NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME AND USE OF MINORITY LANGUAGES IN MALAWI: THE CASE OF CIYAWO

M.A. (APPLIED LINGUISTICS) THESIS

BY

AHMMARDOUH NURUDDIN USSI MJAYA

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AHMMARDOUH NURUDDIN USSI MJAYA

Bachelor of Education (Humanities) University of Malawi

Submitted to the department of English, Faculty of Humanities, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics)

University of Malawi
Chancellor College

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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.

Ahmmardouh Nuruddin Ussi Mjaya

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.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Samson MacJessie-Mbewe PhD (Senior Lecturer)

Internal Examiner

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Foster Kholowa PhD (Senior Lecturer)

Internal Assessor

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pascal J. Kishindo PhD (Professor)

Main Supervisor

Signature:_____ Dtae: _____

Edrinnie L. Kayambazinthu PhD (Associate Professor)

Supervisor

DEDICATION

To my wife, Rhoda and our two daughters, Chifundo and Thokozani.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the choice and use of Malawian local languages as media of instruction in the national adult literacy programme. Literature suggests that the best medium of instruction for adult literacy, just like initial education, is the mother tongue. This study, therefore, sought to test this hypothesis among the Yawo in selected areas in Zomba amidst reports that the Malawi national adult literacy programme was going to change the medium of instruction from the national language to mother tongue. The study attempted to ascertain the problems the adult learners who speak minority languages such as Ciyawo, face when and after acquiring literacy in Chichewa. It also investigated the language(s) that Yawo adult learners would prefer to be media of instruction in their areas.

The data for this study was collected and analysed using both qualitative and quantitative approachess. The discussion of the results exploited Bourdieu's linguistic capital and markets theory.

The findings show that the Yawo adult learners under study do not face serious challenges due to the use of Chichewa as a medium of instruction. Also they indicate that given adequate opportunities, the Yawo adult learners have the potential to transfer their literacy skills from Chichewa to Ciyawo. Furthermore, the findings show that these learners prefer Chichewa as a medium of instruction to Ciyawo and that there are no circumstances in which they would prefer the use of Ciyawo as a medium of instruction.

This thesis principally contends that for an appropriate policy on language of instruction in adult literacy in Malawi to be formulated, there is need to conduct country-wide and thorough socio-linguistic surveys to underpin the identification and use of any local language in the programme.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

APPENDICES

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CLS:	Centre for Language Studies
EFA:	Education For All
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion(s)
MCP:	Malawi Congress Party
MEFA:	Malawi Education For All
MPRSP:	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
NALP:	National Adult Literacy Programme
NCLAE:	National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
PIF:	Poverty Investment Framework
REFLECT:	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
SVO:	Subject Verb Object
UMCA:	Universities Mission to Central Africa
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO:	United Nations Education Scientific and Culture Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Preliminary remarks

Many countries in the world are engaged in programmes that are meant to improve the literacy levels of their citizens. This is done either through formal education or nonformal means such as adult literacy. The motivation behind these efforts is that, generally, all nations acknowledge, as Neijs (1961:9) puts it, that "literacy is one of the first and indispensable steps to development, both of the individual and of his (sic) community." According to UNESCO's Working Group on Education for All (2005:2), "adult literacy is a key component to individual confidence and participation in society."

1.1 The concept of literacy

Literacy is one of the concepts that is problematic to describe because as Winterowd (1989: xii) and Bowers (1968:381) observe, it "is a relative term." This is so because as Winterowd explains, the meaning of literacy "depends on individual needs and values and the norms and expectations of the social group of which the individual is a part..." This is perhaps the reason why Lind (1988:11) notes that "varying and often vague definitions of literacy abound in both literature and practice [and] there is often a conspicuous gap between broader concepts of literacy and the operational definitions necessary for evaluating literacy acquisition." The definitional problem is further compounded by the fact that literacy is a loaded term in that it is used to refer to a wide range of issues and also because, as Mipando and Higgs (1982) correctly note, the definition of any field of study depends to a certain extent on time changes. Nevertheless, literacy is, generally, looked at from two angles i.e. literacy per se, on the one hand, and functional literacy on the other. In this regard, according to UNESCO's Education for All 2000 Assessment, literacy is defined as 'the ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one's daily life' (UNESCO, 2004). On the other hand, based on a 1958 UNESCO recommendation, 'a literate person is [looked at as the] one who

can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his or her every day life'.

This definition changed from 1970 and UNESCO began to consider a functionally literate person as

> One who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and community's development.

Indabawa (1991 cited in Indabawa (2000: 2) views a literate person as the one who "in a language that he (sic) speaks can read and understand anything he (sic) would have understood if it had been spoken to him (sic) and who can write, so that it can be read, (…)".

In 1986, the National Advisory Council on literacy in Malawi, agreed that:

> In Malawi a person is literate when he/she has attained knowledge and skills in reading and writing in the local language through formal school up to standard 4, or has reached level 2 of the national adult literacy programme or on his (sic) own (Rokadiya, 1986:17).

This was in line with what was agreed upon at an evaluation workshop held in November 1985, where national experts and international specialists in consultation with field workers set up three literacy attainment levels and, according to Rokadiya (1986), these levels were characterised as follows:

i) Level I: The literacy learner is initiated to recognise written symbols. The learner can read and write some difficult and simple words in Chichewa and also can recognise, read and write mathematical signs.

ii) Level II: The literacy learner is able to read, comprehend and write correctly some Chichewa words, short simple sentences and a simple short paragraph. The learner can work out simple arithmetic problems.

iii) Level III: This is a stage at which the literacy learner demonstrates advanced skills in reading, writing and arithmetic. The learner can read and write comprehension questions of any simple passage and read and

solve mathematical problems involving simple additions, subtractions, multiplications and divisions.

Without venturing into the task of seeking a universally acceptable description (which is not central to this study), this study adopts UNESCO's 1970 reformulated view of a functionally literate person and Indabawa's description of a literate person as cited above. UNESCO's reformulated view of a functionally literate person has been adopted because it seems to fit very well with the nature of the adult literacy programme being conducted in Malawi. On the other hand, Indabawa's view is also appealing because of its emphasis on the ability to read and write in a language one easily speaks and understands. This view forms a bedrock to the idea of conducting literacy in the learners' first language or mother tongue as stipulated in the Malawi Government's (2004) National Strategic Plan for the United Nations Literacy Decade.

1.2 Why is literacy desired?

There are many reasons why literacy is sought after and one of them is that it is believed to have several values. In Neijs' (1961:10) view, one of these values, which is also relevant to this study, is that it is the cornerstone of socio-economic development by facilitating:

(i) accelerated social change which is characteristic of our (sic) age, the acquiring of knowledge, which need literacy to be fully effective;

(ii) economic development with its stress on increased productivity and industrialisation implying a widespread diffusion of technical knowledge which can hardly be realised without literacy;

(iii) democracy which needs a participation by equal citizens which can not take place when some are excluded from communication through literacy (Neijs 1961:10).

This facilitative role of literacy is possible because as Akinpelu (1990) and Indabawa (1995) cited in (Indabawa 2000: 3) note, literacy has some generic uses such as:

(i) Making available coded information and knowledge;

(ii) Facilitating communication;

(iii) Empowering and enabling critical and constructive treatment of issues;

(iv) Ensuring freedom of expression;

(v) Generating a feeling of self-confidence and personal security against being cheated;

(vi) Promoting political participation and survival of democracy;

(vii) Increasing one's access to economic, political and social gains and advantages;

(viii) Creating better attitude to change and creating positive attitudes such as tolerance, understanding, adaptation and self-application for the common good.

In fact Barton, Ivanič, Appleby, Hodge and Tusting (2007: 66) assert that "literacy mediates all aspects of people's lives." It is perceived benefits such as these that compel nations such as Malawi to launch literacy programmes even for people who can no longer attend lessons in a normal school setting.

1.3 Brief overview of the language situation and language policies in Malawi

1.3.1 Malawi's language situation

Malawi is linguistically heterogeneous. According to the Centre for Language Studies (2006 & 2009), language mapping survey reports, there are 16 indigenous languages in the country with some languages such as Kiswahili and Cibemba being spoken by immigrants. Kayambazinthu (2003) asserts that out of all Malawian languages, Chichewa is the majority language followed by Ciyawo and Citumbuka. However, she points out that although numerically the Lomwe are superior to the Yawo [and Tumbuka] most Lomwes do not speak their language. And earlier on Matiki (1996/97) had observed that Cilomwe has been declining steadily[1]. In terms of geographical distribution, Chichewa with its varieties Chinyanja and Chimang'anja, and Ciyawo have many native speakers in both the central and southern regions of the country. Citumbuka is commonly spoken in the northern region including Kasungu north. The other languages that are also commonly spoken in the northern region are Cinkhonde, Citonga, Cinyakyusa, Cilambya,

[1] Recently a cultural association, Mulhakho wa Alhomwe has been instituted with cultural revival as one of its main objectives. Language has been mentioned but not really emphasized (see *Weekend Nation* 25-26 October, 2008).

Cisukwa Cibandia, Cingoni, Cimambwe and Cinamwanga. Cinsenga is commonly spoken in the central region especially Mchinji district whereas Cilomwe and Cisena are commonly spoken in the southern region of the country.

1.3.1.1 Geographical distribution of Ciyawo

According to the 1966 census, the Yao form the third largest ethnic group in Malawi and their language [Ciyawo] was spoken by 13% of the total population (1966 Population Census cited in Kayambazinthu 1998:379). Ciyawo is spoken in large parts of Mangochi and some parts of Balaka, Machinga, Zomba, Chiradzulu, Thyolo, Blantyre and Mulanje districts in the southern region of Malawi. In the central region, the language is spoken in some parts of Dedza, Salima and Nkhotakota. Thus in most districts such as Zomba, the Ciyawo speaking communities live side by side with speakers of other languages. In Zomba for instance, apart from Ciyawo speakers there are also, among others, large communities of Chichewa/Chinyanja and Cilomwe speakers.

1.3.2 National language policy in Malawi

Historically, Malawi's language policy has been shifting since the colonial era. For instance, Vail and White (1989:164) report that in 1918 one of the colonial Government administration's junior officers resurrected the old idea that Nyanja should be made the official language of the country and [be] taught in all its schools. This proposal was rejected by the Governor, Sir George Smith fearing that such a move would unite the people and would eventually lead to an uprising. However, the policy was favoured by Governor Sir Shenton Thomas in the late 1920s who argued that " a single official lingua franca would help unite the country and save money," (Vail & White 1989: 164). The policy was implemented in 1935 by Governor Sir Harold Kittermaster amid resistance from the missions especially Livingstonia. Due to this resistance the colonial office in London instructed Sir Kittermaster to hold a conference on this policy and avoid imposing any policy against the wishes of the Mission. Following this development, in 1947, after Word War II, Citumbuka became an official language along side Chinyanja and remained so up until 1968 when a new policy was effected.

What should be noted though is the fact that "unlike Chinyanja [and indeed Citumbuka] which [were] officially recognised by the colonial government, Chiyao[2] was not," (Kishindo, 1994:99).

According to Kishindo (1994:137), when Nyasaland got independent its urgent task was to seek social-cultural integration and self-reliance and to achieve this it was felt necessary to minimise linguistic diversity. In line with this, when the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) held its annual convention in 1968 in Lilongwe, it strongly recommended that in the interest of national unity:

(i) Malawi [should] adopt Chinyanja as a national language;
(ii) that the name Chinyanja [should] henceforth be known as Chichewa
(iii) that Chichewa and English [should] be official languages of the state of Malawi and all other languages would continue to be used in everyday private life in their respective areas (*Malawi Congress Party Convention Resolutions, 1965-1983)* cited in Kishindo (1994).

What one notes here is that, generally, the policy that was rejected by the Missions as early as late 1920s was re-introduced by the Malawi Congress Party. This state of affairs remained so up until 1994 when politically, a new era emerged. Before this period Malawi was a single party state where government, as elsewhere in Africa, put a lot of emphasis on national unity and viewed any form of diversity as a threat to this cause. In line with this, politically, the then ruling party declared openly that it would not allow a multiparty system of government because such a system meant "war". [3] Linguistically, the government viewed multilingualism as a possible source of civil unrest. It was because of this kind of thinking that the then President emphasised that as far as he was concerned there was no Chewa, Lomwe, Yawo etc in Malawi but that everyone was just Malawian.[4]

[2] Current orthography rules recommend that the name of the language should be spelt "Ciyawo".
[3] See Kamwendo, 2000 and *Malawi Government Hansard* 18th December, 1991.
[4] See *Malawi Government Hansard* 3rd and 18th December, 1991 and 16th April, 1992.

However, following the "winds of change" in the early 1990s, Malawi's political ideology changed in 1994. From that year, Malawi embraced multiparty democracy which put a lot of emphasis on human rights. Consequently some changes to the national language policy have been effected so that some minority languages are now being tolerated in some official domains such as public radio, although the 1968 policy is officially, still operational. Generally, this tolerance has been politically motivated as the inclusion of most of these languages in these official domains, especially on the state controlled radio station, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, has been done through presidential directives made at political rallies following requests from traditional leaders to have their languages featured on radio (see Kayambazinthu 1998).

1.3.3 Language in education policy in Malawi

Generally Malawi's language in education policy has been influenced by the general language policy that in turn has been driven by political events. For example, Governor Sir Shenton Thomas' argument for the introduction of a single lingua franca in the country was politically driven. Interestingly, when the Advisory Committee on Education met, it adopted the proposal that directed that "Nyanja be introduced as the medium of instruction not later than class 4 in all Government and Assisted schools," (Vail & White 1989: 164). No wonder, the Scottish Missionaries resented this decision and on 15th July 1933 the Livingstonia Mission made it known that it did not accept the policy. According to Vail and White (1989), the Mission detested Nyanja on several grounds. First, the Mission thought that the policy was educationally unsound and that it would not work. Second, the policy would inconvenience mission work as the mission had to look for Nyanja teachers. Third, the Mission said that Nyanja was a bad choice since it was not a language of higher cultural and linguistic value. Fourth, it was a politically bad decision since the idea was opposed by the people themselves. In the end the Mission succeeded. The single official lingua franca policy was withdrawn which meant that the missions were to revert to using any local language that appealed to them in their respective stations although some Missions such as the UMCA had already given up the use of Ciyawo in their schools (see Kishindo 1994).

When the national language policy changed in 1968 on the premise of fostering national unity, the language in education policy followed suit. According to Kishindo (1994:138), the Ministry of Education stipulated that starting from the 1969-70 academic year, Chichewa was to be taught in primary and secondary schools as well as teacher training colleges [and that] the teaching of other Malawian languages was to be abolished. From that time Chichewa also became the medium of instruction from standard 1 to 3 (see Kayambazinthu 1998). This was a big blow to other local languages such as Ciyawo.

After the multi-party general elections in 1994 Malawi's national language policy began to shift such that apart from Chichewa, other local languages began to be tolerated in some official domains. In line with this state of affairs, the Ministry of Education directed on March 28th 1996 that from then onwards all pupils from standard 1 to 4 in all Government school would be taught in their own mother tongue or vernacular language and Chichewa and English would continue to be taught as subjects (see *Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Circular letter Ref. No. IN/2/14* dated *28th March 1996).* As Kayambazinthu (1998:412) puts it, "the justification for this [policy change was] based on hearsay and systematic research [done] elsewhere, not in Malawi" that had established that children learn better and faster if taught in their mother tongue especially in the first four years. Following the 1996 directive, the Ministry of Education has developed a language in education policy which is currently awaiting approval. This draft policy covers all sectors of education including adult literacy.

1.3.4 Policy on medium of instruction in adult literacy in Malawi

The policy on the medium of instruction in adult literacy has followed the changes made in the national language policy. For example, the change in national language policy made in 1968 influenced the policy on the medium of instruction in adult literacy in that from that time up to now, Chichewa has been the sole official medium of instruction in the national adult literacy programme. Also the current shift of allowing other local languages in some official domains is being taken on board in adult literacy. For example, the draft Language in Education Policy (2007:35) stipulates that:

> The overall objective of the policy... shall be to have as many adults as possible who are functionally literate in their languages so that they can contribute meaningfully to the country's socio-economic development. To

> fulfill this objective the policy shall promote the learning of basic reading and writing skills through familiar local languages.

However, no further details are provided. A similar stipulation is also made in the draft National Adult Literacy Policy (2007:16) as follows:

> The Ministry shall promote the use of local languages in the delivery of adult literacy programmes since research shows that mother tongue allows creating teaching in a familiar language while giving learners an active choice about the language in which they would like to learn (sic).

This policy, too, awaits approval and what it means is that when approved languages such as Ciyawo, Cilomwe and others shall be used as media of instruction in adult literacy. What is interesting though about this stipulation is that it is ambivalent in that it advocates for the use of mother tongues and at the same time it gives the learners the freedom to choose a language to be used in their classes. In this regard one gets the impression that the policy statement assumes that, due to the stated merit, adult learners would choose to be taught through their mother tongues. Also when one examines the policy statements in the two draft documents as cited above, it is very clear that they are non-committal as to whether the best practice is to use mother tongue or indeed any local language as long as that language is familiar to the learners. This lack of clear direction evidently shows that choosing appropriate language(s) for use in Malawi's adult literacy programme is a problem that requires some serious attention.

1.3.5 The use of Ciyawo in education

Ciyawo was used as a medium of instruction by the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) in the southern part of Malawi (Nyasaland) as well as in Nkhotakota in the central region. The language also had the same status in Government schools in Yawo areas. Just like other local languages namely Chinyanja and Chitumbuka, Ciyawo was used as a medium of instruction at elementary and lower middle level. However, the language lost its status when the colonial Government pushed for the adoption of Chinyanja in all schools in the early 1930s. This was compounded by the fact that as Kishindo (1994: 134) puts it, “the promotion of Chiyao by the UMCA was rather feeble”

compared to that of Chinyanja and Chitumbuka by the Government and Livingstonia Mission respectively. Kishindo substantiates this fact by citing the absence of flourishing school literature in Ciyawo. Since that time, Ciyawo has not had a significant official and meaningful role to play in government school system be it formal or informal.

1.4 Description of some of terms used in this study

This sub-section gives a brief overview of some of the terms that have been used in this study. This is done basically to delineate the interpretation of such terms so that they are in tandem with the scope of this study. Specifically the section examines minority language, mother tongue, native language, first language, relevance and transfer.

1.4.1 Minority language

Bamgbose (2000: 14) contends that the majority minority divide is one that is inherent in any multilingual situation, since languages differ, among other things, in number of speakers and geographical spread. Bamgbose (1984) asserts that this term is usually characterised by three features the first one being arbitrary as the description dwells much on various issues such as number of speakers, literary, political or educational status. The second feature in Bamgbose's view is relative. He gives an example of a situation in which a language that is deemed to be a minority at national level is seen as a major one at state level or a language that is considered to be a major one in one country is treated as a minority one in another country. Lastly minority language brings into effect a sense that implies smallness in terms of number of speakers. In his contribution to the description of the term, Coulmas (1984) views minority language as a minor language that does not serve as a standard or national language in any country. In this study, I use the term to reflect both the numerical and status aspects of the languages. That is, in this study the term is used to refer to all Malawian local languages that have small numbers of speakers and are not used as standard or have a diminishing role at national level. These languages as Coulmas (1984: 10) puts it, are not appropriate means of vertical mobility and full participation in national life.

1.4.2 Mother tongue

According to Mchazime (1999: 41), this term is often used ambiguously. The term can be used to refer to a language a child learns from its mother; the first language the child learns regardless of parental affiliation; or the national language. Skutnabb-Kangas (1995: 44) also acknowledges the fact that there are several ways of defining mother tongue such that she offers four descriptions of the term based on four criteria namely origin, competence, function and identification. Based on origin, she looks at mother tongue as the language(s) one learned first. In terms of competence, she describes mother tongue as the language(s) one knows best. Using the criterion of function she considers mother tongue as the language(s) one uses most. And on the basis of identification, she looks at mother tongue as the language(s) one identifies with or one is identified as a native speaker of by others. In this study, mother tongue is used mostly based on the criteria of competence and function. This is so because it was not within the scope of this study to establish and verify the language(s) individuals learnt first.

1.4.3 Native language

This term too, carries different connotations. In some cases it is used to refer to a language one is identified with whilst in others it implies the language one knows best and uses most. The latter seems to be the connotation implied by Neustupný (1984). Neustupný observes that there is a new attitude towards linguistic variation because there is a shift in emphasis from acquiring literacy in the national language to acquiring it through the medium of one's native variety of language. Gillespie (1994) also apparently uses this term with the same connotation when he asserts that to avert the problems learners face in literacy classes due to the use of English as a medium of instruction many programmes in the United States have responded by offering such classes in the native language of the learners. In this study, the term is used to refer to the language one knows and uses most as well as the language one is identified with. The reason for this is that this study was interested in language use in relation to the ethnicity of the adult learners.

1.4.4 First language

Just like the other terms, this term too, is multifaceted. In some cases the term is used to refer to a language an individual initially acquires before other languages. In this study however, this term is used to refer to mother tongue as understood using the function and competence criteria above. This is not a novel way of using the term since other scholars such as Osuji, Adewumi and Braimoh (1988:62) do likewise when they assert that "the mother tongue, that is the first language of the community, is the medium of its realities, its culture, thoughts and aspirations (…) it should be the most widely-used language for the communication of ideas that are designed for effecting social change."

Looking at the descriptions of mother tongue, native language and first language given above a general picture emerges. It appears that despite having other connotations these terms are commonly used to refer to a language that is known and used most. In view of and based on this commonality, these terms are used interchangeably in this study. This is consistent with the normal practice among researchers in matters regarding mother tongue as it has been shown in this sub-section.

1.4.5 Adult learners

In this study, the term adult learners refers to all those individuals aged 15 and above who enrol and attend adult literacy classes. In this regard, it includes any person who graduated from adult literacy programme as well as the one who has not yet completed a full cycle of adult literacy classes.

1.4.6 Relevance

In this study, I subscribe to Akinpelu's description of this term. This is so because this description matches well with the overtones surrounding the issue of mother tongue or local language instruction in adult literacy which puts emphasis on the learners. According to Akinpelu (1988: 29), "in educational terms, the concept of *relevance* (sic) describes more or less a match between the skills imparted in the educational activity, on the one hand, and the aspirations and capabilities of the educatee, on the other."

He further notes that it is relevance that determines the significance of any activity and makes the actions of the people involved satisfying to them and objects of approval by others.

1.4.7 Transfer

This is one of the contentious terms because it is used to reflect various linguistic parameters. Due to this, Kellerman (1984) proposes that this term should be returned to the public domain asserting that its use mostly leads to confusion. This is because among other things, instead of using the term to just reflect the ability to use prior linguistic principles to deal with new linguistic situations, it is also used to capture cross-language influence. The later looks at, among others, the tendency by second language learners of including some traits from their first language such as words, word order, etc into the second language. Despite these differences the term is still in use. Premack (1989) uses the term to refer to the ability to produce and comprehend novel sentences. When Baker (2002) asserts that lessons learnt in one language can easily transfer into the other language, he generally seems to use the term to refer to the use of prior knowledge to new learning situations and it is in this sense that the term is used in this study. This view was taken because this study did not focus on determining cross-language influence but rather on the ability of the adult learners to use their writing and reading abilities from Chichewa to Ciyawo.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study was confined to mainly, addressing the issue of identifying an appropriate language of instruction for Ciyawo speaking adult learners. To do this, the study focused mainly, on the effect of Chichewa on the acquisition and use of literacy among Ciyawo speaking adult learners in selected areas in Zomba district.

1.6 Problem statement

This study was undertaken to resolve the issue of identifying the most appropriate medium of instruction among the Yawo in selected areas in Zomba district. This was done because as Indabawa (2000) contends, the current trends with regard to policies on

the choice and use of language in adult literacy seems to be arbitrary and unrelated to critical concerns of the eradication of adult illiteracy. He further argues that this arbitrariness affects the success of many literacy projects. This is so because instead of allowing languages to be catalysts for the acquisition of functional literacy, these tendencies make languages impediments to such ventures. Unfortunately, these trends are also eminent in Malawi. For instance, the current language policy was made on the basis of political considerations. As a result there are reports that some adult learners face problems in understanding their lessons when Chichewa, the official medium of instruction, is used (see Phiri & Safalaoh, 2003 and Chinsinga & Dulani, 2006). In keeping with these trends, currently there are plans to introduce mother tongues as media of instruction in adult literacy. The premise for this policy change is the problem alluded to above. What the new plan entails is that the adult learners may be required to acquire literacy in languages that are predominantly spoken in their areas for example, Ciyawo in areas perceived to be predominantly Ciyawo speaking.

However, the major problem with the current arbitrary language choice tendencies is that it becomes increasingly very contentious for one to boldly and conclusively state that a particular language is the most appropriate medium of instruction in adult literacy for any linguistic community in the country.

1.7 General objective

The aim of this study was to establish the limitations of understanding that adult learners whose first language is not Chichewa face due to the use of the language when and after acquiring literacy as well as assessing their linguistic preferences in terms of medium of instruction in adult literacy programme.

1.8 Specific objectives

This study sought to:

(i). Find out the extent to which Yawo adult learners understand their lessons when they are taught in Chichewa.

(ii). Examine problems Ciyawo adult learners face when they are instructed in Chichewa

(iii). Establish whether or not there is a positive transfer of literacy abilities from Chichewa to Ciyawo

(iv). Establish the language(s) Yawo adult learners would want to be used as medium/media of instruction in adult literacy in their areas

(v). Assess the circumstances under which Yawo adult learners may prefer literacy instruction in Ciyawo to instruction in Chichewa

1.9 Justification of the study

Malawi's adult literacy programme has undergone several changes since it was first introduced in the country. Throughout these changes not much attention has been given to issues of language of instruction although the important role of the medium of instruction in adult literacy is generally acknowledged. In keeping with these trends, Malawi is currently planning to introduce mother tongues or familiar local languages as media of instruction in adult literacy despite the absence of any significant and thorough linguistic study to establish relevant linguistic needs of the adult learners. The policy change is based on consultancy reports on adult literacy in general, that allude to the fact that adult learners whose mother tongue is not Chichewa face problems in class when instruction is carried out in this language. But this policy change is being considered without any relevant study on the linguistic needs of the adults let alone wide consultations and debate. In fact Kishindo (1994:104) notes that:

> in Malawi since 1966 population census, no research has been done nation wide to ascertain patterns of languages use. As a result so little is known with certainty about these patterns and what influences them, as sine qua non for policy making in education, rural and urban development programmes.

In view of this, it is not clear as to whether apart from meeting the pedagogical concerns the new policy will also live up to the wishes and interests of those it is purported to benefit, the adult learners. This may be so bearing in mind that forcing people to acquire literacy in their mother tongues against their wishes and interests may likely be counterproductive because of the obvious potential of creating a mismatch between the

aspirations of the adult learners and what the policy would decree. This could be the case because as Ryan (1985:160) rightly contends, "without a certain scale of usage, a written language may be of limited utility and its mastery of little appeal to its speakers." In the same vein, Wagner (1992: 63), contends that "the presumed cognitive advantage of learning a first literacy in one's mother tongue may be small relative to the motivational aspects of learning to read in the second language." This problem is very critical because it impacts on relevance, which is one of the most crucial elements of any education endeavour in general, and any adult literacy programme in particular. What this means is that unlike with children where emphasis is on how quickly they acquire the writing and reading skills, with adults the emphasis should also be on whether or not the literacy the adult learners are going to acquire will help them to improve their social, political and economic status. In this regard, literacy becomes as Mipando and Higgs (1982: n.p.) rightly put it, "… a preparation for life rather than a skill to be learned for its own sake." If not, then the literacy programme begs one of the most fundamental questions: literacy for what? So, if language is to contribute fully in addressing this question emphasis should be placed not only on pedagogical concerns but also on the functionality of the literacy the adult learners would acquire. And this balance cannot be established arbitrarily, hence the need to carry out a study of this type.

Interestingly, there are indications already in Malawi, that one of the reasons why the adult literacy programme is not making adequate progress is lack of relevance. Phiri and Safalaoh (2003) acknowledge the fact that the adult literacy programme in Malawi is failing to attract the required numbers per class and that the programme was experiencing a high turn over due to, among other things, lack of perceived benefits after graduation. Contrary to the situation prevailing in Malawi, there is a massive improvement in enrolment figures in the United Kingdom after the introduction of a new initiative called 'Skills for Life Strategy' in 2001 that replaced the community oriented and student based programmes (see Papen 2005). This is so mostly because the new initiative directly benefits the learners by focusing on improving their work performance as well as raising the employability of the jobless. Perhaps what Malawi needs to do to unravel the current enrolment problem is to undertake an in-depth countrywide assessment of the current programme. That assessment would help in refocusing the programme and also assist in systematically resolving the issue of the choice of language of instruction in adult literacy

in the country which, if left unattended could be counter-productive. A similar language choice problem was experienced in Tanzania where Ryan (1985:160) reports that:

> Missionaries who were teaching literacy in tribal languages, as a transitional step in the mastery of literacy in Swahili, found that many learners considered the teaching of the transitional language to be a waste of time and an extra hurdle in achieving their ultimate goal of literacy in the national language. While they cherished their tribal languages as an expression of their culture and identity, they could see no necessity or even purpose in becoming literate in these languages: their mother tongues were for speaking; Swahili was for reading and writing.

Although Ryan (1985) cautions that it is difficult and dangerous to generalise matters regarding attitudes towards languages, chances of replicating this experience in Malawi, cannot be ruled out if the problem at hand is allowed to prevail. These fears are not unsubstantiated because Wagner (1992: 63) also observes that "in the few studies which have looked at the preferred language of literacy in adult literacy programmes, policy makers have been surprised to find that individuals often choose the metropolitan language of literacy rather than the relatively ineffective (for economic purposes) mother-tongue local languages." What is clearly emerging therefore, is the fact that the problem of language of instruction in adult literacy in Malawi is not just a function of which local language is predominant and therefore pedagogically sound in a given locality but also a question of which local language the adult learners themselves think would best help them acquire the literacy that would be instrumental in improving their living standards. Unfortunately, that language may not be effectively identified, in any linguistic community, using the current arbitrary language choice practices, hence the need to carry out this study. In this regard, this thesis contends that for a sound policy on language of instruction in adult literacy in Malawi to be formulated there is need to conduct thorough country-wide sociolinguistic surveys to inform and validate the identification and use of any local language in the programme.

1.10 Theoretical framework

This study is grounded within Bourdieu's (1977) linguistic capital and markets framework. This theory is very critical in this study, which centres mostly on language

choice, because of its predictive and explanatory power in matters regarding language choice and use.

Bourdieu's theory of linguistic capital and markets is a framework that uses economic perceptions to explain language choice and use. In this theory, Bourdieu characterises the notions of capital and markets as being the key components regulating language choice and use. He views language as capital and all the social conditions that produce and reproduce the language users as the market. Bourdieu (1977) argues that language is a symbolic asset that can be valued or devalued relative to the market on which it is offered. Thus the theory views languages as currencies such that just like in the economic domain where currencies can be valued or devalued depending on the prevailing economic conditions, language, too, can be valued or devalued subject to, among other things, prevailing social conditions. Bourdieu asserts that anyone trying to defend a threatened capital (language) cannot successfully do so without saving the market i.e. all the social conditions that are essential in the production and reproduction of producers and consumers. In this context, the producers and consumers are the people that can speak and understand the language and hence constitute the market that determines the value of the language, i.e. the capacity of the language to act as a linguistic capital.

Bourdieu rightly observes that, among others, the education system is key to the production of mass producers and consumers as well as the production of the market on which the value of linguistic competence depends. He observes that the future of a language is governed by what happens to the instruments that are responsible for the production and reproduction of the linguistic capital such as the school system. This is because, as Bourdieu (1977:652) puts it, the education system "has the monopoly over the production of the mass of producers and consumers, and hence over the production of the market on which the value of the linguistic competence depends." Bourdieu (1977) claims that "when one language dominates the market, it becomes the norm against which the prices of the other modes of expression, and with them the values of the various competences, are defined." In other words, in a situation where one language has a monopoly of use in all important domains, decisions on the appropriateness and value of other languages in such domains will be made relative to that language. However, Bourdieu notes that the dominant language functions as a linguistic capital securing a profit of being unique relative to other languages only if the groups of people that possess

it have the ability to impose it as the only legitimate language in legitimate linguistic markets. In other words, a language can function as a linguistic capital in legitimate linguistic markets depending on the extent to which its speakers view it as distinct and consequently advocate for its recognition as a valuable language.

In this theory Bourdieu also uses the notions of profit and price. He views profit as the sense of distinction a speaker gets during discourse. On its part price is viewed as the speaker's anticipation of the reception to be given to his or her speech act. In this respect Bourdieu (1977:654) highlights some conditions upon which objective chances of linguistic profit depend and these are: the degree of unification of the linguistic market i.e. the degree to which the competence of the dominant group or class is recognised as legitimate, i.e. as the standard of the value of the linguistic products; and the differential chances of access to the instruments for producing the legitimate competence (…) and to the legitimate sites of expression. What this suggests is that for a language to make one feel distinct, it must be recognised as having some value. In addition, there must also be some mechanisms for ensuring that not everyone has access to acquire the language and above all it must have its legitimate domains.

Apart from perceiving language from the economic point of view, Bourdieu (1977) also characterises language as something that regulates power relations. In this regard Bourdieu (1977:648) asserts that "language is not only an instrument of communication or even of knowledge, but also an instrument of power. A person speaks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished." He contends that "a language is worth what those who speak it are worth, i.e., the power and authority in the economic and cultural power relations of the holders of the corresponding competence," (Bourdieu 1977:652). In this case Bourdieu shows that there is a relationship between the social status of the linguistic community and that of their language so that if the people have a lower social status their language, too, will be deemed to be of lower status. It makes sense therefore, when Bourdieu argues that the relative value of different languages cannot be resolved just within linguistic considerations because although it is true that languages are linguistically equal they are not so, socially.

Expounding Bourdieu's theory, Kayambazinthu (2000:18) observes that Bourdieu's general contention is that language represents a form of social and cultural capital that is convertible into economic capital or socio-economic status. She explains that linguistic capital becomes social capital because the way an individual speaks shows how and where they acquired it and that becomes their social status. This is why, in a multilingual situation like the one prevailing in Malawi, a dominant language acts as a valuable asset that establishes a distinct advantage over the dominated languages in crucial official and semi-official domains such as education, health, courts, development meetings, etc so that people often have to decide whether or not using the dominated language would accrue better prices than using the dominating one. This is so because arguably, it is the interplay between profit and price, among other factors, that determines the language to be employed in a given situation.

1.11 Outline of the thesis

This thesis has five chapters. The present chapter has introduced the thesis and has covered a number of issues. It has discussed the concept of literacy, rationales for literacy, language situation and policies in Malawi as well as descriptions of some of the terms used in the study. It has also covered the scope of the study, problem statement, as well as both general and specific questions the study seeks to address, including the significance of this study and wound up with an outline of the theory on which this study is based.

The second chapter provides the background to the study and literature review. This chapter sets the context in which this study was undertaken by looking at how the adult literacy programme has been run in Malawi relative to language of instruction as well as what other scholars, experts and researchers say on the same.

Chapter three, methodology, deals with an overview of how the data was collected, the nature of the respondents as well as the limitations of the study.

The findings of the study and their subsequent discussions are provided in chapter four. Broadly, the findings are categorised into three key themes namely, effects of Chichewa

as a medium of instruction on lesson delivery, transfer of literacy abilities and language preferences.

Lastly chapter five concludes the thesis by stating the major findings and their implications.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter overview

This chapter has two major sub-sections namely background and literature review. It provides the context within which this study was undertaken as well as some of the work done on adult literacy in Malawi. Apart from that, it also provides brief overviews of literature in this field covering a wide range of issues. In this regard, the literature review subsection is split into sub-themes that include choice of language of instruction, transferability of literacy abilities, reasons for mother tongue instruction in adult literacy and policies on language of instruction in adult literacy in African countries and beyond. In all, the major focus is to put into perspective the issue of the choice of a language of instruction in adult literacy in Malawi.

2.1 Background

Malawi is one of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where illiteracy is reported to be very high. According to the UNDP (2004: 219), Malawi's literacy rate is at 62.1%. To improve the literacy rate and foster development, Malawi has been conducting adult literacy programmes dating even as far as the colonial period. According to Mipando and Higgs (1982), historically, Malawi's adult literacy objectives took a turning point in 1947. In that year the primary objective of the literacy effort was to induce people to take an active part in matters that concerned them in order to achieve better living standards. The pilot project for this programme was conducted at Mponela in Dowa and by the close of 1948, 13 literacy centres had been established. However, according to Mpheluka (1983), the project was terminated in 1949 due poor management, lack of trained instructors and inadequate follow up materials.

In the same year, another project was initiated at Domasi under the name, 'Community Development Scheme' and in 1950, the scheme opened 9 mass literacy centres.

Unfortunately, by 1953, this scheme, too, was closed due the same problems that led to the closure of the Mponela project.

The effort to improve people's living standards through adult literacy programmes was enhanced in 1962 when the Malawi Government, in line with the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) manifesto, decided to have an extensive programme to eradicate illiteracy and improve the general living standards of the people of Malawi as one way of fighting against ignorance, poverty and disease. In 1966, a National Literacy Committee was established to oversee issues regarding adult literacy but still there was little progress and according to Mpheluka (1983:6) this was so because of a number of reasons. Firstly, the curriculum was not related to the needs of the adults living in rural areas. Secondly, the methods of teaching were not geared to the adult literacy teaching. Thirdly, there was lack of coordination between Ministries and finally, instructors were not trained in the art of literacy teaching.

In order to improve the delivery of the programme, the Malawi Government sought some assistance from UNESCO to look at the literacy situation and formulate ways of improving the state of affairs. This resulted in the conception, in 1967, of an adult literacy programme that sought to promote, as Mipando and Higgs (1982: n.p.) put it, "a greater sense of participation in rural development." This literacy programme underwent an internal evaluation in 1972.

Following this evaluation exercise, Malawi mounted a UNESCO-UNDP assisted functional literacy pilot project that run from 1981 to 1985 culminating into the launch, in 1986, of Malawi's functional adult literacy programme whose aim was to increase the level of literacy among Malawians. According to Kishindo (1992:114), "the rationale behind the functional literacy programme was that, apart from simply being able to read and do simple calculations, the learners would be able to acquire information that would enable them to improve their own, and their families' standard of living." The goal of the National Adult literacy Programme (NALP) was to make sure that out of an estimated 3.6 million adult illiterates, approximately two million were functionally literate by 1995.

Interestingly, in all these programmes, their reviews and recommendations, the issue of language of instruction does not feature at all. Commenting on this state of affairs, Mipando and Higgs (1982) noted that generally no specific reference had been made to a mandatory language of instruction in any relevant documents available. It appeared to have been assumed by everyone that the medium of instruction was to be the national language, Chichewa. This observation is confirmed by Rokadiya (1986:7) who stipulates that "In line with national policy the medium of instruction is to be Chichewa the national language of the country."

The national policy referred to by Rokadiya are the 1968 MCP recommendations cited earlier in section 1.4.2. It is these recommendations that are usually cited as being the basis for Malawi's language policy. What this means is that the official policy regarding the language of instruction in education is also based on these recommendations. Thus Chichewa was assumed to be the sole official language of instruction in adult literacy.

That language in general and choice of language of instruction in particular, is not given centre stage in adult literacy in Malawi is also noted in some crucial government policy documents such as the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP). In fact Kayambazinthu (2003) is surprised as to why language does not feature as a factor in these crucial documents since it is such an important issue in poverty reduction programmes. All the MPRSP talks about is close co-operation between Government and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), revision of literacy policy and curriculum, training of 12,000 literacy instructors, printing and distribution of adequate adult literacy teaching and learning materials and efforts to open more rural instruction centres.

Even the National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE) seems not to pay much attention to issues of language. When NCLAE conducted a training workshop on evaluation and monitoring functional literacy programme at Grand Beech Hotel in Salima in 1985 it highlighted four advantages of the evaluation of learners in functional literacy programme. Interestingly, this evaluation does not touch on any issue related to language of instruction (see NCLAE 1985).

Contrary to this practice, Mipando and Higgs (1982) correctly observe that "there is no doubt that the question of the language medium to be used for functional literacy is of critical importance". This attitude towards language was also noted elsewhere by Bamgbose. Bamgbose (2000:56) contends that when Lind and Johnston made their review of adult literacy in the Third World, they

> concluded their findings with what adult educators consider to be 'Factors in Adult Literacy Success'. The main ones are the role of the state as the prime mover, political will, mobilisation, organisation and 'dual strategy' of combining literacy and universal primary education.

Language, however, was relegated to "other key issues along with such matters as time factor, training of teachers and cost," (Bamgbose 2000:56).

Due to the importance the Malawi Government attaches to adult literacy programme, another evaluation exercise of the programme was conducted and its first draft report was published in 2003. According to Phiri and Safalaoh (2003: v), "the main objective of this study was to review the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP) and find ways of mainstreaming [the programme] into poverty reduction strategies (…)."

Having analysed and discussed their data, Phiri and Safalaoh made several conclusions. They observed that most people feel that the NALP in Malawi can be successful only if, among other things, literacy was taught through the first language of the adult learners.

In 2001, The United Nations General Assembly declared 2003 to 2012 as United Nations Literacy Decade. As part of events marking this decade the National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE) developed a Strategic Plan. In this plan, it is acknowledged that:

> Literacy plays a critical role in issues of equity, justice, peace and development which are at the centre of the frameworks that guide national development policies and plans such as the Vision 2020 and the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS), among others (NCLAE 2004: v).

Apart from the framework and other documents referred to above, the Ministry of Education developed the Malawi Education for All (MEFA) National Action Plan. This plan clearly states that language of instruction, among other things, need to be improved if the NALP is to succeed in Malawi (see Ministry of Education 2005).

On its part, the Ministry of Gender, Child Welfare and Community Services presented a paper in April 2005 in which it advocated for a curriculum that would develop three-tier primers. In the new curriculum, the first level primers will be developed in an indigenous language to speed up literacy skills in reading, writing and arithmetic and some life skills equivalent to standard four. The second level primers will be transitional and will include introduction to second language and introduction to productive and entrepreneurial skills equivalent to standards 5-6. The third level primers will be linked to formal education equivalent up to standard 8 and equivalent to basic vocational training skills and entrepreneurships in accordance with ecological or geographical locations.

This plan was made with a view of declaring 2006 as a year to eradicate illiteracy. Also what is interesting in this plan is the recognition of vernacular and second languages in the programme.

In addition, this Ministry commissioned Chinsinga and Dulani to review the adult literacy programme in the contemporary Malawi. In their report Chinsinga and Dulani (2006) state that learners in non-Chichewa speaking areas such as Rumphi and Nkhata Bay were struggling in adult literacy classes as they had to learn Chichewa first before they could assimilate the literacy skills and use the primers on their own. However, the two researchers fall short of telling us how the adult learners learn to speak and understand Chichewa for them to be able to use it to assimilate the literacy skills as asserted considering the fact that language teaching and learning is not included in the adult literacy curriculum. Notwithstanding this omission, the two consultants concluded by recommending that adult literacy should be conducted using mother tongue. Given this context, the current study was, therefore, undertaken with the assumption that adult learners in areas where Chichewa is not predominantly spoken are experiencing difficulties in understanding their lessons due to the use of the language.

2.2 Literature review

2.2.1 Choice of language of instruction in adult literacy in some multilingual African countries

In a paper presented at the National Institute for Educational Development, Indabawa (2000:6) asks a crucial and interesting question: "why are literacy projects not succeeding in Africa?" There could be many reasons for this state of affairs but Indabawa lists down what he calls 'problems and militating factors' that are hindering literacy programmes in Nigeria, Zambia, Ghana, Malawi, Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe' and some of these include:

i) Poor funding,
ii) Lack of skilled and professionally trained personnel,
iii) Lack of accurate data for different programme planning,
iv) Ineffective monitoring and supervision,
v) Logistic difficulties relating to difficulty in reaching remote rural areas,
vi) Dwindling political will and discontinuity in programme implementation resulting from constant changes of government,
vii) In flow of additional non-literate adults and relapse back to illiteracy due to dropping out,
viii) Poor conditions of service for literacy personnel,
ix) Gender imbalance of literacy programmes content, and
x) Wrong use of language, specially the use of second languages or transition to them.

What is interesting from this list is the fact that language is featured as one of the problems and factors militating against literacy programmes. This is perhaps because as Indabawa (2000:np) contends, "literacy can only be facilitated more effectively through the use of a given language in any society". However, due to the multiplicity of languages in most African countries including Malawi, the issue of which language to use in adult literacy is not simple and straightforward. Yet as Indabawa points out, among the many factors that facilitate literacy, the basic one is the identification and use of a language. Notwithstanding this fact, the tendency in most countries such as Malawi is that of using national or official languages. This practice seems to confirm Coulmas' (1984:7) observation, that "in some cases literacy campaigns concur with programmes for

promoting a standard language." There are various reasons as to why many countries prefer this practice but one of them is that of trying to promote national unity. For example, Lind (1988:3) reports that in Mozambique, initially, (though things are changing, see Liphola, 2006; Sitoe, 2006) "literacy was … conceived of as one of the most important means of promoting national unity by mobilising the people politically, and by disseminating the Portuguese language as the only language of unity and cross-national communication." Similar reasons were given for the choice of Chichewa as a medium of instruction in adult literacy in Malawi, Swahili in Tanzania and Amharic in Ethiopia before regime change. This seems to suggest that most countries prefer to make language choices in education in general and in adult literacy in particular, in order to deal with political problems as opposed to free choice and pedagogical concerns. No wonder as Ryan (1985:161) asserts, "in most situations, it will be the political authorities and not the educational planner, the literacy worker or language scholar who will determine the choice of language or settle other important linguistic issues".

However, it should be noted that some scholars and experts also seem to support the use of a single language in national programmes such as adult literacy. Djite (1993:160) states that:

> Although literacy is a desirable goal for everyone, 'mother tongue instruction' is not argued for (…) for providing literacy in each individual language is next to impossible. This goal can practically best be achieved through the local linguae francae. And if the ultimate objective is to make literacy and education functional then it makes sense to resort to the widely used languages (…).

However, Djite's objection to mother tongue instruction on the basis of practical concerns is equally contentious in as far as adult literacy instruction is concerned. Using modern approaches such as the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT[5]), it is possible to use all local languages as media of instruction in adult literacy in a country. This is so because REFLECT is a dialogue and need based approach that does not, generally, require pre-determined curricula as well as

[5] The approach is being piloted in 12 districts in Malawi and the Malawi Government is advocating for its adoption along side the functional literacy approach. See Dzimadzi, C. (2007) and the Draft National Adult Literacy Policy (2007) respectively.

primers. In this approach, the facilitators organise their lessons based on the concerns voiced out by the communities during the dialogue sessions. Perhaps what still holds in Djite's sentiments is the fact that the objective of the literacy programme is one of the major determiners in the choice and use of language. It is true that if the idea is to help the citizens to function in all those spheres where literacy is required, then the most appropriate thing to do is to employ the language that is widely used.

In Malawi the choice of Chichewa, a local lingua franca, as a language of instruction in adult literacy was based on a political decision that made it a national language. However, studies done on adult literacy in Malawi assert the fact that many adult learners whose first language is not Chichewa face some problems when instruction is carried out using this language (see Mipando and Higgs 1982; Phiri and Safalaoh, 2003; Chinsinga and Dulani 2006). To minimise this problem, these researchers recommend that instruction in adult literacy should be undertaken in the learners' first language.

In line with these recommendations, NCLAE (2004) stipulates in its Draft Strategic Plan that local languages will be used as media of instruction in the delivery of knowledge and skills. It is also planned that major languages such as Chichewa, Citumbuka, Ciyawo will be taught as subjects where applicable. In addition, it is also envisaged that foreign languages such as English can be introduced according to local needs and demand for purposes of continuing education and linking with formal education.

What should be noted however, is that Malawi is still running the functional adult literacy programme that was launched in 1986. In view of this one is not sure as to whether this shift in language of instruction will facilitate the attainment of the objectives of this programme. That is, one is not sure as to how the adult learners who will have acquired literacy in their various languages would function in literacy domains that continue to be dominated by Chichewa and English since so far no study has been conducted in the country to ascertain whether or not the adult learners can transfer their literacy abilities from their mother tongues to Chichewa.

Apart from NCLAE, based on hearsay and empirical evidence from studies done elsewhere not in Malawi (see Kayambazinthu 1998), the Ministry of Education decreed in 1996 that from then onwards pupils in standards 1 to 4 should be taught using languages that are familiar to them. Following that declaration, a Draft Language in Education Policy was formulated and is currently awaiting approval. As far as adult literacy is concerned, the Draft Policy, among other things, states that it shall encourage the learning of basic reading and writing skills through a familiar local language.

Suffice to say that this policy direction is being declared without any in-depth study on the linguistic needs of the adult learners. In other words, as it is, this could as well be another case of arbitrary pronouncements on language of instruction in adult literacy in the country. This is perhaps the reason why this policy direction does not state how it will be implemented. For example, there is no indication as to who will have the authority to identify a local language for use in adult literacy in a particular area and how this will be done. Contrary to this, some countries in Africa such as Uganda have made a bold decision to empower the local communities to choose the language of instruction in adult literacy. As Okech (2001: np) notes, Uganda's official policy provides that the "choice of language in basic literacy programmes for adults would be the responsibility of the local authorities".

2.2.2 Transfer of literacy abilities

Just like in many multilingual countries where adult literacy is carried out in a national or official language, so, too, in Malawi, there is need to establish how the adult learners whose first language is not the national or official language transfer their literacy abilities. This is so because when one reads official reports in Malawi, there is a clear indication that adult learners from whatever corner of the country are being declared literate each year (see NCLAE 1995). In fact, Phiri and Safalaoh (2003) allude to the fact that many adult literacy graduates are able to transfer the learned material into real life. The two researchers contend that some graduates from adult literacy are able to account for their businesses and also read and write letters.

However, these reports fall short of telling us how this transfer is being achieved. There is need to state, in very clear terms for instance, the issue of the language in which this transfer is taking place. This is critical bearing in mind the fact that there are reports that learners whose first language is not Chichewa face problems in class when instruction is carried out using this language. Is it the case then that by the time they graduate, such learners are now competent in Chichewa or they transfer whatever they learnt in class into their first language? This question is crucial because it directly queries the functionality of the literacy acquired in this language bearing in mind that unlike in Tanzania where, according to Ryan (1985), literacy instruction was preceded and accompanied by second language learning, that is not the case in Malawi. It is technically evident that Malawi's adult literacy programme does not have a component of helping the learners develop both linguistic competence and performance in the medium of instruction. Official documents including the core curriculum for instance, do not provide for the teaching of Chichewa. The core curriculum contents just include reading, writing and numeracy. Even the course design itself does not show any elements that signify the fact that the adult learners need to be taught how to speak and understand the medium of instruction (see Rokadiya 1986). In short the teaching and learning of Chichewa is not included in the curriculum of adult literacy in Malawi.

It should be noted, however, that transferability of literacy abilities could be simple and straight forward but sometimes as Komarek (1997:22) contends, it may not be because "just as with any translation from one code to another, translation from sounds into graphic symbols is only possible when the translator understands what is to be translated. Translation into graphic symbols presumes oral mastery of the language to be translated". In fact Okech (2001: np) reports that… "transferability seems to be easier among some languages than others [and that] there are considerable percentages of people in many districts of Uganda who speak Luganda but find it very difficult to read and even more difficult to write". One needs to know therefore, as to whether transferability is easy between Chichewa and all other local languages in Malawi including Ciyawo considering the fact that these languages are, to a certain extent, similar and are classified as Bantu languages. Bryan (1959), following Guthrie (1948), puts Chichewa in a Nyanja single unit group N.31 subgroup N.31b and Ciyawo is put in a Yawo group P.21.

One of the similarities of the two languages is that they share some vocabulary whereas other vocabulary are near equivalents as shown in the table below. The table contains words that are exclusive to each language, some are similar whilst the others are virtually the same only that they are pronounced somehow differently[6].

6 Most of the words given in this table were sourced from Sanderson's (1954) *Dictionary of Yawo Language* and Centre for Language Studies' (2000) *Mtanthauzira Mawu wa Chinyanja* respectively.

Words Exclusive To Each Language			**Semi Identical Words**			**Identical Words**		**Borrowed Words Shared**	
Chichewa	*Ciyawo*	*Gloss*	*Chichewa*	*Ciyawo*	*Gloss*	*Chichewa/Ciyawo*	*Gloss*	*Chichewa/Ciyawo*	*Gloss*
Ng'azi	Sakata	Monitor lizard	Dzuŵa	Lyuŵa	Sun	Bunyula	Blunt	Kanema (Eng)	Cinema
Udzu	Manyasi	Grass	Nsomba	Somba	Fish	Gumula	Pull down	Telefoni (Eng)	Telephone
Denga	Msakasa	Roof	Nkhuku	Nguku	Chicken	Seka	Laugh	Malasha (Shona)	Coal
Mawere	Usanje	Millet	Mvula	Ula	Rain	Titimira	Sink	Chipewa (Port)	Hat
Nsembe	Mbepesi	Offerings	Ndevu	Ndeu	Beard	(Ku) Gwa	Fall	Yembe (Swah)	Mangoes
Phala	Likoko	Porridge	Benthula	Bendula	Chip off	Luma	Bite	Mbendera (Port)	Flag
Fisi	Litunu	Hyena	Nunkha	Nunga	Smell badly	Komoka	Faint	Kantini (Eng)	Canteen
Gula	Suma	Buy	Ganiza	Ganisya	Think	Ulesi	Laziness	Buledi (Eng)	Bread
Tseka	Ugala	Close	Bereka	ŵeleka	Bear	Ponya	Throw	Ndege (Swah)	Aeroplane
Lavula	Suna	Spit	Yenga	Jenga	Render (oil)	Gona	Sleep	Sopo (Eng)	Soap
Chila	Lama	Get well	Nyanja	Nyasa	Lake	Pinda	Fold	Bomba (Port)	Bomba
Moŵa	Mkologo	Beer	Ng'oma	Ngoma	Drum	Tunga	String	Buku (Eng)	Book
Loŵa	Jinjila	Get in	Dzino	Lino	Tooth	Tula	Put down	Kompyuta (Eng)	Computer
Khala	Tama	Sit	Omba	Gomba	Beat/Fire	Sangalala	Be happy	Kampani (Eng)	Company
Thandiza	Kamucisya	Help	Nthutumba	Ndutumba	Gizzard	Bangula	Roar	Sukulu (Eng)	School
Swa	Kasa	Break	Uluka	Guluka	Fly	Chaka	Year	Pensulo (Eng)	Pencil
Suta	Kwemba	Smoke	(Ku)dya	(Ku)lya	Eat	Potola	Twist	Telala (Eng)	Tailor
Lemera	Sitopa	Be heavy	Tsomphola	Sombola	Snatch	Sukusa	Be addled	Samani (Eng)	Summon
Lemera	Sicila	Be rich	Mbuzi	Mbusi	Goat	Nyodola	Despise	Wayilesi (Eng)	Radio
Mwayi	Upile	Luck	Malaya	Malaja	Shirt	Songola	Sharpen	Sitolo (Eng)	Store
Bala	ŵeleka	Bear	Dzombe	Sombe	Locust	Gwedera	Be loose	Ofesi (Eng)	Office
Gwira	Kamula	Catch	Lephera	Lepela	Fail	Kalipa	Be angry	Sokosi (Eng)	Socks
Pempha	ŵenda	Ask/Request	Bwato	Wato	Canoe	Kangana	Quarrel	Batire (Eng)	Battery
Dontha	Sulula	Leak	Koleza	Kolesya	Make a fire	Kama	Milk	Belu (Eng)	Bell
Landira	Pocela	Receive	Phulika	Ulika	Burst	Pota	Spin	Ngolo (Shona)	Ox-cart
Ponda	Liŵata	Step on	Diso	Liso	Eye	Tetera	Cackle	Chubu (Eng)	Tube
Chitseko	Litanga	Door	Fumbata	Umbata	Grasp in	Suluka	Fade	Beseni (Eng)	Basin
Phewa	Lokoyo	Shoulder	Kweza	Kwesya	Raise	Moto	Fire	Sitima (Eng)	Train
Chingwe	Lukonji	Rope/String	Dzina	Lina	Name	Nyoŵa	Get wet	Soda (Eng)	Soda
Bwereza	Wilisya	Do it again	Njuchi	Nyuci	Bee	Tambala	Cock	Buleki (Eng)	Break
Mkango	Lisimba	Lion	Nkhunda	Ngunda	Dove	Nyimbo	Song	Timu (Eng)	Team
Moyo	Umi	Life	Yasama	Jasama	Gape	Pukuta	Wipe	Tikiti (Eng)	Ticket

Table 2.1: Lexical Relatedness Between Chichewa and Ciyawo. Note that shared words are written using Chichewa Orthography

The small sample of words given in the table above clearly shows that whilst the two languages are indeed distinct, they share a lot of words and that some words are very close to each other.

Apart from being similar in terms of lexical items, Chichewa and Ciyawo are also related morphologically. Typologically, they are both viewed as, among other things, agglutinating languages[7]. For instance, if one takes nouns (except proper ones) in both Chichewa and Ciyawo, one discovers that principally it is possible to segment them into lexical stems and number affixes as follows:

Chichewa				**Ciyawo**			
Prefix	Stem	Word	Gloss	Prefix	Stem	Word	Gloss
mu-	-nthu	munthu	person	mu-	-ndu	mundu	person
a-/ŵa	-nthu	munthu	people	ŵa-	-ndu	ŵandu	people
mu-	-tu	mutu	head	m-	-twe	mtwe	head
mi-	-tu	mitu	heads	mi-	-twe	mitwe	heads
chi-	-londa	chilonda	wound	ci-	-pula	cipula	knife
zi-	-londa	zilonda	wounds	yi-	-pula	yipula	knives

These examples confirm the assertion that the two languages are indeed related. These similarities therefore may play a part in simplifying one's ability to transfer literacy skills between the two languages if one spoke and understood both languages.

Furthermore, the two languages are related syntactically. For instance, both languages have principally an SVO basic sentence structure. This is usually the case in instances where transitive verbs are involved and the objective markers are absent as shown below.

Chichewa: Galu akudya nyama. (The dog is eating meat).

Ciyawo: Mbwa jikulya nyama. (The dog is eating meat).

[7] According to Comrie (1981), agglutinating languages are those whose words may be made up of more than one morpheme and the division between these morphemes in the word is always clear-cut.

In the two sentences above, galu/mbwa (dog) are subjects (S), akudya/jikulya are verbs (V) and nyama is object (O).

In addition to sentence structure, the two languages are also related in terms of word order within phrases such as between nouns and their modifiers as follows:

Chichewa: Mtengo wawukulu (The big tree)

Ciyawo: Citela cacikulungwa (The big tree)

In both Chichewa and Ciyawo noun phrases above, the adjective normally comes after the noun. In the Chichewa noun phrase, Mtengo (tree) is the noun whilst wawukulu (big) is the adjective. It is the same case with the Ciyawo noun phrase where Citela (tree) is the noun and cacikulungwa (big) is the adjective).

Phonologically, the two languages are also related in some respects. For example, both languages are described as tonal i.e. languages in which pitch may serve to distinguish word meaning as well as display some grammatical differences. For example, in Chichewa and Ciyawo, tone has a semantic function as shown in the words below.

Chichewa

Word	Gloss	Word	Gloss
mtengo	price	mténgo	tree
khala	sit	khála	charcoal/a hot ember
theká	be possible	théka	half
kama	milk (v)	kamá	bed

Ciyawo

Word	Gloss	Word	Gloss
soni	again	soní	shame
mpika	a (clay) pot	mpiká	boundary/border
citundu	big basket	citúndu	a coop
mtondo	a fabaceous tree	mtóndo	day after tomorrow

Also, the two languages are related phonemically. For example, both languages use the same symbols for the five basic vowels namely a, e, i, o and u. Apart from that, the two languages share many consonantal combinations some of which are given below:

Consonantal Cluster	Ciyawo	Gloss	Chichewa	Gloss
mb-	**mb**unda	zebra	**mb**amba	thunder
mbw-	**mbw**a	dog	**mbw**ita	fail
nd-	**nd**ulu	gall bladder	**nd**alama	money
ndw-	**ndw**elo	pumpkin seed	**ndw**ale	goose flesh
mpw-	**mpw**anga	my young Bro[8].	**mpw**eya	air
md-	**md**umu	big navel	**md**ima	darkness
mt-	**mt**undu	type/tribe	**mt**ima	heart
lw-	**lw**ala	sick	nkha**lw**e	ill-treatment
kw-	**kw**apula	flog	**kw**apula	flog
msw-	**msw**aci	tooth brush	**msw**ala	giraffe
pw-	**pw**esya	deflate	**pw**eteka	hurt
py-	**py**apyala	thin edged	**py**apyala	thin edged
sw-	**sw**ala	giraffe	**sw**a	break

In addition to the consonantal clusters, Ciyawo uses almost all the single consonants represented in the Chichewa alphabet except that it does not have V, R and Z (see *Chichewa Board*, 1990: 1-5 and *Centre for Language Studies*, 2005: 1,2).

Besides, the two languages are related in terms of syllable structure. They both have an open syllable structure, i.e. the majority of the words have syllables that end with vowels as shown in the examples that follow.

[8] brother

Chichewa

Syllabic breakdown	Word	Gloss
m**e**/ny**a**	menya	beat
th**a**/m**a**/ng**a**	thamanga	run
d**u**/mph**a**	dumpha	jump

Ciyawo

Syllabic breakdown	Word	Gloss
p**u**/t**a**	puta	beat
u/t**u**/k**a**	utuka	run
s**u**/mb**a**	sumba	jump

It would be interesting to find out whether or not Ciyawo adult learners could take advantage of these similarities and transfer the literacy abilities they gain in Chichewa to read and write Ciyawo texts.

That similarities in some language aspects facilitate transfer of some language skills is well documented. Reporting on transfer of reading abilities from first language (Spanish) to second language (English), Mora (2007) states that due to the fact that there were many words in English that share common roots in Greek and Latin with their Spanish equivalents, there were a large number of cognates, or words that had the same meaning in the two languages and that there is evidence that word structure analysis skills transfer from Spanish to English in reading so that the bilingual readers capitalise on these cognates.

The transfer of literacy abilities from one language to another is also supported by some cognitive theories of bilingualism especially Cummins' (1980a, 1981a cited in Baker, 2002) Common Underlying Proficiency Model. In this model, Cummins' perception of bilingualism is that the two languages that an individual owns are different in outward conversation but underneath the surface they operate through the same central operating system. In other words, according to Baker (2002: 165, 166), the model asserts that,

"when a person owns two or more languages there is one integrated source of thought. Speaking, listening, reading or writing in the first or second language helps the whole cognitive system to develop." The model uses an analogy of icebergs that are separate above the surface but are fused underneath suggesting that the two languages are fused. Thus Baker argues that language attributes are not separated in the cognitive system but that they transfer readily and are interactive. According to Baker, a lesson learnt in one language can readily transfer into the other language. Apart from Baker, Mora (2007), commenting on the metalinguistic knowledge transfer from the first to the second language, notes that the greater the similarity in the writing systems of the two languages the greater the transfer. When one looks at the way the two languages are written, it is evident that they are similar (see section 2.2.2). It is therefore, worth finding out whether or not the adult learners are able to capitalise on this similarity to transfer their writing and reading abilities.

Apart from the similarities highlighted in this section, perhaps one also needs to bear in mind that sociolinguistically, in Zomba, where this study was carried out, the two languages, i.e. Chichewa and Ciyawo are adjacent to each other if not, that the communities are mixed thereby giving rise to bilingual Yawo who may easily make connections between the two languages.

2.2.3 Reasons advanced for the use of mother tongue in adult literacy

At this point, it is perhaps noteworthy to acknowledge the fact that the use of minority languages in adult literacy is in line with what many scholars, literacy experts and linguists (Bamgbose 2000; Dorvlo 1993; Mbuagbaw 1999; Nadine 1995; Neijs 1961; Pemagbi 1992; Reddeppa Reddy 1992; Ryan 1985; Tadadjeu 2004; among others), note that the best practice in the basic adult literacy programmes is to carry out instruction in the language of the learners. Gillespie (1994) cites several rationales in support of native language literacy instruction for adults.

To begin with native language literacy is advocated on socio-political reasons. These are based on the role that minority languages can or should play in the society. Different orientations are presented with regard to the situation in the USA but Gillespie (1994)

observes that people who support the maintenance approach of bilingual education are of the view that learners have a right to be educated in their own language taking into account the fact that dominant groups have been using language as a tool to exclude language minorities from access to jobs and services as well as from taking part when deciding on which language should be used officially.

Secondly, this practice is advanced on linguistic grounds. This rationale is based on various areas of research hinging on language. Of particular significance to this study are Collier (1992) and Ramirez (1992) studies (cited in Gillespie 1994) that have revealed that second language skills for more decontextualised academic learning need an average of five years or even longer to develop. According to Gillespie, these findings provide a stronger reason for equipping limited-English proficiency children and adults with access to the core curriculum or content area knowledge in their first language.

Thirdly, native language instruction is favoured based on socio-cultural reasons. Mostly, this centres on the role of native language literacy in fostering a sense of socio-cultural identity vital to the learning process. A study conducted by Strei (1992, cited in Gillespie 1994) reported that in a Palm Beach County literacy programme, in Florida, drop out rate fell from 85% to 10% after effecting native language literacy. Gillespie argues that the cultural nuances within the classroom may be subtle, but powerful.

Fourthly, this practice is advanced due to reasons based on the social context. It centres around issues related to the social context of adult learning. Gillespie notes that educators dealing with adult learners have realised that literacy acquisition involves so much more than just a set of isolated skills. It is claimed that native language plays a facilitating role in allowing learners to explore socio-contextual dimensions of literacy such as "adults' beliefs about literacy and learning, their everyday literacy practices, the metacognitive processes by which they learn to read and write" (Gillespie 1994:21).

Lastly, there are also reasons hinging on content-based instruction. This rationale revolves around the role of the native language in acquiring knowledge and skills in the content area. The argument is that native language instruction plays an important role in fostering the learning of knowledge and skills in various content areas.

Apparently, it is in pursuance of these pedagogical advantages that there is a shift in policy regarding language of instruction in adult literacy in Malawi.

2.2.4 Trends and experiences in the choice and use of language(s) in adult literacy

Literature shows that the choice and use of language in adult literacy programmes vary from country to country subject to the prevailing national circumstances. For instance, in Malawi, apart from the pedagogical needs cited earlier, there are also concerns that imposing a language as a medium of instruction in adult literacy, contravenes the provision of the Republic of Malawi Constitution that guarantees the right for each and every citizen to choose a language and participate in a cultural life of his or her choice. Commenting on the current situation, Kayambazinthu (2003:157) observes that:

> the current language situation in Malawi has a crippling effect in that it excludes a significant percentage of the people from understanding their political and economic rights and responsibilities. In addition, they are not empowered to participate actively and democratically in all spheres of their lives. The Malawian case is not conducive to the establishment of an inclusive society since the majority of its citizens are alienated from participating in national debates on linguistic grounds.

What this suggests is that the current practice puts certain sections of the Malawian society at an advantage over others in crucial spheres of their lives. In an effort to address this situation, the Draft Background to the Education for All: Language Policy in Malawi (2005) clearly grounds the use of local languages in education into the human rights domain. This document states that:

> Article 26 of the Constitution of Malawi states that 'every person shall have the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice'. Respect for human rights and/or democratic participation will include observance of the right to free expression – implying the use of whatever language is at hand – as well as the promotion of the right to be informed, and participate in public affairs in an intelligible manner. Free primary education and local language education are part of the Government's program of empowering people to participate in the general, political and socio-economic development of the nation.

Despite advocating for free choice as stipulated in the article cited above, the policy is silent on how this freedom is going to be exercised. It should be emphasised, however, that the solution to both the pedagogical and language rights concerns the country is experiencing now does not lie in just allowing all local languages to be media of instruction in the programme but also in whether or not such a move would sustain the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the programme. Examples from other countries inform us as to why this balance is crucial.

In Tanzania initially the practice was that of employing multiple languages as media of instruction in adult literacy (see Ryan 1985). The missionaries who were conducting such classes felt that this was a better transitional step towards offering literacy in Swahili. However, the adult learners themselves did not like this practice. They wanted to go straight into acquiring literacy in Swahili. After independence, the practice changed. Swahili became the sole language of instruction in adult literacy and the programme succeeded. Using a single language it is reported that the country had managed to reduce illiteracy from 75% at the time of independence to 21% in 1981. Ryan attributes this success partly to the manner[9] in which the policy was applied. That is, the adult learners were first taught Kiswahili and they continued to learn the language during their literacy instruction. In other words, in this country literacy instruction was preceded and accompanied by second language learning. Apart from that, the policy also succeeded partly because it was the adult learners themselves who demanded the use of Kiswahili in their literacy classes.

Contrary to the practice employed in Tanzania, Ethiopia began with a single language policy in adult literacy but the programme suffered greatly mostly due to the single language policy and the manner in which it was applied. For instance, unlike in Tanzania where language problems of the participants were singled out and dealt with within the programme, in Ethiopia such problems were ignored. That is, whilst in Tanzania literacy instruction was preceded and accompanied by second language learning, this was not the case in Ethiopia (see Ryan 1985). Consequently, the country changed its policy after regime change when it became clear that adult learners whose mother tongue was not

[9] This shows that the implementation strategy plays a critical role in the success of the policy.

Amharic, the national language, were facing some problems in class due to the use of this language. Mother tongues or languages closely related thereto are now used as media of instruction in adult literacy in the country and the results are encouraging.

Perhaps the most interesting case is that of Mozambique where a foreign language, Portuguese, was the sole medium of instruction in adult literacy. Lind (1988) tried to understand factors that led to the rise and fall of literacy campaigns in that country. She provides a mixed picture of the consequences of using a foreign language as a medium of instruction. She says that this practice provided a strong motivation because the language facilitated a link between adult literacy and formal education and further training. However, Lind (1988: 167) acknowledges that "the negative consequences of using Portuguese as the language of literacy instruction were also obvious." The researcher cites the suppression of active participation, relating content to the learners' own mother tongues frames of reference and inadequate command of the language by the tutors as some of the problems. This state of affairs is also reported by Mario and Nandja (2005) who attribute low enrolment and high drop out in the country's adult literacy programme to, among other factors, the use of Portuguese. However, Lind (1988) concludes in her study that the language problem was not the exclusive or the most important cause of the differences in the rate of literacy learning as well as the fall in the number of people taking part in and the efficiency of the programme. In fact, the country's illiteracy rate fell from 93% in 1975 (Lind 1988) to 53.6% by 2004 (Mario & Nandja 2005). This is perhaps the reason why despite the problems cited above, the language is still used in adult literacy in the country. Nevertheless, the country realises the need to conduct adult literacy in Mozambican languages. In accordance with this, Lopes (1998: 449), reports that "recently, the educational authorities have experimentally introduced Bantu languages in adult literacy campaigns as well as in primary schooling." Apart from this pilot study, Mario and Nandja (2005) indicate that the Mozambican government introduced a literacy programme in 1991 as part of the Women's Bilingual Education Project in an effort to combat low enrolment and massive drop out caused by the use of Portuguese as a sole medium of instruction in adult literacy. In fact, Liphola (2006) reports that partly due people's views and public pressure, the Mozambican Government approved to legally introduce initial bilingual education system in 2004. What is interesting is that this decision was preceded by research and debates. What this

education system entails is that apart from Portuguese, Mozambican languages have also been incorporated as media of instruction. Thus the country has adopted a transitional model just as was the case in Tanzania before independence. That is, initial literacy is being promoted in Mozambican languages culminating into the acquisition of literacy in Portuguese. According to Sitoe (2006:1), the new education policy attracts enthusiasm from among the communities concerned but it also constitutes a roll of concerns. This is perhaps the reason why Liphola (2006:9) wonders whether or not "the initial bilingual education can meet the real anxieties of the communities in addressing the problems that need to be resolved through literacy programs."

Also interesting is the case of the new approach to literacy in the United Kingdom. This initiative which is called 'Skills for Life Strategy' was launched in 2001 with an aim of giving 'all adults in England the opportunity to acquire the skills for active participation in the twenty-first century society and to engage their energy and commitment' (Blunkett 2001) cited in Papen (2005:98). According to Barton (2007), the strategy was part of broader government policy aimed at addressing poverty and unemployment. Barton further states that the justification for the skills strategy was twofold. The first one was social inclusion by way of enabling learners to participate fully in society. The second was economic through improving the skills of individuals so as to enable them get and/or keep their jobs. This programme is striking in many respects. First, the priorities in terms of the learners who should be targeted are clearly spelt out. Second, there is a clear system of standards and progression routes. Third there is a clear focus, which is improving the standards of the workforce. Fourth, the three broad areas i.e. language (English for Speakers of Other Languages -ESOL), literacy and numeracy have each its own curriculum. What is significant in this programme is that apart from using it as a medium of instruction, English is taught as a subject. This programme has aroused a lot of enthusiasm among the adult learners compared to previous community oriented and student-based programmes. By 2003 the number of adults who had successfully improved their skills stood at 470,000 (see Papen 2005:100).

Despite these marked differences in the choice of languages in these countries, i.e. mother tongue, national/official and foreign language, what is important is to acknowledge the fact that the language chosen to be a medium of instruction in adult

literacy should be that spoken by both the adult learners and the instructors. This is so because generally all literacy classes are meant to be participatory. As Dorvlo (1993: 77) states "Freire holds [the view] that the adult learner should participate actively in the learning process from the beginning to the end." To do this, Freire singles out dialogue as being essential because it is through dialogue that the people involved e.g. the co-ordinator and the adult learners, will tease out the social significance of generative themes appropriate and relevant to the learners' everyday life. These generative themes are expressions that come from the vocabulary of the prospective adult learners and according to Dorvlo (1993: 59), the "words identified should reveal the perpetual pre-occupations, anxieties and aspirations of the group". In other words, the expressions should be those that the prospective adult learners themselves use when describing the situations they find themselves in. Arguably such expressions can only come from the language the learners already command. Thus from this postulation one can cautiously conclude that Freire implicitly calls for the use of languages that the prospective adult learners already speak. Otherwise one wonders as to how dialogue would take place without a shared medium.

On his part, Laubach is very explicit in acknowledging the fact that the language that is used in adult literacy should be familiar to the learners. According to Dorvlo (1993: 54), Laubach's approach recognises at least the following facts:

i) The adult is independent and comes to the learning situation voluntarily.
ii) The adult learner has experience and, therefore, is not joining the learning situation with a blank mind
iii) The adult learner has knowledge of the language and sometimes he is even more knowledgeable in the language than the tutor.
iv) What he lacks, which is why he joins the learning situation, is the ability to read and write.
v) He is very sensitive and will withdraw from the class as soon as he is made to feel uncomfortable.
vi) He should therefore be handled with the greatest amount of courtesy.

What is interesting though is the fact that even Freire and Laubach do not state how the language of instruction is going to be identified let alone state the authority that would be

responsible for this process so that there is a balance between pedagogical concerns and the realisation of the needs and aspirations of the adult learners given a situation where there is more than one familiar language.

In view of the foregoing, it is very clear that as Lind (1988) states, there are no ready-made or orthodox solutions to the issue of language choice and use in adult literacy. This is so partly because it depends on the prime objectives of the programme. What this means, therefore, is that before any decision on language of instruction is made, there is need to have a thorough understanding of the prevailing linguistic circumstances in different parts of the country. In this regard, if Malawi seriously considers functional literacy as one of its tools in the fight against poverty, disease and ignorance and that human rights are a benchmark for this endeavour, then the issue of language of instruction in functional adult literacy programme should be dealt with holistically. To achieve this, this thesis argues that there is need to conduct thorough sociolinguistic surveys to underpin the identification and use of any local language in Malawi's adult literacy programme.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview

This study aimed at finding out how the language of instruction, Chichewa, affected literacy acquisition and use among Ciyawo speaking adult learners in selected places in Zomba and subsequently establish their preferred medium of instruction. To accomplish this, the study sought to find out the extent to which these learners understand the lessons taught in this language and the problems they face in class due to the use of Chichewa; establish whether or not there is a positive transfer of literacy abilities from Chichewa to Ciyawo; establish the learners preferences in terms of language of instruction and also assessing circumstances under which instruction in Ciyawo or Chichewa may be preferred.

This section presents the target population and sampling techniques, methodological approaches, data collection process and data analysis. It also discuses some problems and challenges encountered during the course of conducting this study.

3.1 The target population and sampling techniques

The study was conducted in Zomba district in the southern part of Malawi. This district was purposely chosen mainly because of three reasons. First, it was because of resource constraints both in terms of finances and time. Second, it was due to the fact that the target language, Ciyawo, is spoken in some of the areas where adult literacy classes are conducted in the district. Third, Zomba was easily accessible since it was within my place of residence.

Multi-stage stratified sampling technique was used in order to draw the sample. The major characteristic of the sample was that it should be Ciyawo speaking. Since there are several districts in the country where Ciyawo speaking communities are found, the first

stage was to sample a district in which the study was to be undertaken and based on the reasons given above Zomba was purposely selected.

Organisationally, Zomba is divided into nine (9) adult literacy zones namely Chinseu, Chingale, Mayaka, Jali, Domasi, Ulumba, Namadidi/Nachikwangwala, Chimwalira and Msondole. Thus the second stage was to determine the zones to be involved in this study. Among other factors, one third was deemed to be appropriate considering the fact that not all these zones were predominantly Ciyawo speaking. For instance, Jali and Mayaka are predominantly Chinyanja/Cilomwe speaking which means that eligible zones were less than nine. The zones targeted, therefore, included Domasi, Msondole and Ulumba. These zones were purposely targeted because it was reported by adult literacy instructors that the communities residing in these areas are mostly Ciyawo speaking[10]. Apart from that, these zones were also purposely chosen on the basis of accessibility.

In each zone there are adult literacy centres whose number varies. For instance, according to the Assistant Community Development Officers responsible for the targeted zones, Domasi has 17 government run centres, Msondole 17 and Ulumba has 12. Having identified the zones, the third stage was to sample the centres to be involved in this study. It was decided that one out of every three centres in each of the three zones should be purposely selected. What this means is that 6 centres were targeted in Domasi, 6 in Msondole and 4 in Ulumba. Apart from resource constraints, the decision to select one out of every three centres was also based on the fact that the study was not looking at many variables from the population since ethnicity was already under control. According to Maree and Pietersen (2007:178),

> the size of the sample necessary for it to be representative of the population depends on the degree of homogeneity of the population [and] in homogeneous populations where the members are similar with respect to variables that are important to the study, smaller samples may adequately represent the population.

[10] See also Centre for Language Studies (2009) Language Mapping Survey report.

In this study the principal variable was language of instruction, Chichewa, i.e. how this language was affecting Ciyawo speakers' literacy acquisition. Hence the decision to have one out of every three zones targeted. A list of the zones and centres purposely sampled is given in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Distribution of sampled centres by zone

Zone	**Centre**
Domasi	Chilambe, Matuta, Kanyesi, Namitoso, Matindiri, Msigalira.
Msondole	Msondole1, Msondole2, Mtenga, Namawato, Mng'ambo, Nam'babada.
Ulumba	Matache, Msala, Ngauma, Thundu.[11]

These centres are spread in the areas of traditional authorities Kumtumanji, Malemya, and Chikowi in Zomba district.

At the centre level, the respondents were stratified into three strata: beginners, graduates with one year literacy experience[12] and graduates with more than one year literacy experience. This stratification was necessary so as to meet the objectives of this study. Beginners were targeted because the study sought to establish problems adult learners were experiencing in their classes due to the use of Chichewa and, therefore, it was assumed that beginners could be in a better position to vividly describe what these problems were and also suggest what could be the most appropriate medium of instruction in their area as the study also sought to establish. On their part, the graduates were targeted and split into two on the assumption that those that had more than one year of literacy experience may have had more opportunities to use their literacy abilities than the new graduates and on the basis of this, they may be in a better position to tell the circumstances in which literacy abilities in other languages as opposed to Chichewa, may be needed. Furthermore, since some studies already established that literacy abilities just like other skills can easily be lost with time through disuse, it was assumed that this could be the case with those graduates who had more than one year of literacy experience if no opportunities were available for them to use their Chichewa literacy abilities. This might

[11] Centre just established and not operational at the time of the visit.
[12] Based on number of years that had passed since one was certified literate.

have made it difficult to establish literacy ability transfer from Chichewa to Ciyawo since such individuals would have lost their literacy abilities even in the language in which they gained their literacy skills.

The fourth and last stage was, therefore, to sample the adult learners to be involved in the study. Only Ciyawo speaking adult learners were supposed to be purposely sampled. The number of adult learners per centre varied and the total population for the 16 centres was 244. According to Salant and Dillman (1994:55) when one has a population of 250, it is possible to sample either 70 respondents with a 50/50 split, where the population is relatively varied and 49 respondents with an 80/20 split, where the population is less varied and these samples would give a confidence level of 95% of a sampling error of ±10%. What this means is that with a population of 250, that is less varied one can sample 49 individuals and be 95% sure that the sampling error is ±10%. In this regard if, for instance, 70% of the respondents expressed a certain opinion it means that one could be 95% sure that either 80% or 60% of the whole population could also express that opinion. Since the total population was close to 250 and was generally less varied in terms of the characteristics that were relevant to the study, the ideal sample size could have been 49 respondents. However, 70 was preferred to 49 because Salant and Dillman (1994:55) advise that " unless we know the [actual] split ahead of time, it is best to be conservative and use 50/50," which in this case meant 70 respondents. Also, the targeted sample was relatively higher because it was feared that some respondents might not be available to take part in the study due to unforeseen problems. Thus the target population was put at 96 to compensate for such eventualities. This compensation was in line with sampling procedures because according to Salant and Dillman (1994:57) "we figure our sampling error on how big the sample ends up being after we take out people who are ineligible or refuse to participate in the survey and after we discard illegible questionnaires." To ensure equal and fair representation, all centres were required to have an equal number of respondents and since there were 16 centres, this meant that each centre was going to have 6 respondents. In the same vein, since the population was already stratified into three, each stratum was given a quota of two. In other words, at each centre, the study targeted two beginners, two graduates with one year literacy experience and two graduates with more than one year literacy experience. Apart from adult learners, instructors for each centre sampled automatically qualified to be

interviewed as key informants. Key informants were included because it was assumed that being facilitators of the lessons, they had vast knowledge and experience on the issues this study sought to investigate. Since there were 16 centres involved, this brought the total number of respondents to 112 as outlined in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Planned sample population by centre

Name of Centre	**No. of Learners**	**No. of Instructors**	**Total**
Chilambe	6	1	7
Matuta	6	1	7
Kanyesi	6	1	7
Namitoso	6	1	7
Matindiri	6	1	7
Msigalira	6	1	7
Msondole1	6	1	7
Msondole2	6	1	7
Mtenga	6	1	7
Namawato	6	1	7
Mng'ambo	6	1	7
Nam'babada	6	1	7
Matache	6	1	7
Msala	6	1	7
Ngauma	6	1	7
Thundu	6	1	7
Total	96	16	**112**

However, due to some problems such as some centres sampled not being eligible, repetition and unavailability of some categories of the adult learners in some centres, the actual number of adult learners and instructors that took part in this study was 68 and 14 respectively. Thus the total number of respondents that actually took part was 82. As far as adult learners are concerned, this happened due to at least two reasons. First, no interviews or focus group discussions were done at one of the centres namely Thundu, because it had just been established and its replacement, too, was found to be non-operational. Second, in most of the centres it was not possible to have the three categories

of adult learners as had been planned because the instructors claimed that the centres had not had more than two cycles of adult learners. Also in some cases it was difficult to get beginners because it was discovered that most of the adult learners that had enrolled for classes were, for reasons to be explained later, in subsection 4.1.2, repeating their classes. In those circumstances, only 4 adult learners were involved at some centres.

As for instructors, only 14 out of the possible 16 were interviewed because one centre did not take part as outlined above and at another centre namely Chilambe, the instructor was reported to have gone away on family matters.

Out of the 68 adult learners, 62 were proficient bilinguals, i.e. they spoke Ciyawo and Chichewa whilst the remaining 6 spoke Chichewa only. The 6 were erroneously sampled because the instructors treated Ciyawo speaking as being synonymous to being Yawo. That is, when the instructors were asked to purposely identify adult learners who were Ciyawo speakers to be sampled for this study, they included adult learners who were Yawo ethnically but not linguistically competent in Ciyawo. Unfortunately, these were discovered in the process of administering the questionnaires. However, during data cleaning and analysis the 6 were excluded, as they did not fit into the study.

Among the 62 bilingual respondents, 42 said that Ciyawo was their first language whereas 20 claimed that, though Yawo, they considered Chichewa as their first language. This seems to suggest that because the people are living in an area where the two languages have been adjacent for a long time it is easy for them to learn and speak both languages thereby creating societies that are bilingual. This is consistent with what the Centre for Language Studies (CLS) established in its sociolinguistic survey in 1996. CLS conducted this survey in Mangochi, Machinga, Dedza, Salima, Nkhotakota, Blantyre, Zomba and Chiradzulu and found that 94.7% of the respondents spoke Chichewa in addition to Ciyawo. On the basis of this the Centre for Language Studies (1996) asserts that most Ciyawo speakers have become bilingual due to the status accorded to Chichewa as well as its dominance in usage in official domains.

Apart from linguistic characteristics, formal education background of each adult learner sampled was also considered the results of which are summarised in table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Educational background of the sampled adult learners

Educational Level	Number of Respondents
Never Attended Formal Education	14
Standard 1	12
Standard 2	23
Standard 3	9
Standard 4	3
Standard 5	5
Standard 6	2
Standard 7	0
Standard 8	0
Total	68[13]

Generally one would have expected that the adults who enrol for these classes should have been those who have never attended any formal education as well as those who drop out of primary school before standard 4, a class that is used by the National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education as yardstick for the acquisition of literacy. Interestingly, what one sees here is that adults, who went up to standard 6 in their primary education, enrol for adult literacy lessons. These results may suggest that in Malawi, some children go as far as standard 4 and beyond without acquiring any meaningful literacy.

On the basis of gender, out of a total of 68 adult learners who took part in this study, only 2 were males. This is in agreement with numerous reports on adult literacy in Malawi that state that female adults dominate this programme due to various reasons such as relevance of the literacy programme, mixture of men and women in the same class and the gender of the facilitator[14] among others (see Phiri & Safalaoh 2003). Phiri and Safalaoh (2003) also contend that women easily relate their inability to read and write to practical problems they face when they fail to read cooking instructions as well as instructions from health centres. They further allude to the fact that this state of affairs should be expected because statistically there are more illiterate females than males. This gender disparity is also noted in many African countries. For example, Bhola (1988)

[13] Figure includes the 6 monolingual Chichewa speakers.
[14] These are called instructors in the national adult literacy programme.

reports that Grainger found a similar situation in Zimbabwe. In this report Bhola observes that Grainger found that adult literacy in Zimbabwe had become a women's affair and that men preferred drinking beer to attending adult literacy classes. Just like in Malawi, in Zimbabwe too, it is reported that the adult literacy programme lacked relevance as the learners wanted to acquire academic knowledge so as to enter into the formal economy and not functional literacy as the programme sought to accomplish. Lind (1988) alludes to a similar female dominance in adult literacy in Mozambique.

3.2 Methodological approaches, research techniques, research tools and data analysis

3.2.1 Methodological approaches

This study principally, used the quantitative approach supplemented by the qualitative approach. The quantitative approach was preferred because most of the issues that were investigated in this study could best be explained by looking at how many people expressed a given view as opposed to the other. In other words, there was need to use figures to fully account for the issues. On its part, the qualitative approach was also preferred because some issues could also be fully explained by just looking at the presence or absence as well as the significance of the issue at hand without necessarily paying much attention to the number of people involved.

32.2 Research techniques

This study used mostly the survey technique due to the fact that the study was undertaken with limited resources both in terms of time and finance. As such it was not possible to involve all eligible respondents. In this regard, the survey was selected since, according to Salant and Dillman (1994), it has the quality of allowing researchers to obtain information from a few respondents so as to describe the characteristics of many. Apart from the survey, focus group discussions and key informant interviews were also done mostly to triangulate the information.

3.2.3 Research tools

The study mainly used a standardised structured questionnaire because most of the issues investigated required questions that needed pre-coded responses to limit the range of answers respondents could provide for meaningful analysis and interpretation of the data. In line with the objectives of the study, the questionnaires covered issues such as the degree of learners' understanding of lessons taught in Chichewa; the problems they face due to mostly, the language of instruction and also establishing the learners' language preferences. Also, the questionnaires addressed the issue of literacy transfer from Chichewa to Ciyawo.

The other tool that was used was the key informant interview schedule. This instrument addressed almost all the issues that were covered in the individual questionnaires for purposes of triangulating the data. Apart from the questionnaire and key informant interview schedules, focus group guidelines and note pads were also used to collect and record the data. These discussions were conducted also to reinforce and triangulate the insights gathered through questionnaires and key informant interviews. These discussions were conducted with adult literacy graduates. Among other things, the graduates were asked to reflect on their experiences as learners and also their experiences as graduates of this programme so as to solicit informed views on the circumstances under which literacy instruction in Chichewa may be preferred over instruction in Ciyawo or vice versa. The discussions also centred on the period within which the adult learners acquired their literacy skills, the problems they faced during and after literacy acquisition due to the use of Chichewa.

Participant observation was not employed as planned because classes were not in session during the period the centres were visited.

3.3 Data collection process

Data was collected between 26th February 2007 and 9th March 2007. The data was collected using two instruments. The main data collection instrument for quantitative data was the questionnaire. There were two sets of questionnaires one for adult learners and the other for instructors (see appendices 1 & 2 respectively). The questionnaires covered

issues such as the degree of learners' understanding of lessons taught in Chichewa; the problems they face due to, mostly, the language of instruction and also establishing the learners' language preferences. Also, the questionnaires addressed the issue of literacy transfer from Chichewa to Ciyawo. The researcher asked the questions orally and recorded the responses on the questionnaire. This was done for two reasons. Firstly, not all adult learners were literate enough to read and fill in questionnaires on their own. Secondly, both the adult learners and instructors did not have personal mailboxes let alone telephones through which they could have been contacted.

Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions using focus group guidelines (see appendix 3) and the responses were recorded in notepads. Among other things, the guidelines covered issues such circumstances under which literacy instruction in Chichewa may be preferred over instruction in Ciyawo or vice versa, the period over which the adult learners acquired their literacy skills and the problems these learners faced during lesson delivery due to the use of Chichewa.

3.3.1 Data analysis

The information gathered was processed mainly in two ways. First, the information obtained through the questionnaires, which was quantitative in nature, was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to produce, mostly, tables and frequencies for meaningful analysis. Second, the information collected through focus group discussions, which was qualitative was summarised based on key themes to establish major patterns relative to the main issues the study sought to address.

3.3.2 Challenges and limitation of the study

During the course of conducting this study there were several challenges met. To begin with, all the villages that were going to be visited were not familiar to the researcher and most of them are located in remote and distant places. This challenge was dealt with by hiring cyclists and when doing so care was taken to select someone who was familiar with the area to be visited.

In addition, getting a reasonable number of respondents at each centre was not easy because people in the villages have many things to attend to such as household chores, farming and other social activities. Two things were done to overcome this. First, an attempt was made to contact and establish a good working relationship with adult literacy instructors. The instructors played a critical role in mobilising the respondents. Second, prior arrangements were made with the adult learners through their instructors before a visit was made to a centre. Though costly such appointments helped a great deal.

The other challenge was that of mobility. In some areas such as in Msondole and Ulumba zones mobility on a bicycle was not easy due to the terrain. In such places a greater part of the distance was covered on foot. To avoid having respondents wait for a long time care was taken when setting time for the administration of the questionnaires.

Besides the challenges above, there was a problem of getting accurate records such as the number of centres in the three zones. For example, Zomba Community Development Office said that Domasi had 21 centres, Msondole 14 and Ulumba 20 whereas the assistant community development officers for these areas put the number of centres at 17, 17, and 12 respectively. This had an implication on the sample size. To minimise this problem a decision was made to use the figures given by the assistant community development officers on the assumption that these were the people who knew their areas very well.

Related to the problem above was that of lack of accurate information on the status of the centres. This problem created some inconveniences. First, resources were wasted in hunting for a centre that was not eligible for the exercise. For example, Thundu was sampled in Ulumba zone but when a visit was made to the centre, the chairperson of Thundu Adult Literacy Committee claimed that the centre had just been established and that it was not yet operational. To solve this problem, Bulaimana was sampled as a replacement but when a visit was made to this centre, village headman Bulaimana declared that the centre had been closed. Having wasted a lot of time and money on the two centres no further replacement was sought. Thus this zone had one centre less than the planned number. This problem impacted on the sample size.

However, the total targeted number of respondents from the 15 remaining centres was still adequate to provide relevant insights and, therefore, the absence of this centre did not have adverse effects on the study.

Another inconvenience was that the required categories of respondents could not be met in some centres such as Msondole 1, Msala and Nam'babada because the instructors claimed that the centres were relatively new and, therefore, did not have adults who had graduated two to three years before this study. To deal with this problem only adult learners who graduated the year before and those that had not yet completed their cycle were sampled.

Related to this disturbance was the problem of re-admittance. This was one of the most serious challenges because it recurred in almost all the centres. This is why only 12 of the 68 adult learners were recorded to be beginners (see 4.1.2 for more details). Due to this problem, it was difficult to categorise the adult learners as planned' i.e. those that had not yet completed their cycle (beginners), graduates with one year literacy experience and those graduates with more than one year literacy experience because most of them qualified to be placed in any of those categories. To deal with this problem only two categories were generally identified, i.e. those graduates with one year literacy experience and those with more than one year literacy experience.

Funerals were another setback. At some centres such as Msala the administration of the questionnaires had to be postponed because some of the respondents who were sampled and had agreed to be interviewed had lost a relative. This problem was dealt with by rescheduling the activity although this had some financial implications.

The most critical limitation of the study was that classes were on recess during the time it was being carried out. Unfortunately due to requirements of time allocated to this activity, this study could not wait for the classes to resume. This meant that participant observation could not take place. This was a setback because the observations were meant to triangulate the information provided by the adult learners especially on the part of their understanding of the lessons delivered in Chichewa.

Given these circumstances, the study had to rely on the literacy proficiency of the adult learners to ascertain the claims they made that they understood lessons delivered in Chichewa without any problems at all.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents and discusses the results of this study on the basis of the objectives, the theoretical framework and the literature reviewed. In some sections results of two objectives are presented together under one general sub-title because such objectives are related in one way or the other. The chapter has three main sections, namely, effects of Chichewa as a medium of instruction, transfer of literacy abilities and preferred languages.

4.1 Effects of Chichewa as a medium of instruction on lesson delivery among Ciyawo speaking adult learners

One of the objectives this study sought to accomplish was to find out whether or not the use of Chichewa as a medium of instruction among Ciyawo speaking adult learners impedes the learners' understanding of their lessons as some researchers such as Phiri and Safalaoh (2003) and Chinsinga and Dulani (2006) claim. To this effect, respondents were asked to state how well they understood lessons delivered to them in Chichewa. In addition, they were asked to state whether or not they faced any problems during lesson delivery due to the use of Chichewa as a medium of instruction. The results and discussions on these matters are presented in the sub-sections that follow.

4.1.1 Extent of understanding of lessons delivered in Chichewa

As cited in the background to this study (see Phiri & Safalaoh 2003 and Chinsinga and Dulani 2006), there has been a recurrent recommendation from consultancy reports that adult literacy should be conducted in mother tongue. The premise for this recommendation has been that adult learners whose mother tongue is not the medium of instruction, Chichewa, struggle a lot to understand what is being taught in class specifically due to the use of the language. In addition, as the literature reviewed shows, many scholars, literacy experts and linguists contend that basic literacy is best taught

using the language of the learners (see Bamgbose 2000; Dorvlo 1993; Mbuagbaw 1999; Nadine 1995; Neijs 1961; Pemagbi 1992; Reddeppa Reddy 1992; Ryan 1985; Tadadjeu 2004; Tera 1992).

This study therefore, sought to find out how Ciyawo adult learners were fairing in their classes where instruction was being carried out in Chichewa. Here the adult learners were asked to rate their understanding of lessons conducted in Chichewa on a scale ranging from poor through fair, good to very good. In the final analysis, 55 (88.7%) of the 62 Ciyawo speaking respondents rated their understanding as very good, 5 (8.1%) said it was good, 2 (3.2%) rated it as fair and nobody said it was poor. A similar picture emerged from the responses of adult literacy instructors. 9 (64.3%) of the 14 instructors interviewed rated the level of understanding of their learners as very good, 3 (21.4%) said it was good, 2 (14.3%) said it was fair and nobody said it was poor.

These results generally do not support the hypothesis that adult learners whose mother tongue is not Chichewa find it hard to understand their lessons due to the use of the language. However, these results should be understood from the fact that the adult learners under study were proficient bilinguals in both Chichewa and Ciyawo. These results show that for bilingual adult learners like the ones under study, the use of Chichewa in their classes does not negatively affect understanding of their lessons. What this may suggest is that if at all, the adult learners under study were experiencing any problems in understanding their lessons, then the cause may not be the language of instruction. In view of this, there is need to find out what these causes are. Apart from that there is also need to spell out very clearly the nature of the adult learners who face problems just because Chichewa, the medium of instruction, is not their mother tongue. This will not only help in ensuring that the policy on language of instruction is appropriately formulated, but will also help in ensuring that it is meaningfully implemented.

4.1.2 Problems faced due to the use of Chichewa as a medium of instruction

Apart from level of understanding, the adult learners were asked to state whether or not they faced any problems during lessons due to the use of Chichewa as a medium of instruction. In response, 59 (95.2%) of the 62 Ciyawo speaking adult learners involved in this study said that they did not face any problem at all. Similarly, 9 (64.3%) of the instructors interviewed said that their learners did not face any problem at all.

However, both the 3 (4.8%) of the 62 adult learners and 5 (35.7%) of the 14 instructors who said that there were some problems cited lexical meanings as the recurring obstacle. They pointed out that sometimes some adult learners encountered some words in the primers whose meanings they did not know due to dialectical differences. This is expected, however, because in any case it is unlikely that there is any native speaker of Chichewa who knows the meanings of all words in the language. To deal with this problem, the 5 instructors reported that they explain such words to the adult learners in Ciyawo. Perhaps these results also underscore the advantage of having instructors that can speak both the language of instruction and the first language of the adult learners.

Generally, these results simply reinforce those on level of understanding and they show to a certain extent, the reason why the adult learners understand their lessons well. That is, the results seem to show that these adult learners do not face any problems at all due to the use of Chichewa. Consequently, they seem to understand very well, lessons taught using the language.

Asked to explain how it was possible for them to understand lessons conducted in a language that was not a mother tongue to most of them, the adult learners asserted that Chichewa had spread widely in the area such that it was spoken and understood very well by many people in the area. What this suggests is that most of the Yawo in this area have become, somehow, proficient bilinguals.

What these results suggest is that whilst it may be true that adult learners whose first language is not Chichewa struggle to understand what is being taught in adult literacy due to the use of Chichewa as the literature reviewed shows this may not be the case among

the Ciyawo speaking adult learners in the area under study who are mainly bilingual. May be this is an indication that the long standing historical close contact that has been there between the Chewa and the Yawo coupled with the historical movement that began as early as the colonial era and continued during the reign of the MCP that promoted the development and use of Chichewa in official domains have had an impact on the minority Yawo communities such as the one in this area (see Kishindo 1994, Vail & White 1989). Also, Chichewa has been having an impact on minority languages because it has the largest number of speakers in the country. In this regard, most of the Yawo are becoming proficient bilinguals and, therefore, they may not have serious problems in understanding adult literacy lessons delivered in Chichewa.

This situation fits well with Bourdieu's theory which predicts that when one language dominates the linguistic market, it becomes the yardstick for measuring the value of the other languages. Naturally, people make attempts to acquire such a language so that they too can perform in its legitimate linguistic markets without any hindrance. In Malawi, Chichewa is the most dominant language. It is a language that is second to English and therefore, it wields some form of prestige. It is a language that is used in some official functions where English is found to be inappropriate such as public meetings. Just as Bourdieu's theory predicts that a dominant language succeeds in becoming a linguistic capital only if its speakers impose it as the only legitimate one in linguistic markets, Chichewa has succeeded because its speakers led by Malawi's first head of state, who was a Chewa himself, have done a lot to enhance the influence the language had already had on the speakers of other languages including the Yawo to recognise and value it as a crucial language in the country. Just as the colonial administrators did, Dr. Banda put in place mechanisms to ensure that Chichewa, which was already spoken by many, should spread far and wide. For example, the language was introduced in school both as a medium of instruction and as a subject of study. Also, a language board was established to develop and promote Chichewa (see Kishindo 1994). In addition to that, the language was given an official status along side English. Due to this, among other factors, it appears that the language has exerted a lot of influence among the Yawo in the area under study. This may explain the reason why Yawo adult learners in this area seem not to face any serious problems when instruction in their adult literacy classes is done using Chichewa because they, too, have become competent speakers of this language.

It would be interesting, therefore, to establish the extent of this influence in all Ciyawo speaking areas as well as in areas that speak other languages so as to come up with a clear linguistic situation for the country.

In order to probe further the assumption that adult learners whose mother tongue is not the medium of instruction, Chichewa, face problems in class as alluded to by the literature reviewed, this study also sought to find out how long it took the learners to be able to read and write in Chichewa. To do this, 51 Ciyawo speaking respondents who had completed at least a cycle of adult literacy learning were asked to state the period within which they acquired their literacy. Although most of the responses were based on estimates, the results present an interesting picture. 8 (15.7%) respondents said that they acquired their literacy within 6 months, 6 (11.8%) said they got it within 10 months whilst 37 (72.5%) said it took them more than the official period (more than 10 months) to be functionally literate. In fact, 42 (67.7%) of the 62 Ciyawo speaking adult learners involved in this study indicated that they had attended more than one cycle of the adult literacy programme (see table 4.4 for more details). Phiri and Safalaoh (2003) also report a similar state of affairs. The two researchers give three 'hypotheses' to explain this. They assert that some adults take these classes as one way of interacting or socialising with other members of their community. Also they contend that the adult learners do not benefit much from one cycle of learning because instructors are not adequately rewarded and, therefore, just play with the adult learners but in the end make everyone pass including those that fail the exams. Lastly, they observe that the adult learners relapse into illiteracy due to lack of guidance or follow up as well as the absence of rural libraries.

When the 42 respondents who had attended more than one cycle of adult literacy classes were asked to explain why there was a massive re-admittance, varied reasons were given and these are summarised in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Cases and reasons for re-admission

Re-admission Cases	Percentage	Reason
4	9.5%	Old age, hence more time required to grasp the skills
18	42.9%.	Frequent suspension of classes
10	23.8%	Absenteeism due to family obligations
10	23.8%	Inadequate mastery of the reading, writing and numerical skills

Table 4.1 shows that most of the re-admittance cases, 18 (42.9%) are due to the fact that classes are frequently suspended. The table also shows that absenteeism due to family obligations and inadequate mastery of the literacy skills each accounts for 23.8% (10 cases each) and 4 (9.5%) adult learners attributed re-admittance to old age hence need more time to acquire the literacy skills.

These results do not directly confirm the 'hypotheses' given by Phiri and Safalaoh cited earlier. However, they do agree with the contention made by the two researchers that most of the learners do not gain full literacy within the set time limit. This massive re-admittance (67.7%) therefore, makes one question the accuracy and reliability of the annual literacy figures NALP records because chances of re-counting individuals are very high.

However, what is important about these results is the fact that language of instruction is not cited as one of the factors that impede understanding of the lessons thereby leading to the massive re-admittance referred to above. In other words, the language of instruction seems not to negatively affect the literacy acquisition of the adult learners under study. These results therefore, disconfirm the assumption this study undertook to establish that adult learners whose mother tongue is not Chichewa such as the Yawo under study struggle a lot in understanding their lessons due to the use of this language. Based on

these results, one may strongly argue that, pedagogically, there is no basis for changing the language of instruction for the adult learners under study from Chichewa to Ciyawo. That is, teaching these adult learners using Ciyawo just because it is their mother tongue, as the new policy may direct would be unjustified unless the adult learners themselves chose to be taught using the language. In fact as it will be shown later, the adult learners' view on the language of instruction contradicts the spirit of the new policy. This state of affairs may not be restricted to the area under study. Therefore, as this thesis argues, there is need to undertake a thorough study to establish the language situation as well as the adult learners' attitudes towards Chichewa and their mother tongues in various parts of the country. Such a study would help greatly in formulating an appropriate policy on language of instruction in adult literacy in the country.

4.2 Transfer of literacy abilities from Chichewa to Ciyawo

One of the most important aspects of literacy learning is the learners' ability to transfer literacy skills from the language through which it was acquired to another. This helps in minimising the task of re-learning the skills one has already acquired in another language. In view of this, this study sought to examine whether or not there is a positive transfer of literacy abilities from the language of instruction, Chichewa to Ciyawo. To accomplish this, the adult learners especially those that had completed at least a cycle of adult literacy programme and with whom a one on one interview was conducted underwent a literacy proficiency test. The respondents were given two paragraphs (one in Chichewa and the other in Ciyawo) to read. They were also asked to write a sentence long dictation in Chichewa and Ciyawo. In total, there were 40 respondents involved in this task because 11 Ciyawo speaking adult learners involved in the study had not yet completed a cycle, 6 were ineligible because they spoke Chichewa only and 11 Ciyawo speaking adult learners participated in the study through focus group discussions hence they did not do this activity. The results of these two activities are presented separately below.

4.2.1 Reading activity

The analysis of the reading activity was based on how fluent and accurate a respondent was as he/she read the paragraphs (see appendix 1).

In this regard, the adult learner's reading performance was rated as

(a) Very good: if they read fluently and pronounced all the words accurately.

(b) Good: if they read fluently but pronounced any single word inaccurately.

(c) Fair: if they read with pauses between words and pronounced any single word inaccurately.

(d) Poor: if they read with pauses between syllables and pronounced any single word inaccurately

(e) Could not: if they were eligible for the activity but did not read even a single word.

Based on this analysis the results of the activity were as shown in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Level of reading performance and number of respondents per level per language

Level of Reading Performance	**Number of Respondents Per Level Per Language**	
	Chichewa	Ciyawo
Very Good	12 (30.0%)	0 (0%)
Good	14 (35.0%)	6 (15.0%)
Fair	1 (2.5%)	8 (20.0%)
Poor	8 (20.0%)	11 (27.5%)
Could not	5 (12.5%)	15 (37.5%)

Table 4.2 shows that 12 (30%) adult learners read the Chichewa paragraph fluently and pronounced all the words accurately but none did the same in Ciyawo. The table also shows that 14 (35%) adult learners read the Chichewa paragraph fluently but pronounced just one word wrongly whilst 6 (15%) did likewise in Ciyawo. It also indicates that one (2.5%) adult learner read the Chichewa paragraph with pauses between words whereas 8 (20%) did the same when reading the Ciyawo text. Furthermore, the table shows that 8 (20%) read the Chichewa paragraph with pauses between syllables and 11 (27.5%) did the same when reading the Ciyawo paragraph. Lastly, table 4.2 shows that 5 (12.5%) adult learners could not read the Chichewa text and 15 (37.5%) could not read the Ciyawo text despite the fact that the adult learners were eligible for these activities.

Comparatively, these results show that a good number of adult learners were able to read

very well in Chichewa as opposed to those who were able to do the same in Ciyawo. However, this was expected since the respondents learn and practice their reading ability in this language. What is important in these results though is not the comparative analysis of the level of performance in the two languages per se but the fact that there are signs that Ciyawo speaking adult learners may transfer their literacy skills from Chichewa to Ciyawo. The results show that at least 6 adult learners (15%) read reasonably well and 8 (20%) read fairly well in Ciyawo. That is, 14 (35%) of the 40 adult learners who took part in this activity were able to read the Ciyawo paragraph satisfactorily. This is notwithstanding the fact that all the respondents asserted that they had not read any Ciyawo text prior to this study. What these results suggest therefore, is that may be if they are given more opportunities to read in Ciyawo, the Yawo adult literacy graduates such as the ones involved in this study, could develop and transfer their reading abilities from Chichewa to Ciyawo. These results are important because they may have a bearing on the functionality of the literacy the adult learners do acquire in Chichewa. In the literature reviewed, Okech (2001) noted that for some languages it is difficult to transfer literacy abilities implying that one needs to learn how to read and write in each language separately. However, these results show that this may not be necessary with Chichewa and Ciyawo speaking adult learners under study. The results suggest that with the literacy they acquire in Chichewa, these adult learners may function fairly well in literacy domains that require the use of Ciyawo. In other words, these results show that these adult learners may not need to learn in Ciyawo for them to be able to read in the language. Given the opportunity, they may read texts written in Ciyawo. This may not be surprising given the fact that the two languages are closely related in terms of grammar and other parameter (see section 2.2.2) and these similarities may enable the learners to guess or transfer their literacy skills.

Also the results seem to confirm the fact that some adult learners complete a full cycle of learning without acquiring meaningful literacy or no literacy at all. The results show that 13 adult learners did not have meaningful literacy in Chichewa. Considering the fact that all adult learners involved in this exercise were graduates, one would have expected all of them to read reasonably well at least in Chichewa. This raises a serious question on the efficiency of the adult literacy instruction in the area under study. Perhaps one may argue that these adult learners could have done better if they were taught using their first

language. But this may not be the case because amongst these Yawo learners were those that claimed that Chichewa was their first language and when one looks at the results of their reading proficiency one does not see that language gave them an outright advantage over their counterparts who named Ciyawo as their first language especially when one combines the 'good' and 'very good' results as shown in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: First language and Chichewa reading proficiency

First Langauge	**Chichewa Reading Proficiency**					**Total**
	V. Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Couldn't	
Ciyawo	6 (22%)	12 (44%)	1 (4%)	4 (15%)	4 (15%)	27
Chichewa	6 (46%)	2 (15%)	0 (0%)	4 (30%)	1 (8%)	13
Total	12	14	1	8	5	40

Table 4.3 shows that 22% of the adult learners who said that Ciyawo was their first language read very well the Chichewa text whereas 44% read it well. The table shows that 46% of the adult learners who named Chichewa as their first language read it very well whereas 15% read the text well. These results give a mixed picture. Whilst a good number (46%) of respondents who claimed that Chichewa was their first language read very well, 38% of the same group did not have meaningful literacy. If language was a major factor one would have expected to have very few adult literacy graduates whose first language is Chichewa not to be able to read and not as high as 38% which compares well with the 30% of those that claimed that Ciyawo was their first language. In fact when one combines together the 'good' and 'very good' percentages one notes that 66% of those that said that Ciyawo was their first language read the text reasonably well compared to 61% who did the same but named Chichewa as their first language.

These results re-enforce the claim made by the adult learners themselves that language of instruction does not impede their literacy instruction. Given this state of affairs and also mindful of the factors responsible for repetition of adult literacy classes established

earlier, there is need to critically examine other factors such as the calibre of the instructors, their training as well as their motivation among others. Other researchers also allude to this observation (see Chinsinga & Dulani 2006, Phiri & Safalaoh 2003). Currently, the instructors are volunteers who are in most cases standard eight (primary school) dropouts. The persons identified to be instructors undergo a two-week training and when they start their work they are given a token of K500.00 per month. This state of affairs clearly shows that the role of instructors towards the efficient and effective delivery of the adult literacy programme in the country is not given the seriousness it deserves. When one examines the period of literacy acquisition and the educational background of the adult learners involved in this study, the point being raised here becomes, perhaps, even much clearer as table 4.4 below shows.

Table 4.4: Period of literacy acquisition and educational level

Period of Literacy Acquisition	**Educational Level**							**Total**
	Never[15]	Std[16] 1	Std 2	Std 3	Std 4	Std 5	Std 6	
Within 6 Months	0%	1 (11%)	4 (22%)	0%	0%	1 (33%)	2 (100%)	8
Within 10 Months	2 (25%)	1 (11%)	2 (11%)	1 (12.5%)	0%	0%	0%	6
Over 10 Months	6 (75%)	7 (78%)	12 (67%)	7 (87.5%)	3 (100%)	2 (67%)	0%	37
Total	8	9	18	8	3	3	2	51

Table 4.4 shows that most of the adult learners acquire their literacy skills after the official time limit. In other words, the table shows that 75% of the adult learners who had never attended formal education got their literacy skills after repeating their classes just as was the case with 78% of the standard 1, 67% of the standard 2, and 87.5% of the standard 3 dropouts respectively. Interestingly, these are the adult learners that are mainly targeted by the national adult literacy programme and according to this programme "the first sequence [runs for] about six months (…) to be followed by a post

[15] Never attended formal education.
[16] Short form for 'standard'.

literacy sequence of organised teaching for a period of four months (…)," Rokadiya (1986:13). What this suggests is that the adult learners are supposed to gain their literacy within six months and spend the remaining four months consolidating their skills. But as Table 4.4 shows this seems not to be the case. In fact the table shows that nobody (0%) who had never attended formal school became literate within 6 months, only 11%, 22% and nobody (0%) who dropped out of school in standards 1, 2, and 3 respectively became literate within that time limit. Given this scenario, one may suggest that apart from the reasons given for repeating classes stated earlier, the efficiency of the instructors or indeed the literacy period should be reviewed. It is also somehow worrisome to note that some adult learners who had dropped out of school in standard 4 have to repeat their adult literacy cycles for them to be able to read and write. Also, despite repeating their adult literacy cycles, the literacy proficiency of these adult learners is still below what one would have expected as Table 4.5 below shows.

Table 4.5: Educational level and Chichewa reading proficiency

Educational Level	**Chichewa Reading Proficiency**					**Total**
	V. Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Couldn't	
Never	0%	4 (57%)	0%	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	7
Std1	0%	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)	5
Std 2	6 (38%)	5 (31%)	0%	4 (25%)	1 (6%)	16
Std 3	0%	3 (75%)	0%	0%	1 (25%)	4
Std 4	3 (100%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	3
Std 5	1 (33.33%)	1 (33.33%)	0%	0%	1 (33.33%)	3
Std 6	2 (100%)	0%	0%	0%	0%	2
Total	12	14	1	8	5	40

Table 4.5 shows that nobody (0%) below standard 4 (a class that NCLAE uses to certify literacy acquisition) except some 38% of the adult learners who had dropped out of school in standard 2, read the Chichewa text very well. In other words, the table shows

that 43% of the adult learners that had never attended formal school, 60% of those that dropped out of school in standard 1, 31% of those that dropped out of school in standard 2 and 25% of those that did the same in standard 3 did not have meaningful literacy after completing their adult literacy cycle. Although it is encouraging to note that 57% of the adult learners that had never attended formal education, 31% of those that dropped out of school in standard 2 and 75% of those that did so in standard 3 read well, one would have expected them to do better than this especially when one takes into account the fact that most of the adult learners involved in this activity had repeated their adult literacy cycles.

4.2.2 Writing Activity

The assessment of the writing activity was based on the number of words the respondent wrote accurately (see appendix 1). In this respect, the writing ability of a respondent was rated as

(a) Very good: if they wrote all the words accurately

(b) Good: if they wrote more than half but not all the words accurately

(c) Fair: if they wrote half of the number of the words accurately

(d) Poor: if they wrote less than half or none of the words accurately

(e) Could not: if they were eligible for the activity but did not scribble anything.

In the end the picture that emerged is as shown in table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Level of writing performance and number of respondents per level per language

Level of writing performance	Number of Respondents Per Level Per Language			
	Chichewa		Ciyawo	
Very Good	0	(0%)	0	(0%)
Good	13	(32.5%)	7	(17.5%)
Fair	5	(12.5%)	3	(7.5%)
Poor	15	(37.5%)	13	(32.5%)
Could not	7	(17.5%)	17	(42.5%)

Table 4.6 shows that none of the adult learners was able to write all the words accurately in either Chichewa or Ciyawo. But the table shows that 13 (32.5%) and 7 (17.5%) adult learners were able to write accurately more than half the number of words in the Chichewa and Ciyawo dictation respectively. The table also indicates that 5 (12.5%) and 3 (7.5%) adult learners wrote accurately half the number of words in the Chichewa and Ciyawo dictation respectively. It also shows that 15 (37.5%) adult learners were able to write less than half the number of the words contained in the Chichewa sentence and 13 (32.5%) were able to do the same in Ciyawo. Lastly, Table 4.6 shows that 7 (17%) and 17 (42.5) adult learners did not know how to write despite being eligible for the exercise.

Just like the reading activity these results, too, suggest some positive transfer of the writing ability from Chichewa to Ciyawo. Here, too, the respondents reported that this was the first time for them to write in Ciyawo. This was also confirmed when the respondents were asked to state the language(s) in which they are able to read and write. All of them (51 in total, including the 11 that took part through FGDs) said they were able to read and write in Chichewa. Nevertheless, as the results show, when the adult learners were asked to write in Ciyawo, 7 of them (18%) wrote reasonably well and 3 (8%) wrote fairy well. What this means is that these adult learners have the potential to transfer their writing abilities from Chichewa to Ciyawo. In other words, given more opportunities, these adult learners *may* write reasonably well in Ciyawo. Thus the results show that these adult learners may not need to learn in Ciyawo for them to be able to write in the language.

Also, just like in the reading exercise, it is worrying to note that there were 7 (17%) adult learners who were unable to write in Chichewa, a language they are taught how to read and write. In fact, almost half (46%) of the number of the adult learners who claimed that Chichewa was their first language and took part in this activity did not have meaningful literacy as table 4.7 below shows. This was the case notwithstanding the fact that these adult learners had completed at least one cycle of the adult literacy programme. Since the adult learners claimed that language of instruction was not a problem, this state of affairs again may reflect some inadequacies in other factors that are critical in the effective delivery of adult literacy programmes as alluded to earlier.

Table 4.7: First language and Chichewa writing proficiency

First Language	Chichewa Writing Proficiency					Total
	V. Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Couldn't	
Ciyawo	0%	7 (26%)	4 (14.8%)	11 (40.7%)	5 (18.5%)	27
Chichewa	0%	6 (46%)	1 (8%)	4 (31%)	2 (15%)	13
Total	0	13	5	15	7	40

Table 4.7 shows that there was no (0%) adult learner from amongst those that claimed that Ciyawo as well as amongst those that said that Chichewa was their first language who wrote the Chichewa sentence dictation very well. Apart from that the table shows that 26% of those that named Ciyawo and 46% of those that stated that Chichewa was their first language wrote the Chichewa sentence dictation well. The table also shows that 59.2% of those that claimed that Ciyawo was their first language did not have meaningful writing skills as was the case with 46% of those adult learners who said that Chichewa was their first language. Just like the reading activity, these results, too, present a mixed picture. One may question as to why 46% of the adult learners who claimed that the language of instruction was their first language and had completed at least a full cycle of adult literacy did well and about the same number (46%) failed to write a simple sentence long dictation. These results may suggest that there is more to this performance than just mother tongue instruction. In view of this, therefore, one may suggest that other factors such as the calibre, motivation and training of the instructors need to be looked into.

All in all, what is important about the literacy transfer results of both the reading and writing activities in this study is not a comparative analysis of how well or badly the respondents performed in the two languages. Rather, it is the indicative potential that these results portray. These results can be interpreted as suggesting that the Yawo adult learners under study, potentially, have the ability to transfer their reading and writing skills from Chichewa to Ciyawo. In other words, these results confirm Okech's (2001) contention that whilst it may be very difficult to transfer literacy skills between some

languages it is potentially possible for others. One of the reasons why it may be relatively easy for literacy abilities to be transferred between Chichewa and Ciyawo is that the two languages are closely related as shown in the literature reviewed since both of them are Bantu languages and they are also geographically contiguous. According to Cummins' (1980a, 1981a cited in Baker, 2002) Common Underlying Proficiency Model, these adult learners may not need to attend special literacy classes for them to be able to write and read in their first language because the literacy they acquired is not just fed to, as it were, the Chichewa section of the brain but rather spreads throughout the entire cognitive system. What these results imply is that adult learners like the ones under study, may function in literacy domains that require the use of Ciyawo despite acquiring their literacy skills in Chichewa. In other words, they may not have to be taught in Ciyawo for them to be able to read and write in the language.

Apart from ability to transfer literacy skills, the results in this sub-section clearly suggest that Chichewa is the most functional language amongst the Yawo under study in matters that require literacy since all those eligible for the writing and reading exercises revealed that they had never practiced these skills in Ciyawo. This is expected because generally there are very few materials written in Ciyawo. This state of affairs reflects Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital and market. This is so because although the Yawo adult literacy graduates may have the potential to write in their mother tongue, it appears that there is no market, i.e., literacy situations that require the use of Ciyawo as its currency. In this respect, one would argue that the lack of use of literacy abilities in Ciyawo by these graduates may not be a sign of an inability to transfer such skills from the language of instruction to their mother tongue, but rather it may be an interplay between what Bourdieu calls the price and profits that dictates the linguistic capital, 'currency' to be used and at the moment it appears that the linguistic capital that has more value in this area is Chichewa. Therefore, given the prevailing linguistic market in the area under study, it is very clear that making these adult learners acquire literacy in Ciyawo as the new policy would require may not serve the best interests of the adult learners.

4.3 Language preferences

The study further sought to generally establish the preferred medium of instruction amongst the Yawo in this area in view of the imminent policy change on language of instruction in adult literacy programme. To accomplish this, the study did two things. First an attempt was made to find out the situations in which Chichewa or Ciyawo may be preferred as a language of instruction. Second, an attempt was also made to establish a language the Yawo adult learners in the area may prefer to be used as a medium of instruction.

4.3.1 Circumstances under which Chichewa or Ciyawo may be preferred as a language of instruction

Based on the assumption that adult learners whose language was not Chichewa were experiencing problems in class due to the use of this language as reported by other researchers (see Phiri and Safalaoh, 2003; Chinsinga and Dulani, 2006), this study sought to establish the circumstances in which, mostly, the use of Ciyawo would be preferred to Chichewa. The thinking was that such circumstances could reflect the cause of that lack of understanding. However, when the respondents were asked to state whether or not there were any situations in which they felt it could be more appropriate if Ciyawo was used as a medium of instruction instead of Chichewa or vice versa, 57 (92%) of the 62 Ciyawo speaking respondents said there were none. The remaining 5, (8%) picked out situations in which business and agricultural matters are discussed as the ones that required the use of Ciyawo for them to understand such matters fully. This is understood because these are the main occupations many people in the villages including in this area venture into. Although very few respondents (8%) said this, this seems to suggest that these adult learners use Ciyawo in their agricultural and business matters and, therefore, would want the language to be used when discussing such matters in class so as to improve upon their output in these ventures.

However, the overall impression one gets from the results is that the Yawo in the area under study are comfortable with the use of Chichewa in adult literacy classes regardless of the prevailing circumstances. In fact, adult literacy instructors confirmed this when they were asked to assess whether or not their learners felt comfortable with the use of

Chichewa as medium of instruction. All of them (14 in total) said that their learners were comfortable with the use of the language in all situations.

4.3.2 Language preferred to be a medium of instruction

Since some experts in the literature reviewed in this study such as Mipando and Higgs (1982), Phiri and Safalaoh (2003) and Chinsinga and Dulani (2006) suggest that instruction in adult literacy should be done in the learners' first language to minimise the challenges they say adult learners experienced due to the medium of instruction, this study attempted to find out the language the adult learners in this area would prefer to be a medium of instruction. To do this, respondents were asked to name a language they would have preferred to be a medium of instruction if they were given a chance to choose one. Interestingly, 49 (96.1%) of the 51 Ciyawo speaking respondents with whom a one on one interview was conducted said they would choose Chichewa whereas only 2 (3.9%) mentioned Ciyawo. When they were asked why they would choose Chichewa, they gave varied reasons as summarised in Table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Reasons for choice of Chichewa and frequency

Reason	**Frequency**	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Widely used language in Malawi	20	39%
Official language	11	22%
Subject and medium of instruction	4	8%
Easy language	16	31%

Table 4.8 shows that the majority of the respondents 20 (39%) would choose Chichewa as a medium of instruction because they realise that it is a language that is widely spoken in the country. 11 (22%) said they would choose Chichewa because like English the language is used in official domains. The table also shows that 4 (8%) respondents

indicated that they would choose the language because it is used as a medium of instruction and also studied as a subject in schools. Finally, Table 4.8 shows that 16 (31%) respondents said that they would choose Chichewa because the language is easy to understand, i.e. easy to listen and speak as well as read and write.

Also, all the adult learners (11 in total) who took part in the study through FGDs said that, given a chance, they would choose Chichewa to be a medium of instruction in their adult literacy classes based on the same reasons.

The choice of Chichewa as a medium of instruction by the adult learners clearly reflects the effects of linguistic dominance. According to Bourdieu (1977: 652), "when one language dominates the market, it becomes the norm against which the prices of the other modes of expression, and with them the values of the various competences, are defined." These results suggest that the adult learners would want to be taught in Chichewa because they seem to think that with literacy in Chichewa they can operate widely in the country. They also believe that with literacy in Chichewa and not in Ciyawo they will be able to function in official domains such as schools, courts, banks, hospitals, post offices and others. In other words, the Yawo in this area seem to suggest that their language is not the 'currency' that is required in important domains such as banks, schools, courts, hospitals, offices, etc, where the use of Chichewa is tolerated. In this regard the respondents seem to suggest that with literacy in Chichewa, they will have the necessary linguistic capital to operate in such domains. These results clearly show that literacy is not acquired for its own sake. In fact, Tusting and Barton (2003: 1-2) contend that:

> Adult learners have their own motivations for learning. Learners build on their existing knowledge and experience. They fit learning into their own purposes and become engaged in it. People's purposes for learning are related to their lives and the practices and roles they engage in outside the classroom.

As such one may not be surprised that the respondents prefer the use of Chichewa as a medium of instruction in their classes as opposed to Ciyawo since experience may have shown them that Chichewa is the necessary linguistic capital. In fact, other scholars and experts have reported a similar trend elsewhere. For example, Kayambazinthu (2000:30), reports that:

> The Malawian data showed the Lomwe and to some extent the Yawo were shifting to Chichewa due to migration, demographic distribution, small numbers and rapid socio-economic change and institutional pressures during settlement. Their languages no longer [serve] them for professional, educational and economic needs. In other words their shift can be related to their lack of loyalty or negative attitudes to their language and culture that could not serve them in their new environment, especially those who settled in the less cohesive urban areas of Zomba, Blantyre, Chiradzulu and Machinga (…).

However, these results contradict the findings of the 1996 CLS sociolinguistic survey which among other objectives, sought to establish whether or not Ciyawo native speakers would favour the introduction of the language as a medium of instruction in primary school. The survey found that 61.6 % of the respondents were in favour of having Ciyawo as a medium of instruction in primary school in Ciyawo speaking areas. This contradiction confirms Ryan (1985)'s assertion that it is difficult and dangerous to generalise matters regarding attitudes towards languages. Furthermore, the contradiction shows that language of instruction is sought after for different reasons such that the language that may be appropriate for school pupils may not necessarily be so for adult learners. In Bull's (1964:528) words "what is best for a child psychologically and pedagogically may not be what is best for the adult socially, economically or politically…."

Also the results in this sub-section somehow contradict the spirit of the new policy, i.e. the promotion of the use of mother tongues in adult literacy. Although a few (8%) adult learners feel there is need to use Ciyawo in a few literacy instruction situations, the majority (92%) feel that Chichewa fits in any situation. What this suggests generally, is that if these adult learners were forced to acquire literacy in Ciyawo, then a situation similar to that of Tanzania as reported by Ryan (1985), cited earlier, might emerge. Certainly, these trends reveal the complexity of the task of formulating and implementing appropriate policies on language of instruction in adult literacy programmes in the country. In other words, these results show that there may be more for a language to be appropriate for use in adult literacy programme in any linguistic community than just

being predominant or mother tongue. That is, unlike with school pupils where an appropriate language of instruction is sought just for academic progress, with adults the language may also be sought in order to help in facilitating socio-economic advancement. In view of this, there is need, as this thesis argues, to carry out countrywide thorough socio-linguistic surveys to establish the current linguistic situation and adult learners attitudes towards Chichewa and their mother tongues in the country so as to formulate an appropriate policy on language of instruction in adult literacy in Malawi.

In conclusion, the overall impression these results depict is that the Yawo in the area under study do not require a policy change in language of instruction because the use of Chichewa is serving them well. Apart from that, given an opportunity they can transfer their literacy abilities from Chichewa to Ciyawo.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0 Chapter overview

This chapter provides a summary of the main issues presented in this thesis. Principally the chapter summarises the findings of the study and their implications.

5.1 Summary of the findings

It is generally asserted, as the literature reviewed in this study show, that adult learners whose first language is not Chichewa face some challenges when learning is done through that language. To avert this problem some researchers recommend that basic adult literacy instruction should be done in the learners' first language. However, as the background to, and literature reviewed in this study have shown, such recommendations are not informed by systematically conducted language surveys. As a result, most of the decisions on which language(s) should be used in adult literacy are not directed towards addressing adult literacy concerns and, therefore, do not fully meet the wishes and aspirations of the learners themselves. For example, just like the current policy, a new draft policy has been formulated without fully taking into account the current language situation in the country as well as the views of the purported beneficiaries, the adult learners. Consequently, one cannot unequivocally state that this policy would address both pedagogical matters, on the one hand, and relevance concerns, on the other. In other words, under these circumstances, it is difficult for one to boldly proclaim any language as being the most appropriate for literacy instruction in any linguistic community in the country. It is this problem that this study set out to address. To do this, the study attempted to assess the limitations Yawo adult learners face when Chichewa is used as a medium of instruction in their classes. Apart from that it also attempted to establish whether or not adult learners could transfer the literacy abilities they acquired in Chichewa to Ciyawo as well as establishing the language the adult learners may prefer to be used as a medium of instruction if they were given an opportunity to choose one.

Lastly, the study also sought to find out circumstances in which Ciyawo could be preferred as a medium of instruction to Chichewa. In the final analysis, the study has established that:

i) The Ciyawo speaking adult learners in the area under study do not face any problems during lesson delivery due to the use of Chichewa as a medium of instruction. This finding therefore, rejects the assumption that states, in general terms, that adult learners whose mother tongue is not Chichewa struggle a lot in adult literacy when instruction is carried out in this language in the country. This study has revealed that due to the proximity of Chichewa to Ciyawo some adult learners whose mother tongue is Ciyawo understand lessons delivered in Chichewa very well.

ii) Although most adult learners repeat their adult literacy cycles, language of instruction is not one of the factors that hamper them to acquire meaningful literacy within the set time limit.

iii) Due to a close linguistic relationship between Ciyawo and Chichewa, proficient bilingual (Ciyawo and Chichewa) adult learners have the potential to transfer their reading and writing skills from Chichewa to Ciyawo provided that there is adequate practice. Therefore, Ciyawo speaking adult learners who also speak and understand Chichewa may not need to learn in Ciyawo for them to be able to write and read in Ciyawo.

iv) The Yawo under study prefer Chichewa as a medium of instruction in their adult literacy classes to their mother tongue, Ciyawo. What this may suggest is that as it stands, the new policy on language of instruction in adult literacy has the potential of failing to deal, concurrently, with both the achievement of pedagogical concerns and the fulfilment of the expectations of the adult learners whose mother tongue is not Chichewa especially proficient bilinguals like the Yawo under this study. This is so because the linguistic preference of these adult learners contradicts the spirit of the policy. In other words, the study has shown that teaching these adult learners in Ciyawo just because it is their mother tongue or a dominant language in the area may be inappropriate.

Overall, these findings disconfirm the hypothesis that states in general terms that adult learners whose language is not Chichewa are seriously struggling in class due to the use of this language. In this respect one would say that generally, the findings reflect a mismatch between the appropriate language of instruction as established by the study and the one the policy would deem fit for the adult learners under study. This mismatch vindicates the underlying thesis for this study that country-wide and thorough socio-linguistic surveys should be undertaken to inform and validate the identification and use of any local language in Malawi's adult literacy programme.

5.2 Implications of the findings

The first major implication one can draw from these findings is that the implementation of the new policy may face some resistance in some communities due to a mismatch between what the policy decrees and the linguistic preferences of the adult learners. That is, in some communities the language(s) of instruction identified using the policy would be deemed inappropriate. Should this state of affairs be allowed to prevail, it may negatively affect the motivation of the adult learners to enrol for adult literacy classes. In addition, it may also impact negatively on the efficiency and effectiveness of the functional adult literacy programme in the country. In other words, the findings imply that thorough sociolinguistic surveys need to be conducted to determine the existing patterns of language use in various parts of the country to formulate a sound policy on language of instruction in literacy in Malawi. Also, these findings imply that adult learners need to be involved in the identification of language of instruction to ensure that the language chosen is appropriate for the fulfilment of their needs and aspiration both pedagogically and otherwise. This may not only promote the learners' language rights but also help in ensuring that the literacy the adult learners acquire is functional.

The other implication is that a holistic approach towards the improvement of the delivery system of adult literacy in the country needs to be adopted. That is, since this study has established that language of instruction does not impede the adult learners' understanding of their lessons despite the fact that most of them repeat their classes, all areas such as the qualification, training and motivation of instructors among others should be looked into to ensure that adult learners gain meaningful literacy within the set time limit.

This is important because as Chinsinga and Dulani (2006:32) observe, it is generally recognised that:

> the teaching of adults require[s] more specialised knowledge and skills, requiring instructors and facilitators to be knowledgeable about the general status of adult literacy in the country, strategies for teaching adult learners and generally how to deal with adult learners.

Lastly, this study has established that the Yawo adult learners under study can transfer their literacy abilities from Chichewa to Ciyawo. What this may suggest is that with the literacy they acquire in Chichewa, these adult learners may function in literacy domains that require the use of Ciyawo. The implication of this therefore, is that where such literacy transfer potentials prevail, either language may be used in lesson delivery in accordance with adult learners' preferences.

Given these implications it is, therefore, imperative as this study argues that a thorough countrywide sociolinguistic survey needs to be carried out to help in not only articulating a relevant policy on language of instruction in adult literacy but also in ensuring that it is appropriately implemented in the country.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1**:** ADULT LEARNERS' QUESTIONNIRE

Questionnaire No. ☐

MINORITY LANGUAGES AND NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS IN A DEMOCRATIC MALAWI: A CASE OF CIYAWO.

ADULT LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

I am ……..from Chancellor College doing a study on minority languages and adult literacy in a democratic Malaŵi. This study aims at assessing the challenges adult learners face when adult literacy lessons are conducted in a language other than that of the learners and also tries to establish the positive transferability of literacy abilities from the language of instruction to the native language of the learners. You have been identified as one of the respondents for this study. I would like therefore to ask for your permission to take part in this study. Be assured that your identity will be kept anonymous. The information you are going to give will greatly assist in the assessment of the language in education policies in the country.

A. Personal Information (Tick where applicable)

1. Sex: F ☐ M ☐
2. What is your home district? …….
3. What is your
   (a) First language? …….
   (b) Second language? ……
4. Have you ever attended any formal education?
   A. ☐ Yes B. ☐ No

Ana ŵalijiganyeje sukulu syakusalijiganyaga mundu kutandila ku wanacesi?

5. You went up to which class?
Ŵalecele kalasi jaci? 1 2 3 Other (Specify)_____

B. Subject Data

1. How would you describe your understanding of adult literacy lessons conducted in Chichewa. *(Andagulile yagakusati pakupikanika majiganyo gawo gakusalijiganya kusepucila mu* ci*ŵeceto ca Chichewa?)*

A. V. Good B. Good C. Fair D. Poor

2. Explain why this is the case. (If fair or poor ask question 3) *(Agopolanye kuti yeleyi ili m'yiyi ligongo cici?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Can you suggest what could be done to improve the situation.
(Ana mpaka tutende uli kuti yeleyi imale?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you face any problems because of the use of Chichewa as a medium of instruction? (Ana akusasimana ni yakusawusya/ilagasyo yine yiliyose ligongo lyakulijiganya mu ci*ŵeceto ca Chichewa?)*

A. Yes B. No

5. If yes, what are these problems? *(Ilagasyo yakwe ni yapi?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What could be done to minimise these problems?
(Ana mpaka tutende uli kuti tunandiye yakusawusyayi/ilagasyoyi?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. A. How long did it take for you to acquire functional literacy? (**for graduates only**) **(If shorter than or within the official period then go to B)**
*(Ana papite miyesi/yaka ilingwa kuti ŵalakwe akole ukombosi wakulemba ni kuŵalanga yindu yiliyose mu Chichewa?)*_____

B. How was this possible since the language used to teach you is not your mother tongue? (*Yeleyi yakombolece uli pakuti ciŵeceto ciŵacikamulicisyaga masengo pakwajiganya nganiciŵa cakusaciŵeceta ŵalakwe?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. In what language(s) are you able to read and write?
(*Ana ŵalakwe akusapakombola kuŵalanga ni kulemba mu iŵeceto yapi?*

_____

9. How can you describe your

(a) reading ability in Ciyawo
(*Ukombosi wawo wa*ku*ŵalanga m'ciyawo uli uli?)*

A. [V. Good] B. [Good] C. [Fair] D. [Poor]

(b) writing ability in Ciyawo
(Ukombosi wawo waku*lemba mu Ciyawo uli uli?)*

A. [V. Good] B. [Good] C. [Fair] D. [Poor]

10. Can you

(a) read to me the following Chichewa and Ciyawo paragraphs
(Ambalanjile tungani atu)

Chichewa

(i) Dziko la Malawi likukhudzidwa kwambiri ndi matenda a HIV/EDZI ndi kachirombo koyambitsa matendawa ka HIV. Munthu woyamba kupezeka ndi kachirombo koyambitsa matendawa m'dziko muno anapezeka m'chaka cha 1985. Kuyambira nthawi imeneyo, matendawa akhala akufala kwambiri.

Ciyawo

(ii) Ili yakusengwasya kuti ciŵalanjilo ca ŵandu ŵacikulile ŵakukajigala kalombo ka HIVngacikukwela mwakuwutuka m'cilambo muno. Nambotu ayi ikasatutendesya kuti tuwulecelele ulwelewu. Kutamilicika kwa ciŵalanjilo ca ŵandu ŵakwete kalombo ka HIV magopolo gakwe ni gakuti ciŵalanjilo ca ŵandu ŵakuwa ni ulwele wa Ezi caka cilicose cikulandana ni ciŵalanjilo ca ŵandu ŵakukajigala kwene kalomboka.

(b) write for me the following sentences
(Alembele ayi)

(i) Munthu wodwala kolera amasanza ndi kutsekula m'mimba pafupipafupi.

(ii) Ulwele walukweso ukusatanda ligongo lya tulombo twatukusasimanikwa m'mesi.

11. What language would you prefer to be used as a medium of instruction in adult literacy in your Ciyawo area? (Ana ŵalakwe mpaka asose kuti aticala akamulicisyeje ciŵeceti caci pakwajiganya ŵandu mu sukulu sya kwaca mu upande wa Ciyawo wawo uno?)

A. Chichewa ☐ B. Ciyawo ☐ C. Other (Speficy) ☐

(a) Why? (Ligongo cici?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(b) Do you speak that language? (Ana wawo akusaŵeceta cele ciŵecetoco?)

A. ☐ Yes (Elo) B. ☐ No (Iyayi)

12. Are there any situations in which you think instruction in Ciyawo may be preferable than in Chichewa? (Pana katema kane kakuganisya *ŵalakwe kuti kulijiganya m'Ciyawo mpaka kuŵe kwambone kupunda kulijiganya m'Chichewa?)*

A. ☐ Yes (Elo) B. ☐ No (Iyayi)

13. If yes, what are these situations? *(Katema kakwe kapi?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. If no, why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Why is instruction in Ciyawo preferred in these situations?
(Ana ligongo cici kulijiganya m'Ciyawo mpaka kuŵe kwakusosegwa pa kele katemaka?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

THANK YOU FOR SPARING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME FOR ME

APPENDIX 2: INSTRUCTORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire No. ☐

MINORITY LANGUAGES AND NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS IN A DEMOCRATIC MALAWI: A CASE OF CIYAWO.

INSTRUCTORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

I am ……..from Chancellor College doing a study on minority languages and adult literacy in a democratic Malaŵi. This study aims at assessing the challenges adult learners face when adult literacy lessons are conducted in a language other than that of the learners and also tries to establish the positive transferability of literacy abilities from the language of instruction to the native language of the learners. You have been identified as one of the respondents for this study. I would like therefore to ask for your permission to take part in this study. Be assured that your identity will be kept anonymous. The information you are going to give will greatly assist in the assessment of the language in education policies in the country.

A. Personal Information (Tick where applicable)

1. Sex: F ☐ M ☐
2. What is your home district? …….
3. What is your
   (a) First language? …….
   (b) Second language? ……

B. Subject Data

1. How would you describe your learners' understanding of adult literacy lessons conducted in Chichewa*? (Ana ŵakulijiganya ŵawo akusagapikanicisya uli majiganyo gakusaŵajiganya kusepucila mu ciŵeceto ca Chichewa?*

A. V. Good B. Good C. Fair D. Poor

2. Explain why this is the case. (*Agopolanye magongo gakwe)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Can you suggest what could be done to improve the situation.
(Ana mpaka tutende cici kuti yindu yijendeje cenene)

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Do your learners face any problems when you instruct them using Chichewa?
(Ana ŵakulijiganya ŵawo akusasimana ni yakusawusya/ilagasyo pakusaŵajiganya kusepucila mu ciŵeceto ca Chichewa?)

A. Yes B. No

5. If yes, what are these problems? *(Yakusawusya/ilagasyo yakwe ni yapi?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What could be done to minimise these problems?
(Mpaka tutende uli kuti yakusawusyayi/ilagasyoyi inandipe?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Did you ever discuss such problems with those responsible for the program?
(Ana ŵatagulilene nawo acakulungwakulungwa ŵa majiganyoga ya yele ilagasyoyi?)

A. Yes B. No

8. If yes, what was the outcome of such discussions?
(Pambesi pa yakuŵecetanayo ŵakamulene yanti uli?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. If no, why? _____

_____

10. In what languages are your learners able to read and write?
*(Ana ŵakulijiganya ŵawo akusapakombola kuŵalanga ni kulemba mu iŵeceto yapi?)*_____

11. How can you describe their
(Ana ukombosi wa ŵakulijiganya ŵawo pa kuŵalanga mu Ciyawo uli uli?)

(a) reading ability in Ciyawo

A. V. Good B. Good C. Fair D. Poor

(b) writing ability in Ciyawo

(Ana ukombosi wa ŵakulijiganya ŵawo pa kulemba mu Ciyawo uli uli?)

A. V. Good B. Good C. Fair D. Poor

12. Are there any situations in which you think instruction in Ciyawo may be preferable than in Chichewa? (Pana katema kane kakuganisya *ŵalakwe kuti kwiganya m'Ciyawo mpaka kuŵe kwambone kupunda kwiganya m'Chichewa?)*

A. Yes B. No

13. If yes what are these situations? *(Katema kakwe kapi?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Why is instruction in Chichewa preferred in these situations? *(Ana ligongo cici kwiganya m'Chichewa mpaka kuŵe kwakusosegwa pa kele katemaka?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. What language do your learners prefer to be used as a medium of instruction in

adult literacy in your Ciyawo area? (Ana ŵakulijiganya ŵawo ŵa Ciyawo ŵa upande awuno akusasosa kuti ŵalakwe akamulicisyeje masengo ciŵeceto caci pakwajiganya

A. Chichewa ☐ B. Ciyawo ☐ C. Other (Speficy) ☐

(a) Why? (Ligongo cici?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(b) Do you speak that language? (Ana wawo akusaŵeceta cele ciŵecetoco?)

A. ☐ Yes (Elo) B. ☐ No (Iyayi)

(c) Do your learners speak that language? (Ana ŵakulijiganya ŵawo akusaŵeceta cele ciŵecetoco?)

A. ☐ Yes (Elo) B. ☐ No (Iyayi)

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

THANK YOU FOR SPARING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME FOR ME

APPENDIX 3: FGD GUIDELINES

MINORITY LANGUAGES AND NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS IN A DEMOCRATIC MALAWI: A CASE OF CIYAWO.

FGD GUIDELINES

1. Can you explain to me the extent to which you understood your lessons when instruction was done in a language other than your own?
   (Andagulile ana ŵagapikanicisyaga/akugapikanicisyaga cenene kapena iyayi majiganyo gawo gaŵalijiganyaga/gakulijiganya kusepucila mu Chichewa m'malo mwa ciŵeceto cawo ca Ciyawo?)

2. Why was it like this?
   (Yeleyi yaliji m'yiyi ligongo cici?)

3. What can be done to improve the situation?
   (Mpaka tutende uli kuti yeleyi inandipe?)

4. Did you face any problems due to the fact that the lessons were conducted in Chichewa?
   (Ana jemanja ŵasimanaga/akusimana ni yakusawusya/ilagasyo yilicose ligongo lyakuti ŵalijiganyaga majiganyo gawo mu ciŵeceto ca Chichewa?)

5. (If yes) what are these problems?
   (Ana yakusawusya/ilagasyo yakwe ni yapi)

6. How can such problems be avoided?
   (Ana mpaka tuliŵambasye uli ku yele yakusawusyayi/ilagasyoyi)

7. (If no) why is it like that considering that this is not your mother tongue?
   (Ligongo cici pakuti aci nganiciŵa ciŵeceto cawo)

8. A. How long does it take for one to acquire functional literacy? (**for graduates only**) **(If shorter than or within the official period then go to B)**

(Ana pakusapita miyesi/yaka ilingwa kuti mundu amalisye kulijiganya nikumtagulila kuti sambano akwete ukombosi wakulemba ni kuŵalanga yindu yiliyose mu Chichewa?)

B. How is this possible since the language used to teach is not the mother tongue? (*Yeleyi yakombolece uli pakuti ciŵeceto cacikusakamulisigwa masengo pakwiganya nganiciŵa cakusaciŵeceta ŵandu ŵakunokuno?)*

9. Explain to me whether or not you find it easy to read and write in Ciyawo? *(Andagulile, ana jemanja akusaŵalanga ngani syakulembegwa m'Ciyawo mwangalajilila kapena mwakulajilila?)*

10. Why is this so?
(Ana yeleyi ili m'yiyi ligongo cici?)

11. What language would you prefer to be used as a medium of instruction in adult literacy in your this area? (Ana jemanja mpaka asose kuti aticala akamulicisyeje ciŵeceti caci pakwajiganya ŵandu mu sukulu sya kwaca mu upande awuno?)

(a) Why? (Ligongo cici?)

(b) Do you speak that language? *(Ana jemanja akusaŵeceta cele ciŵecetoco?)*

12. Tell me situations in which you think instruction in Ciyawo is necessary? *(Andagulile cenene, ana pana katema kane kakuganisya jemanja kuti yindu yine mpaka itame cenene kulijiganya kusepucila mu ciŵeceto ca Ciyawo m'malo mwa Chichewa?)*

13. Why is Ciyawo preferred in these situations?
(Ligongo cici Ciyawo mpaka ciŵe cambone pa kele katemaka pakuciwanicisya ni Chichewa?)