

Decolonisation: Enhancing Equity in the Management of Language Education in Secondary Schools in Kabwe District

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Abstract

This paper endeavours to address the colonial mind-set in the management of language education in Zambian secondary schools. The aim of the paper is to respond to the need to decolonise the challenges which hinder the achievement of quality implementation of language programmes in the Department of Literature and Languages in secondary schools. The paper draws insights from “tenets of equitable management” to outline how national, provincial, district, school and departmental leadership as well as language planners, and curriculum developers can decolonise the management of teachers and subjects in the Department of Literature and Languages. The paper is guided by the marginal theory. The paper adopted purposive sampling to identify ten schools and respective Heads of Department of Literature and languages as key informants for the study. Elicitation, face to face interviews, document analysis, descriptive and qualitative approaches were used to collect data to justify the arguments in the study. The study reveals that some subjects and teachers in the Department of Literature and Languages are unfairly and impartially treated as the colonial arrangement still exists to a large extent. Decolonisation is only observed in the distribution of Heads of Department in the sampled schools where they share 50% for each gender. There is great need to decolonise the management of language education in order to enhance equity and motivate all the teachers of languages for the effective implementation of language education and planning policies.

Key words: Decolonisation, marginal theory, management, language education, Zambia

1.0 Introduction

The concept of decolonisation is about removing colonial aspects which should be viewed from the perspective of fairness in the distribution of materials, resources, time, teachers, learners as well as appointments in the light of the Department of Literature and Languages in Secondary Schools in Kabwe, Zambia. Kabwe district is found in Central Province of Zambia. At provincial level, language related subjects in Zambian secondary schools are under the custodian of the Senior Education Standards Officer (SESO-Languages). The Department of Literature and Languages is expected to have six subjects based on the five adopted languages in Zambia. At school level, the department is managed by the Head of Department while the six subjects are headed by the Heads of Section, namely, English language, Literature in English, Zambian languages, French, Chinese and Portuguese (cf. MoESVTEE, 2013). Zambia lies in the heart of central Africa and shares borders with the following countries: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the north, with Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique in the east, with Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia in the south, and with Angola in the west (cf. Marten & Kula, 2014).

Colonisation of language education is due to the colonial mind-set which was planted in Zambians just after independence in 1964. Historically, Zambia adopted the teaching of English language as a subject after independence in 1964 by virtue of being a colony of Britain which is an English speaking nation. English language was adopted as a medium of instruction in government programs including language planning and education during initial literacy (cf. Marten & Kula, 2014). The Department of Literature and Languages has continued teaching literature as a component in all languages except in English language where it is taught as an independent subject, an aspect which requires decolonisation. Language coloniality can also be seen in the introduction of four Zambian languages (Bemba, Lozi, Tonga and Nyanja) out of 72 which were mandated to be taught as subjects and later, three languages were added to make seven regional official languages (ROL), namely, Bemba, Lozi, Tonga, Nyanja, Kaonde, Lunda and Luvale (Nkolola, 2013). In this paper, we problematize the colonial management style and advocate for the decolonisation of the management of language education in Zambian secondary schools in Zambia in general and Kabwe in particular in order to enhance equity.

We note that the teaching of French in Zambia became a reality after the abolition of Latin in the 1950' which was arrived at after the Addis Ababa Conference of 1963 that was attended by

African Heads of State and Ministers of Education. The aftermath of the 1963 Addis Ababa Conference, saw the introduction of French language in Zambia which was taught at Chipembi Girls' Secondary School and Munali Boys' Secondary School, and by 1991 the number of schools offering French exceeded one hundred (Chishiba, 2016). Nonetheless, by 1994, there were only thirty schools in Zambia which continued teaching French, with only two training institutions for teachers. Kaira (1997) partly attributes the reduction in the number of schools offering French to the Ministry of Education's decision to concentrate both human and material resources in a few selected schools to enhance quality in the teaching of the subject. The above move saw equality by compromised in the distribution of resources and languages which was biased to certain places. Machinyise (2009) argues that shortage of teachers, inadequate teaching and learning materials, pupils' attitude and lack of motivation, among others, all account for dwindling numbers of learners of French language as a subject.

Based on the recommendations of the 2013 revised curriculum framework, by 2014 two languages were added to the Department of Literature and Languages, namely, Chinese and Portuguese (cf. MoESVTEE, 2013). Literature shows that Chinese is only taught in ten pilot schools in ten provinces of Zambia. Each of the ten provinces has one school mandated to offer Chinese language. The following are the secondary schools and their respective provinces: Kalonga Secondary School in Central Province, Nyumbayanga Secondary School in Lusaka Province, Siavonga Secondary School in Southern Province, Kabompo Secondary School in North-Western Province, Masaiti Secondary School on the Copperbelt Province, Sesheke Secondary School in Western Province, Mansa Secondary School in Luapula Province, Chinsali Girls' Secondary School in Muchinga Province, Chipata Day Secondary School in Eastern Province and Kasama Girls Secondary School in Northern Province (MoESVTEE, 2013). We note that only Kalonga Secondary School in Kabwe district is mandated to offer Chinese in Central Province which does not provide fair treatment of the subject, teachers and learners in other schools as well as districts. We assume that learners in other schools in Central Province would equally be interested in learning Chinese hence there is great need to spread the subject across districts.

With the above background in mind, language education in Zambia and in particular Kabwe has suffered setbacks from the time of independence. The aim of this paper is to advocate for

decolonisation of the management of the affairs of language education in order to promote equity. This is achievable through the effective implementation of tenets of equitable leadership in language education and planning in Kabwe district in Central Province of Zambia. The paper progresses as follows: methodology and approaches, theoretical framework, results and discussion of findings, and conclusion.

2.0 Methodological Perspectives

The paper used qualitative research which refers to holistic, non-numerical, inductive, subjective and process-oriented methods used to understand, describe, interpret and develop a particular theory on a phenomenon or a setting (Burns & Grove, 1997). Brink & Wood (1998) argue that qualitative research is a better strategy of understanding aspects which are difficult or complex to quantify by means of assigning numerical values, such as matters related to decolonising language education in secondary schools in Kabwe district.

Using abstract thinking processes which qualitative research encourages, meaning and theoretical implications emerge, thereby, satisfying the notion which says qualitative research design is flexible and unique and evolve throughout the research process (Burns & Grove, 1997). The research findings obtained using the qualitative design are reported descriptively using words and sentential expressions (Mutch, 2005). Based on Mutch's assertion, the findings of the present study are reported descriptively using themes, tables and sentential expressions to justify the existence of colonial legacy in the management of language education which require decolonisation.

The study had a sample size of ten (10) secondary schools in Kabwe district of Central Province in Zambia. The study specifically focused on the Department of Literature and Languages. The sampling procedure was conducted as follows: Firstly, ten (10) secondary schools were sampled purposively. The ten (10) sampled schools offer the following language-based subjects: English language, Literature in English, Zambian languages, French and Chinese. Unfortunately, Portuguese is not offered in any of the sampled schools in Kabwe. Secondly, ten (10) Heads of Department of Literature and Languages were sampled randomly and purposively based on the sampled schools. The above sample size became the primary source of information. The primary data were justified using the secondary sources of information.

Document analysis, purposive population sampling and elicitation methods were used during data collection and analysis. Chaleunvong (2009) says identifying and retrieving secondary sources of data required for the study is the systematic starting point of efficient data collection. Secondary sources of information included textbooks as well as internet publications, such as articles and book chapters. Data analysis went hand in hand with data collection (cf. Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The findings of the study were presented and analysed thematically, in tabular form as well as sentential expressions.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The study is informed by the marginal theory (McClusky, 1963) and is backed by tenets of equitable management. Drawing insights from tenets of equitable management, teachers who are the curriculum implementers must be given due consideration when designing and revising the curriculum for languages as subjects. In order to account for unfair treatment of either teachers or language-based subjects, we adopt tenets of equitable management as a corpus to decolonise the management of language education in Zambia in general and Kabwe district in particular. The tenets can be used to redeem equity of subjects and languages as well as implementers of language education whose voices are usually caged. The above scenario would help to decolonise language education and planning. The choice of the marginal theory to address issues which surround unfair treatment in the management of language matters is befitting in this paper because it aims at removing restrictions that hinder effective implementation of programmes which side-line key players such as teachers of language (cf. McClusky, 1963).

To strengthen the marginal theory, we adopt tenets of equitable management of language education advocated for by Siame (October, 2022). In order for language education to flourish in secondary schools in Kabwe, those who are entrusted with the responsibility to design the curriculum, to manage the language matters in secondary schools at provincial and school levels and to implement the affairs of Literature and Languages (teachers of languages) are expected to uphold equitable management characteristics. Tenets of equitable management are required to enhance equity in the management of language education. It is hoped that the effective application of the eight tenets discussed below will bring about decolonisation of the curriculum of language education in the district in particular and Zambia in general.

Figure 1 below presents the eight tenets of equitable management which can also be adopted in the management of language matters:

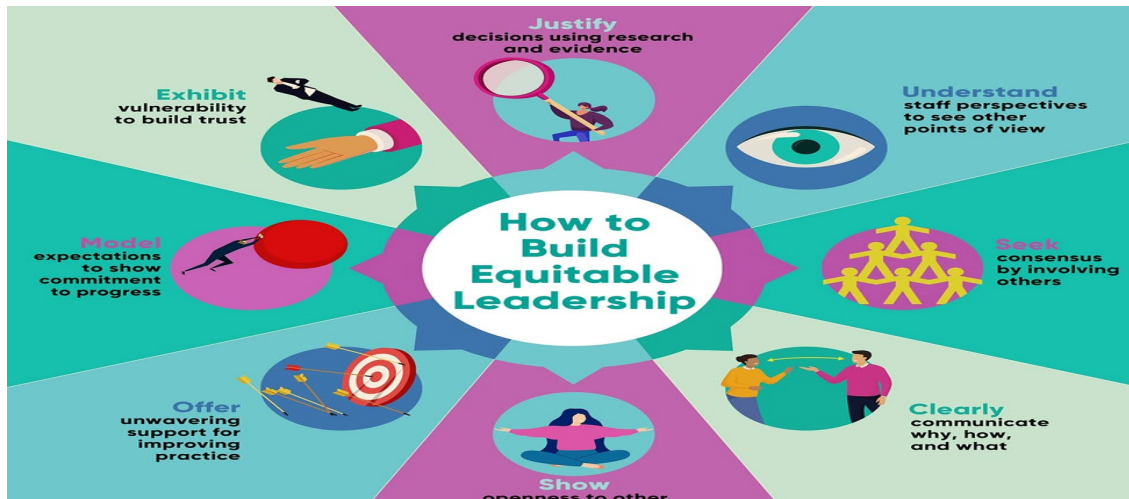


Figure 1: Equitable management of language education in Kabwe (Adopted from: Siame, 2022)

Based on the above litmus showing characteristics of equitable management of language education, it is expedient for curriculum developers to conduct research to justify why they make certain decisions regarding language-based subjects. For instance, why they have given Literature in English to be taught as an independent subject, but the same literature with a similar magnitude to be taught as a component in Zambian languages, French, Chinese and Portuguese. Apart from justification, the figure above shows that equity can also be achieved during the management of language education if curriculum developers and managers take into account the points of view of teachers who are the curriculum implementers. The third tenet of equitable management is to seek consensus by involving teachers of languages before implementing an education policy, such as, the language policy. The fourth tenet requires curriculum designers to clearly explain the rationale behind the programmes they design. The fifth tenet encourages management to be open to teacher's ideas and suggestions regarding language education. The next tenet is about management offering unwavering support to implementers of language policies. The seventh tenet encourages management to become role models in promoting implementers of language policies in education in order to witness progress and good results. The eighth characteristic requires management to exhibit vulnerability to implementers of

language programmes in order to build trust. The effective implementation of the tenets of equitable management in language education would yield better results to learners and teachers.

4.0 Results and Discussion of Findings

Data were presented and analysed based on selected language-based subjects in the Department of Literature and Languages in Kabwe district in Central Province. The qualitative data are presented and analysed thematically and sententially using seven tables.

4.1 Number of classes Allocated to each Language Subject

The informants in the sampled secondary schools provided the responses outlined below in respect of the class allocation patterns in the Department of Literature and Languages. The table below presents the findings of the class allocation patterns in the sampled secondary schools:

Table 1: Class allocation patterns to language subjects

Secondary schools	English	Zambian Languages	French	Chinese	Portuguese
Kab	07	03	01	00	00
Kal	05	01	01	01	00
Hig	04	02	01	00	00
Muk	04	02	01	00	00
Bwa	05	02	01	00	00
Mwa	02	01	00	00	00
Bro	04	02	00	00	00
Kas	04	02	00	00	00
Ang	04	02	01	00	00
Car	04	02	01	00	00
TOTAL	43	19	07	01	00

Based on the results presented in the table above, English language had the highest class pattern followed by Zambian languages, then French and finally, Chinese. The table shows that Portuguese was not taught in any of the sampled schools in Kabwe district. One of the key informants (HOD) commented: *“Class allocation patterns are not evenly distributed in the Department of Literature and Languages in Kabwe district.”*

The analysis of the above information in Table 1 and the informant’s voice reveal that there is impartial distribution of the class pattern which is biased to English language and the trend is against tenets of equitable management and require decolonisation (cf. McClusky, 1963). The

study also reveals that Portuguese is not taught in the sampled schools. This implies that Portuguese language simply appears as a subject in the 2013 curriculum, but is not offered in Zambian secondary schools which is an aspect of marginalisation and require decolonisation in order to attain equity (cf. MoESVTEE, 2013). There is need to enforce the teaching of Chinese and Portuguese in secondary schools in Kabwe district, otherwise it would be demotivating to teachers who are trained to teach these languages as well as learners who are introduced to the above stated languages if they do not continue to teach and learn the subjects (cf. Machinyise, 2009). We advocate for decolonisation in the distribution and management of class patterns by school managers and Heads of Department of Literature and languages in secondary schools in Kabwe district in particular and Zambia in general.

4.2 Enrolment Trends According to Language Subjects

Informants provided the current enrolment trends in their respective secondary schools which were used to ascertain the existence of equitable management of language matters in the district. The findings from the sampled schools are recorded in the table below:

Table 2: Approximate Number of Learners Per Language Subject Per Secondary School

Secondary schools	English	Zambian Languages	French	Chinese	Portuguese
Kab	200	50	20	00	00
Kal	150	60	30	50	00
Hig	120	65	35	00	00
Muk	160	50	28	00	00
Bwa	250	90	35	00	00
Mwa	190	80	00	00	00
Bro	100	60	00	00	00
Kas	170	80	00	00	00
Ang	100	40	40	00	00
Car	160	70	60	00	00
TOTAL	1500	645	348	50	00

The table above shows that all the sampled schools teach English and Zambian languages, followed by French which is taught by seven secondary schools, then Chinese by one school and finally, Portuguese which does not seem to be taught in any of the sampled schools. English had 1500 pupils, Zambian languages had 645, and French, 348, Chinese 50 and Portuguese zero (00). The key informant B lamented: *“Learners who study language subjects are usually imbalanced.....The enrolment trends by school managers are not justifiable and promote*

inferiority complex to languages with low enrolment. Languages with high enrolment levels tend to have superiority complex”

Based on the above data, we argue that there is unjustifiable unfairness in terms of enrolment levels for particular languages which is not in tandem with the first tenet of equitable management of language matters (cf. McClusky, 1963; Siame, 2022 October 25). We also argue that there is unfairness in the distribution of subjects in secondary schools hence learners should be distributed evenly by school managers with the help of HODs. To promote the teaching of Portuguese, there is need for the government of Zambia to come up with a deliberate policy to conduct a fast track training of teachers and sample schools for pilot teaching as is the case for Chinese (cf. MoESVTEE, 2013). The Senior Education Standards Officer can be tasked to identify teachers who are willing to upgrade in Chinese through the school managers as well as advertising for pre-service trainee teachers in Chinese to undergo fast track training. In addition, when it comes to deployment, those who are trained in subjects other than English language and Zambian languages should equally be given due consideration. The trend would act as a motivating factor to enhance equity in the distribution of teachers in secondary schools in the Department of Literature and Languages. This trend would also help to beef-up staffing for the understaffed language-based subjects. It is hoped that effective management of language matters would enhance equity of language education as a decolonisation focus and eventually uplift enrolment levels in all language-based subjects.

4.3 Heads of Department of Literature and Languages by Gender

The informants provided information regarding the gender pattern of the Heads of Department (HODs) in the sampled secondary schools in Kabwe. The responses from the informants concerning the distribution of HODs of Literature and Languages by gender are illustrated in the table below:

Table 3: Heads of Department by Gender

Secondary school	Male	Female
Kab	√	x
Kal	x	√
Hig	√	x
Muk	x	√
Bwa	x	√

Mwa	x	√
Bro	x	√
Kas	√	x
Ang	√	x
Car	√	x
TOTAL	05	05

Data in the above table shows that the distribution pattern of HODs in the sampled schools is in the ratio 1:1 which can be interpreted as 50% for each gender. The key informant C had this to say about gender distribution of HODs: *“The district through the Senior Education Standards Officer has scored success in this area. There is gender balance in the sampled districts in Kabwe which demonstrates fairness in the appointments regardless of gender”*

The analysis of the above table and information from the key informant C shows that the district is not bias in terms of appointments of Officers to the position of HOD. Based on the results, it can be argued that both equality and equity cannot be questioned in the district. The findings of the study show that there is fairness in the management and distribution of gender of HODs in the Department of Literature and languages in the sampled schools which is in tandem with the tenets of equitable leadership (cf. McClusky, 1963). Maintaining the above gender distribution pattern is a good sign of decolonisation in the light of enhancing equity in the management of language matters in secondary schools. This direction is also likely to motivate both genders of teachers of languages and lead to effective implementation of language education policies in secondary schools.

4.4 Heads of Department based on their Major language Subject Affiliation

The informants stated that there are variations in the numbers of HODs who are appointed in the sampled secondary schools in Kabwe based on the major subjects they were trained to teach. The data in the table below shows the distribution pattern of HODs according to their major subjects they are trained to teach:

Table 4: Heads of Department by Major Subject Affiliation

Secondary school	English	Zambian Languages	French	Chinese	Portuguese
Kab	x	√	x	x	x

Kal	x	x	√	x	x
Hig	√	x	x	x	x
Muk	√	x	x	x	x
Bwa	√	x	x	x	x
Mwa	√	x	x	x	x
Bro	√	x	x	x	x
Kas	√	x	x	x	x
Ang	√	x	x	x	x
Car	√	x	x	x	x
TOTAL	08	01	01	00	00

Table 4 shows that the distribution of HODs with respect to their major subjects they were trained to teach is 80% for those whose major subject is English language, 10% for Zambian Languages, 10% for French, 0% for Chinese and 0% for Portuguese. The informant D made the comment below: *“Some HoDs majored in English language while others majored in Zambian languages, French and Chinese. However, Portuguese has no representation of the HOD in Kabwe district and is not taught anywhere in Central Province and Zambian secondary schools. I lament that appointments for HODs in Kabwe are biased to teachers who majored in English language which is demotivating to other teachers who majored in other languages.”*

From the forgoing, we note that equity is not enhanced in the sampled schools in the distribution of HODs regarding their major subject during the training which goes against the marginal theory (cf. McClusky, 1963). The analysis shows that appointments of Heads of Department are biased to teachers who majored in English language, a trend which calls for urgent and swift decolonisation measures. We argue that, the side-lined teachers in the Department of Literature and Languages feel inferior to those who majored in English language during their training. The above is one of the factors which has for a long time hindered staff development, deployment and advancement in the languages which are despised due to lack of motivation (cf. Machinyise, 2009). There is need for appointing authorities to consider decolonising the appointment trends so that teachers are appointed to the Office of Head of Department irrespective of the language they majored in.

4.5 Time Allocation Per Subject Per Week

Data was collected from informants to ascertain the time distribution patterns per language subject per week in the Department of Literature and Languages. The table below outlines the time allocation patterns in secondary schools in Kabwe district:

Table 5: Number of periods per week per subject

Secondary school	English	Lit. in English	Zambian Languages	French	Chinese	Portuguese
Kab	06	04	04	04	04	04
Kal	06	04	04	04	04	04
Hig	06	04	04	04	04	04
Muk	06	04	04	04	04	04
Bwa	06	04	04	04	04	04
Mwa	06	04	04	04	04	04
Bro	06	04	04	04	04	04
Kas	06	04	04	04	04	04
Ang	06	04	04	04	04	04
Car	06	04	04	04	04	04

The study shows that all the secondary schools have allocated six periods per week to English language which represents 60%. To the contrary, other languages in the Department including Literature in English have been allocated four periods per week representing 40%. Informant E had this to say: *“There is unfairness in the allocation of time for language-based subjects in secondary schools. More time is allocated to English language.”*

The analysis shows that there is a disparity in time allocation to subjects in the Department of Literature and languages. The results show unfairness to languages other than English which is demotivating to both teachers and learners (cf. Machinery, 2009). Perhaps, HODs, Deputy Head teachers, District Education Standards Officers (DESOs), Senior Education Standards Officers (SESOs) in charge of Languages at provincial levels, Principle Education Standards Officers at Provincial and National levels, Director of Standards of Education as well as curriculum specialists and developers have not paid attention to the unfairness of time allocation for

language based subjects other than English language. Unfairness is a major reason for dwindling numbers of secondary schools and teachers offering languages apart from English, such as Zambian languages, French and Chinese, a trend which should be checked and decolonised (cf. Kaira, 1997). In order to uphold fairness and decolonisation in time allocation per language per week, we advocate that English language should be given less periods per week than other language subjects which have Literature as a component. Considering the above argument would help in promoting equity in the management of language education which would consequently lead to imparting of all the required knowledge and skills for complete linguistic development of the learners in all language-based subjects.

4.6 Languages Taught with a Literature Component

We interviewed the informants regarding the language subjects which are taught with a literature component in the Department of Literature and Languages. Their responses regarding language based subjects which are taught alongside a literature component are illustrated below:

Table 6: Languages (Subjects) with a Literature component

Language	Yes	No
English	x	√
Zambian Languages	√	x
French	√	x
Chinese	√	x
Portuguese	√	x
TOTAL	04	01

The results in Table 6 show that only English language does not offer literature as a component, but it is taught as an independent subject. Informant F had this to say: *“We have continued teaching languages based on the colonial curriculum which favours English language as a medium of instruction. It seems from the time of colonial masters when English was considered superior, the trend has continued to look down other languages even after independence as can be seen in the allocation pattern where only English has been allowed to have Literature as a subject when other languages also have a literature component with the same weight like Literature in English.”*

The analysis shows that apart from English, the rest of the languages have both language and literature in one subject which is unfair, demotivating, and restrictive to teachers and learners (cf. McClusky, 1963; Machinyise, 2009). The above situation requires decolonisation. We argue that there is serious unfairness and impartiality in the management of literature affairs because all language subjects under study have literature as a component as opposed to English language where it is offered as a subject. We also argue that whether literature is taught as a subject or component, it has the same number of texts to cover, that is, five texts at senior secondary school and four at junior secondary level which is against tenets of equitable management of language education (cf. McClusky, 1963). For the sake of decolonising the management of language education, curriculum developers and managers of language-based subjects in Zambia and Kabwe in particular should either consider teaching literature as a component in all languages as opposed to teaching it as an independent subject or all languages to have literature as an independent subject because it has the same weight. When curriculum developers and managers of language planning consider this finding and argument, it would help to remove inferiority complex and uplift the morale of the disadvantaged teachers of languages who panic to complete the syllabus and teach for examination purposes (cf. Machinyise, 2009).

4.7 Components in Languages which are Taught as Subjects

The researchers collected data concerning the component parts of language subjects which are taught in the Department of Literature and Languages. The table below illustrates the components which are taught in each language:

Table 7: Components in language subjects

Components	English	Zambian Languages	French	Chinese	Portuguese
Grammar/structure	√	√	√	√	√
Compositions	√	√	√	√	√
Listening and speaking	√	√	√	√	√
Comprehension	√	√	√	√	√
Summary	√	√	√	√	√
Translation	x	√	√	√	√
Literature	x	√	√	√	√

Proverbs/sayings	x	√	√	√	√
TOTAL	05	08	08	08	08

The above table shows that English language as a subject has five components as opposed to Zambian languages, French, Chinese and Portuguese which have eight component parts respectively. Informant F voiced this: *“There are more component parts allocated to languages other than English language and yet English language is allocated more periods per week on the timetable. The logic is questionable and unjustifiable”*

The above data reveals that other than English language, the other language-based subjects are overloaded and are given less time per week. Indeed, the logic is questionable and unjustifiable for allocating language subjects which have more component parts few periods per week than English language. One also wonders why English language should not be taught with Literature as a component and yet it is still given the highest contact periods per week. We argue that curriculum developers probably skipped the above scenario for them to have continued to toll the colonial mind-set in the management of language education and planning system. There is need to decolonise this area which would eventually motivate the key stakeholders who are the implementers of language education (cf. Machinyise, 2009).

5.0 Conclusion

We conclude that decolonisation in the management of language education only exists in the distribution of Heads of Department by gender in the sampled schools. We also conclude that fairness does not exist in the management of subjects, class allocation patterns, curriculum design and implementation, time allocation and distributions of components in the language subjects. Based on the collected data, we further conclude that there is 14.2% equity and decolonisation in the management of language education in Zambia and Kabwe in particular as opposed to 85.8% colonisation. Curriculum planners and developers, provincial, district and school managers of language education should consider revising the curriculum and patterns of appointing Heads of Department in order to decolonise the management trends and uphold tenets of equitable leadership in language education in Kabwe district in particular and in Zambia in general.

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