

**GIRLS' PERCEPTIONS ON GENDER STEREOTYPING IN
LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF THREE
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL EAST EDUCATION DIVISION**

**M.Ed. (CURRICULUM AND TEACHING STUDIES- LANGUAGE
EDUCATION) THESIS**

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

MAY, 2018

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submitted to the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies, School of Education,
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May, 2018

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgements have been made.

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval

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Symon Chiziwa, PhD (Lecturer)

Co- Supervisor

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late father and my mother who does not have any slightest idea about the pedagogical principles of language teaching and learning. I also dedicate this work to my wife, Beatrice, and all my children who admired and encouraged me all the period I took to complete this work. I owe thanks to my supervisors for their tireless efforts in guiding and shaping my work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Amos Chauma and Dr. Symon Chiziwa, for working tirelessly in scaffolding me to come up with this work. You were more than supervisors. I also thank the Education Division Manager for the Central East Education Division (CEED), Mr. Billy Banda, for granting me timely permission to conduct my study in the CEED secondary schools.

I would also like to express my profound gratitude to all participants in the study for providing me with their invaluable experience on gender issues and gender stereotyping in language teaching and learning.

I thank my wife, Beatrice, and our children; Naomi, Mwayi, Glad, Chisomo and Luntha for their admiration and encouragement which made me to work extra hard. It was a blessing in disguise. Above all, I praise God Almighty for sustaining me throughout the study.

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at exploring girls' perceptions on gender stereotyping in language teaching and learning. The study was conducted in the Central East Education Division in the districts of Kasungu, Nkhotakota, Salima, and Dowa. Participants included thirty-six girls, randomly selected for focus group discussions, twelve girls per school from three schools. Six language teachers drawn from three schools were purposively selected from government secondary schools. The study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. The study used Pygmalion effect as its conceptual framework whose idea is about forming differential expectations on learners in the teaching and learning of languages. Data was generated through classroom observations whose instrument was observation check list; focus group discussion (FGD) whose instrument was guiding questions to the discussion and finally used in depth interview (IDI) whose instrument was a question guide. The study found that gender stereotyping existed in language classroom. Despite gender stereotyping, girls participated in all the activities during language lessons, and language tasks. The study concludes that both learners and teachers should deal with gender stereotyping so that teaching and learning of languages is effective. This implies that girls may perform better than boys in the learning of languages if given enough opportunity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEED	Central East Education Division
CHANCO	Chancellor College
CLT	Communicative language teaching
DCE	Domasi College of Education
EDM	Education division manage
EFL	English as foreign language
ESL	English as second language
FGD	Focus group discussion
IDI	In depth interview
LLS	Language learning strategies
PIRLS	Progress in international reading literacy study
PISA	Progress in international students' assessment
SLA	Second language acquisition

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents background to the study. The chapter discusses gender stereotypes and how these have affected girls' education in Malawi and other countries. The chapter also discusses statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study.

1.2 Background to the study

Education of the girl child is widely acknowledged as being a single and most powerful vehicle of self-advancement. Education potentially opens doors to alternative occupations for women and girls and is an important tool for development. Girls' education is an investment that serves as a means to achieve education for all children (AAUW, 1992).

The benefits of girls' education on girls and their future families have long been seen as human rights (DFID, 2005). A mother's level of education is more indicative of a child's health and schooling than the level of education of the child's father. Educated women are less likely to die in childbirth and less likely to have children who are affected by stunting. If all women had a secondary education, the number of child deaths in the world

would be cut in half. Girls with higher levels of education are likely to get married later, have children later and have fewer children. Education also helps women find work and narrow the wage gap with their male peers (AAUW, 1992).

There is an alarming difference between the numbers of girls attending primary and secondary school. The vast majority of school-aged girls in sub-Saharan Africa are not enrolled in secondary school, because the relatively high costs of secondary education are acting as a major disincentive for poorer parents (DFID, 2005). In Pakistan, the gross enrolment rate for girls in secondary education is nineteen percent. In Niger, Tanzania and Chad it is only five per cent. There are exceptions to the rule, but generally in countries where girls fare poorly in primary education compared with boys, they do even worse in secondary education (DFID, 2005).

In Malawian context, just as in many other countries of the world, women's place in the society is low and they are always considered by many people to be less capable than men (Banda, 1998; Hammond, 2015; Pilai & Anna, 1990). There is much of gender stereotyping in many societies. The concept of stereotypes is referred to in several disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology and linguistics (Zajdman & Ziv, 1993). It is also used in a broad sense to denote a commonly held popular belief about specific social groups or types of individuals (Butarro, 2012). In this study, it is about secondary school girls as a social group.

School books such as English language books include images of gender stereotypes of the behaviour of men and women, boys and girls. Teachers are themselves products of the wider society holding their own ingrained stereotyped beliefs about the appropriate gender roles (Chawafambira, 2010). These stereotypes and beliefs influence the expectations of boys and girls and the future roles that they will play in society. Crucially, they impact upon subject choice and level of achievement indifferent subjects (Gortnar, 2008).

According to Berger (1997), the use of stereotypes is part of our everyday illogical and uncritical way of thinking. In the field of language teaching and learning there has been a long standing assumption that females are more adept at languages than males, excelling in their native tongue and also foreign language study (Merritt, 2014). However, they have not excelled in these studies as expected because they have not been given enough opportunities to do so.

In the past, Malawian girls' education, just like in many other developing countries lagged behind than that of men. This is why illiteracy rate is higher among women than men in Malawi. However, there is an assertion by Merritt (2014) that female language learners engage more skills in speaking and reading as well as in elements of language, for instance, vocabulary and pronunciation.

Some communities did not and do not encourage girls to go to school because they prefer tribal customs to formal education. The woman's primary role in the society was and is

structured for reproduction to nurture and support a child (Davison & Kanyuka, 1990). Consequently, the attitudes that different communities have towards girls and women are carried over to educational institutions. This then means that girls in the school as well as in the classroom, are not given much attention by the teachers as well as male peers in the education circles due to this attitude.

Gender stereotyping becomes very clear in some subjects offered in Malawian schools, for example, home economics may be considered for girls while woodwork and technical education is for boys (Banda, 1998). Sometimes teachers, both male and female, make discouraging comments such as: “girls are not good at Mathematics:” Thus unequal opportunities at school and low teachers’ expectations are likely to affect girls’ interests, confidence and aspirations(Banda, 1998).

According to Sternberg and Williams (2002), cultural and social attitudes and stereotypes that shape how a girl grows into a woman and how a boy grows into a man are everywhere in our society. Little boys and girls are treated differently. Hence, a huge number of stereotypes create beliefs that are learned as early as a child starts going to school. In view of that, the purpose of teachers in a school environment is not just to teach about the different subjects, but also to give children more knowledge about existing stereotypical issues and their relatedness to their future. Consequently, the goal should be to make students focused, motivated and engaged in the learning process, and this can be done only by providing equal opportunities (Toci, & Aliu, 2013).

In many educational contexts, gender stereotyping has been seen to exist not only among teachers and learners but also in the elaboration of classroom teaching and learning materials including textbooks and more recently in software for young children. Language teaching and learning has also had its share in stereotyping and bias as is observed in Leskin's examination of popular ESL (English as Second Language) textbooks. Language learning and teaching does not simply involve the study of language; it also contributes to cultural studies, learned through the use of various types of text material (Leskin, 2004).

There exists rich source of empirical work on gender and gender issues (Christen, 2013; Mikkola, 2007; Morrison, 2007; Powell, 2002,). However, most of these researches were conducted in developed countries and have been preoccupied with gender stereotyping in school system, gender stereotyping in career or work place, gender stereotyping in textbooks and also gender stereotyping in achievements (Watt, & Bornholt, 1994) and little on gender stereotyping in language teaching and learning. This study therefore intends to find out girls' perceptions on these stereotyping tendencies in coeducation language classrooms in Malawian secondary schools.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Among several factors that affect girls' education are teaching and learning classroom practices which perpetuate gender inequalities that include gender biases and gender stereotypes. Studies have been conducted in Malawi and other countries on gender stereotyping but from my reading, little is said about the perceptions that girls have on

gender stereotyping perpetuated by teachers and male learners in the language teaching and learning classroom in Malawian secondary schools. Bearing that in mind therefore, it was necessary to explore girls' perceptions in gender stereotyping in language teaching and learning situations and the effect they have on their learning.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore the girls' perceptions on gender stereotyping on language learning in the co-education classroom.

1.5 Research questions

The following are the main and specific research questions which this study sought to answer.

1.5.1 Main research question

What perceptions do girls have on gender stereotyping in language learning in the co-educational classroom?

1.5.2 Specific research questions

The following are the specific research questions that guided the study:

1. What are girls' experiences about gender stereotyping in the language classroom?
2. What are the examples of gender stereotyping that take place in language lessons?
3. How does gender stereotyping affect the performance of girls in language classroom?
4. How do teachers and learners deal with gender stereotyping in language lessons?

1.6 Significance of the study

Firstly, the findings of this study will provide insights into how stereotypes affect girls in the learning and teaching of language in secondary schools. Secondly, the study will also inform language teacher practices in the development of teaching and learning materials that are gender sensitive and include measures to deal with stereotyping. Thirdly, the study will inform policy makers on the teaching styles and classroom practices that eliminate stereotypes in language teaching and learning which would encourage girls to participate fully in classroom activities. This will lead to improved girls' performance. Lastly, the findings of this study will also assist teachers of other subjects other than languages only to reflect on their classroom practices.

1.7 Operational definitions

The following terms have been defined so that there is a clear understanding of the context in which they are used in the study.

Stereotype: These are false or misleading generalisations about groups held in a manner that renders them largely, though not entirely, immune to counterevidence. In doing so, stereotypes powerfully shape the stereotyper's perception of stereotyped groups, seeing the stereotypic characteristics when they are not present, failing to see the contrary of those characteristics (Blum, 2004).

Stereotype threat: This is social - psychological threat that one feels when she or he is performing a task that may elicit negative stereotype about individual membership (Steel, 1997).

Gender: It refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. Behaviour that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as gender-normative; behaviours that are viewed as incompatible with these expectations constitute gender non-conformity (APA, 2011).

Gender stereotype: It is the beliefs about the characteristics associated with, and the activities appropriate to, men or women (Eagly, 1987).

Gender bias: This is behaviour that shows favoritism toward one gender over another. Most often, gender bias is the act of favouring men and/or boys over women and/or girls. However, this is not always the case (Rothchild, 2007).

Pygmalion effect: This refers to the fact that people, often children, students or employees, turn to live up to what is expected of them and they tend to do better when treated as if they are capable of success. However, the positive teaching expectations do not necessarily lead to high student achievement (Chang, 2011).

Self-fulfilling prophecy: Merton (1948) defines self-fulfilling prophecy as a false definition evoking a new behaviour which makes the originally false conception come true. Merton (1948) believes that false expectations by people could come true or create their own reality by causing other people to change their behaviours to match and fulfill the initial expectations.

Teacher expectations: Cooper and Good (1984) defines teacher expectations as inferences that teachers make about the future academic achievement of students. Teachers' expectations, then, may be linked to students' self-image and achievement levels.

1.8 Thesis outline

The thesis is presented in five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction of the whole thesis. Chapter two reviews related literature and research. The research design and methodology and its justification for the study are outlined in chapter three. Research findings are presented and discussed in chapter four. Finally, chapter five draws conclusions and provides implications of the study. Areas for further study are also suggested in chapter five.

1.9 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented the background to the study on how gender interacts with education. The importance of school environment in the teaching and learning of language has also been highlighted in this chapter. The chapter has also given some factors that affect girls' performance in language learning such as social-cultural and economic factors. Statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study are some areas that have also been covered in this chapter. The chapter ends with operational definitions and the outline of the thesis. The next chapter reviews literature on studies conducted on gender stereotyping in the language teaching and learning classroom.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents literature relevant to the topic under study. The chapter reviews literature on secondary school girls' perception on gender stereotyping during language teaching and learning in the classroom. There has been a considerable amount of literature on girls' education both in Malawi and on the international scene. The chapter highlights some studies which were conducted in line with the research questions in order to explore gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages. The chapter shall also present conceptual framework that guides the study.

2.1.1 Gender stereotyping in the language classroom

In the past 15 years, the field of applied linguistics has witnessed major changes in its understanding of the relationship between gender and second language acquisition (SLA). Moving away from positivistic understandings of gender in isolation, which assumes a direct relationship between language and gender, and turning towards constructivist and post structuralism frameworks, gender is increasingly seen as only one of many intersecting factors contributing to an individual's ever-shifting identity. Recent work examining gender from this perspective (for example, Cameron, 2005; Coates,

2004; Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004; Norton, 2000; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Sunderland, 1992, 1998) problematizes certain essentialist language learning and classroom myths, such as female superiority in language learning and male dominance in mixed-gender classrooms.

While many studies (for example, Baxter 2002; Hruska 2004; Kline 1993; Losey 1995; Pica *et al.* 1991; Polanyi, 1995) continue to find gender implicated in language learning success, it does not seem to be implicated in predictable ways based on gender in isolation. As a result, it is worth considering that the way that gender identities get constructed in particular communities may have very concrete consequences for the kinds of second language proficiency developed by men and women (Ehrlich, 1997).

There are numerous indicators within schools and societies that point to the fact that gender bias is present in the curriculum and teachers' practices. Gender bias, according to Sunderland (1992), operate at different levels in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms: classroom materials, English language itself, and classroom processes that always interact within a particular political, sociolinguistic and educational context. Examples of gender bias are that one gender is substantially over or underrepresented in a curriculum. These are the stereotypical images of men and women present in the textbooks; teacher expectations are related to or affected by student gender; or classroom practices, teaching methods or discipline disproportionately affect one gender (Dabiri, 2006; Fabes, Pahlke, Martin, & Hanish, 2013).

A much examined aspect of classroom interaction in language lessons is the amount of time teachers devote to their female and male students in language activities. A well-known study by Spender (1982) cited in Sunderland,(2000b) documents findings of a self-study she conducted by audiotaping her language classes and analysing the recordings for differential teacher treatment by gender, a phenomenon she was aware of and was deeply disturbed about the possibility that it might happen in her language classroom (Sunderland, 2000b). Spender was dismayed to find out that the maximum amount of classroom time she devoted to the girls was about less than the minimum time devoted to the boys. Such findings have since been used to illustrate the belief that male students tend to dominate in the classroom, leaving female students to be portrayed as victims (Baxter, 2002).

Studies by Baxter, (2002) and Hruska,(2004) have found that, whereas girls wait to be called on, boys tend to call out more, which initiates interaction and results in increased male student and teacher talk-time. For example, a study by Baxter (2002) on a British high school L1 English class with a mix of girls and boys, aged 14-15 documents the results of a comparative analysis of girls' and boys' speech. Baxter notes three major findings: both in their speech and their behaviour, the girls showed a greater conformity to the rules of the classroom; girls appear to offer boys considerably more interactional support than they receive in return; boys do not just simply fail to support girls in classroom discourse, they actively seek to undermine girls' linguistic interactions and by doing so, manage, on occasion, to disempower them. Regardless of these findings, however, Baxter argues against the portrayal of these girls as victims. Despite evidence

showing that, in whole class conversations, girls had a much harder time both securing themselves a speaking turn and holding onto that turn long enough to make their point, several of the girls were evaluated more favorably than the boys on account of their ability to effectively overcome these obstacles during discussions.

In the L2 classroom, where there is the increasing importance of using the language and of speaking as a skill in its own right (Sunderland, 1998), securing talk time and teacher interaction is arguably a bigger issue. In Sunderland's (1998) study, however, she stresses the importance of looking at the kind, rather than simply the amount of teacher interaction with students. Her observations of an L2 German class in Britain with a mix of 13 girls and 14 boys, aged 11-12, led to findings that supported previous studies demonstrating that girls receive less teacher interaction than boys. However, when she looked at the kinds of interaction given to girls and boys she found that interaction directed at the boys was more often disciplinary in nature, less often required a response in the L2, and less often required more than a minimal response of one word. Interaction directed at the girls more often required a response in the L2 and more often required more than a minimal response.

As a result, Sunderland contends that the girls were being constructed by the teacher as a more academic group than the boys, perhaps in accordance with the myth of female superiority in language learning, or perhaps because these girls simply were more academic. In either case, as a group, the girls received less interaction, but Sunderland

suggests that the kind of interaction took on greater significance in this context than did the amount.

Most reading materials often tend to show women as those who support and survive through men who are uniquely work-oriented, outgoing and practical. The gendered nature of reading material and other school texts provide important indicators of the extent of gender stereotyping in the education system as a whole. The language used is highly influential particularly on younger children, and has drawn criticism in the past for excluding or demeaning girls and women and for favouring stereotyped gender roles; ‘fireman’ instead of ‘fire fighter’, boys who ‘laugh’ as opposed to girls who ‘giggle’ are two examples. Studies have also focused on the frequency and manner in which the sexes are portrayed, and have found that men appear more often and in a wider set of roles as workers, whereas women are shown mainly in domestic roles.

The ultimate goal of language teaching and learning is to be able to communicate in another language. Cultures shape the way language is structured and the ways in which language is used. When we use a language, we are involved in culture. Cultural awareness is an approach to culture which emphasises not information about a culture but skills in exploring, observing and understanding difference and sameness, and perhaps most centrally, ‘suspension of judgement, for instance, not being instantly critical of other people’s apparently deviant behaviour (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004).

Stereotypes are a feature of prejudice. We gain our knowledge of the world around us through our culture and the group that we belong to. Research shows that people hold stereotypes of nationalities that they have not personally encountered (Katz & Braly, 1933). Much of our knowledge of other people does not come from personal contact with them. What we gain from common knowledge is the shared knowledge that exists within a culture. Through communication between group members, this knowledge is developed and transmitted within the culture. Stereotypes are embedded in the culture which is transmitted through language teaching and learning in which we are raised and live and they are conveyed and reproduced through socialization in the family and at school, through repeated exposure to language textbooks, television and newspapers, and so on.

The cognitive approach to stereotyping asserts that stereotypes are cognitive structures, like other schemas, influence the way people perceive, process, store and, retrieve information. Thus, stereotypes are likely to affect behaviours that are based on these biased processes. Through language learning, we can form new cognitive schemas hopefully more positive ones. Stereotyping shapes societal expectations of that group and inform decisions made about the group and its members and influences and underpin experiences of inequality and discrimination for many individuals and groups. Stereotyping also informs the choice made by members of the group as societal expectations are internalised and thus limit their options.

2.1.2 Examples of gender stereotypes that occur in language lessons

Studies which have investigated the manner in which male and female characters have been portrayed in books (Etim, 1988; Davidson & Kanyuka, 1992; Erinosh, 1994; Azikwe, 2002; Aladejana, 2002; Mkuchu, 2003) attempted to find out if selected text or reading materials used in English literature classes and also science textbooks in Nigerian secondary schools were male or female centered, and if traits given to male and female characters were stereotyped. It was reported that in the fifteen books selected, females were in very few activities and their roles and characters not well developed as compared to males. In studying the representation of males and females throughout various media, special emphasis needs to be put on visual images as nonverbal symbols.

As a socialising agent, the visual imagery provided by the media can have a powerful impact on our attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors, since it can contribute meanings and associations entirely apart and of much greater significance (Kang, 1997). Images are symbols that can convey meaning as efficiently as verbal symbols. Consequently, the medium of children's English and Chichewa books serve as a socializing tool to transmit values from one generation to the next, and in turn, is a strong purveyor of gender role stereotypes. As noted by Arbuthnot (1984), books are often the primary source for the presentation of societal values to the young. And, research has affirmed that gender stereotyping in children's language books have detrimental effects on children's perception of gender roles, and children's identity and self-esteem could be affected by negative portrayals of their gender in these language books (Gooden & Gooden, 2001).

Renner (1997) comments that more recently, feminist groups have voiced a view that there is need to change the structure that supports sexism within language. The use of generic masculine words is more than just a symbolic declaration of women's lesser status. Some would argue that the use of English generic masculine is more damaging to women's interest that it impedes communication and encourages discrimination. This feminine approach in the last three decades has led to a shift in language, a shifting leading up to formation of new words replacing the old ones. Words like 'firefighter' and 'police officer' rather than 'fireman' and 'policeman'. Today, there is a perceived need as well as a demand to create new linguistic terms that place both sexes on equal terms. Generally, replacements for what Renner views as more suitable expressions, words without gender preference are becoming common. Renner, (1997) and Mills (1995) emphasise long term effects that sexist language can have on peoples' self-image and confidence. According to Mills, a gender free language contributes to the acceptance of each human being without dominance from one group.

It is a stereotype if it ascribes characteristics to an individual based solely on group membership. For example, it is a stereotype to assume that a tall thin young African American male is a basketball player or that an Asian student is good in mathematics. It is probably a stereotype if it describes how girls and boys are supposed to be. For example, the statement that Susie will be better than Edson at babysitting because she is a girl is a stereotype. It is probably a stereotype if a book, toy or tool is described or pictured as for boys or for girls (Campbell, 1994). Gender stereotypes vary on four dimensions: traits, role behaviors, physical characteristics, and occupations (Deaux &

Lewis, 1983). For example, whereas men are more likely to be perceived as aggressive and competitive, women are more likely to be viewed as passive and cooperative.

Kelly, (1988) concludes that boys get more instructional contacts such as language textbooks during reading lessons, more high-level questions in literature, more academic criticism and slightly more praise than girls, all of which would seem potentially valuable in terms of facilitating language teaching and learning but also found that the discrepancy was most marked for behavioural criticism. In her meta-analysis, Kelly (1988) concluded that girls are just as likely as boys to volunteer providing language answers in class, but boys are much more likely to respond.

Traditionally, men have been viewed as financial providers, whereas women have been viewed as caretakers. Physical characteristics and occupations have also been considered consistent or inconsistent with masculine or feminine roles. For instance, women are supposed to be beautiful, slim and attractive while men do not need to look after themselves or pay attention to their physical appearance. Relatively passive, domestic and less interesting jobs or jobs that do not require much intelligence or physical strength are usually associated with women such as housewife, secretary, nurse, teacher, model, flight attendant, shop assistant, etc. On the other hand, men can do various adventurous, interesting, socially respectable jobs which require physical and psychological power like politician, artist, scientist, doctor, businessman, professor, police officer and soldier.

Gender is an issue with important theoretical and pedagogical assumption in second language learning. A good number of studies found that gender can have a significant effect on how students learn a language. A large number of researches worked on topics about gender, including language learning ability, motivation, teacher perceptions, learning styles and strategies, classroom interaction, teaching materials, testing and pedagogies. Many studies that have examined gender as a variable in the use of language learning strategies have shown greater use of these strategies by females than males (Green and Oxford, 1995; Noguchi, 1991). Politzer (1983) also reported that females used learning language strategies more than males. So this clearly shows that while men are good in certain dimensions, females show superiority in the use of language learning strategies.

2.1.3 How stereotyping affects performance of girls in language classroom

Most recently, evidence has shown that while boys and girls have improved their performances, girls achieved higher marks than boys in EFL (English as Foreign Language) learning. Gender has been regarded as an important affective factor that plays a specific role and influences second language acquisition. There are some differences between the language of men and that of women and no education can wholly erase these differences (Zoghi, 2013). According to gender role theory, prevalent gender stereotypes are culturally shared expectations for appropriate behaviours. The theorists of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) believe that female learners show possible superiority in their second language learning process since they are able to employ specific language learning strategies(Boyle, 1987; Ehrlich, 2001).

A number of studies reported that girls tend to outperform boys in language learning (Powell & Batters, 1985; Mori & Gobel, 2006) which could be due to a fact that girls comport themselves differently from boys (Sunderland, 1998). This may include employing specific language learning strategies, possessing particular attitudes towards the learning situation and the language under study, and subscribing to specific beliefs about language learning. The most well-known gendered aspect of second and foreign language learning, and indeed the key issue for many, is probably that girls tend to perform better (Boyle, 1987; Arnot, David & Weiner, 1996). In some countries girls do so much better that entrance requirements are lowered for boys applying to attend English-medium schools. Arnot et al. (1996) cite GCSE foreign language examinations in the UK, in which girls' higher performance continues to increase relative to boys (Clark, 1998).

Examination results however always need treating with caution, and examination validity questioned. Any apparent superior proficiency as regards scores may always be partially a function of the test (Sunderland, 1995a). As regards performance in class, including class tests, and on homework, teachers' may believe that girls are the better language learners, or have a flair for language (Altani, 1995; Stanworth, 1983). Such beliefs may have a bearing on teachers' expectations and treatment of students; girls may for example be treated in subtle ways more encouragingly than boys (the 'Pygmalion effect'). Clark (1998) suggests that because girls tend to present neater work, teachers may respond to girls disproportionately positively.

As regards some form of non-innate ability in the L1, Halpern (1986) cites verbal superiority in females in respect to a range of L1 verbal abilities as shown by a range of studies. This might suggest a spin-off for girls in terms of confidence in using language and even communicative competence including in an additional language. Hyde and Linn (1988), in a meta-analysis of 165 studies of gender differences in verbal ability, reached the conclusion that at least at this time, in American culture, in the standard ways that verbal ability has been measured. The magnitude of the gender difference in verbal ability is so small that it can effectively be considered to be zero (Hyde & Linn, 1988, Jaeger, 1998). Interestingly, Hyde and Linn among others report a decline in the degree of reported gender difference in studies of verbal ability done between the nineteen-fifties and the nineteen-eighties.

However, differential achievement by gender is not always the case. In the UK, boys perform better at A-level (Arnot et al., 1996) though this gender gap is decreasing. And, in Cross's (1983) study of foreign language proficiency, carried out in two British mixed-sex comprehensive schools, boys were superior (Morris, 1998; Scarcella & Zimmerman, 1998; Powell, 1979). Merrit (2014) asserts that girls tend to be more motivated to study languages than their male classmates. Studies in Canada, the UK and Hungary all show that female students are more likely to continue learning their foreign language in school even when the language class is not mandatory. In language learning, women are likely to be open to new linguistic forms in the L2 input and they will be more likely to rid themselves of inter language forms that deviate from target-language norms (Ellis, 1994).

A study carried out by experts from Newcastle University, UK and Georgetown and John Hopkins Universities in the USA found out that girls were more able to remember words while boys were more likely to create words and sentences (Burman, 2009). For girls, stereotypes are postulated to directly affect their performance in male connoted tasks by a phenomenon designated as stereotype threat. It has been frequently proved that group members perform poorer on a particular task if they have been confronted with negative stereotype towards their group with respect to achievement in certain activities. This negative impact of stereotypes is explained by an anxiety that one will confirm the stereotype which puts additional pressure on the member of targeted group and has a negative impact on performance (Wright & Taylor, 2003).

Steele (1997) uses the term stereotype threat to explain the social- psychological threat that one feels when she or he is performing a task that may elicit negative stereotype about individual membership. Therefore in the teaching and learning of languages, stereotype threat influences classroom achievement. Language teacher may assume that poor performance of a particular student in the domain reflects student's true ability as opposed to limited exposure in the subject. For example, Spencer, Claude and Quin (1999) found that women perform significantly worse than men on a mathematics test when participants were led to believe that the test would probably produce gender differences. In contrast, women and men performed equally well when the participants were led to believe that the test did not produce gender differences. These findings suggest that negative stereotypes can and do negatively affect performance even when the stereotype has not been internalised or incorporated into the view of the self.

Gender is an issue with important theoretical and pedagogical assumption in foreign language learning. A good number of studies found that gender can have a significant effect on how students learn a language. A large number of researches worked on topics about gender, including language learning ability, motivation, teacher perceptions, learning styles and strategies, classroom interaction, teaching materials, testing and pedagogies. Many studies that examined gender as a variable in the use of language learning strategies (LLS) reported that significant gender differences almost always are the same, and they show greater use of language learning strategies by females (Green & Oxford, 1995; Noguchi, 1991). Thus, gender indicates the socially constructed roles, behaviours and characteristics that a particular society deems appropriate for men and women. Labov (1991) observes that women use more standard forms than men in stable sociolinguistic stratification and more incoming forms when linguistic change is at issue.

The social and cultural roles assigned and expected by the society one lives in create gender distinction, and it has nothing to do with the biological phenomenon one is born with. According to the international social structure gender and its categories are defined in a different way than such as wife a woman, dentist a man, and so on (Oakley, 1972). Oakley further argues that gender is a visible sum of the qualities including mannerisms, ways of speaking, dress, choice of topics in conversation and so on. To Cornell (2004), in its initial meaning the term gender was used critically in social, political and scientific works; however, it introduced new dimensions of human history as for the first time it looked forward to see women's subjugation in different spheres of life and how women can play positive roles in social, political and economic life.

Politzer (1983) reported that females used social language strategies significantly more than males. Ehrman and Oxford (1990) using the language learning strategies with both students and instructors at the U.S., Foreign Institute came to the conclusion that compared to males, females reported significantly greater use of language learning strategies in four areas of general study strategies, functional practice strategies, strategies for communicating meaning, and self-management strategies. Language learning strategies or the specific behaviours that language learners employ, usually intentionally, to enhance their understanding, storage and retrieval of second or foreign language information (Oxford, 1994) are largely common to female than male students.. A few gender differences have been found alongside the similarities mainly concerning frequencies of use(Bacon & Finnemann, 1992).

Girls' often superior foreign language performance and achievement in languages might be related to more general learning patterns or styles. Oxford (1994) suggests that a female learning style may be relatively but characteristically global rather than analytical, field dependent rather than field-independent, reflective rather than impulsive and auditory rather than visual. Style and language learning can also be viewed more specifically. The fact that acquiring a language is incremental, one stage building on the next, suggests that consistent commitment is needed, at least for most classroom language learning. Interestingly, girls tend to do better on essays and coursework, requiring constant application; boys on multiple choice questions and exams, requiring occasional bouts of hard work (Sunderland, 1995a). What is needed for language learning may then be a style which is associated with girls rather than boys. The question remains as to what

extent such a style is socially constructed, and whether any aspects are innate. The value of constant commitment would logically increase as proficiency advanced; boys might then be expected to do progressively poorly in relation to girls as the level of the subject increased. This is indeed the case at GCSE level in the UK. However, it is not the case at A-level, where the few boys who take foreign languages actually do better than the girls (Arnot *et al.*, 1996).

In PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) 2006, girls in the fourth grade on average showed better reading achievement in nearly all the participating countries. However, mean differences between reading competences of young girls and boys varied. There are countries where there are no differences, for example Germany, countries where differences are very small, and countries like the United Kingdom where the differences are great (Blossfeld *et al.*, 2009). When we take a look at the reading achievements of older students, the gender differences are more established. In PISA 2009, the mean difference in reading achievement between girls and boys of all participating countries was 39 points in favor of girls, the smallest difference was in Chile 22; the greatest difference in Finland 55, and in Germany the difference was 40, (Naumann, Artelt, Schneider & Stanat, 2010). All former PISA surveys have detected similar differences. However, in spite of their poor reading abilities, boys' self-concept/self-esteem with respect to this domain is as high as that of girls. There seem to be differences in interest and engagement in reading activities which are crucial for boys' lower achievement (Naumann, *et al.* 2010).

Gender is a variable that can affect language use and acquisition as a result of biological, psychological effects, or socio-cultural influences differences between the two. Politzer, (1983) studied learning strategies of 90 undergraduate foreign language learners enrolled in French, Spanish and German courses in the U.S. and found that female learners used social learning strategies more often than males. After studying the LLS used by more than 1,200 undergraduate university learners, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) concluded that gender difference had a profound influence which indicates that females used strategies more frequently than males.

Gender stereotyping can also affect men's and women's performance. Stereotype threat is defined as "an individual's awareness that he or she may be judged by or may self-fulfill negative stereotypes about her or his gender or ethnic group" (Lips, 2001). Research indicates that stereotype threat can negatively affect performance by increasing anxiety. For example, Spencer, Steele, and Quinn (1999) found that women performed significantly worse than men on a math test when the participants were directed to believe that the test would probably produce gender differences. In contrast, women and men performed equally well when the participants were led to believe that the test did not produce gender differences. These findings reveal that negative stereotypes may negatively affect the performance of men and women even when the stereotype has not been internalised.

Gender stereotypes also influence traditional feminine occupations, resulting in social and psychological pressure on women who break traditional gender roles. These

stereotypes include that women have a caring nature, have skill at household work, have more manual skills than men, are more honest than men, and have a more attractive physical appearance. Jobs that are usually associated with these stereotypes include: midwife, teacher, accountant, cashier, salesperson, receptionist, cook, maid, social worker, model, and nurse (Anker, 2001). Some jobs that are associated with women and men have changed in recent years. For instance, early computer programmers were women and this has reversed in recent decades with programming being perceived as a masculine occupation (Light, 1999). In the field of medicine, the role of physician was traditionally seen as masculine, while the role of nurse was considered feminine (Boulis & Jacobs, 2010).

According to Francis and Skelton (2005) and Wessel (2005), gender stereotypic views create negative influence on children in their choice of career decision, and females are less likely to study engineering and computer sciences than males. Therefore, there are some indications that gender stereotype can influence individuals' academic perceptions and achievement. Some theorists of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) believe that female learners show possible superiority in their second language learning process (Burstall, 1975; Boyle, 1987; Ehrlich, 2001). Foreign Institute came to the conclusion that compared to males, females reported significantly greater use of learning language skills in four areas of general study strategies, functional practice strategies, strategies for communicating meaning, and self-management strategies.

There are also several studies of first language acquisition (Douglas, 1964; Morris, 1966) that have shown girls to be better learners than boys. Trudgill (1974) showed that women used the prestige variants more frequently than men and related this phenomenon to female social insecurity. Differences between male and female L1 learners appear more in studies conducted in bilingual settings; and such studies favor female learners in acquiring the languages they are exposed to. Faced with male dominance of classrooms, Arnot et al. (1998) suggest that girls may adopt compensatory communication strategies such as approaching the teacher individually or asking questions after the lesson; other such strategies may be getting and assimilating useful input from boys' talk, and attending to the teachers' responses to boys.

2.1.4 How teachers and learners deal with stereotyping in language lessons

Papatzikou (1996) makes three suggestions for teachers working towards gender-aware classroom practices. These include: increasing awareness of body language although this is often a difficult task in many ESL classrooms, where a mixture of students from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds may display many different body languages, avoiding sexist and racist generalisations at all costs, and becoming familiar with literature on sexism and language, for example in the ESL classroom, teachers should draw students' attention to the lack of an epicene third-person singular pronoun and introduce the various strategies for negotiating this issue. Many researchers (Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004; Hruska, 2004; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Sunderland, 2000b) take this last suggestion one step further by suggesting that sexism and language, and other topics inviting critical perspectives, would be excellent topics for in-class discussions to raise

students' awareness as well. Most central to gender-aware practices and classroom inclusivity is the notion that the effect of factors such as gender and ethnicity is not predictable.

Research clearly depicts that teacher expectations can have both positive and negative effects on student learning and achievement. Ormrod (1999) insists that expectations influence the ways in which teachers evaluate students, behave towards students, and make decisions about students. These expectations create an intersubjective reality in which students tend to perform up to expectations. Bruner (1996) explains intersubjectivity as how humans come to understand each other's minds. As teachers form expectations about their students' minds and students come to understand what is in their teachers' minds about their ability, reality is formed for both.

One of the most salient affective issues is the influence of teachers' expectations on pupils' attitudes towards learning, since evidence shows that teacher expectancies are correlated with student achievement (Dusek & Joseph, 1983). The issue of expectations that teachers hold for their students in terms of their capability to learn (Alderman, 2004), and the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy as a conceptual tool for understanding classroom achievement dynamics, (Covington, 1998) have been the focus of much attention in English as foreign language and English as second language (EFL/ESL) contexts.

Research has identified that the expectations that teachers have for their students in terms of behaviour and academic performance can have a strong impact on success in English as second language and English as foreign language learning, since they can act as self-fulfilling prophecies (Zabel & Zabel, 1996). In the teaching and learning of languages, teachers can develop a positive classroom climate if they avoid forming differential expectations for students based on qualities such as gender, ethnicity, or parents' background (Schunk, Pintrich & Meece, 2008). Similarly, they should avoid forming expectations based on such factors as record files, colleagues, information from other teachers or even the family's reputation (Good & Brophy, 1973).

Teachers can communicate expectations for success by forming groups with students from all levels of language performance, and by not marginalizing low achievers. Trying not to marginalise students of lesser ability can be achieved through the implementation of the varied classroom techniques. Pair and group work may of course be particularly characteristic of language classrooms, with implications for learning opportunities in terms of both comprehensible input and speaking practice (Sunderland, 1998).

The formation of expectations does not necessarily mean that teachers communicate expectations to students. However, research has shown that a number of teachers do convey expectations, in a number of ways, sometimes with the teachers not being aware of it. The following teaching practices can convey differential expectations to students (Covington, 1998). Firstly, some teachers are influenced by some student characteristic, label them as "less able", and use differential practices and behavior. This kind of teacher

bias, however, can have a negative effect on their self-efficacy perceptions, that is, their personal judgments about their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce designated types of educational performances (Bandura, 1997). Secondly, self-fulfilling prophecy prone teachers are often in the habit of providing praise to low achievers for success in relatively simple tasks, while withholding blame for failure. Such strategies, though, can have a negative effect on their motivation and self-esteem, since they may be considered by students as an indication that the teacher has little confidence in their abilities and expects little from them (Bandura, 1997).

Thirdly, questioning strategies can convey the meaning that the teacher expects much or little from students. Many teachers adopt different questioning techniques depending on their assessments of student ability. For example, they often pay more attention to the answers of high achievers and wait longer before calling on someone else. Gore and Roumagoux (1983) found significant differences in wait-time in mathematics classes, boys being given longer to answer a question. Swann and Graddol (1988) found differences in the types of questions addressed to juniors in a British primary school, in particular girls being asked “challenging and open questions less often than boys. They also found a tendency for the teacher’s gaze to be directed towards the boys. This gaze occurred at critical points, such as when a question was to be answered, thus inviting ‘self-selection’.

Study by Cotton (1998) was conducted to determine if teachers have higher expectations for a specific type of student. Because every teacher has his or her own way of

constructing reality, no two teachers will have the exact same expectancy. In fact, the expectation is determined partly upon the environment in which a teacher is teaching. Despite the inconsistency among teacher expectations, studies still determined that teachers favour specific characteristics in students. Teachers could take any of the following into consideration: socioeconomic class, home background, clothing and personal belongings, disposition, effort, location of seating, race, appearance, gender, and/or past performance. However, in this study, gender is considered the determining factor of teacher expectancies.

Gender appears to determine teacher expectancies even in the teaching and learning of language. Stipek (1998) argues that gender biases are based on cultural stereotypes. Boys tend to do better in maths and science because of the way they are raised. Parents believe boys are better in these two areas than are girls and push their sons to partake in activities such as using the computer in order to promote these skills. Clearly, then, gender does have influence in the classroom, and expectations could certainly be affected. Hence gender stereotype, like all other social evils, is something that is deeply ingrained in most, if not all cultures, and will take a long time to truly defeat. However, there is need to address gender stereotypes as children are growing so that they grow with the right perceptions (Chawafambira, 2010).

Teachers can deal with gender stereotyping by communicating expectancies for success by forming groups with students from all levels of language performance, and by not marginalising low achievers. Trying not to marginalize students of lesser ability can be

achieved through the implementation of the following classroom techniques. One of the techniques is by not supplying answers impatiently to children of lesser ability depriving them of opportunity to think and answer (Covington, 1998). The other technique is that students should be given equally academically challenging tasks, and the same questioning strategies should be used for all students (Alderman, 2004). For example, some teachers tend to ask weak students questions which are at the lowest level, for example, questions of knowledge. By contrast, they usually provide high achievers with opportunities to answer higher level questions, for example, questions requiring an analysis or drawing a conclusion.

d despair.

According to Gibbs (2001), studies show that boys talk more than girls in the classroom at a ratio of three to one. This is very likely because when boys get the teacher's attention by calling out, they are not reprimanded or corrected for doing so, and thus boys see this as an encouragement in taking risks. When a boy calls out, teachers seem to accept the boys' answers or actions, whereas when a girl calls out she is reprimanded and is told that calling out is inappropriate behavior. This sends a powerful message that boys should be assertive and girls should be passive. If teachers accept boys calling out and expect girls to be patient and raise their hands then girls will not develop risk taking in the classroom nor anywhere else in their lives. Gibbs (2001) says bias and inequality are devastating to children's development and learning. They promote hostility, alienation, poor school performance, failure, an

Hedlin (2004) says teachers and other individuals in the society treat boys and girls differently without knowing it. According to Hedlin, there are many individuals who honestly believe that since they are aware of discussed gender issues in schools and society, then they automatically treat everyone equally. That is not the case in reality. Treating boys and girls equally is not just something that just occurs on its own. Instead, it is something that people should learn and practically practice the habit. Furthermore, Hedlin states that even though people may learn that habit, it is still hard for people to notice when they treat boys and girls differently.

Davison and Kanyuka, (1990) observed that cultural factors in Malawi and gender specific factors about division of labour shape the decisions about whether a child should or should not be in school. The study mostly targeted primary school girls. The purpose of the study was to find out about retention of girls in primary schools and early secondary school education. Davison and Kanyuka (1991) found that a majority of parents and teachers generally regarded girls as less able than boys and prone to discontinue their education when they wished. In addition, twice as many boys as girls obtained places in secondary schools. This poor performance of girls is interpreted differently by parents who generally express the opinion that boys are inherently more intelligent than girls. About 50% of parents and guardians interviewed by Davison and Kanyuka thought that girls need not be educated beyond secondary school. Over 60% of parents thought of university education as a goal for boys only.

Studies by Burchfield and Kadzamira, (1996) and Chimombo, (1999) identified inadequate clothing and lack of money to buy school supplies as the reason for non-enrolment and lack of participation of girls in classroom activities. Studies by Kadzamira and Chibwana, (1999); Maluwa and Kholowa,(2002) and other studies beyond have also given reasons that prevent girls from completing primary education which include distance to school, academic performance, attitudes and perceptions of teachers and resource allocation. All these studies have not explored the perceptions that girls who remain in school have on gender stereotyping. This is why it is imperative for this study to focus on girls in a new perceptions.

When talking about second or foreign language teaching there are many aspects that should be considered. Such is the case of motivation, gender, age, attitude, culture, economical aspects, among others. These, as well as many other aspects, will determine the way in which an individual assimilates and develops all the linguistic skills that he/she needs to learn language (Montero, Chaves& Alvarado, 2014). In order to learn or teach another language, even though it is necessary to take into consideration elements such as vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, among others, it is extremely advisable to take socio-cultural aspects into account as well.

The ultimate goal of language teaching and learning is to be able to communicate in another language. Cultures shape the way language is structured and the ways in which language is used. When we use a language, we are involved in culture. Cultural

awareness is an approach to culture which emphasises not information about a culture but skills in exploring, observing and understanding difference and sameness, and perhaps most centrally, ‘suspension of judgment, for instance, not being instantly critical of other people’s apparently deviant behaviour’ (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004). According to different studies, (Marinova-Todd , 2003; Moyer, 2004; Nikolov, 2000) second language acquisition has a difference based on a series of factors that will either strengthen or weaken it. Among those factors it is possible to mention age, socio-economical context, linguistic background, affective factors and cognitive factors.

Williams and Burden (1997) states that the impact of context on learning a language is considerable because the learning environments will enable individuals to learn how to learn and to develop as fully integrated learners. Learner’s access to different cultural goods such as internet, computers, pictures, paintings, books and dictionaries which is cultural capital and learners’ relationships with teachers, parents, siblings, and peers which is social capital may have a profound influence upon whether, what and how any individual learns a language. Language competence is a social and cultural competence.

A study by Miske (2013) observed that strong foundation in a first language, especially during the early years of school, is crucial to a child’s educational success. Mother tongue instruction is important for girls and boys alike, and it is especially important for girls. Where teachers use a language of instruction that girls understand, girls are more likely to stay in school longer, be identified as good students, do better on achievement tests, and repeat grades less often than girls who do not get mother tongue instruction. Under these

conditions, they are more likely to enjoy school, experience success, and perceive that schooling is relevant, which will give them the skills and confidence to continue their school careers. For this effective learning to take place, teachers who speak the girl's mother tongue also need to use proven bilingual teaching strategies that will enable the girl to learn to read, write and transition successfully into the dominant language, as appropriate.

Language acquisition is less concerned with the learning process as an individual development and more concerned with the learning process as a socialising one where the learner gains cultural competence which enables him or her to participate in society. This is where foreign language and mother tongue learning meet in the sense that, on the one hand, cultural insight, seen as an intrinsic part of mother tongue competence, may be influenced and broadened through foreign language competence, and, on the other hand, developing cultural awareness through mother tongue competence, seen as text competence, might support the learner in the process of acquiring a foreign language.

2.1.5 Summary

In conclusion, this stereotyping literature clearly shows how stereotypes affect teaching and learning of languages either positively or negatively. To some extent this stereotyping literature also shows how teachers perceive these stereotypes on the learners. Gender which has been considered discriminating is noted to have significant effects on how students learn a language. However studies that examined gender as a variable in the use of language learning strategies reported that gender differences were always the same

and that females showed greater use of language learning strategies. Studies have also shown that stereotype threats influence classroom achievement. Steel (1997) uses the term stereotype threat to explain the socio- psychological threat that one feels when she or he is performing a task that may elicit negative stereotype about individual membership. This also makes the teacher to think that the learners' poor performance is a true reflection of the learner's ability in the teaching and learning of languages. While these studies have explored cultural and socio-economic factors, teachers' perceptions about gender stereotypes in language teaching and learning, they have not explored the perceptions that girls have about gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages hence this study that has focused on exploring girls' perceptions about gender stereotypes in the teaching and learning of English and Chichewa.

2.2 Conceptual framework

This study will use Pygmalion Effect as its conceptual framework. Pygmalion first appeared in Greek mythology as a king of Cyprus who carved and then fell in love with a statue of a woman, which Aphrodite brought to life as Galatea. Much later, George Barnard Shaw wrote a play, entitled Pygmalion, about Lisa Doolittle, the cockney flower girl whom Henry Higgins, the gentleman turns bets he can turn into a lady. Nowadays, the Pygmalion effect usually refers to the fact that people, often children, students or employees, turn to live up to what is expected of them and they tend to do better when treated as if they are capable of success (Chang, 2011).

The Pygmalion Effect was as a result of a publication of a powerful study conducted by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson in 1968 on teacher expectations. Pygmalion effect has four key principles. First, there is formation of certain expectations of people or events. Pygmalion effect involves both positive expectations and negative expectations. In the light of a self-fulfilling prophecy, the Pygmalion effect means you get what you expect. If teachers hold positive expectations towards students, they will be given more learning opportunities or increased challenges, be provided with more detailed feedbacks, be praised more often following success and be encouraged more often following failure. Thus, teacher behaviors influence student performance in both positive and negative way. If teachers hold negative expectations towards students, they will be taken into disadvantageous learning conditions and teacher behaviors influence student performance in a negative way (Chang, 2011).

Secondly, the expectations are communicated in various ways. Research has shown that a number of teachers do convey expectations, in a number of ways, for example, paying more attention to the answers of high achievers and wait longer before calling on someone else or differences in the types of questions addressed to individual learners in language lessons, sometimes with the teachers not being aware of it (Brophy & Good, 1974). Third is about people responding by adjusting their behaviour. Human beings adjust their behaviour to match what they perceive are the expectations of those who are in more senior positions of authority or influence. And finally, results of the original expectation. The teacher might unknowingly behave in ways that subtly encourage or facilitate the performance of the students seen as more likely to succeed. This, in turn,

would create the self-fulfilling prophecy of actually causing those students to excel, perhaps at the expense of the students for whom lower expectations exist (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1966).

2.2.1 Factors that influence teachers' expectations

Research has explored the complex factors and the many potential sources that affect the formation of teacher expectations. For example, Alderman (2004) provides a useful summary of the major sources of the expectations that teachers hold for their students (Alvidrez and Weinstein, 1999) and (Baron, Tom and Cooper, 1985). First, a significant source is related to teachers' beliefs about students' ability and their beliefs about intelligence. Alderman (2004) explains that when teachers consider intelligence as a fixed student characteristic, they are more likely to label students as smart or dumb and teach them according to the label. Weinstein argues that one contributor to teacher's judgments of ability is student performance (Weinstein, 2002).

Another source of teachers' expectations can be students' socioeconomic background, gender and ethnicity. Dusek and Joseph (1983) conducted a meta-analysis of research on teacher expectancies and concluded that student characteristics such as student's conduct in the school, race, classroom conduct, and social class were related to teacher expectancies. Finally, students' test scores, and/or previous academic achievement can be influential in teachers' expectancies. Rivers (1980) quoted in (Dusek and Joseph, 1983) has found that in the early elementary school years an older sibling's performance may

influence teachers' expectancies (either positive or negative) for a younger sibling's performance.

2.2.2 How teachers communicate expectations to students

The formation of expectations does not necessarily mean that teachers communicate expectations to students. However, research has shown that sometimes teachers convey expectations without being aware of it. The following teaching practices can convey differential expectations to students (Alderman, 2004; Covington, 1998). Firstly, some teachers are influenced by some student characteristic, labeling them as "less able", and use differential practice and behavior. This kind of teacher bias, however, can have a negative effect on students' self-efficacy perceptions, that is, their personal judgments about their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce designated types of educational performances (Bandura, 1997; Zimmerman, 1999).

Secondly, self-fulfilling prophecy prone teachers are often in the habit of providing praise to low achievers for success in relatively simple tasks, while withholding blame for failure. Such strategies, though, can have a negative effect on their motivation and self-esteem, since they may be considered by students as an indication that the teacher has little confidence in their abilities and expects little from them (Thompson, 1997). Thirdly, questioning strategies can convey the meaning that the teacher expects much or little from students. Many teachers adopt different questioning techniques depending on their assessments of student ability. For example, they often pay more attention to the answers of high achievers and wait longer before calling on someone else. Finally, seating

arrangements can convey expectations. Students labeled as “able” by the teacher are often seated in the first rows, while the students considered as less likely to have high performance usually occupy the last rows, thus becoming “invisible” by the teacher.

The effects of teachers' expectations on students are also connected to the idea known in psychology as the self-fulfilling prophecy (Spitz, 1999). The self-fulfilling prophecy states, much like the Pygmalion Effect, that once an expectation is held, an individual tends to act in ways that are consistent with the belief and eventually his or her actions may cause the expectation to become a reality (Cooper & Good, 1983). Teachers' expectations, then, may be linked to students' self-image and achievement levels. Teacher expectations may be defined as inferences that teachers make about the future academic achievement of students (Cooper & Good, 1984).

Although no two teachers are alike, research shows that teachers tend to have higher expectations for certain types of students than they do for others. In the case of past performance, race, socioeconomic status and gender; teachers tend to have higher expectations for students who have been high performers in the past. In mathematics and science courses, high expectancies are held for boys, and in all other courses, higher expectancies are held for girls (Sherman, 2000). Teachers, in multiple ways, demonstrate these different levels of expectancies. Formed through the interplay of past performance, race, socioeconomic status, and gender, teacher expectancies have an undeniable influence on students' learning.

Research on second and foreign language learning suggests that the expectations that teachers form for their students can often have an impact on students' behavior and achievement. Some teachers tend to convey differential expectations to students, which appear to have self-fulfilling prophecy effects on them. The self-fulfilling prophecy effects of teacher expectations are an important, yet not adequately appreciated affective variable in second and foreign language learning (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2010). Teachers should re-assess their expectations from time to time, because even if their expectancies reflect accurate perceptions of students' abilities, their performance or behaviour may change in the course of the school year. Alderman (2004) called this kind of teacher behaviour as "the sustaining expectation effect", which occurs when a teacher has formed an expectation about a student, and although the student's behaviour has changed, the teacher continues to respond to the student in the same way.

Students perception remains problematic because different students may perceive identical teacher behaviours differently. Several factors influence the manner in which students perceive teacher behaviour. Students may perceive certain behaviours, often different than those intended by the teacher, based on personal expectations (Dusek, 1985). In such a case, a teacher must consciously make him or herself aware of the student's specific perception (Stevens, van Werkhoven & Castelijns, 1997). Teachers need to be in greater contact with their students; the communication and the relationships between teachers and students should be enhanced through varied language teaching approaches such as Communicative Language Approach (CLT). Teachers are not in the classroom just to correct speech and writing. The teacher's role is to create learning

conditions and giving students the chance to produce language, interact and make mistakes and errors; teachers have to develop a different view of learners' errors to facilitate language learning (da Luz, F., 2015).

Some factors that influence student perception are similar to those that influence teacher expectations. One factor influencing both the teacher and a student is gender. Studies have shown that girls and boys perceive their environment in different ways (Dusek, 1985; Young, 1997). Also, just as teacher expectations can be influenced by cultural stereotypes, student perceptions of teacher behaviors can be influenced by these same cultural stereotypes.

Mros (1990) examines this idea through three categories that encompass the cultural influence exerted on perception. Firstly, students' culture may place more importance on certain teacher behaviors than the culture of the teacher, resulting in differing perceptions of those behaviors. Secondly, the absence of the student's cultural familiarity with various items or practices may hinder perceptions of them. Thirdly, systems of communication differentiate a student's beliefs, customs, heritage, and social practice from others, again causing problems.

Language sets the stage for the development of self-conscious behavior and thought. Through language and interaction, children acquire a social self (Mead, 1934). Language allows humans to make sense of objects, events, and other people in our environment. Indeed, language is the mechanism through which humans perceive the world (Whorf,

1956). As children learn how to read, they are exposed to the cultural symbols contained in books. Given the assumption that language shapes and conditions reality, then it might be useful to ask what children might be learning about gender when they learn how to read.

Children's books present a microcosm of ideologies, values, and beliefs from the dominant culture, including gender ideologies and scripts. In other words, when children learn how to read they are also learning about culture. Learning to read is part of the process of socialization and an important mechanism through which culture is transmitted from one generation to the next. For example, children may use the gender scripts and ideologies in these books when they are role playing and forming an impression of the generalized other, and hence femaleness and maleness (Bem, 1981; Mead, 1934).

Teacher behaviours can ultimately lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy where the students will then perform as expected. But in her doctoral dissertation, Mros (1990) points out that, teacher expectations cannot influence a student's performance unless perceived by the student. Seemingly obvious, the importance of students' perception in determining their behaviour, as well as influencing their beliefs and goals, cannot be over emphasized (Young, 1997).

Similarly, students perceive teacher behaviours based on their own view of the existing teacher-student relationship. This perception of the relationship often stems from the student's self-perceived ability-level, influencing perceptions of the teacher's treatment of

high and low expectancy students. Moreover, several studies point to conditions or contexts in which a student's behavior influences that student's perception (Dusek, 1985; Mros, 1990).

Teachers' expectations about students' learning can have profound implications on what students actually learn. Expectations affect the content and pace of the curriculum and the organization of instruction and evaluation. Instructional interactions with individual students and many subtle and not so subtle messages that affect students' own expectations for learning and behaviors stem from teachers' expectations. Teacher expectation effects are most likely to occur in subject areas that allow the greatest variation in instructional styles. Language teaching and learning is an example of a subject that does allow the greatest variation in instructional styles. For example, language may use simulations or role plays. Some instructional behaviours are more likely to produce expectation effects than others.

The study intends to find out the perceptions that girls have on stereotyping from teachers and male learners. Since perceptions are a result of the expectations that teachers and male learners have on the girls, and that gender appears to determine teachers' expectations, this concept attempts to respond to specific questions that the study intends to answer.

2.3 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed relevant literature on girls' education. The chapter has reviewed literature on girls' education both in Malawi and on the international scene. The chapter has highlighted some studies which were conducted both internationally and in Malawi to explore gender stereotypes in the teaching and learning of language. The chapter has also presented the conceptual framework, "Pygmalion effect" which will guide the study and the discussions. The next chapter is about the research design and methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the approach which the study has greatly used. The chapter defines qualitative research, characteristics of qualitative research and its significance. The chapter also discusses the design of the study and its appropriateness to the study. Another aspect that will be discussed in this chapter is sampling and sample of the study. Methods of data generation and how data was analysed is highlighted in this chapter. The chapter also discusses the credibility and trustworthiness of the study on issues of peer review, triangulation, verbatim quotes by participants and also pilot study.

3.2 Research approach

The study employed qualitative approach. Within this qualitative approach, it used case study design. Qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions; strategies of inquiry; and methods of data generation, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2009, p173). A qualitative approach emphasises the qualities of entities, processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative

research thus refers to the exploration of meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and description of things (Berg, 2007).

Qualitative researchers use a variety of tools and techniques in order to develop deep understandings of how people perceive their social realities and in consequence, how they act within the social world. They seek to make connections between events, perceptions and actions so that their analyses are holistic and contextual. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, hoping always to get a better fix on the subject matter at hand. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) Qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced based on methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced (rather than rigidly standardized or structured, or removed from 'real life' or 'natural' social context, as in some forms of experimental method) based on methods of analysis and explanation building which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context (Mason, 1996).

Qualitative research is often conducted in the field, allowing direct interaction with the people being studied in their context. Qualitative research aims to produce rounded understandings on the basis of rich, contextual and detailed data. There is more emphasis on holistic forms of analysis and explanation in this sense, than on charting surface patterns, trends and correlations. As a researcher, data was generated by myself by examining documents, observing behaviour of the participants inside and outside

classroom. The participants who included teachers and learners, specifically girls, were also interviewed. All data was reviewed and organised into themes that cut across all sources. Qualitative research usually does use some form of quantification, but statistical forms of analysis are not seen as central (Mason, 1996).

3.3 Research design

The research was a case study. Case studies are those in which the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. A case study is an intensive study of a single unit with the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units, observed at a single point or over a delimited period of time. Case study was appropriate for this study because the approach was aimed at gaining deep understanding of a specific event, rather than surface description of a sample (Creswell, 2003). This case study was largely qualitative approach though there were some elements of quantitative approach in terms of numbers. This will show frequencies of certain occurrences of a particular behaviour especially when it comes to using an observation checklist. In this case study, three schools were visited in the Central East Education Division. The schools were all conventional coeducation schools and three streams schools. These schools were each chosen with a consideration that stereotypes could also be a result of different cultures. This meant having six teacher participants, thirty girl participants in three focus groups.

3.4 Sampling and sample

Sampling is the process of selecting units, for example; people, organisations, from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalise our results back to the population from which they were chosen while a sample is a subset of the population being studied. It represents the larger population and is used to draw inferences about that population. It is a research technique widely used in the social sciences as a way to gather information about a population without having to measure the entire population (Trochim, 2006).

Identification of research participants of the study was random sampling. Simple random sample is a subset of individuals chosen from a larger set or population (Trochim, 2006). To collect a simple random sample, each unit of the target population was assigned a number. It was chosen because it is un biased surveying technique. If a certain number of units are selected from a mass on purely random basis, every unit will have a chance of being included and sample so selected will contain all types of units so that it may be representative (Trochim, 2006).

A set of random numbers was then generated and the units having those numbers were included in the sample. For example, if a class had a population of twenty girls and the researcher wished to choose a simple random sample of five girls, first, each person was numbered one through twenty. Then, a list of five random numbers was generated. The learners were chosen since they were observed in the language classroom and also involved in focus groups. Random sampling was used to identify twelve students for each

focus group. The total number of learner participants of the study was thirty-six girl students. The labeling was that girls from school A were labeled 1 to 12, school B were labeled 13 to 24 and school C were labeled 25 to 36. This was considered to be representative enough for the purpose of this study in these three schools.

The study also comprised secondary school teachers of English in the Central East Education Division (CEED). The sample was purposively selected from the districts of Kasungu, Nkhonkhotakota and Salima constituting part of CEED. The schools were chosen because they are in the same category, for instance they are all three streamed schools and coeducation schools. The researcher sampled six teacher participants who were labeled as follows: teachers 1 and 2 from school A, teacher 3 and 4 from school B and teacher 5 and 6 from school C. These teachers were chosen because they were qualified, practising teachers of Chicheŵa and English. According to McMillan and Schumacher(2001), purposive samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating.

The researcher had very limited resources that constrained him from covering other Education Divisions. The researcher was mindful that purposive sampling procedure is usually criticised for bias and failure to allow for the extension of results to the entire population. However, the researcher felt that the sample would not be completely biased because the participants possessed similar qualities: the participants were qualified teachers trained at Domasi College of Education (DCE) and Chancellor College (CHANCO), and taught in government secondary schools.

Form three students were participants through the same purposive sampling considering their wide range of activities in the teaching and learning of languages. Purposive sampling saved the researcher's time, money and effort. It was flexible and met multiple needs and interests. It enabled the researcher to select a sample based on the purpose of the study and knowledge of a population. Participants were chosen because of certain characteristics. However, purposive samples, irrespective of the type of purposive sampling used, can be highly prone to researcher's bias. The idea that a purposive sample has been created based on the judgement of the researcher is not a good defence when it comes to alleviating possible researcher biases. This challenge of biasness was overcome by varying the gender of the samples. There were both male and female teachers as participants (Trochim, 2006).

3.5 Data generation methods and instruments

The study employed qualitative methods of data generation. The study used qualitative methods since the search was conducted in the field, allowing direct interaction with the people being studied in their context. Data was generated by examining documents, observing behavior or interviewing participants. Qualitative research uses different methods of generating information. The nature of this research was exploratory (Creswell, 2009). The methods included observation, in-depth interviews and focus group. The instruments used included observation checklist and questionnaires. This involved observing the teaching practices, teachers' reactions towards girls and also classroom interactions in language lessons. In planning data generation effort, care was taken to include time for transcription and analysis of this detailed data.

3.5.1 Observation

Observation is a systematic data collection approach where researchers use all of their senses to examine people in natural settings or naturally occurring situations (Creswell, 2000). In qualitative research, observations yield detailed information. The advantage of observation is that it provides direct access to the social phenomena under consideration. Instead of relying on some kind of self-report, such as asking people what they would do in a certain situation, you actually observe and record their behaviour in that situation (Hughes, 1990). Therefore, qualitative research is an interactive process in which the persons studied teach the researcher about their lives. Events can be understood adequately only if they are seen in context. The type of observation in this study was non participant observation.

Nonparticipant observation is a data generation method used extensively in case study research in which the researcher enters a social system to observe events, activities, and interactions with the aim of gaining a direct understanding of a phenomenon in its natural context. As a nonparticipant, the observer does not participate directly in the activities being observed (Creswell, 2009). This option is used to understand phenomenon by entering the community or social system involved, while staying separate from the activities being observed. In this research, each participant was observed for a minimum of two times depending on the topic they were teaching, in some cases literature lessons or language lessons. Some lessons observed were single which were thirty five minutes and others were double-period sessions which were seventy minutes.

Observation as a data generation approach had the following challenges:

3.5.1.1 Practicability

One of the main challenges of observation was that it was time consuming and needed more resources such as recording equipment and video shooting equipment which the researcher did not have. Observation could have been a desirable strategy to explore certain research questions, but it was not feasible for the researcher with limited time and resources to carry out the observation. Therefore, alternative strategies were pursued. As a result the researcher simply sat on a chair at the back of the classroom. An observation check list was used to generate data that responded to the research questions. This was successful because the researcher only targeted aspects of the lesson which were on observation checklist.

3.5.1.2 Observer effect

Another weakness of observation was the so-called observer effect, which refers to the way in which the presence of an observer in some way influences the behaviour of those being observed. In some instances the participants behaved differently, both learners and teachers. Changes in teacher behaviour could have contaminated data to be collected. In order to avoid or minimise this, methods of observation sometimes attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible. The researcher avoided making it known to the participants the actual days when their lessons would be observed. This did help because the researcher wanted to observe the teachers' usual way of presenting lessons.

3.5.2 In-depth interviews (IDI)

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

An interview is a form of conversation adopted by the researcher in order to gather data for answering research questions (Creswell, 2000). There are three different formats of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews consist of a series of pre-determined questions that all interviewees answer in the same order. Data analysis in structured interviews usually tends to be more straightforward compared to other forms of interviews, because researcher can compare and contrast different answers given to the same questions. Structured interviews are usually the least reliable form of interviews from research viewpoint, because no questions are prepared prior to the interview and interview is conducted in an informal manner. Unstructured interviews can be associated with a high level of bias and comparison of answers given by different respondents tends to be difficult due to the differences in formulation of questions. semi-structured interviews contain components of both, structured and unstructured interviews. In semi-structured interviews interviewer prepares a set of same questions to be answered by all interviewees, however, additional questions might be asked during interviews to clarify and/or further expand certain issues.

The researcher used the technique to probe issues of interest, investigate beliefs and practices. The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more

detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys. In depth interview also provided a more relaxed atmosphere in which to generate data, participants felt more comfortable having a conversation with the researcher about their experiences, feelings and expectations.

However, there were some limitations. For example, responses from participants could also be biased. Sometimes interviews were time consuming because of the time it took to conduct interviews, transcribe them, and analyse the results. Every effort was made to design a data generation method, create instruments, and conduct interviews that would allow for minimal biasness. The researcher used semi-structured and open-ended questions to get the interviewees express their opinions freely. Six separate interviews were conducted with six teachers for both English and Chichewa classes with each interview taking forty minutes which in total used four hours.

3.5.3 Focus group discussion (FGD)

A focus group is an organised discussion though structured in a flexible way of between six and twelve participants. It usually lasts one or two hours and provides the opportunity for all the respondents to participate and to give their opinions. Dominant and submissive relationships which develop within the group, as well as side conversations, can be controlled. Smaller groups and those with a narrower range of characteristics tend to be more coherent and interactive (ADEA, 2006). A focus group discussion (FGD) is a good way to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. Facilitator guides the group based on a predetermined set of

topics. The purpose is to gather information about a specific or focused topic in a group environment, allowing for discussion and interaction by the participants. Focus groups can be used as the sole source of data or as a complement to another research method such as a survey (Palomba & Banta, 1999).

The researcher used focus groups because comments of one participant could generate comments from other participants. Ideas and opinions were developed and explored more which could not be the case with individual interviews. These discussions were very productive. The researcher and interviewers benefited from the ideas generated in these discussions. A large quantity of data was generated more quickly and at less cost than it could be with individual interviews.

The actual time and cost for planning, conducting, and analysing data was relatively small. Interactions between the researcher and participants allowed the researcher to probe issues in depth, address new issues as they arose, and asked participants to elaborate more on their responses. Participants were more comfortable talking in a group than in an individual interview. The data was in the respondents' own words. It was easily understood and provided insights into how respondents thought about the topic. Three different focus group discussions (FDGs) were conducted in three different schools with each discussion taking one hour and thirty minutes. In each discussion group, there were twelve participants. These focus group discussions in all the three schools took four and half hours.

However, the researcher faced some challenges like having less control over the flow of discussion in the group discussion since every member of the group wanted to argue or counter argue on a raised point. Group setting influenced the responses of individuals, which was a problem when a dominant member affected the outcomes of the discussions. Sometimes the discussions were dominated by one or two participants. The small numbers in focus groups limited the extent to which the results could be generalised.

The researcher dealt with the challenges by the using the technique of making the focus groups homogenous for example in terms of age, experience, education and sex (Smithson, 2000).The researcher followed the interview guide and made sure that the discussions followed the identified themes. The researcher allowed everyone to give out their views and opinions and encouraged those who were shy and passive to contribute.

3.5.4 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a set of questions which can be structured or semi structured which are used to get participants reveal explicitly their understanding of a phenomenon.(Creswell, 2000).The researcher developed six questionnaires for the participants to collect bio data and their understanding of gender stereotyping in language classroom. The researcher decided to use the questionnaire because it has the potential of collecting a lot of required information within a very short period of time. The researcher administered the questionnaire during the preliminary visit to the schools. The questionnaire comprised two sections: Section A was for teacher's biodata. Section B was asking the teacher's

understanding of gender stereotyping during the teaching and learning of languages, and how they dealt with these stereotypes.

The researcher gave the questionnaires in person to all the six participants on the day of visiting the schools. All the questionnaires were completed except one whose respondent decided not to complete it. This was a challenge. However considering the ethics of research, the respondent was not coerced into answering the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were collected the same day at the end of the visit at a schools.

A questionnaire was chosen as a data generation instrument because it was relatively quick to collect information and usually questionnaires are objective. However, there were a few challenges which were encountered which included taking long time not only to design but also to apply and analyse. Such a challenge was dealt with partially by piloting the questions on a small group.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data (Marshall & Rossman, 1990).

Analysis of the data was done qualitatively to a greater extent. However, some data was analysed quantitatively, for example during observation, frequencies of some activities were quantified. The narratives, numbers and other information were analysed in line with the themes which were generated from the specific questions. Some of the numerical observations were entered into charts and tables.

Data analysis was done manually. Some steps were followed as outlined by Creswell (2000) which included organisation of data, reading through data, coding, description, representation of descriptions and themes and interpretation. However, because of the size of the data, which was large, it became so challenging especially when it came to searching for relevant structures, identification of patterns, the interpretation of people's statements or other communication and the spotting of trends. So the first step to deal with this challenge was to outline the themes first which were the research questions. Each theme was followed by relevant information that responded to the research questions.

3.6.1 Organisation of data

Processed data were organised into themes (key concepts) and categories, supported by evidence. The research questions formed the themes and the data was categorised on the basis of the research questions.

3.6.2 Reading through data

Having read through the data, the researcher picked principal points and key statements which were responding to research questions. The researcher used questionnaire responses, lesson observations and interviews to understand the participants' perceptions about gender stereotypes in the teaching and learning of languages.

3.6.3 The analysis and coding process

Data was analysed in relation to the research questions. The researcher identified common patterns emerging in the data. Later data was translated into categories and themes. Themes are major lessons that are implied by connecting patterns of various categories (Rossman & Rallies, 2003).

3.6.4 Data interpretation

The lessons learnt from the findings imply the essence of data interpretation. In the study the researcher used his knowledge about gender stereotypes that exist in a language classroom in interpreting the findings.

3.7 Credibility and trustworthiness of the study

Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings (Anney, 2014). Credibility therefore means that the study should represent the true picture of the phenomenon being studied. According to Shenton (2004), trustworthiness is where the study is satisfying credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Trustworthiness therefore can be defined as where the study is

considered true in that the results would be the same whether done on other respondents or repeated by the researchers and that those results would be confirmed or corroborated if other researchers conducted the same study.

3.7.1 Peer review

Peer review is both a set of mechanisms and a principle at the heart of the system for evaluating and assuring the quality of research before and after it is published. It involved subjecting research proposals and draft presentations, papers and other publications to critical evaluation by independent experts (Rin, 2010) as well as colleagues.

Peer review helped validate the research, establish a method by which it could be evaluated, and increase networking possibilities within research communities. Despite criticisms, peer review is still one of the widely accepted method for research validation .It does allow the reader to make some judgment about the relative quality and merit of the research. It also allows a diversity of opinions to be brought to the table, theoretically removing any personal biases and pre-set ideas from the equation (Shuttleworth, 2009).

3.7.2 Triangulation

Triangulation means using more than one method to generate data on the same topic. This is a way of assuring the trustworthiness of research through the use of a variety of methods to generate data on the same topic, which involves different types of samples as well as methods of data generation. However, the purpose of triangulation is not necessarily to cross-validate data but rather to capture different dimensions of the same

phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). In this study, there were a number of methods for generating data. Identification of samples was also triangulated. This study used questionnaire, in depth interviews, lesson observation and focus group discussion while samples were randomly identified and purposively identified.

3.7.3 Use of participants' verbatim quotes

As stated by Corden and Sainsbury (2006), the use of verbatim quotations provides evidence for interpretations and claims that readers who see some of the original data can make their own judgements about the fairness and accuracy of the analysis. Further, verbatim quotations offer readers greater depth of understanding because people's spoken words sometimes show the strength of their views or the depth of feelings. Furthermore, verbatim quotations are used to explain how something happened so that readers should understand complex processes by which people made sense of their lives. In this study, the verbatim quotes assisted the researcher to clarify the links between the data, interpretation and even the conclusions. The verbatim quotes showed what the researcher was doing. Mostly the verbatim quotes were from focus group discussions and interviews with the teachers.

3.7.4 Pilot study

A pilot study is a research study conducted before the intended study. Pilot studies are usually executed as planned for the intended study, but on a smaller scale. Cohen (2007, p.47) states that "a pilot study has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity, and practicability of the questions". In addition, Turner (2010) contends that

pilot testing will assist the researcher in determining if there are flaws, limitations, or other weaknesses within the interview design and will allow the researcher to make necessary revisions prior to the implementation of the study. Pilot study assisted the researcher in validating the questionnaires. The pilot study was conducted in order to check if the research instruments were going to collect required data that could respond to the research questions. The pilot study was done at Madisi secondary school. A number of things were learnt during this pilot study. It assisted the researcher to learn the attitude of the participants during research. Some of the questions were modified in order to capture the right and required information.

3.8 Ethical consideration

In social research, ethical issues play an important role in all research processes. Researchers are unconditionally responsible for the integrity of the research process. Ethical issues stem from problems being investigated and the methods used in obtaining data (Cohen et al., 2007). It is important to adhere to ethical norms in research because they promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. For example, prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data promote the truth and avoid error since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness. This section discusses the important considerations that the researcher addressed in planning the research:

3.8.1 Informed consent

Informed consent, according to Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2005), is the system for communicating the research study to potential participants and providing them with the opportunity to make autonomous and informed decisions regarding whether to be participants in the study or not. It gives the participants the freedom and self-determination to participate or not. In addition, informed consent gives the participants the opportunity to understand the procedures to be employed, the risks, and the demands that may be made upon them (Best & Kahn, 2001). Thus, the researcher has to explain all the required information to his or her prospective participants, including the right to confidentiality, the non-disclosure of information, and the benefits of the research.

The researcher sought permission from the CEED Education Division Manager (EDM) before conducting the study in some secondary schools in the division. The EDM granted me permission. Permission was sought from the head teachers to have some of their teachers involved in the survey, and have their classes observed despite obtaining permission from the EDM. The teachers were asked to give their consent to participate in the study. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The head teacher or targeted teacher were not coerced to accept his request despite obtaining permission from the EDM. School activities were not disrupted like requesting for make-up classes or interviewing teachers when they were supposed to attend their core functions.

3.8.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality in social research deals with protecting the identity of those providing research data (O’leary, 2004). The researcher is responsible for ensuring that information that is provided by research participants is protected by providing the needed privacy and dignity of the participants. This involves “the teacher’s right to have control over the use of or access to his or her personal information, as well as the right to have the information that he or she shares with the researcher to be used anonymously”. Different from confidentiality, anonymity goes a step further to protect research participants from identification even by the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). When anonymity is adhered to, data generated cannot be traced back to a particular respondent.

The researcher gave the participants full assurance that their names and the names of their schools would not be revealed. The questionnaires were completed anonymously. That is to say, no one except the researcher was allowed to see the information provided by the research participants. Furthermore, the researcher would not release any information regarding the participants without their permission.

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted the approach that dominated the study. There was also a definition of qualitative research, characteristics of qualitative research and also its significance of the approach. The chapter also discussed the design of the study and appropriateness of the design to the study. Sampling and sample of the study have been discussed. Methods of data generation were presented in this chapter and how

data wa sanalysed. Credibility and trustworthiness of the study have been explained. There was also a presentation on ethical considerations. The next chapter highlights the results and discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter is a presentation and discussion of the findings of the study. The purpose of the study was to explore girls' perceptions on gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages based on what girls know about gender stereotypes. The main research question was what perceptions do girls have about stereotypes on themselves in the teaching and learning of languages in a coeducational classroom? The subsidiary research questions that guided the study were as follows: What do girls know about gender stereotypes in a language lesson? What forms do these stereotypes take in a language lessons? How do these stereotypes affect the performance of girls in language classroom? How do teachers and learners deal with stereotypes in language lessons? After analysing the data, the following themes emerged: what girls know about gender stereotypes in the teaching and learning of languages, forms of gender stereotypes in a language classroom; girls performance in language classroom and also dealing with gender stereotypes in a language classroom. The discussions of the findings of the study are presented according to each research question. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings of the study

4.2 What are girls experiences on gender stereotyping in the language classroom

On the question of girls' experiences about gender stereotype in a language classroom, findings from observations, in depth interview and focus group discussion showed that girls were aware of gender stereotyping. This was clearly seen during reading lessons where mostly it was boys who read the passages. Girls indicated to the researcher that sometimes comments from both the teachers and boys showed that they were being undermined as illustrated in the following verbatim quote:

Some of these comments come out when we are answering oral questions. When a girl gives wrong answer, boys laugh at her. The teachers do not show much interest to assist us when responding to the questions. The teacher does not even correct the responses. However, there are some who pay little attention to our responses. When a girl gives a wrong answer to a question, the next person to be chosen to answer the question is always a boy. [FGD- Girl 36 - at school C- 23rd November, 2016]

During an observation schedule, it was noted that girls were not given a lot of opportunity in classroom activities like reading, making presentations etc. However some teachers encouraged girls, for example when a girl was not able to pronounce a word properly when reading aloud, the teacher assisted with correct pronunciation. Similarly when a girl gave a wrong answer, like in trying to give meanings of words which had been used in the passage, a teacher assisted the learner with the correct meaning through formation of a sentence. This confirms the argument by Lipmann (1922) that a stereotype could be individual scheme which associates a set of personality traits belonging together in a particular individual.

Much as the number of boys was large as compared to girls, only a few girls were given opportunity to read the passage. Girls were also aware of gender stereotyping in their reading materials like literature books citing examples of where women are only considered to take care of their homes while husbands went out to fend for their families. They gave an example of a passage in smouldering charcoal, a literature text book, where Nambewe is given passive household chores, she is just a recipient while Mchere is a worker at Nkate bakery and he provides everything to support his family. Girls indicated that such type of reading passages were gender stereotyping and only gave their male peers ground for looking down upon girls even in classroom activities in languages. . One girl had this to say:

Sometimes these stereotypes are found in the reading texts especially in literature where a woman may be portrayed as a weak character. For example in smouldering charcoal where Nambewe is given passive household chores, she is just a recipient while Mchere is a worker at Nkate bakery and he provides everything to support his family. Then boys start making comments about us basing on the story we are reading for example saying that we are not as important as they are, a way of harassing us [FGD - Girl 14 - at school B-22nd November, 2016].

Studies which have investigated the manner in which male and female characters have been portrayed in books include Etim (1988) who attempted to find out if selected text or reading materials used in English literature classes in Nigerian secondary schools were male or female centered, and if traits given to male and female characters were stereotyped, reported that in the fifteen books selected, females were in very few activities and their roles and characters not well developed as compared to males.

From the observation schedule data analysed, it was learnt that girls were aware of the existing gender stereotyping. That is why they were hesitant to raise their hands to respond to oral questions. From focus group schedule analysed, they indicated they could not participate fully in the classroom discussions which were gender stereotyping like stories read from literature textbooks. From the same focus group schedule, it was analysed that boys expectations were that girls should always be behind them in performance and other classroom activities such reading passages, making presentations. However, girls indicated that while some teachers encouraged them when they performed well, other teachers did not make encouraging remarks. Girls were determined to compete fairly with boys and even leading them.

It was also revealed through focus group discussion that girls hesitated to raise their hands to answer questions because they feared to be embarrassed if they gave wrong response to the question. This hesitation was a realisation of gender stereotyping in the language classroom. This deprived girls to develop one of the language skills which is speaking. However, not every girl felt the same. Some girls raised their hands and gave correct responses. The self-fulfilling prophecy states, much like the Pygmalion Effect, that once an expectation is held, an individual tends to act in ways that are consistent with the belief and eventually his or her actions may cause the expectation to become a reality (Cooper & Good, 1983). In this case girls did not want to act alongside the teacher's expectations and those of boys. This confirms the assertion that girls do better in languages.

In focus group discussions in all the three schools, girls indicated that both the teachers and the boys did not expect girls to perform better than boys. So whenever a girl performed better as was the case in languages with girls, comments from the boys could be demeaning while some of their teachers could recognize their good performance and encourage them to do much better. One girl indicated that girls did better in languages. This was evidenced from the tests which were administered by their teachers. The fact that girls were not able to actively participate in some discussions generated from their literature passages indicates that they knew something about gender stereotyping. If they participated in such discussions, boys could shout at them as evidenced in this verbatim transcript.

They shout at us when we comment on issues related to male and female relationships from stories read from literature texts and sometimes they call us prostitutes, [**FGD - Girl 26—at school C - 23rd November, 2016**].

The girls indicated that this was the attitude that boys had on them. Girls said that they were not considered as equals. Girls indicated that their participation in the lesson was affected. Numerous studies have demonstrated that in mixed-sex conversations, women are interrupted far more frequently than men are. Moreover, once interrupted, women sometimes stayed out of the discussion for the remainder of the class hour.

During interviews with teachers, it was indicated that when they found that a language reading passage was gender sensitive, the teacher would use a method that would avoid embarrassing one group of learners, that is either girls or boys, which showed that both the teachers and learners knew that gender stereotypes existed in a classroom.

4.3 Examples of gender stereotypes in language classroom

On the second question which explored examples of gender stereotyping in language lessons, methods to collect data included observation, interviews and also focus group discussion. During focus group discussion, eight out of the ten girls indicated that there were different examples of gender stereotyping that took place in the classroom such as boys' domination in classroom activities and comments made on the girls. In a focus group discussion, one girl had this to say:

Boys dominate in classroom activities. Sometimes boys intimidate us when we are chosen to be group leaders by the teachers. Sometimes comments made by both teachers and male peers are another form of gender stereotyping. This happens when a girl is reading a passage and is not able to pronounce some words correctly. Comments are also made when a girl is answering a question especially when they realise that the girl is going to give wrong answer [FGD- Girl 11- at School A- 21st November, 2016].

Comments as a form of gender stereotyping occurred when it came to reading literature texts which had elements of gender stereotyping. Boys could relate weak characters from the passages to the girls. Research has affirmed that gender stereotyping in children's books has detrimental effects on children's perception of gender roles, and children's identity and self-esteem could be affected by negative portrayals of their gender (Gooden and Gooden, 2001).

The girls indicated that gender stereotyping could also occur in a form of segregation when it came to division of some classroom activities, for example, when a teacher wanted to display a chart on the chalkboard or on the wall, the teacher could ask a boy to

assist him or her to post the chart. However during observation schedule it was noted that girls were given leadership roles. The girls also indicated that when a teacher asked a question pertaining to language lesson or literature lesson, both boys and girls could raise hands to give an answer, but eventually the teacher could choose a boy with an expectation that a boy would give correct response unlike a girl. Boys are given much opportunity to participate in most of the classroom activities like reading texts. During in focus group discussion, girls indicated that they always surpassed boys in both reading and speaking English. This was a form of gender stereotyping.

During classroom lesson observations, the researcher observed that due to acute shortage of textbooks to be used during reading sessions, the teacher put the students in groups and in most of the groups, textbooks were assigned to boys more than girls. This was another form of gender stereotyping in a language classroom. This meant that boys had more access to reading materials than girls. Girls indicated that boys had a lot of opportunity to read loudly to the class than girls depriving them of developing reading skills. Eventually boys dominated reading lessons. In a focus group discussion a girl made the following remark:

Because boys are many in numbers in each language classroom, they dominate reading of texts and we have little opportunity and yet we even read better than some of them. [FGD – Girl 6 –at school A-21st November, 2016]

This shows how determined girls are on how they could perform in languages if they were given opportunity to participate in the lessons just as their male peers.

During observation schedule, it was observed that out of three boys who were given chance to read, only a single girl was given an opportunity to read. The girls said that this was so because to some extent even teachers and the boys did not consider girls to be good readers. The girls said that the boys argued that girls were not able to read properly in terms of pronunciation and connecting ideas in the passage. In a focus group discussion, a girl commented as in this verbatim:

They say we do not read well. We do not pronounce words properly and therefore we should not be given a lot of chances to read to the class because we will distort the sense of the story. But this is not true. There are a lot of boys who do not read as good as we do.[FGD – Girl 10 –at school A - 21st November 2016].

This then implies that girls are not given enough opportunities to develop the skills in the teaching and learning of languages like reading and speaking skills. But girls are determined that they even read much better than most of the boys. An assertion by Merrit, (2014) indicates that girls are good at pronunciation and reading in general. This assertion may be true but they have very little opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

Kelly(1988) concludes that boys get more instructional contacts on language, more high-level questions like in literature, more academic criticism and slightly more praise than girls, all of which would seem potentially valuable in terms of facilitating learning but also found that the discrepancy was most marked for behavioural criticism. Group work is paramount for language learners within the classroom and it is an effective way to encourage language learners to have conversations in the classroom (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).It becomes a form of gender stereotyping when girls are not accepted to

lead the groups. It is as if they do not have the capacity to lead a language activity, for example, in a literature passage where they want to identify main characters and minor characters. However girls have the courage to lead the groups despite the boys' resistance. During focus group discussion girls indicated that they were not put off by the boys resistance as evidenced in the following verbatim:

Anyamata safuna kutipatsa mpata woti tizikhala ma group leader. Koma ife timakhalabe makamaka akasankhiratu aphunzitsi mkalasi. Timatsogoleraso bwinobwino komaso timakapanga present zomwe tapeza kukalasi yonse bwinobwino.(Boys are not always comfortable to have a girl as a group leader. However, when groups are set by the teacher, girls are put as group leaders. We are able to coordinate group activities and make good presentations in class).[FGD – Girl 8 –at school A– 21st November, 2016].

The findings here are contrary to what sometimes teachers and male learners expect from female learners. Students may perceive certain behaviours, often different than those intended by the teacher, based on personal expectations (Dusek, 1985). In such a case, a teacher must consciously make him or herself aware of the student's specific perception.

During lesson observations schedule, it was observed that girls participated well in most of the classroom activities. The activities included reading passages from English literature textbooks; answering oral questions, when doing group work the girls contributed to the discussions and also leading groups. The girls also made presentations as per group findings. In some cases, however, contrary to expectation that teachers and boys had about them, girls did not want to be considered those who cannot compete ably with boys. They were just as good as their male peers. There are also several studies of

first language acquisition that have shown girls to be better learners than boys. Trudgill (1974) showed that women used the prestige variants more frequently than men and related this phenomenon to female social insecurity.

However it was also noted that boys wanted to dominate in most of the language classroom activities such as reading the stories from textbooks, making classroom presentations after working in groups together with girls and even leading the groups. However girls were quick to reprimand such type of attitude towards girls. Girls actually told boys to allow them to present findings from their groups and also be given room to participate in reading sessions. Eventually the teacher alternated who to read next, in this case when a boy read a passage, next was a girl.. If not controlled then girls would not have chance to participate. During focus group discussion, it was revealed that girls performed much better in languages than boys despite all the challenges. A girl had this to say:

Ngakhale anyamata amaphangira panthawi yowerenga nkhani zammabuku,poyankha mafunso aphunzitsi mkalasi,nthawi zambiri atsikanafe ndi amene timakhoza bwino chizungu ndi chichewa.Mtsikana amatha kutsogolera kalasi yonse.[Although boys dominate reading sessions, we perform much better in both English and Chichewa. Sometimes a girl takes first position]. **[FGD - Girl 16 –at school B - 22nd November, 2016].**

This clearly showed gender stereotyping in a language classroom. Despite girls not accorded enough chances in the acquisition of the two language skills like reading and speaking, the findings indicated that girls out ruled expectations that teachers and boys had on them and that no any gender stereotyping could undermine their authority in

classroom activities. In her doctoral dissertation, Mros (1990) points out that, teacher expectations cannot influence a student's performance unless perceived by the student. In recent years, more than a dozen studies which include (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; AAUW, 1995; Nidiffer, 2001) have provided evidence of women's lower self-esteem in co-educational colleges than in single-sex schools. Recently, Kathleen Welch, at Yale, compared assertiveness in discussions, as one measure of self-esteem, in classrooms at Yale. What she found was that women at both of the mixed-sex institutions were verbally less assertive than men. It could be that they thought they could not compete fairly with men. But the findings of this study do not agree with these studies and a study by Kathleen Welch. Girls' perceptions in this particular study are quite different from these studies. Girls in this study show high self-esteem and high assertiveness in all the activities in the teaching and learning of languages.

During focus group discussions schedules, girls in the three focus groups indicated that some of these gender stereotyping were also portrayed in the form of reading materials especially literature textbooks such as "Looking for a rain God" A story about empty basket where a woman to the contrary accuses men of not behaving like men for failing to rescue her baby from her house when a snake entered it. However, later the same woman, Oloo, accuses her husband for not clearing bush around their house since that was men's job. And she claims that the snake entered the house because of the high bush around the house

Our literature books also inculcate gender stereotyping. In Looking for a rain God, a story about an empty basket manifests elements of gender stereotyping where a woman by the name Oloo accuses men of behaving

like women for failing to rescue her baby from a snake which entered her house, this makes the men of Kagonya become angry with her. However, later she accuses her husband who stays away for not clearing the bush around the house since it was men's job.[FGD - Girl 28 -at school C-23rd November, 2016].

During observation, male students were seen comfortable with the content of the reading materials which were gender stereotyping, for example materials reflecting women characters as weak, much more sensitive, or sometimes even helpless and with less important positions in the workplace. This implied that teachers were supposed to deliberately encourage girls to participate in reading such passages; otherwise girls were going to remain quiet and passive throughout that language lesson. In the teaching and learning of languages, the boys who were relaxed were able to grasp ideas whether it was a literature discussion or language lesson. They were able to participate in speaking and reading language and literature textbook unlike girls who were already put off by the stereotyping in those reading passages. This showed that male students had internalized the stronger characteristic features associated with masculinity in society and female students were disturbed by the weaker characteristic features which were shown typical to femininity.

Research has shown that the threat of being evaluated, judged by, or treated in terms of a negative stereotype can cause individuals to perform worse in a domain in which negative stereotypes exist about a group of which they are a member. Due to stereotyped reading materials, girls considered themselves helpless and developed in themselves a stereotyping threat. Stereotype threat refers to being at risk of confirming, as a self-

characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's social group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Eventually they did not participate in the language lessons because they feared to be judged based on the stereotypes in the reading materials.

4.4 How gender stereotyping affects girls performance in language classroom

From lesson observations, focus group discussions, interviews and questionnaire, it was established that despite the existence of gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages in various forms, girls participated fully in the languages lessons' activities which included reading stories from language textbooks, be it literature or languages lessons. While the expectation was that girls could lag behind, these stereotypes did not stop them from participating in the activities. The findings indicated that gender stereotyping positively affected them in the sense that some girls still worked hard in the tasks given as a way of fighting against gender stereotyping. Gender stereotyping negatively affected girls since other girls became very passive in almost all activities in language lessons. Much as some of them hesitated to participate in classroom discussions, they were able to respond to oral questions in class positively. In some cases they provided correct responses, sometimes not. Where they were wrong, teachers corrected them. When it came to written exercises, girls performed fairly well and were able to ask the teacher where they had problems.

It was also observed during reading sessions that they were able to read fluently and pronounced English words correctly. The girls answered comprehension questions correctly though they had problems with meanings of some words. During in depth

interviews with the language teachers, it was indicated that when teachers conducted a test either in English or Chichewa, girls competed favourably with boys, though girls who performed better were few in numbers. One girl during focus group discussion indicated that girls did better in languages. This was evidenced from the tests which were administered by their teachers. This was in line with an assertion by Merritt (2014) which states that female language learners engage more skills in speaking and reading as well as in elements of language, for instance, vocabulary and pronunciation, and boys are good in sciences. Girls did not want to lag behind as per the expectations of their peers.

During in depth interview schedules, all the six teachers interviewed, showed evidence of results from mid-term tests, where it was noted that in some instances highest grade could be girl especially in Chichewa literature and language though only a few girls did better. The girls said that when it came to writing compositions, answering literature questions, girls could obtain better grades than boys. In a focus group discussion girls indicated clearly that to some extent, gender stereotyping affected their performance negatively especially when it came to oral work in class like reading and answering questions. The attitude of boys towards the girls during some language activities was so intimidating that most of the times they kept quiet. But the girls further said that the same gender stereotyping encouraged the girls to work very hard in languages since they realised that the peers and sometimes the teachers labeled them less able in class. The theorists of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) believe that female learners show possible superiority in their second language learning process since they are able to employ specific language learning strategies (Boyle, 1987; Ehrlich, 2001).

During in depth interview schedule, all the six teachers indicated that most girls shied away from participating in classroom activities because they feared comments from boys and to some extent even teachers. These activities which they shied off included classroom presentation, answering questions or in role play as a language teaching method. This is evidenced from the following verbatim:

Girls compete fairly with boys which show that girls are not completely discouraged by stereotyping which may exist in a language classroom. Girls are even compelled to work hard by dominating group discussions, making good presentations, to down play the stereotypes that emerge in the language classroom. However there are some girls who shy off some of these classroom activities. So these stereotypes affect girls both positively and negatively.

[IDI - Teacher 4 – at school B - 22nd November, 2016].

The findings clearly show that girls performance is not completely affected by gender stereotyping that exist in the classroom and that given enough opportunity to participate fully in all language activities like reading, making presentations, answering oral questions in class without fear, girls would perform even much better than boys. Their perception about gender stereotyping is quite different from the expectations that teacher and male peers hold about them.

During focus group discussions in all the schools, girls indicated that they did not want teachers and male peers' expectations to become a reality. According to Tauber (1998), the Pygmalion Effect asserts that one's expectations about a person can eventually lead that person to behave and achieve in ways that confirm those expectations. Girls thought that gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages should not prevent

them from fully participating in classroom activities and later on perform better in languages.

Since language learning involves acquisition of the four language skills which are reading, writing, speaking and listening, girls wanted to be given much opportunity to read from the textbooks, so that they developed the skills and that their performance was not negatively affected. This was also evidenced in the girls' performance in the tests which were administered in which only a few girls did very well as compared to boys despite a girl being the highest.

Every language requires a different repertoire of reading skills, based on the structure of the language and the literacy habits of the native speakers of that language. ESL and EFL teachers, therefore, should train students in the skills that will give them the power to comprehend in English (Mikulecky, 2008).

Observation data analysis showed that due to shortage of reading materials, as a strategy in the teaching and learning of languages, learners were put in groups and the groups were mixed. Both boys and girls formed a group. Teachers need to accommodate group work for language learners so that all the students in the classroom are included in the learning process. Language learners who participate in the associated activities have the opportunity to develop and enhance their oral language skills along with other essential skills.

Evidence has shown that group work actually supports academic progress and higher conceptual learning including closing the gap in performance between boys and girls and pupils of different attainment levels. It also increase academic progress in lower attaining pupils and raise achievement levels of gifted and talented pupils. Group work has also been proven to promote improved pupil behaviour as it actively engages pupils in sustained on-task interactions with fewer opportunities for distraction. Furthermore, it promotes the development of important life and social skills including self and mutual respect, organisation, cooperation, negotiation, flexibility, compromise, delegation, accountability and leadership (Stevens&Slavin, 1995).

It has been frequently proven that group members perform poorer on a particular task if they have been confronted with a negative stereotype towards their group with respect to achievement in certain activities. This negative impact of stereotypes is explained by an anxiety that one will confirm the stereotype, which puts additional pressures on the member of the targeted group, and has a negative impact on performance (Wright & Taylor, 2003).

During focus group discussion schedule, girls indicated that their performance in class was good especially in languages unlike science subjects. They said that though boys outnumbered the girls, they worked hard in languages as emphasized in the following verbatim quote:

Though few in number, we do perform better than some boys in languages that is both English and Chichewa. Despite the groups being mixed, we do make good presentations in class. As you observed in the classroom, you might have noted that girls were equally good. We do not

want any type of stereotype to negatively affect us in our performance.
We are just as good as our male peers. [FGD -Girl 17 –at school B - on
22nd November, 2016]

To some extent, girls felt that their small numbers in class misled teachers and male peers that their performance could be affected as they participated in classroom activities. Girls were determined to fight against any form of stereotype that would lead to poor performance in class. This clearly shows how girls perceive gender stereotyping in a language classroom.

In focus group discussion schedules, girls accepted that boys performed extremely well in sciences but this did not discourage them from working hard in class from performing better in languages.

4.5 How teachers and learners deal with gender stereotyping

After analyzing data collected through focus group discussions, observations, interviews and responses on the questionnaire, the researcher noted that teachers were involving both girls and boys in all classroom activities such as reading passages from text books, answering oral questions, choosing girls to be group leaders and even in role play as a means of dealing with gender stereotyping. Girls were very enthusiastic to become group leaders as a way of dealing with stereotyping and participated fully in all activities such as reading passages, answering oral questions and making classroom presentations. They also contributed a lot during group work. One way of destabilizing gender norms is by allowing students of different genders to work together, particularly in elementary school

when children tend to choose friends and playmates based on gender (Gosselin, 2007).

The following is a verbatim quote by one of the girls:

When it comes to reading passages, we raise our hands to participate even when answering oral questions. Though boys do not feel comfortable to have a girl as a group leader, we do accept to be leaders since sometimes we are chosen by the teacher. We make sure that we participate in all activities that boys think we cannot do. [**FDG – Girl 17- School 2- 22nd November, 2016**]

From in depth interview data with the teachers, teachers said that they were very sensitive with gender issues in their lessons. Teachers indicated that during reading lessons, they had to choose who to read next so that not only one group of learners is involved in the reading activity. They also indicated that there were some texts which contained elements of gender stereotyping as evidenced from the following verbatim quote:

In Literature, some stories in the texts have elements of gender stereotyping, for example in Smouldering charcoal , Nambewe is given passive household chores while Mchere is a worker at Nkate bakery and he provides everything to support his family, and as such the text has to be handled without biasness.[**IDI - teacher 1 –at school A–21st November, 2016**].

During lesson observation, it was noted that another way of dealing with the gender stereotyping was forming working groups. Teachers formed groups composed of both boys and girls despite lesser number of girls. In addition to that, when teachers were assigning work to the groups, they encouraged both boys and girls to participate fully and that both boys and girls should be able to respect ideas of each other like in literature lessons where learners were asked to come up with various themes after reading a literature passage. This was done to avoid one group dominating discussions in the group.

However, girls indicated that boys still wanted to dominate despite the teacher's instructions. In an in depth interview, all the six teachers interviewed said that when giving group work, they mixed the groups, they did not separate boys from girls. They also indicated that they considered learner's ability assigning learners to the groups. During focus group discussions, girls indicated that sometimes only a single boy dominated the discussion because of their classroom ability. That is to say, those who did not perform better mixed with those who performed very well in class. In a focus group discussion, girls revealed that efforts to deal with gender stereotypes in the learning of languages, girls were even put as group leaders. However girls' leadership received a lot of resistance from boys as evidenced in the following verbatim quote:

When a girl is put a group leader most of the boys in that group do not accept our leadership. But we still make sure that we lead the group make observations in that language activity we are given. This just shows to us that they do not take us as equals. [FGD - Girl 30 –at school C - 23rd November, 2016].

Learners also had their own ways of dealing with gender stereotyping, for example, from the analysed observation schedule data, it was noted that girls did not shy away or refuse leadership positions during group work. They were even more enthusiastic to lead boys during languages.

This is indeed a good development because language learners who participate in the associated activities have the opportunity to develop and enhance their oral language skills along with other essential skills. Group work is paramount for language learners

within the classroom and it is an effective way to encourage language learners to have conversations in the classroom (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

In a group work, there is a lot of direct interaction among them which promotes active learning and eventually reduces stereotyping. Research has shown that group work activities typically yield the following results for both teacher and learners: team building spirit and more supportive relationships; greater psychological wellbeing, social competence, communication skills and self-esteem; and higher achievement and greater productivity in terms of enhanced learning outcomes (Briggs, 2013).

During focus group discussion, twenty seven out of thirty six girls, indicated that boys generally undermined their authority and their performance in most subjects including languages. Girls indicated that despite all this, girls still presented their findings, for in literature lesson where they were supposed to describe various characters in the story and a girl representing a group of both boys and girls was chosen to present, went in front of the class and made a presentation. As such, boys had to accept girls' views and ideas. In some cases, girls presented much better than boys especially in languages. In a way this is a means of dealing with gender stereotyping because it silenced boys as regards looking at girls' as inferior. However, from the focus group discussion, girls added that boys seemed to be dominating much in a language lesson because girls were small in numbers in the classes as compared to boys. Sometimes girls were half the number of boys in each classroom as evidenced in the following verbatim:

Boys are always many in every class and therefore they are seen to contribute a lot in language lessons. Their participation in reading

sessions and when given work to present to the class, boys participate more than girls. As a result they look down upon us.[FGD - Girl 19 –at school B - 22nd November, 2016].

From the above verbatim, it shows that while both girls and boys participate fully in the language lesson, it is boys who are perceived to be participating more because they are many. This does not mean girls are passive they are even more active.

One girl commented in a focus group discussion in the following verbatim:

Amatiderera koma nthawi zina timawapondera makamaka chikakhala Chichewa kapena chizungu. [Boys look down upon us and yet we perform better than most of them]. [FGD – Girl 27- at school C - 23rd November, 2016].

However, it was established that despite small numbers in class, girls participated fully in classroom activities such as reading passages aloud to the whole class. Girls also made good classroom presentations especially in literature lessons. Despite that, girls' performance was to some extent affected when boys made unnecessary comments such as 'mahule' (prostitutes) when they wanted to respond or comment on stories read from literature books. Sometimes girls kept quiet in the classroom to avoid embarrassing comments from boys. Nevertheless the active participation of the girls was a means of dealing with gender stereotyping.

During in depth interviews, teachers indicated that while their expectations were that girls could not perform better in languages, they noted that girls were determined to compete with boys in all classroom activities. As such, as teachers they were supposed to create

conducive atmosphere for the teaching and learning of languages. One teacher had this to say:

When I administer a test in my subject which is Chichewa, in some cases girls perform well, even better than boys. I am given enough opportunities, these girls would perform wonders.

[IDI – Teacher 3—at school B - 22nd November, 2016].

This is an indication that teachers to some extent perpetuate gender stereotyping because of the expectations they hold for the girls. This tends to agree with what Gosslen, (2007) says; that teacher philosophy and their verbal and non-verbal communication play a vital role in classroom construction of social gender norms. Therefore, the results of this study are contrary to self-fulfilling prophecy as a conceptual tool which states that once an expectation is held, an individual tends to act in ways that are consistent with the belief and eventually his or her actions may cause the expectation to become a reality (Cooper & Good, 1983). It is very clear in this study that while teachers and boys have negative expectations about girls' performance, girls do not act in the ways that are consistent with their belief.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study on girls perceptions about gender stereotypes in the teaching and learning of languages based on what girls know about gender stereotypes; forms of gender stereotypes in a language classroom; girls performance in language classroom and also dealing with gender stereotypes in a language classroom. The next chapter presents conclusions and implications.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents conclusions and implications based on the discussions of the findings of the study presented in chapter four. The chapter has also outlined suggestions for areas for further studies in relation to the findings of the study. The summary of the findings provide the conclusions and implications.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate girls' perceptions on gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages.

The first question investigated what girls know about gender stereotyping in a language classroom. The study revealed girls understanding of gender stereotypes as a product of the attitude and expectations that boys and teachers had towards them. The learner participants were aware of the gender stereotypes that existed in a language classroom. It was established that girls were not given equal opportunities in participating in activities like reading passages and making classroom presentations in language lessons. In addition, comments which were made by boys whenever a girl was responding to

question, reading a passage and even when making presentations. The study also established that girls were given very little opportunity to partake leadership roles in the language class. When a teacher posed a question in a language lesson, girls hesitated to raise hands to respond to the question because they feared being embarrassed by boys. This hesitation was a realisation of the existence of gender stereotypes in the language classroom. This eventually minimised their participation in the lesson. Therefore, in conclusion, it is imperative that boys and girls be accorded equal opportunities in their participation in language classroom activities. This implied that if these gender stereotyping continued to exist in language classes then girls would not show their full potential

The second question explored if girls knew the forms which this gender stereotyping take in a language classroom. It was revealed that different forms of gender stereotypes occur during language reading lessons, group work, and classroom participation. These stereotypes were also traced in the reading materials. In addition, the study also showed that at times girls could just keep quite depending on the topic under discussion since boys could give embarrassing comments if girls participated especially in literature lessons.

The study concludes that these forms of gender stereotypes can lead female students to expect less of their abilities. This may also result into diminished self-confidence and expectations. If these gender stereotypes come from teachers and their peers, they may also lead some female students to participate less frequently in class discussions. This

implies that teachers therefore are supposed to provide all students with equal opportunities to succeed and pay particular attention to the participation patterns of female students in the teaching and learning of languages. Paying particular attention to classroom dynamics can profit all the students in the course and result in a higher level of intellectual performance in languages.

On the question that sought to investigate how gender stereotyping affected girls' performance in a language classroom, teachers, indicated that girls competed fairly with boys. Sometimes girls scored the highest in languages as seen in one of the tests though not many girls performed well. This reaffirms the assertion that girls do better in languages than in sciences. It was also established that girls are always shy when it came to answering oral questions.

The study established that girls did not fully participate in classroom activities when it came to learning of languages because they were afraid of the boys' and eventually shied away to avoid embarrassing comments from boys. The study concludes that in the teaching and learning of languages, teachers can develop a positive classroom climate if they avoid forming differential expectations for students based on qualities such as gender, ethnicity, or parents' background (Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece, 2008). This implies that if girls are not assisted in creating conducive learning environment, then their performance in the learning of languages is greatly affected. They will not perform well.

The fourth question sought to explore strategies and ways of how teachers and learners in a language classroom dealt with issues that were gender stereotyping. The findings

revealed that teachers were very sensitive towards gender stereotypes during reading lessons and the way teachers handled passages with traits of gender stereotyping chosen to be read. Teachers made sure that boys and girls were given opportunity to read the passages aloud to the whole class. Teachers also considered reading passages since some of them, especially in literature, were gender biased. When it came to group work, they made sure that a group was made of both boys and girls. Girls showed a lot of enthusiasm towards leadership roles during group work in language lessons. There was also full participation in classroom activities such as reading passages, answering oral questions, making classroom presentations after group work and too leadership roles during group work. The study concludes that both learners and teachers have a responsibility to deal with gender stereotyping so that teaching and learning of languages is effective. The implication is that if girls were given a conducive learning atmosphere, they could do much better than boys in the learning of languages. The other implication is that while gender stereotypes may have a negative impact on girls' performance, girls are determined to work very hard in class as to compete fairly with the boys. Their perception about gender stereotypes is not as per the expectations of both the teachers and boys.

5.3 Suggested areas for further research

Based on research findings, the study proposes the following areas:

- A study focusing on performance of girls in a single sex school to find out if there are any elements of gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages in such schools.
- An action research that would investigate as to what extent teachers promote or discourage gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of introduction from Chancellor College



Principal: Richard Tambulasi,
BA, (Pub Admin), PBA (Hons), MPA, Ph.D

Our Ref.:
Your Ref.:

P. O. Box 280, Zomba, MALAWI
Tel: (265) 01 524 222
Telex: 44742 CHANCOL MI
Fax: (265) 01 524 046
Email: cats@cc.ac.mw

29th April, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FOR MR JOSEPH P.S. CHIOZA

This is a letter of introduction for Joseph P.S Chioza our Master of Education student in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Studies, Faculty of Education, Chancellor College. He is doing research for his thesis as part of the requirements for an award of M.Ed. He will need assistance to access and collect information for his study. Please assist him accordingly.

For further information, please contact the undersigned.

Many thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'A. Chauma'.

Dr. A. Chauma.
HEAD OF CURRICULUM AND TEACHING STUDIES DEPARTMENT
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE



Appendix 3: A request letter to division manager (CEED)

DATE: 23RD JUNE, 2014.

FROM: JOSEPH P.S.CHIOZA, Dedza Secondary School, P.O. 48, Dedza.

TO: The EDM, Central East Education Division, P/B 233, Kasungu.

SEEKING CONSENT TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN THE CENTRAL EAST EDUCATION DIVISION SCHOOLS:

I am a student at chancellor College pursuing a Master's Degree in Education in the Department of Curriculum Studies in Language Education. As a requirement to be awarded the said degree, I have to carry out a research for my Thesis.

In my sampling, I have chosen Central East Education Division as my research area. Therefore the purpose of this letter is to request for your permission to allow me to carry out this research in your Division.

The research in the Division is designed to be carried out in Conventional boarding secondary schools which are coeducational, i.e. those accommodating both boys and girls. To be specific, the schools sampled are:

1. Chayamba Secondary School
2. Madisi Secondary School
3. Nkhotakota Secondary School
4. Chipoka Secondary School

These schools are sampled for the research since all of them are three streamed schools. One of the schools is earmarked for pilot study and the other three for main study.

Briefly the research is about finding Girl's perceptions about gender stereotypes in the learning of languages especially English and Chichewa. Girls have always been considered to be lagging behind in Education due to several factors. This study intends to find out if their perceptions about gender stereotypes do affect their participation and performance in the learning process and later on their education.

I will be grateful if I am assisted as per requested.

JOSEPH P. S. CHIOZA

MED/LED/ 006/013.

Appendix 4: Informed consent letter

18th July, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Joseph P.S. Chioza. I am a postgraduate student in Faculty of Education at Chancellor College, a constituent college of University of Malaŵi. I am doing a study about gender stereotyping in the teaching and learning of languages. I am interested in finding out girls' perception on gender stereotyping.

The Education Division Manager (EDM) for the Central East Education Division (CEED) has granted me permission to conduct this research in selected secondary schools in the division. You are requested to participate in this research study since you teach languages. I will observe some of your lessons and interview you. I will also observe your language lessons as a researcher.

If you are uncomfortable or suspicious about the study; you are free to stop participating.

Data collected shall be kept as private and confidential as possible. There shall be no mention of your name in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

There may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. I shall communicate my research findings to you. There will be no financial costs to you as a result of taking part in this study. Since my study is non-commissioned, you will not be paid any cash for participating.

While the Education Division Manager for CEED is aware of the study, you are not obliged to participate. You are free to decline taking part or withdraw from the study at any point you may wish. Your decision to decline, participate or withdraw shall not affect your status as a language teacher. Thank you very much for your attention. If you agree to participate, please complete the consent.

CONSENT

I have read and understood the consent form. I accept to volunteer to participate in the study. However, my consent does not take away my legal rights in case of negligence or abuse by any persons involved in the study. I agree to have my schemes of work accessed and my lessons observed. I also agree to be interviewed by the researcher.

Name of participant

Signature of participant

Name of researcher

Signature of researcher

Appendix 5: Questionnaire to participants

Section A

Please provide correct information by ticking (√) in the appropriate box, completing the blank spaces and explaining, where necessary.

1 School CDSS CSS Grant-aided

2 Sex Female Male

3 Highest academic qualification

a. Diploma in _____

b. Bachelor's degree in _____

c. Master's degree in _____

4 The highest qualification was obtained from

a. Chancellor College

b. Domasi College of Education

c. Mzuzu University

d. Other (specify) _____

5 Subject specialisation for secondary school teaching

a. Chicheŵa and English

b. Chicheŵa and French

c. Other (specify) _____

Section B

Please give your responses in the spaces provided

1. What do you know about gender stereotypes?

2. Do they exist in your class when you are teaching?

3. In what form do these stereotypes occur in the classroom and even outside the classroom?

4. How do you integrate boys and girls in your lessons?

5. What is your opinion about girls' participation in your lessons?

6. How do you deal with reading passages that seem not gender sensitive?

7. What challenges do you encounter when dealing with girls in a language lesson?

8. How do you compare the performance of boys and girls in a language lesson?

9. How often do you administer assessment tests?

10 How do you describe the performance of girls in the tests administered?

11. How often do girls approach a teacher for individual help where they did not understand?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix 6: Lesson observation check list

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

CLASS _____

TYPE OF SCHOOL _____

1. How often does the teacher call girls' names to respond to classroom questions?	
2. How do learners relate in a language classroom in terms of sharing resources and assisting each other?	
3. Group work involvement of girls	
4. Frequency of girls being considered as group leaders	
5. Participation of girls throughout the language lesson	
6. Forms of gender stereotypes occurring within the language lesson	
7. How often is the teacher seen going assisting both girls and boys?	
8. Is the teacher being gender sensitive in choosing teaching and learning materials in the lesson?	

9. Are girls seen raising hands to answer oral questions in the class?	
10. Is the teacher being gender sensitive when delivering her or his lesson? (words that avoid stereotyping)	
11. When exercise is given in class, where does the teacher first go to mark the work between girls and boys?	
12. What comments does the teacher make when a girl gives right response?	
13. What comments are made by the teacher when a boy gives right response?	
14. How does the teacher react when a girl gives wrong response?	
15. How does the teacher react when a boy gives wrong response?	

Appendix 7: Focus group discussion

NAME OF SCHOOL_____ **CLASS**_____

TYPE OF SCHOOL_____

GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS:

1. What do girls know about gender and gender stereotypes?
2. How much do girls participate in a lesson as compared to boys' participation?
3. How does the teacher administer individual help between boys and girls?
4. What comments does the teacher make to encourage both girls and boys when they give responses in class?
5. What comments does the teacher make when a response is given by either a boy or a girl?
6. In a role play, how are characters identified?
7. When a question is difficult, who does teacher finally nominate for correct response?
8. How are groups formed during group work to address gender issues?
9. What comments do you get from male teachers about your performance?
10. What do you think is the attitude of the male teachers towards female learners?
11. What comments do you get from female teachers about your performance?
12. What positions do you take as girls when a test is given?
13. Are you aware of any gender stereotypes that take place in class?
14. In what form do these stereotypes portrayed in the language classroom?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Appendix 8: Sample reading passages with gender stereotyping

she remembered was that she was out in the yard with the baby in her arms.

Aloo's courageous act, and the malicious words that she had flung at the men, left them with the shame that demolished a man and reduced him to nothing. 'All of you are cowardly women.' They might have swallowed the words from the mouth of a man, but the naked words from a woman were unbearable. The men were angry. They even wanted to beat Aloo. Most of the men there were related to her. But then their mood changed. In place of anger Aloo's brave act inspired a new spirit in them. Aloo must not believe that she married among men who were more cowardly than women. Two men moved towards the door ready to enter the house. Others moved cautiously forward behind them. The sitting room was in a complete shambles. The chairs were broken and the main table stood on its hind legs with one side kissing the floor. The glass cupboard was shattered and most of the utensils were perched precariously on the wooden frame. There was much more damage than had appeared from the outside. At last two men entered the house, Ochieng, Aloo's distant brother-in-law, and Obwolo, Aloo's neighbour who was not actually related to her.

Ochieng stood timidly...

Looking for rain god [MSCE Literature textbook]

'Against whom? Don't you see?'

'You men, who else? There must be a thousand and one ways of making a strike against anything that is bad. If we did that then you might begin to realise how important we are. I am not joking.' But she could not help laughing.

'What would you do without men? You are mad! A strike is a very serious thing, not like pounding maize or serving bottles of beer! Men are men and women are women, that's all.'

'What rubbish! If that is so then your bosses were created stronger than you, so you have no right to strike against them. Do you know what we have to go through just to make your lives bearable, not to say happy?' She was becoming as argumentative as Nambe and he did not like that.

'You mean wearing wigs, painting yourselves up and making beds and cooking,' he chuckled with sarcasm. 'Who can't do that?'

'Who can't bake, you tell me?' she said spiritedly. 'Sometimes you don't use your head. Why do you protest when you are treated badly at work when you actually treat us in the same way; worse, in fact, for all your anger and frustrations are heaped on us? Are we your dustbins?'

'... I mean we are also men, so it's different.'

... bread? I can also do it.'

Smouldering charcoal [MSCE Literature textbook]