teacher helps the learners in documenting these experiences and thoughts using the familiar language and models how their ideas and words are to be written down and read. Learners may use L1 while the teacher reinforces their responses in LOI. After documenting the experience, the teacher may ask questions about the experience. LEA can be used to support learners by building on earlier knowledge, oral language

or vocabulary skills while involving the learner in meaningful activities of writing and reading. The teacher can help learners to record ideas and experiences in their familiar lexicon and modelling how their thoughts and lexes can be written, and afterwards read. During this exercise, the learners can use their L1 and the teacher can go through the information using LOI.

6. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study adopted the descriptive research design under qualitative research approach ((Milingo, 1999; Milingo, 2004; Milingo, Changwe and Hara-Zulu, 2021). McCombes (2022) submits that descriptive research aims to precisely and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon. The population for the study were all schools, learners and teachers in Chongwe Rural District. The sample for the study consisted of ten schools from which three teachers were sampled per school giving a total of 30 teachers. The study employed purposive sampling technique to select the ten schools and the three teachers per school. The study made use of three data collection instruments namely, Focus Group Discussion guide (FGD), Classroom lesson Observation checklist and Documents. Since the study is purely qualitative, the data were analysed using thematic analysis. The data collected was coded and then the patterns were identified before they were classified and reorganized (Cameron, et.al, 2011). Finally, the data were presented in thick descriptions. Themes from each response was extracted and then grouped according to the research questions. Permission to undertake research was sought from the university and clearance was obtained from University of Zambia Ethics Committee. Participants were assured that the information was purely for academic purposes and that the information would be confidential and that they would withdraw from participating in the research at any time if they so wished.

7. DATA PRESENTATION

The findings of the study show that teachers made use of some strategies in the classroom as follows.

7.1 Translanguaging

Some teachers explained that they employed translanguaging when teaching in the classroom to help learners from different language backgrounds. One teacher explained:

I had a child who came from Luapula province. To help that learner I used the words in English and Nyanja and then translated them into Bemba. I did this for four weeks and then stopped since the child had become familiar with Nyanja. Afterwards I continued using Nyanja as LOI. The learner understood instruction in Nyanja thereafter.

It came out that translanguaging is a formidable strategy that teachers make use of in the classrooms with diverse linguistic learners.

7.2 Using Real Objects

Teachers further indicated that they made use of real objects to help all learners access learning. One teacher said:

We do this with the help of teaching aids because some children learn just like that. We use concrete ones, concrete teaching aids – charts, concrete real objects...for example, if you are teaching a topic about a garden, if you take the children to the garden to see what happens at the garden, how plants grow, how the watering is done, that information is going to stick in the head of that child for a very long time. So, when you use concrete objects, it

can help a child who does not understand the language that am using, so concrete objects help a lot...

7.3 Picture Stories

Yet other teachers explained that they employed picture stories, charts or other objects to assist learners not familiar with the LOI in the classroom to enhance learning. One teacher explained:

From the picture story, they will be able to detect through the story on the picture there and then they will be interpreting in their language that this one is from drawing water, then wapika nsima then wayenda wasobela...in their own language.

7.4 Peer Scaffolding

Some teachers from FGD revealed that they put learners who are not familiar with the LOI in groups with those that are familiar with the LOI. The teachers prepare these learners before the lesson to ensure they go about the interpretation correctly. As the lesson is going on, the learners are also explaining to the fellow learners while the teacher is monitoring from time to time. Those learners who are not familiar with the LOI learn faster from fellow learners that way.

From school J teachers said:

We also use group work at times. You find one child who is conversant with that language that that child knows and through group work, working together you tell this other child that help your friend. What am speaking, this that am saying, how do you say in your language? In very little time, language is a fun thing children grasp very fast. Through doing that every day the child will grasp the language quickly and efficiently.

The teachers indicated that group work and use of fellow learners were effective MTB-MLE strategies used in multilingual contexts.

7.5 Use of Songs

Teachers also indicated that they used songs to help learners who were not familiar with the LOI in the classroom. They did this by singing a song together with the learners and then asking the learners questions based on the songs. In some cases, songs are just sung at the beginning of the lesson to motivate learners.

A teacher from school D explained:

We use, sometimes we use songs, stories, picture stories, we use passages to read aloud to the pupils...

For instance, Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes, and then teach the parts of the body while learners are seeing and touching the parts of the body.

Songs are usually used in introductions of lessons acting as motivation or to arouse learner's interest before the lessons. Songs are usually complemented by stories and pictures to give meaning to the lessons.

7.6 Translation Lists

In addition, teachers indicated that they used translation lists to help learners who may not be familiar with the LOI. For instance, Teacher 7 at School C made use of translation lists in her lesson:

Nyanja	English
Madibba	gardens
Masamba	vegetables
Ampondamatiki	rich people

7.7 Use of Flash Cards

The data from the study indicate that teachers make use of flash cards and remedial work to help learners who may not be familiar with the LOI in the classroom. From school G one teacher revealed that:

We get cards with vowels, syllables or words and show learners. Then we ask questions about what they are seeing. Then they will be answering. Those who don't know the language will see what is written on the card. They will also hear the sound. If they don't understand we invite them for catch up after class.

7.8 Use of other Teachers and Community Members

The data further revealed that some teachers used other teachers and community members to help learners not familiar with LOI. For instance, teachers from school H and school G indicated that they made use this strategy to help with explaining concepts to the learners and to the teachers. For instance, one teacher from School G explained that she had a Tonga learner in her class, so she invited the parents and explained to them that their child would be taught from Tonga to Nyanja. The parents were asked to help teach the learner. The teacher explained:

I had a learner who came from Southern province who didn't know Nyanja. In class I was explaining in Nyanja and then there was one learner who knew Tonga, so she was explaining to her in Tonga when I was teaching. I also told the parents that your child will be taught from Tonga to Nyanja and I asked the parents to be teaching the child.

8. DATA ANALYSIS

The results of the study show that teachers used various MTB-MLE strategies in a variety of ways to help learners who may not be conversant with the LOI in the classroom. These MTB-MLE strategies included translanguaging in the form of translation, code switching and cold mixing where the content is first explained in English and then in Nyanja and other indigenous languages. Teachers also made use of translanguaging in order to be inclusive and to enhance participation of learners. These findings tend to agree with the views of Muzeya (2023) who submits that teachers employ translanguaging to foster linguistic inclusivity in their classrooms. She contends that translanguaging is a formidable strategy to employ when teaching diverse learners in multilingual contexts as it enhances learners' involvement, perception and aid the link between what they were working on in class to their language of play and home language. Besides, Nyimbili and Mwanza (2020) avows that employing translanguaging improved classroom participation by learners, multiliteracy acquisition, preservation of culture and affirmation of identity by learners. While Mashinja and Mwanza (2020) added that translanguaging in Namibia, enabled positive language teaching and learning experiences; propagating and naturalising multilingualism as a classroom standard and investing in their manifold linguistic identities. This perspective supports the concept of using other languages other than LOI in the classroom as a justifiable practice and useful teaching tool to enhance learning in the classroom. As it is argued that using one's first language is a human right, learners should be given the freedom to express themselves in their first languages.

From the foregoing, it can be safely stated that the language in education policy or the teachers should not restrict learners regarding the use of language, a view supported by Ruiz (1984). Since the learners are entitled to personal freedom, they have the right to receive classroom instruction in the languages they are familiar with (Ruiz, 1984). Given this scenario, teachers in the classroom should be innovative and liberal enough to accord linguistically inclusive learning environments to learners by taking into account the languages used by learners. Besides, the study shows that teachers made use of translanguaging in the classroom to afford learners linguistic inclusivity according to the learners they were involved with and the circumstances that prevailed in the classroom as posited by Muzeya (2023). In this way, language is seen as a resource (Ruiz, 1984) since teachers are able to make use of learners' first languages to explain concepts to enhance comprehension on the part of the learners in multilingual classrooms. Consequently, meaningful learning can be realised through the recognition of language diversity such as the multilingual schools of Chongwe District.

The other MTB-MLE strategy that teachers used is peer scaffolding whereby other learners in the classroom are asked to help fellow learners not familiar with LOI. The teacher first prepares these learners and while the teacher is explaining, learners who are conversant with the LOI and the L1 of those learners not conversant with the LOI, explain to the friends while the teacher is monitoring them. In this way, those learners who are not familiar with the LOI learn faster from fellow learners. These findings are in line with the views of Mkandawire, et.al (2023) who avow that the teachers in Lusaka district of Zambia also make use of multilingual teachers, parents and bilingual learners as resources in multilingual classrooms to enhance learning. However, this view is not supported by Maulad and Magbata (2022), who view multilingualism as a problem. They contend that the diversity of the linguistic backgrounds of the learners poses a problem and that even though teachers receive training on MTB-MLE, such training has no practical relevance to their day-to-day classroom instruction. This is one instance where Richard Ruiz's orientation of language as a problem is supported (Ruiz, 1984) by focusing on monolingual ideologies as the norm during classroom instruction. However, multilingualism should not be seen as a problem but rather as a resource to enhance learning as pointed out above.

Teachers also employed picture stories to assist learners not familiar with the LOI in the classroom. When a teacher explains a picture story, explaining what each picture is about and connecting to the other pictures making a story, a learner who may not be familiar with the LOI will be able to follow through the pictures and connecting them to their experience and to understanding the story. Due to this understanding, these learners are able to participate actively in class as they are motivated by the pictures and consequently breakthrough to literacy quickly. These results are in line with those of Nyimbili and Mwanza (2020) who submit that employing MTB-MLE improved classroom participation by learners, multiliteracy acquisition, preservation of culture and affirmation of identity by learners. These views are also according to Dagelea, Peralta & Abocejo (2022) who revealed that the MTB-MLE programme has far reaching benefits which include adherence to cultural and linguistic origin while learning and the comprehension of deeper native language. The perspective is further supported by Bercasio, Remolacio, and Reonal (2016) who submit that the use of MTB-MLE strategies resulted into high literacy levels, and enhanced pedagogical competences. This is due to the fact that MTB-MLE makes use of highly useful, relevant and informative materials. As a result of MTB-MLE implementation, instructional strategies are interactive, making use of the relevant technology-supported materials which in turn motivate learners. Besides, the use of MTB-MLE resulted into assessment practices that are adequate, competency-aligned combining both conventional and authentic tools.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that teachers used Real objects to help learners not conversant with the LOI in the classroom. The use of real objects helped learners not familiar with LOI to comprehend what was being explained, since they were able to visualise the object as the teacher was explaining. Learners who may not be familiar with LOI are able to follow through the lesson and learning is achieved quickly and efficiently. These findings are in line with Muzeya's (2023) views that translanguaging, one of MTB-MLE strategy, was a formidable strategy to employ when teaching diverse learners in multilingual contexts as it enhanced learners' involvement, perception and aided the link between what they were working on in class and their language of play and home language.

Besides, the use of MTB-MLE gave freedom to learners in the classroom where they were able to give answers in different languages such as Soli and Tonga. As Bhatt (2022) posits, MTB-MLE is a useful strategy for preserving people's identities, to enabling them cope with global market, and to save the languages that are threatened of dying. In this case, learners were preserving their identities by expressing themselves in a language they were familiar with and in turn contributed to saving those languages (especially Soli) from dying. Given that expressing oneself in one's language is a human right, this is an example of an instance where learners exercised their personal freedom by answering questions using their own L1, where language is seen as a human right, a view supported by the theory that informed the study (Ruiz, 1984). Therefore, with 'language as a right,' orientation, learners have the right to be taught or express themselves in the language familiar to them since speaking and maintaining one's language (or languages) is a human right attached to one's personal freedom and autonomy. Moreover, this perspective is in line with that of Lartec et.al (2014) who avow that the teachers made use of strategies such as translation of target language to mother tongue, utilization of multilingual teaching, utilization of lingua-franca, improvization of instructional materials written in mother tongue, remediation of instruction, and utilization of literary piece written in mother tongue as motivation.

The results further indicated that some teachers in Chongwe District made use of translation lists and read aloud to accommodate learners not familiar with LOI in the classroom. The teachers explained the meaning of words by use of flash cards written in Nyanja and English, for example; Garden - madibba, cabbage- kabicci, expert – kaswili, rich people- ampondamatiki. The teachers further explained these words in other familiar languages such as Bemba and Tonga to enhance learning. These findings concur with those of Lartec, et.al (2014) who revealed that the teachers made use of strategies such as translation of target language to mother tongue, utilization of multilingual teaching, utilization of lingua-franca, improvization of instructional materials written in mother tongue, remediation of instruction, and utilization of literary piece written in mother tongue as motivation. As Leonardi (2011) submits, translation is a linguistic endeavour which preserves the meaning of a message even after the application of norms. It is also a cultural phenomenon which links cultural divides and arbitrates cultures in such a way that it fills up gaps that may be there. Leonardi further posits that translation is a cognitive process which happens naturally and cannot be stopped in a multilingual situation as it appears usual to depend on translation when faced with foreign words and expressions. The findings are further supported by Mkandawire, et.al (2023) that teachers in these multilingual classrooms used bilingual materials, remediation and reading intervention strategies to teach literacy in Early grades. In addition, this view is in line with the theory guiding the study that language is seen as a resource according to Ruiz (1984) in that the L1 can be used to help teach the LOI using learners in the classroom.

The results of the study are similar to some other findings in other multilingual countries. For instance, the use of MTB-MLE in Namibia, enabled positive language teaching and learning experiences; propagating and naturalising multilingualism as a classroom standard and investing

in their manifold linguistic identities (Masinja and Nwanza, 2020). While in the Phillipines, Degelea, et.al (2022) posited that MTB-MLE has far reaching beneficial effects like adherence to cultural and linguistic origin while learning and comprehending deeper native language. Furthermore, Phillipines - Bercasio, Remolacio, and Reonal (2016) who submit that the use of MTB-MLE strategies resulted into high literacy levels, and enhanced pedagogical competences. In addition, in Nepal South Asia, a study by Bhatt (2022) revealed that MTB-MLE is a useful strategy for preserving people's identities, to enabling them cope with global market, and to save the languages that are threatened of dying. In another study in Italy, Leonardi (2011) reveals that translation facilitates global relations and connections as well as interaction between two or more diverse linguistic communities. Since a message becomes translated from one language into another minus losing its sense of norms, translation is regarded as a linguistic endeavour. While in South Africa, Leketi (2015) revealed that the interactions as a result of MTB-MLE during the course enabled an expanded cultural identity of the speakers as the students through classroom interactions realised that their cultures were similar with those of other languages.

The implication of these findings is that, teachers must understand the cultural background of their learners for them to be able to handle the content of their lessons effectively, as meaningful learning takes place when the learners' culture is taken into account. Besides, teachers should be urged to translate instructional content from the target language to other languages that are familiar to their learners. This in turn cultivates critical thinking on the part of the learners. As Ruiz (1984) submits, language in this way is used as a resource in that the other languages familiar to the learners can be used to explain the target language. The findings are also supported by Leketi (2015) who revealed that the interactions as a result of MTB-MLE during the course enabled an expanded cultural identity of the speakers as the students through classroom interactions realised that their cultures were similar with those of other languages (see also Banda and Mwanza, 2020; Nyimbili and Mwanza, 2020; Mashinja and Mwanza, 2020; Mwanza, 2020; Mubita and Mwanza, 2020; Banda and Mwanza, 2020; Mwanza and Bwalya, 2019).

In Chongwe District, teachers make use of other languages such as Bemba, Soli and Tonga to explain concepts in the target language, English. At the same time, the aspect of language and power comes out clearly that the seven dominant languages, those used as *linguae francae* in their designated zones are still frequently used even in other areas as languages of wider communication in communities. This perspective is supported by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory which shows how power is exercised, circulated, used and abused in classroom interaction because these power relationships result into inclusive and exclusive interactions (Van Dijk, 2006). The use of Tonga and Bemba in Chongwe district can only be explained in terms of language and power, in that Bemba and Tonga are prestigious languages among the seven official languages. Even though for the use of Tonga, there is a Sociolinguistic explanation in that Soli is a dialect of Tonga and therefore, is easily understood by Solis, and since it is a dominant language enjoying more power than Soli, it is more likely to be used in formal situations like education.

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that the teachers used fellow teachers and community members to help learners not familiar with LOI in the classroom. Teachers sought help from community members to help them translate some concepts that they may not have understood when preparing lessons. In some cases, the teachers invited these community members to class to help explain certain concepts to the learners for better understanding. This view is in line with that of Mkandawire et.al (2023) who affirm that the teachers also made use of multilingual teachers, parents and bilingual learners as resources in multilingual classrooms. These findings are also supported by Simachenya (2017) who showed that teachers incorporated both English and Nyanja into their lessons to be linguistically inclusive.

9.0 CONCLUSION

The study found out that teachers use a variety of MTB-MLE strategies to help learners in multilingual classrooms including translanguaging, use of real objects, picture stories, use of groups, picture stories, translation lists and questioning. This is new contribution in language teaching and learning.

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