

# **Primary Reading Programme versus Primary Literacy Programme in Zambia: Exploring their Similarities and Differences**

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## **Abstract**

*This article emerged from a study that focused on some similarities and differences between the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) and the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) in Zambia. The two programmes were compared in terms of overall aims or purpose, programme package, teaching and learning materials, recommended teaching and learning methods, classroom organisation, assessment patterns, treatment of learners with varying abilities, and*

*other classroom practices. Researchers used analytic research where official publications on PRP and PLP were analysed and reviewed with respect to the focus of the desk study. Gupta and Gupta (2011 p.11) contended that “analytic research uses facts or information already available, and analyse these to make to critical evaluation of the material”. Among the similarities noted were that both programmes aimed at improving literacy levels in the country. Classrooms had talking walls with various interactive materials and that both programmes assessed learners at intervals. The factors that affected PRP such as ill trained teachers, pupil absenteeism, inadequate teaching materials, and negative attitudes of some teachers towards a familiar language were also prominent in PLP. The differences noted were that PRP had more teaching and learning materials supplied to schools especially in the early years than PLP, where some schools were running the programme without teacher’s guides across subject areas with inadequate pupil’s books. PRP had four sub courses as compared to PLP which is running from grade 1 to 7, with policy statements and an oral course or literacy in English sentiments and in terms of teaching methods in class, NBTL of PRP used more analytic or whole language approach to teaching while PLP utilised phonics or synthetic methods of teaching. The article recommended based on good practices that in future, the Ministry of General Education and other stake holders should take precautionary measures to ensure that all necessities were in place before introducing a new literacy programme for early grades in the country.*

**Key Terms:** Literacy, Language, Primary Reading Programme, Primary Literacy Programme, New Breakthrough to Literacy, Step Into English, Pathway, Read on Course, National Literacy Framework, PRP, PLP.

## **Introduction**

This desk study article aimed at comparing and contrasting the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) and Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) in Zambia. The two national literacy programmes shared several similarities and differences in terms of programme structure, packaging, pedagogical and the general implementation in the classroom. It is also important to note that other salient features and themes surrounding the two literacy programmes have been discussed in this article.

### ***Contextual Definition of Terms***

Defining literacy in the present day without context, can be a night mare because the term has multiple meanings in various spheres (Roberts 1995, Barton 2007, Mkandawire 2015, Mkandawire and Daka (2018 p.140). In this article, the meanings of literacy have included technical skills of reading and writing or conventional literacy as discussed by (Mkandawire 2018 p.40, Mbewe etal 2016 and Mwanza-Kabaghe 2016), and other classroom forms of literacy that is associated with early grade learners as discussed by (Lawton and Gordon, 1996 p. 138). The technical skills of literacy in this context were also situated by the National Literacy Framework (2013:6) as part of the Primary Literacy Programme, where literacy was defined as “the ability to read and write”. The Primary Reading Programme (PRP) in this article refers to a literacy programme and its constituents, that was introduced by the Ministry of General Education of the Republic of Zambia, to help improve literacy levels from 1999 to 2013. The Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) on the other hand refer to another literacy programme introduced by the Ministry of General Education and started running in 2013, and replaced PRP with a similar agenda of improving literacy levels in Zambia. Although the names of

the two literacy programmes were different, they served the same purpose of improving literacy levels primary level, which is an important aspect in the structure of the education system in Zambia (Mkandawire & Illon, 2018). Sometimes names may be signposts that reflects the social, historical and cultural ideologies of name givers (Wakumelo etal 2016 p.270, Tembo 2017p.119, Mkandawire 2017b p.54,and Udoye 2018 p.1). The terms New Breakthrough to Literacy, Step Into English, Pathway and Read on Course were sub courses offered under the Primary Reading Programme.

### ***Background to the Primary Reading Programme and Primary Literacy Programme***

The introduction of Primary Reading Programme and Primary Literacy Programme were meant to help improve literacy levels among early grade learners in Zambia (Mkandawire, 2017a p.60). The execution of these two programmes had implications on the overall results that each programme intended to achieve. In order to compare and contrast the two programmes stated above, it is important for readers to understand the nature of PRP and PLP literacy programmes in Zambia, as a case in point.

### ***The Primary Reading Programme (PRP, 1999-2013)***

Soon after Zambia's independence in 1964, there were several changes in different sectors of the society including education. Among the changes in education was a shift on language in education policy from using familiar local language as medium of instruction in early grades to English language from grades 1 to University level (Manchishi 2004). The use of English as a second language in early grades highly contributed to consistent poor performance in literacy over a period of time in Zambia (Linehan 2004). Citizens started raising concerns about the decreasing

literacy levels in the nation (Lungu 2005). The concerns about the low literacy levels among school going children in Zambia led to the introduction of several literacy programmes and initiatives (Mkandawire 2017a). The Primary Reading Programme (PRP) was one of the major land marking literacy programmes that Zambia had ever known. Literacy instruction in this programme was to be done in a local Zambian language familiar to the learners. The use of familiar local language for literacy instruction was supported by research and the Ministry of Education policy, *Educating our Future* (1996, p.39) which stated that ...” “The fact that initial reading skills are taught in and through a language unfamiliar to the majority of children is believed to be a major contributing factor to the backwardness in reading shown by many Zambian children”. This statement in the National Policy Document, ‘*Educating our Future*’ paved the way for the introduction of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP).

The PRP was an initiative which was officially introduced and implemented in 1999 to 2013. The aim of the programme was to improve literacy levels among school going children at the lower and middle basic levels in Zambia (Mkandawire 2017b). PRP therefore, was concerned with improving reading and writing skills in all primary schools through targeted interventions at every Grade level ranging from 1 to 7.

One of the early successes of the PRP was the production of *New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL)*, a course and method that was intended to help children learn to read fluently and write easily as well as accurately in their local language in their first grade in primary school. The seven local languages that were used as media of instruction to teach literacy under NBTL were Ibibemba, Tonga, CiNyanja, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale and KiKaonde. The NBTL course was followed by a course called *Step In To English (SITE)* (Kalindi, Mwanza 2011, Mwanza-Kabaghe 2015),

a literacy course which was meant to enable learners to read and write fluently and accurately in English in Grade 2. Alongside NBTL and SITE, there was an Oral English Course (Pathway 1 and 2), a teacher's guide for oral competence in English to equip learners of grades one and two with enough oral vocabulary in English in readiness for the Read On Course (ROC) which was offered from Grades 3 to 7.

The ROC was developed with the mission to improve literacy levels among the Zambian school going children at the middle basic level. It is a single literacy handbook for Grades 3 to 7 designed to consolidate and support the reading skills acquired in Grades 1 and 2 in both Zambian language and English. The ideal situation was that, NBTL should feed into SITE and SITE feeds into ROC. This suggested that if pupils did not breakthrough to literacy in their mother tongue in NBTL in the first one year, they would have nothing to transfer to SITE and therefore nothing to build on in ROC. However, the path way 1 and 2 also made pupils breakthrough to literacy in English (SITE and ROC) in terms of speaking and listening.

In the new curriculum reform, there was a separation of literacy teaching and language teaching. While literacy emphasized the teaching of reading and writing skills, language teaching emphasized the teaching of oral language, grammar and syntax. For PRP, the time to teach literacy courses had been increased to 60 minute periods while the teaching of Zambian language and English language still remained and continued following the Zambia Basic Education course (ZBEC) time allocation of 30 minute periods. This indicates that in addition to teaching of Literacy through the medium of Zambian language and English, ZBEC courses for Zambian language and English language at the middle basic level still remained and continued to support the learning of literacy in both languages, and teach

other aspects of language and culture not contained in the literacy courses (MOE, 2001).

Following the introduction and implementation of PRP, one of the expectations of the Ministry of Education was that, children should Breakthrough to Literacy by the end of grade one. In line with the same, Kanyika (2002) stated that “the aim of PRP was to improve reading and writing skills among the pupils at the lower and middle basic levels in Zambian schools so that they can learn more effectively across the curriculum”. However, these expectations proved to be unrealistic because since the inception of the (PRP), some studies such as the MOE (2006, 2008); Sampa, (2005), Chibamba (2012) and Mwanza (2012) provided information on the reading levels among Zambian children, and results showed that, on the overall, reading achievement levels were still low. The mean performance across all provinces was below the criterion percentage mark of 40 percent for minimum level of performance set for the nation in the Zambian language and English.

The factors that seemed to have the greatest impact on the low reading levels among school going children in both English and Nyanja language under PRP were family related, pupil related, teacher and school related factors (Chipili, 2016).

Family related factors included parental movements from one region to another due to work related matters or mere preference to change residential places. This in turn affected pupils performance in schools because it meant that the child has moved from a familiar language locality to a locality with an unfamiliar local language. Furthermore, the language background of both teachers and pupils had an impact on pedagogical implications on pupils (Mwanza-Kabghe et al 2015). Some parents also had negative attitude towards the use of Nyanja as medium of instruction at school. This lowered the morale and self-esteem of learners from

such homes. Parental behaviour towards reading had an impact on pupil's academic progress in early grades because. Proximity of the school to the pupils was another serious matter that affected some pupils from different social context.

Pupil related factors included absenteeism, pupil transfers from one school to another, negative attitudes towards reading and learning in a local language and spending more time on extra-curricular activities also contributed to low reading levels in Zambia.

Teachers related factors included lack of training and orientation in PRP for several teachers, negative attitudes towards the use of local language and PRP as a whole, lack of teachers' oral proficiency in Nyanja language. Some teachers failed to follow the prescribed daily lesson routines to teach literacy because they lacked pedagogical proficiency and experience.

School related factors included lack of adequate teaching and learning materials, over enrolment with high pupil teacher ratio, lack of supervision of literacy teachers by relevant authorities and some classes lacked libraries and readers.

In order to help improve the situation after noticing the challenges under PRP, the Ministry of General Education revised the curriculum and introduced the Primary Literacy Program (PLP) that also emphasized the use of the familiar local language as the medium of instruction, but this time from pre-school to grade four. PLP was developed in order to address the weaknesses under PRP and improve literacy levels among learners in primary schools.

### ***The Primary Literacy Programme (PLP, 2013-2018)***

The Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) started in 2013 by the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) with support from cooperating partners,



as an intervention initiative to help address the weaknesses noted under the Primary Reading Programme. This interposition programme, emphasized the use of a familiar local Zambian language as the medium of instruction from pre-school to grade 4. The PLP adopted the process of learning to read that is based on the principles of provision of the big five key competence skills, namely, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Therefore, in terms of having an effective approach for teaching reading, the MESVTEE reviewed the Primary Reading Program (PRP) and realized the need to first have a National Literacy Framework. In March 2013, with support from USAID/Zambia Read To Succeed project, MESVTEE developed a draft National Literacy Framework for grade 1 to 7 that established the roadmap for literacy teaching in primary schools (MESVTEE, 2013).

The Primary Literacy Programme took a different approach as far as literacy instruction was concerned. Its major emphasis was on starting with phonics or the teaching of letter sound relationship in early Grades using the seven regional official languages, namely; Icibemba, Tonga, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale Cinyanja and Kikaonde. This was not the case in the PRP where the whole language approach was emphasized.

It was expected that before the official launch of the Primary Literacy Programme, stake holders for the implementation of the programme such as primary school teachers and primary teacher training college staff that were training primary education teachers would be trained in the new method. This was done because some primary school teachers especially those teaching Grade 1, were not adequately trained in teaching literacy. College and University staff training primary early grade teachers were themselves not even oriented but were left to figure it out by themselves. This partly affected the effective implementation of

the PLP programme. In this case, when one teacher is promoted or retired, it is not easy to find a good replacement.

Another interesting aspect is that in the PLP, the teaching and learning materials were reduced to three as compared NBTL of PRP where there were several materials in a kit. PLP relied much on the Teacher's Guide, Learners' Activity Book and teacher created resources such as Decodable stories, charts and others. In other words, in terms of literacy instruction PLP has two course books; the Teacher's Guide and the learner's Activity Book. The Teacher's Guide contains all the lessons required to be taught from term 1 to term 3 in each grade year. The lessons in the teacher's guide correspond to the activities in the learner's book. It is also important to know that the lessons in the teacher's guide are written in all the seven prescribed regional languages. This makes it easy for a teacher to teach in other languages should there be a transfer. The sounds to be taught are also graded starting with the most frequently used to the least.

This arrangement has reduced teacher preparation time and the materials are cost effective and comparatively easy to reproduce. Although the approach, just like in PRP was based on oral language skills and learners' vocabulary, PLP enables learners to attend to specific letter sounds, and connections between letters and sounds. In this approach learners identify sounds, read syllables, form and read words proficiently with speed and accuracy and understanding. It enables learners to attend to specific letter sounds, that aid them to make connections between letters and sounds and facilitates their reading skills.

## **Method**

This was a document analysis study (analytic research) where existing published and unpublished literature from 2000 to 2018 on Primary Reading Programme and Primary Literacy Programme

were analysed and themes of interest were extracted with a view of establishing the similarities and differences between the two literacy programmes. Bowen (2009, p. 27) reported that “document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents of interest are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic.” It should be noted that, in the process of analyzing documents, the researchers analysed data by coding its content into themes manually. The nature of the specific documents analysed included Journal articles, existing PRP and PLP national manuals and books, curriculum framework, national policy on education, unpublished thesis and dissertations which are indicated on the page of references. In other words, documents in public domain on PRP and PLP were analysed as discussed by (O’Leary, 2014).

Searches for necessary literature were conducted both online and offline. Some international databases such as JSTOR and Science direct were searched for literature related to the two programmes using terms such as Literacy programme in Zambia, PRP, NBTL, ROC, PLP in full. The search was expanded using institutional repository for University of Zambia which stores huge volumes of data, google scholar and some search engines such google, metacrawler, lycos and yahoo. Researchers also went to search for some literature physically in the University of Zambia Library, researchers in the field and a few specialists were consulted especially those familiar with the programmes. Several documents were extracted and used on the study. It is also important to note that while the study was mainly desk review, researchers interviewed a few teachers and key informants on the subject matter.

### **Similarities between PRP and PLP Programmes**

There were several similarities noted in the two major literacy programmes in Zambia. The first connection was centered on

overall aims of the two programmes which was anchored on improving literacy levels among early grade learners in Zambia. This aim was generated following a series of studies conducted on literacy and language education in the country (MOE 2006 and 2008, Kanyika 2003, Sampa, 2005, Luangala 2011, Tambulukani and Bus 2011, and Chibamba 2012). These studies further highlighted the factors that contributed to low literacy levels under the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) in Zambia. Other studies (Tambulukani 2015, Mwanza-Kabagh 2015. Sampa 2016, Mkandawire 2017 and Sampa etal 2018) also reported aspects of low literacy levels and factors that contributed to low reading levels in PRP and PLP.

In terms of Literacy and Language-in-education policy, both PRP and PLP used a familiar language of instruction to teach initial literacy in early grades in Zambia. The National Literacy Framework (2013:14) indicated that:

*to support early literacy and later, English literacy instruction, Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MESVTEE) will introduce instruction in a familiar language so as to build learners' arsenal for learning to read in other languages as well as learning content subjects.*

Furthermore, Ministry of Education (1996:39) observed that “The fact that initial reading skills are taught in and through a language that is unfamiliar to the majority of children is believed to be the major contributory factor to the backwardness shown in many Zambian children”.

The third similarity was that both programmes taught constrained finite skills such as letter-sound relationships and how they blended with others to form syllables. While the approaches to the teaching of letter sound relationship differed in PRP and PLP, they were all centred on aiding reading and writing skills in

learners. It is important to note that the teaching on phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, sight recognition to early grade learners is a common practice across the world.

The fourth similarity was that both programmes emphasised on talking walls where each early grade classroom had pictures and charts stuck on walls which contained certain messages on teaching points in order to create a reading environment. The other value of talking walls were for revision purposes by pupils individually or with friends and also to make classrooms look attractive for children. Much of the literature on talking walls are centered on phonics or phonemic awareness. This is a common practice across the universe.

Another similarity was that each early grade class was expected to have a class library with different reading materials such as readers, teacher created materials, pupil created materials, newspapers and charts. Other materials that were at the level of the learners were also included in the class library. It is important to note that materials that were included in these libraries were specifically those that were useful and relevant to the level of that class. These class libraries took the form of either a shelf in the corner of the classroom or a table with reading materials displayed in the centre of the classroom. Children were free to stand up and go to the library and take a book to read whenever they had no other class task assigned. All these activities were important as they promoted literacy development in classes.

Similarity number six was that both programmes were to be offered on a daily basis for one hour or five hours per week. While the Primary Reading programme had a slight different package with three literacy courses, the NBTL course had similarities with the PLP. The implication of this similarity is that the two programmes might yield similar results in terms of overall performance of pupils at the end of early grade classes.

In terms of assessment, both the Primary Reading programme and Primary Literacy Programme were scheduled to assess

learners after a stipulated period of teaching to assess how much learners were progressing in attaining certain literacy skills. These assessment periods were set by the state to take place across the country. The implication of this is that some pupils might be assessed on materials that they might not have covered because schools are surrounded by various factors such as floods and teacher's malice that might interfere with academic activities.

The eighth similarity was in terms of teaching and learning materials where the authors observed that both programmes had prescribed teaching and learning materials. However, these materials had different levels of adequacy for effective delivery of lessons. PRP had several materials in the NBTL and SITE kits, these were not being replenished and after five years of implementation most school ran out of the materials. This was also the situation with PLP. In some cases, some teachers in some schools had literary no teachers guides and pupils books to help in implementing the programmes in the first five years of PLP existence. This means that the nation should not expect much positive result from the PLP because necessary materials were not in some schools the time the study was done. It would have been better if materials were provided early enough to guide teachers.

In terms of overall performance, both programmes reported initial improvement in reading levels. However, in both programmes, learners did not meet the desired level of performance in breaking through to reading and writing. These observations were noted by (MOE 2006 and 2008, Kanyika 2003, Sampa, 2005 and 2018, Tambulukani and Bus 2011, and Chibamba2012) (We need to find a study that reported that even with PLP learners did not reach the desired level of proficiency of reading, in order for this to stand as a similarity)

The tenth similarity was that the factors that contributed to low literacy levels in the two programmes in Zambia were similar. These factors included lack of teaching and learning materials, ill-trained teachers to handle the programmes, negative attitudes

of teachers towards the use of local languages as medium of instruction, poor orientation to the programmes, overcrowded classrooms where teacher pupil ratio in most schools was 1 to 60 or even above which was too high to allow for group learning (Mwanza 2011), and absenteeism among both pupils and teachers. Language of literacy instruction was another factor that negatively affected teaching and learning for both teachers and learners. Some teachers were posted in schools where the language of literacy instruction was different from the languages that teacher knew or spoke. Some pupils also did not understand the language of literacy instruction especially in cosmopolitan centres such as Lusaka and Copperbelt towns where there is a mixture of local Zambian languages spoken (Tambulukani 2015, Mwanza-Kabghe et al 2015) However, this was a very small number of pupils that had issues with language of literacy instruction. In any case, it was not just pupils that had challenges with language of instruction but some teachers as well. There were some teachers who did not understand Nyanja/chewa spoken by some pupils in class. Some teachers were using pupils familiar with the language as resources for their lessons. This imply that challenges of low literacy levels among early grade learners in Zambia may not be improved any time soon unless the state address various factors at play.

### **Differences between PRP and PLP Programmes**

There were some differences noted in the two major literacy programmes in Zambia. The first area of difference was in terms of teaching methods that were employed in the two literacy programmes which emphasized different procedures in class. The Primary Reading Programme used a variety of teaching and learning methods which included look and say, whole word, whole language and analytic method while the Primary Literacy Programme focused more on the use of phonics or synthetic

methods for teaching literacy in Grade 1. This means that other methods such as look and say were utilized on a small scale in PLP. The differences in methods of teaching might not have a serious effect on literacy acquisition by pupils.

The second divergence was based on programme package. The Primary Reading Programme was made of four Courses while the Primary Literacy Programme was running as a whole single programme from Grade 1 to Grade 7, with two sub sister courses in English Oral course and Literacy in English as a subject which was embedded in two policy guideline statements (National Literacy Framework (2013 p.14). The four courses that constituted the Primary Reading Programme from inception were: New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL), Step Into English (SITE), Pathway to English 1 and 2 (PWTE) and Read on Course (ROC).

Figure 1 below (modified from Mkandawire, 2017:60) reflects the summarised components of the Primary Reading Programme (PRP).

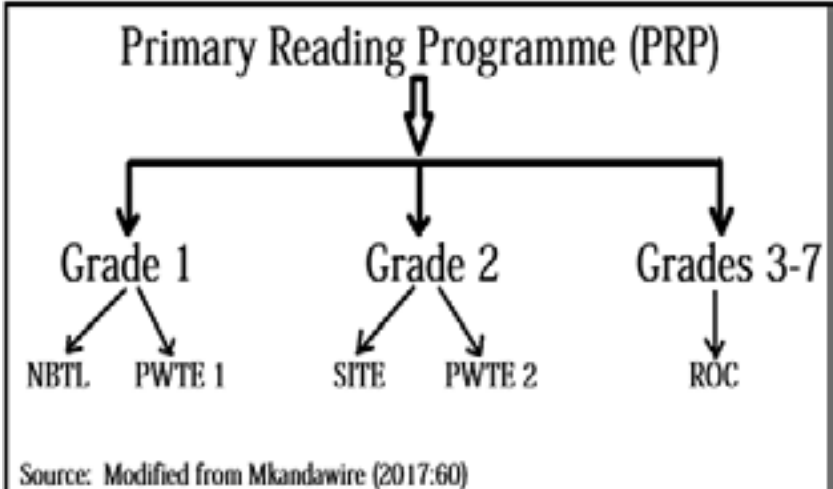


Figure 1: PRP Courses

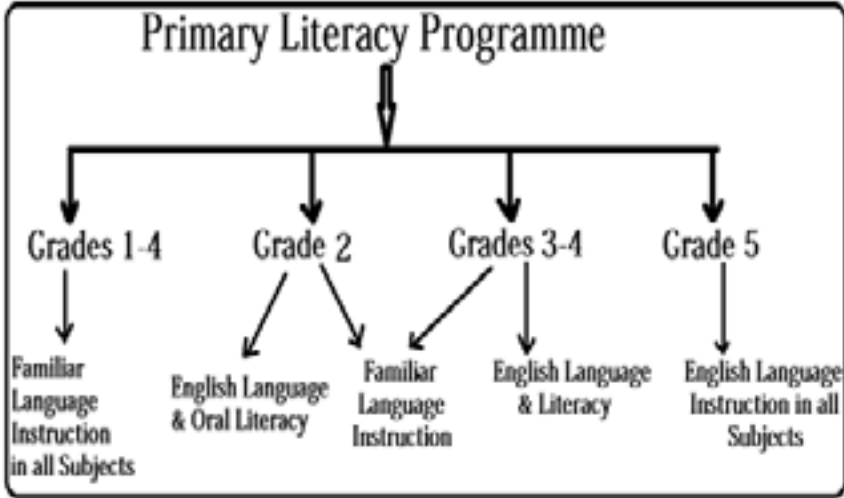


As figure 1 above suggests, New Breakthrough to Literacy course was offered in Grade 1 only to help pupils breakthrough to literacy using a familiar local language as medium of instruction. Pathway to English part 1, was offered in Grade 1 for 60 minutes per week as an oral English course to give learners an oral base for English Language which started running as medium of instruction in Grade 2. Pathway to English 2 was a continuation of the oral course from grade 1 to grade 2 with a little more content. It was running for 30 minutes per day in a week to consolidate learner's knowledge in spoken English (Ministry Of Education, 2003:4). It is also important to note that Pathway to English 2 was running alongside Step Into English which introduced English as medium of instruction in Grade 2. Read on Course was more advanced among the four. It was running from Grade 3 to 7 with various topical contents at each Grade level. The other observation under ROC was that, it was mandatory to use English and Local languages (familiar language per province) interchangeably on certain days, as medium of instruction (Ministry Of Education, 2003:78). The aim of Roc was to ensure that learners developed reading skills in two languages and continue to read on by the time they completed middle basic years Grades 5 to7..

Unlike PRP, the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) was made of two sister courses in English Language as subjects namely: English Language where Oral Literacy was taught and English Language where aspects of Literacy were equally taught. In these two English subjects, familiar language was expected to be used as medium of instruction. The other two aspects of PLP were policy guideline statements where local familiar languages were expected to be used as medium of instruction from Grades 1 to 4 and English Language would start as medium of Instruction from Grades 5 to7. One would also argue that there were three

components of the Primary Literacy Programme: The first one was that the teaching of all subject areas including literacy and language were to be done in a familiar local language as medium of instruction from Grade 1 to 4. The second part was an introduction of the English Language as a subject where Oral Literacy, reading and writing were introduced in Grades 2 and 3 respectively (National Literacy Framework, 2013 :13-14).

Figure 2 below summarizes the programme package for the Primary Literacy Programme.



Source: Field Data

The purpose of this Primary Literacy Programme was to help children breakthrough to reading and writing skills in local languages and English. Learners were expected to attain skills sufficient to enable them excel and compete on a regional and international levels.

The third difference was a shift in Language of Instruction policy. In PRP, familiar local Language as medium of Literacy

Instruction was restricted to Grade 1 only while in the PLP, it was extended from Grade 1 to 4. However, it is important to note that in Grades 2 to 7, English language was used where necessary, and teachers also switched to local languages on some days. For instance, under ROC, within a week, teachers would teach for two days using local Zambian languages and another two days using English language as medium of instruction. On the fifth day, it was up to the teacher to decide which language to use for revision and instruction. In the case of grades 5-7, the alternating of language of instruction was done on a weekly basis. For example, in week one, the teacher would use Zambian Language and in week two, they would use English Language as medium of instruction, (Ministry of Education, 2003 :78-79). It was difficult for researchers to establish whether or not the switching of languages had an impact on literacy or learning in general. Teacher's views were that there was no problem on their part and pupils.

The other difference was in terms of teaching and learning materials. The PRP had a well-stocked full kit for NBTL with specific materials such as sentence maker, sentence holder, word cards, pupil's story books, teacher's guides and others. Other PRP courses such as SITE, Pathway 1 &2 and ROC, also had adequate materials especially in the first few years after the programme started. The teaching and learning materials for PLP on the other hand, were pupil's book and teacher's guide book for each of the seven regional official languages. There were three pupils' books for each term and there was only one teachers guide book for each academic year. Even if teachers and pupils books were prepared, they were inadequately available in some schools. In some cases, some schools only had one pupil's book in class against 60 to

70 pupils. This one copy of Grade 1 book was mainly used by teachers as there were no teacher's guides available in those schools. In other words, the PLP had limited teaching and learning materials in terms of quantity and availability. This imply that there might be very little progress to expect from our pupils entering grade 1 in this period because of limited teaching materials. This is supported by Mkandawire (2010) who noted that inadequate teaching and learning materials can be hinderance to curriculum implementation.

The fifth difference between PRP and PLP was in terms of class daily routine practices. For PRP, the structure of the literacy hour for Grades 1 and 2 was similar to that of Grades 3 to 7. For example, for NBTL, SITE and ROC, the literacy hour was divided into three stages; starting together, teaching corner lesson and sharing together time. In addition, learners were put in pace groups according to their ability and the groups had group names based on animals, colours or fruits. For instance, in one class, pupils may be categorized based on colours such as orange, yellow, green and blue. This is not the case for PLP as teachers no longer follow the PRP literacy hour structure. For PLP, the teacher was allowed to stand in front like a lecture method and teach while all the learners sit in rolls facing the teacher. In terms of pace groups, it was up to the teacher to know which leaner is in which group without physically showing it or grouping pupils in class. Furthermore, it is important to note that same teachers were mixing PRP and PLP classroom management structure. The idea of treating pupils equally in PLP is a good one so that pupils do not discriminate one another. Mixing of PRP and PLP methods of teaching might have both positive and negative effects on learners.

## **Conclusion**

The study has shown several similarities and differences between PRP and PLP. Among the similarities noted were that both programmes taught constrained finite skills first such as alphabetic letters, letter-sound relationships and how one sound blended with others to form syllables. Another similarity was that classes in both programmes were expected to have talking walls with a small library. Literacy was taught for about five hours in a week for both programmes and that assessment of learners took place after a stipulated period of time.

The study has shown that Primary Reading Programme emphasized on analytic methods of teaching reading while PLP emphasized synthetic phonics to teach alphabetic principles. The programme package was different in the sense that PRP was made of four Courses while the Primary Literacy Programme was running as a whole single programme from Grade 1 to Grade 7, with two sub sister courses in English Oral course and Literacy in English as a subject. The shift in Language of Instruction policy was another significant difference. In PRP, familiar local Language as medium of Literacy Instruction was restricted to Grade 1 only while in the PLP, it was extended from Grade 1 to 4. The PRP had a well-stocked full kit for NBTL with specific materials such as sentence maker, sentence holder, word cards, pupil's story books, teacher's guides and others. Other PRP courses such as SITE, Pathway 1 &2 and ROC, also had adequate materials especially in the first few years after the programme started. PLP on the other hand, had limited materials which in some schools were hard to access. The daily routine for both programmes was equally different.

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