

DE-MARGINALISATION OF THE NON-REGIONAL OFFICIAL LOCAL ZAMBIAN LANGUAGES: A CASE OF LUNGU, MAMBWE AND NAMWANGA LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This paper endeavours to address re-imagining education and schooling grounded in local indigenous knowledge by combining three concepts, namely; re-envisioning ways education can be transformed to address current challenges, self-reflexivity and decolonising the mind as well as decolonising the education system concerning local languages education. The marginalisation of the non-regional official languages (ROL) in Zambia is due to the colonial mindset which was planted just after independence in 1964. Lungu, Mambwe, and Namwanga (LuMaNa) languages have been used to mirror the current challenges all non-ROLs in Zambia are facing. Lungu is classified as M14, Mambwe as M15, and Namwanga as M22. The paper addresses the following objectives: to identify major causes of marginalisation of the non-ROL; to describe the effects of marginalisation of non-ROL; and to suggest ways of de-marginalising the non-ROL in Zambia. The study employs marginal framing which deals with the potential restrictions to participation in education which eventually emerge as challenges. Document analysis and descriptive and qualitative approaches were adopted in a bid to justify the arguments in the study. The findings of the study reveal that potential restrictions to the use of the indigenous local languages have far-reaching consequences such as high illiteracy levels in the country. Among the most valid options to de-marginalise the non-ROL are; the establishment of the national official local language (NOLL), implementation of the 2013 curriculum framework policy, or formulation of the unified *Zambian languages orthography*.

Keywords: *Decolonization, marginal theory, restrictions, Lungu, Mambwe, Namwanga*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Guthrie (1948) classifies Lungu as M14, Mambwe as M15, and Namwanga as M22. The native speakers of Lungu are found in Mpulungu while Mambwe is found in the Mbala and Senga districts of Northern Province in Zambia, and parts of Southern Tanzania. On the other hand, Namwanga is spoken in the Nakonde and Isoka districts of Northern Province in Zambia. Lungu, Mambwe, and Namwanga (henceforth, LuMaNa) languages are at the periphery of the Northern part of Zambia along the corridor of Tanzania (Nurse and Philippson, 1999). Nurse and Philippson (1999) have shown that the origin of the LuMaNa languages is universal and Fipa in Southern Tanzania is believed to be their

ancestor language. The three genetically related languages are not used as official languages in government and language learning, as such, very little literature is known and documented about them. The LuMaNa languages are chosen to mirror the challenges that all the sixty-five (65) non-regional official languages (henceforth, non-ROL) are facing in Zambia.

Zambia lies in the center of the Bantu-speaking area. The geographical position shows that Zambia lies in the heart of central Africa and shares borders with the following countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to the north, 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). This paper accounts for the marginalisation that takes place in language policy, planning, and education regarding the non-regional official languages in Zambia. Marginalisation is a concept that describes restrictions that people undergo when they are expected to participate in certain activities within their communities (cf. McClusky, 1963). The restrictions undermine the effectiveness and full participation of the marginalized citizenry in language national planning and implementation. This paper aims to contribute to the decolonization of language planning and education. The paper endeavours to deal with the following research objectives: to identify the causes of marginalisation of the non-ROL in Zambia; to determine the challenges that go with the marginalisation of non-ROL in Zambia; and to evaluate the possible ways of alleviating the challenges of marginalising non-ROL in Zambia.

This paper accounts for the linguistic restrictions of non-ROL in national and language planning as well as education during initial literacy which is only done using the seven mandated regional official languages (henceforth, ROL) in the country which came into force after the change from a one-party system to multiparty democracy in 1991 (cf. Marten & Kula, 2014). The change emphasized the shift towards the promotion of Zambia's seven national languages, namely; Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, and Kaonde (cf. Nkolola, 2013).

Zambia is a multilingual country and uses English as a medium of instruction in government programs including education (cf. Marten & Kula, 2014). The country has 72 local languages which are named after their ethnic groupings, bringing the total to 73 languages spoken in Zambia. The above background information about the Zambian language scenario is summarised in the illustration provided below which shows the tribal (ethnic) and linguistic map of Zambia:

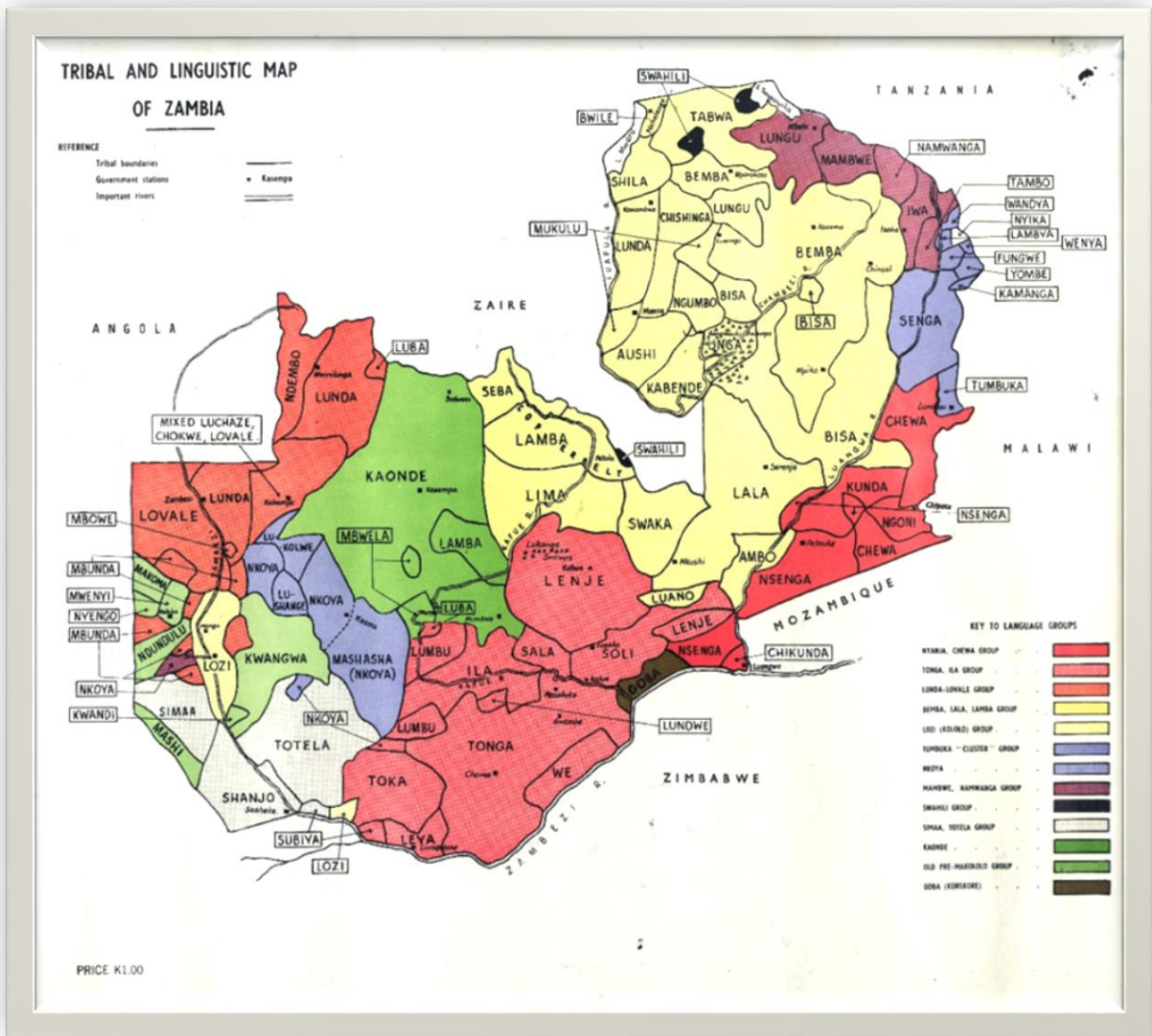


Figure 1: Linguistic map of Zambia (Adopted from Brelsford, 1965:158)

1.1 Theoretical Locale

The study was informed by the marginal theory (McClusky, 1963). The marginal theory is a descriptive theory that outlines how a linguistic corpus has been undermined due to certain factors such as colonialism. Descriptive study is a component of documentary linguistics that deals with languages that are less documented such as LuMaNa. Mutch (2005) shows that the descriptive theory uses words and sentential expressions which are then analysed for what they are. Sebastien (2016) postulates that descriptive theory is a set of propositions that attempts to describe something, in this case, the marginalisation of local languages in Zambia which requires de-marginalisation.

The marginal theory looks at the potential restrictions to participation in education. Restrictions hinder the active involvement of non-ROL in language planning and education. In this paper, the above restrictions lead to the marginalisation of languages

such as LuMaNa which have not obtained the status of ROL during national educational planning and implementation.

The restrictions hinder reading, writing, comprehension, and numeracy acquisition among other learning skills and subjects. Restrictions also hinder regional and national cohesion and unity (cf. Marten & Kula, 2014). The restrictions increase the levels of illiteracy in society and hinder participative development in areas that require reading, writing, comprehension, and numeracy. Restrictions in the area of academic advancement for those who are already in formal employment lead to a lack of appointments to positions that require higher academic achievements.

2.0 Methodological Perspective

According to Dawson (2002), a research design is a conceptual structure that guides the manner of conducting research. Dawson (2002), further describes a research design as a systematic study strategy that the researcher uses to convert the set research questions into a ‘testing project’ or ‘an experimental study’. Kothari (2004) adds that a research design is a set of decisions that a researcher makes in advance which acts as a research master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the required information on a particular topic. Kothari (2004) further postulates that the selection of a research design for a particular research problem statement to be resolved should consider the following aspects critically: objectives of the research study; method(s) of data collection to be adopted; source(s) of information; tools for data collection; and whether data analysis will involve qualitative or quantitative approaches. Therefore, 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, was chosen to guide the study (Burns & Grove, 1997; Brink and Wood, 1998). Brink & Wood (1998) as well as Burns & Grove (1997) argue that qualitative research is a better strategy for understanding aspects that are difficult or complex to quantify employing assigning numerical values, such as the sound system of languages.

By using abstract thinking processes that qualitative research encourages, meaning and theoretical implications emerge, thereby, satisfying the notion which says qualitative research design is flexible and unique and evolves 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 sentential expressions to justify the marginalisation of non-ROL in Zambia, such as LuMaNa languages.

The document analysis method was used during data collection and analysis. This study heavily depended on secondary sources as a way of observing COVID-19 health regulations. This method was comprehensively used to justify the topic and descriptive objectives using the available and valid sources of secondary data. Chaleunvong (2009) says identifying and retrieving secondary sources of data required for the study is the systematic starting point of efficient data collection. The retrieved secondary data became the major source of information during data analysis.

The documents that were analysed were accessed from libraries, the internet, and published works on the causes and effects of the marginalisation of languages both within and outside Zambia. The secondary sources were important because they

supplemented the author's understanding of the study concepts in terms of the background to the study, literature review, methodologies applicable in qualitative studies, theoretical perspective of marginalisation on Bantu languages which are non-ROL as well as principles governing the analysis of data. The above secondary sources provided comprehensive information that analysed the causes and effects of marginalisation on LuMaNa languages as a mirror for non-ROLs in Zambia's success

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Causes of Marginalisation of Non-regional Official Languages

There are many causes of marginalisation. However, the paper outlines the six major causes of the marginalisation of the non-regional official local languages in Zambia.

3.1.1 Colonial Language Zoning in Zambia

After independence in 1964, the Republic of Zambia adopted English as the medium of instruction from Grade One to tertiary education. The English language subsequently became the National Official Language (NOL) for use in schools, business, politics, and administration. The seven Zambian Regional Official Languages (henceforth, ROL) gained their status through language zoning and were mandated to be used in local courts and administrative functions (Banda & Bellononjengele, 2010). The seven ROLs in Zambia include the following; Bemba, Nyanja, Lozi, Tonga, Lunda, Luvale, and Kaonde (cf. Nkolola, 2013). It should be pointed out that the above seven ROLs represent a total of 72 local languages spoken in Zambia. The Zambian languages which are not among the regional official local languages are regarded as dialects of the seven ROL, a critical symbol of marginalisation.

Jimaima (2016) aptly argues that the zoning of the seven languages in Zambia was based on the assumption that the seven languages were static and bounded in particular homogenous communities and regions. The present study conforms to the above assumption and postulates that the belief that other languages in Zambia have remained dormant to the point where only the regional languages are superior to the languages that were not accorded the regional status should entirely be treated as a fallacy. Nkolola (2013) states that although the seven regional lingua franca have been adopted for official use in designated parts of the country and domains, their status is unclear and their use in government is ultimately dependent on political whim principally because the Zambian Constitution ACT No. 1 (5) provides for the use of English as the national official language. The above assumption shows that, although zoning of Zambian languages has been done and seven languages have been granted regional official status, the English language remains the national official language status and as a medium of instruction in schools and government. However, with about 72 local languages spoken in the country, Zambia deserves to be described as a multi-ethnic and multilingual nation (Banda, 1996; Kashoki & Mann, 1978). The above notion is affirmed by the Ministry of Education in Zambia in the curriculum framework which adheres to the reinforcement of language zones and initial literacy to be conducted in local languages to the first graders (MoESVTEE, 2013).

3.1.2 Erroneous Grouping of Selected Non-regional Official Languages

The existing literature gives the impression that nothing specific had been written about Lungu before the 1980s (Polomé, 1980). To strengthen Polomé's argument, Jones (1893) shows that the earliest works purporting to describe Mambwe were based on the Lungu language. As pointed out by Watson (1958) and Halemba (1994), it is evident that Jones

compiled his short Mambwe grammar from Lungu informants using a Swahili interpreter because it contains many foreign words, and misuses throughout the Lungu pronunciation based on the available written discourse. In his argument, Watson referred specifically to the Outline of Ki-Mambwe Grammar published by Jones (1893). It can be argued that in the above title, 'Ki-Mambwe' is archaic and has Swahili and Fipa inclinations. The prefix (ki-) is no longer used, instead (ci-) is a preference (cf. Siame & Banda, 2021) and usually begins with a small letter for language(s). Nevertheless, Jones (1893) should have titled the study 'An outline of the ciMambwe Grammar or simply ciMambwe Grammar'.

Johnston (1919-1922), who collected wordlists of Lungu and Mambwe, also treated both languages as dialects of a single language, which he later referred to as 'Lungu-Mambwe'. Doke likewise linked Lungu and Mambwe, erroneously assuming them to be dialects of Bemba, together with Tabwa (Doke, 1945; Watson, 1958). Just like Lungu and Mambwe languages, Doke (1945) and Watson (1958) attest that Namwanga has not been the subject of full-length studies. As the case of Lungu and Mambwe is in terms of similarity and dialectology, there appears to be a good reason to treat Namwanga and Iwa as dialects of a single language (Johnston, 1922). This shows that Johnston (1922) was not aware of the close relationship between Namwanga and Iwa and, as such had very little information on the Namwanga language which he thought was closely related to Bemba. Due to a lack of accurate and validated information, Johnston erroneously classified Namwanga as a dialect of Bemba (Johnston, 1922). The above arguments show that the erroneous classification of the non-ROL in Zambia was due to using guesswork and that the documenters were not the mother tongue speakers of the Zambian languages they documented to ascertain which languages were closely related.

3.1.3 The Place of Lungu, Mambwe, and Namwanga in Language Zoning

In the light of Banda (1996) and language zoning, LuMaNa languages are not ROL in Zambia and as such, they are overshadowed by Bemba as their ROL for initial literacy and local government. As pointed out above, Bemba is one of the seven mandated ROLs in Zambia which is spoken in Northern, Muchinga, Luapula, Copperbelt, and the central part of Central Province (Nkolola, 2013). Therefore, Lungu and Mambwe languages in Northern Province as well as the Namwanga language in Muchinga Province use Bemba as their ROL in primary schools for initial literacy and in secondary schools as a subject. Arguably, LuMaNa languages are found in zone M and belong to the Mambwe group in the Zambian classification with a total population of 764, 106 (CSO, 2010). Based on the above revelation, it can further be argued that once the orthographies and grammars are established, the LuMaNa languages can be mandated as ROL for teaching, political, planning, and administrative purposes.

3.1.4 The Place of LuMaNa in the Unified Standard Orthography for South Central African Languages

The Unified Standard Orthography for South Central African languages merely mentions the LuMaNa languages as cross-border languages. However, the orthography does not capture any orthographic design for the three genetically related languages to validate how they are related to Bemba being their ROL and other South Central African languages which include Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (cf. Banda et al, 2013:4). Other non-ROL in Zambia, such as Bisa, Lozi, Lamba and Soli, have also been mentioned as cross-border languages, but have no orthographic representation in a Unified Standard Orthography for South Central African Languages which

demonstrates marginalisation (cf. Banda et al, 2013:4). In the case of LuMaNa languages, the omission of content in the unified orthography for South Central African Languages could be attributed to lack of resource personnel at the time of documentation, lack of established orthographic designs and comprehensive grammars for reference. The Zambian languages with full orthographic illustrations in Banda et al, (2013) are; Bemba, Tonga, Kakonde, Nsenga, Ngoni, Tumbuka, Nyanja, Chewa, Lunda, Luvale, and Kunda.

3.1.5 Lack of Writing Systems in Non-regional Official Languages

As pointed out in 4.1.4, the majority of the non-ROLs in Zambia have not established writing systems. The writing systems describe the orthographic designs that particular languages are expected to use to represent their phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax as well and semantics (cf. Banda, 2008). When a language lacks orthography which is the case for many non-ROL in Zambia, there is a likeliness of being marginalised. Therefore, there is a great need to motivate linguists to document grammar and orthographies for all 72 Zambian languages.

3.1.6 Lack of Standardised Grammar for Non-regional Official Languages

It is envisaged that most non-ROLs in Zambia do not have grammatical descriptions to be a corpus for reference and teaching. However, some of the grammar which exists in certain languages such as the LuMaNa languages in Zambia are erroneously done as can be seen in the following illustrations:

- a) Halemba (2007) documents that the Mambwe language has nine (9) noun classes instead of eighteen (18) which is attested in many Bantu languages.
- b) Halemba (2007) uses elision in his grammar supplement to the dictionary to describe a phonological process where vowels follow each other instead of fusion or coalescence.
- c) No mother tongue speakers of LuMaNa languages participated in the documentation of the grammar of their languages, but simply worked as informants (cf: Halemba, 1991, 2004, and 2007). The above argument can be verified by considering the names of authors or scholars on LuMaNa languages, such as Doke (1945), Watson (1958), Pelome (1980), Bickmore (2004, and 2007), Halemba (2007), Johnston (1919-1922), Werner (1940), Jones (1983 and 1901), and Dawer (1900)), just to mention a few.
- d) In some instances, some colonial scholars who determined the grammar of non-ROL in Zambia, for instance, LuMaNa languages, used informants who were not native speakers of such languages as interpreters. One example is Jones (1893) who used Swahili interpreters to establish a short grammar of the Mambwe language.

3.2 Effects of Marginalisation of Non-regional Official Languages

There are numerous effects of marginalising non-regional official local languages. Nonetheless, six critical effects are discussed below.

4.2.1 Low Literacy Levels During Initial Literacy

This challenge is attributed to a lack of literacy materials in the non-ROL. The learners who use non-ROL struggle to master the phonotactics of the ROL for initial literacy. This leads to code-switching and eventually, such pronunciation errors get fossilized and cannot easily be controlled or corrected. This scenario would have been eradicated if the 2013 curriculum framework had been implemented (cf. MoESVTEE, 2013).

4.2.2 Failure to Implement Beneficial Literacy Programmes

The compulsory teaching of initial literacy in Zambia which was proposed in 2013 failed to materialise because most non-ROs such as LuMaNa did not have established grammar and orthographic designs (cf. MoESVTEE, 2013). Based on the above fact, non-RO has continued to be overshadowed by the seven ROs for initial literacy. For instance, the LuMaNa languages are not used as official Zambian languages for initial literacy and local government in Northern and Muchinga Provinces because they lack established phonological, morphological, and syntactic literature which constitute the grammar and orthographies for teaching and language planning (MoESVTEE, 2013).

4.2.3 Inferiority Complex

This is a situation where the non-RO feels less important as compared to the seven ROs. Let us for example consider Bemba which is used as a RO in five provinces in Zambia despite the linguistic variations. The five provinces where Bemba is used for initial literacy and taught as a subject include; Northern, Muchinga, Luapula, Copperbelt, and part of Central province (Nkolola, 2013). This is an act of real marginalisation of the non-RO in the five provinces. There is a great need to demarginalize the language situation of the five provinces by decolonising the colonial language zoning system.

4.2.4 Language Shift

There is a challenge of language shift from smaller languages (non-RO) to languages that have established orthography and grammar, such as Bemba in the case of LuMaNa languages (non-RO). It is envisaged that the languages which are less explored and documented such as LuMaNa, have very little literature which is known about them both inside and outside Zambia. It can be urged that the preservation of Bantu languages can only be achieved through research, documentation, and publication. Negligence of research and documentation of Bantu languages endangers their existence which is in conformity with Brenzinger (1998) who points out that small African languages are currently still not endangered by ex-colonial languages but risk being replaced by other major African languages such as Bemba in the Zambian context which is the RO in Northern and Muchinga provinces where LuMaNa languages are found. Therefore, to avoid the dearth of literature in non-RO, linguists must rise to the occasion and develop grammars and orthographies to be used for language planning and teaching in schools. For instance, there is a need to propose a common grammar and orthography for LuMaNa languages which are spoken along the corridors of Zambia and Tanzania. The above scenario is likely to lead to the recognition of three languages as regional official languages which have been named the Mambwe group (CSO, 2010).

4.2.5 Language Dearth

This is a situation where a marginalized language due to certain restrictions to its usage ceases to exist (cf. Brenzinger, 2007). Language dearth comes about when non-ROs lack literature and are fused into bigger languages called RO and subsequently die. For instance, the Nkoya and Mbunda languages in the Western province of Zambia have fused into the Lozi language. The above situation is likely to lead to language death for the two languages. Similarly, Lungu, Mambwe, and Namwanga languages are likely to die because initial literacy, political, and administration programs where the three languages are spoken are dominated by Bemba as their regional official languages.

4.2.6 Lack of Representation of Non-regional Official Languages at the National Level

The non-ROL are side-lined and marginalized in many national language programs, such as:

a) Language Planning

The non-ROLs in Zambia are not involved in language planning programs. For instance, programs that require dissemination of information in local languages such as national immunisations, political programs, and health messages such as COVID-19 are never presented in non-ROL, but only in the seven ROLs (cf. Nkolola, 2013).

b) Language Teaching and Learning

This challenge is associated with the subjects of initial literacy which are only restricted to the seven ROLs (cf. Banda, 1996; Nkolola, 2013). The seven ROLs are also taught as subjects from primary through to tertiary education. Despite the vast linguistic variations between the non-ROL and ROL in Zambia, mother-tongue speakers of local languages are still forced to learn and use an ROL that is slightly related to their language. This is one of the major contributing factors to graphological errors because learners come from different phonotactics backgrounds and hence have challenges with pronunciations and word spellings of some words in the ROL.

c) National Radio Stations

In a similar scenario, the non-ROL in Zambia are absent on national radio programs which makes such mother tongue speakers miss out on important national programs. The radio stations for non-ROL in Zambia only exist at localised levels, such as KBC in Kapiri Mposhi where Bemba is used instead of Swaka language, Chete in Nakonde for Namwanga language, ISO FM in Isoka for the Namwanga language, Luswepo in Mbala for Mambwe language and Walamo for Lungu language in Mpulungu districts respectively.

d) National Television (TV) Programmes

In like manner, the non-ROL in Zambia are absent on the national television broadcasting media, such as the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC). The non-ROLs are not broadcasted in terms of news reading, but only ROLs are present. Due to the above challenge, staunch mother tongue speakers of non-regional official languages miss out on information due to language barriers and are eventually marginalised when it comes to national development (cf. McClusky, 1963).

4.3 Recommendations to De-marginalise Non-regional Official Languages

Based on the causes and challenges faced by non-ROL in Zambia, decolonization is the best remedy. All Zambian languages should be revitalized and gain their normal and original status. In this paper, the following de-marginalisation possibilities have been recommended:

4.3.1 Implementation of the 2013 National Literacy Policy

There should be a follow-up of the 2013 curriculum framework which did not materialise. Its aim was for all 72 local Zambian languages to be taught as initial literacy languages to new school entrants (MoESVTEE, 2013). This good initiative failed because some of the local languages had not developed standard grammar for use during

language planning and education. The above useful framework can be promoted by documenting grammatical sketches in all seventy-two (72) local Zambian languages.

4.3.2 National Official Local Language

As the late first Zambian president Dr. David Kenneth Kaunda's motto says, 'One Zambia, One Nation', this was aimed at achieving national cohesion through language unity (cf. Simpson, 2008). The 'One Zambia, One Nation' motto is echoed by Marten & Kula (2014). The duo attributes the motto to language unity in a multilingual Zambia. Arising from the ideology of national unity, national language unity can be implemented. At the moment, Zambia does not have a NOLL but only has seven ROLs. It is possible to decolonise the once multilingual nation, Zambia to one national official local language (NOLL) like Tanzania which has adopted Swahili. This does not mean that Tanzania has only one local language, but that was done for the sake of national unity and cohesion. It is cardinal to indicate that Swahili was picked out of many other languages which are spoken in Tanzania, such as; Kisukuma (Kazwanomo, 2016), Akan (Appah, 2003), and Nyakyusa (Robinson, 2016). Nonetheless, Tanzania picked Swahili to uphold national language unity and to avoid marginalisation (cf. Polomé, 1980). Some people might argue that it is too late to settle for a local language as a national language in Zambia because English has been a medium of instruction since independence. The above argument would be regarded as a colonial thought because it is still possible to have English as a national official language (NOL) and adopt one local Zambian language as a national official local language (NOLL) like other countries discussed below.

Therefore, Zambia can choose to use NOL and NOLL side by side. Let us take the example of South Africa which has succeeded in using English as an NOL alongside NOLL such as Zulu, Afrikaans, and Xhosa languages. Other Bantu languages speaking countries that have succeeded in adopting NOLL include the following: Botswana which uses English as an NOL and Tswana (Setswana) as a NOLL, and Namibia which uses English as an NOL alongside Afrikaans and Oshiwambo languages as NOLL (<https://www.familysearch.org>). Similarly, Zambia which has seven ROLs can either upgrade one of them to a NOLL, such as Bemba which is spoken in five out of ten provinces, or can name an independent NOLL to further avoid the unprecedented marginalisation, inferiority, and superiority complexes. Upgrading one or two ROLs to the status of NOLL would give room to upgrading non-ROL which have developed orthographic designs and grammar to ROL status while adopting an independent common NOLL would make all languages in Zambia feel equal.

4.3.3 Unified National Orthography

The implementation of a common national orthography is another possible option to decolonize local language planning and education in Zambia. This suggestion is achievable whether the country chooses to adopt the NOLL or to maintain all 72 local languages to be independent. The national orthographic design would make all the local languages in Zambia have common phonological, morphological, and syntactic structural characteristics harmonized. This notion would decolonize language planning and education, and no local language would either feel superior or inferior to the other. The country can pattern Banda et al, (2013) who came up with the unified standard orthographic designs for South-Central African languages which covers Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. The unified standard orthography can mirror the Zambian languages'

common national orthography as a standard corpus because most of the Zambian languages are captured in the South Central African languages orthography. The establishment of a unified national orthography would be another way of decolonising the Zambian languages, language planning, and education which is currently problematic during the teaching of initial literacy due to marginalisation.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The marginalisation of non-ROL in Zambia is a result of a colonial mindset. There is a great need to decolonise the language educational system so that all 73 languages in Zambia benefit equally. Constant documentation of the less documented languages, which are also non-ROL, such as LuMaNa languages, would help to alleviate inferiority complex, and language shift so that there is language maintenance as well as the risk of possible language dearth and subsequently language death.

Decolonisation of language education in Zambia can be achieved through the implementation of national language unity. It is possible to have English as a national official language (NOL) and adopt one local Zambian language as a national official local language (NOLL). NOL and NOLL can be used side by side. Zambia can name an independent NOLL to further avoid the unprecedented marginalisation that has the potential to lead to either inferiority or a superiority complex of languages.

Decolonization can also be achieved by establishing a common national orthography in Zambia. This suggestion is achievable whether the country chooses to adopt the NOLL or to maintain all 72 local languages to be independent. National orthographic designs would make all the local languages in Zambia have phonological, morphological, and syntactic structural characteristics harmonized. This notion would decolonize language planning and education, and no local language would either feel superior or inferior to the other. The establishment of a common national orthography would be another way of decolonising the Zambian languages, language planning, and education which is currently problematic due to marginalisation.

Furthermore, the implementation of the national literacy policy would uplift the 2013 curriculum framework which did not materialize. All the 72 local Zambian languages would be taught as initial literacy languages to new school entrants. Government and schools would be using standard grammar during language planning and education to promote literacy. The framework can be promoted by documenting grammatical sketches in all 72 Zambian languages.

Finally, the successful implementation of the above viable suggestions would positively contribute to the effective decolonization of language planning and education in Zambia.

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