



Language of Instruction (LOI) Research in Zambian Primary Schools



FINAL REPORT

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
BCs	Back-checks
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
DEBs	District Education Boards
ECED	Early Childhood Education Development
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
HFCs	High Frequency Checks
ICT	Information Communication Technology
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
MoE	Ministry of Education
MWL	Minority Written Language
NEP	National Education Policy
NLP	National Literacy Policy
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Impact Research
KAP	Knowledge Attitudes and Practices
KII	Key Informant Interview
LOI	Language of Instruction
PEO	Provincial Education Officer
RMI	Research Methods International
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and/Abuse
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Glossary of Key Terms

Consumers of Literature	The group of people in a community or country that read, or consume, written texts.
Culture of Literacy	A community of people with enthusiasm for and commitment to reading and writing in daily life.
Early Childhood Education Development	Early Childhood Education Development refers to the growth and progress of young children in terms of their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development during the early years of their lives, typically from birth to around eight years old. It encompasses the educational and nurturing experiences provided to children in various settings, such as day care centres, preschools, and homes. In Zambia ECED, or nursery school, includes learners between the ages of 3 to 5 years.
Familiar Language	Everyday language or local languages spoken by people in their daily lives. Zambia is a multilingual country with over 70 different ethnic groups, each having their own languages and dialects. The most widely spoken languages in Zambia include Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Silozi, Lunda, and Kaonde, among others. When discussing familiar language in Zambia, it means using the language that is commonly spoken and understood by the local population. It involves using words, phrases, and expressions that are part of the everyday vocabulary of Zambians. This helps to ensure effective communication and understanding among people in various contexts, such as informal conversations, community interactions, and local settings
First Language (L1)	A first language (L1), also known as a mother tongue or native language, is the language that a person learns from birth or in early childhood as their primary mode of communication. It is the language that is most commonly spoken by individuals within their family or community.
Framework	A basic structure or prescribed approach to be taken in an area or activity.
Language of Instruction	The Language of Instruction refers to the language in which teaching and learning activities take place in an educational setting. It is the language used by teachers to impart knowledge and facilitate learning, as well as the language through which students engage in classroom discussions, ask questions, and demonstrate their understanding. The choice of the language of instruction varies depending on the educational system, national policies, cultural context, and language demographics of a particular country or region. In some countries, the official language(s) of the country are used as the primary language of instruction.
Language of Instruction Policy	A Language of Instruction Policy refers to a set of guidelines, rules, or principles established by educational authorities or institutions to determine the language(s) used for teaching and learning in formal educational settings. It outlines the language(s) in which instruction is conducted, the role of different languages in the curriculum, and the considerations taken into account when making language-related decisions. The official language of instruction in Zambia, as stated in the Zambian Education National Policy, is English. English is used as the medium of instruction from Grade 4 onwards, while in Grades 1 to 3, the policy allows for the use of local languages as a transitional measure to facilitate learning and understanding for young learners. The Zambian

	Education National Policy recognizes the importance of multilingualism and encourages the development and use of local languages in education. It acknowledges the role of local languages in preserving cultural heritage, enhancing communication, and facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills.
Literacy	Literacy as defined by the Zambian National Curriculum is the ability to read and write to understand and communicate effectively. It is key to successful learning at school and is an element for active participation in social, economic, cultural and political life.
Mother Tongue	Mother tongue refers to the language that a person has learned from birth or in early childhood as their first language. It is also known as the native language or first language (L1). The mother tongue is typically acquired through natural exposure and interaction within the family and community.
National Languages	National languages refer to the languages that are officially recognized and designated as the languages of a particular country or nation. These languages often hold a special status and are used for official government communications, education, administration, and other important functions within the country. The local, or vernacular, languages recognised by the Government of Zambia for use in education, communication and media, and social life. Seven national languages have been named by the Government of Zambia for development and use in education and national media like television, radio and newspapers.
National Literacy Framework	The Framework that guides the education community towards a national approach for the development of literacy skills. The purpose of the framework is to put literacy on the national agenda. It aims to clarify curriculum expectations, promote reading and ensure that learners attain skills sufficient to enable them to excel and compete on a regional and international levels.
Official Language	The language legally chosen for use in politics and in the day-to-day operations of the government. In Zambia, this language is English.
Orthography	A set of conventions for writing a language, including norms of spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, emphasis and punctuation. Structure of a language.
Policy	Principles and practices that define the structure and design of the education system, as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern its operations.
Primary Education	In the Zambian education system, primary education refers to the initial stage of formal education that children receive typically from the age of six to the age of thirteen. It is the foundational level of education and is essential for providing students with basic literacy, numeracy, and life skills. Primary education in Zambia according to the new curriculum has grades, starting from Grade 1 and progressing to Grade 6. Early primary includes Grades 1 to 4.
Producers of Literature	Producers of Literature refers to individuals or entities involved in the creation, writing, and production of literary works. They are the creators and originators of various forms of written or spoken artistic expression, which may include novels, short stories, poems, plays, essays, and other literary genres. Producers of literature play a crucial role in shaping and contributing to the literary landscape.

Regulators of Literature	The institutions and individuals that oversee the transaction between writers and readers. These transactions are regulated in three main ways: 1) through the transmission of literacy via instruction at all levels; 2) through defining and maintaining standards of language use; and 3) through the businesses, institutions and laws that facilitate the distribution of the written word.
School and System Level <i>Also, referred to as the 'Little Systems' and 'Big Systems' of the education sector</i>	Schools are the part of the education sector with which all stakeholders are familiar. They operate as the 'little system' where policies are implemented as practices and where the core actors (school leaders and teachers) and beneficiaries (learners and parents) of the national education system reside. The effectiveness of learning depends not only on the 'little systems' in schools but also on the work of the larger system (or the 'big system') comprised of education professionals in the ministry, provinces and districts, and in a range of other implementing partners, state and non-state actors and organisations, and donors operating at the national, provincial, district, and zonal levels. These professionals, policymakers and technical specialists work outside of schools, operating within the education sector's 'big systems' on a national, regional and sub-regional scale.
Second Language (L2)	A language children acquire in school. They are not proficient in this language when they begin school. The L2 is often taught alongside a learner's L1 and eventually becomes their language of instruction in later grades.
Strategy	A plan of action identified to support the implementation of a policy. It is often developed alongside a framework to guide implementation of the legal policy document.
Vernacular Language	The local languages of a country's ethnic groups. Sometimes referred to as mother tongues or indigenous languages.
Visual Research Methods	Methods which use visual materials of some kind, as part of the process of generating evidence in order to answer social science research questions.
Zambian Language	The Zambian language refers to the diverse set of languages spoken in Zambia. Zambia is a multilingual country with 72 indigenous languages belonging to various language families. However, English is the official language and serves as the language of government, administration, education, and business. The seven recognised local languages designated for learning and teaching are: Chitonga, Cinyanja, Ibibemba, Lunda, Luvala, Kikaonde and Silozi.

Executive Summary

Background

This Report presents the findings of the Language of Instruction Research in Zambian primary schools necessitated by efforts earmarked to reform the national language strategy to promote literacy and educational attainment through the teaching of Zambia's 7 designated languages. In order to achieve this vision, the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), through the Education Act of 2011 and subsequent 2013 National Literacy Framework, designated seven Languages of Instruction (LOIs) to be used in schools across the country namely Chitonga, Cinyanja, Icibemba, Lunda, Luvale, Kikaonde and Silozi. The National Literacy Framework mandates that Zambian languages replace English as a medium of instruction in the early grades. Therefore, the study is specifically aimed at understanding the dynamics of using local language for teaching from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Grade 4, and to inform the Ministry of Education's policies and provide guidance to schools regarding LOI directives.

Highlights of Key Findings

Implementation of the LOI Policy

Finding 1 - Implementation of LOI Policy by Assigned Zonal Language: The study assessed if teachers in Zambian schools are teaching in the LOIs allocated to their zones. This involved an assessment of the matching of the languages being used by teachers against the languages assigned in their zones. A mismatch was discovered and observed where teachers do not use LOIs intended and assigned to their zones. On average, teachers use their assigned zonal LOI 75% of the time for classroom instruction and 25% of the time do not use assigned LOIs. The biggest discrepancy on mismatch between assigned zonal LOIs and the LOIs was reported in Icibemba and Silozi language speaking communities. Luvale was the only language reportedly taught in schools as a LOI 100% of the time for classroom instruction.

The stakeholders involved in discussions on the evaluation of the language of instruction (LOI) policy highlighted concerns about the 2013 curriculum, citing that it had not been thoroughly evaluated, affecting full implementation of the local language policy in the past 10 years. Stakeholders pointed to the lack of adequate teaching and learning materials, leading to challenges in its implementation. There was a common sentiment that policy decisions should be based on evidence, with a call for more comprehensive evaluations and mid-term reviews. As one director noted:

"What could we do in this situation.... we haven't yet assessed the curriculum, and we're lacking knowledge about the specific challenges at hand. What are individuals expressing? It's important to base our policies on thorough evaluations and the feedback of the people involved. What are people discussing regarding the language of instruction? Once we have a clearer understanding, we can proceed with appropriate actions. However, we must ensure that it's not only the privileged few who have a voice; everyone's perspectives should be heard and considered".

Overall, the findings underscored the need for improved monitoring, evaluation, and communication strategies to enhance the effectiveness of the LOI policy in the country.

Finding 2 - Implementation of LOI Policy across Subject Areas: Application of the assigned zonal LOI across subject areas varied, with English being used alongside familiar languages for instruction across all key subjects, most notably Science, Mathematics, Technology and Social Studies. This finding indicates that seven designated Zambian languages have underdeveloped, or were poorly taught carrying English vocabulary especially in teaching science and mathematics subjects, resulting in teachers and learners communicating in the classroom in English.

Finding 3 - Implementation of LOI Policy by Grade: According to Head Teachers (68%), LOI used by Grades 1 to 4 is fairly consistent within each Zambian national language, though they are used less commonly for ECD instruction (which has a much higher percentage of English use than early primary classrooms). Application of the LOI across grade levels within language communities varies, however, with Cinyanja, Lunda and Luvale using their LOI most consistently across all grades.

Finding 4 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Teacher Self-Reported Practices: Teachers reported differences between the schools' assigned LOI and the language spoken by most of their local communities (82% and 70%, respectively). While teachers largely expressed self-confidence in using their school's assigned languages of instruction (LOI) (87%), they were more skeptical of their peer's ability to use it. Only 41% of teachers reported speaking the LOI and using it correctly in teaching. Only 43% of teachers said that the LOI they taught was their preferred language, with 73% reporting they were confident teaching in another national language. These statistics reflect a mismatch of teachers' language proficiencies and the LOIs for areas they are assigned to teach. An overwhelming number (97%) reported complete confidence in using English for instruction, with half of the teachers preferring to teach in English rather than a designated familiar local language.

Finding 5 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Teacher LOI Confidence: Teacher self-reported confidence in using their school's assigned LOI for instruction was relatively high with an average of 87%, with the highest confidence reported in Silozi (100%) and the lowest in Luvale (69%).

Finding 6 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Teacher's Other Language Confidence: Many teachers (73%) also reported being confident using other familiar languages for instruction aside of their school's assigned LOI, with teachers assigned to teach in Silozi reporting the highest levels of confidence in other languages and teachers assigned to teach in Luvale the lowest.

Finding 7 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Teacher Preference: Teachers on the whole reported that they preferred teaching in English (50% of average across all languages), rather than their school's assigned LOI, with the highest preference for teaching in English among teachers instructing in Chitonga, Cinyanja and Lunda (between 60-64% of teachers), and the lowest preference for teaching in English in Kikaonde (just below 27%).

Finding 8 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Learners: According to learners, there is a mismatch across all language communities between their school's assigned LOI and the language they speak at home, ranging from a large mismatch in Chitonga-speaking schools and communities (where only 40% of learners speak the school's assigned LOI at home), to a negligible mismatch in Luvale (where 98% of learners speak the school's assigned LOI at home).

The LOI Policy and Children's Learning

Generally, across LOIs, learners read comparably the same number of words per minute with the same degree of accuracy in each grade, except for English reading in grades 2 and 3. Learners demonstrated

progression in the number of words they read correctly per minute from grade to grade. There is a constant finding about learning gain for correct words per minute (cwpm) in both reading and comprehension. These results are also consistent with the finding that teachers have since observed improvements since the introduction of the policy.

Teacher and Learner Classroom Experiences under the LOI Policy

Finding 1 – Classroom Experiences with Instructional Materials: Classroom observations in all language communities revealed that a significant number of teachers lacked instructional materials hanging on walls and made available to help with learner instruction in reading/literacy and other subjects. Only three of seven languages had these teaching and learning materials available during observed lessons at least 50% of the time for reading/literacy, and only two of seven languages had them available more than 50% of the time in other subjects.

Finding 2 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Teacher Positive Actions: Classroom observations revealed that teachers demonstrated a range of positive actions throughout their lessons, applying various effective teaching techniques while instructing learners in their literacy and numeracy classes. On average, teachers demonstrated a range of positive instructional methods and appropriate pedagogy throughout their 30-minute lessons, with most teachers demonstrating a high degree of learner engagement and encouraging participation through questioning and engaging learner-led activities.

Finding 3 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Teacher Negative Actions: Classroom observations documented more infrequent and limited instructional strategies classified as negative actions, with the majority of teachers demonstrating them infrequently. The most common negative actions displayed related to infrequent teacher movement and lack of engagement of individual learners (whether to probe with questions or to redirect misbehaviour).

Finding 4 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Reading Actions: Classroom observations also measured learner actions and behaviours related to reading instruction. Literacy classrooms were observed, across all languages, teaching sounds, letters, and words in the school's assigned LOI. Sentences (36%) and stories (21%) were taught to a far lesser extent across all languages and schools.

Finding 5 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Writing Actions: Classroom observations captured learner writing actions in addition to reading during literacy lessons. As with reading actions, learners are getting limited exposure to more complex writing instruction and tasks. Unlike reading actions, results varied across zonal LOIs with Icibemba, Kikaonde and Luvale demonstrating more appropriate and varied instructional methods for teaching writing in the early grades.

Finding 6 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Speaking and Listening Actions: Classroom observations indicated that learners had an opportunity to participate in speaking and listening actions in lessons in their assigned LOIs at varying rates across languages and within each 10-minute lesson segment. Most speaking and listening activities were between learners and teachers and as a whole class. Learners and teachers spoke almost entirely in their assigned LOIs, though the use of English was observed across all lessons and languages to a certain extent. Children in Lunda-speaking classrooms had the most opportunity to engage in listening and speaking activities, while children in Cinyanja- and Icibemba-speaking classrooms had the least.

Finding 7 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Engagement: Classroom observations documented that learners are engaged in multiple ways during lessons, with moderate variation across languages. Key common means were provision of information in multiple formats (e.g. chalk board, book, verbal and written) (93%); provision of feedback from the teacher for clear guidance for next steps (89%) as well showing learners the goals of the lesson in written and verbal form in a language that make senses to them (89%). Multiple means of engagement is a core foundation of any learner-centred method and is important in instruction to ensure learners understand and take meaning from teacher-provided content.

Finding 8 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Representing Information: Classroom observations also documented how teachers shared information with learners. Teachers largely (87%) chose throughout lessons how to display information and most (85%) gave a variety of examples to explain a concept. Scaffolding (83%) was also applied to help learners break down new information and content.

Finding 9 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Action and Expression: Classroom observations recorded the various ways teachers allowed and encouraged learners to express themselves and demonstrate their understanding of content. Teachers across all languages most supported learners to practice with new material in small parts, allowing them to demonstrate their capabilities in mainly specific, functional, tasks rather than more complex conceptual ones.

Finding 10 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Opinions about Performance: Learners were interviewed to better understand their learning experiences and opinions regarding the LOI policy as it is applied in their school. On the whole across all languages and schools, learners expressed a high degree of confidence in both their personal foundational literacy and numeracy capabilities in comparison to their peers, as well as in their ability and willingness to demonstrate their knowledge or skills in front of others. Majority (78%) learners agreed that they can read just like their friends and this was also comparably the same to learners (76%) who felt they were good in mathematics just like their friends. Most (59%) reported not being nervous when asked to read in front of others and this was also comparably the same with the proportion of learners (63%) who reported not getting nervous when they have to work out a mathematical problem in front of the class.

Finding 11 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Teacher Actions Supporting Student Learning: Interviews with teachers revealed a series of actions teachers take in their classrooms across language communities in support of the LOI policy. Some of the common actions reported by teachers were speaking slowly and repeating information (59%), writing on the board (52%) and translanguaging (52%). These actions are implemented during instruction to improve the teaching and learning process and support student comprehension and overall understanding of content.

Finding 12 – Teacher Expectations of Learner’s Literacy Skills: Teachers generally professed low expectations of learner performance in the main goals of literacy (reading fluency and comprehension) across the early grades. Around 40% of teachers felt that children should not be able to fluently read and understand a short passage in any language until grade 3, while around 30% felt they should not be able to write a short story until grades 2 or 3.

Teaching and Learning Materials

Finding 1 – Teaching and Learning Materials Available for Literacy Instruction: Teacher and head teacher interviews and school environment surveys found that teaching and learning materials for literacy instruction in LOI and English have been provided across all languages and provinces over the last two years, but to varying degrees. This has been also confirmed by the CDC Director, who highlighted that the materials were distributed to the schools. Schools assigned to the Chitonga, Icibemba and Kikaonde LOI received the fewest materials, while those with the Silozi, Lunda and Luvala LOIs received the most.

Finding 2 – Teaching and Learning Materials Used for Literacy Instruction: Teacher interviews and school environment surveys found that schools across all LOIs largely used the materials they received to the same degree of frequency, except for schools assigned to the Cinyanja LOI and those in Eastern Province.

Finding 3 – Teaching and Learning Materials by Type, Condition, Accessibility and Language: Most of the materials received are in good condition and in use and are very accessible to teachers. Student access, however, is less so: between 20-30% of students on average across all languages are not able to regularly use the material provided to schools. Between 60-70% of the early grade materials received by schools are in their assigned LOI, while the other 30-40% are in English.

Finding 4 – Teaching and Learning Materials Access and Use According to Learners: Feedback from learner interviews confirmed findings from teachers and head teachers regarding access to reading materials by LOI, as did more nuanced findings from teacher interviews regarding children using materials in class. Few children take books home from school for learning outside of class, according to both learners and teachers.

Perceptions of the LOI Policy

Finding 1 – Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Teachers: Teacher interviews found that teachers are largely in support of the national LOI policy (73% agree or strongly agree). Overall, this indicates that, while teachers are in support of the policy, they prefer instructing in a language they are more comfortable with – which is English.

Finding 2 – Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Head Teachers: Head teacher interviews produced nearly identical findings as those from teachers, save for three questions which demonstrated more substantial differences between them. Head teachers were less likely to believe that changing the LOI to English in grade 5 causes confusion to learners (73% of teachers versus 59% of head teachers).

Finding 3 – Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Parents: Parents were far more likely than teachers and head teachers to disagree or strongly disagree with the majority of questions asked regarding perceptions on the national LOI policy. They also had greatly differing opinions than teachers and head teachers regarding application of the LOI policy in their children's school, with the vast majority believing their children would learn better in another Zambian local language and that it is important for children to continue learning in a familiar language beyond lower primary.

Finding 4 – Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Teachers, Head Teachers and Parents by Language: Opinions varied across language communities for each group of respondents, with more variation on some questions than others. On the whole, respondents in the Chitonga and Lunda

language communities were the least likely to support the LOI policy (only 60% of respondents supported the policy compared to between 75-90% of respondents in other language communities) and to prefer to use English as the LOI in their schools (between 60-70% of respondents supported using English compared to between 40-50% of respondents in other language communities).

Teacher Preparation and Assignment

Finding 1 – Teacher and Head Teacher Certification and Experience: Nearly 28% of teachers have been teaching at their school for less than one year, and another 50% have only been teaching at their school for the past 1-5 years. This ranges by language community, with teachers in the Cinyanja and Silozi language communities having the greatest number of teachers posted to their schools for more than 10 years. Copperbelt and Muchinga Provinces had the highest number of teachers at their posts for less than one year, while Lusaka had the highest number of teachers at their post for over 10 years. Nearly 50% of all teachers surveyed had been teaching for 5 years or less overall across all languages.

Finding 2 – Professional Development for Early Grade Teachers: Around 75% of grade 1-4 teachers, according to head teachers and teachers themselves, received in-service training within the past two years, attending on average four trainings each. Teachers in the Luwala (43%), Chitonga (33%) and IChibemba (27%) language communities received the least number of trainings. Trainings were mostly held at school, district, and zonal levels; around 77% of all trainings were led by the Ministry of Education.

Finding 3 – Training Content: Training content focused mostly on literacy, lesson planning and work plans, followed by classroom practices and curriculum delivery, according to teachers. Head teachers agreed, though they indicated teachers also received training on numeracy. Training content varied across language communities, however, though it was more consistently provided for literacy-focused professional development.

Finding 4 – Professional Development in Literacy for Early Grade Teachers: Both teachers and head teachers reported holding literacy trainings over the last two years (From 2021 to 2023). Copperbelt and Eastern Provinces received the highest number of trainings, Central and Northern Provinces the least. Trainings were held in schools, districts and zones.

Finding 5 – Teacher Capacity and Confidence in LOI and English: Nearly 60% of teachers reported that their peers did not speak the school's LOI or use it correctly when they were teaching. Silozi and Cinyanja-speaking teachers were the most confident in their assigned LOI, Kikaonde and Chitonga-speaking teachers were the least. Between 90-100% stated they are confident speaking and teaching in English.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Implementation of the LOI Policy

CONCLUSION 1: There are evident mismatches countrywide between assigned LOIs and LOIs being used in schools and classrooms.

RECOMMENDATION 1: In order to realign current population distributions with past national and zonal LOI application, it is important for the Government of Zambia to consider the needs of the linguistic

populations in the country on a regular basis and allow a flexible policy for using local languages for instruction in districts and schools based on their current and emerging needs.

CONCLUSION 2: Teacher confidence and preparation for using national LOIs for classroom instruction versus English varies across languages. Only 43% of teachers said that the LOI they taught in was their preferred language, with 73% reporting they were confident teaching in another national language. Only 65% of teachers believe they are sufficiently prepared to teach learners to read using their school's LOI.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Focus on teacher training and classroom inputs that build teacher confidence and provide them with the skills they need to teach content (especially literacy) in Zambian Languages and English. Provide teachers with more intensive investments in pre- and in-service training to improve their confidence and ability to teach learners to learn – and especially to read – using Zambian national languages and eventually transfer these skills to literacy in English.

The LOI Policy and Children's Learning

CONCLUSION 3: Learning outcomes in literacy are relatively progressive and demonstrate increasing learning gains across grades 1-4 in both LOI and English. However, there is uneven development of reading and reading comprehension proficiency across individual national languages.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Invest in developing a broader culture of literacy in schools and classrooms across Zambia for improving overall literacy and reading performance, as findings indicate noticeable improvements in reading outcomes since the LOI policy has been implemented.

CONCLUSION 4: This study found a positive correlation between reading proficiency in LOI and reading proficiency in English, and learning gains since the last round of national assessments in all LOIs and English. Generally, there was a moderate correlation ($r=0.441$) across all the learners regardless of LOI and grade and this was significant at 0.01 level. Stronger relations were registered in Chitonga ($r=0.670$) and Luvale ($r=0.582$).

RECOMMENDATION 4: Align national targets for learning with student proficiency profiles to help students and teachers understand progressive outcomes within and between grades to allow for tracking learner achievement across a continuum of foundational skills in early primary. This will ensure a smooth transition for learners between grades that promotes progressive outcomes, and allow teachers in the lower grades to share information on learners' progress with the next grade level teacher to continue improving learner performance as they move between grades.

Teacher and Learner Classroom Experiences under the LOI Policy

CONCLUSION 5: Classroom observations in all language communities revealed that there is lack of instructional materials hanging on walls made available to help with learner instruction in reading/literacy (36%) and other subjects (41%).

RECOMMENDATION 5: Continue to provide consistent access to a range of teaching and learning materials during all lessons in the school's assigned LOI. Help teachers develop higher order literacy and numeracy skills in learners through exposure to connected texts and conceptual math activities. This training should be integrated into the pre- and in-service training curriculum to close these critical skill gaps.

CONCLUSION 6: Little progression was observed across each 10-minute segment in every LOI regarding literacy activities, meaning that learners are largely being exposed to foundational reading skills related to phonological awareness, decoding and word identification, but given limited time to practice these skills to become more automatic, fluent readers of sentences and stories before their attention shifts to comprehension.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Provide specific, targeted and ongoing training and support to help teachers instruct learners in both their assigned LOI and in English, and ensure they are provided with the resources they need to teach across the curriculum effectively. Both internal and external mentorship and coaching should be encouraged to help teachers understand difficult or new concepts and deliver them to learners during instruction.

CONCLUSION 7: Teachers generally professed low expectations of learner performance in the main goals of literacy (reading fluency and comprehension) across the early grades. These misaligned expectations are likely driven by a range of factors, including teacher's personal experiences in the classroom with learners, gaps in their training and knowledge of the curriculum, and their beliefs about learning.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Help teachers understand how learners acquire key foundational skills in both a familiar language and English and what activities they should use in class to improve their learners' outcomes in literacy and numeracy. This should be a focus of both pre- and in-service training throughout the life cycle of a teacher's employment.

Teaching and Learning Materials

CONCLUSION 8: Teacher and head teacher interviews and school environment surveys found that teaching and learning materials for literacy instruction in LOI and English have been provided across all languages and provinces over the last two years, but to varying degrees.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Provide materials evenly across language communities, provinces, schools and grade levels to reduce differentials in learning outcomes in the early grades. Schools can also develop local teaching and learning materials to contribute to the resources available in their classrooms.

Perceptions of the LOI Policy

CONCLUSION 9: Teachers, head teachers and parents in primary schools are in support of the national LOI policy from grades 1-4 and believe it is of value, appropriate and leads to better instruction, teaching and learning. But, to varying degrees early primary teachers prefer instructing in a language they are more comfortable with – which is often English. Early primary teachers are confident, however, in using their school's assigned LOI for instruction overall, indicating that their lack of confidence in their instructional capabilities may be more a result of the actual technical skills required to teach reading, rather than to teach using their school's LOI.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Dissemination, education and advocacy campaigns about Zambia's national LOI policy should be implemented to help support improved uptake and recognition of the policy's benefits in schools and communities. Teachers in pre- and in-service training should also be particularly targeted for these campaigns as they are the frontline workers responsible for the policy's delivery.

Teacher Preparation and Assignment

CONCLUSION 10: Most teachers have been teaching for less than 5 years across all languages and locations, and 3 out of 4 have earned a diploma in education. Many teachers have recently been trained, but exposure to core content areas has varied.

RECOMMENDATION 10: New teachers (as well as those already posted to schools) need intensive, ongoing, in-class support and mentorship to improve their practice, and new teachers need special consideration for ongoing training programmes. This refresher training can benefit all teachers as a means of aligning their work under current and new policies affecting classroom content and instruction.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Zambia is a multi-ethnic and multilingual society that speaks 73 vernacular languages; only seven of these are recognised by the Government as major national languages adopted for use in schools, for broadcasting on radio and television, and for publications in vernacular newspapers (Chishiba and Manchishi, 2016). Zambia's education system pre-independence emphasized local language medium education (Manchishi, 2004, p. 10). English was declared the country's only official language post-independence in 1964, as it was seen to be a unifying factor facilitating the newly independent Government's development efforts due to the large number of ethnic groups in Zambia (Chishiba and Manchishi, 2016). Since then, numerous attempts to reform the national language strategy to promote literacy and educational attainment through the teaching of Zambian languages were proposed, but none of the recommendations were implemented fully, if at all.

To address these gaps, the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), through the Education Act of 2011 and subsequent 2013 National Literacy Framework, designated seven Languages of Instruction (LOIs) to be used in schools across the country: Chitonga, Cinyanja, Icibemba, Lunda, Luvale, Kikaonde and Silozi (UNESCO, 2016). The National Literacy Framework mandates that Zambian languages replace English as a medium of instruction in the early grades. Grade 1 learners use one of the seven Zambian local languages most commonly found in their region as the LOI in all content subjects. From Grades 2 to 4, content subjects and literacy are taught in Zambian local languages, while English language and literacy is taught in English. From Grades 5 to 7, content subjects are taught in English, while Zambian languages are taught in the LOI most commonly found in the region.

Since this significant reform was initiated, the Ministry of Education has not yet evaluated or assessed the application of the language strategy in schools to determine its efficacy and impact on improving education quality and learning outcomes, especially for literacy. Similar to many lower and middle income countries where over 50% of children fail to read with understanding (World Bank, 2021), Zambia has faced a profound learning crisis over the last two decades, which was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, findings from the latest Grade 2 learning assessment in 2021 demonstrated that only 4% of Grade 2 learners met the minimum level of reading proficiency specified by the MoE; no learners reached the proficient reader (or fluent reader) benchmark (USAID, 2021).

Following a series of discussions around this poor performance, the MoE identified the Language of Instruction strategy as a key research area for the MoE as part of reforms to improve education outcomes, and agreement was reached on conducting a study to provide recommendations for this process. As specified in the Terms of Reference, the study is aimed at understanding the dynamics of using local language for teaching from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Grade 4, and to inform Ministry of Education's policies and guidance to schools regarding LOI directives.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research was to provide information on what works, what does not work and why to the Government of Zambia, implementing partners and donors on the design and delivery of the LOI strategy in primary schools. GRZ and the MoE intend to use this information to inform and strengthen implementation of the policy and improve learning quality and outcomes for Zambian learners, particularly in the early grades (UNICEF Terms of Reference, 2022). To deliver on this, the study took a comprehensive approach to evaluating the design, dissemination and delivery outcomes achieved to

date under Zambia's national LOI strategy, now a decade old, including its influence on the achievement of early learning outcomes, particularly regarding literacy among primary school learners. As such, Government stakeholders, public and private sector actors, implementing partners, donors, school leaders and teachers, learners in early primary and their parents were engaged in interviews, focus group discussions, and school- and classroom-level observations.

1.3 Use of Findings

The Ministry of Education (MoE) identified the Language of Instruction strategy as a key research area for the reforms to improve education outcomes, and based on the agreement reached with stakeholders. Findings from the LOI research will aid understanding the dynamics of using local language for teaching from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Grade 4, and to inform MoE's policies and guidance to schools regarding LOI directives.

Findings from this study will also provide the basis to formally embed LOI practices and principles into all relevant aspects of the country's education system and practices through an actual LOI Policy, including complementing the existing: curriculum framework; teacher workforce management strategies; teacher accreditation; pre- and in service teacher training modalities; the national assessment and examination system; the development and distribution of teaching and learning materials; documentation of local languages in orthographies and other regulatory materials to concertize and promote the rules governing their use in instruction; academic standards and national targets for learning (especially literacy acquisition); financing and resource allocation, etc.

Since the LOI research focused on the development, dissemination and delivery of the LOI strategy in Zambian primary schools, results will be useful in generation of evidence and recommendations that can facilitate the creation of a national LOI Policy for Zambia.

2. Study Methodology and Analytical Framework

2.1. Research Design and Analytical Framework

A mixed methods research design was used for this study. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to collect and analyse data. The study adopted a five-lens analytical framework (Figure 1) capturing performance data on implementation of the LOI strategy and to help document the resources, inputs, activities and processes applied under the strategy to generate change, including those related to learning. The framework was applied at each stage of the research process to ensure relevant questions are asked, appropriate and necessary data is captured and analysed, and that the correct number and mix of key stakeholders were engaged. The first lens was the language policy analysis which sought to analyse the current state of Zambia's education system and the national LOI policy against the actions needed to eliminate learning poverty and get learners reading. The second lens explored five lampposts; the integrals of successful ingredients required for LOI policies to improve children's learning, especially in the acquisition of literacy competencies.

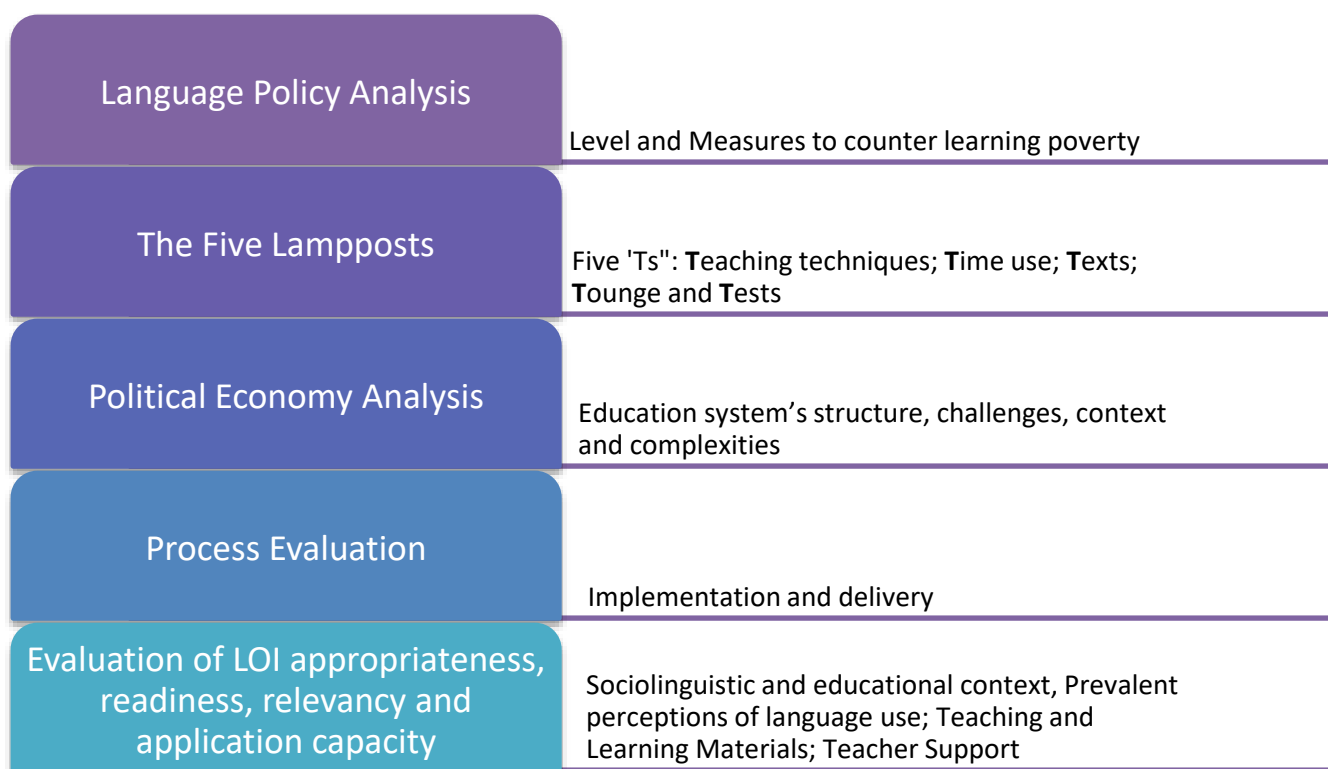


Figure 1: Five-lens analytical framework

The third lens explored the political economy focusing on education system's structure in the early grades, challenges the system and its actors face delivering education services; complexity of LOI and EGR service delivery needs for Zambia; and context and industry-specific barriers, gaps and opportunities faced by stakeholders. The fourth lens focused on process evaluation, interrogating the implementation and delivery of the LOI provisions. The fifth lens focused on evaluation of LOI appropriateness, readiness, relevancy and application capacity; exploring the understanding of the sociolinguistic and educational context, including prevalent perceptions of language use; support of the development and distribution of appropriate TLMs; attraction, selection, and supporting motivated teachers; matching teachers' language skills with their instructional mandate; and creatively harnessing technology in ways that respect the context.

2.2. Sampling Framework

The sampling was done using language cluster sampling based on a representational distribution-free sampling method to fairly represent all the 7 languages of instruction recommended for use by Zambia's Ministry of Education. A sample of 1400 learners was equitably shared among the 7 languages to create 200 data points for each language group (Figure 2). The research was scheduled to cover 350 primary schools: targeting 1400 learners (200 per language); 100 teachers (about 14 teachers per language); 100 school heads (about 14 heads per language); 400 parents (about 57 per language) in 21 purposively sampled districts of Zambia.

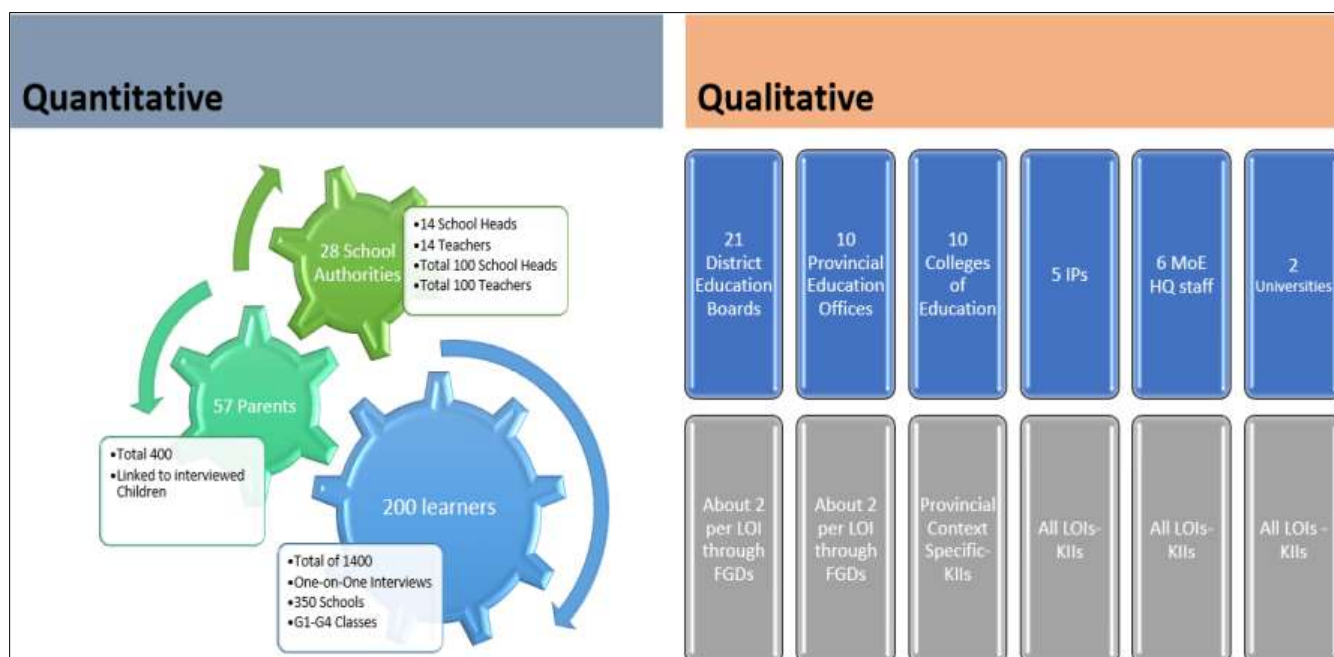


Figure 2: Data Density for Each LOI

Data triangulation and qualification came from a qualitative inquiry envisioned from 6 MoE Headquarters (HQ) staff covering all 6 key Directorates.; 10 Provincial Education Offices targeting the Provincial Education Officers (PEO), Provincial Education Office (PESO), Provincial Resource Centre Coordinator (PRCC), Senior Education Standards Officer (SESU)-special, Language specialist; 21 District Education Boards (urban and rural) targeting District Education Boards (DEBs), District Education Standards Officer (DESO), District Resource Centre Coordinators (DRCCs) and Education Standards Office (ESO)-Special; 5 implementing partners to be selected from mapping stakeholders on Literacy and numeracy and stakeholders for hearing impairment such as Zambia National Association for the Deaf and/or Zambia Institute of Special Education (ZAMISE); 2 Universities, University of Zambia (UNZA) and Chalimbana University (CHAU), (Primary Education, literature, psychology department and language departments); 10 Colleges of Education, targeting the administration and the department of literacy and language.

A multi-methods and multi-stage sampling approach was used to select participants from every province in Zambia to ensure that the survey collected data from all linguistic groups. Secondly, quota sampling was used for equitable distribution of samples across languages and provinces. As shown in Table 1 below, each language has a sample of 200 learners spread across different provinces from which the languages are deemed popular. Thirdly, districts within these provinces were purposively selected and the language of instruction was a key factor. Fourthly, within these selected districts schools were randomly selected from both urban and rural stratum.

Table 1: Quantitative Sample Parameters

Province	Learner Targets and Languages in Provinces							Totals					
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Silozi	Lunda	Luvale	Kikaonde	Learners	Parents	School Heads	Teachers	Schools	Districts
Lusaka		100						100	28	7	7	25	2
Central Province	100							100	28	7	7	25	2
Copperbelt			50					50	15	4	4	13	1
North-Western					200	200	200	600	171	42	42	150	5
Northern			50					50	15	4	4	13	1
Western				200				200	57	14	14	50	2
Luapula			50					50	15	4	4	12	2
Muchinga			50					50	15	4	4	12	2
Eastern		100						100	28	7	7	25	2
Southern	100							100	28	7	7	25	2
Total	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	1400	400	100	100	350	21

2.2.1. Sampling of Learners

At the school level, the selection of learners was based on a random sex-based quota-sampling with an intention to have equal proportions of boys and girls. At each school, 4 learners were selected one from each grade (G1-4) for the one-on-one interactions. The in-school boys and girls in grades were the foundation of the quantitative survey. The primary caregiver and/or parents of some of randomly selected learners were considered for the quantitative survey and FGDs. Some teachers and school heads were also considered for quantitative data collection. Please refer to detailed sample frame below for detailed targets per school. Selection of teachers and parents also had an indication of specific corresponding grade levels for which these should be chosen. A sampling guiding protocol was developed and shared with the teams for them to follow the random allocation. The selection of the teachers, however, also considered samples from the ECE classes.

2.2.2. In school learners

For the selected schools, equal chance was given for the selection of the 4 learners to be interviewed. The grade and sex of the learners to be selected were predefined in the detailed sample frame and this was to be followed religiously. If, for any reason, a school was to be replaced, the new school was to follow the same allocation as the school being replaced. Overall, it was expected to reach out to equal numbers of both boys and girls across the 4 grades. Each grade for every language was expected to reach out to 25 girls and 25 boys, giving a total of 200 learners for every language. From the target of 1400 learners, the study managed to reach the target and surpassed with about 1% (16 learners) (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of sampled learners by Province and Language

Province	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Reached	Target	Difference
Southern	101							101	100	+1
Central	101							101	100	+1
Copperbelt			52					52	50	+2
Eastern		106						106	100	+6
Luapula			49					49	50	-1
Lusaka		99						99	100	-1
Muchinga			52					52	50	+2
Northern			52					52	50	+2
North-Western				200	202	201		603	600	+3
Western							201	201	200	+1
Reached	202	205	205	200	202	201	201	1,416	1,400	+16
Target	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	1,400		
Difference	+2	+5	+5	+0	+2	+1	+1	+16		

2.1.1. Parents

For selected schools, about 4 to 5 parents were to be invited for a quantitative caregiver survey. Only selected schools in the detailed sample frame were to be considered for the caregiver survey. A total of 57 parents were expected for each language. Upon completion of the survey the same parents were also to be considered for a mini-focus group discussion in addition to any other parents. This group was to also attract other parents as well as those with learners in ECE classes. We reached 98% of the parent target (393 of 400 parents) through individual surveys. However, we far exceeded the target through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which reached a total of 755 parents, or 188% of the original target.

Table 3: Number of sampled parents by Province

Parent Individual Surveys			
Province	Target	Reached	+/-
Central	28	28	0
Copperbelt	15	16	1
Eastern	28	28	0
Luapula	15	10	-5
Lusaka	28	27	-1
Muchinga	15	15	0
North-Western	171	172	1
Northern	15	11	-4
Southern	28	29	1
Western	57	57	0
Total	400	393	-7

2.1.2. Teachers

As guided by the detailed sample frame, for some randomly selected schools, interviews and observations were done with teachers from ECE up to grade 4. A total of 14 interviews were conducted with 14 teachers distributed as follows: two ECE teachers, two Grade 1 teachers, two grade 2 teachers, four Grade 3 teachers, and four Grade 4 teachers. This was done considering the LOI targets and scope of study. Teams were flexible to suggest reshuffling of the selected especially to meet the ECE requirement. We exceeded our targeted number of teachers by 1, reaching 101 of the 100 targeted, or 101%.

Table 4: Number of Sampled Teachers by Province and Language

Teachers LOI by Province								
Province	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Central	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Copperbelt	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Eastern	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
Luapula	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Lusaka	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
Muchinga	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
North-Western	0	0	0	15	15	13	0	43
Northern	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Southern	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	12
Total	14	16	16	15	15	13	12	101

2.1.3. School Heads

Guided by the detailed sample frame, specific schools were selected for the school head surveys. A total of 14 interviews and school observations were expected for each language.

Table 5: Number of Sampled Head Teachers by Province and Language

Head Teacher LOI by Province								
Province	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Central	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Copperbelt	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Eastern	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
Luapula	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Lusaka	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
Muchinga	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
North-Western	0	0	0	13	14	13	0	40
Northern	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Southern	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17
Total	13	14	16	13	14	13	17	100

2.3. Primary Data Collection Methods and Tools

Data was collected using a mixed methods approach by adopting quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques.

2.3.1. Quantitative Tools

2.3.1.1. Learner Survey

The inclusion criteria for this tool involved all the learners in the Grade 1 to Grade 4 classes. This tool explored learner's experiential evidence of being taught the curriculum in local languages. The content of the inquiry was guided by the key blockages and support, prioritized by the stakeholders, to attaining learning outcomes for learners under the policy. The tool collected learner experiences and opinions regarding literacy instruction and their interaction with teachers and texts. Collection of data on class performance as well as learning assessments were also part of the tool.

2.3.1.2. Parent Survey

To complement the learner survey, parents were also asked about their experience with their children being taught in local languages. The inclusion criteria involved parents with children in grades 1 to grade 4. The inquiry explored perceptions and attitudes towards the use of local languages as LOIs in schools. The tool aid in examination of the broader 'culture of literacy' present in households and communities to determine gaps in the broader delivery, regulation and integration of the formal and informal systems for the delivery of literacy instruction and reading development.

2.3.1.3. Teacher Survey + Classroom Observations

The tool had two components, first a classroom observation of a literacy lesson and documentation of how the class performs and responds to reading instruction and the use of local languages for teaching in school. This was followed by an interview on the teacher's training and professional development, perceptions of reading instruction and LOI, and their knowledge of, experiences as with, and overall attitudes towards literacy instruction in local language.

2.3.1.4. School Head Semi-Structured Interview + Facility and Textbooks and Learning Material (TLM) Checklists

Inquiry was made on the key barriers and potential support to quality learning school environments for the use of the local LOIs. The tool explored instructional leadership, literacy lessons and documentation of how the class performs and responds to reading instruction and the use of local languages for teaching in school. This was accompanied by a school checklist administered in each school through the school head to document the availability and quality of facilities, teaching and learning materials, and books relevant to literacy instruction in local languages and English.

2.3.2. Qualitative Tools

2.3.2.1. Parent FGDs

The invited parents were also engaged in focus group discussions to explore experiences involving their children being taught in local languages, their perceptions and attitudes towards the use of local languages as LOIs in schools.

Table 6: Number of Parent Focus Group Discussions conducted disaggregated by sex

Parent Focus Group Discussions				
Province	No. of FGDs	Female	Male	Total
Central	7	46	27	73
Copperbelt	4	23	10	33
Eastern	7	36	13	49
Luapula	4	27	6	33
Lusaka	7	32	3	35
Muchinga	4	26	9	35
North-Western	32	165	136	301
Northern	3	12	8	20
Southern	7	55	21	76
Western	10	59	41	100
Total	85	481	274	755

2.3.2.2. Provincial and District KIIs

At provincial and district levels, KIIs were conducted with potential listing from different departments and the stakeholders at the provincial level (PEO, PESO, PRCC, SESO-special, Language specialist) and at district level (DEBs, DESOs, DRCCs, ESSO-Specialist). The provincial and district interviews illuminated on the policy design, implementation and delivery processes.

2.3.2.3. National Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

At national level and other institutions (Universities, Colleges and IPs) engagement was done thorough key informant interviews. These sought to tap into expert knowledge and qualifications. KIIs explored the policy provisions, framing the guiding questions from the stakeholders' insights on key barriers and potential support to policy provisions. Inquiry in policy considerations and implementation experiences were chief considerations for the interviews. This data was used to triangulate findings derived from quantitative data by providing additional justification or explanations to the findings.

2.4. Data Processing, Analysis and Reporting

A mixed method approach was used in analysing the qualitative and quantitative data to understand a phenomenon better and answer the research questions. Thematic and inductive approaches were applied in analysing the qualitative data to facilitate systematic construction of meanings, explanations and formations of concepts grounded in the data. Discovering

patterns through determination of frequencies, causal relationships, and chronology of occurrences of issues and coding categorised sets of related ideas or observations into limited number of themes to facilitate thematic analysis and interpretation.

Quantitatively, from reading assessments, fluency (correct per minute), accuracy (% correct words/sounds/answer) and comprehension (% correct answers) were the assessment values for comparison. We checked consistency of data on mWater and then transferred to the SPSS for cleaning and analysis. Data cleaning was done to ensure that all the variables were complete and correctly entered and that more correlational and tabulated data would be calculated for critical key information of some variables. Data transformation and computation was done for compound variables on fluency and accuracy for each learner. Each subtask presented to the learners included computed proficiency scores, based on the four standard proficiency levels; no learners, unable to attempt anything; emergent learners, scoring from 1% to 40%; established learners, scoring from 41% to 75% and the proficient learners scoring above 75%.

The categorization of proficiency levels was done using 'IF FUNCTION' for all subtasks and computed additional variables. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for the analysis. Measures for centrality (mean, median, percentiles) and dispersion (standard deviation, minimum and maximum) were used for descriptive statistics. One-Way ANOVA was used to see the differences across the LOIs and other multi-level independent variables. Further analysis was done using Tukey post hoc tests for determination of homogeneous subsets. For the assessment of the relationship of proficiency levels and project conditions, chi-square for independence tests was used. Pearson correlation was also considered for the assessment of the relationship between reading LOI and developing proficiency in English.

2.5. Study Limitations

- **Data loss due to tablet failure:** There was a functionality glitch on the database for the team in Western Province, which resulted in data loss.

Mitigation measure – follow-up data collection: A follow-up exercise was undertaken to recapture data from schools, learners and parents to ensure all respondent targets were met. As previously indicated, this rectified the issue so that all respondent targets at school level were either met or exceeded.

- **School accessibility:** Accessibility of schools, especially in rural parts of the sampled districts, was a challenge in some instances. As schools were selected at random from a master list provided by the Directorate of Planning, the research team had to map the location of schools and access routes on the ground with province and district teams at the start of data collection. This led to the identification of hard to reach and inaccessible schools, some of which required over 12 hours of travel in one direction to reach them.

Mitigation measure – replacement schools: Difficult to reach schools were replaced to reach the target of 350 schools for the study. The selection on replacement schools was done with the district education teams to ensure representativeness in rural and urban locations and to maintain LOI allocations. Due to the second round of data collection undertaken to capture final respondent data and reach targets, an additional 3 schools were visited for the study, exceeding the school target of 350.

- **Government stakeholders were difficult to track down:** Due to other engagements like recruitment of teachers at DEBS level, some stakeholders could not be interviewed on designated dates. Other assignments like examinations and workshops in the districts by other partners made it difficult to conduct interviews according to plan.

Mitigation measure: Multiple follow-ups were made with government officials and offices to attempt to reach all targeted respondents. A minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 attempts were made. In most cases, this resulted in a successful follow up. In some instances, remote engagements were leveraged through filling of online questionnaires, followed up with phone calls to clarify responses. Overall, despite some officials not being reached, the study captured a complete coverage area countrywide across all geographical and linguistic areas as previously indicated.

- **Logistical challenges:** Poor road networks limited access to some parts of the sampled districts, and reaching them proved challenging. For example, Zambezi West bank is a sandy terrain where even local government vehicles could not easily access the areas.

Mitigation measure: Wherever possible, schools in these locations were replaced with accessible sites to ensure the sample was reached. Data collection timelines were extended in some regions to ensure enumerator teams were able to reach all targeted schools.

- **Traditional barriers:** Zambezi District had to be replaced with another district after only a few days of data collection due to an emerging conflict between tribes which occurred at the start of data collection that proved volatile and unsafe for data collection to continue.

Mitigation measure: Zambezi District was replaced with Chavuma District was to ensure all respondent targets were reached for the Luvale language community. This decision was made in consultation with local government officials and a representative sample of schools was drawn as a replacement using official government registers in the district.

3. Findings

This section presents primary and secondary data from the study, organised by study thematic area. Information is presented in terms of key findings under each theme, focused on results obtained via data collection in government primary schools and local and national government offices at district, provincial and ministerial levels. Information captured from school stakeholders, including grade 1-4 learners, grade ECE-4 teachers, head teachers and parents of grade 1-4 learners – the main participants and beneficiaries of the Language of Instruction (LOI) policy – form the bulk of the findings. Additional findings were gathered from interviews with officials, academics, education stakeholders and development partners.

3.1. Implementation of the LOI Policy

Finding 1 - Implementation of LOI Policy by Assigned Zonal Language:

Teachers identified, on average, that they use their assigned zonal LOI 75% of the time for classroom instruction. There is a noticeable mismatch between assigned zonal LOIs and the LOIs reportedly used in schools, with the Ibibemba and Silozi language communities representing the highest discrepancies. Luvale was the only language reportedly used accurately between assigned zonal LOI and school time.

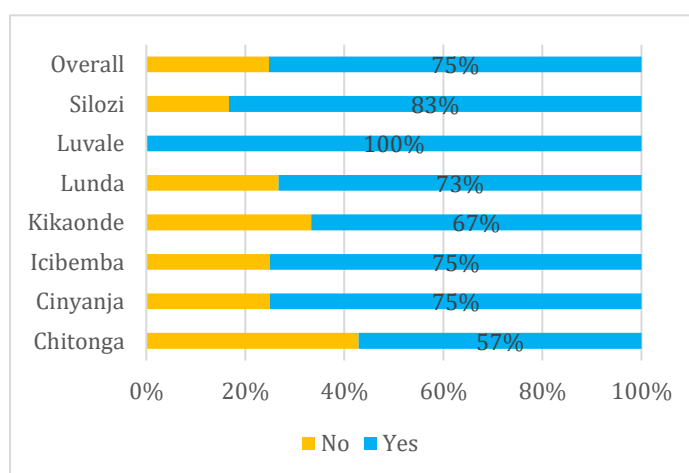


Figure 3: LOI Language Use Overall

LOI 100% of the

Table 7: Match between Zonal and School LOI

		LOI at school									
		Chitonga	Cinyanja	English	Ibibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Other	Silozi	Overall
LOI Zone	Chitonga (n=14)	86%	7%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	86%
	Cinyanja (n=16)	0%	81%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	81%
	Ibibemba (n=16)	0%	0%	19%	69%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	69%
	Kikaonde (n=15)	0%	0%	13%	0%	87%	0%	0%	0%	0%	87%
	Lunda (n=15)	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	87%	7%	0%	0%	87%
	Luvale (n=13)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%
	Silozi (n=12)	0%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	67%
	Overall (n=101)	86%	81%	14%	69%	87%	87%	100%	13%	67%	82%

Qualitative data revealed the mismatch, with the situation direr in urban areas; language of instruction policy context does not reflect the diverse cultures and ethnic communities;

Directorate of Teacher Education and Specialized Services: *I would say, in certain exceptional instances rather than as a general rule. In some isolated cases, this policy reflects the prevailing culture in our society. However, in many situations, particularly within urban areas, there may be a degree of ambiguity or uncertainty.*

The discourse on whether the policy reflects the diverse cultures and identities of the Zambian people and their ethnic communities attracted most a yes response from almost all respondents. The Primary Directorate felt that yes, the policy has respected the 7 official languages but this is not adequate.

Primary Directorate: *In August 2023, we were in Central province and we went to areas which are predominantly Lamba speaking. And because the zonal language is Bemba, they are using Bemba. And in the same area you will find that some children are Lambas, others are Tongas. And we also found a bigger group of people from Zimbabwe that speak Shona and Ndebele - in Central province. And of course, people speaking Bemba. So, the policy may not be very adequate because it is limited in the languages that they have been selected as the zonal languages. But I think in Southern province, from the beginning their homework was done right; the selection of three languages I think has helped a lot. So, we wish in other provinces, like in Eastern province, if we can have a Tumbuka and any other language.*

Sentiments from the Primary Directorate are that there is lack of clarity in the definition of familiar language and their limits. Reference was made to the misunderstanding of languages and their variants (dialects), where maybe one dialect will end up being used to represent a language with broader dialects causing some confusion in the process;

We are in Lusaka, and I don't know if the familiar language is Cinyanja or English, or Bemba or Tonga. So, we need to look at what the familiar language is. As long as we determine what the familiar language is, then it will be easy to teach. We can't prescribe one language to meet the entire province. Like we have been to Chongwe, and you would realise that there some learners are speaking Soli, and we are taking books of Cinyanja.

The concern was also on the correctness of the language used in which the Cinyanja being used in the books is not the exact Cinyanja they are used to but rather more of Chichewa. Generally, there was a call to have a scrutiny on the correctness of the language as it reflects on the familiar language.

The ECE Directorate also expressed that there is some misaligned interpretations first language and familiar language.

Teach children in their first language. This is a World Bank policy, and it is saying teach children in their first language. What is a first language? I am Tumbuka (improvise), and my first language is Tumbuka. This is the World Bank document. Teach children in their

own local language starting with early childhood education through at least the first six years of primary school. What does this mean? Going into primary, when teaching children, the first language is not familiar language. These two are different. Familiar language and first language are two different things. Then it says, use the children's first language for instruction in academic subjects beyond reading and writing.

The ECE Directorate reasoned that it is not easy teaching children in the language they speak at home considering the diversity in a country like Zambia, more so in cosmopolitan Lusaka, the language children learn in is different from what they speak at home.

The question that I am asking is, teach children in the language that they speak at home, do they speak that? ... This is a big problem because of diversity in nature. For example, if you go to Western province, Kaoma, they don't speak Lozi – they speak Nkoya. Nkoya is totally different from Lozi. There is no relationship. Some of the Luvalas are in Kaoma. Luvale is no near to Lozi. So, those are the conflicts in the language. I lived on the Copperbelt, and I was working in the Ministry of Agriculture. If you leave Chingola town out there, it's 'Kawembe', 'Chizilamba' which is not Bemba. But because they are in Copperbelt, they learn Bemba. So, it is a complex issue, honestly. And to me, it looks to be cautiously. We have to look at the best options and say, how do we move? Even the proponents – those who say we should teach in these local languages – yes, but we must understand this.

Finding 2 - Implementation of LOI Policy across Subject Areas: Application of the assigned zonal LOI across subject areas varied, with English being used alongside national languages for instruction across all key subjects, most notably Science, Mathematics, Technology and Social Studies.

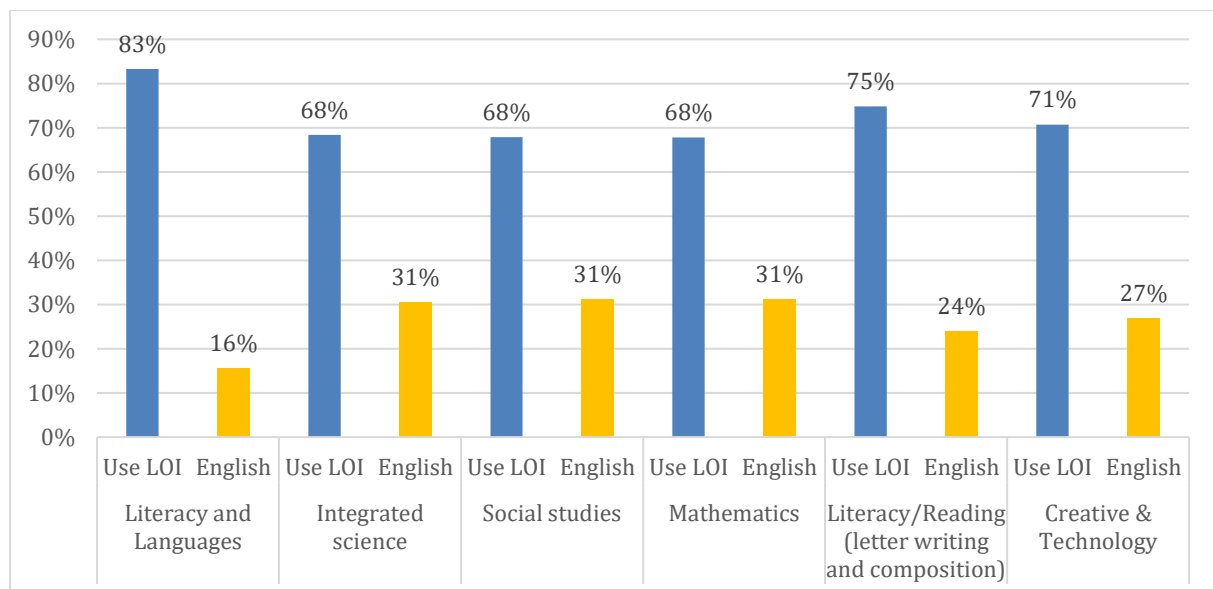


Figure 4: Language Use by Subject

This finding indicates that many Zambian national languages have underdeveloped, been insufficiently disseminated or carry insufficiently taught vocabulary terms for science and mathematics subjects, making it difficult for teachers and learners to communicate in the classroom without the use of English subject area vocabulary. This is not to say that these terms have not been developed, but based on evidence they are not widely known or disseminated across schools, classrooms and practicing teachers. Table 8 below shows language use by each LOI.

Chalimbana lecturer revealed that they have forwarded any argument for teacher training to introduce students to translanguaging practices. In Lundazi, there was also registry of some efforts to start the process of encouraging translanguaging in training. The PRCC Chipata and DESO, ESO SP, DRCC Lundazi received that much is being done in Cinyanja, because in mathematics, there are word problems that they have been training their teachers as they were solving out mathematics word problems using Cinyanja.

Also, they are learning a lot in terms of reading in Cinyanja because those words problems will come in Cinyanja. For example:

Malita anali ndi nthochi 17. Atate ake anampasilapo zili 17. Kodi Malita anakhala ndi zingati pamozi? (Martha had 17 bananas. Her father gave her 17 more. How many bananas does Martha have now?)

In that, the learners need to read that sentence in Cinyanja. They need to know how to read that sentence and how to interpret that information. What is the information that has been given? What are they asking for? What is it that you are going to do? If we are to put together, what will happen to the numbers? So, they will interpret all that.

Table 8: Language Use by Subject by LOI

	Literacy and Languages		Integrated science		Social studies		Mathematics		Literacy/Reading (letter writing and composition)		Creative & Technology	
	Use LOI	English	Use LOI	English	Use LOI	English	Use LOI	English	Use LOI	English	Use LOI	English
Chitonga	88%	13%	71%	29%	67%	33%	67%	33%	86%	14%	80%	20%
Cinyanja	100%	0%	50%	50%	50%	50%	58%	42%	75%	25%	64%	36%
Icibemba	67%	33%	60%	40%	60%	40%	53%	47%	46%	54%	64%	36%
Kikaonde	71%	29%	75%	25%	69%	31%	69%	31%	67%	33%	75%	17%
Lunda	85%	8%	77%	15%	85%	8%	85%	8%	83%	8%	82%	9%
Luvale	100%	0%	90%	10%	89%	11%	92%	8%	100%	0%	86%	14%
Silozi	73%	27%	56%	44%	56%	44%	50%	50%	67%	33%	44%	56%
Overall	83%	16%	68%	31%	68%	31%	68%	31%	75%	24%	71%	27%

It was reported that this is being written in Cinyanja just to improve literacy levels for learners. Cooperating partners were said to be really doing a lot in terms of materials – just to support literacy. Otherwise, we have a lot of story books in schools, and text books. Nevertheless, the

orthographies for these languages are still highly underdeveloped. Professor of Applied Linguistics at UNZA revealed in an interview that Orthographies exist in 50% of Zambia’s local languages because where there is a local bible, there is an orthography. There is need to increase the vocabulary including engaging language artists for invention of terminologies. Through community driven development, he stressed that communities can tell schools, schools tell districts, districts tell provinces, provinces tell the headquarters, making everyone a reader and writer – communities can do this on their own, ownership and identity are held in homes and communities. Therefore, there is need to activate the terminologies through the communities and the general community literacy culture.

Finding 3 - Implementation of LOI Policy by Grade: According to 68% of Head Teachers, LOI use in classrooms is fairly consistent in Grades 1-4 within each Zambian national languages, though they are used less commonly for ECED instruction (which has a much higher percentage of English use than early primary classrooms). Application of the zonal LOI across grade levels within language communities varies however, with Cinyanja, Lunda and Luvale using their zonal LOI most consistently across all grades. Head Teachers reported that teachers from ECE to Grade 4 use English, on average, between 20-30% of the time, which is high given the national policy’s guidance to teach in national languages from ECE to Grade 4.

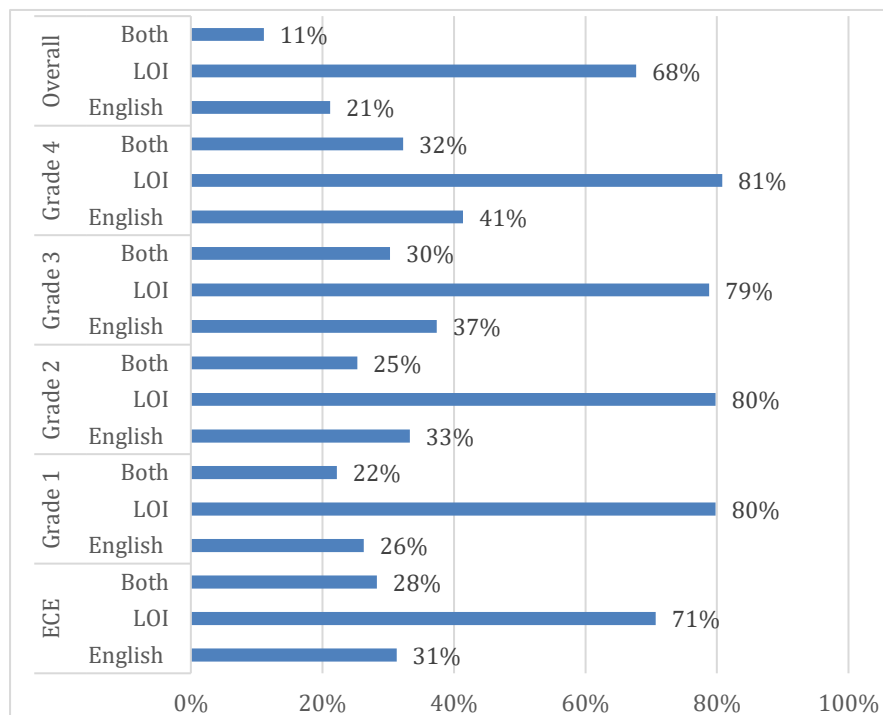


Figure 5: Language used to teach

Silozi and Cinyanja also reported the highest degrees of translanguaging, meaning teachers use both English and their zonal language consistently and fluidly during instruction to reinforce student understanding and instructional concepts.

Table 9: Language Use by Grade by LOI

		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Overall
ECE	English	46%	43%	44%	31%	7%	8%	38%	31%
	LOI	77%	86%	56%	62%	86%	85%	50%	71%
	Both	39%	43%	13%	23%	7%	8%	63%	28%
Grade 1	English	31%	29%	38%	31%	7%	0%	44%	26%
	LOI	77%	93%	81%	62%	86%	100%	63%	80%
	Both	8%	21%	31%	23%	7%	0%	56%	22%
Grade 2	English	46%	36%	50%	31%	7%	0%	56%	33%
	LOI	85%	93%	81%	62%	93%	100%	50%	80%
	Both	31%	29%	44%	23%	0%	0%	44%	25%
Grade 3	English	62%	43%	50%	31%	14%	8%	50%	37%
	LOI	77%	93%	75%	62%	93%	100%	56%	79%
	Both	54%	36%	38%	23%	7%	8%	44%	30%
Grade 4	English	69%	43%	56%	39%	21%	0%	56%	41%
	LOI	85%	93%	75%	62%	93%	100%	63%	81%
	Both	54%	36%	44%	31%	14%	0%	44%	32%
Overall	English	31%	29%	31%	23%	7%	0%	25%	21%
	LOI	69%	86%	50%	62%	86%	85%	44%	68%
	Both	8%	21%	6%	15%	0%	0%	25%	11%

Finding 4 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Teacher Self-Reported Practices:

The graph below presents results from a range of teacher responses to questions about application of the zonal LOI to instruction, including an assessment of their own and other teacher's practices. Teachers reported a difference between the schools' assigned LOI and the language spoken by most of their local communities (82% and 70%, respectively). While teachers largely expressed self-confidence in using their school's assigned LOI for instruction (87%), they were more skeptical of their peer's ability to use it, only 41% of teachers reported that most of the teachers at their respective schools speak the LOI and use it correctly when they teach.

Only 44% of teachers said that the LOI they taught in was their preferred language, with 73% reporting they were confident teaching in another national language. An overwhelming number (97%) reported complete confidence using English for instruction, with half of teachers preferring to teach in English rather than a national language. Importantly, only 65% of teachers believe they are sufficiently prepared to teach learners to read using their school's LOI. This is a critical finding, indicating that teachers require more intensive investments in pre- and in-service training to improve their confidence and ability to teach learners to read using Zambian national languages, as opposed to English.

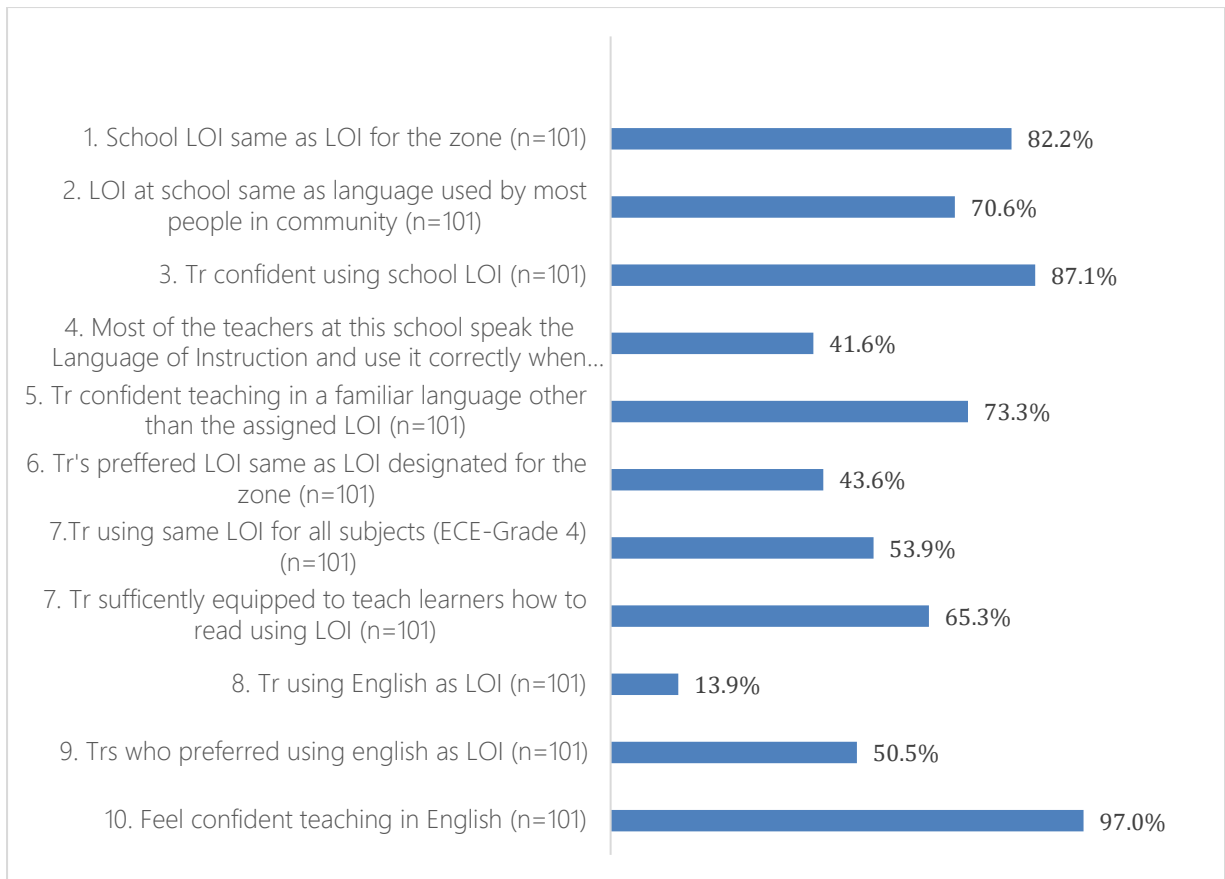


Figure 6: Teacher Self-Reported Practices

Finding 5 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Teacher LOI Confidence: Teacher self-reported confidence in using their school's assigned LOI for instruction was relatively high with an average of 87%, with the highest confidence reported in Silozi (100%) and the lowest in Luvale (69%).

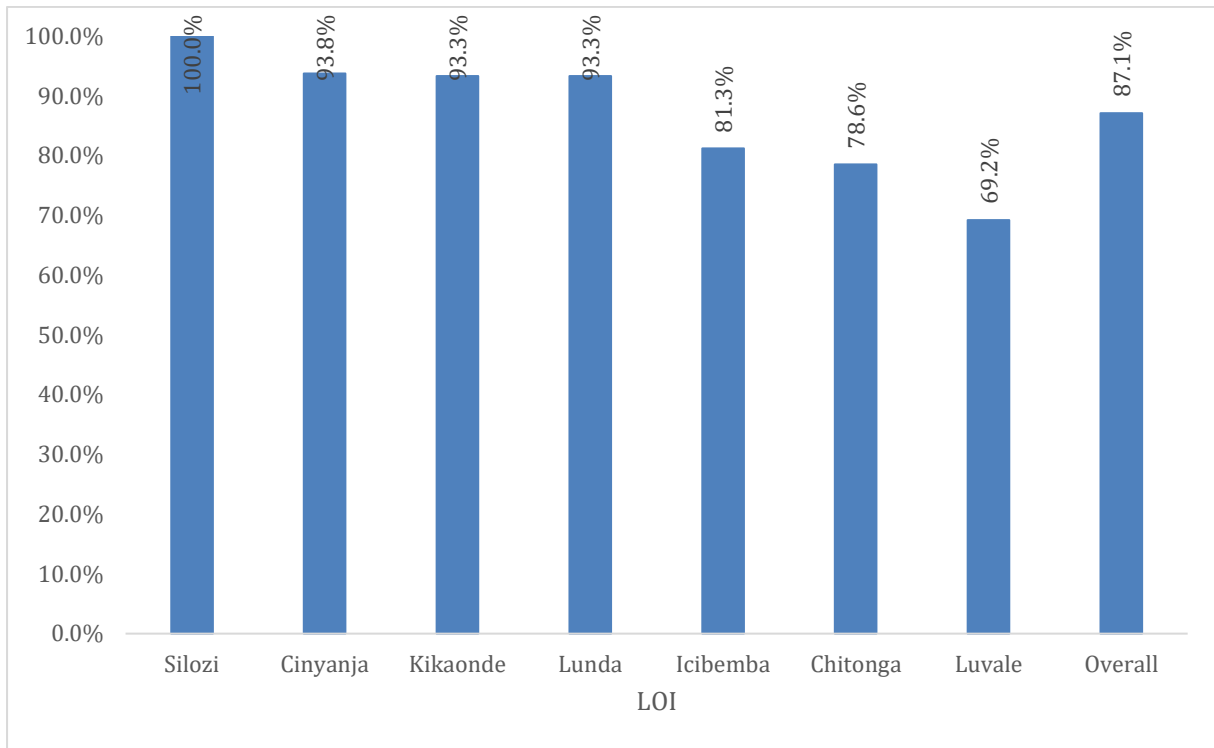


Figure 7: Confidence Teaching Literacy Using School LOI by Language Group

These variations are likely due to a range of factors, including: 1) mismatches in teacher assignment to areas with a different LOI than their first language; 2) larger urban populations in the Central region with greater variation in the number of community languages spoken; and 3) mismatches between the languages spoken at home in linguistically diverse regions and the school's assigned LOI.

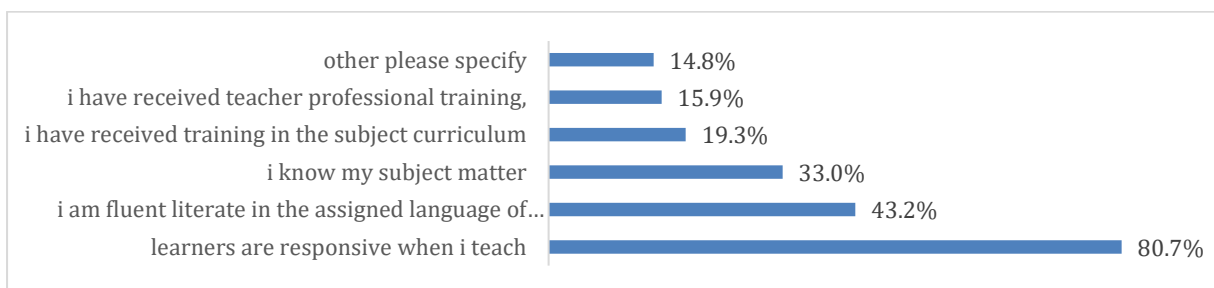


Figure 8: Reasons for Teacher Confidence Using School LOI

Most teachers reported being confident in using their school's assigned LOI because their learners were responsive to their instruction and because they are fluent in their school's LOI. Conversely, lack of confidence was due to lack of LOI fluency, further indicating the importance of appropriate teacher assignment and allocation to areas where they are confident speaking (and therefore instructing in) the local language.

Table 10: Reasons for Lack of Teacher Confidence Using School LOI

Reasons	Out of 11	Percentage of Cases
learners are non-responsive	2	15.4%
I am not sure of my subject matter	0	0.0%
I do not have teaching materials e.g lesson plans and teachers guide to help me with my class	2	15.4%
I am not fluent/literate in the assigned language of instruction	7	53.8%
I feel that I need further training on how to deliver curriculum	2	15.4%
other please specify	4	30.8%

Finding 6 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Teacher’s Other Language

Confidence: Many teachers (73%) also reported being confident using other familiar languages for instruction aside from their school’s assigned LOI, with teachers assigned to teach in Silozi reporting the highest levels of confidence in other languages and teachers assigned to teach in Luvale the lowest.

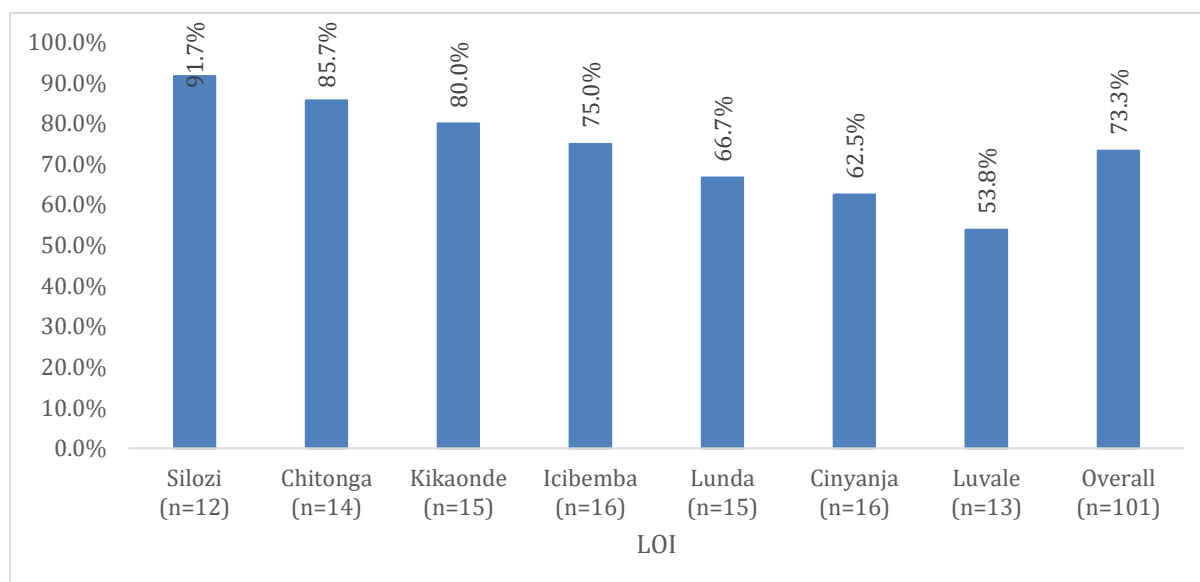


Figure 9: Confidence Teaching Literacy Using Other Familiar Language by Language Group

Reasons for high and low confidence in other familiar languages were similar to those reported above, largely centering on whether their learners were responsive and whether they were fluent in another language.

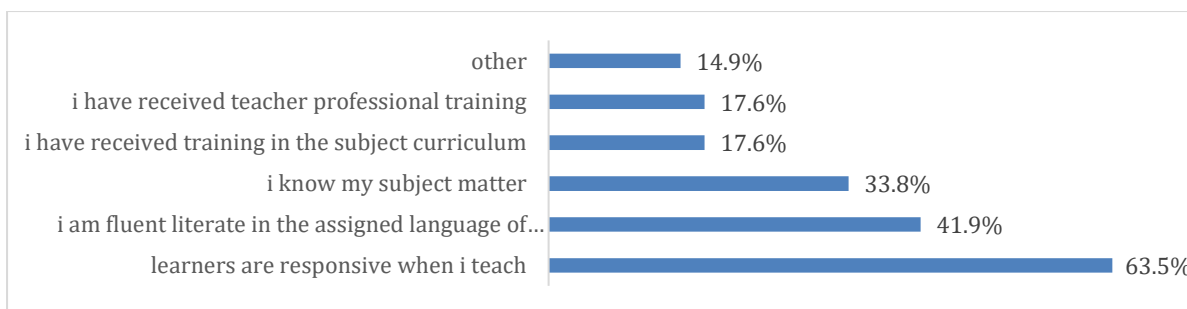


Figure 10: Reasons for Teacher Confidence Using Other Familiar Language

This is an important finding, indicating that teacher-learner interactions provide a critical foundation for the successful application of LOI in classrooms, along with teacher perceptions regarding their own language capabilities and overall linguistic confidence.

Table 11: Reasons for Lack of Teacher Confidence Using Other Familiar Language

Reasons	Out of 26	Percent of Cases
learners are non-responsive	12	46.2%
I am not sure of my subject matter	0	0.0%
I do not have teaching materials e.g lesson plans and teachers guide to help me with my class	0	0.0%
I am not fluent literate in the assigned language of instruction	9	34.6%
I feel that I need further training on how to deliver curriculum	1	3.8%
other	6	23.1%

Qualitatively learning from the DRCC and ESO Special -Petauke BEBS, it was expressed that from the policy, the delivery hasn't improved as expected because of the same language barrier for the teachers. It was expressed that some teachers are restricted to the language that is used to that particular district or province, yet you will find that there are some teachers who are unable to communicate in that particular language, and the policy would restrict them to teach only in that particular language.

DRCC and ESO Special -Petauke DEBS: *So, you will find that their input is not much, is not as expected. Sometimes some of teachers even teach in Bemba. If you ask someone why they are teaching in Bemba, they will say, "This is what I know. I can't speak fluent Cinyanja." So, you find that if there are learners purely from this area, Eastern province, when Cinyanja is the language they understand, it becomes difficult for them to understand. And also for the teacher, even if he or she teaches in Bemba or Tonga or any other language interpretation of the content is also a problem.*

Finding 7 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Teacher Preference: Teachers on the whole reported they prefer teaching in English (50% of average across all languages), rather than their school's assigned LOI, with the highest preference for teaching in English among teachers instructing in Chitonga, Cinyanja and Lunda (between 60-64% of teachers), and the lowest preference for teaching in English in Kikaonde (just below 27%).

Table 12: Preferred LOI

	Preferred LOI									
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	English	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silози	Other	Overall
Chitonga (n=14)	21%	0%	64%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	21%
Cinyanja (n=16)	0%	38%	63%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	38%
Icibemba (n=16)	0%	0%	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	56%
Kikaonde (n=15)	0%	0%	27%	13%	53%	7%	0%	0%	0%	53%
Lunda (n=15)	0%	0%	60%	7%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	33%
Luvale (n=13)	0%	0%	46%	0%	0%	0%	54%	0%	0%	54%
Silози (n=12)	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%
Overall (n=101)	21%	38%	51%	56%	53%	33%	54%	50%	7%	44%

Teachers instructing in Icibemba, Kikaonde and Luvale reported the highest preferences for teaching in their assigned LOI (between 53-56% of teachers). Teachers assigned to teach in Chitonga had the lowest preference for teaching in their assigned language at 21%.

These variations indicate a wide range of preference levels among teachers across the country, with a substantial percentage of early grade teachers preferring to instruct in English rather than a Zambian national language. As previously identified, the reasons for this include lack of confidence, mismatches between teacher’s assigned LOI and the language they are most fluent in, and learner responsiveness in class, which could be an indicator of LOI mismatch or lack of understanding the curriculum, or of instructional gaps in lesson delivery on the part of teachers. These questions are further explored later in this section.

From the qualitative inquiries, it was also found that the teachers’ proficiencies in the languages were questionable. The Primary Directorate pointed that there is more that is needed to be done as a country because most teachers do not have adequate training.

I think their proficiency in language is questionable. I wish we invited all the teachers that are teaching in primary schools, and then get them an examination to measure their ability to handle language. Maybe that is when we can say. But I think we have the challenge when it comes to teacher language competencies.

The secondary school directorate also problematized the lack of deliberate control of the deployment of teachers. The secondary school directorate pointed that the policy can only work in a country where teachers are deployed in areas they are competent in the language;

I am Tonga, and I am teaching within my area – and that is the language I am familiar with; not where you have a Lunda and you take him to Southern province. The teacher will be learning the language and at the same time he will be trying to teach in a local language. So, we have those types of issues. And you know, Zambia has a lot of languages. So, this policy has not helped us because, we did not take into consideration that wherever we copied it from, those people had very few languages, and bringing it to Zambia, we have over 70 languages. And this is One Zambia One Nation – we work anywhere. I am Tonga, I am working in Lusaka, and I am working in Soli land. I have

worked in Northwestern before. There is nothing else that I know about Soli. I cannot speak the language. So, we have had those challenges

The directorate reiterated that language barriers are the biggest challenge to the teachers because there is no deliberate effort to choose which teacher will go to teach in which area based on a rigorous criterion to avoid mismatch of the languages;

And when the teachers apply for work in government, they are expected to work wherever their services are needed. So, if my services are needed in Bushi land, I must go and work in Bushi land. It doesn't matter whether I am Lozi or I am Luvale or I am Mbunda – I must go and work there. And when I get there, I should be able to learn the language as I am teaching. So that poses the biggest challenge when it comes to teaching because, the teacher is learning the language at the time of teaching.

Finding 8 - Implementation of LOI Policy According to Learners: According to learners, there is a mismatch across all language communities between their school's assigned LOI and the language they speak at home, ranging from a large mismatch in Chitonga-speaking schools and communities (where only 40% of learners speak the school's assigned LOI at home), to a negligible mismatch in Luvale (where 98% of learners speak the school's assigned LOI at home). Learners reported that the LOI used by their teachers in class largely matched the school's assigned LOI, with the greatest variation in Chitonga (where only 61% of learners said they were taught in Chitonga) and the smallest variation in Luvale (where over 99% of learners reported being taught in the school's assigned LOI).

Table 13: Matching of languages with LOI

Match Between School LOI and Home Language According to Learners										
Language	Chitonga	Cinyanja	English	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Other	Overall
Chitonga	41%	19%	10%	9%	1%	1%	0%	6%	14%	41%
Cinyanja	2%	65%	9%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	18%	65%
Icibemba	1%	3%	8%	72%	0%	0%	0%	1%	17%	72%
Kikaonde	1%	1%	14%	18%	54%	7%	4%	1%	2%	54%
Lunda	2%	2%	5%	3%	1%	88%	0%	0%	1%	88%
Luvale	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	98%	0%	0%	98%
Silozi	1%	1%	9%	3%	0%	0%	2%	73%	13%	73%
Match Between Teacher's Language and School LOI This Year According to Learners										
Chitonga	61%	10%	19%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	61%
Cinyanja	1%	74%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	74%
Icibemba	0%	0%	28%	70%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	70%
Kikaonde	0%	0%	24%	3%	73%	1%	0%	0%	0%	73%
Lunda	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	91%	0%	0%	0%	91%
Luvale	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	###	0%	0%	###
Silozi	0%	0%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	84%	0%	84%
Match Between Teacher's Language and School LOI Last Year According to Learners										
Chitonga	66%	8%	19%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	66%
Cinyanja	1%	64%	27%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	64%
Icibemba	0%	0%	28%	71%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	71%
Kikaonde	1%	0%	29%	5%	65%	0%	0%	0%	0%	65%
Lunda	0%	0%	12%	2%	0%	86%	1%	0%	1%	86%

Match Between School LOI and Home Language According to Learners										
Language	Chitonga	Cinyanja	English	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozhi	Other	Overall
Luvale	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	99%	0%	0%	99%
Silozhi	0%	0%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%	82%	1%	82%
Match Between Teacher's Language in ECE and School LOI According to Learners										
Chitonga	45%	11%	40%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	45%
Cinyanja	2%	48%	44%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	48%
Icibemba	0%	2%	48%	48%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	48%
Kikaonde	0%	1%	70%	1%	28%	0%	0%	0%	0%	28%
Lunda	1%	3%	35%	1%	0%	57%	1%	0%	1%	57%
Luvale	0%	0%	17%	0%	2%	0%	81%	0%	0%	81%
Silozhi	0%	1%	29%	1%	0%	1%	0%	69%	0%	69%

This trend is similar to learner's experiences the previous year, demonstrating consistency across teachers and classrooms within schools regarding alignment with nationally assigned zonal LOIs. English language use across both this year and last year, according to learners, also remained consistent.

The greatest variation reported by learners in their past instructional LOIs came at ECE level, where English was used for instruction between 16-70% of the time. Languages with the highest match between assigned LOI and teacher use of the assigned LOI maintained this status in ECE as well. These findings do demonstrate a similar trend, however, as those reported by learners regarding instruction in lower primary.

3.2. LOI Policy and Children's Learning

Using local language and English reading assessments, the study analysed reading fluency (correct words per minute), accuracy (the percentage of words read correctly) and comprehension (the number of correct answers in a series of questions) to compare learning levels across children by language and grade. Analysis was done using the SPSS software; data transformations and computations were conducted to assess compound variables on fluency and accuracy for each learner.

Finding 1 – Reading Fluency in National Languages and English: Generally across LOIs, learners read comparably the same number of words per minute with the same degree of accuracy in each grade, except for English reading in grades 2 and 3. Learners demonstrated progression in the number of words they read correctly per minute from grade to grade.

Grade 1 learners only read a story in their LOI; on average across all LOIs, learners read about 7 words per minute.¹ However, Chitonga, Cinyanja and Kikaonde speakers read relatively slower (though not to a statistically significant degree) than their peers in Silozhi, Luvale, Lunda and Icibemba-speaking classrooms.

¹F_{obt} (6;340) = 1.574, p = .154

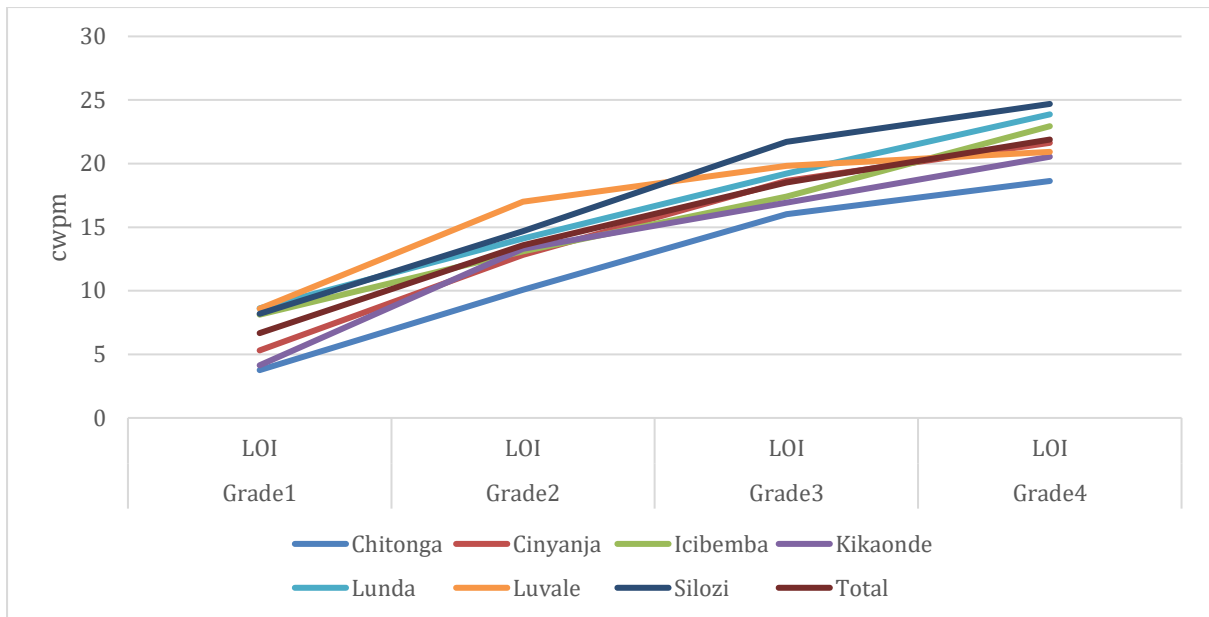


Figure 11: Number of Words per minute reading in LOI

Grade ones only read a story in their LOIs; **on average they were reading about 7 words per minute** and this was comparably the same across LOIs.² However, those reading in Chitonga, Cinyanja and Kikaonde were relatively slower (not statistically significant) compared to those reading in Silozi, Luvale, Lunda and Icibemba.

Table 14: Words per minute for each LOI per grade

			N	Mean Words/minute	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Grade 1	LOI	Chitonga	49	3.76	11.573	0.154
		Cinyanja	51	5.31	11.299	
		Icibemba	49	8.12	12.592	
		Kikaonde	50	4.14	9.232	
		Lunda	50	8.62	13.666	
		Luvale	51	8.59	12.988	
		Silozi	47	8.19	13.947	
		Total	347	6.67	12.324	
Grade 2	LOI	Chitonga	50	10.08	14.384	0.419
		Cinyanja	50	12.82	14.162	
		Icibemba	54	13.11	15.996	
		Kikaonde	49	13.31	13.340	
		Lunda	49	14.12	14.747	
		Luvale	50	17.00	13.541	
		Silozi	50	14.68	16.584	
		Total	352	13.58	14.742	
	English	Chitonga	24	10.75	16.617	0.007
		Cinyanja	23	1.96	4.800	

²F_{obt} (6;340) = 1.574, p = .154

			N	Mean Words/minute	Std. Deviation	Sig.
		Icibemba	29	10.76	18.656	
		Kikaonde	17	16.71	25.536	
		Lunda	23	.48	2.294	
		Luvale	28	16.11	22.408	
		Silozi	27	9.11	16.400	
		Total	171	9.40	17.669	
		Grade 3	LOI	Chitonga	51	
Cinyanja	52			18.63	13.923	
Icibemba	53			17.40	16.995	
Kikaonde	51			16.92	15.738	
Lunda	50			19.22	15.814	
Luvale	49			19.82	14.655	
Silozi	50			21.72	19.395	
Total	356			18.51	16.210	
English	Chitonga		29	16.66	21.660	0.002
	Cinyanja		28	13.00	14.996	
	Icibemba		23	12.30	20.645	
	Kikaonde		25	24.04	23.490	
	Lunda		22	1.00	4.690	
	Luvale		24	10.33	13.409	
	Silozi		23	18.52	19.656	
	Total	174	13.95	18.970		
Grade 4	LOI	Chitonga	52	18.63	14.668	0.543
		Cinyanja	52	21.63	15.235	
		Icibemba	49	22.94	17.815	
		Kikaonde	50	20.54	17.274	
		Lunda	53	23.87	16.038	
		Luvale	50	20.92	15.296	
		Silozi	51	24.69	18.367	
		Total	357	21.89	16.398	
	English	Chitonga	23	32.13	24.588	0.166
		Cinyanja	24	24.17	27.395	
		Icibemba	27	28.44	28.062	
		Kikaonde	28	25.50	24.765	
		Lunda	24	16.50	23.692	
		Luvale	19	14.84	19.311	
		Silozi	28	29.11	23.046	
Total		173	24.82	24.969		

Finding 2 – National Reading Fluency Improvements: Grade 2 students read an average of 14 words per minute in their respective LOIs; there was no statistically significant difference across languages.³ This indicates an improvement from USAID’s 2021 midline report, where grade 2 learners read an average of 4 words per minute, and an improvement from the 2021 Zambian National Assessment Survey (NAS) of Learning Achievement, where learners read about 8 words per minute.

This study also discovered a constant finding about learning gains: once learners were reading at least 10 correct words per minute on average in a grade, there was a documented decline in non-readers in the overall cohort in both reading and comprehension.

Although the stories utilised for this assessment were not calibrated, findings indicate there are learning gains in classrooms across the country since the 2014 Zambian National Assessment Survey (NAS) of Learning Achievement at Grade 2, as well as from more recent USAID-led national Early Grade Reading Assessments. These results are also consistent with findings (detailed in the sections below) that teachers have observed improvements in learning outcomes following implementation of the LOI policy.

Table 15: Comparison in Reading Outcomes across National Assessments

	Current study ⁴	USAID Midline	Diff Mid	USAID Baseline	Diff Base	2014 NAS	Diff NAS
Chitonga	10.1	3.3	6.8	4.4	5.7	1.9	8.2
Cinyanja	12.8	4.7	8.1	6.6	6.2	4.1	8.7
Icibemba	13.1	4.6	8.5	5.3	7.8	7.6	5.5
Kikaonde	13.3	2.3	11.0	3.9	9.4	3.5	9.8
Lunda	14.1	3.5	10.6	5.1	9.0	6.3	7.8
Luvale	17.0	3.4	13.6	7.5	9.5	4.3	12.7
Silozi	14.7	4.3	10.4	7.7	7.0	8.4	6.3
Total	13.6	4.2	9.4	5.9	7.7	5.2	8.4
	Ave Diff		9.8		7.8		8.4

Finding 3 – Fluency in English at Grade 2: On average, grade 2 learners read 9 English words per minute. There was a significant difference across language communities⁵ in grade 2 English reading, with Lunda and Cinyanja speakers having the lowest number of words per minute and Luvale and Kikaonde speakers the highest. The post hoc analysis revealed two homogeneous subsets, isolating Lunda as having a significantly lower number of words per minute while Luvale and Kikaonde having significantly higher number of words per minute. For the rest of the other LOIs, they were in-between and comparable to both sides.

³ $F_{obt}(6;345) = 1.010, p = .419$

⁴ It is important to note that these stories were not calibrated and as a result of varying levels of difficulty.

⁵ $F_{obt}(6;164) = 3.078, p = .007$

Table 16: Grade 2 English Words Read Correctly

LOI	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Lunda	23	.48	
Cinyanja	23	1.96	1.96
Silozi	27	9.11	9.11
Chitonga	24	10.75	10.75
Icibemba	29	10.76	10.76
Luvale	28		16.11
Kikaonde	17		16.71
Sig.		.371	.051

Finding 4 – Fluency at Grade 3: Similar patterns were also observed in grade 3 LOI fluency. Learners read an average of 19 words per minute; there was no statistically significant difference across LOIs.⁶ In English, grade 3 learners reading 14 words correctly on average; there was a statistically significant difference,⁷ with Lunda speakers reading the lowest number of words per minute compared to other LOIs. Analysis revealed two homogeneous subsets, isolating Lunda as having a statistically significant lower number of words per minute and Chitonga, Silozi and Kikaonde-speaking learners reading showed mixed results and were comparable to both sides.

Table 17: Grade 3 English Words Read Correctly

LOI	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Lunda	22	1.00	
Luvale	24	10.33	10.33
Icibemba	23	12.30	12.30
Cinyanja	28	13.00	13.00
Chitonga	29		16.66
Silozi	23		18.52
Kikaonde	25		24.04
Sig.		.240	.117

Finding 5 – Fluency at Grade 4: Among grade 4 learners, there were no statistically significant differences in reading fluency in across the LOIs⁸ or in English.⁹ Grade 4 learners read an average of 22 words per minute in their respective LOIs, with Silozi, Lunda and Icibemba having relatively higher word per minute scores. On average, grade four learners read an average of 25 English words per minute, with Chitonga, Silozi and Icibemba learners reading more words

⁶ $F_{obt}(6;349) = 0.717, p = .636$

⁷ $F_{obt}(6;164) = 3.078, p = .007$

⁸ $F_{obt}(6;350) = 0.836, p = .543$

⁹ $F_{obt}(6;166) = 1.546, p = .166$

per minute correctly than learners who speak other LOIs. Notably, Lunda and Luvale speakers read the lowest number of words, though this was not statistically significant.

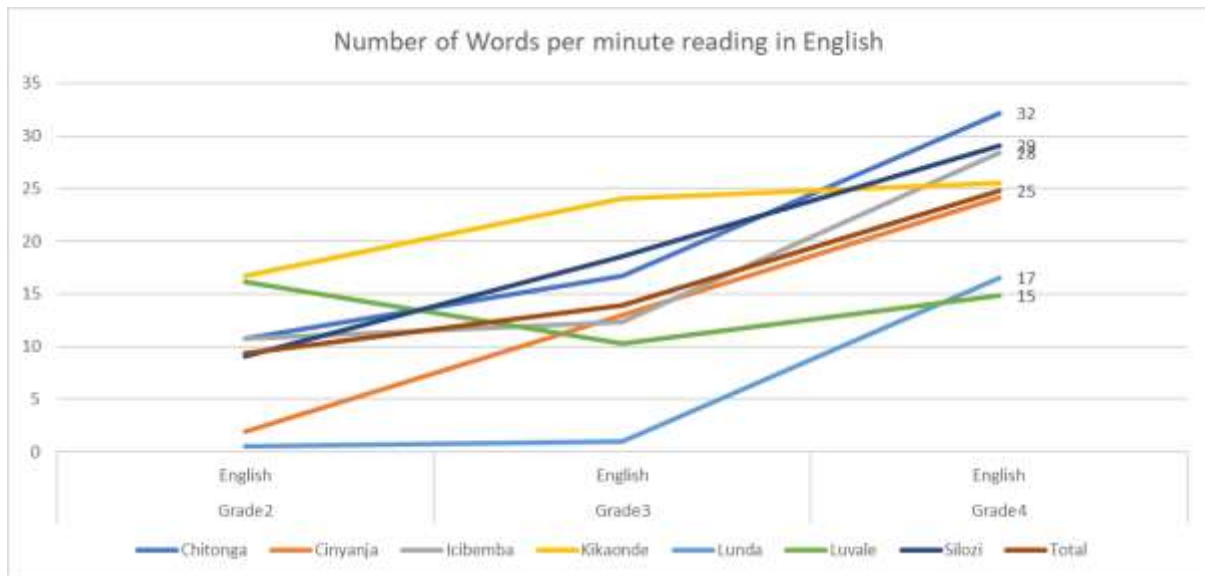


Figure 12: Number of words per minute in English

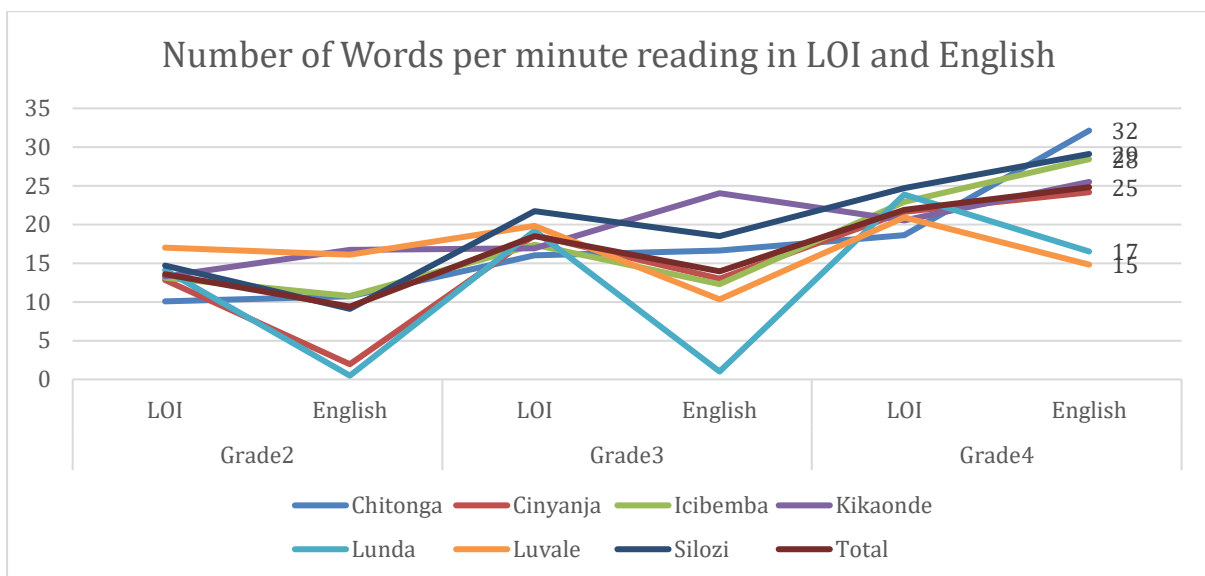


Figure 13: Number of words per minute for LOI and English

Finding 6 – Non-Readers in LOI and English: There were a significant number of non-readers – meaning learners who were unable to read a single word of the text – in grade 1 across all LOIs. In grade 2, the proportion of non-readers dropped by about 20%. Chitonga learners had a higher proportion of non-readers in grade 2, however, and there were significant differences in the proportion of non-readers in grade 2 across all LOIs.¹⁰

¹⁰ $\chi^2 (18, N = 353) = 32.536, p = .019$

Generally, there seems to be a decrease from USAID’s 2021 midline EGRA report, which documented 29% non-readers nationally. When compared to USAID’s EGRA baseline as well as the 2014 NAS, there is a decrease in the percentage of non-readers by 23% and 25%, respectively. These improvements are indicative of learning gains in Zambian classrooms since these two assessments were executed.

In English, the proportion for non-readers for grade 2 stood at 64%, compared to 41% in Zambian National Languages. Lunda and Cinyanja speakers had the highest number of non-readers in English across the LOIs.

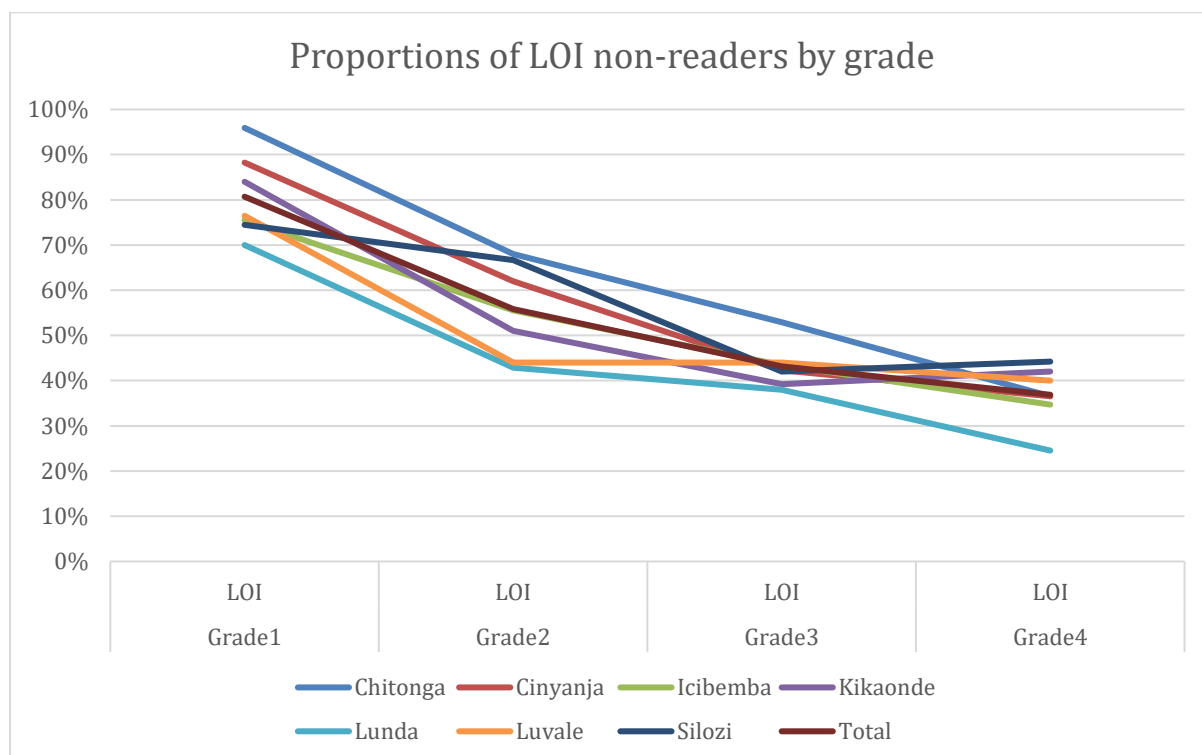


Figure 14: Proportion of LOI non-readers

Table 18: Non-reader comparisons across studies

	Current study	USAID midline	Diff Mid	USAID Baseline	Diff Baseline	2014 NAS	Diff NAS
Chitonga	58%	75%	-17%	74%	-16%	88%	-30%
Cinyanja	44%	68%	-24%	61%	-17%	64%	-20%
Icibemba	48%	63%	-15%	63%	-15%	52%	-4%
Kikaonde	31%	80%	-49%	75%	-44%	74%	-43%
Lunda	35%	69%	-34%	65%	-30%	46%	-11%
Luvale	18%	73%	-55%	56%	-38%	80%	-62%
Silozi	49%	61%	-12%	53%	-4%	56%	-7%
Total	41%	69%	-28%	64%	-23%	66%	-25%
	Ave Diff		-29%		-23%		-25%

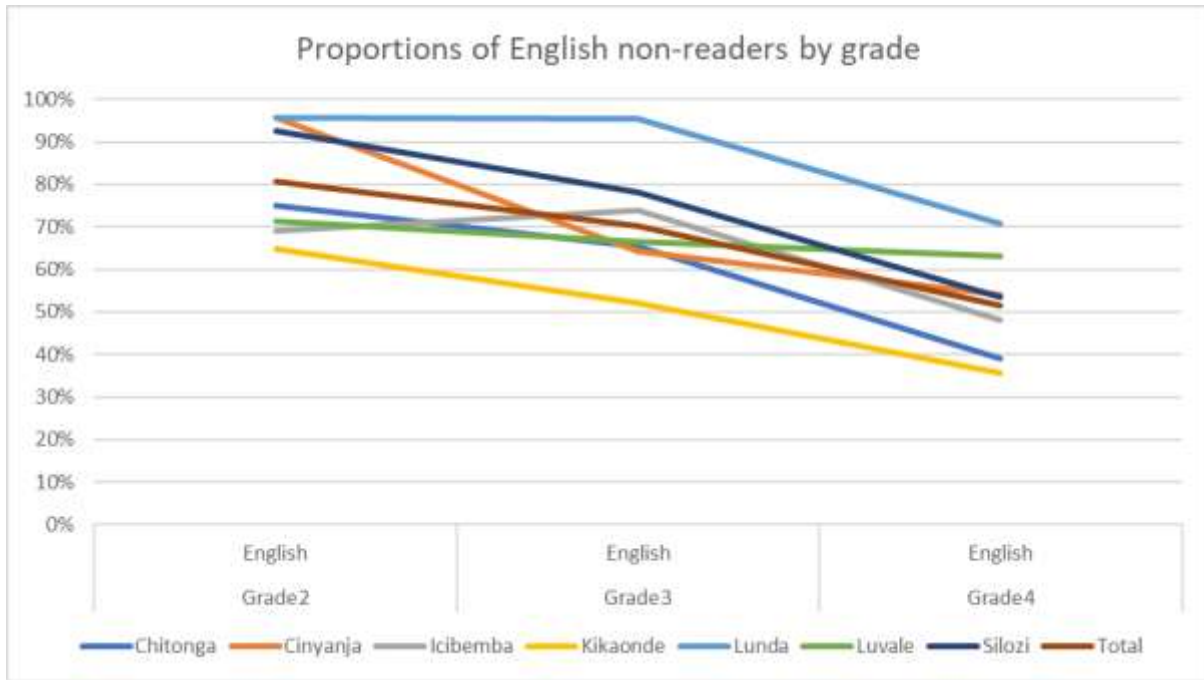


Figure 15: Proportion of non-readers in English

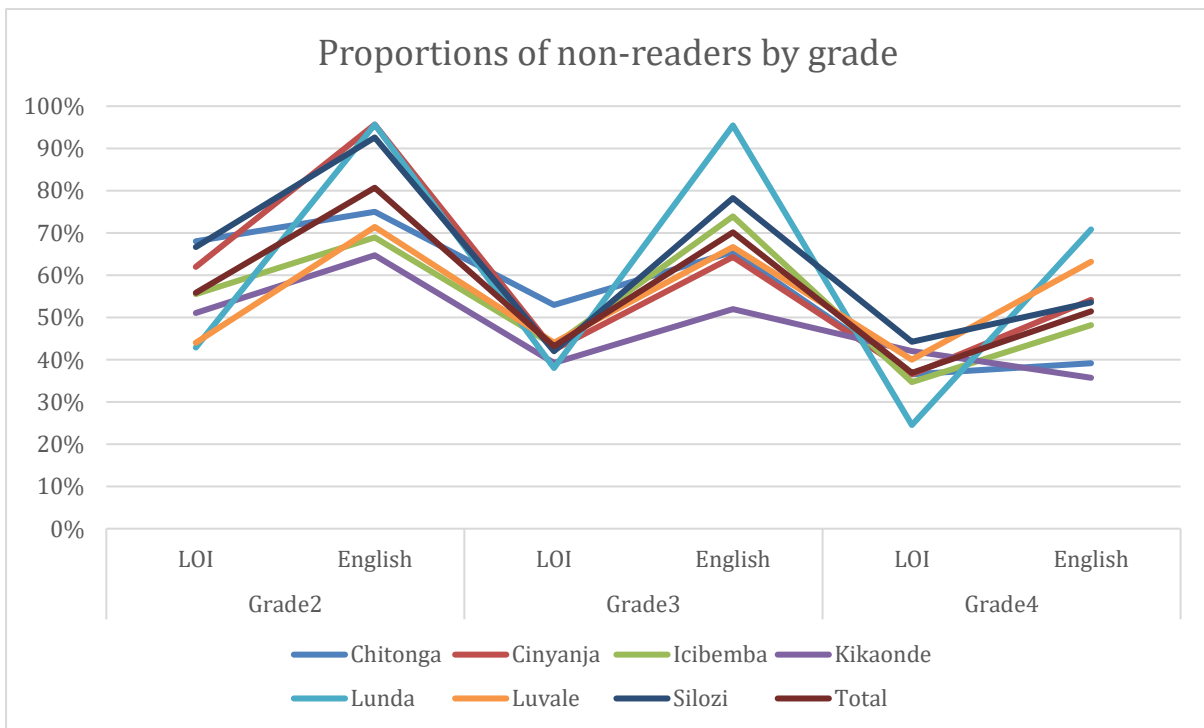


Figure 16: Proportion of non-readers

Finding 7 – LOI Reading Proficiency Profiles Among Learners: A reading proficiency profile score was computed for each learner based on four standard proficiency levels¹¹: non-readers, who read zero words in the passage; emergent readers, who read between 1% to 40% of the

¹¹ =IF(CELL=0,"No Learner", IF(CELL<0.4,"Emergent Learner", IF(CELL<0.75,"Established","Proficient")))

passage; established readers, who read between 41% to 75% of the passage; and proficient readers, who read more than 75% of the passage correctly. Below is a table showing the proportion of learners categorised by reading proficiency profiles across grades by LOI.

Generally, most grade one learners (64%) were non-readers. There were significant differences in the distribution of non-readers and emergent readers in grade 1 across LOIs, with Chitonga and Cinyanja learners performing at the lower end of the proficiency scale in comparison to their peers in other language communities.¹²

Grade 2 saw a reduction overall in the percentage of non-readers, in addition to an increase in the percentage of emergent and established readers across all LOIs. A noticeable number of proficient learners started emerging in grade 2 across all languages.

Grade 3 had a significantly different distribution of learners across proficiency levels and LOIs,¹³ with Chitonga interestingly having both the highest proportion of non-readers and of proficient learners.

Across all LOIs, most learners in grade 4 fell into the established and proficient reading profile categories. Even at this grade level, there were significant differences in the distribution of learners across profiles by LOI.¹⁴ Silozi (2%) and Cinyanja (8%) had the lowest proportion of learners in the proficient category in grade 4.

¹² χ^2 (18, N = 347) = 34.224, p=. 012)

¹³ χ^2 (18, N = 357) = 46.340, p=. 000)

¹⁴ χ^2 (18, N = 358) = 37.121, p=. 005)

Table 19: LOI Reading Proficiency

		LOI Reading Proficiency Profiles							Total
		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	
Gr 1	Non-Reader	86%	73%	55%	66%	54%	47%	68%	64%
	Emergent	6%	20%	31%	30%	30%	41%	19%	25%
	Established	0%	4%	8%	2%	8%	6%	11%	5%
	Proficient	8%	4%	6%	2%	8%	6%	2%	5%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gr 2	Non-Reader	58%	44%	48%	31%	35%	18%	49%	41%
	Emergent	14%	30%	26%	45%	37%	46%	27%	32%
	Established	16%	20%	15%	18%	18%	26%	22%	19%
	Proficient	12%	6%	11%	6%	10%	10%	2%	8%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gr 3	Non-Reader	41%	25%	34%	29%	32%	12%	34%	30%
	Emergent	12%	31%	26%	31%	12%	52%	30%	28%
	Established	24%	38%	26%	31%	42%	20%	30%	30%
	Proficient	24%	6%	13%	8%	14%	16%	6%	12%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gr 4	Non-Reader	25%	19%	22%	18%	21%	18%	31%	22%
	Emergent	23%	29%	24%	36%	13%	36%	17%	25%
	Established	25%	44%	31%	32%	42%	24%	50%	35%
	Proficient	27%	8%	22%	14%	25%	22%	2%	17%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Finding 8 – English Reading Proficiency Profiles among Learners: Luvale and Kikaonde had significantly higher proportions (18%) of learners in grade two who were proficient readers in English – a higher percentage than those who were proficient readers in their respective LOIs. While there were no statistically significant differences in proficiency across LOI¹⁵ in grade two, it was close.

In grade 3, about half of all learners (49%) were non-readers in English, compared to 30% in their respective LOIs in the same grade. Lunda had the highest proportion (95%) of non-readers.

There was a statistically significant distribution of grade 3 learners across proficiency levels across the LOIs,¹⁶ with Kikaonde having the highest proportion of proficient learners. Luvale speakers had significantly fewer proficient learners in grade 3 in comparison to grade 2, a pattern that was maintained through grade 4.

¹⁵ $\chi^2(18, N = 171) = 27.791, p = .065$

¹⁶ $\chi^2(18, N = 174) = 40.178, p = .002$

Generally, the proportion of English non-readers in grade 4 was 35% across all languages, compared to 22% when reading in their assigned LOI. While the gap was closing in grade 4, Lunda still have the lowest number of proficient learners in comparison to the other LOIs. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the distributions of proficient learners across LOI¹⁷ in grade 4.

Table 20: English Reading Proficiency

		English Reading Proficiency Profiles							Total
		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	
Grade 2	Non-Reader	54%	78%	62%	47%	96%	46%	63%	64%
	Emergent	38%	22%	24%	29%	4%	29%	30%	25%
	Established			7%	6%		7%	4%	4%
	Proficient	8%		7%	18%		18%	4%	8%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 3	Non-Reader	41%	50%	61%	28%	95%	33%	39%	49%
	Emergent	34%	36%	22%	40%	5%	58%	35%	33%
	Established	14%	14%	9%	12%		4%	13%	10%
	Proficient	10%		9%	20%		4%	13%	8%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 4	Non-Reader	13%	46%	37%	32%	58%	42%	18%	35%
	Emergent	43%	17%	19%	36%	13%	37%	39%	29%
	Established	13%	8%	15%	11%	17%	16%	21%	14%
	Proficient	30%	29%	30%	21%	13%	5%	21%	22%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Finding 9 – Reading Comprehension Proficiency in LOI and English: After reading the passage, learners were asked a series of comprehension questions about what they read. As with the reading passages, results were analysed to group learners into reading comprehension proficiency profiles based on how many questions they answered correctly for the LOI and English reading passages. Below is a table showing the proportions of learners in various proficiency levels across grades comprehending a story in their respective LOIs, followed by a similar table for English reading comprehension proficiency.

Generally, most of grade one learners (81%) were unable to read a story with comprehension (scoring zero), with significant differences, however, in the distribution of learners across language categories.¹⁸ Chitonga and Cinyanja had relatively a higher proportion of learners reading with no comprehension in grade 1.

¹⁷ $\chi^2(18, N = 173) = 26.016, p = .099$
¹⁸ $\chi^2(18, N = 347) = 43.254, p = .001$

In grade 2, the proportion of learners unable to read a story with comprehension dropped to 56%, with Chitonga speakers having the highest proportion of zero scores. There are also significant differences in the proportion of learners reading with comprehension in grade 2 across language category.¹⁹ Comparing grade 2 reading comprehension results to earlier studies, there seem to be a 20%-point decrease in the percentage of learners unable to answer a single comprehension question correctly against USAID's 2021 midline EGRA report. When compared to the USAID EGRA baseline study as well as the 2014 NAS, there is a decrease in the percentage of learners unable to answer a reading comprehension question correctly by about 16% and 24%, respectively. These improvements are also indicative of learning gains in reading comprehension since the last round of national assessments.

Grade 3 had a statistically significant distribution of learners across proficiency profile levels across LOIs²⁰, with Chitonga having the highest proportion of readers with zero comprehension and the highest proportion of readers comprehending at a proficient level.

On average, only about 9% of grade 4 learners read with comprehension at a proficient level in their respective LOI, and there were significant differences in the proportion of learners comprehending at a proficient level across LOIs.²¹ Silozi (2%), Kikaonde (2%) and Cinyanja (6%) had the lowest proportions of learners reading with comprehension in the proficient category.

In all, only 1% of grade one learners, 3% of grade two learners, 6% of grade three learners and 9% of grade four learners were able to read with comprehension in their LOIs at a proficient level.

Reading comprehension in English was more difficult: in grade two, 81% of learners were unable to answer any reading comprehension question correctly, compared to 56% of learners in LOI. Even by grade three, the proportion of learners who were reading with zero comprehension stood at 70%, which is significantly higher than grade 3 learners in their LOI, which stood at 43%. The same also applied in grade 4, where 51% of learners had zero scores in reading comprehension compared to 37% in their LOI.

¹⁹ χ^2 (18, N = 353) = 32.954, p=. 017)

²⁰ χ^2 (18, N = 357) = 46.397, p=. 005)

²¹ χ^2 (18, N = 358) = 42.354, p=. 001)

Table 21: LOI Reading Comprehension Proficiency

		LOI							Total
		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	
Grade 1	No Learner	96%	88%	76%	84%	70%	76%	74%	81%
	Emergent		12%	18%	14%	14%	20%	19%	14%
	Established			6%		16%	4%	6%	5%
	Proficient	4%			2%				1%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 2	No Learner	68%	62%	56%	51%	43%	44%	67%	56%
	Emergent	10%	24%	19%	35%	22%	28%	18%	22%
	Established	12%	12%	22%	14%	33%	24%	14%	19%
	Proficient	10%	2%	4%		2%	4%	2%	3%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 3	No Learner	53%	42%	43%	39%	38%	44%	42%	43%
	Emergent	16%	27%	15%	33%	8%	30%	20%	21%
	Established	20%	31%	34%	25%	42%	16%	38%	29%
	Proficient	12%		8%	2%	12%	10%		6%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 4	No Learner	37%	37%	35%	42%	25%	40%	44%	37%
	Emergent	10%	29%	16%	38%	15%	26%	21%	22%
	Established	35%	29%	35%	18%	51%	20%	33%	32%
	Proficient	19%	6%	14%	2%	9%	14%	2%	9%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 22: English Reading Comprehension Proficiency

		English							Total
		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	
Grade 2	No Learner	75%	96%	69%	65%	96%	71%	93%	81%
	Emergent	17%	4%	7%	12%	4%	18%		9%
	Established	8%		14%	12%		7%	4%	6%
	Proficient			10%	12%		4%	4%	4%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 3	No Learner	66%	64%	74%	52%	95%	67%	78%	70%
	Emergent	24%	25%	13%	8%		21%	4%	14%
	Established	3%	11%	9%	24%	5%	8%	13%	10%
	Proficient	7%		4%	16%		4%	4%	5%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Grade 4	No Learner	39%	54%	48%	36%	71%	63%	54%	51%
	Emergent	13%	17%	11%	36%	8%	16%	32%	20%
	Established	30%	21%	15%	11%	8%	21%	11%	16%
	Proficient	17%	8%	26%	18%	13%		4%	13%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 23: Non-learner comparisons in reading comprehension across studies

	Current study	USAID midline	Diff Mid	USAID Baseline	Diff Baseline	2014 NAS	Diff NAS
Chitonga	68%	76%	-8%	77%	-9%	94%	-26%
Cinyanja	62%	80%	-18%	76%	-14%	79%	-17%
Icibemba	56%	70%	-14%	73%	-17%	82%	-26%
Kikaonde	51%	88%	-37%	82%	-31%	89%	-38%
Lunda	43%	80%	-37%	73%	-30%	62%	-19%
Luvale	44%	83%	-39%	68%	-24%	84%	-40%
Silozi	67%	54%	13%	51%	16%	68%	-1%
Total	56%	75%	-19%	72%	-16%	80%	-24%
	Ave Diff		-20%		-16%		-24%

Finding 10 – Relationship between Reading Proficiency in LOI and English: It was found that generally there is a positive correlation between reading proficiency in LOI and reading English. **Positive correlation means there is transference of LL to English reading and a positive shift from learning to read in LL and learning to read in English.**

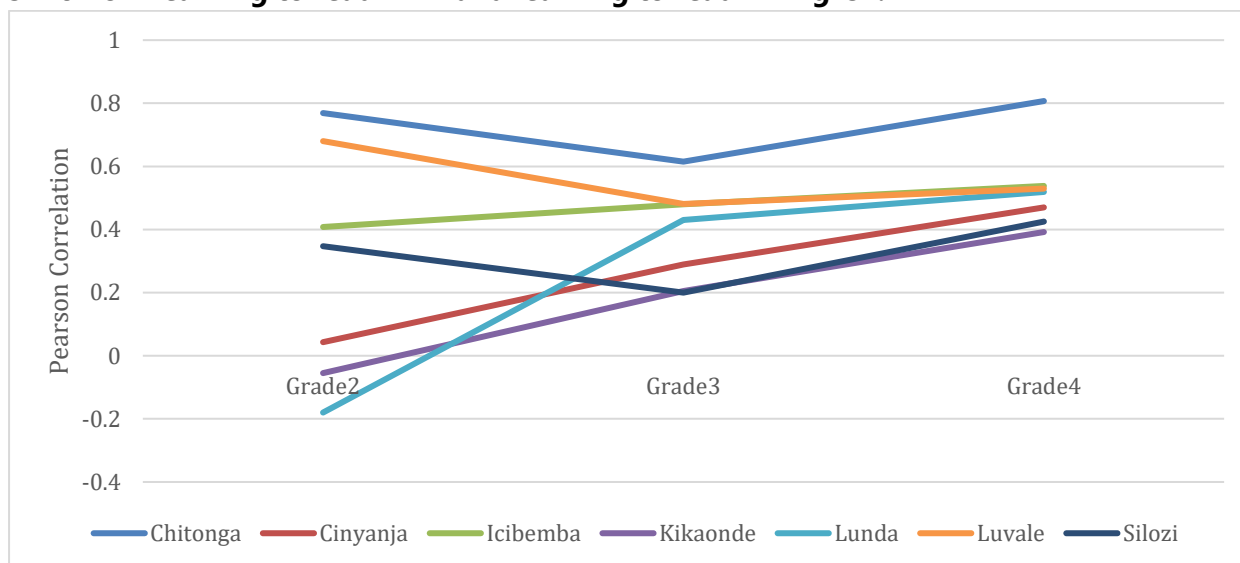


Figure 17: Relationship between Reading Proficiency in LOI and English

Chitonga, Cinyanja, Icibemba, Lunda, Luvale and Silozi had correlations significant at the 0.01 level while Kikaonde correlation was significant at the 0.05 level. Overall, Chitonga had a strong relationship ($r=0.670$) and this was significant (at the 0.01 level) across all grades with grade 4 with the strongest relationship ($r=0.807$).

Cinyanja had an overall moderate correlation ($r=0.351$) and this was only significant among the grade 4 learners ($r=0.470$) at the 0.05 level.

Icibemba had a relatively stronger relationship ($r=0.527$) with both grade 2 and three with moderate relationship significant at the 0.05 level while the grade 4 were relatively stronger ($r=0.538$) significant at the 0.01 level.

Kikaonde had the weakest relationship ($r=0.268$) and for the grade 2 the relationship was negative ($r=-0.055$), at grade 3 it was very weak and not significant. It was only in grade 4 that we found a moderate relationship ($r=0.392$) significant at the 0.05 level.

Lunda also had a moderate significantly strong relationship ($r=0.438$) but this was mostly pronounced in the grade 4s ($r=0.519$) and 3s ($r=0.430$) since the relationship was negative at the grade 2 level ($r=-0.180$).

Luvale also had a relatively stronger relationship ($r=0.582$) and this was significant (at the 0.01 level) and also for the grade twos. For grade 3s and 4s the relationship was moderate and significant at 0.05 level.

Silozi also had a relatively moderate relationship ($r=0.361$) only significant for the grade 4s ($r=0.425$) this was significant at the 0.05 level.

The final table in this section provides more detail on the relationships for each LOI and grade levels. Generally, there was a moderate correlation ($r=0.441$) across all the learners regardless of LOI and grade and this was significant at 0.01 level. Stronger relations were registered in Chitonga and Luvale. Also among the grade 4s there were relatively stronger relations across LOIs.

Table 24: Correlations between LOI and English Reading Proficiencies

			LOI Reading Proficiency	English Reading Proficiency	
Chitonga	Overall	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.670** ²²
			Sig. (2-tailed)		0
			N	202	76
	Grade 2	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.769**
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
			N	50	24
	Grade 3	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.615**
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
			N	51	29
	Grade 4	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.807**
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
			N	52	23
Cinyanja	Overall	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.351**
			Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002
			N	205	75
	Grade 2	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.043
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.845
			N	50	23
	Grade 3	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.289
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.135
			N	52	28
	Grade 4		Pearson Correlation	1	.470* ²³

²² **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

²³ *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

				LOI Reading Proficiency	English Reading Proficiency	
Icibemba	Overall	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021	
			N	52	24	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.527**	
	Grade 2	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	
			N	205	79	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.408*	
	Grade 3	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028	
			N	54	29	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.480*	
	Grade 4	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020	
			N	53	23	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.538**	
	Kikaonde	Overall	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
				N	200	70
				Pearson Correlation	1	.268*
Grade 2		LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.025	
			N	49	17	
			Pearson Correlation	1	-.055	
Grade 3		LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.835	
			N	51	25	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.205	
Grade 4		LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.327	
			N	50	28	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.392*	
Lunda		Overall	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.039
				N	202	69
				Pearson Correlation	1	.438**
	Grade 2	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	
			N	49	23	
			Pearson Correlation	1	-.180	
	Grade 3	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.412	
			N	50	22	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.430*	
	Grade 4	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.046	
			N	53	24	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.519**	
	Luvale	Overall	LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
				N	201	71
				Pearson Correlation	1	.582**
Grade 2		LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	
			N	50	28	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.680**	
Grade 3		LOI Reading Proficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
			N	50	28	
			Pearson Correlation	1	.481*	
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.017	

			LOI Reading Proficiency	English Reading Proficiency	
		N	50	24	
	Grade 4	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.530*
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.020
			N	50	19
Silozi	Overall	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.361**
			Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
			N	200	78
	Grade 2	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.347
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.076
			N	51	27
	Grade 3	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.200
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.359
			N	50	23
	Grade 4	LOI Reading Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	1	.425*
			Sig. (2-tailed)		.024
			N	52	28

Generally, there was a moderate correlation ($r=0.441$) across all the learners regardless of LOI and grade and this was significant at 0.01 level. Stronger relations were registered in Chitonga ($r=0.670$) and Luvale ($r=0.582$). Also among the grade 4s there were relatively stronger relations across LOIs.

Positive correlation means there is transference of LL to English reading and a positive shift from learning to read in LL and learning to read in English. From various qualitative interviews, it was noted that children's reading has improved, more on the reading of the local languages but not so much in the reading of English. The quality of English reading and results at grade 7 were said to be very low. DESO and DRCC – Chipata DEBS revealed that, on literacy as a district they have improved from 33% to 39% and feel that Chipata is one of the districts that is doing fine. However, this is still far below their expectations;

Yes, because we are seeing some percentages of children breaking through. .. Despite implementing this for the past six to eight years, we are still trailing behind; we are still trailing below 50% on average – if you look at Chipata... all the percentages are below the expectation, and the expectation should be probably around 60% and above; but we are still trailing below 50%.

DRCC and ESO Special -Petauke BEBS also reported some best practices where some children are able to read Cinyanja; they have broken through. There are some places of improvement.

We normally use local languages, especially here in Eastern province. Our children are very good at reading in the local languages. So, teachers are really doing their best. There are a few, I suppose, who have challenges. We see their results. They are able to read and write, and even passing at Grade 7 level... they don't fail local language. They only fail English and other subjects... Then it has also improved in terms of reading the actual local language. There is that improvement based on available records. I will speak of our district. It is very rare to find a child failing the local language at Grade 7 level. They pass because they understand very well, because it has been typically emphasized and explained from the early stage up to the latter stage.

The primary directorate also confirmed that there is still poor literacy and numeracy levels among foundational learners affecting across the curriculum and across the grades even up to grade 12;

Primary Directorate: *I think the results of the literacy levels of children speak volumes because the implementation of the policy and government programmes will be judged and evaluated based on the results. So, I can say we are still scoring poor literacy and numeracy levels among foundational learners. And this is seen across the curriculum and across the grades, because even when you go to Grades 8 to Grades 12 you will still have learners that are not reading, meaning that the foundation was poor. So, I cannot say we have 100% results that we desired.*

3.3. Teacher and Learner Classroom Experiences under the LOI Policy

Finding 1 – Classroom Experiences with Instructional Materials: Classroom observations in all language communities revealed that a significant number lacked instructional materials hanging on walls and made available to help with learner instruction in reading/literacy and other subjects. Only three of seven languages had these teaching and learning materials available during observed lessons at least 50% of the time for reading/literacy, and only two of seven languages had them available more than 50% of the time in other subjects. Positively, teachers used instructional materials the majority of the time in classrooms observed across all LOIs. Overwhelmingly, these materials included those available at a minimum standard across all classrooms in the country – chalkboard and chalk, and subject area textbooks. Reading books were observed in use in over 77% of classrooms – a positive finding regarding the teaching and learning materials required in an effective literacy instruction.

Table 25: Availability of Materials

		Does the classroom have materials hanging on the walls and made available throughout the classroom to help with learner instruction in reading/literacy?							Total
		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	
	No (25% or less time)	57%	53%	6%	31%	13%	67%	30%	36%
	Somewhat (between 25% to 50% of time)	14%	20%	25%	38%	33%	8%	40%	25%
	Yes (more than 50% of time)	29%	27%	69%	31%	53%	25%	30%	39%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
		Does the classroom have materials hanging on the walls and made available throughout the classroom to help with learner instruction in other subjects?							Total
		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	
	No (25% or less time)	57%	60%	19%	46%	13%	58%	40%	41%
	Somewhat (between 25% to 50% of time)	21%	13%	13%	15%	33%	8%	30%	19%
	Yes (more than 50% of time)	21%	27%	69%	38%	53%	33%	30%	40%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
		Does the teacher use instructional materials during the lesson?							Total

	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	
No	7%	13%	6%	8%			10%	6%
Somewhat	7%	13%		38%	27%			13%
Yes	86%	73%	94%	54%	73%	100%	90%	81%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 26: Table 26: Teaching Materials Used During Observed Lessons

Teaching Materials	Freq	Percent of cases (n=101)
Subject textbooks	88	87.1%
Exercise books	69	68.3%
Reading books	78	77.2%
Chalkboard	92	91.1%
Posters, pictures	71	70.3%
Wallcharts	74	73.3%
Workbooks	38	37.6%
Chalk	89	88.1%

Finding 2 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Teacher Positive Actions: Classroom observations revealed that teachers demonstrated a range of positive actions throughout their lessons, applying various effective teaching techniques while instructing learners in their literacy and numeracy classes. The tables below summarise these actions utilising a ‘traffic light system’ that assigns shades of red (limited use), amber (moderate use) and green (high use) to demonstrate the frequency of teachers using these positive actions during 10-minute lesson segments. Results are segmented by teacher action and LOI.

On average, teachers demonstrated a range of positive instructional methods and appropriate pedagogy throughout their 30-minute lessons, with most teachers demonstrating a high degree of learner engagement and encouraging participation through questioning and engaging learner-led activities. Teachers showed more limited use of lesson plans (reducing from an average of 67% of lessons in the first 10 minutes to between 40-50% of lessons for the duration of the time) and assessment practices (which hovered around 50% across all lessons observed throughout all three 10-minute segments).

Chitonga lessons demonstrated the least frequency of positive actions, while Kikaonde demonstrated the most. Reasons for this will be further explored in the teacher preparation and deployment section findings.

Table 27: Teacher actions - Positive Actions

Teacher actions - Positive Actions First 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Refers to TG or lesson plan while teaching	79%	33%	69%	85%	67%	83%	60%	67%
Moves freely around the classroom	86%	80%	75%	100%	80%	83%	80%	83%
Calls on individual learners by name	93%	80%	88%	100%	80%	92%	70%	86%
Encourages learner participation/questions, keeps attention	64%	80%	88%	92%	93%	92%	90%	85%
Brings learners back on task when needed	71%	93%	56%	100%	80%	83%	80%	80%
Observes and records learners' performance (assessment)	21%	73%	50%	77%	40%	42%	50%	51%
Engages girls and boys equally in activities	100%	80%	69%	100%	93%	75%	60%	83%
Teacher actions - Positive Actions Second 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Refers to TG or lesson plan while teaching	36%	53%	67%	31%	60%	42%	44%	48%
Moves freely around the classroom	71%	80%	67%	100%	73%	75%	89%	78%
Calls on individual learners by name	79%	80%	67%	85%	93%	83%	78%	81%
Encourages learner participation/questions, keeps attention	57%	80%	93%	100%	80%	75%	89%	82%
Brings learners back on task when needed	36%	87%	67%	100%	87%	58%	78%	73%
Observes and records learners' performance (assessment)	21%	80%	60%	54%	33%	67%	44%	52%
Engages girls and boys equally in activities	79%	73%	87%	85%	67%	83%	44%	75%
Teacher actions - Positive Actions Third 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Refers to TG or lesson plan while teaching	29%	21%	64%	10%	75%	42%	33%	39%
Moves freely around the classroom	71%	79%	64%	60%	83%	67%	78%	72%
Calls on individual learners by name	50%	71%	55%	80%	83%	83%	78%	71%
Encourages learner participation/questions, keeps attention	57%	71%	55%	90%	92%	67%	78%	72%
Brings learners back on task when needed	50%	79%	73%	90%	67%	67%	89%	72%
Observes and records learners' performance (assessment)	29%	57%	64%	80%	17%	50%	89%	52%
Engages girls and boys equally in activities	57%	64%	64%	90%	92%	67%	56%	70%

Finding 3 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Teacher Negative Actions: Classroom observations documented more infrequent and limited instructional strategies classified as negative actions, with the majority of teachers demonstrating them infrequently. In this table, blank cells indicate that the action was not observed. The most common negative actions displayed related to infrequent teacher movement and lack of engagement of individual learners (whether to probe with questions or to redirect misbehavior). Classrooms with Luvale as the LOI showed, on the whole, the most frequent and persistent negative actions across all variables and lesson segments. In keeping with the above findings on positive actions, Chitonga-speaking classrooms demonstrated the fewest negative actions, followed by Kikaonde. The most common negative action across all teachers and LOIs was lack of lesson planning and preparation by the teacher.

Table 28: Teacher actions - Negative Actions

Teacher actions - Negative Actions First 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Lesson does not appear planned		20%	13%		27%	33%	30%	17%
Remains at the front of the class		27%	19%	8%	33%	33%	20%	20%
Does not call on individual learners by name		7%	13%		7%	25%	20%	9%
Very little learner participation and attention		7%		8%	7%	42%	10%	9%
Ignores/does not address off-task learners			13%		7%	25%	10%	7%
Does not record learner performance (assessment)	7%		13%	8%	13%	42%		12%
Does not engage boys and girls equally in activities					7%	33%		5%
Teacher actions - Negative Actions Second 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Lesson does not appear planned		13%	7%	8%	27%	33%	22%	15%
Remains at the front of the class		20%	40%	15%	33%	33%		22%
Does not call on individual learners by name		7%	20%	8%	7%	25%	11%	11%
Very little learner participation and attention				23%		33%		8%
Ignores/does not address off-task learners			7%		7%	17%		4%
Does not record learner performance (assessment)	7%	13%		15%	7%	42%		12%
Does not engage boys and girls equally in activities		13%			7%	17%		5%
Teacher actions - Negative Actions Third 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Lesson does not appear planned		21%		10%	25%	42%	11%	16%
Remains at the front of the class		7%	27%	30%	33%	33%	11%	20%
Does not call on individual learners by name		7%	18%	10%	17%	25%		11%
Very little learner participation/questions and attention	7%	7%	18%	20%		25%		11%
Ignores/does not address off-task learners		7%	9%		8%	17%		6%
Does not record learner performance (assessment)		7%	9%	10%	25%	50%		15%
Does not engage boys and girls equally in activities	7%	14%			8%	25%		9%

Finding 4 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Reading Actions: Classroom observations also measured learner actions and behaviours related to reading instruction. The same traffic light system and presentation is used for this data. Literacy classrooms were observed, across all languages, teaching sounds, letters and words in the school's assigned LOI. Sentences (36%) and stories (21%) were taught to a far lesser extent across all languages and schools.

Little progression was observed across each 10-minute segment in every LOI, meaning that learners are largely being exposed to foundational reading skills related to phonological awareness, decoding and word identification, but given limited time to practice these skills to become more automatic, fluent readers of sentences and stories before their attention shifts to comprehension. The ability to read a grade-appropriate passage orally and answer related questions is an authentic expectation in the lower primary grades, but focusing on instructing students in just a few skills (as observed in these lessons) results in limited development of students' reading and comprehension abilities.

These findings could be suggestive as to why learners are acquiring reading fluency and comprehension skills at lower, slower rates than expected in the early primary grades. Findings also are illustrative at the teacher level, in that teachers pointed to their lack of knowledge and confidence instructing students in literacy in their school's assigned LOI as a reason for not wanting to apply the LOI policy in their classrooms. The instructional methods and activities they delivered in this lesson are, in part, aligned with this self-assessment of limited capability.

Without specific, targeted and ongoing training and support to teach literacy, and to teach it in zonal national languages, Zambia's children will continue facing challenges acquiring the necessary reading and writing skills required to develop a basic level of fluency and comprehension in any language they study.

In addition to findings regarding instructional content, classroom observations showed that learners are getting limited exposure throughout entire literacy lessons to reading words and stories in books, textbooks, or other reading and writing instructional materials. They are also restricted in their ability to produce work on their own or in small groups, with most instruction throughout the lesson happening with the whole class. Most classwork is performed at the chalkboard, with infrequent and non-progressive individual work and practice.

By the third 10 and final 10 minutes of all lessons observed across all languages, learners are not observed doing any meaningful instructional tasks, practice, interaction or engagement with typical reading activities. In effect, much of the productive parts of the lesson are executed within the first 10 minutes, with the quality and variety of classroom reading instruction reducing considerably over the next lesson phases.

Table 29: Learner Reading

Learner Reading first 10 minutes								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silози	Total
Sounds	29%	47%	69%	100%	33%	58%	30%	53%
Letters	14%	47%	63%	69%	53%	42%	20%	45%
Words	29%	73%	56%	77%	67%	75%	70%	63%
Sentences	43%	33%	44%	8%	27%	58%	40%	36%
Stories	14%	20%	44%	8%	20%	17%	20%	21%
Whole class	64%	87%	69%	69%	53%	50%	60%	65%
Smaller group		7%	6%	8%	13%	8%	20%	8%
Individual at board	36%	40%	63%	31%	33%	25%	40%	39%
Individual at seat	14%	47%	31%	38%	33%	42%	30%	34%
On board	43%	67%	75%	54%	40%	33%	40%	52%
In reading book	14%		19%		20%	17%	10%	12%
In textbook	7%	13%	25%		7%	42%	50%	19%
Other	14%	20%	6%	23%	27%	8%		15%
Learner Reading Second 10 minutes								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silози	Total
Sounds	21%	33%	40%	85%	33%	50%	11%	40%
Letters	7%	40%	27%	54%	40%	33%	11%	31%
Words	36%	67%	60%	69%	80%	67%	67%	63%
Sentences	50%	33%	40%	8%	40%	33%	44%	35%
Stories	43%	7%	20%		27%	17%	33%	20%
Whole class	43%	67%	53%	46%	73%	33%	56%	54%
Smaller group	14%	7%	13%		13%	8%	11%	10%
Individual at board	36%	40%	53%	46%	27%	33%	44%	40%
Individual at seat	7%	67%	20%	62%	20%	25%	56%	35%
On board	50%	67%	47%	38%	80%	25%	11%	48%
In reading book	21%	20%	20%		27%	33%	11%	19%
In textbook		20%	13%		20%	17%	33%	14%
Other	7%	13%	20%	15%	27%			13%
Learner Reading Third 10 minutes								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silози	Total
Sounds	7%	21%	36%	70%	50%	33%	11%	32%
Letters	7%	29%	9%	40%	58%	25%	22%	27%
Words	21%	57%	36%	60%	92%	50%	78%	55%
Sentences	36%	50%	36%		33%	42%	44%	35%
Stories	21%	14%	18%		17%	8%	33%	16%
Whole class	29%	43%	36%	20%	67%	17%	33%	35%
Smaller group	7%	14%	36%	10%	17%	8%		13%
Individual at board	14%	21%	36%	10%	25%	42%	33%	26%
Individual at seat	21%	36%	36%	30%	33%	50%	44%	35%
On board	14%	36%	45%	10%	58%	42%	44%	35%
In reading book	14%	7%	18%		33%	42%	11%	18%
In textbook	14%		36%		25%	33%	44%	21%
Other		21%		30%	25%			11%

Finding 5 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Writing Actions: Classroom observations captured learner writing actions in addition to reading during literacy lessons. As with reading actions, learners are getting limited exposure to more complex writing instruction and tasks. Unlike reading actions, results varied across zonal LOIs with Icibemba, Kikaonde and Luvale demonstrating more appropriate and varied instructional methods for teaching writing in the early grades. Chitonga and Cinyanja demonstrated the least variety and application of appropriate methods for teaching early grade writing in national LOIs. As before, blank spaces in the table indicate these methods of instruction and practice, and of the types of written content for that instruction and practice, exhibited gaps during teacher instructional delivery. Given that the development of literacy is a complex process involving writing as well as reading (in addition to listening and speaking), this component of classroom delivery and experiences under the LOI policy appears to have noticeable gaps that are likely affecting student learning outcomes across the country.

Table 30: Learner Writing

Learner Writing first 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silosi	Total
Pictures		13%	13%		20%	33%	30%	15%
Grammar	7%	13%	19%		7%	42%		13%
Name		13%	19%		20%	33%		13%
Letters	7%	27%	44%	46%	27%	33%	40%	32%
Words	14%	53%	44%	62%	33%	67%	70%	47%
Sentences	14%	13%	31%	8%	7%	58%	20%	21%
Air writing			6%	23%		25%		7%
Writing own text		20%	19%		7%	8%		8%
Handwriting practice		13%	6%	8%	13%	8%		7%
Copying teacher text -board	14%	20%	31%	23%	13%	25%	10%	20%
On paper	7%	7%	25%	31%		17%	30%	16%
On board	7%	53%	56%	31%	33%	33%	30%	36%
Learner Writing Second 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silosi	Total
Pictures		13%	13%		13%	17%	11%	10%
Grammar	7%	13%			13%	33%		10%
Name		13%	13%		13%			6%
Letters	14%	33%	33%	54%	40%	33%	22%	33%
Words	14%	73%	47%	62%	47%	58%	78%	53%
Sentences	14%	53%	33%	8%	20%	58%	44%	32%
Air writing		7%		23%		17%		6%
Writing own text		13%	13%		20%	17%	11%	11%
Handwriting practice			7%		13%			3%
Copying teacher text -board	36%	53%	40%	46%	27%	50%	11%	39%
On paper	14%	33%	40%	31%	7%	25%	44%	27%
On board	7%	33%	27%	15%	27%	25%	22%	23%
Learner Writing Third 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silosi	Total
Pictures		7%	9%		17%		11%	6%
Grammar		21%			25%	25%		11%
Name		21%	9%		17%			7%
Letters	7%	36%	36%	50%	50%	25%	22%	32%

Words	14%	57%	64%	80%	83%	75%	78%	62%
Sentences	29%	71%	27%		42%	33%	56%	38%
Air writing				20%		25%		6%
Writing own text	7%	7%	9%		33%	33%		13%
Handwriting practice			9%		8%			2%
Copying teacher text -board	36%	50%	36%	20%	42%	58%	22%	39%
On paper	36%	21%	55%	40%	33%	17%	33%	33%
On board	7%	21%	45%	20%	42%	33%		24%

Finding 6 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Speaking and Listening Actions:

Classroom observations indicated that learners had an opportunity to participate in speaking and listening actions in lessons in their assigned LOIs at varying rates across languages and within each 10-minute lesson segment. Most speaking and listening activities were between students and teachers and as a whole class. Learners and teachers spoke almost entirely in their assigned LOIs, though the use of English was observed across all lessons and languages to a certain extent. Children in Lunda-speaking classrooms had the most opportunity to engage in listening and speaking activities, while children in Cinyanja- and Icibemba-speaking classrooms had the least.

Table 31: Speaking/Listening

Speaking/Listening first 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
To a partner	14%	27%	38%		27%	33%	20%	23%
To the teacher	93%	60%	63%	77%	67%	67%	60%	69%
To a small group		27%	25%		20%	8%		13%
To the whole class	64%	60%	44%	31%	93%	50%	80%	60%
English	21%	33%	38%	15%	7%	17%	40%	24%
Familiar language	71%	60%	63%	62%	93%	58%	70%	68%
Speaking/Listening second 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
To a partner	21%	20%	33%		33%	25%	33%	24%
To the teacher	79%	47%	73%	92%	80%	67%	56%	71%
To a small group	7%	27%	27%	8%	13%		22%	15%
To the whole class	43%	53%	40%	23%	67%	50%	78%	49%
English	21%	20%	13%	15%	7%	17%	44%	18%
Familiar language	64%	47%	47%	69%	73%	42%	67%	58%
Speaking/Listening Third 10min								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
To a partner	14%	21%	45%	20%	33%	17%	22%	24%
To the teacher	50%	36%	36%	90%	58%	50%	44%	51%
To a small group	14%	14%	27%		25%			12%
To the whole class	50%	29%	27%	30%	92%	42%	78%	49%
English	29%	14%	18%		17%	8%	33%	17%
Familiar language	50%	29%	55%	80%	92%	50%	67%	59%

Finding 7 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Engagement: Classroom observations documented that learners are engaged in multiple ways during lessons, with moderate variation across languages. Multiple means of engagement is a core foundation of any learner-centred method and is important in instruction to ensure learners understand and take meaning from teacher-provided content. The most critical difference in learner engagement approaches related to access to printed materials, which was low across all LOIs and especially so in Luvale, Silozi and Lunda.

The highest degree of access to printed materials used during lessons was in Kikaonde; still, only 46% of Kikaonde-speaking classrooms utilised printed materials to engage learners and hold their interest during instruction. Peer interaction among learners was observed to a significant degree in most lessons across all languages, as was teacher feedback and guidance. Learners were, on the whole, exposed to a range of information formats, though these mostly centred on whole group materials such as chalkboards, verbal instruction from teachers, and written content on the board.

Table 32: Means of engagement

Multiple means of Engagement/Recruiting Interest of Learner								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Printed materials are provided to learners.	● 36%	● 40%	● 38%	● 46%	● 27%	● 8%	● 20%	● 32%
Hard of Hearing learners in activities.	● 7%	● 0%	● 0%	● 0%	● 13%	● 8%	● 0%	● 4%
Learner given relevant content, examples they value, or the topic or skill is true to their lives.	● 93%	● 93%	● 75%	● 85%	● 100%	● 75%	● 50%	● 83%
Learners shown the goal of the lesson in writing and hear the goal in a language in a way that makes sense to them.	● 93%	● 80%	● 88%	● 100%	● 87%	● 100%	● 80%	● 89%
Learners given resources that range in difficulty and challenge	● 71%	● 67%	● 19%	● 69%	● 40%	● 42%	● 40%	● 49%
Learners given opportunities to collaborate with one another	● 79%	● 60%	● 81%	● 92%	● 67%	● 58%	● 80%	● 74%
Feedback provided by the teacher gives the learner clear guidance on next steps	● 93%	● 80%	● 94%	● 85%	● 87%	● 100%	● 90%	● 89%
self-assess and reflect when learning.	● 71%	● 73%	● 56%	● 77%	● 40%	● 83%	● 80%	● 67%
Learners are given information in multiple formats (e.g. chalkboard, book, verbal, written) to enable learning.	● 93%	● 100%	● 88%	● 92%	● 93%	● 100%	● 80%	● 93%

Finding 8 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Representing Information: Classroom observations also documented how teachers shared information with learners. Teachers largely (87%) chose throughout lessons how to display information and most (85%) gave a variety of examples to explain a concept. Scaffolding (83%) was also applied to help learners break down new information and content, though teachers were observed to a lesser degree (71%) helping learners generalise this information from one topic or skill to another.

Across all languages, teachers were observed helping learners make connections across languages to aid in their comprehension, in keeping with other self-reported teacher and student actions in the classroom above. Teachers clearly have a degree of autonomy in how they apply language to instruction, given the variation across classrooms and LOIs in this finding. This is important, as it demonstrates teacher creativity and agency in meeting the needs of learners and addressing the reality of multi-lingual classrooms and student populations.

Table 33: Means of representing information

	Multiple Means of Representing Information							
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Teacher suggests and chooses how information is displayed.	100%	87%	81%	77%	87%	92%	90%	87%
Teacher gives a variety of examples to explain vocabulary, letters, and grammar.	93%	87%	81%	85%	80%	100%	70%	85%
Teacher scaffolds (breaks information into bits) to decode text, words, and letters.	100%	93%	69%	85%	67%	83%	90%	83%
Teacher helps to see and make connections across languages (e.g., English, Familiar Language, Other Language)	86%	80%	81%	77%	73%	83%	80%	80%
Teacher shows pictures and real items to illustrate ideas and content	50%	60%	69%	69%	47%	67%	70%	61%
Teacher guides learners to recall background knowledge	86%	93%	75%	77%	73%	100%	70%	82%
Teacher guides learners to generalize information about one topic or skill and apply it to another.	64%	80%	63%	54%	80%	75%	80%	71%

Finding 9 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Action and Expression: Classroom observations recorded the various ways teachers allowed and encouraged learners to express themselves and demonstrate their understanding of content. Teachers across all languages most commonly supported learners to practice with new material in small parts, allowing them to demonstrate their capabilities in mainly specific, functional, tasks rather than more complex conceptual ones.

Positively, learners were allowed to use methods other than writing to show their understanding, though this was observed to a lesser degree in three language communities: Lunda, Luvale and Silozi. Learners were only allowed, on average, to use pictures, drawing or real items to express themselves about 50% of the time across all lessons and languages, indicating that teachers are

not placing huge value on developmental writing techniques as learners develop their literacy skills.

This could limit their early progression in writing (and also reading), as making the jump from images to words is an important pre- and early literacy skill that should be encouraged in the classroom. Pictures and images are also neutral regarding language, and provide a good mechanism for teaching vocabulary and new content in a school's assigned LOI – especially in multilingual classrooms.

Table 34: Means of actions and expression

Multiple Means of Action and Expression								
	Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Total
Learners are able to demonstrate their knowledge by using rate, timing, or speed that suits them and in ways other than paper and pencil.	▲100%	▲87%	■63%	▲77%	▼33%	■58%	▲90%	■72%
Learners encouraged to use any assistive devices they have to demonstrate their knowledge.	■57%	▼40%	▼19%	▼23%	▼27%	■58%	■50%	▼38%
Learners allowed to use pictures, drawings, and real items to express their knowledge.	■50%	■47%	■50%	▲85%	■47%	▲75%	▼40%	■56%
Learners allowed to use methods other than writing to show their knowledge (e.g. role play, verbal response)	▲100%	▲93%	▲75%	▲92%	■47%	■67%	■50%	▲76%
Learners encouraged to take small learning steps when practicing. -	▲93%	▲73%	▲75%	▲85%	▲73%	▲75%	▲80%	▲79%

Finding 10 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Learner Opinions about Performance:

Learners were interviewed to better understand their learning experiences and opinions regarding the LOI policy as it is applied in their school.

Table 35: Ability to read like others and in front of others

		I can read as well as my friends				
	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Chitonga	202	21.8%	51.0%	5.9%	17.8%	3.5%
Cinyanja	205	22.0%	52.2%	9.8%	11.7%	4.4%
Icibemba	205	12.2%	65.9%	2.9%	17.6%	1.5%
Kikaonde	200	25.5%	37.5%	19.5%	16.0%	1.5%
Lunda	202	17.8%	61.9%	5.4%	14.4%	0.5%
Luvale	201	10.0%	76.1%	2.0%	11.4%	0.5%
Silozi	201	15.4%	75.6%	2.5%	5.5%	1.0%
		I get nervous when I have to read in front of others				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Chitonga		10.9%	20.8%	7.4%	53.0%	7.9%

		I can read as well as my friends				
	n	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Cinyanja		9.8%	26.3%	5.4%	44.4%	14.1%
Icibemba		7.8%	42.0%	1.0%	45.9%	3.4%
Kikaonde		6.5%	36.0%	6.0%	36.5%	15.0%
Lunda		4.0%	24.3%	2.0%	68.8%	1.0%
Luvale		2.0%	37.3%	1.0%	58.2%	1.5%
Silozi		4.0%	26.9%	2.5%	63.2%	3.5%

They were asked to rate their performance against their peers and level of confidence engaging in language-specific tasks in front of others. On the whole, across all languages and schools, learners expressed a high degree of confidence in both their personal foundational literacy and numeracy capabilities in comparison to their peers, as well as in their ability and willingness to demonstrate their knowledge or skills in front of others. Majority (78%) learners agreed that they can read just like their friends and this was also comparably the same to learners (76%) who felt they were good in mathematics just like their friends. Most (59%) reported not being nervous when asked to read in front of others and this was also comparably the same with the proportion of learners (63%) who reported not getting nervous when they have to work out a mathematical problem in front of the class.

Table 36: Ability to do math like others and in front of others

		I get nervous when I have to do maths in front of others				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Chitonga		4.5%	17.8%	12.9%	59.9%	5.0%
Cinyanja		3.9%	30.7%	4.4%	47.3%	13.7%
Icibemba		4.4%	31.7%	1.0%	59.5%	3.4%
Kikaonde		8.0%	28.0%	6.5%	48.0%	9.5%
Lunda		2.0%	24.8%	5.0%	65.3%	3.0%
Luvale		2.0%	34.3%	1.0%	61.2%	1.5%
Silozi		3.0%	24.4%	6.5%	59.2%	7.0%
		I am as good at maths as my friends				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Chitonga		8.9%	58.4%	12.9%	15.8%	4.0%
Cinyanja		19.0%	56.6%	9.8%	13.7%	1.0%
Icibemba		8.3%	72.7%	3.4%	15.1%	0.5%
Kikaonde		15.0%	53.0%	10.0%	19.5%	2.5%
Lunda		7.9%	75.2%	5.0%	11.9%	0.0%
Luvale		2.5%	70.1%	1.5%	23.9%	2.0%
Silozi		11.4%	70.1%	6.0%	11.9%	0.5%

This is a positive set of findings, indicating that teachers have built classroom environments where expression and demonstration are encouraged national languages across both literacy and numeracy lessons.

Table 37: Confidence answering questions

Languages	I feel confident answering questions in class				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Chitonga	16.8%	62.4%	11.4%	7.4%	2.0%
Cinyanja	21.5%	65.4%	4.4%	6.8%	2.0%
Icibemba	14.1%	73.2%	2.0%	9.3%	1.5%
Kikaonde	19.0%	59.5%	8.5%	12.5%	0.5%
Lunda	11.4%	74.3%	4.0%	10.4%	0.0%
Luvale	10.4%	71.1%	3.5%	14.4%	0.5%
Silози	20.4%	65.2%	3.5%	9.0%	2.0%

Finding 11 – Classroom Experiences Regarding Teacher Actions Supporting Student Learning:

Interviews with teachers and parents revealed a series of actions teachers take in their classrooms across language communities in support of the LOI policy. These actions are implemented during instruction to improve the teaching and learning process and support student comprehension and overall understanding of content. Some actions are applied more frequently than others, including trans-language (a technique teachers use during instruction by mixing languages to facilitate student understanding); speaking slowly and repeating information, and writing on the chalkboard. Interestingly, parents are also aware of these methods, identifying that they help their children understand the teacher and take meaning from lessons.

Table 38: Teacher Actions that Support Student Learning

Teacher Actions	Teacher (n=101)		Parent (n=393)	
	Freq	% Cases	Freq	% cases
Trans-languaging	708	51.8%	413	32.3%
Charts in local language	466	34.1%	98	7.7%
Letter sounds in local language	391	28.6%	145	11.3%
Provide me with my own materials	230	16.8%	318	24.9%
Sitting at the front of the classroom	228	16.7%		-
Make sure classroom has enough light	134	9.8%		-
Speak loudly	538	39.4%	231	18.1%
Speak slowly repeat information	799	58.5%	386	30.2%
Write on the board	714	52.3%	69	5.4%
Use pictures	382	28.0%	126	9.9%
Students/children to help support	100	7.3%	100	7.8%
Teachers/parent to help support	25	1.8%	93	7.3%
Provide adapted materials	72	5.3%	77	6.0%
Other	71	5.2%	288	22.5%

Finding 12 – Teacher Expectations of Learner’s Literacy Skills: Teachers were asked to identify at which grade level from ECE to grade 4 that students should be able to demonstrate a range of foundational literacy skills in three languages: 1) their school’s assigned LOI; 2) the learner’s familiar language (e.g. their home language or language of play); and 3) in English.

Teachers generally professed low expectations of learner performance in the main goals of literacy (reading fluency and comprehension) across the early grades. Around 40% of teachers felt that children should not be able to fluently read and understand a short passage in any language until grade 3, while around 30% felt they should not be able to write a short story until grades 2 or 3. Teachers indicated they expect limited grade level progression on these key skills prior to this.

In addition, teachers do not expect incoming grade 1 learners to demonstrate any emergent literacy or numeracy skills, an indication they do not expect learners to be school-ready when they begin primary. There is a large change in their expectations for learners once they are in grade 1: teachers generally expected learners in grade 1 across all three language categories (school LOI, familiar language and English) to be equally able to read and recognise letters, identify initial sounds, segment words into syllables, and be able to listen to stories told to them by teachers. While the LOI policy and national literacy framework identify these skills to be developed in learners in grade 1 in their school’s LOI (which is supposed to be their familiar language), reading in English is not supposed to be introduced until grade 2, as grade 1 is reserved for listening and speaking skills development.

These misaligned expectations are likely driven by a range of factors, including teacher’s personal experiences in the classroom with learners, gaps in their training and knowledge of the curriculum, and their beliefs about learning. Learners who enter primary school without a nursery education may struggle to gain foundational skills in the early years in their assigned LOI, leading to their poor performance and slow overall growth. If grade 1 instruction does not address these gaps, reading problems compound over time and become increasingly difficult to address.

To combat these challenges, teachers must be taught how children acquire literacy and numeracy in both a familiar language and foreign one like English – and at times, a school’s LOI – and understand the key competencies they must progressively demonstrate in the early grades to become fluent readers in both their school’s assigned LOI and English.

Table 39: Literacy skills

Literacy skills	ECE	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4 or later
Literacy Skills in the Language of Instruction (if it is a learners’ Familiar Language)					
<i>Demonstrate basic skills in reading and writing simple and compound sentences</i>	6.9%	52.5%	25.7%	9.9%	5.0%
<i>Write short stories/passages</i>	1.0%	11.9%	36.6%	29.7%	20.8%
<i>Read and comprehend short texts based on different cross-cutting themes</i>	0.0%	11.9%	29.7%	36.6%	21.8%
<i>Recognize written letters and say letter names</i>	31.7%	51.5%	9.9%	2.0%	5.0%

Literacy skills	ECE	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4 or later
<i>Show skills of reading initial sounds i.e. letters, syllables and word.</i>	13.9%	71.3%	10.9%	2.0%	2.0%
<i>Segment words into syllables</i>	4.0%	63.4%	19.8%	9.9%	3.0%
<i>Listen to stories which are told or read by teachers</i>	4.0%	63.4%	19.8%	9.9%	4.0%
<i>Write in script and cursive forms.</i>	5.0%	15.8%	17.8%	28.7%	32.7%
Literacy Skills in a Familiar Language (home language or language of play)					
<i>Demonstrate basic skills in reading and writing simple and compound sentences</i>	6.9%	47.5%	28.7%	11.9%	5.0%
<i>Write short stories/passages</i>	1.0%	16.8%	32.7%	34.7%	14.9%
<i>Read and comprehend short texts based on different cross-cutting themes</i>	2.0%	11.9%	25.7%	37.6%	22.8%
<i>Recognize written letters and say letter names</i>	21.8%	52.5%	15.8%	5.0%	5.0%
<i>Show skills of reading initial sounds i.e. letters, syllables and word.</i>	14.9%	63.4%	10.9%	7.9%	3.0%
<i>Segment words into syllables</i>	2.0%	54.5%	30.7%	9.9%	3.0%
<i>Listen to stories which are told or read by teachers</i>	27.7%	43.6%	10.9%	12.9%	3.0%
<i>Write in script and cursive forms.</i>	1.0%	19.8%	16.8%	24.8%	37.6%
Literacy Skills in English					
<i>Demonstrate basic skills in reading and writing simple and compound sentences</i>	5.9%	31.7%	26.7%	28.7%	6.9%
<i>Write short stories/passages</i>	1.0%	12.9%	30.7%	33.7%	21.8%
<i>Read and comprehend short texts based on different cross-cutting themes</i>	1.0%	10.9%	17.8%	43.6%	26.7%
<i>Recognize written letters and say letter names</i>	15.8%	44.6%	21.8%	14.9%	3.0%
<i>Show skills of reading initial sounds i.e. letters, syllables and word.</i>	7.9%	47.5%	21.8%	18.8%	4.0%
<i>Segment words into syllables</i>	2.0%	39.6%	31.7%	21.8%	5.0%
<i>Listen to stories which are told or read by teachers</i>	23.8%	29.7%	18.8%	22.8%	5.0%
<i>Write in script and cursive forms.</i>	1.0%	8.9%	14.9%	25.7%	49.5%

3.4. Teaching and Learning Materials

Finding 1 – Teaching and Learning Materials Available for Literacy Instruction: Teacher and head teacher interviews and school environment surveys found that teaching and learning materials for literacy instruction in LOI and English have been provided across all languages and provinces over the last two years, but to varying degrees. Schools assigned to the Chitonga, Icibemba and Kikaonde LOI received the fewest materials, while those with the Silozi, Lunda and Luvale LOIs received the most. The Ministry of Education also supplied the fewest number of materials in these language communities, with other non-government providers covering – to a much lesser extent – some of the gaps.

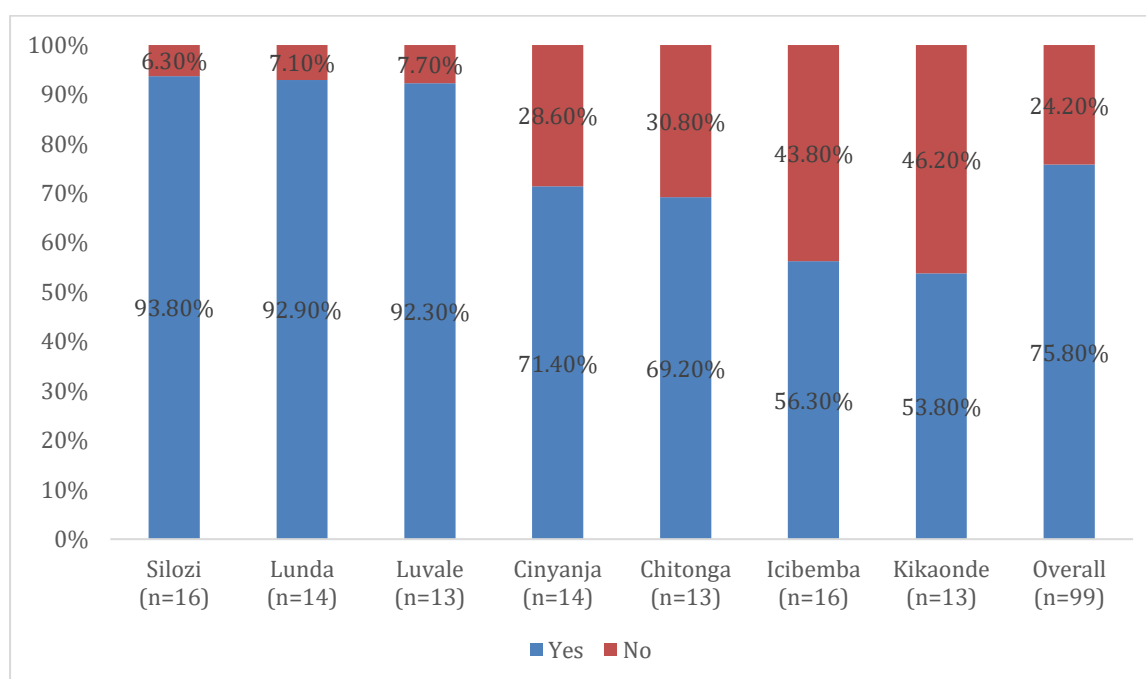


Figure 18: Receipt of Literacy Materials by Language

Schools in the Central, Luapula and Lusaka Provinces received the fewest number of materials, while those in Eastern and Southern Provinces received the most. Of the materials received, the greatest majority were textbooks and teacher’s guides, followed to a much lesser degree by supplementary readers and lesson guidelines. This uneven distribution of resources across LOIs and provinces could be a contributing factor to differential academic outcomes in the early grades, as access to resources in schools is critical to improving teaching and learning for all students.

Table 40: Types of Materials Received

Teaching and Learning Materials	Freq	Percent of Cases (n=75)
Textbooks	67	89.3%
Chalkboard	20	26.7%
Chalk	24	32.0%
Posters, pictures	31	41.3%
Wall charts	27	36.0%
Workbooks for children	20	26.7%
Exercise books	17	22.7%
Learners course	19	25.3%
Supplementary readers	22	29.3%
Teachers guides	35	46.7%
Lesson guidelines	23	30.7%
Pens, pencils	6	8.0%

Table 41: Supplier of Materials by Language

LOI	Ministry of Education (or other Ministry dept.)	Other
Chitonga (n=13)	77.8%	22.2%
Cinyanja (n=14)	40.0%	60.0%
Icibemba (n=16)	66.7%	33.3%
Kikaonde (n=13)	28.6%	71.4%
Lunda (n=14)	46.2%	53.8%
Luvale (n=13)	83.3%	16.7%
Silozi (n=16)	46.7%	53.3%
Overall (n=99)	56.0%	44.0%

Finding 2 – Teaching and Learning Materials Used for Literacy Instruction: Teacher interviews and school environment surveys found that schools across all LOIs largely used the materials they received to the same degree of frequency, except for schools assigned to the Cinyanja LOI and those in Eastern Province. The reasons for this lack of usage may be aligned to the relevancy of materials received, or to the way they were distributed and leveraged in individual schools and classrooms.

Table 42: Frequency of Materials Use by Language

LOI	Always	Sometimes	Rarely
Chitonga (n=13)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cinyanja (n=14)	90.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Icibemba (n=16)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kikaonde (n=13)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Lunda (n=14)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Luvale (n=13)	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%
Silozi (n=16)	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Overall (n=99)	97.3%	1.3%	1.3%

Finding 3 – Teaching and Learning Materials by Type, Condition, Accessibility and Language:

The following tables break down the types of materials received by schools by LOI, their current condition and level of accessibility by teachers and students, and the language the materials are written in. Most of the materials received are in good condition and in use and are very accessible to teachers. Student access, however, is less so: between 20-30% of students on average across all languages are not able to regularly use the material provided to schools. Between 60-70% of the early grade materials received by schools are in their assigned LOI, while the other 30-40% are in English.

Table 43: Teaching and Learning Materials by Type, Condition, Accessibility and Language

		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Overall
Textbooks									
	Textbooks present	100%	100%	100%	100%	93%	92%	100%	98%
Condition	Good and in use	80%	42%	82%	86%	69%	92%	77%	76%
	Minor faults but in use	20%	58%	18%	14%	31%	8%	23%	24%
Accessibility - Teachers	Poorly accessible	7%	0%	6%	8%	0%	10%	15%	7%
	Very accessible	93%	100%	94%	92%	100%	90%	85%	93%
Accessibility - Students	Not accessible	14%	17%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%
	Poorly accessible	29%	8%	18%	31%	67%	20%	23%	28%
	Very accessible	57%	75%	77%	69%	33%	80%	77%	67%
Language	English	43%	8%	47%	23%	17%	0%	8%	23%
	Familiar language of the area	0%	8%	12%	8%	8%	40%	8%	11%
	School's assigned LOI	57%	83%	41%	69%	75%	60%	85%	66%
Teacher's Guides									
	Textbooks present	80%	92%	100%	86%	100%	77%	100%	91%
Condition	Good and in use	79%	100%	88%	100%	79%	58%	69%	82%
	Minor faults but in use	7%	0%	12%	0%	21%	17%	31%	13%
	Not in use	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	5%
Accessibility - Teachers	Not accessible	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%	30%	0%	6%
	Poorly accessible	8%	0%	24%	0%	15%	10%	15%	12%
	Very accessible	77%	100%	77%	100%	85%	60%	85%	83%
Accessibility - Students	Not accessible	75%	70%	12%	0%	85%	11%	8%	37%
	Poorly accessible	8%	10%	24%	60%	8%	44%	17%	23%
	Very accessible	17%	20%	65%	40%	8%	44%	75%	40%
Language	English	50%	50%	47%	18%	8%	33%	31%	34%
	Familiar language of another area	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	1%
	Familiar language of the area	0%	0%	12%	0%	0%	22%	0%	5%
	School's assigned LOI	50%	50%	41%	82%	92%	44%	62%	60%
Student Books/Readers									
	Textbooks present	87%	69%	100%	93%	93%	100%	92%	91%
Condition	Good and in use	71%	88%	77%	100%	62%	69%	46%	73%
	Minor faults but in use	21%	13%	24%	0%	39%	31%	46%	25%
	Not in use	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	2%
Accessibility - Teachers	Not accessible	8%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	8%	4%
	Poorly accessible	0%	0%	6%	0%	8%	9%	23%	7%
	Very accessible	92%	100%	88%	100%	92%	91%	69%	90%

		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Overall
Accessibility - Students	Not accessible	15%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	8%	5%
	Poorly accessible	31%	25%	29%	0%	50%	10%	31%	26%
	Very accessible	54%	75%	65%	100%	50%	90%	62%	69%
Language	English	46%	13%	29%	25%	17%	9%	15%	23%
	Familiar language of another area	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Familiar language of the area	0%	0%	18%	0%	0%	27%	8%	8%
	School's assigned LOI	0%	0%	18%	0%	0%	27%	8%	69%
Storybooks									
	Textbooks present	87%	85%	71%	93%	100%	85%	77%	85%
Condition	Good and in use	86%	80%	71%	100%	57%	75%	69%	76%
	Minor faults but in use	14%	20%	0%	0%	43%	17%	23%	16%
	Not in use	0%	0%	29%	0%	0%	8%	8%	8%
Accessibility - Teachers	Not accessible	8%	0%	29%	0%	0%	10%	15%	10%
	Poorly accessible	0%	0%	12%	0%	8%	20%	15%	8%
	Very accessible	92%	100%	59%	100%	92%	70%	69%	8%
Accessibility - Students	Not accessible	0%	0%	24%	0%	0%	11%	15%	8%
	Poorly accessible	23%	30%	29%	0%	69%	22%	23%	29%
	Very accessible	77%	70%	47%	100%	31%	67%	62%	63%
Language	English	46%	10%	24%	18%	0%	0%	8%	16%
	Familiar language of another area	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Familiar language of the area	8%	0%	18%	9%	8%	33%	15%	13%
	School's assigned LOI	46%	90%	59%	73%	92%	67%	77%	71%
Grammar/Spelling (Lang/Lit) Books									
	Textbooks present	40%	39%	82%	93%	79%	46%	62%	64%
Condition	Good and in use	70%	50%	65%	92%	82%	55%	39%	65%
	Minor faults but in use	0%	17%	18%	8%	18%	0%	31%	14%
	Not in use	30%	33%	18%	0%	0%	46%	31%	21%
Accessibility - Teachers	Not accessible	22%	33%	18%	0%	0%	33%	23%	17%
	Poorly accessible	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	11%	15%	5%
	Very accessible	78%	67%	77%	100%	100%	56%	62%	78%
Accessibility - Students	Not accessible	22%	33%	24%	0%	10%	38%	15%	19%
	Poorly accessible	0%	0%	12%	17%	30%	0%	23%	13%
	Very accessible	78%	67%	65%	83%	60%	63%	62%	68%
Language	English	63%	17%	35%	27%	10%	14%	17%	27%
	Familiar language of another area	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
	Familiar language of the area	0%	0%	18%	9%	0%	29%	0%	9%
	School's assigned LOI	38%	67%	47%	64%	90%	57%	83%	63%
Posters/Wall Charts									
	Textbooks present	93%	77%	88%	100%	93%	92%	77%	89%
Condition	Good and in use	87%	73%	77%	86%	31%	75%	23%	65%
	Minor faults but in use	7%	18%	12%	14%	69%	25%	62%	28%
	Not in use	7%	9%	12%	0%	0%	0%	15%	6%
	Not accessible	7%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	15%	5%

		Chitonga	Cinyanja	Icibemba	Kikaonde	Lunda	Luvale	Silozi	Overall
Accessibility - Teachers	Poorly accessible	0%	0%	12%	0%	8%	20%	31%	10%
	Very accessible	93%	100%	82%	100%	92%	80%	54%	85%
Accessibility - Students	Not accessible	14%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	8%	5%
	Poorly accessible	0%	0%	12%	0%	17%	38%	31%	13%
	Very accessible	86%	100%	82%	100%	83%	63%	62%	83%
Language	English	54%	50%	44%	25%	17%	0%	31%	33%
	Familiar language of another area	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Familiar language of the area	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	44%	0%	7%
	School's assigned LOI	46%	50%	44%	75%	83%	56%	69%	60%
Subject Area Textbooks									
n		15	13	17	14	13	13	13	98
Literacy and Languages		100%	92%	94%	86%	93%	100%	100%	95%
Braille Materials		13%	0%	24%	0%	0%	0%	39%	11%
Integrated Science		87%	85%	94%	93%	79%	69%	69%	83%
Social Studies		87%	92%	94%	93%	71%	77%	85%	86%
Mathematics		93%	92%	94%	93%	79%	77%	92%	89%
Literacy/Reading (Letter writing and composition)		67%	77%	94%	86%	86%	46%	69%	76%
Creative and Technology Studies (CTS)		87%	92%	82%	86%	71%	54%	54%	76%
Other (please specify)		27%	23%	18%	14%	7%	0%	0%	13%

Finding 4 – Teaching and Learning Materials Access and Use According to Learners: Feedback from learner interviews confirmed findings from teachers and head teachers regarding access to reading materials by LOI, as did more nuanced findings from teacher interviews regarding children using materials in class. Few children take books home from school for learning outside of class, according to both learners and teachers. However, learners reported reading at home with other materials kept in the house, namely periodicals, storybooks and religious texts. Many learners also reported having academic subject area books at home, though these are presumably provided by their parents to guardians, rather than the school.

Table 44: Reading Materials by Language According to Learners

LOI	n	Availability of Reading Materials by Language According to Learners	Do children use the books/reading materials during class?	Do children take the books home?	Taking Books Home According to Learners	Reading at Home According to Learners	Availability of Books at Home According to Learners
Chitonga	202	80.0%	93.3%	40.0%	31.2%	70.6%	54.2%
Cinyanja	205	87.1%	100.0%	46.2%	46.3%	82.0%	54.6%
Icibemba	205	81.7%	76.5%	23.5%	28.8%	79.4%	53.7%
Kikaonde	200	72.5%	92.9%	14.3%	37.0%	75.5%	43.0%
Lunda	202	90.9%	100.0%	15.4%	69.2%	76.2%	40.3%
Luvale	201	91.4%	84.6%	61.5%	58.0%	60.5%	23.6%
Silozi	201	96.0%	76.9%	46.2%	36.2%	80.1%	58.3%
Overall	1416	85.7%	88.8%	34.7%	43.8%	74.9%	46.9%

Table 45: Books Available at Home by Subject and Language According to Learners

LOI	Math	Social studies	Science	English	Story books	Newspapers/ magazines	Bible, religious	Other
Chitonga	100%	100%	100%	96%	97%	100%	90%	94%
Cinyanja	100%	83%	94%	97%	98%	100%	94%	96%
Icibemba	97%	96%	100%	94%	100%	100%	100%	89%
Kikaonde	95%	96%	95%	98%	100%		100%	100%
Lunda	100%	100%	93%	97%	98%	100%	100%	67%
Luvale	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%
Silози	98%	100%	100%	99%	96%	100%	95%	91%
Overall	99%	96%	98%	97%	98%	100%	97%	89%

3.5. Perceptions of the LOI Policy

This section summarizes perceptions regarding the LOI policy across teachers, head teachers and parents. All respondents were asked a series of questions related to the LOI policy's design, delivery and outcomes, detailed in the next table. Findings by respondent category are presented below.

Table 46: Perceptions of the LOI Policy

F1. I support the school's Language of Instruction policy for teaching children in familiar
F2. I prefer English as the language of instruction to be used at this school.
F3. Changing the Language of Instruction to English at Grade 5 causes confusion to learners.
F4. The current Language of Instruction at this school is not appropriate.
F5. My learners fully understand the Language of Instruction being used at this school.
F6. My learners are very confident answering questions using the Language of Instruction.
F7. Most people in the school catchment area speak the same language as the Language of Instruction at this school.
F8. Most of the teachers at this school speak the Language of Instruction and use it correctly when they teach.
F9. A child using a Familiar Language for learning in school is more likely to be successful than if they were using another language.
F10. My learners could do much better if they were taught using another Zambian National Language.
F11. Teachers can confidently assist children learning using the Language of Instruction in this school.
F12. Learning outcomes have improved since the introduction of the Language of Instruction policy.
F13. Use of Language of Instruction supports children's learning since they know the language.
F14. Use of a Familiar Language for instruction in the early years helps learners learn to read and write better and faster than a non-familiar language.
F15. It is important for learners to continue learning a Familiar Language throughout their time in school, beyond lower primary.
F16. Transitioning to English language learning in Grade 5 is important for children.

Finding 1 – Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Teachers: Teacher interviews found that teachers are largely in support of the national LOI policy (73% agree or strongly agree), but also prefer to teach in English (55%). Overall, this indicates that, while teachers are in support of the policy, they prefer instructing in a language they are more comfortable with – which is English. Based on other data, this level of comfort is due to a range of factors, including lack of training

and guidance in how to teach core subjects like literacy and math in their school's assigned LOI, mismatches between children's familiar language and a school's assigned LOI, and gaps in in-service teacher mentoring and support. Notably, many teachers are also new to the profession and to their assigned schools (see next section), which can further contribute to overall preferences in the languages they use for instruction.

Teachers also largely believe that transitioning to learning in English in grade 5 is confusing to learners – but important for children regardless. Over 60% of teachers think it is not important for learners to continue learning in a familiar language beyond lower primary, emphasizing the academic and social value teachers place on the English language above other Zambian National Languages.

Most teachers also believe that the current assigned LOI in their school is appropriate, matches the language of their nearby communities, and that their learners fully understand the school's LOI and can readily engage in learning using it (over 80% of teachers agree or strongly agree with these statements). One out of four teachers (25%) reported that their colleagues do not speak the school's assigned LOI or use it correctly when they teach, and 86% believe other teachers in their school can confidently assist children to learn in the school's LOI.

Over 60% of teachers believe that a child will learn better in a familiar language, and over 70% believe learners are being taught in the correct LOI. Only half of all teachers surveyed believe learning outcomes have improved since the LOI policy was introduced. Yet, 90% of teachers believe that using a familiar language for instruction helps students learn to read and write faster than a non-familiar language since they know that language best.

Overall, these findings on perception regarding the LOI policy among teachers demonstrate their overall support of the policy itself, and a belief that it is of value, appropriate and leads to better instruction, teaching and learning.

Their feelings are mixed, however, on whether the LOI policy has led to better learning outcomes, and they demonstrate conflicting beliefs regarding their own, and other teacher's capabilities to teach literacy in it.

They are confident, however, in using their school's assigned LOI for instruction overall, indicating that their lack of confidence in their instructional capabilities may be more a result of the actual technical skills required to teach reading, rather than to teach using their school's LOI.

Table 47: Teacher Perceptions of the LOI Policy

Teachers	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/no response
F1	24.8%	48.5%	5.9%	12.9%	7.9%	0.0%
F2	26.7%	28.7%	8.9%	22.8%	12.9%	0.0%
F3	36.6%	36.6%	5.0%	18.8%	3.0%	0.0%
F4	9.9%	20.8%	5.0%	52.5%	11.9%	0.0%
F5	31.7%	52.5%	4.0%	6.9%	4.0%	1.0%
F6	36.6%	47.5%	5.0%	6.9%	3.0%	1.0%
F7	30.7%	40.6%	3.0%	16.8%	8.9%	0.0%
F8	19.8%	41.6%	6.9%	24.8%	5.9%	1.0%
F9	18.8%	44.6%	3.0%	25.7%	7.9%	0.0%
F10	6.9%	16.8%	3.0%	48.5%	24.8%	0.0%
F11	22.8%	63.4%	5.9%	5.9%	2.0%	0.0%
F12	13.9%	42.6%	16.8%	17.8%	6.9%	2.0%
F13	33.7%	56.4%	4.0%	4.0%	2.0%	0.0%
F14	27.7%	61.4%	5.0%	5.0%	1.0%	0.0%
F15	11.9%	25.7%	2.0%	35.6%	24.8%	0.0%
F16	33.7%	43.6%	4.0%	15.8%	3.0%	0.0%

Finding 2 – Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Head Teachers: Head teacher interviews produced nearly identical findings as those from teachers, save for three questions which demonstrated more substantial differences between them. Head teachers were less likely to believe that changing the LOI to English in grade 5 causes confusion to learners (73% of teachers versus 59% of head teachers). They were more like to believe that most of the teachers in their school speak the LOI and use it correctly when they teach (75% of head teachers versus 61% of teachers) and that a child using a familiar language for learning in school is more likely to be successful than if they were using another language (73% of head teachers versus 63% of teachers).

Slighter differences in responses were found for questions focused on learning outcome gains and how children acquire academic knowledge and foundational literacy. Head teachers were less likely than teachers to believe that learners in their school would do better if they learned in another Zambian national language (24% of teachers versus 15% of head teachers) and more likely to believe learning outcomes have improved since introduction of the LOI policy. (56% to 63%).

Notably, they were less likely than teachers to believe that the LOI policy better supports children’s learning since they know the language, that using a familiar language in the early years helps learners to read and write better than learning in a foreign language, and that it is important for children to learn in a familiar language beyond lower primary.

These findings may indicate that, while head teachers are supportive of Zambia’s national LOI policy and execute it accordingly in their schools, they may not fully believe in its effectiveness or ability to help achieve the country’s national learning agenda.

Table 48: Head Teacher Perceptions of the LOI Policy

Head Teachers	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/no response
F1	34.3%	41.4%	3.0%	12.1%	9.1%	0.0%
F2	23.2%	32.3%	9.1%	26.3%	9.1%	0.0%
F3	24.2%	35.4%	6.1%	29.3%	5.1%	0.0%
F4	11.1%	23.2%	5.1%	55.6%	5.1%	0.0%
F5	30.3%	49.5%	6.1%	11.1%	3.0%	0.0%
F6	24.2%	57.6%	8.1%	8.1%	2.0%	0.0%
F7	29.3%	44.4%	3.0%	12.1%	11.1%	0.0%
F8	28.3%	46.5%	9.1%	12.1%	4.0%	0.0%
F9	20.2%	52.5%	5.1%	20.2%	2.0%	0.0%
F10	5.1%	10.1%	4.0%	50.5%	30.3%	0.0%
F11	23.2%	63.6%	8.1%	4.0%	1.0%	0.0%
F12	14.1%	48.5%	8.1%	21.2%	8.1%	0.0%
F13	19.2%	63.6%	4.0%	12.1%	1.0%	0.0%
F14	22.2%	58.6%	6.1%	10.1%	3.0%	0.0%
F15	9.1%	20.2%	8.1%	39.4%	23.2%	0.0%
F16	30.3%	48.5%	7.1%	13.1%	1.0%	0.0%

Finding 3 – Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Parents: Parents were far more likely than teachers and head teachers to disagree or strongly disagree with the majority of questions asked regarding perceptions on the national LOI policy. They also had greatly differing opinions than teachers and head teachers regarding application of the LOI policy in their children’s school, with the vast majority believing their children would learn better in another Zambian national language and that it is important for children to continue learning in a familiar language beyond lower primary.

They were also less likely than teachers and head teachers to believe that use of LOI supports learning or that using a familiar language for instruction in the early years helps their children learn to read and write better than a non-familiar language.

Parent responses are significantly more nuanced than those from head teachers and teachers, demonstrating vastly different perspectives regarding the design, dissemination and delivery of the LOI policy in schools. Their opinions on the LOI policy appear to be very mixed, with a wide range of approval and disapproval for the policy across individual respondents.

Table 49: Parent Perceptions of the LOI Policy

Parents	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/no response
F1	52.2%	12.2%	3.8%	6.4%	25.2%	0.3%
F2	42.2%	24.9%	3.3%	12.7%	16.5%	0.3%
F3	37.7%	27.2%	5.1%	10.4%	19.1%	0.5%
F4	32.6%	42.7%	10.4%	8.1%	5.9%	0.3%
F5	60.3%	6.4%	3.8%	4.3%	24.9%	0.3%
F6	61.1%	7.9%	1.8%	7.6%	20.6%	1.0%
F7	51.4%	13.2%	1.8%	8.4%	25.2%	0.0%
F8	52.2%	15.0%	3.3%	11.7%	15.3%	2.5%
F9	48.6%	15.5%	4.8%	15.5%	15.3%	0.3%
F10	20.6%	51.7%	15.3%	8.1%	3.8%	0.5%
F11	57.3%	10.2%	2.5%	6.6%	23.2%	0.3%
F12	52.4%	15.0%	5.3%	13.7%	12.2%	1.3%
F13	63.6%	8.1%	2.3%	7.9%	17.6%	0.5%
F14	52.9%	14.0%	2.3%	10.4%	20.1%	0.3%
F15	30.5%	37.9%	14.2%	9.9%	7.1%	0.3%
F16	52.2%	10.4%	1.5%	7.1%	28.5%	0.3%

From the FGDs with the parents, groups (of not more than 12 participants) were made to discuss five main themes, firstly their level of agreement with the statement "I am satisfied with my child's school", secondly the statement "My child is learning what they need to learn at school", thirdly the statement "It is important for my child to know how to read in a Familiar Language" fourthly the statement "It is important for my child to know how to read in English" and lastly the statement "I can help my child improve their reading." For each of the statements, each of the up to 12 participants gave their ratings 1-10 where 1 was strongly disagreeing and 10 strongly agreeing. The discussions were then given in relation to these ratings. From the statements 1, it is shown that most of the parents were satisfied with their children's schools, with an average rating of 8.

Table 50: Ratings of FGD Statements 1 and 2

Row Labels	Average rating of "I am satisfied with my child's school"	Average rating of "My child is learning what they need to learn at school"
Chitonga	8	9
Cinyanja	9	9
Icibemba	8	9
Kikaonde	7	7
Lunda	7	8
Luvale	6	6
Silozi	8	9
Grand Total	8	8

P5D2S4L3: Number one is the environment of the school, and the care exhibited by teachers, the communication with the child just, like my child came to this school in grade three and was struggling with Cinyanja but now she is doing well.

P5D2S4L6: Even me it the same when he started learning in Cinyanja, he also learnt read, even English he reads. It helped a lot.

P5D2S4L3: And the teachers are patient with the children. [Others agree] if the teacher has no patience, we would not see any improvement.

P5D2S4L5: It is the way they are taught that helps like the way they are taught how to pronounce the vowels example Ma, Me, Mi, Mo, Mu it helps them make words like I demonstrated Ma. Me, Mi, Mo, Mu.

P5D2S4L3: Okay I am not just saying this because my child is here but really there is a great improvement. My child came here when he was 5 years, he had refused to go to private school because of seeing his friends in uniform for this school, and she just wanted to come here because of the uniform. Right now she reads long words in Cinyanja to an extent that some words she reads me as a parent cannot even try.

P5D2S4L1: There was a time they even called us parents for the children to read in front of us, it was very gratifying. They read and read, that's when I saw that they are in good hands.

The comments are about the effort from the teachers and how the LOI facilitate learners to read faster and confidently. Among the Icibemba Parents, the same sentiments were expressed, reiterating that *"what makes a good school is the teachers ... taking a child to school who doesn't know how to read and write parents expect to see change with time. Then even with the language of instruction there should be change in the learners' performance especially on reading fluency."*

Among the Kikaonde parents, they reiterated the presence of learning materials. They reasoned that a good school should have learning materials ready for learner's and should be accessible to all learners at all times. There should be teachers who are fluent in the Kikaonde language of instruction and well trained. Among the Lunda parents, a good school is the one that delivers in local language because if a child gets educated, he/ she is educated for the whole community. They reasoned that *"children learn well and the implementation of language of instruction in schools is helping our children to learn well because it is the same language they speak at home."* They felt that teachers are doing a good job when it comes to teaching in Lunda as the language of instructions, they have seen improvements in the learner's books, *"a good school is a school that produces learners that can read and write."* Some of the parents expressed that parents are very much satisfied with the children's education because of the new teachers at the school who are able to deliver in the language of instructions.

Luvale parents strongly prefer schools that promote high academic achievement and teachers that are close to home. They are also concerned about the school's reputation. Generally, when they choose a school, they do so based on its general development, academic achievement, and functional conditions. They also said a good school must have a lot of materials to be used, Teachers should be familiar with Luvale as a language of instruction. Silozi parents said what makes a good school is the planning of the school at large on how they are about to deliver knowledge to the learners. This also covered the availability of enough materials to use in school and good infrastructure.

Generally, parents agreed with the second statement that learners were learning what they need to learn at school. Nevertheless, there was a discord in the discussion on the use of the familiar language, a language to learn to read and write, and as a medium of instruction from ECE to Grade 4. Most of the Tonga speaking parents were aware of the policy. They reasoned that for some of the learners the LOI is imposed on them yet they do not understand Chitonga, *“the performance of the children who are familiar with the language is okay except for those who don't understand the language.”* Some were also worried that *“children do not progress well when they transition to grade 5 because most of the children don't know how to read, write or speak English.”* Among Cinyanja, the same discord was recorded, participants reported that there is general improvement in their children’s performance but are not very sure if this is preparing them well in the English based economy. They reasoned that learners should learn both in English and Cinyanja in all grades;

P5DIS8L4: Learning they are learning in the local language but what we want is for them to also be learning things in English

P5DIS8L8: She is right, because everything is in Cinyanja that is why you find that a learner reaches grade seven (7) but cannot read in English so they need to be learning both.

P5DIS8L3: Yes because of that they fail, its good they are learning their local language but English is also very important so like she has said English is also needed.

P5DIS8L4: What bothers me is that they are concentrating on Cinyanja but during tests they are tested for English as well.

P3D3S4L3: Language of instruction should go along with English it should be taught together with English from grade one up to grade 12 that will help learners adapt even if they change schools moving from one province to a different province with a complete different language learners will still be able to communicate in English

The average rating of parent own ability to help own child improve reading was 7, this was relatively lower (6) in Lunda, Luvale and Silozi while higher (8) in Chitonga and Icibemba and highest (9) among the Cinyanja speaking parents.

Table 51: Ratings on helping children read at home

Row Labels	Average rating of “I can help my child improve their reading”
Chitonga	8
Cinyanja	9
Icibemba	8
Kikaonde	7
Lunda	6
Luvale	6
Silozi	6
Grand Total	7

However, there were no reading initiatives in the communities. Of all the 14 FGDs with Chitonga speaking parents, only one group reported that church helps children with reading on certain days. All Cinyanja groups also reported no community reading except one respondent, from the Eastern province, Lundazi district from Nyalubanga school (P3D2S6L7) who narrated that facilitators were recruited who will be in charge of reading camps in the communities where

children will be coming to learn how to read. "From Friday to Monday pupils are at school, so they will be coming to the reading camps Saturdays and Sundays, and the trained facilitators will be teaching them. For Icibemba all groups did not have the community initiatives except of two; one in Nakonde district, reporting that community has engaged a teacher in the community to teach learners when they knock off from school. The other one is from Mpongwe district, they reported that they recently started community reading and it is helping their learners significantly. None of the Kikaonde, Luvale and Silozi groups reported any community reading initiatives. For Lunda, none also reported community reading except one group that reported that they have arranged for the night school program to help the parents learn to read and write.

Generally, across LOIs, parents reported improved performance but are sceptical to the eventual outcome when it comes to international competitiveness. For their ratings of the third (importance of reading familiar language) and the fourth (importance of reading English) statements, it was found that significantly more parents strongly agreed with the fourth statement than the third statement. The proclivity to English was evident across LOIs. Much more parents strongly agreed to their children reading English than their familiar language. On average reading in English was rated at 9/10 while LOI was rated at 8/10 on importance. However, Luvale and Silozi parents had their LOIs as more important than English.

Table 52: Ratings on importance of Local and English languages

LOI	Sum of parents Strongly Agreeing with importance of reading LOI	Sum of parents Strongly Agreeing with importance of reading English	Average rating of "It is important for my child to know how to read in a Familiar Language"	Average rating of "It is important for my child to know how to read in English"
Chitonga	76	105	9	9
Cinyanja	53	91	9	10
Icibemba	29	62	8	9
Kikaonde	34	59	8	9
Lunda	25	75	7	9
Luvale	0	0	7	6
Silozi	59	15	9	7
Total	276	407	8	9

The parent's sceptical sentiments were also triangulated by the secondary education directorate which aired their experience with **failed switch from local language to the use of English**. The directorate noted that as they as you go round monitoring or supervising teachers, teaching in local languages continues beyond grade 4, it sprawls all the way to secondary school and at the end affect the performance of learners;

Secondary school directorate: *The teaching in local languages is supposed to be from ECE to Grade 4; and at grade 2 they begin to introduce English. But what has been happening is, our teachers who are teaching primary and early childhood education continue teaching in local language up to grade 7. You are teaching children in their local language, they don't really understand English, but they will write an exam in English. So there in lies our biggest problem. And others failed these same children that are writing grade 7, in English. They were supposed to start learning in English in grade 2 and carry it*

on throughout. By grade 5 they should have switched to learning in English... Right now, if you go to secondary schools, you will find that in most cases grades 8 in government schools are not fluent in English. And for schools in rural areas, they continue to teach even in the local language at secondary school, meanwhile the exams are coming in English... Right now, you have problems of literacy. At grade 8 we are trying to teach them the basics in numeracy and literacy that should have been done at primary. We are trying to catch up at grade 8, meanwhile they are losing time to focus on their secondary studies...

The secondary school directorate felt that the threats are that the official language is English and this "policy" has side lined the teaching using English in that learners have not been able to converse in English;

... When we come to secondary, our biggest threat is that we are receiving learners who cannot read and write in English. English is like a foreign language to them. Meanwhile English should have been embedded in the teaching from the onset, but it hasn't been done.

The DRCC and ESO Special -Petauke BEBS, felt that the children from the system would not be as functional in Zambian context where English is the official language. It was reasoned that it is disadvantaging learners in terms of how to spell, how to write, disadvantaging during exams.

DRCC and ESO Special -Petauke BEBS: *... it is not answering the current needs, unless if we can adjust. Because when you talk of needs, we don't just look at the community; it is a diverse thing. We live in a global world. This is a child that one time will be exposed to a laptop, will be exposed to the corporate world. We are talking of a children who are exposed to English in their daily lives. So, it is not their fault; it is just the world they are born in. So as long as we live in Zambia, we just need to adjust. We don't live in Malawi whereby everything according to them is a positive thing, because everything to them is put in their local language. Even when it comes to marketing, everything is in the local language... I'm not saying English is the best language, but this is the language that we use as an official language. These children will be teachers, or doctors and will be required to use English. So, this child will be exposed. At a certain point they will go and work maybe in Southern or Western province; he or she won't just end up being here in Eastern province.*

The challenge was noted to be emanating from poor transition. The DESO and DRCC – Chipata DEBS revealed that there is limited time and resources to facilitate the transition, transitioning from one grade to another, they reasoned that there is no proper system on how the children should transition – from now familiar language to oral English.

DESO and DRCC – Chipata DEBS: *But again the issue is on the transition: how do teachers move from one grade to another grade? Like currently, the teachers who are teaching Grade 5 are the ones who are complaining that there is a gap for the learners to acquire the official language within the range of ...is it 5,6,7, 3 years? For them to sit for their final exams, which is Grade 7; they are finding it very difficult to give skills to the learners within 3 years. And this could be because of the way the transition was; it starts from Grade 2, then Grade 3, Grade 4, 5, 6 until 7.*

It was reasoned that there is a delayed process for children to move from local language to official language, more especially that there are final primary level examinations at Grade 7. It was lamented that children are failing their English exams, "Pupils are doing fine with ZL, but

when it comes with official language, the percentages are very low." The DRCC and ESO Special -Petauke BEBS also confirmed this happening, learners passing mostly the local language:

And as a district, last year (2022), when we analyzed the academic results, we noticed that students who exclusively passed Cinyanja language examinations put themselves at a disadvantage when it came to progressing to Grade 8. Their narrow focus on Cinyanja proficiency inadvertently disadvantaged their chances of advancing...And according to the way the policy was interpreted, they don't know that there is English from grade 2 to 4. So, for them it's only Cinyanja. They bring a lot of reading books in Cinyanja. And for our district, Cinyanja we are doing fine, but we need to work very well in making sure that children break through also in terms of English, because the very learners, whether they read in Cinyanja fluently, they have to write examination at grade 7 using English... when you talk of English from Grades 1 to 4, it's just given 30 minutes. So all subjects are in Cinyanja, every interpretation is in Cinyanja... So, the whole time the child is at school, and only learns English for 30 minutes – and it was not even done. Now, the very 30 minutes, when you talk of all the materials – I'll just give an example – like Petauke we have got a lot of supporting partners as a district: we have got Let's Read and others. And even those supporting partners, the way this policy was interpreted, it's like this English is non-existent. All they know is that from grade 1 to 4 they use local language. All the materials they bring is in Cinyanja.

It was felt that by the time that child reaches Grade 5, they would have been insufficiently exposed and face challenges in learning English set at that level;

...the child has got no background in terms of English. So now, it becomes difficult for that child because learning is a process: from down you go up. So, this child who is not exposed to the simple boy, is, what, and then you expect that boy to know those big-big words? Because if you get a Grade 5 book – I am very particular about books – the English that is there is advanced. That means a child should have a background of learning from the lower level, because that child cannot perform miracles.

Finding 4 – Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Teachers, Head Teachers and Parents by Language: The following table presents findings on perceptions by language for teachers, head teachers and parents. Opinions varied across language communities for each group of respondents, with more variation on some questions than others. On the whole, respondents in the Chitonga and Lunda language communities were the least likely to support the LOI policy (only 60% of respondents supported the policy compared to between 75-90% of respondents in other language communities) and to prefer to use English as the LOI in their schools (between 60-70% of respondents supported using English compared to between 40-50% of respondents in other language communities). Respondents in the Chitonga and Silozi language communities were the least likely to agree that most people in their school catchment areas spoke the same language as the assigned LOI in their schools. Chitonga respondents were also the least likely to agree that learning outcomes had improved in their schools since the introduction of the LOI policy.

Table 53: Perceptions of the LOI Policy among Teachers, Head Teachers and Parents by Language

	Head Teacher					Teacher						Parents					
	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Neither agree or disagree	4. Disagree	5. Strongly Disagree	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Neither agree or disagree	4. Disagree	5. Strongly Disagree	6. Don't know/no response	1. Strongly agree	2. Agree	3. Neither agree or disagree	4. Disagree	5. Strongly Disagree	6. Don't know/no response
	F1. I support the school's Language of Instruction policy for teaching children in familiar language																
Chitonga	15%	46%	8%	15%	15%	21%	43%	21%	14%	0%	0%	19%	42%	16%	18%	5%	0%
Cinyanja	43%	36%	14%	0%	7%	31%	56%	0%	6%	6%	0%	33%	46%	6%	13%	4%	0%
Icibemba	31%	44%	0%	6%	19%	38%	44%	0%	13%	6%	0%	21%	56%	8%	14%	2%	0%
Kikaonde	54%	15%	0%	23%	8%	60%	20%	0%	13%	7%	0%	39%	37%	15%	7%	2%	0%
Lunda	29%	36%	0%	36%	0%	7%	53%	0%	33%	7%	0%	22%	54%	2%	22%	0%	0%
Luvale	23%	62%	0%	8%	8%	0%	69%	0%	8%	23%	0%	9%	73%	0%	9%	9%	2%
Silози	44%	50%	0%	0%	6%	8%	58%	25%	0%	8%	0%	35%	56%	0%	4%	5%	0%
Overall	34%	41%	3%	12%	12%	25%	49%	6%	13%	8%	0%	25%	52%	6%	12%	4%	0%
	F2. I prefer English as the language of instruction to be used at this school																
Chitonga	15%	46%	15%	23%	0%	50%	7%	21%	21%	0%	0%	26%	44%	11%	14%	5%	0%
Cinyanja	36%	29%	7%	14%	14%	6%	38%	13%	25%	19%	0%	9%	38%	22%	29%	2%	0%
Icibemba	44%	13%	0%	38%	6%	19%	31%	0%	13%	38%	0%	15%	44%	14%	25%	2%	0%
Kikaonde	39%	8%	23%	23%	8%	40%	20%	13%	0%	27%	0%	20%	24%	24%	22%	9%	0%
Lunda	14%	50%	7%	29%	0%	27%	40%	0%	33%	0%	0%	17%	63%	5%	15%	0%	0%
Luvale	8%	39%	0%	31%	23%	31%	31%	0%	39%	0%	0%	22%	37%	0%	36%	3%	2%
Silози	6%	44%	13%	25%	13%	17%	33%	17%	33%	0%	0%	5%	44%	16%	33%	2%	0%

Overall	23%	32%	9%	26%	9%	27%	29%	9%	23%	13%	0%	17%	42%	13%	25%	3%	0%
	F3. Changing the Language of Instruction to English at Grade 5 causes confusion to learners.																
Chitonga	8%	46%	0%	39%	8%	57%	21%	14%	0%	7%	0%	21%	30%	14%	26%	7%	2%
Cinyanja	43%	21%	14%	14%	7%	44%	38%	0%	19%	0%	0%	15%	27%	6%	40%	13%	0%
Icibemba	31%	19%	13%	31%	6%	19%	44%	6%	31%	0%	0%	21%	37%	2%	40%	0%	0%
Kikaonde	39%	23%	0%	31%	8%	33%	27%	7%	20%	13%	0%	22%	26%	33%	13%	6%	0%
Lunda	14%	57%	0%	21%	7%	33%	40%	7%	20%	0%	0%	14%	56%	9%	15%	7%	0%
Luvale	15%	23%	15%	46%	0%	39%	23%	0%	39%	0%	0%	15%	41%	0%	39%	3%	2%
Silози	19%	56%	0%	25%	0%	33%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	26%	46%	11%	18%	0%	0%
Overall	24%	35%	6%	29%	5%	37%	37%	5%	19%	3%	0%	19%	38%	10%	27%	5%	1%
	F4. The current Language of Instruction at this school is not appropriate.																
Chitonga	15%	46%	8%	31%	0%	14%	21%	7%	57%	0%	0%	11%	32%	12%	40%	5%	0%
Cinyanja	29%	21%	7%	36%	7%	0%	6%	0%	81%	13%	0%	2%	29%	4%	53%	13%	0%
Icibemba	25%	19%	6%	44%	6%	6%	38%	6%	44%	6%	0%	4%	42%	12%	40%	2%	0%
Kikaonde	8%	8%	0%	69%	15%	33%	7%	7%	20%	33%	0%	6%	26%	17%	28%	24%	0%
Lunda	0%	21%	7%	71%	0%	7%	40%	0%	47%	7%	0%	14%	44%	5%	34%	3%	0%
Luvale	0%	31%	0%	69%	0%	8%	15%	0%	62%	15%	0%	3%	27%	0%	59%	9%	2%
Silози	0%	19%	6%	69%	6%	0%	17%	17%	58%	8%	0%	2%	28%	9%	44%	18%	0%
Overall	11%	23%	5%	56%	5%	10%	21%	5%	53%	12%	0%	6%	33%	8%	43%	10%	0%
	F5. My learners fully understand the Language of Instruction being used at this school																
Chitonga	23%	15%	15%	39%	8%	21%	29%	7%	36%	7%	0%	37%	35%	4%	18%	7%	0%
Cinyanja	57%	36%	0%	7%	0%	44%	50%	0%	6%	0%	0%	18%	69%	4%	4%	6%	0%
Icibemba	25%	50%	0%	13%	13%	44%	44%	6%	6%	0%	0%	19%	64%	4%	12%	2%	0%
Kikaonde	46%	31%	15%	8%	0%	67%	13%	7%	0%	7%	7%	43%	44%	9%	2%	2%	0%
Lunda	29%	71%	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%	29%	59%	7%	5%	0%	0%

Luvale	31%	69%	0%	0%	0%	8%	69%	8%	0%	15%	0%	15%	71%	2%	3%	7%	2%
Silози	6%	69%	13%	13%	0%	8%	92%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	79%	2%	2%	4%	0%
Overall	30%	50%	6%	11%	3%	32%	53%	4%	7%	4%	1%	25%	60%	4%	6%	4%	0%
	F6. My learners are very confident answering questions using the Language of Instruction.																
Chitonga	15%	39%	23%	15%	8%	43%	14%	0%	43%	0%	0%	28%	42%	14%	14%	2%	0%
Cinyanja	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	44%	50%	6%	0%	0%	0%	18%	64%	6%	6%	2%	6%
Icibemba	25%	38%	6%	31%	0%	50%	31%	13%	0%	6%	0%	15%	62%	10%	12%	2%	0%
Kikaonde	31%	46%	15%	8%	0%	60%	27%	0%	7%	0%	7%	43%	37%	7%	7%	4%	2%
Lunda	14%	79%	7%	0%	0%	20%	73%	7%	0%	0%	0%	14%	68%	12%	5%	2%	0%
Luvale	31%	69%	0%	0%	0%	15%	62%	8%	0%	15%	0%	14%	80%	2%	3%	2%	0%
Silози	6%	81%	6%	0%	6%	17%	83%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	74%	4%	9%	0%	0%
Overall	24%	58%	8%	8%	2%	37%	48%	5%	7%	3%	1%	21%	61%	8%	8%	2%	1%
	F7. Most people in the school catchment area speak the same language as the Language of Instruction at this school.																
Chitonga	8%	31%	0%	23%	39%	21%	0%	14%	36%	29%	0%	32%	32%	9%	26%	2%	0%
Cinyanja	43%	36%	0%	14%	7%	38%	50%	0%	6%	6%	0%	27%	55%	6%	11%	2%	0%
Icibemba	38%	25%	6%	13%	19%	38%	38%	0%	13%	13%	0%	10%	52%	2%	31%	6%	0%
Kikaonde	46%	39%	15%	0%	0%	53%	27%	0%	20%	0%	0%	50%	26%	13%	11%	0%	0%
Lunda	36%	64%	0%	0%	0%	13%	73%	7%	7%	0%	0%	20%	66%	5%	5%	3%	0%
Luvale	39%	62%	0%	0%	0%	46%	39%	0%	8%	8%	0%	27%	71%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Silози	0%	56%	0%	31%	13%	0%	58%	0%	33%	8%	0%	11%	56%	25%	9%	0%	0%
Overall	29%	44%	3%	12%	11%	31%	41%	3%	17%	9%	0%	25%	51%	8%	13%	2%	0%
	F8. Most of the teachers at this school speak the Language of Instruction and use it correctly when they teach.																
Chitonga	15%	23%	15%	39%	8%	14%	36%	7%	29%	14%	0%	16%	33%	14%	30%	4%	4%
Cinyanja	36%	50%	0%	14%	0%	25%	56%	6%	13%	0%	0%	16%	47%	11%	15%	0%	11%
Icibemba	38%	44%	6%	0%	13%	25%	38%	0%	31%	6%	0%	12%	71%	4%	6%	4%	4%

Kikaonde	39%	15%	15%	23%	8%	40%	13%	13%	27%	0%	7%	26%	30%	22%	20%	2%	0%
Lunda	14%	71%	14%	0%	0%	20%	40%	7%	20%	13%	0%	17%	44%	12%	24%	3%	0%
Luvale	46%	39%	8%	8%	0%	8%	46%	8%	31%	8%	0%	3%	75%	7%	7%	9%	0%
Silози	13%	75%	6%	6%	0%	0%	67%	8%	25%	0%	0%	18%	65%	12%	4%	2%	0%
Overall	28%	47%	9%	12%	4%	20%	42%	7%	25%	6%	1%	15%	52%	12%	15%	3%	3%
	F9. A child using a Familiar Language for learning in school is more likely to be successful than if they were using another language.																
Chitonga	15%	46%	8%	31%	0%	0%	50%	7%	43%	0%	0%	21%	35%	25%	16%	4%	0%
Cinyanja	21%	43%	0%	36%	0%	25%	50%	6%	19%	0%	0%	24%	35%	20%	18%	4%	0%
Icibemba	25%	38%	6%	31%	0%	19%	31%	6%	38%	6%	0%	4%	62%	10%	21%	2%	2%
Kikaonde	31%	46%	15%	0%	8%	53%	20%	0%	20%	7%	0%	15%	35%	32%	13%	6%	0%
Lunda	29%	36%	0%	36%	0%	7%	47%	0%	33%	13%	0%	20%	46%	9%	25%	0%	0%
Luvale	8%	85%	0%	0%	8%	8%	46%	0%	15%	31%	0%	14%	54%	0%	15%	17%	0%
Silози	13%	75%	6%	6%	0%	17%	75%	0%	8%	0%	0%	9%	74%	16%	0%	2%	0%
Overall	20%	53%	5%	20%	2%	19%	45%	3%	26%	8%	0%	15%	49%	16%	16%	5%	0%
	F10. My learners could do much better if they were taught using another Zambian National Language.																
Chitonga	8%	23%	0%	31%	39%	14%	0%	0%	71%	14%	0%	2%	21%	9%	51%	18%	0%
Cinyanja	0%	0%	7%	36%	57%	0%	13%	0%	56%	31%	0%	0%	9%	7%	53%	29%	2%
Icibemba	13%	13%	0%	50%	25%	6%	13%	13%	50%	19%	0%	4%	17%	2%	64%	14%	0%
Kikaonde	8%	8%	0%	31%	54%	7%	7%	0%	20%	67%	0%	7%	17%	17%	41%	19%	0%
Lunda	0%	7%	0%	79%	14%	0%	13%	0%	67%	20%	0%	5%	12%	10%	64%	9%	0%
Luvale	8%	0%	0%	62%	31%	15%	31%	8%	39%	8%	0%	7%	19%	0%	64%	10%	0%
Silози	0%	19%	19%	63%	0%	8%	50%	0%	33%	8%	0%	2%	49%	12%	25%	11%	2%
Overall	5%	10%	4%	51%	30%	7%	17%	3%	49%	25%	0%	4%	21%	8%	52%	15%	1%
	F11. Teachers can confidently assist children learning using the Language of Instruction in this school.																
Chitonga	8%	54%	23%	8%	8%	14%	57%	0%	29%	0%	0%	32%	44%	7%	14%	4%	0%

Cinyanja	43%	43%	14%	0%	0%	38%	56%	6%	0%	0%	0%	16%	66%	6%	11%	2%	0%
Icibemba	38%	50%	0%	13%	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%	65%	4%	12%	0%	0%
Kikaonde	23%	62%	8%	8%	0%	47%	40%	7%	0%	7%	0%	32%	44%	13%	11%	0%	0%
Lunda	21%	71%	7%	0%	0%	7%	67%	20%	7%	0%	0%	20%	61%	7%	12%	0%	0%
Luvale	23%	77%	0%	0%	0%	8%	69%	8%	8%	8%	0%	19%	64%	2%	5%	9%	2%
Silози	6%	88%	6%	0%	0%	17%	83%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	56%	9%	7%	4%	0%
Overall	23%	64%	8%	4%	1%	23%	63%	6%	6%	2%	0%	23%	57%	7%	10%	3%	0%
	F12. Learning outcomes have improved since the introduction of the Language of Instruction policy.																
Chitonga	0%	39%	8%	39%	15%	7%	36%	21%	36%	0%	0%	12%	32%	28%	25%	4%	0%
Cinyanja	14%	57%	0%	14%	14%	13%	44%	25%	13%	0%	6%	16%	58%	18%	7%	0%	0%
Icibemba	19%	44%	6%	25%	6%	31%	38%	6%	19%	6%	0%	10%	50%	14%	23%	0%	4%
Kikaonde	23%	23%	23%	15%	15%	20%	40%	20%	7%	7%	7%	19%	41%	15%	11%	15%	0%
Lunda	21%	29%	7%	36%	7%	0%	33%	20%	40%	7%	0%	14%	46%	12%	25%	3%	0%
Luvale	15%	77%	8%	0%	0%	23%	39%	0%	8%	31%	0%	9%	71%	0%	9%	12%	0%
Silози	6%	69%	6%	19%	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	7%	68%	11%	5%	4%	5%
Overall	14%	49%	8%	21%	8%	14%	43%	17%	18%	7%	2%	12%	52%	14%	15%	5%	1%
	F13. Use of Language of Instruction supports children's learning since they know the language.																
Chitonga	8%	54%	8%	23%	8%	21%	57%	7%	14%	0%	0%	21%	49%	7%	19%	4%	0%
Cinyanja	29%	64%	0%	7%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	16%	71%	6%	7%	0%	0%
Icibemba	31%	50%	0%	19%	0%	44%	44%	0%	13%	0%	0%	14%	65%	12%	10%	0%	0%
Kikaonde	31%	39%	23%	8%	0%	60%	27%	7%	0%	7%	0%	17%	54%	19%	7%	4%	0%
Lunda	14%	71%	0%	14%	0%	20%	73%	7%	0%	0%	0%	19%	64%	9%	7%	2%	0%
Luvale	15%	85%	0%	0%	0%	23%	62%	8%	0%	8%	0%	12%	78%	2%	2%	7%	0%
Silози	6%	81%	0%	13%	0%	8%	92%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%	63%	4%	5%	0%	4%
Overall	19%	64%	4%	12%	1%	34%	56%	4%	4%	2%	0%	18%	64%	8%	8%	2%	1%
	F14. Use of a Familiar Language for instruction in the early years helps learners learn to read and write better and faster than a non-familiar language.																

Chitonga	15%	62%	8%	15%	0%	14%	64%	14%	7%	0%	0%	28%	40%	9%	21%	2%	0%
Cinyanja	21%	64%	0%	0%	14%	44%	56%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	55%	15%	11%	0%	0%
Icibemba	31%	50%	0%	13%	6%	38%	50%	6%	6%	0%	0%	10%	60%	15%	15%	0%	0%
Kikaonde	31%	39%	15%	15%	0%	53%	33%	7%	0%	7%	0%	30%	35%	17%	11%	7%	0%
Lunda	36%	43%	7%	14%	0%	13%	73%	7%	7%	0%	0%	27%	44%	10%	17%	2%	0%
Luvale	8%	92%	0%	0%	0%	8%	77%	0%	15%	0%	0%	7%	71%	2%	14%	5%	2%
Silози	13%	63%	13%	13%	0%	17%	83%	0%	0%	0%	0%	19%	65%	7%	9%	0%	0%
Overall	22%	59%	6%	10%	3%	28%	61%	5%	5%	1%	0%	20%	53%	10%	14%	2%	0%
	F15. It is important for learners to continue learning a Familiar Language throughout their time in school, beyond lower primary.																
Chitonga	0%	15%	8%	46%	31%	0%	21%	0%	36%	43%	0%	11%	28%	5%	44%	12%	0%
Cinyanja	0%	14%	7%	21%	57%	19%	25%	0%	38%	19%	0%	4%	26%	22%	40%	9%	0%
Icibemba	13%	19%	13%	44%	13%	13%	25%	0%	50%	13%	0%	4%	39%	4%	46%	8%	0%
Kikaonde	31%	8%	23%	23%	15%	27%	20%	0%	20%	33%	0%	4%	30%	20%	37%	9%	0%
Lunda	7%	14%	0%	64%	14%	7%	13%	7%	53%	20%	0%	12%	14%	3%	41%	31%	0%
Luvale	0%	23%	0%	54%	23%	0%	31%	0%	23%	46%	0%	3%	36%	0%	37%	22%	2%
Silози	13%	44%	6%	25%	13%	17%	50%	8%	25%	0%	0%	12%	44%	16%	21%	7%	0%
Overall	9%	20%	8%	39%	23%	12%	26%	2%	36%	25%	0%	7%	31%	10%	38%	14%	0%
	F16. Transitioning to English language learning in Grade 5 is important for children.																
Chitonga	46%	23%	15%	8%	8%	43%	21%	0%	36%	0%	0%	40%	40%	14%	5%	0%	0%
Cinyanja	36%	50%	7%	7%	0%	44%	38%	13%	6%	0%	0%	31%	46%	4%	20%	0%	0%
Icibemba	63%	13%	13%	13%	0%	38%	56%	0%	6%	0%	0%	27%	56%	8%	10%	0%	0%
Kikaonde	39%	31%	15%	15%	0%	60%	33%	0%	7%	0%	0%	26%	39%	19%	11%	6%	0%
Lunda	14%	71%	0%	14%	0%	13%	53%	0%	20%	13%	0%	24%	56%	7%	14%	0%	0%
Luvale	15%	77%	0%	8%	0%	31%	46%	0%	15%	8%	0%	29%	59%	0%	9%	2%	2%
Silози	0%	75%	0%	25%	0%	0%	58%	17%	25%	0%	0%	23%	68%	0%	5%	4%	0%
Overall	30%	49%	7%	13%	1%	34%	44%	4%	16%	3%	0%	29%	52%	7%	10%	2%	0%

3.6. Teacher Preparation and Assignment

Finding 1 – Teacher and Head Teacher Certification and Experience: Nearly 28% of teachers have been teaching at their school for less than one year, and another 50% have only been teaching at their school for the past 1-5 years. This ranges by language community, with teachers in the Cinyanja and Silozi language communities having the greatest number of teachers posted to their schools for more than 10 years. Copperbelt and Muchinga Provinces had the highest number of teachers at their posts for less than one year, while Lusaka had the highest number of teachers at their post for over 10 years.

Table 54: Teacher Years at School by Language

	n	1 - 5 years	5 - 10 years	Less than 1 year	More than 10 years
Chitonga	14	57.1%	7.1%	35.7%	0.0%
Cinyanja	16	37.5%	6.3%	25.0%	31.3%
Icibemba	16	37.5%	25.0%	31.3%	6.3%
Kikaonde	15	60.0%	6.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Lunda	15	53.3%	6.7%	20.0%	20.0%
Luvale	13	53.8%	7.7%	30.8%	7.7%
Silozi	12	50.0%	8.3%	16.7%	25.0%
Overall	101	49.5%	9.9%	27.7%	12.9%

Nearly 50% of all teachers surveyed had been teaching for 5 years or less overall across all languages. The Chitonga, Icibemba, Kikaonde and Silozi language communities had the fewest number of experienced teachers (e.g. those teaching for 10 years or more). There were no sampled teachers in Central, Copperbelt, Muchinga, Northern and Southern Provinces who had been teaching for more than 10 years – most had been teachers for five years or less.

Table 55: Teacher Years Teaching Overall by Language

	1 - 5 years	5 - 10 years	Less than 1 year	More than 10 years
Chitonga (n=14)	57.1%	7.1%	35.7%	0.0%
Cinyanja (n=16)	37.5%	6.3%	25.0%	31.3%
Icibemba (n=16)	37.5%	25.0%	31.3%	6.3%
Kikaonde (n=15)	60.0%	6.7%	33.3%	0.0%
Lunda (n=15)	53.3%	6.7%	20.0%	20.0%
Luvale (n=13)	53.8%	7.7%	30.8%	7.7%
Silozi (n=12)	50.0%	8.3%	16.7%	25.0%
Overall (n=101)	32.7%	25.7%	14.9%	26.7%

Nearly 75% of teachers had a diploma, the remainder had a certificate (14%) or bachelor's degree (12%). The Chitonga and Silozi language communities had the highest number of teachers with certificates – around 30% overall.

Nearly 80% of head teachers have been posted to their current school for 5 years or less. The Cinyanja and Icibemba language communities had the highest number of new head teachers.

Just over 46% of head teachers had a diploma, followed by a bachelor's degree (41%); nearly 10% had a masters, with the greatest number in the Silozi language community.

Table 56: Teacher Highest Level of Education by Language

	n	Bachelor's Degree	Certificate	Diploma	Master's Degree
Chitonga	14	21.4%	28.6%	42.9%	7.1%
Cinyanja	16	18.8%	6.3%	75.0%	0.0%
Icibemba	16	18.8%	12.5%	68.8%	0.0%
Kikaonde	15	6.7%	0.0%	93.3%	0.0%
Lunda	15	0.0%	13.3%	86.7%	0.0%
Luvale	13	7.7%	7.7%	84.6%	0.0%
Silozi	12	8.3%	33.3%	58.3%	0.0%
Overall	101	11.9%	13.9%	73.3%	1.0%

Table 57: Head Teacher Highest Level of Education by Language

	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
Chitonga (n=13)	0.0%	46.2%	46.2%	7.7%
Cinyanja (n=14)	0.0%	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%
Icibemba (n=16)	12.5%	43.8%	43.8%	0.0%
Kikaonde (n=13)	0.0%	53.8%	30.8%	15.4%
Lunda (n=14)	0.0%	50.0%	42.9%	7.1%
Luvale (n=13)	7.7%	61.5%	30.8%	0.0%
Silozi (n=16)	0.0%	28.6%	50.0%	21.4%
Overall (n=99)	3.1%	46.4%	41.2%	9.3%

Finding 2 – Professional Development for Early Grade Teachers: Around 75% of grade 1-4 teachers, according to head teachers and teachers themselves, received in-service training within the past two years, attending on average four trainings each. Teachers in the Luvale (43%), Chitonga (33%) and Icibemba (27%) language communities received the least number of trainings. Trainings were mostly held at school, district, and zonal levels; around 77% of all trainings were led by the Ministry of Education.

Table 58: Grade 1-4 Teachers Receiving In-Service Training According to Head Teachers

Level	Teachers at school			In-service training	Proportion received in-service training
	Male	Female	Total		
ECE	20	130	150	108	72%
Grade 1	36	127	163	121	74%
Grade 2	36	123	159	120	75%
Grade 3	27	133	160	123	77%
Grade 4	40	121	161	123	76%
Total	159	634	793	595	75%

Table 59: Teacher Professional Development According to Grade 1-4 Teachers

	In-service Training		Average number of trainings received	
	No	Yes	Mean	
Kikaonde	7.7%	92.3%	4	
Lunda	7.7%	92.3%	7	
Silozi	12.5%	87.5%	3	
English	14.3%	85.7%	4	
Cinyanja	21.4%	78.6%	4	
Icibemba	27.3%	72.7%	2	
Chitonga	33.3%	66.7%	6	
Luvale	42.9%	57.1%	4	
Overall	34.7%	65.3%	4	

Table 60: Location for Teacher Professional Development

	Pct.of.Cases (n=66)
School based	43.9%
District based	56.1%
Zonal based	47.0%
Province based	10.6%
National based	4.5%

Table 61: Groups Responsible for Training by Language

LOI	Min of Education	Other
Chitonga	71.4%	57.1%
Cinyanja	62.5%	37.5%
Icibemba	90.9%	36.4%
Kikaonde	88.9%	55.6%
Lunda	54.5%	54.5%
Luvale	66.7%	33.3%
Silozi	100.0%	10.0%
overall	76.9%	40.0%

Finding 3 – Training Content: Training content focused mostly on literacy instruction, lesson planning and work plans, followed by classroom practices and curriculum delivery, according to teachers. Head teachers were in agreement, though they indicated teachers also received training on numeracy. Training content varied across language communities, however, though it was more consistently provided for literacy-focused professional development.

Table 62: Content of Trainings

	Percent of Teachers (n=66)	Percent of Head Teachers
Literacy	77.3%	89.4%
Teaching numeracy	15.2%	47.9%
Classroom practices	37.9%	35.1%
Curriculum delivery	25.8%	28.7%
Lesson and work plans	45.5%	53.2%
Prof standards	16.7%	22.3%
Other content	12.1%	11.7%

Table 63: Content of Trainings According to Head Teachers by LOI

	Teaching literacy	Teaching numeracy	Classroom practices	Curriculum delivery	Lesson plans and work plans	Professional standards	Other
Chitonga	92.3%	38.5%	46.2%	38.5%	61.5%	23.1%	23.1%
Cinyanja	91.7%	66.7%	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	16.7%	25.0%
Icibemba	100.0%	53.3%	33.3%	26.7%	40.0%	20.0%	13.3%
Kikaonde	91.7%	66.7%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	41.7%	0.0%
Lunda	76.9%	15.4%	30.8%	7.7%	76.9%	23.1%	23.1%
Luvale	84.6%	15.4%	23.1%	23.1%	61.5%	23.1%	0.0%
Silozi	87.5%	75.0%	37.5%	31.3%	37.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Overall	89.4%	47.9%	35.1%	28.7%	53.2%	22.3%	11.7%

Finding 4 – Professional Development in Literacy for Early Grade Teachers: Both teachers and head teachers reported trainings were held in literacy over the last two years. Copperbelt and Eastern Provinces received the highest number of trainings, Central and Northern Provinces the least. Trainings were held in schools, districts and zones.

Table 64: Teacher Professional Development Received for Literacy by Language

	Teachers	Head Teachers
Chitonga	64.3%	100.0%
Cinyanja	87.5%	85.7%
Icibemba	75.0%	93.8%
Kikaonde	93.3%	92.3%
Lunda	86.7%	92.9%
Luvale	53.8%	100.0%
Silozi	91.7%	100.0%
Overall	79.2%	94.9%

Table 65: Locations for Trainings According to Head Teachers by Site

Level	Percent of cases (n=71)
School based	75.5%
District	63.8%
Zonal	67.0%
Provincial	6.4%
National	3.2%

Finding 5 – Teacher Capacity and Confidence in LOI and English: Nearly 60% of teachers reported that their peers did not speak the school’s LOI or use it correctly when they were teaching. The challenge was mostly noted among the Kikaonde (87%), Chitonga (64%), Icibemba (63%) and Lunda (60%) speaking teachers. Between 90-100% stated they are confident speaking and teaching in English. Teachers expressed confidence when teaching because their learners were responsive during class and because they were fluent and literate in the LOI used by the learners in their class. Teachers who expressed that they lacked confidence said o because they needed more training and because they did not know the LOI used in their school.

Table 66: Teacher Speaks LOI and Uses Correctly When Teaching

	No	Yes
Chitonga (n=14)	64.3%	35.7%
Cinyanja (n=16)	43.8%	56.3%
Icibemba (n=16)	62.5%	37.5%
Kikaonde (n=15)	86.7%	13.3%
Lunda (n=15)	60.0%	40.0%
Luvale (n=13)	53.8%	46.2%
Silozi (n=12)	33.3%	66.7%
Overall (n=101)	58.4%	41.6%

From qualitative data, it was learnt that teacher preparations are met with a number of obstacles emanating from as early as the ECE. The bulky of the privatized CEC subsector causes a lot of unstandardized practice in which most of the private ECE centers are adamant to the use of local languages, they are more inclined to the use of English. Refresher courses and CPD is done but was often decried to be faced with resistance from teachers used to the olden ways. In-service, often coming from different partners was also said to be coming with a multi-sprung approaches causing some level of confusion to the understanding of the literacy dynamics. The teachers are not necessarily assessed for their LOI proficiency and this, coupled with limited supervision and monitoring would lead to reduced efficiencies.

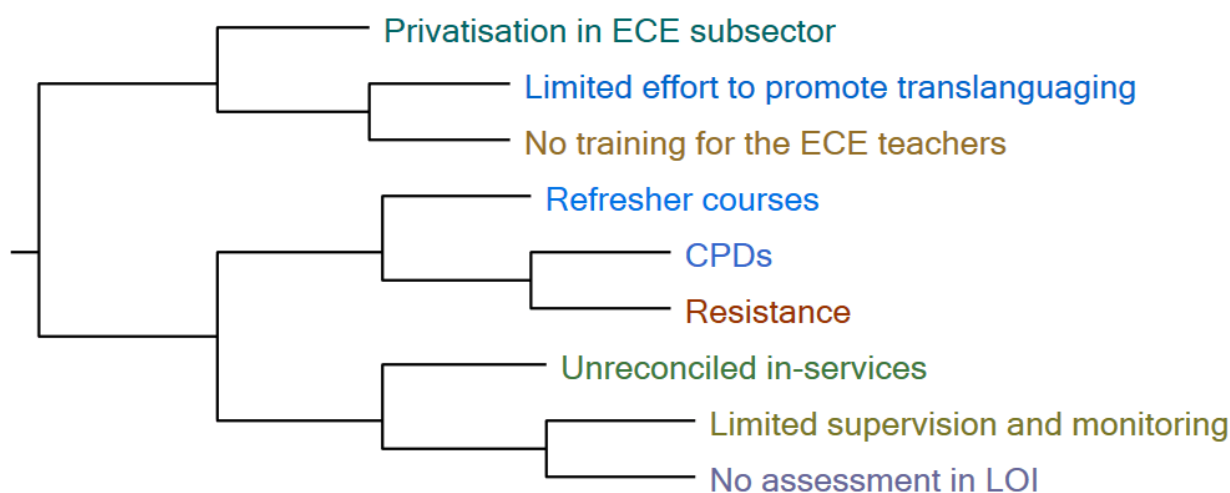


Figure 20: Qualitative findings on preparation of teachers

Privatization of ECE and the Training of the ECE Teachers

Now with the introduction of early childhood education in the mainstream public schools, the coordination of the teacher education with those at ECE level and those in primary especially when it comes to use of the same local or familiar language to enable that transition was found wanting. The Directorate of teacher Education observed that the background of this ECE sector or subsector which was for a long time under local government and under local government, it had an issue of amplifying the use of English language due to having most of them as private players;

... that sub sector was very much in the private sector, and in the private sector they were even training their own teachers. Okay, it's only now maybe not long ago this subsector was training their own teachers under our public colleges of education. So the use of a familiar language under that stage I would say was affected, why? In my view, there was no control as it as at now were that subsector is annexed to a primary school, okay. If it is under a primary school, there, there is the umbrella school under one administrator who is a primary school head teacher who is also in charge of that sector.

There is some lack of control in the training of the ECE teachers, standardising the training on the LOI demand.

Training in LOI and Translanguaging

Relatedly, during the training there is also limited effort to actually help with the translanguaging and learning the languages themselves. A lecturer from Chalimbana revealed that they are advancing the advocacy to introduce students to trans-language practices;

Chalimbana lecturer: *Yes. And we have even forwarded and argument to say, in teacher training we should actually introduce students to translanguaging practices. And when I came to Chalimbana University, I introduced it in the methodology because, I have been teaching the methodology courses for the past five years at Chalimbana University. And students are able to confess that "when we go to classrooms, this is actually what we do, because the policy is not speaking the truth, but what we are doing is actually the truth." Our classrooms are multi-lingual, they are not mono-lingual. Therefore, if we are to teach them, we are supposed to actually trans-language, use their knowledge in order to actually teach what we are supposed to teach.*

From the students themselves, there was no evidence that they are trained in a particular LOI, they have to figure out which language they can teach based on their own experiences with the language rather than formal training in it;

Chalimbana student 1: I'm prepared to teach English in any place. But to teach local language, I think I'm prepared if I can be posted to my regional area.

Chalimbana student 2: I think I'm fully prepared because, you know as a teacher, you have to be prepared all the time. Just like what she said earlier on to say, if you are to be teaching using English and local language, I think it's something that I'm ready to do.

Chalimbana student 3: I think I'm only prepared when I'm posted to a place where....as a teacher, I must know two or three languages. Myself I know three languages: Bemba, Nyanja and Namwanga – I'm Namwanga by tribe, and Namwanga is my mother tongue. So, if I'm posted to a Bemba land – to Northern Province where they speak Bemba, I understand and read Bemba very well. Even Nyanja and Namwanga I read. So, it can be

easy for me to teach learners in local languages as well as English because, I cannot say English is difficult.

Chalimbana student 4: If I were to be posted to where I come from, then I can teach literacy and English language as well. So, I'm very comfortable, and I'm comfortable with my local language.

These students are only trained in their basics but in terms of LOI proficiency, this is not part of their assessments or training.

Refresher courses and CPD

For purposes of In-service, there was evidence of some refresher courses being done. DESO and DRCC – Chipata DEBS revealed that they are coordinating refresher courses in the LOI Policy following the deployment of 30 000 teachers in July 2022 although most reported in September 2022. ;

Since we had a deployment of 30, 000 teachers in July 2022, we have had two refresher courses already from the time they were deployed. So, you can see that there is already a well-defined roadmap on how implementation should be done. It is just those issues we are talking about where, maybe some certain group of pupils who had been disadvantaged were introduced to three languages at a go. Otherwise when you talk of the implementation process up to assessment, up to tracking the performance of pupils, this is well elaborated, well structured, well defined.... as we speak, that programme is on right now; they are in our schools... It is a brilliant pilot.

CPDs are also efforts cited to boost in-service efforts. Chipata DEBS reported of school coaching and training practices allowing teacher to develop in their work stations;

DEBS CHIPATA: *maybe this one is talking about the CPDs that I've been talking about. So, the extent for which school coaching training and practice is there. It is quite great. You know, as you are working, you begin to realize that some things and some new concepts begin to develop and it's those new concepts that begin to develop and see where you are able to see now develop without someone going back to college but just amongst themselves as professionals you can share certain things.*

Petauke DEBS also concurred that teacher training is the role of the government to train the teachers

Government provides almost everything and also they are some NGOs that have partnered with government to look at the teachers even as when they already deployed just like I said also that they are partners that come during the deployment, I can say to enhance the methodologies that the teachers can use for example Save the Children they are coming in just to enhance the methodologies to teach literacy to the learners

Resistance

Efforts are there but there is significant resistance especially from those who are still holding on to the olden ways of teaching. DESO and DRCC – Chipata DEBS exclaimed;

And then also, over the same, you will find the teachers now who were trained, maybe ZPC – because they are now retiring, but they are still there in schools. ZPC, there is 'ZATEC'. Then all those are now told: "No, go for training; you are now going to train like this. You

were teaching English, and all of a sudden you change to Cinyanja. So, you know, in a group of people, 10% will quickly grasp the vision and move with it, and the majority will be waiting to say, "We will see the outcome first." Then the rest are just negatives. 10% above there are just negatives; they have all the reasons why this should fail. But if they were trained from college, then they come, then you find the new 'shot' of teachers who... that is the only thing they know, compared to these who can compare to say, there was that which is better than this, there was that programme after another and it has failed. So, how will this one succeed?

Unreconciled in-services

In their numbers partners were said to be coming to support literacy, each coming with their own ways resulting in lack of standardization. In-service, often coming from different partners was also said to be coming with a multi-sprung approaches causing some level of confusion to the understanding of the literacy dynamics. The directorate for teacher education observed that there is lack of coordination and harmonization of these practices;

For those in service teachers I have been observing some of them when we go for monitoring, there are so many partner organizations that are coming, okay, this one comes to say can you access the learners in week what or two, remember the term has three months and we have three terms in a year. This organization comes it's about literacy, another organisation comes it's about literacy, , are they are confusing the teachers with different methods okay, for me I feel, the best is the ministry to sit down with those partner organizations that are helping us in this area to say can we put the package together so that what we are talking about and what we want to implement can be done, no wonder you are moving maybe three forward and two steps backwards. Have you seen? In my view, those are my only experiences maybe others have not experienced these, for me those are my experiences. because if you want to go the way we were, for me I was taught under primary course the way things were moving, maybe you can take a leaf from that and you say, this kind of policy that you want to implement, let's go by it. Unlike today you have this, tomorrow you find another one implementing something , for me I feel that is confusion under in-service.

Limited supervision and monitoring

DESO and DRCC – Chipata DEBS revealed that for pre-service, they have been teaching teachers the basics – where to start from, so that when they come into schools, at least they have an idea on what is prevailing. However, they also reported that if not supervised and monitored, teachers could just implement in their own different ways;

But if left the way it is – because sometimes you can have these refresher trainings, but if you don't make follow ups, teachers will do their own things at classroom level. So, if we can continue frequenting the schools, encouraging them, then we can say, the programme, the medium of instruction is okay.

The Directorate of teacher education revealed that when these student teachers go in schools they are given the mentors but there is limited time for supervision and monitoring;

Let me just talk about mentors, when they are there with the mentors, maybe they can be mentored for a week and afterwards, the student is left on his own or her own meaning that, that student cannot learn effectively, secondly, lecturers from the colleges, okay, lecturers from the colleges, maybe they are just released for a week to go and check on the

students and maybe it's not one student that this lecturer is monitoring, maybe he has a bunch of students so meaning that there is that support is lacking, why is it that it is lacking, because this student is supposed to be in the field with the lecturer for some time to coach and to mentor but this student is left and maybe is monitored once and in a hurry, why in a hurry, because maybe the colleges are not having enough resources to support the lecturers who should go and be with the students coach them and to mentor them and even these, the so-called mentors maybe they have a lot of work that they are doing. Spending time with a student or what may they also feel demotivated so that is about the teachers.

Deployment of Teachers

Majority of respondents were concerned with the lack of due diligence in the deployment of teachers, especially to areas the teachers are not competent speaking or using the local language. DESO and DRCC – Chipata DEBS were frank to say they have not been looking at the language.

At primary, we expect one to teach all the languages, including literacy. So, all primary school teachers are trained in literacy, unless this programme which has started now. I am told there is a new programme where there are teachers who, at some point – I don't know whether it is at third year or so – they are taught literacy. Even when they go for the TP, they are only attached to literacy. So, it is a new programme which is very welcome, in my opinion – very, very welcome. Because that is what we used to have during my time. We used to have teachers who were just teaching one or two subjects. We used to have teachers who were teaching HE purely – at primary. So, you would even go for HE periods. So, I hope that we will come back; that will really help solve this problem, because you will find at some point the teachers teaching grade one, the next time is taken to grade 7. So there is always that inconsistency – at certain schools, not all.

The directorate of Teacher education revealed that government has given that leeway to the would be teachers to choose wherever he or she wants. Maybe that is another way of saying can you go where you can teach, were you are familiar with the language but not to force someone to say for you we have seen your name is this you'll go where you are supposed to... Government has just opened up to the applicants to apply wherever they want. So, maybe government there it is trying to promote One Zambia One Nation. For this, DRCC and ESO Special -Petauke BEBS positioned that it has created problems in which teachers will just learn from trial and errors;

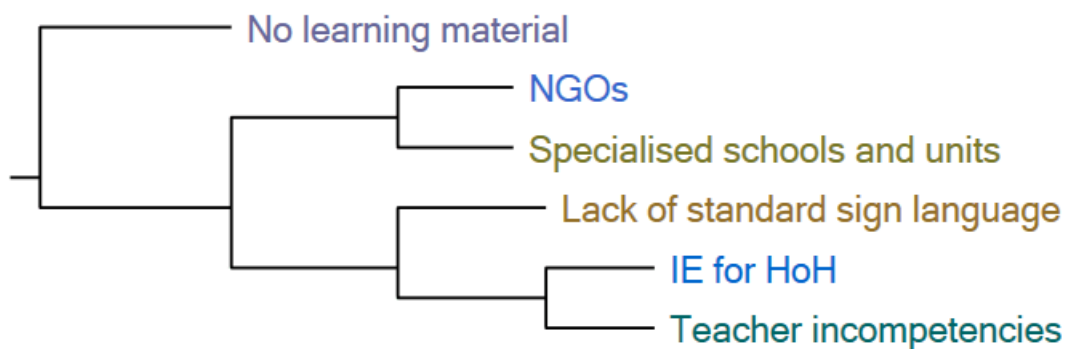
The way I have said that Zambia is one country. I will just give you an example of those teachers who were deployed. Like in Petauke, we had 500+ teachers. Those teachers did not just come from Petauke; others came from Southern province, others came from Lusaka, others came from different provinces. It's one country – One Zambia, One Nation. So, you talk of their mother tongue, for some, Cinyanja is not their mother tongue – they struggle – and their struggling affects the learning process; until they tune to that level, because wherever you go, you have to tune yourself to that level so that the learners understand. At a certain time, they will reach the level where they understand. But only confusing part is that, even the same Cinyanja that is written in books is a confusing Cinyanja because, some words do not really exist. So, a teacher is left hanging, especially these nowadays teachers. Teachers who were educated in the past understand most of the things, but nowadays teachers find some challenges.

The secondary directorate reiterated that the policy can only work in a country where a person is deployed where s/he is competent. Having teachers learning the language and at the same time trying to teach in a local language will not help the learners.

Secondary Directorate: *Language barriers are the biggest challenge to the teachers because, we don't choose which teacher will go where; we just send them anywhere. And when they apply for work in government, we say we will work wherever our services are needed. So, if my services are needed in Bushi land, I must go and work in Bushi land. It doesn't matter whether I am Lozi or I am Luvale or I am Mbunda – I must go and work there. And when I get there, I should be able to learn the language as I am teaching. So that poses the biggest challenge when it comes to teaching because, the teacher is learning the language at the time of teaching.*

Language of instruction for children with hearing impairments. (TBC if they have mild, moderate or severe hearing loss).

From qualitative data it was learn that mostly teachers do not have competences to handle learners with hearing impairments. Basic training for inclusive education was said to help only with mild cases of HOH where teachers can improvise to accommodate learners in their mainstream classes. Zambian Sign language was said to be underdeveloped and less so, calibrated to be used in different LOIs. However, there was reference to existence of specialized schools and units that have specialized interventions for different disabilities including hearing impairments. Lack of learning material was also noted to be hampering integration and effective teaching for those with various disabilities.



Teacher incompetence

It was found that it is a general expectation that teachers should have basic skills to help children with special needs. Petauke DEBS revealed that when in college, would-be teachers are trained how to handle learners with special education needs, it was reported that there is a component in which they are trained how to handle learners with special education needs and how teachers are supported to prepare for the learners who with special needs. However, the Primary directorate raised a big concern on the level of skills of the teachers working with learners with hearing impairment;

Primary Directorate: We need to meet the needs of the learners based on what they are. I was just doing research on the implementation of the primary literacy Programme on learners with hearing impairment. And I think the results that are coming from that study are quite saddening and depressing because, first and foremost, teachers that are teaching learners with hearing impairment are not even properly skilled and they lack proficiency in

sign language. The language for learners with hearing impairment is sign language. So, if a teacher is incompetent... I think it is also similar to hearing children, because even amongst the hearing children, we would say teachers are not competent in language. So, that means we have not taken issues of language seriously - sign language and normal language.

The directorate lamented that the waste part is that for learners with hearing impairment, learning should be through visual but these are also lacking in schools. A combination of different other factors are affecting learners with hearing impairment: teachers are not trained in the primary literacy Programme to teach the hearing impaired, and they have no skills on how to adapt. Even when it comes to the catch up in schools, the directorate revealed that you will find that learners with disabilities are not embraced 100% with the Catch up Programme.

Lack of standard sign language

The Zambian sign language was also said to be confounded by a number of challenges, firstly, there's still a debate to decide on its consideration as part of the local languages. Secondly, there is need to study to understand the convergence with other international signs. In all there is need for standardization for the ZSL;

Directorate of Teacher Education: *...as a ministry, those directorate where special education is... and with our learners with special education needs and disabilities more especially when it comes to sign language. Sign language, if you ask those people at the special education are saying, sign language can be counted among, the local languages, why am I saying so? Because, the way we give signs here in Zambia maybe it's different from other countries so it should be counted among the local languages. So that is how maybe our directorate is trying to implement and wherever we go when we are doing pre- service teaching and even in-service, we are involving special education unit so that we are inclusive in what we are talking about.*

Specialisation Schools and Units

For most areas, they mostly have learners with hearing impairments in specialized schools or units. DEBS Chipata reported that special training institutions are there to accommodate hearing impaired learners. In such schools, DEBS also reported that some NGOs are cooperating partners and recently they had one that was giving the hearing aids to the children. DESO and DRCC – Chipata DEBS as well as the PEO also confirmed that for Chipata it is very easier for them because they have a specialized school, Magwero for the blind and deaf. The same 'test' items which are shared with other schools, they share with Mangwero, and they also administered to learners with hearing impairments.

PRCC CHIPATA and DESO, ESO SP, DRCC LUNDAZI reported that they have very few special units and do not have a special education school, but their units are well equipped with teachers good in sign language;

We have three special units here in Lundazi. And for Lundazi Special unit, the enrollments are overwhelming, and we have about four special education teachers there. In terms of language of instruction, in terms of sign language, I think they are good. In some cases, they have even been used in courts here in Lundazi. So, we don't have a problem in terms of sign language. We have one at Msuzi primary, we also have one at Mchereka primary, and about four teachers at Lundazi primary. In terms of sign language, they are up to the task.

In Petauke, there was also reference to units to help with severe conditions. DRCC and ESO Special -Petauke BEBS revealed that for those with severe conditions, they have units where those with severe hearing impairment and those who are blind totally are taught by specialists.

Does the school have any children with disabilities?

The Head Teachers survey shows that 67.7% of them confirmed the availability of children with disabilities in their schools. In trying to respond to the study objective of understanding issues relating to the language of instruction for children with hearing impairment. The Head Teachers highlighted that visual impairment (47.5%) was the common type of disability. Other types of impairment includes physical (17.9%) and hearing with 14.9%. Unfortunately we did not interview the children because we did not find any Children with Disabilities (CWDs) in the mainstream classes we observed. Head Teachers reported that they were, to a small degree, present in some schools, but they were either not in the classes we observed, or they were absent the day we visited. We did not visit any special schools or units during fieldwork. Answering these questions about CWD and inclusion more broadly is important, however, and deserves further examination in future studies to purposively targeting children with disabilities. Given the scope of this study, it was unfortunately not possible to dig further into this during fieldwork.

By LOI

	n	No	Yes
Chitonga	13	0.0%	100.0%
Cinyanja	14	21.4%	78.6%
Icibemba	16	50.0%	50.0%
Kikaonde	13	23.1%	76.9%
Lunda	14	35.7%	64.3%
Luvale	13	53.8%	46.2%
Silozi	16	37.5%	62.5%
Overall	99	32.3%	67.7%

By Province

	n	No	Yes
Central	7	0.0%	100.0%
Copperbelt	3	33.3%	66.7%
Eastern	7	28.6%	71.4%
Luapula	5	60.0%	40.0%
Lusaka	7	14.3%	85.7%
Muchinga	5	40.0%	60.0%
North-Western	40	37.5%	62.5%
Northern	3	66.7%	33.3%
Southern	6	0.0%	100.0%
Western	16	37.5%	62.5%
Overall	99	32.3%	67.7%

What disability impairments do they have?

By LOI

	Hearing	Intellectual	Learning	Physical	Visual	Total
Chitonga	2	2	0	0	9	13
Cinyanja	1	1	0	4	5	11
Icibemba	0	3	1	2	2	8
Kikaonde	1	0	0	4	5	10
Lunda	4	0	1	0	4	9
Luvale	2	1	0	1	2	6
Silози	0	2	2	1	5	10
Overall	10	9	4	12	32	67
%	14.9%	13.4%	6.0%	17.9%	47.8%	

By Provinces

	Hearing	Intellectual	Learning	Physical	Visual	Total
Central	1	1	0	0	5	7
Copperbelt	0	0	0	1	1	2
Eastern	1	0	0	2	2	5
Luapula	0	1	1	0	0	2
Lusaka	0	1	0	2	3	6
Muchinga	0	2	0	0	1	3
North-Western	7	1	1	5	11	25
Northern	0	0	0	1	0	1
Southern	1	1	0	0	4	6
Western	0	2	2	1	5	10
Overall	10	9	4	12	32	67
%	14.9%	13.4%	6.0%	17.9%	47.8%	

From your recent Week 5 Formal Assessments, how many learners are in each of the following categories? (Note if there is such records)

	Mean number of learners in		
	Low (Red) Performers	Average (Yellow) performers	Good (Green) performers
ECE	7.28	11.9	13.6
Grade 1	17.8	21.5	26.7
Grade 2	13.7	23.1	27.3
Grade 3	14.7	20.3	24.9
Grade 4	14.7	20.3	24.9
Overall	13.6	19.4	23.5

Disability Access Facility*

Pathways

	Present		Working condition				Hygiene condition			Accessibility		
	n	Yes	n	Good and in use	Minor faults but in use	Not in use	Inadequate	Minor issues	Very clean	Not accessible	Poorly accessible	Very accessible
Chitonga	15	60.0%	9	87.5%	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	85.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Cinyanja	13	23.1%	3	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Icibemba	17	52.9%	9	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	77.8%	11.1%	0.0%	88.9%
Kikaonde	14	78.6%	11	63.6%	36.4%	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	0.0%	9.1%	90.9%
Lunda	14	35.7%	5	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Luvale	13	23.1%	3	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Silozi	13	53.8%	7	42.9%	57.1%	0.0%	14.3%	57.1%	28.6%	0.0%	28.6%	71.4%
Overall	99	47.0%	47	76.1%	23.9%	0.0%	9.5%	23.8%	66.7%	2.3%	7.0%	90.7%

Ramps

	Present		Working condition				Hygiene condition			Accessibility			
	n	Yes	n	Good and in use	Hazardous and unsafe but in use	Minor faults but in use	Not in use	Inadequate	Minor issues	Very clean	Not accessible	Poorly accessible	Very accessible
Chitonga	15	40.0%	6	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%
Cinyanja	13	30.8%	4	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Icibemba	17	23.5%	4	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%
Kikaonde	14	21.4%	3	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%
Lunda	14	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Luvale	13	15.4%	2	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%
Silozi	13	53.8%	7	42.9%	14.3%	28.6%	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%
Overall	99	27.0%	26	65.4%	3.8%	19.2%	11.5%	11.5%	42.3%	46.2%	19.2%	23.1%	57.7%

Rails

	Present		Working condition				Hygiene condition			Accessibility			
	n	Yes	n	Good and in use	Hazardous and unsafe but in use	Minor faults but in use	Not in use	Inadequate	Minor issues	Very clean	Not accessible	Poorly accessible	Very accessible
Chitonga	15	13.3%	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
Cinyanja	13	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Icibemba	17	5.9%	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Kikaonde	14	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lunda	14	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luvale	13	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Silozi	13	46.2%	6	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2
Overall	99	9.0%	9	3	0	3	3	2	3	4	2	4	3

Are there any other inclusive education (IE) materials in the school?*

	n	No	Yes
Chitonga	15	46.7%	53.3%
Cinyanja	13	69.2%	30.8%
Icibemba	17	58.8%	41.2%
Kikaonde	14	71.4%	28.6%
Lunda	13	92.3%	7.7%
Luvale	13	69.2%	30.8%
Silozi	13	53.8%	46.2%
Overall	98	65.3%	34.7%

The interviewed Head Teachers confirmed that Chitonga (53.3%) had more other inclusive education (IE) materials in the school. Silozi (46.2%) and Icibemba (41.2%) had also have other inclusive education material. The less represented language was Lunda with (7.7%).

4.0 History and Current Context of the LOI Policy

Overview

At Zambia's independence in October 1964, the new government invested heavily in education at all levels to provide more educated labour for the country's growing population and economy. Literacy was a high priority for the first Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), and the new government was tasked with identifying an appropriate language of instruction for schools across the country.

Today, ensuring a Zambia has a literate and educated citizenry remains a high priority of the Government, which has undertaken a series of acts and reforms to achieve this goal over the last decades. This section details these strategies and policies, culminating in a reflection of their impact on today's LOI Policy in Zambian schools.

History of Language Strategies in Zambian Schools

1966: Education Act

English was officially adopted by the new Government of the Republic of Zambia as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 until the end of tertiary.

1977: Educational Reform

In 1976 the government sponsored a series of draft educational reforms, believing that English was detrimental to educational achievement. Yet, in the final document launched in 1977, English was maintained as the medium of instruction. This was justified by claiming that the English language unified the country across the large number of ethnolinguistic groups in Zambia. In the reforms, teachers were also given the freedom to explain concepts that might prove difficult for students to understand using one of the dominant official Zambian Languages.

1992: Focus On Learning

In 1992 GRZ published a new document of Educational Reforms titled "Focus on Learning." It supported arguments in favour of using Zambian Languages in schools. However, even though this document was formally adopted by the Cabinet in 1992, no attempts were made to properly implement the proposed language strategy (Linehan, 2004).

1994: Curriculum Reforms

In 1994 the Curriculum Development Centre published a document on the primary school curriculum entitled "The Structures of the New School Curriculum." It recommended that Zambian Languages should be used as the medium of instruction during the first four years of primary education. According to Manchishi (2004), this recommendation also was not taken up during implementation.

1995: Conference on Reading

The 1995 Conference on Reading highlighted low reading levels among primary school learners in Zambia. This was determined through studies led by the Ministry of Education in 1995 which revealed that only 25% of Grade 6 pupils could read at defined minimal levels and only 3% could read at desirable levels. The Ministry of Education undertook a series of steps in response, including adopting the teaching of local languages as subjects in primary school.

1996: Educating Our Future

In 1996 the Ministry of Education produced another policy document entitled "Educating Our Future." This document replaced the 1992 "Focus on Learning" document, establishing that children had the right to acquire initial literacy in a familiar language while maintaining English as the medium of instruction.

According to "Educating Our Future," (p34), "A fundamental aim of the curriculum for lower and middle basic classes is to enable pupils to read and write clearly, correctly and confidently, in a Zambian language and in English and to acquire basic numeracy and problem solving skills. However learning to read and write in English should begin after learners have the acquired basic skills in the local language."

In sum, while English remained the only medium of instruction, local languages were encouraged for use in the early grades to help children achieve initial literacy skills. Unfortunately, the policy did not clearly state when these efforts should begin and how long they should last, leading to a range of implementation modalities by teachers and schools countrywide.

Depending on the teacher's own language background as well as the makeup of the students in each class, local languages were used in initial literacy instruction to various degrees. In all cases, English remained the medium of instruction from Grade 1, while local languages were used intermittently.

Further research showed that the 1996 policy change did not lead to higher literacy achievement among primary students. A baseline study conducted for the Primary Reading Programme in 1999 revealed that students in Grades 1-6 were still reading at an average of two grade levels below their own level in both English and local languages.

1997: New Curriculum

In 1997 the Government published a new curriculum for Zambia. This document recommended that local languages be compulsory from Grade 1 to Grade 9, and optional in high school. However, the recommendations were not implemented.

In 1998, a pilot study was undertaken in two districts in Northern Province – Mungwi and Kasama. In this study, the local language, Ibibemba, was used to teach initial literacy to Grade 1 students. The study found that students were able to read in Grade 1, and that their reading levels in Grade 2 were equivalent to the level of Grade 4 students using English as the medium of instruction in early primary.

As a result of the pilot, literacy instruction in local languages was scaled to all schools in Zambia in 2000 under the government's new Primary Reading Programme.

2000: Basic Curriculum Framework

In 2000, the Curriculum Development Centre published a document on the Zambian primary curriculum entitled "The Basic School Curriculum Framework." It recommended that in Grade 1 literacy should be taught in a familiar language and English, with Zambian languages taught as additional subjects. From Grade 2 literacy should be taught in English, while Zambian language literacy skills should continue to be enhanced.

At the same time, the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) was introduced as a comprehensive seven-year plan of action aimed at raising literacy levels in primary classrooms and middle basic school (Ministry of Education, 2001). The goal of the PRP was to reverse Zambia’s extremely low literacy rates (Ministry of Education, 2002).

After a successful one year pilot, the programme was renamed Zambia New Break Through to Literacy and was rolled out to all provinces using seven regionally assigned Zambian Languages for teaching initial literacy in Grade 1.

2012: Zambia Education Curriculum Framework and 2013: National Literacy Framework

The 2013 National Literacy Framework and the 2012 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework proposed a new language strategy in Zambia, detailed in the table below.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Content Subjects and Literacy</i>	<i>Language of instruction</i>
1	All learning areas	Local languages
2	All learning areas	Local Languages
	Content subjects and Literacy in ZL	Local Languages
	English Language and Oral Literacy	English Language
3	Content subjects and Literacy in ZL	Local Language
	English Language and Literacy	English Language
4	Content subjects and Literacy in ZL	Local Language
	English Language and Literacy	English language
5 - 7	Content subjects	English Language
	English	English Language
	Zambian Languages	Local Languages

Source: National Literacy Framework (2013:14)

The National Literacy Framework identified that, for many children in primary school, the language of instruction has traditionally been a different language from the one spoken in their homes.

It states: “research shows that children learn best in their mother tongue, with a gradual transition to bilingual education. Moreover, research shows children’s ability to learn a second language (e.g., an international language) does not suffer by first learning to read in their mother tongue; literacy in one’s mother tongue develops the foundational cognitive and linguistic structures for learning additional languages more easily (Kosenen, 2005; UNESCO, 2011).”

According to the Framework, low literacy levels in primary schools can be solved by scaffolding learning through instruction in local languages. This, together with a well-defined literacy teaching programme will improve results. The rationale for teaching in a local language is rooted in scientific research which supports developing a learner’s language abilities – vocabulary, intrinsic knowledge of grammar rules, and use of his or her language, in order to develop reading and writing skills.

Since January 2014, the Ministry of Education in Zambia has implemented the recommendations contained in the 2013 National Literacy Framework, which include, inter alia, the use of seven Zambian Languages as the medium of instruction from Grade 1 to Grade 4. The seven languages are used as subjects in schools, for broadcasting on radio and television, as well as for publications in vernacular newspapers. They are also widely spoken in political circles and used to interpret in courts of law. Furthermore, the seven major Zambian Languages are also the only ones recommended for teaching as vernacular subjects at secondary school level.

Present: The New 2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework

In late 2023, the MOE under the Curriculum Development Centre launched a new national curriculum framework aimed at meeting the aspirational goals of the country's National Development Plan and the Vision 2030, which placed a high premium on education as a means of accelerating growth through human capital development. The 2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (p7) specifies that:

"The Education Act of 2011 gives legal guidance on language of instruction in Zambia. It prescribes the use of the English language as the official Language of Instruction from Early Childhood Education (ECE) to Tertiary. This continuity in language of instruction helps build a solid learning foundation for young learners. Zambian languages could be used to explain concepts while English Language remains as a medium of instruction across the curriculum except when teaching a Zambian or foreign Language as a subject. Sign Language will be used as medium of instruction for learners with hearing impairment at all levels."

Reflections on the Future of Zambia's LOI Policy

"One Zambia, One Nation" was the motto adopted when Zambia gained independence from the British in 1964. This motto highlighted people's desire to become a unified nation after the colonial period (Marten & Kula, 2007). Following the belief that "one nation equals one language," Zambians adopted English as their only official language.

Although Zambia has identified seven national languages, English still remains the official language and was the only language recognised in the 1991 Constitution. English is used in official governmental activities and has been the main language of instruction in Zambian schools – a policy that has been further ratified by the new 2023 National Curriculum Framework.

Importantly, still today the majority of Zambians are multilingual. Many respondents interviewed in this study agree that complex multilingualism is an essential part of Zambian identity and communication. In order to not lose the linguistic resources available to Zambians, the roles local languages play need to be examined carefully and protected. In particular, the role of local languages in education is crucial since schools are a primary site for the implementation of language policies and can have a strong effect on the overall vitality of a language.

As the Deputy Director of the Curriculum Development Centre highlighted during the validation workshop for this study in February 2024, there is no doubt that there are benefits to learning in a familiar language.

This concept is respected in the current policy reforms, which provide for code-switching and translanguaging in classrooms as learners acquire basic literacy in both English and Zambian Languages. Currently available materials are still useful in schools, which will still apply the policy of initial literacy being taught in a Zambian Language under the new Curriculum Framework.

He emphasised that the findings from this LOI study should continue to inform ongoing national education reforms, including for the curriculum, as they are ongoing processes, stating:

“These findings resonate very well with our internal work on the curriculum review and validation. We are currently working on the lower primary syllabus revision. The issues from the report will become very useful.

We will also share these findings with other Directorates so they can reflect on these important findings and justify our work as the MOE. The recommendations will also be shared at the Midterm Review of the National Education Policy later in 2024.

These findings are coming at the right time, and will be disseminated further after these national level reviews.”

In short, Zambia’s complex history of LOI Policy development and reform continues from here, with the findings, conclusions and recommendations from this study (highlighted in the next section) helping to inform the next chapter of education sector reforms in the country that drive learning gains for all children.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Implementation of the LOI Policy

CONCLUSION 1: There are evident mismatches countrywide between assigned and spoken LOIs in schools and classrooms.

There is a noticeable mismatch between assigned zonal LOIs and the LOIs reportedly used in schools, with the Ibibemba and Silozi language communities representing the highest discrepancies. Luvale was the only language reportedly used accurately between assigned zonal LOI and school LOI 100% of the time.

Application of the assigned zonal LOI across subject areas varied, with English being used alongside national languages for instruction across all key subjects, most notably Science, Mathematics, Technology and Social Studies.

According to Head Teachers, LOI use in classrooms is fairly consistent in Grades 1-4 within each Zambian National Language, though they are used less commonly for ECD instruction (which has a much higher percentage of English use than early primary classrooms). Application of the zonal LOI across grade levels within language communities varies however, with Cinyanja, Lunda and Luvale using their zonal LOI most consistently across all grades.

RECOMMENDATION 1: In order to realign current population distributions with past national and zonal LOI application, it is important for the Government of Zambia to consider the needs of the linguistic populations in the country on a regular basis and allow a flexible policy for using local languages for instruction in districts and schools based on their current and emerging needs.

In 1996, the Ministry of Education published a policy document called “Educating our Future”. In this document, it recommended that all the pupils will be given an opportunity to learn basic reading and writing skills in local languages, whereas English will continue to be the official medium of instruction.

As population demographics and trends are always in flux, an appropriate LOI policy component should honour this directive and consider decentralising decision-making on language usage in schools and classrooms to the lowest administrative levels to allow local stakeholders to make decisions that meet their needs and the realities of their learners and communities.

Another policy component to encourage and permit is the concept and practice of translanguaging, meaning allowing teachers to use both English and their zonal language concurrently and fluidly during instruction to reinforce student understanding and instructional concepts. This would allow for both easier application of larger zonal languages to classrooms and also cater for school-level nuances in demographic populations that require a range of linguistic strategies to target all children.

CONCLUSION 2: Teacher confidence and preparation for using national LOIs for classroom instruction versus English varies across languages.

Only 43% of teachers said that the LOI they taught in was their preferred language, with 73% reporting they were confident teaching in another national language. An overwhelming number

(97%) reported complete confidence using English for instruction, with half of teachers preferring to teach in English rather than a national language. Importantly, only 65% of teachers believe they are sufficiently prepared to teach learners to read using their school's LOI.

Teacher self-reported confidence in using their school's assigned LOI for instruction varied across languages. These variations are likely due to a range of factors, including: 1) mismatches in teacher assignment to areas with a different LOI than their first language; 2) larger urban populations in the Central region with greater variation in the number of community languages spoken; and 3) mismatches between the languages spoken at home in linguistically diverse regions and the school's assigned LOI.

Most teachers reported being confident in using their school's assigned LOI because their learners were responsive to their instruction and because they are fluent in that LOI. Conversely, lack of confidence was due to lack of LOI fluency.

Variations in application of school LOI for instruction indicate a wide range of preference levels among teachers across the country, with a substantial percentage of early grade teachers preferring to instruct in English rather than a Zambian national language. As previously identified, the reasons for this include lack of confidence, mismatches between teacher's assigned LOI and the language they are most fluent in, and learner responsiveness in class, which could be an indicator of LOI mismatch or lack of understanding the curriculum, or of instructional gaps in lesson delivery on the part of teachers.

According to learners, there is a mismatch across all language communities between their school's assigned LOI and the language they speak at home, ranging from a large mismatch in Chitonga-speaking schools and communities (where only 40% of learners speak the school's assigned LOI at home), to a negligible mismatch in Luvala (where 98% of learners speak the school's assigned LOI at home).

RECOMMENDATION 2: Focus on teacher training and classroom inputs that build teacher confidence and provide them with the skills they need to teach content (especially literacy) in Zambian National Languages and English.

Provide teachers with more intensive investments in pre- and in-service training to improve their confidence and ability to teach learners to learn – and especially to read – using Zambian national languages and eventually transfer these skills to literacy in English.

Teacher-learner interactions seem to provide a critical foundation for the successful application of LOI in classrooms, along with teacher perceptions regarding their own language capabilities and overall linguistic confidence.

Building up these skills is a win-win for both teachers and students, and can be done so at a relatively affordable cost that builds on and extends current investments in teacher in-service professional development. Specific training packages can be developed that will support teachers in these endeavours, each with a focus on activating learner responsiveness and engagement in the classroom to facilitate learning.

The LOI Policy and Children's Learning

CONCLUSION 3: Learning outcomes in literacy are relatively progressive and demonstrate increasing learning gains across grades 1-4 in both LOI and English. However, there is uneven development of reading and reading comprehension proficiency across individual national languages.

Most grade one learners (64%) were non-readers. There were significant differences in the distribution of non-readers and emergent readers in grade 1 across LOIs, with Chitonga and Cinyanja learners performing at the lower end of the proficiency scale in comparison to their peers in other language communities. Grade 2 saw a reduction overall in the percentage of non-readers, in addition to an increase in the percentage of emergent and established readers across all LOIs. A noticeable number of proficient learners started emerging in grade 2 across all languages. Grade 3 had a significantly different distribution of learners across proficiency levels and LOIs, with Chitonga interestingly having both the highest proportion of non-readers and of proficient learners. Across all LOIs, most learners in grade 4 fell into the established and proficient reading profile categories. Even at this grade level, there were significant differences in the distribution of learners across profiles by LOI. Silozi (2%) and Cinyanja (8%) had the lowest proportion of learners in the proficient category in grade 4.

Generally, the proportion of English non-readers in grade 4 was 35% across all languages, compared to 22% when reading in their assigned LOI. While the gap was closing in grade 4, Lunda still had the lowest number of proficient learners in comparison to the other LOIs. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the distributions of proficient learners across LOI in grade 4. In all, only 1% of grade one learners, 3% of grade two learners, 6% of grade three learners and 9% of grade four learners were able to read with comprehension in their LOIs at a proficient level.

Reading comprehension in English was more difficult: in grade two, 81% of learners were unable to answer any reading comprehension question correctly, compared to 56% of learners in LOI. Even by grade three, the proportion of learners who were reading with zero comprehension stood at 70%, which is significantly higher than grade 3 learners in their LOI, which stood at 43%. The same also applied in grade 4, where 51% of learners had zero scores in reading comprehension compared to 37% in their LOI.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Invest in developing a broader culture of literacy in schools and classrooms across Zambia for improving overall literacy and reading performance, as findings indicate noticeable improvements in reading outcomes since the LOI policy has been implemented.

This requires looking beyond the LOI policy alone to determine other reasons for student achievement delays to target inputs towards, especially in literacy, as evidence shows a positive trend in learner performance in reading and comprehension in both Zambian National Languages and English during the time period under which the policy has been implemented.

Developing a culture of literacy in Zambian National Languages and English requires a holistic approach to improving the design, dissemination and delivery of the LOI policy across the system in order to achieve outcomes, including development of an actual documented policy that aligns with other system-level inputs to drive forward Zambia's learning agenda.

Growing the skills of teachers in this regard involves improving on positive actions in the classroom related to appropriate and effective instructional methods while reducing on negative actions that inhibit learning. Pre- and in-service teachers training must expand on this and define a professional development programme that helps teachers meet the needs of their students through appropriate pedagogy and instructional approaches in the literacy classroom and other key subjects.

CONCLUSION 4: This study found a positive correlation between reading proficiency in LOI and reading proficiency in English, and learning gains since the last round of national assessments in all LOIs and English.

Although the stories utilised for this assessment were not calibrated, findings indicate there are learning gains in classrooms across the country since the 2014 Zambian National Assessment Survey (NAS) of Learning Achievement at Grade 2, as well as from more recent USAID-led national Early Grade Reading Assessments. These results are also consistent with findings that teachers have observed improvements in learning outcomes following implementation of the LOI policy.

Comparing grade 2 reading comprehension results to earlier studies, there seem to be a 20%-point decrease in the percentage of learners unable to answer a single comprehension question correctly against USAID's 2021 midline EGRA report. When compared to the USAID EGRA baseline study as well as the 2014 NAS, there is a decrease in the percentage of learners unable to answer a reading comprehension question correctly by about 16% and 24%, respectively. These improvements are also indicative of learning gains in reading comprehension since the last round of national assessments.

Generally, there was a positive, moderate correlation ($r=0.441$) across all learners regardless of LOI and grade, and this was significant at the 0.01 level. Stronger relations were registered in Chitonga and Luvale. Among grade 4 learners there were relatively stronger relationships across all of the LOIs. A positive correlation means our analysis showed there is a statistically noticeable, and confirmed, transfer of reading fluency skills from Zambian National Languages to English and a positive shift from learning to read in a Zambian National Language to learning to read in English.

Chitonga, Cinyanja, Icibemba, Lunda, Luvale and Silozi had correlations significant at the 0.01 level, while the Kikaonde correlation was significant at the 0.05 level. Overall, Chitonga had a strong relationship ($r=0.670$) and this was significant (at the 0.01 level) across all grades, with grade 4 demonstrating the strongest relationship ($r=0.807$).

RECOMMENDATION 4: Align national targets for learning with student proficiency profiles to help students and teachers understand progressive outcomes within and between grades to allow for tracking learner achievement across a continuum of foundational skills in early primary. This will ensure a smooth transition for learners between grades that promotes progressive outcomes, and allow teachers in the lower grades to share information on learners' progress with the next grade level teacher to continue improving learner performance as they move between grades.

A recognized challenge of presenting large-scale education data on learning involves determining the most appropriate way to effectively report outcomes to a wide variety of audiences consistently over time. Results are often described in a siloed way in terms of student

performance on specific subtasks, with data presented in terms of the deficits and gaps children face in achieving standard gains – thereby overlooking progress in related, complementary skills across subtasks and in presenting outcomes from a positive perspective on a progressive continuum of foundational skills acquisition.

But, by categorizing students into learning clusters, or profiles, based on their performance, we can: 1) better map and measure their progress over time and against their peers; 2) pinpoint specific learning gaps for groups of learners with different competencies; and 3) explore emerging trends in learning outcomes for children participating in the formal education system.

By grouping learners into categories, we can track and understand the shift in the distribution of learner profiles as students' progress from grades 1-4, which is useful for establishing programme effectiveness, better describing students' acquired skills and their instructional needs, and showing changes over time in a more meaningful way. It also helps teachers to better implement targeted instruction in their classrooms aligned to student assessment, as the learner profile methodology is designed for ability grouping and tracking with the core principles of teaching at the right level in mind.

It is important to consider technical rigor and accessibility in the presentation of any student performance data, which must ultimately provide a critical perspective on key findings to inform targeted improvements in classroom instruction, curriculum content and teacher professional development inputs.

Teacher and Learner Classroom Experiences under the LOI Policy

CONCLUSION 5: Classroom observations in all language communities revealed that a significant number lacked instructional materials hanging on walls and made available to help with learner instruction in reading/literacy and other subjects. Positively, teachers used instructional materials the majority of the time in classrooms across all LOIs. Overwhelmingly, these materials included those available at a minimum standard across all classrooms in the country – chalkboard and chalk, and subject area textbooks. Reading books were observed in use in over 77% of classrooms – a positive finding regarding the teaching and learning materials required for effective literacy instruction.

On average, teachers demonstrated a range of positive instructional methods and appropriate pedagogy throughout their 30-minute lessons, with most teachers demonstrating a high degree of learner engagement and encouraging participation through questioning and engaging learner-led activities. Teachers showed more limited use of lesson plans (reducing from an average of 67% of lessons in the first 10 minutes to between 40-50% of lessons for the duration of the time) and assessment practices (which hovered around 50% across all lessons observed throughout all three 10-minute segments).

Classroom observations documented more infrequent and limited instructional strategies classified as negative actions, with the majority of teachers demonstrating them infrequently. The most common negative action across all teachers and LOIs was lack of lesson planning and preparation by the teacher.

Classroom observations also measured learner actions and behaviours related to reading instruction. Most literacy classrooms were observed, across all languages, teaching sounds, letters and words in the school's assigned LOI. Sentences and stories were taught to a far lesser extent across all languages and schools.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Continue to provide consistent access to a range of teaching and learning materials during all lessons in the school's assigned LOI. Help teachers develop higher order literacy and numeracy skills in learners through exposure to connected texts and conceptual math activities.

Ensure teachers and students get access to a range of teaching and learning materials more consistently and in their LOI. Train teachers to use them across the curriculum and help them develop activities for learners that engage them in higher order skills development so they gain progressive competencies in core foundational skills over their early primary years.

Teachers should also be encouraged, under the supervision of administrators, to produce appropriate teaching and learning materials using locally available resources for use in their classrooms. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions provide an excellent avenue for doing this within schools.

CONCLUSION 6: Little progression was observed across each 10-minute segment in every LOI regarding literacy activities, meaning that learners are largely being exposed to foundational reading skills related to phonological awareness, decoding and word identification, but given limited time to practice these skills to become more automatic, fluent readers of sentences and stories before their attention shifts to comprehension.

The ability to read a grade-appropriate passage orally and answer related questions is an authentic expectation in the lower primary grades, but focusing on instructing students in just a few skills (as observed in these lessons) results in limited development of students' reading and comprehension abilities.

These findings could be suggestive as to why learners are acquiring reading fluency and comprehension skills at lower, slower rates than expected in the early primary grades. Findings also are illustrative at the teacher level, in that teachers pointed to their lack of knowledge and confidence instructing students in literacy in their school's assigned LOI as a reason for not wanting to apply the LOI policy in their classrooms. The instructional methods and activities they delivered in observed lessons are, in part, aligned with this self-assessment of limited capability.

In addition to findings regarding instructional content, classroom observations showed that learners are getting limited exposure throughout entire literacy lessons to reading words and stories in books, textbooks, or other reading and writing instructional materials. They are also restricted in their ability to produce work on their own or in small groups, with most instruction throughout the lesson happening with the whole class. Most classwork is performed at the chalkboard, with infrequent and non-progressive individual work and practice.

By the third 10 and final 10 minutes of all lessons observed across all languages, learners are not observed doing any meaningful instructional tasks, practice, interaction or engagement with typical reading activities. In effect, much of the productive parts of the lesson are executed within the first 10 minutes, with the quality and variety of classroom reading instruction reducing considerably over the next lesson phases.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Provide specific, targeted and ongoing training and support to help teachers instruct learners in both their assigned LOI and in English, and ensure they are provided with the resources they need to teach across the curriculum effectively. Both internal and external mentorship and coaching should be encouraged to help teachers understand difficult or new concepts and deliver them to learners during instruction.

Without specific, targeted and ongoing training and support to teach literacy, and to teach it in zonal national languages, Zambia's children will continue facing challenges acquiring the necessary reading and writing skills required to develop a basic level of fluency and comprehension in any language they study. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency as part of the broader LOI policy.

Classroom observations documented that learners are engaged in multiple ways during lessons, with moderate variation across languages. Multiple means of engagement is a core foundation of any learner-centred method and is important in instruction to ensure learners understand and take meaning from teacher-provided content. The most critical difference in learner engagement approaches relates to access to printed materials, which was low across all LOIs and must be addressed for learning outcomes to improve.

CONCLUSION 7: Teachers generally professed low expectations of learner performance in the main goals of literacy (reading fluency and comprehension) across the early grades. These misaligned expectations are likely driven by a range of factors, including teacher's personal experiences in the classroom with learners, gaps in their training and knowledge of the curriculum, and their beliefs about learning.

Around 40% of teachers felt that children should not be able to fluently read and understand a short passage in any language until grade 3, while around 30% felt they should not be able to write a short story until grades 2 or 3. Teachers indicated they expect limited grade level progression on these key skills prior to this.

In addition, teachers do not expect incoming grade 1 learners to demonstrate any emergent literacy or numeracy skills, an indication they do not expect learners to be school-ready when they begin primary. There is a large change in their expectations for learners once they are in grade 1: teachers generally expected learners in grade 1 across all three language categories (school LOI, familiar language and English) to be equally able to read and recognise letters, identify initial sounds, segment words into syllables, and be able to listen to stories told to them by teachers.

While the LOI policy and national literacy framework identify these skills to be developed in learners in grade 1 in their school's LOI (which is supposed to be their familiar language), reading in English is not supposed to be introduced until grade 2, as grade 1 is reserved for listening and speaking skills development.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Help teachers understand how learners acquire key foundational skills in both a familiar language and English and what activities they should use in class to improve their learners' outcomes in literacy and numeracy. This should be a focus of both pre- and in-service training throughout the life cycle of a teacher's employment.

To combat these challenges, teachers must be taught how children acquire literacy and numeracy in both a familiar language and foreign one like English – and at times, a school's LOI – and understand the key competencies they must progressively demonstrate in the early grades to become fluent readers in both their school's assigned LOI and English. Encouraging more formative and continuous assessments in the classroom can also help teachers understand the learning levels of their students when they enter class, and to track and adjust their instruction and expectations throughout the academic year accordingly.

Learners who enter primary school without a nursery education may struggle to gain foundational skills in the early years in their assigned LOI, leading to their poor performance and slow overall growth. Early grade instruction must address these gaps to ensure reading problems do not compound over time and become increasingly difficult to address. The goal of this approach is to: 1) strengthen the transition between ECE and grade 1 so that learners are better prepared for formal primary instruction when they enter school; and 2) ensure grade 1 classrooms also focus on closing pre-literacy and numeracy skill gaps to ensure learners increasingly meet proficiency targets in both grade 1 and grade 2.

Teaching and Learning Materials

CONCLUSION 8: Teacher and head teacher interviews and school environment surveys found that teaching and learning materials for literacy instruction in LOI and English have been provided across all languages and provinces over the last two years, but to varying degrees.

Schools assigned to the Chitonga, Icibemba and Kikaonde LOI received the fewest materials, while those with the Silozi, Lunda and Luvale LOIs received the most. The Ministry of Education also supplied the fewest number of materials in these language communities, with other non-government providers covering – to a much lesser extent – some of the gaps.

Schools in the Central, Luapula and Lusaka Provinces received the fewest number of materials, while those in Eastern and Southern Provinces received the most. Of the materials received, the greatest majority were textbooks and teacher’s guides, followed to a much lesser degree by supplementary readers and lesson guidelines. This uneven distribution of resources across LOIs and provinces could be a contributing factor to differential academic outcomes in the early grades, as access to resources in schools is critical to improving teaching and learning for all students.

Teacher interviews and school environment surveys found that schools across all LOIs largely used the materials they received to the same degree of frequency, except for schools assigned to the Cinyanja LOI and those in Eastern Province. The reasons for this lack of usage may be aligned to the relevancy of materials received, or to the way they were distributed and leveraged in individual schools and classrooms.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Provide materials evenly across language communities, provinces, schools and grade levels to reduce differentials in learning outcomes in the early grades.

Schools need a range of materials and content to help teachers teach and learners learn. Access to the right materials, in the right languages and right quantities is central to achieving learning outcome goals across Zambia and supporting effective implementation of the national LOI policy.

The Ministry of Education should take the lead on this by conducting an assessment of available resources in schools before providing additional materials for distribution. This will ensure future allocations are done so equitably and based on evidence of need.

Notably, Education Development Partners also distribute resources around the country, but these projects are not present in all regions. This leads to some provinces receiving more aid and materials (e.g. Southern, Eastern and Lusaka) as opposed to others (e.g. North-western, Northern and Muchinga). The Ministry can take the lead in harmonising these efforts to ensure resources distributed by cooperating partners are also allocated equally alongside their own.

Perceptions of the LOI Policy

CONCLUSION 9: Teachers, head teachers and parents in primary schools are in support of the national LOI policy from grades 1-4 and believe it is of value, appropriate and leads to better instruction, teaching and learning. But, to varying degrees early primary teachers prefer instructing in a language they are more comfortable with – which is often English. Early primary teachers are confident, however, in using their school’s assigned LOI for instruction overall, indicating that their lack of confidence in their instructional capabilities may be more a result of the actual technical skills required to teach reading, rather than to teach using their school’s LOI.

Interviews found that early primary teachers are largely in support of the national LOI policy (73% agree or strongly agree), but also prefer to teach in English (55%). Based on other data, this level of comfort is due to a range of factors, including lack of training and guidance in how to teach core subjects like literacy and math in their school’s assigned LOI, mismatches between children’s familiar language and a school’s assigned LOI, and gaps in in-service teacher mentoring and support. Notably, many early primary teachers are also new to the profession and to their assigned schools, which can further contribute to overall preferences in the languages they use for instruction. Their feelings are mixed, however, on whether the LOI policy has led to better learning outcomes, and they demonstrate conflicting beliefs regarding their own, and other teacher’s capabilities to teach literacy in it.

Primary school head teacher interviews produced nearly identical findings as those from teachers. Notably however, they were less likely than teachers to believe that the LOI policy better supports children’s learning since they know the language, that using a familiar language in the early years helps learners to read and write better than learning in a foreign language, and that it is important for children to learn in a familiar language beyond lower primary. These findings may indicate that, while primary school head teachers are supportive of Zambia’s national LOI policy and execute it accordingly in their schools, they may not fully believe in its effectiveness or ability to help achieve the country’s national learning agenda.

Parents of early primary learners were far more likely than teachers and head teachers to disagree or strongly disagree with the majority of questions asked regarding perceptions on the national LOI policy. They also had greatly differing opinions than teachers and head teachers regarding application of the LOI policy in their children’s school, with the vast majority believing their children would learn better in another Zambian national language and that it is important for children to continue learning in a familiar language beyond lower primary. They were also less likely than teachers and head teachers to believe that use of LOI supports learning or that using a familiar language for instruction in the early years helps their children learn to read and write better than a non-familiar language.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Dissemination, education and advocacy campaigns about Zambia’s national LOI policy should be implemented to help support improved uptake and recognition of the policy’s benefits in schools and communities. Teachers in pre- and in-service training should also be particularly targeted for these campaigns as they are the frontline workers responsible for the policy’s delivery.

Teacher Preparation and Assignment

CONCLUSION 10: Most teachers have been teaching for less than 5 years across all languages and locations, and 3 out of 4 have earned a diploma in education. Many teachers have recently been trained, but exposure to core content areas has varied.

Nearly 28% of teachers have been teaching at their school for less than one year, and another 50% have only been teaching at their school for the past 1-5 years. This ranges by language community, with teachers in the Cinyanja and Silozi language communities having the greatest number of teachers posted to their schools for more than 10 years. Copperbelt and Muchinga Provinces had the highest number of teachers at their posts for less than one year, while Lusaka had the highest number of teachers at their post for over 10 years.

Nearly 50% of all teachers surveyed had been teaching for 5 years or less overall across all languages. The Chitonga, Icibemba, Kikaonde and Silozi language communities had the fewest number of experienced teachers (e.g. those teaching for 10 years or more). There were no sampled teachers in Central, Copperbelt, Muchinga, Northern and Southern Provinces who had been teaching for more than 10 years – most had been teachers for five years or less.

Nearly 75% of teachers had a diploma, the remainder had a certificate (14%) or bachelor's degree (12%). The Chitonga and Silozi language communities had the highest number of teachers with certificates – around 30% overall.

Nearly 80% of head teachers have been posted to their current school for 5 years or less. The Cinyanja and Icibemba language communities had the highest number of new head teachers. Just over 46% of head teachers had a diploma, followed by a bachelor's degree (41%); nearly 10% had a masters, with the greatest number in the Silozi language community.

Around 75% of grade 1-4 teachers, according to head teachers and teachers themselves, received in-service training within the past two years, attending on average four trainings each. Teachers in the Luvala (43%), Chitonga (33%) and Icibemba (27%) language communities received the least number of trainings. Trainings were mostly held at school, district, and zonal levels; around 77% of all trainings were led by the Ministry of Education.

Training content focused mostly on literacy, lesson planning and work plans, followed by classroom practices and curriculum delivery, according to teachers. Head teachers were in agreement, though they indicated teachers also received training on numeracy. Training content varied across language communities, however, though it was more consistently provided for literacy-focused professional development.

RECOMMENDATION 10: New teachers (as well as those already posted to schools) need intensive, ongoing, in-class support and mentorship to improve their practice, and new teachers need special consideration for ongoing training programmes. This refresher training can benefit all teachers as a means of aligning their work under current and new policies affecting classroom content and instruction.

The importance of appropriate teacher assignment and allocation to areas where they are confident speaking (and therefore instructing in) the local language should not be underestimated. Given the inexperienced workforce across the country, especially in the early grades, teachers and head teachers need intensive support and mentorship to develop into effective educators. Their lack of experience can directly feed into reduced learning outcomes

and academic gains among students – much more so than any negative impacts from the LOI policy itself. This should be carefully considered as part of the national policy content and dialogue going forward to ensure the system of delivery around the LOI policy in terms of human resource is capable and as effective as possible.

Mixed perceptions among school stakeholders demonstrates the challenges Zambia has faced disseminating and advocating about the national LOI policy in local schools and communities. Moreover, due to the lack of clear success in achieving improved literacy outcomes countrywide, many stakeholders are quick to blame the national LOI policy for these faults. However, it seems the system of delivery around the policy is the greatest area for improvement to ensure the potential gains from this framework are realised.

6.0 Appendices

Study Tools

1. [Learner Questionnaire.docx](#)
2. [Teacher Questionnaire.docx](#)
3. [Classroom Observation.docx](#)
4. [School Leader Questionnaire.docx](#)
5. [Parent Questionnaire .docx](#)
6. [Parent FGD.docx](#)
7. [District and Province Education Officials KII.docx](#)
8. [Ministry of Education Officials KII.docx](#)
9. [National KII Guide.docx](#)
10. [University Professors Academics KII.docx](#)
11. [Education Development Partners KII.docx](#)
12. [TTC KII 14+15+16. Pre-service Teacher KII+TTC Data.docx](#)

LOI Training and Pilot Report: [RMI LOI Training Report_Final.docx](#)

LOI Fieldwork Report: [RMI LOI Field Data Collection Report_FINAL.docx](#)

Stakeholder Presentation: [LOI Presentation Stakeholder Engagement UNICEF Zambia.pptx](#)

Presentation to EDPs: [LOI Preliminary Results EDP Meeting October 17.pptx](#)

Sampling Guiding Protocol: [Desktop\UNICEF LOI ZAMBIA\LOI Draft Report and Validation\Data Collection Protocol LOI Research.docx](#)

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