MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION AND BILINGUAL CLASSROOM PRACTICE IN POSTCOLONIAL SETTINGS: TEACHER CONCERNS AND PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the desire to understand the nature of teacher concerns that act as barriers to effective implementation of the policy on the language of education, which is meant to benefit rural primary school pupils by learning through their mother language up to Grade 7. A qualitative case study was conducted, whereby 15 rural primary school teachers were purposively selected to speak out their views and concerns about mother tongue education in one district of Zimbabwe. Data, which was collected through the use of focus group discussions, was analysed thematically. Findings indicate that the major concern of teachers was that they lacked self-confidence to teach in the mother tongue, which was viewed as emanating from a lack of training, translation challenges, limited knowledge of policy requirements and the home language of learners having some terms which are vulgar in meaning. Participants suggested the training of teachers as the most effective strategy that could be employed in order to minimise the teachers' concerns. The exemplary and research roles of teacher education institutions were presented as the other intervention measures which might contribute towards the success of the mother tongue policy in a postcolonial bilingual education context.

***Key words*:** Mother tongue education; Language-in-Education policy; teacher concerns; Concerns Based Adoption Model; teacher education; intervention strategies

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literature from recent studies is clear on the indisputable role of the mother language as a key factor on the cognitive development of learners, particularly at primary school level (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh & Wolff, 2006; Mutasa, 2006; Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), 2008; Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009; UNESCO, 2010; Desai, 2012; Benson & Kosonen, 2013; Mcllwraith, 2013; Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014). Zimbabwe is one of the African countries which recognised the significant role played by the mother language particularly during the early years of schooling. Accordingly, a policy was put in place under the Education Act of 1987, whereby learners were allowed to access the curriculum in their home language during the first three years of primary school. The policy was amended in 2006 to enable the mother tongue to be the language of education up to Grade 7. Some researches conducted in Zimbabwe also

indicate that the mother language is vital for learners to access the curriculum with ease (Peresuh & Masuku, 2002; Chivhanga, 2012; Nyaungwa, 2013; Greenhalgh & Shumba, 2014). Despite the advantages of learning through the mother tongue, the Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) is not being effectively implemented in Zimbabwean primary schools (Chimhundu, 2010). In rural Zimbabwe, the majority of learners come from poorly resourced schools and very little English is used outside the school premises as everyday communication is mainly conducted through an indigenous language.

Teachers play a central role in enacting a mother tongue policy in a bilingual situation, hence there is a need to explore their implementation practices (Setati, 2005; Johnson, 2010). Therefore, this study was aimed at investigating how rural primary school teachers were influenced by their beliefs, attitudes, social and cultural inclinations towards mother tongue education in a postcolonial context (Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia, 2006; Ngefac, 2010), with a view to examining the nature of barriers to the implementation of the LiEP. There is dearth of literature in Zimbabwe, pertaining to specific teachers' views and concerns towards failure to implement the 2006 LiEP in rural primary schools. This paper draws on a larger doctoral study which focused on teachers' conceptualization and implementation practices of the LiEP in the Zimbabwean postcolony (Author, 2013).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is framed and guided by the Concerns Based Adoption Model (hereinafter to be referred to as the CBAM). The focus of this study is on teachers as key players in the implementation of the LiEP at primary school level in Zimbabwe. Although there is lack of agreement on a common theory of implementation (Cohen & Spillane, 1993), this study explored the relevance of the CBAM. The CBAM is a well-researched model which describes how people, specifically teachers, develop as they learn about an innovation and the stages of that process (Sweeny, 2008; Hollingshead, 2009; Wang, 2014). According to Anderson (2002), the CBAM was developed at the University of Texas Research and Development Centre for Teacher Education in the early 1970s and continued until the mid-1980s.

Anderson (2002:333) affirms that several assumptions about classroom change in curriculum and instruction underpin the CBAM in the following ways: (1) change is a process, not an event; (2) change is accomplished by individuals; (3) change is a highly personal experience; (4) change involves developmental growth in feelings and skills; and (5) change can be facilitated by interventions directed towards the individuals, innovations and contexts involved. The assumptions stated above seem to imply that teachers play a vital role in implementing change, such as the policy on the language of education for primary schools in Zimbabwe. Since change is a process and not an event, and a highly personal experience, the individual experiences of teachers are crucial. The CBAM provides an analytical tool for this research, as one of its assumptions is that classroom change can be facilitated by assessing teacher concerns and using that information for planning and delivering interventions to assist individuals or

groups of teachers in implementing the change in general, and the implementation of the mother tongue education policy in particular.

According to Fullan (1991:73), a key feature of the practicality of implementation is the 'presence of the next steps'. The question of the relevance of steps is encompassed by the CBAM, where the feelings and attitudes about a change are classified into seven steps or categories of concerns, namely: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration and refocusing. The term 'concern' is further clarified by Hall and Hord (2001, cited in Hollingshead, 2009:168) who define it as "composite representation of the feelings, preoccupation, thought and consideration given to a particular issue or task". The Stages of Concern, therefore, examines attitudes and feelings.

Hall and Hord (2001, cited in Hollingshead, 2009) explain that when undergoing change, individuals impacted by the change share common concerns which happen to have a powerful influence on the implementation of a change policy. According to Anderson (2002), the Stages of Concern (SoC) is a framework that describes the feelings and motivations that a teacher might have about a change in curriculum and/or instructional practices at different points in its implementation. To illustrate this point, Anderson (2002) describes the Stages of Concern as illustrated below.

At Stage 0, AWARENESS, the teacher has little knowledge about or little interest in the change. At Stage 1, INFORMATIONAL, the teacher is interested in learning more about the innovation and the implications of its implementation. Teacher concerns at Stage 2, PERSONAL, typically reflect strong anxieties about the teacher's ability to implement the change, the appropriateness of the change, and the personal costs of getting involved. Stage 3, MANAGEMENT, is reached when the teacher begins to experiment with implementation. At this point teacher concerns intensify around the logistics and new behaviours associated with putting the change into practice. At Stage 4, CONSEQUENCE, teacher concerns focus predominantly on the impact of the change on students in their classrooms and on the possibilities for modifying the innovation or their use of it to improve its effects. Stage 5, COLLABORATION, reflects the interest of the teacher in working with other teachers in the school to jointly improve the benefits of implementing change for students. At some point in the change process, teachers may reach stage 6, REFOCUSING. At this stage, the teacher is thinking about making major modifications in the use of the proposed change, or perhaps replacing it with something else.

In view of the CBAM described above, it is evident that the Stages of Concern examines individual characteristics pertaining to teacher concerns, feelings, attitudes and motivation about implementing a new instructional practice (Hollingshead, 2009; Mugweni, 2012). As such, with reference to my study, the Stages of Concern relates to how rural primary school teachers feel about implementing the LiEP as a curriculum change. The implication is that teachers experience various stages of concerns in their effort to achieve the expected goals. For this reason, Anderson (2002) maintains that the CBAM theory idealizes the Stages of Concern as a

developmental progression in which teachers who are expected to implement a change have concerns of varying degrees across all seven stages at different points as they progress through the change process. In the case of my study, a teacher who is just learning about a change from teaching in English to teaching in the learners' home language, as required by the LiEP, is likely to have higher self-concerns. The early stage concerns subside and the middle stage concerns intensify when the teacher starts trying to implement the change in the classroom. As the teacher gets more skilled in using the change, the middle stage concerns may give way to upper stage concerns. This view is clarified by Anderson (2002), who summarises the stages of concern by indicating that the original CBAM framework progressed from self-concerns (Awareness, Informational, Personal), to task concerns (Management), to impact concerns (Consequence, Collaboration, Renewal).

According to Sweeny (2008:2), the three lower stages are focused on oneself and are referred to as self-concerns, a clue of which might be the use of 'I' and 'me' as in 'I am frustrated'. In the context of this study, during the early concerns phase, teachers may not be aware of the requirements of the LiEP and seek information to gain more knowledge. They may experience anxiety with regard to their capability to meet the demands of implementing the LiEP, its appropriateness in teaching and learning and the personal cost of getting involved (Anderson, 2002). Teachers may also be uncertain about the conflict which they may experience with the school management and parents with regard to attitudes towards teaching in the mother tongue. Not getting adequate information on the part of teachers may make them resist or ignore the change, leading to their failure to implement the policy. The middle stage (management) focuses on mastery of tasks to the point that they become routines and are easier to do. In the context of my study, at this stage teachers' concerns would be focused on the logistics and new behaviours of putting into practice the LiEP as a curriculum innovation. The upper stages are focused on the results and impact of an activity. With reference to this study, teachers' concerns would focus on the impact of the LiEP on learners in their classrooms. A clue might be the use of pronouns which refer to clients who benefit from the activity (Sweeny, 2008). For example, "The students are really learning better since I started using the mother language as a learning and teaching strategy". In the impact phase, teachers are concerned about how to improve implementation of change such as the LiEP and to explore its benefits with the cooperation of other teachers. The subdivision of concerns into three major stages must be viewed as serving a positive purpose. This view is expressed by Sweeny (2008) who argues that the goal of all professional development programmes should be to help people to reach the collaboration level of practice, such as illustrated in the Stages of Concern.

It is evident from the CBAM literature that when people are overwhelmed or feeling unsuccessful, they are not ready to grow. This implies that educational change such as the LiEP cannot be implemented until the concerns of teachers are addressed. The Stages of Concern point out the significance of acknowledging teacher concerns and addressing them at the appropriate time.

Thus, understanding the concerns of teachers can facilitate the adoption of the LiEP as a curriculum change.

The purpose of this study was to assess and pay attention to teachers' concerns during the implementation of the LiEP in rural primary school classrooms in the Zimbabwean postcolony, and for participants to suggest intervention measures which may assist them to embrace the mother tongue policy.

3. METHOD

This study was situated within the postcolonial theory paradigm where proponents of this tradition believe in "dialogical methodologies" (Ashcroft, Griffits & Tiffin, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Ratele, 2006; Chilisa, 2012). The study represents a qualitative case study design. Data was collected from fifteen teachers, five from each of the three selected rural primary schools in Masvingo district of Zimbabwe. Purposive sampling was used to access in-depth knowledge on the specific, unique issue on the LiEP from the identified participants, who happened to be knowledgeable people by virtue of their professional role and experience.

As a way of capturing "the perspectives of the decolonised" (Punch, 2005:173), the views of teachers were gathered through focus group discussion tactics (Anderson, 2002) regarding why they do not effectively implement the LiEP. My choice of the focus group interview method was based on my awareness that scholars who subscribe to the postcolonial theoretical perspective emphasise interaction as a way of giving a voice to the previously marginalised so that they can relate their own history and other experiences in relation to the effects of colonialism (Ratele, 2006). In the process, an opportunity was created for participants' agenda to predominate as postcolonial subjects, rather than the researcher's (Viruru, 2005; Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia, 2006; Chilisa, 2012). Rural primary school teachers were empowered to express their concerns, and to suggest themselves, the nature of intervention measures that could be employed to minimize the challenges.

It has been observed recently that many researchers present studies of the powerless from an elite viewpoint, which does not represent the actual situation of the affected (Chilisa, 2012). During the research process, participants sampled for this study were expected to express their concerns, self-efficacy beliefs, thoughts, feelings and experiences pertaining to factors that contribute towards failure to implement a mother tongue education policy in a postcolonial setting. Rapport with the participants was established and maintained, an approach which is in keeping with the postcolonial theoretical perspective where respect and trust are emphasised (Chilisa, 2012).

Ratele (2006:553) argues that postcolonial scholarship brings to our attention the need to develop research relations which might bring researchers to an understanding of "another life" in a less alienating manner. Hence, the thinking in the postcolonial perspective which emphasises the importance of giving a voice to those who have not been visible, influenced my decision to consider rural primary school teachers as subjects for this study. A thematic analysis was carried out (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Nyawaranda, 2014) on the gathered data. In line with the methodologies inclined to the postcolonial paradigm, I went back to conduct a

'member check' audit with the participants as a way of heightening the dependability and confirmability of my study.

This study received ethical clearance from an institution of higher learning and was implemented after getting permission from the Ministry of Education. To assist participants to relax, I gave them a verbal assurance that the information that they provided would be kept as confidential information (Gray, 2009). To achieve rapport and trust, I asked the interviewees to read and sign an Informed Consent form as a way of guaranteeing their willingness to freely participate in the interviews (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996; Creswell, 2005). The Informed Consent form clearly stated the purpose of the study, that their participation was voluntary; that they were free to discontinue participation at will, and that their answers would be held in strict confidence (Gray, 2009; Silverman, 2010). I made use of a digital voice recorder for the focus group discussions and these were personally transcribed, verbatim.

4. FINDINGS

All the teachers in this study indicated that they did not have confidence to implement a LiEP which uses the mother tongue as the language of education. Participants' concerns and fears were perceived as emanating from lack of training, failure to translate terms from English to the mother language, limited knowledge of policy requirements and terms that became vulgar when used in the home language of the learners.

4.1. Lack of training

Lack of relevant training was viewed as a major reason why teachers lacked confidence in using the mother tongue when teaching, as they had not been equipped with skills to implement the LiEP. These views were expressed by many participants and they are represented in the following responses:

> *Not very confident because I was trained using English and taught using English. Using Shona will be like teaching old dogs new tricks. I will take time to adapt and some terms will be difficult for me to explain (Teacher 4, School 1).*
>
> *Unless measures are put in place for us to understand it thoroughly (policy), then we can implement. We need to get experience from countries where it is successful (Teacher 1, School 3).*

Responses from all the participants in this study confirmed that teachers were concerned that they had not received any form of relevant training to empower them to implement the LiEP of 2006.

4.2. The challenge of translation

The majority of the participants in this study stated that they were not confident to implement the LiEP because they did not have the capacity to translate concepts in textbooks which were written in English. Responses indicated that participants displayed their incompetence in translation by stating the following reasons which represent many such responses from the three schools:

> *It will be hard to teach other subjects in Shona because there are some words which are in English which might be very difficult to translate them into Shona. As a result, we will develop a very*

backward community. If we are to look at the world as it is, English is a language which must be known in order to communicate with others (Teacher 3, School 2).

For example, you want to introduce the lesson on photosynthesis, how am I going to tell the children the Shona word for photosynthesis? You see, you run short of facts. When it comes to English, that word will be a very big problem for them to explain in Shona (Teacher 2, School 1).

4.3. Limited knowledge on policy requirements

Teachers indicated that they lacked knowledge on the policy requirements, hence they could not put into practice what they did not know. This concern was revealed when all the participants expressed that they had low self-confidence in implementing a mother tongue policy simply because they were not aware of the provisions of the current LiEP. This finding is revealed in the following statements which are typical of many such responses:

I am not confident because I have never heard about the policy. Besides, there are no resources and as it is, it's like the people at the top are quiet about it, so we won't be flexible to implement the policy (Teacher 5, School 1).

We have not been made aware of this document so we cannot say we are confident of something we don't know much about (Teacher 4, School 2).

Another dimension for low confidence in implementing a mother tongue policy in education was that teachers feared that their lack of knowledge about policy requirements could cause confusion among teachers, parents and even pupils if they implemented such a policy.

4.4. Vulgar concepts

It emerged in this study that some teachers said they lacked confidence in teaching in the mother language due to cultural reasons. Teaching in English was viewed by many as an advantage because of the following reasons:

Another advantage is that there are other Shona words which you cannot explain clearly to the pupils, anenge otosvodesa (they become vulgar) but if you say them in English there is nothing wrong [---] especially in Environmental Science during reproduction (Teacher 4, School 3).

In vernacular language there are some concepts which cannot be taught in Shona. For example, the topic on reproduction [---] you cannot code switch. Haiiti (It's not possible to translate) [laughter]. Sometimes we can say vernacular language is good because children understand but some topics ha-a-a it is difficult (Teacher 3, School 1).

Participants thus stated that it was taboo to mention names of reproductive organs in the home language of the learners.

Teachers in this study were mainly concerned about low self-confidence in implementing the LiEP due to limited knowledge on policy requirements and lack of relevant training to equip them with skills on how to implement the 2006

LiEP. Consequently, they felt disempowered to translate materials written in English into the mother language and to conduct lessons in a language they were not trained to use when teaching. Interestingly for cultural reasons, teachers indicated that they could not use some terms in the mother tongue as it was considered taboo to talk about sexuality issues with learners. As a result, teachers had no confidence to teach in the mother language, hence, they preferred the use of English particularly for such scientific terms which had to do with the reproductive system.

4.5. Intervention strategies

4.5.1. The training role of teacher education institutions

The professional development of teachers as an intervention strategy was regarded by all the participants as the major technique which should be employed by universities and teachers' colleges to empower teachers on the essential role played by the mother language in the learning of primary school children and also on how to implement the policy effectively. All the participants in this study strongly believed that if they could go for retraining, then they would be in a position to cope with the demands of the current policy which encourages mother tongue usage in the education of primary school learners. The following statements typify suggestions on the role of teacher education institutions in the professional development of primary school teachers for the benefit of mother tongue usage:

> *Students at universities and colleges should be equipped and acquainted with the changes so that they implement them when they get to schools. College and university lecturers should hold in-service and refresher courses for teachers (Teacher 1, School 2).*

> *I support the first two speakers. If we got training, yes, we can manage to teach in the vernacular language because we will be equipped. We will be able to teach especially the other subjects like the science subjects, content subjects and especially mathematics because it's not easy to teach mathematical concepts in Shona but if you are trained to do that you can manage (Teacher 2, School 3).*

> *Currently I am not very confident, I am not yet equipped. Maybe with syllabus interpretation and some key terms in the mother language, yes, so that I grasp them first before imparting to the children (Teacher 3, School 1).*

Involvement of teacher education institutions was considered important in making teachers appreciate the essential role of the mother tongue in education and how to implement a mother tongue policy. Teachers in this study, therefore, valued the training of pre-service teachers as a crucial step for any meaningful implementation of the LiEP to take place. Coupled with pre-service education, was the suggestion that the re-training of practising teachers was very vital and it was proposed that this could be done through seminars, workshops and in-service programmes. Thus, teachers who participated in this study claimed that if they were trained on how to implement the

policy, they would be in a better position to put it into practice.

4.5.2. Exemplary role of teacher education institutions

Apart from the training of teachers through pre-service and in-service programmes, participants in this study suggested that teacher education institutions should be exemplary in their demeanour regarding the implementation of the current LiEP. This view was exposed by some participants as follows:

> *The institutions should be exemplary and teach their students in ChiShona and their students will in turn teach pupils in the same language (Teacher 1, School 1).*
>
> *Universities and teachers' colleges need to teach the policy by teaching their students first in Shona so that the students will be taking part and will take it to the pupils (Teacher 5, School 3).*

Thus findings indicated that teacher education institutions were regarded as vital nerve-centres where the LiEP had to be taught through example to pre-service and in-service students as a way of giving them confidence to implement the policy upon completion of their programmes. The translation of textbooks and syllabi into the mother tongue and making them available to all schools was also taken to be an effective measure to be undertaken by teacher education institutions to enhance the implementation of the 2006 LiEP particularly in rural areas. Another crucial role suggested for teacher education institutions as focal points on the training of teachers was that of research as illustrated below.

4.5.3. The research role of teacher education institutions

Conducting research and experiments on how to implement the current LiEP was deemed a necessary intervention strategy by participants in this study. This kind of thinking was revealed in the following responses which suggest that:

> *They also can make experiments on certain schools so that others can see the results (Teacher 2, School 2).*
>
> *Research further, find out from other countries which have been successful. (Conduct) outreach programmes to make teachers aware, like what you are doing right now (Teacher 2, School 1).*
>
> *... When the policy is drafted they should pilot test it with just a few schools, a few samples (Teacher 3, School 3).*

Participants in this study generally agreed that teacher education institutions should play the key role of training teachers on how to implement a mother tongue policy through pre-service and in-service programmes. It was also believed that by playing an exemplary role in their conduct and by researching to find out from other countries, loopholes would then be identified and rectified through an informed process.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Teachers play a crucial role in implementing change (Jansen, 2009). Therefore, in this study their individual concerns and fears were sought for the purpose of planning intervention strategies

as suggested by the CBAM. The assessment of teacher concerns, attitudes, feelings and motivations was crucial since these factors have a powerful influence on the implementation of a change policy (Anderson, 2002; Bitan-Friedlander, Dreyfus & Milgrom 2004; Hargreaves, 2005; Sweeney, 2008; Hollingshead, 2009; Mugweni, 2012; Wang, 2014). When evaluated against the CBAM, teachers in this study were in the early self-concerns phase of Awareness, Informational and Personal stages. Therefore, teachers had higher self-concerns as they expressed lack of awareness with regards to the provisions of the LiEP and that they sought information to get more knowledge. Participants indicated that they experienced strong anxieties pertaining to their lack of capability to meet the demands of implementing the 2006 LiEP. Clearly, participants in this study had unanswered concerns and fears pertaining to how teachers would translate textbooks which are written in English if all the subjects were to be taught in the mother language.

Professional development through pre-service and in-service programmes was viewed as the most relevant method of preparing teachers to use indigenous languages as media of instruction in a bilingual postcolonial context. Firstly, training and retraining of teachers on the issue of bilingual education is crucial for creating positive attitudes by enlightening teachers on the pedagogic benefits of using the first language in primary schools. Secondly, such professional development would equip teachers with knowledge on how to use appropriate terminology since the text books were written in English.

Professional development strategies can be undertaken on the job, in teachers' colleges and in teacher education departments in universities (Fullan, 1998; Rogan & Grayson, 2003; Bitan-Friedlander, Dreyfus & Milgrom, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2005; Alidou, 2009; Van Laren & Goba, 2013). The empowerment of teachers through professional development is in line with the current trends in teacher education where pre-service and in-service teachers ought to be made aware of bilingual education in order to achieve balanced bilingualism (Mwamwenda, 2004; Alidou et al., 2006; Baker, 2006; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010; Fernando, Valijarvi & Goldstein, 2010; Prinsloo, 2011). In other words, findings point towards the important task to be undertaken by teacher education institutions in equipping both pre-service and in-service teachers with the requisite knowledge and skills which make them gain confidence on how to implement the bilingual policy upon completion of their studies.

Research conducted in most European and North American contexts indicated that teacher education institutions did not pay attention to the challenges of bilingual education (Cummins, 2005). The same findings were yielded in Africa where research has proven that teacher education institutions still prepare their students to teach in ex-colonial languages in schools. Similarly, such lack of teacher preparedness was evident in Malawi (IEQ Research Project, 2000) and in South Africa (Rassool, Edwards & Bloch, 2006). This means that teachers graduate from teacher education institutions without much knowledge about the significant role of the mother tongue in education. As a result, they would find it a big challenge to implement

a mother tongue policy upon completion of their pre-service or in-service programmes. For that reason, Roy-Campbell (2001) implores teacher education programmes to come up with innovative ways of helping learners to value their mother language as well as developing proficiency in English, which appears to be the goal of the current LiEP for Zimbabwean primary schools.

All teachers in this study confirmed that they were never given any form of training in methodological skills in the usage of the mother language as the medium of instruction, hence they suggested the inclusion of relevant modules for both pre-service and in-service programmes at teacher education institutions. It can be argued that negative attitudes may result from lack of adequate training in respect of the cognitive benefits of education in the mother tongue. When teachers are not well versed in the pedagogical benefits of teaching and learning in the first language, then they cannot be expected to enthusiastically introduce it in their practice. As reflected in my study findings, teachers cannot have the expertise and confidence to implement a mother tongue policy, particularly in the absence of relevant educational material resources.

For the mother tongue policy to succeed in Zimbabwe, Nkomo (2008) aptly points out that the Zimbabwean LiEP should not be restricted to classroom practice without considering what happens in lecture rooms where teachers are produced. This implies that Nkomo (2008) regards teacher education programmes in Zimbabwe as crucial in preparing teachers in the use of the first language as the language of teaching and learning in primary schools, in tandem with the expectations of the current LiEP. The fact that teachers in this study confirmed that they were not exposed to any approaches on how to implement a bilingual education programme during their initial teacher training and even at in-service level for those who had obtained degrees, it can be argued that they may lack knowledge and skills to teach in the mother tongue as a change strategy, a factor which may contribute to implementation failure (Fullan, 1998; Benson, 2005; Cummins, 2005; Baker, 2006; Foley, 2008; Jansen, 2009).

The same sentiments are echoed by Foley (2008) who avers that in addition to the training of student teachers in the use of African languages for teaching and learning, it would also be necessary to upgrade the competency levels of those teachers who are already in practice. It was the participants' contention that their needs had to be met, as failure to do so was viewed as tantamount to implementation failure. In other words, if practising primary school teachers do not get in-service training on methodological techniques in the usage of the mother tongue as the language of teaching and learning, it may be regarded as a factor that hinders effective implementation of the bilingual policy. The question here is: 'If the minds of teachers are still colonised, will professional development programmes succeed in changing their attitudes?'

Achieving the above stated task may not be automatic due to deeply rooted attitudes inherent in individuals and institutions as revealed in this study. However, literature has shown that in-service training of bilingual education teachers has been successful in Bolivia (Albo & Anaya 2003 cited in Benson,

2005), Namibia (Stroud 2002 cited in Benson, 2005) and in South Africa under the PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) at the University of Cape Town (Rassool et al., 2006; Alidou, 2009). At the University of KwaZulu-Natal, three modules are offered as a way of preparing Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students to be able to teach in isiZulu in Foundation Phase classes (Grade R-3) upon completion of their programme (Mashiya, 2010, 2011; Van Laren & Goba, 2013). Therefore, through pre-service and in-service training, it may be a way of addressing teacher concerns and enhancing their competencies in mother tongue usage in education, while at the same time attempting to create positive attitudes in those teachers who would otherwise look down upon the home language due to colonial influence.

Besides the involvement of teacher education institutions in the training of bilingual education teachers, the other form of intervention strategy that was suggested by study participants was the production of educational materials. Results of this study demonstrated that teacher education institutions were regarded as appropriately placed to spearhead production of educational resource materials. Literature makes reference to the Rivers Readers' Project in Nigeria where materials of reasonable quality were developed even in situations where resources were scarce (Foley, 2008). Therefore, it was suggested that before any attempt is made to enforce the use of the current LiEP, there is need to allocate resources for teachers and learners since the current scenario leaves the teachers desperate due to a lack of requisite terminology (Nkomo, 2008). Failure to produce relevant educational materials for use in primary schools may thus lead to the resistance of the bilingual education policy as reflected in the current study findings.

6. CONCLUSION

Participants in this study mainly expressed concern that their low self-confidence was due to a lack of training which would have empowered them with knowledge and skills to translate materials into the home language and to effectively use the mother tongue during lessons. It can be argued that if concerns and fears experienced by rural primary school teachers in Zimbabwe are not taken into consideration, that factor may explain why the mother language policy continues to be ignored (Collarbone, 2009). The suggested objective for serious professional development activities may be due to the fact that attitudes, which have been embedded in people for over one hundred years due to colonialism, are difficult to eradicate.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher concerns can be addressed through training and retraining for the purpose of enlightening bilingual education teachers on the pedagogical benefits of mother tongue usage during the early years of schooling. Such training would further equip teachers with the requisite knowledge and skills on how to conduct lessons in the mother tongue while using appropriate language. When materials are rewritten in the mother language, the cultural factor could be considered so that more acceptable terminology could be introduced in sections dealing with sexuality.

8. AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

A similar study to this one in design can be undertaken, but using teacher education personnel in the form of university and college lecturers, to investigate their views on the implementation of the current LiEP. This would be important to assess their beliefs and attitudes since they are expected to lead by example in preparing pre-service and in-service teachers on how to implement a mother tongue policy in primary schools.

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