RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN EVALUATION OF READING KNOWLEDGE AND LINGUISTIC READING SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADE1 LEARNERS IN SIX SCHOOLS OF MILENGE DISTRICT OF LUAPULA PROVINCE ZAMBIA

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Manuscript Info	*Abstract*
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The purpose of the study was to evaluate the Reading knowledge and linguistic Reading skills achievement of Grade 1 learners in three schools that are close to the District Administrative centre and three schools that are far from the District Administrative centre. The study employed a mixed method paradigm of an embedded method and descriptive survey design that used purposive and simple random sampling to select 6 Head teachers, 6 teachers, 6 SICs, 2 Education standards officers and 80 learners. Data was obtained from respondents by means of interviews, questionnaires and classroom observation schedules. Frequency, percentages, tables, graphs and pie-charts were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data obtained. Data was then analyzed by use of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer package. The findings revealed significant differences in that learners' achievement of Reading knowledge and linguistic Reading skills between the two sets of schools. Findings showed differences in learners' attendance of lessons and teachers' absence in classrooms, poor state of infrastructure, multiple sessions, poor pedagogical practices, absence of adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials in reading, limited number of textbooks, lack of improvisation, inadequate internal and external monitoring, irregular CPD meetings, poor teaching methods and techniques, inadequate assessment and poor record keeping.

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Introduction:-

After independence, Zambia inherited the British type of education but immediately after, Zambia had to chart her own destiny in education provision. In 1967, the Zambian Government took a new direction to modify the largely outmoded educational system to make it more relevant to today's and tomorrow's national needs, (MESVTEE 2013:2) and the Education Act of 1966 was meant to overhaul the whole system in order to meet the aspirations of an independent African country. The Education Reform of 1977 brought further changes to the education system.

The Ministry of Education, in its effort to improve the delivery of educational services at all levels embarked on major policy reforms in the 1990's starting with Focus on Learning (1992), Educating Our Future (1996) and the Basic Education Sub-sector Investment Programme (BESSIP-1998). BESSIP was however, intended to accelerate the implementation of the policy goals of the Ministry of Education as articulated in Educating Our Futu

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However, the genesis of the problem is that during the 1980's and 1990's, it became increasingly evident that reading standards among the Zambian school children were distressingly low. In the early 1990's, reading levels in the Zambian Primary schools had declined to about 40%. This was according to statistics taken by the Ministry of Education in 2000, (MESVTEE 2013), Many findings also support the opinion that Zambian children were not gaining basic literacy skills.

Therefore, the Ministry came up with the initiative of teachers' in-service training programmes through Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and the Primary Reading Programme (PRP), (MESVTEE, 2013).

In spite of the numerous reforms in the Zambian Education system since 1965, both at school and teacher training levels and the change of policies on the language of instruction in the teaching and learning and change in approach to the teaching of literacy, still most of the learners in the Zambian Primary schools cannot read by the end of Grade 1, (MOE, 1966.

The 2008 National Assessment Report conducted by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) concluded that learning achievement levels still remained low in the country. The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) report in 1998 described literacy levels as extremely poor. Reading performance for Grade 6 learners was poor with only 25.8% of the learners reaching the minimum cut off and only 2.3 % reaching the desirable performance cut off. Moreover, Zambia exhibits the lowest learner achievement scores among the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

Statement Of The Problem
Perceived learner achievement in reading knowledge and linguistic reading skills in schools in the two sets of schools were not known at the time of research and according to (Chirwa, 2007), these could be attributed to many home and school based factors such as school and teacher monitoring, teaching and learning resources, parental involvement in teaching and learning, reading practice time, reading activities and teacher and learner absenteeism.

Purpose of the study
The purpose of the study was to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in learners' achievement of reading knowledge and linguistic reading skills in the two sets of schools.

Research Objectives:-
1. To investigate the availability and suitability of reading teaching and learning materials in Zambian languages in the two sets of schools in order for learners to achieve high levels of Reading competences
2. To assess the suitability of Reading teaching methods and techniques used in the teaching of reading in the two sets of schools to help raise learners' reading competences.
3. To establish whether constant teacher monitoring in the six schools help Grade 1 learners achievement of Reading knowledge and linguistic Reading skills in Zambiantan languages.

Theoretical Framework
The study was guided by the Social constructivist theory by Vygotsky (1978) which uses the Zone of proximal development (ZPD) and according to Vygotsky, learning occurs in zones where ZPD is the distance between a student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance with peer collaboration and the student's ability in solving the problem independently. Vygotsky's theory promotes learning contexts in which learners play an active role in learning whereas the teacher plays a collaborative role in order to help facilitate meaningful construction in learners and therefore, learning becomes a reciprocal experience. Scaffolding instruction as a teaching strategy originates from this theory and the strategy provides individualized support based on the learner's ZPD, Don 2017.

Significance of the stud
It is hoped that the findings of the study would contribute to the knowledge gap amongst all the stake holders interested in education in Zambia on reading knowledge and linguistic reading skills achievement of Grade 1 learners as well as modify the educational system and make it more relevant and responsive to national needs.

Literature Review:-
Reading knowledge, linguistic skills and language in general linguistic knowledge and linguistic skills are essential elements in the teaching of initial Reading. A teacher of Reading and initial Reading in particular should therefore be well versed with speech sounds, the organization of sounds, general information on Reading and initial instruction in Reading among other factors, (MOE 2013).

Language is a complex and dynamic system of conventional symbols that are used in various modes ,thoughts and communication and can be defined as, a socially shared code or conventional system for representing concepts through the use of arbitrary symbols and the rule governing combinations of these symbols, (Fromkin et al, 2007). Therefore, language has a vital role to play in the education process and hence, the attainment of language skills during the initial education stage is extremely important in the education system and also, communication is essential in teaching and learning.

Reading is a skill by means of which human beings look at written words and understand through them the writer's meaning, (Alan 2011). It is an activity which involves sight, intelligence, knowledge of the writer's language and knowledge of the world. Like writing, reading is a thinking skill and is triggered by print or some other visual stimulus as without thought, there is no real reading. Also, reading is an essential tool rather than a subject and is a series of interlocking and interconnected skill dominated by the eyes and brain. Reading is the foundation skill to other learning activities in the classroom. The purpose of reading is comprehension and the aim of comprehension is learning, (Chiappe et al 2002) and (National Reading Panel 2000).

The Mother Tongue
Mother tongue is the child's first language. When a child is born, he or she is exposed to a language that is spoken by the parents. It is this language that a child learns first and is able to speak at the age of two onwards. This language is the child's parents' language through which a child is able to learn customs and traditions. It is the child's mother tongue, (Gemin, Bearne and Mottram, 2008). Mother tongue play a special role in people's lives as they reinforce and express a certain emotional intimacy among native speakers.

The mother tongue is important because it is part of the learner and it is the language that builds an individual. It shapes one's personality and mannerism. It is deeply rooted and it represents the child and also, the learner's thinking is based on the mother tongue since language and thinking cannot be separated, (Medwell et al 2012). The mother tongue helps the learner to understand and interpret the world and above all, the child organizes the world through a language and one's beliefs, convictions, attitudes, and so on are influenced by the mother tongue. Learners feel more confident and therefore, respond better to learning, if that learning is taking place in a language with which they are familiar (Aitchison, 2012).

Linguistics
Linguistics is defined as the scientific study of language, any given human language, (Aitchison 2012). Nevertheless, a scientific study is one which is carried out systematically on the basis of objectively, verifiable and replicable observations within the framework of some general theory appropriate to the data being studied. There are broadly three aspects to the study, which include language form, language meaning and language in context. Also, language can be understood as an interplay of sound and meaning. It is important that teachers of Reading are familiar with these aspects of language.

(Gove and Cvelich 2011), a teacher of initial Reading need to be well versed with linguistics, the fields of linguistics and also the levels of linguistics because a language constitutes a set of behaviour patterns, each language or dialect has its own unique system of behaviour patterns and that all analysis and description of a given language must conform to the requirements laid down for any satisfactory scientific theory.

Phonetics and Phonology
Phonetics is the study of speech sounds. In phonetics, we study among others, the physical properties of speech sounds and how these speech sounds are produced by human organs. (Aitchison 2012), in studying phonetics, the study of the organs of speech is very important because speech sounds are produced by these speech organs or organs of speech. However, organs of speech perform other functions other than producing sounds. The speech organs are nasal cavity, lips, teeth, teeth ridge or alveolar ridge, hard palate, soft palate, or velum, uvula, pharynx, tip of tongue, blade of tongue, front of tongue, back of tongue, epiglottis and vocal cords, (Mike and Hannalis, 2010)

Phonology is the scientific study of sounds of speech of particular human language and how these sounds are organized into the next higher unit, the word. (DfES 2007:13) further says, "Phonology is a more strict linguistic discipline which investigates the sound systems of particular languages and develops general principles to the sound systems of all languages." (Mike and Hannalis 2010), Phonology deals with sounds and contrasts between sounds within the context of the same language. This means that any statements about the phonology of any given language cannot be generalized to the phonology of other languages. Phonology is therefore, language specific.(Allan 2011), Phonology also deals with features such as stress, intonation and rhythm which show how words and sentences are produced. The phone, the phoneme and the allophone are the units of analysis in phonology. However, a teacher of initial reading should get to understand phonetics and phonology in both English and Zambian languages.

Phonics
It is important that a teacher of initial Reading understands what phonics is and why it is important in the teaching of Reading, (DfES, 2007). However, phonics is different from phonetics and nevertheless, phonics is the teaching of the relationships of sounds to letters and that it gives

learners the ability to translate the written symbol, the letter, into the correct sound, and in this way, to sound an unfamiliar word, using the various phonic rules that they have been taught. This is why phonics is also called the word attack or 'crack-the-code' skill. It offers a rule-based approach to learning to read and Neaum (2012:152) says: "Phonics is a method of teaching reading based on learning letter sounds and their corresponding letters, and blending and segmenting them into words."

General Information On Reading and Initial Instruction
Reading is the foundation skill to other learning activities in the classroom and the basic reading skills necessary to become literate do not develop naturally as they require the learner to learn to adapt the part of the brain that recognizes images, to be able to recognize written letters and words. As has been confirmed by scholars, working to understand reading acquisition in multiple languages, in almost any alphabetic language in which the print can be decoded into sounds, being to read well requires a grasp of five basic skills of Phonic awareness, which focuses on manipulating, breaking apart and putting together sounds orally(Neaum, 2012). Phonics, which involves linking written letters to their sounds and forming spelling patterns; Fluency-which involves achieving speed, accuracy and expression in reading; Vocabulary-which involves knowing words both oral and written and their meaning and lastly, Comprehension-which involves understanding the concepts read or heard.

(Hellen 2007), the assessment components are aligned with the essential and teachable reading skills such as letter recognition, phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, listening and reading comprehension so that results provide clear guidance for changing instruction methods and offer hope of improvement. Measurements of how quickly and accurately children can read a text out aloud, and how much of it they understand, also align with a scientific and a popular understanding of what it means to be able to read.

(Medwell et al 2012), brings out reading developmental stages and the first three phases focus on the foundation skills of learning to read. Once learners learn to apply the foundational reading skills as early as when they are in Grade 1, they can move beyond the task of decoding the text. From Grade 2, learners begin to derive meaning. As learners learn sounds that link to form words, they begin connecting these sounds to printed words. (Ngonyani 2001), thereafter, they start to identify letter sounds, form syllables and words and link words to form sentences, paragraphs and stories. It is at these crucial early stages that learners' transition from learning to read to reading to learn emerge.

Learning to read is one of the Grade 1 learners' major task and therefore, much time and patience must be spent helping the learners and they will also all need as much individual attention as possible. (Townsend and Konold, 2010), it is not obvious, to the young learner, especially one in a rural area where printed materials are not readily available to know that meaning can be got from the printed word. If the teacher does not first establish with the learners that meaning can be got from the printed pages, either from pictures or from words, they will not understand what the task is all about and so will not be motivated to learn. (Chirwa 2007), learners need to be allowed to look at their books in their own time and discuss the pictures in a familiar language with friends. There should also be labels attached to objects all over the classroom so that learners get the idea what the written word, the symbol, tells about the object, or idea, it is associated with.

Reading Problems
(Dambey 2010), a teacher of initial Reading should be able to know as well as identify the causes of reading problems if learners were to be helped in class to read with less difficulties. The learner may have visual difficulties as some learners are not able to see the difference between reversible letters such as b and d, u and n. This can however, be remedied by giving the learner an extra practice in matching shapes. (Gove and Cvelich 2011), failure to keep on the line is also a cause of reading problems as learners find it difficult not to mix words on one line with those in another. For this, a learner can be asked to place a piece of card under the line as he or she reads.

(Gemin, Bearne and Mottram 2008), poor visual memory is another problem. Here, the problem is that learners can remember large units in the 'look and say' or whole word method, meaning that, learners cannot recognize and retain what they have seen. For example, words of more than three letters confuse them and this may be due to poor eye sight. However, this can be corrected by giving learners plenty of play in building up words with syllable cards and letter cards or by playing the memory game with objects. (Allan, 2011), the other reading problem is regressive eye movement.

Instead of moving the eyes along the line from word to word, the learner's eyes would go back, sometimes from right to left hence, the learner would repeat words or syllables and get them in the wrong order. This problem can nevertheless, be prevented by using a card under the line and a pointer going along the line as the learner reads.

(Dambey, 2010), defective hearing is yet another reading problem. Some learners find difficulties in distinguishing between words of similar sounds such as ship and sheep pin and pen, simply because the learner does not hear the sounds correctly. This problem may be due to something wrong with the learner's ears or may be due to the fact that the learner does not listen carefully enough. (Neaum, 2012), hence, the teacher should avoid teaching words of similar sound at the same time but let the learners identify different sounds heard about from adults, friends, on the radio, television, and so on.

(Aitchison 2012), the problem of articulation also affects the learning of reading as some learners find difficult with certain words in their familiar language. For example, Bembas have problems with v and pronounce it as f and z as s, while the Tongas replace r with l, th with d and for instance say, "Dis is de boy", and so on. With the familiar language, this may be due to retaining 'baby talk' or simply lack of practice and experience in using the sounds. With foreign or second language, it is generally the latter and also, with bad listening or defective hearing as added causes. (DfES 2007), for practice, the teacher should use rhymes and jingles with simple tongue twisters such as, "She sells sea shells on the sea shore" and in Icibemba, can use,"Tulekashoola aka pa kakoopo"-we shall eat what is on the tin and these should be said quite faster.

The last reading problem is difficulties due to poor knowledge of language. Some learners have poor knowledge of their own language, having spoken little with adults. (Aitchison 2012), consequently, when they come to learn to read, they try to read words they do not know well. This can also happen with reading in a second language where a learner may be transferred from an old fashioned school during the course of the year. (Allan 2011), learners must never in the early stages be asked to read words which they cannot pronounce, and which they have not already used orally. Learners who are poor at their own language must be given more practice.

Reading Readiness And Pre-Reading Activities
Reading specialists throughout the world agree that it is essential to have a proper and thorough programme of reading readiness activities and training. (Gove and Cvelich 2010), this stage should never be left out and never be taken for granted. If the groundwork is not properly covered in the first weeks in Grade 1, and if the teacher does not check that the learner is ready to begin learning to read, much harm may be done. Many later difficulties in reading can be tracked back to too early an introduction to this formal type of learning, before the learner is properly ready.

In reading readiness, the teacher should have a checklist of questions he or she should ask himself or herself about each learner to establish whether the learner is ready to begin formal reading or not. The checklist falls into three categories namely, readiness in language development, readiness in physical and sensory development and readiness in social and emotional development,

Some learners who have attended Pre-school may be ready to begin reading as soon as they enter Grade 1 but many, especially in rural areas will not be and those that have not attended Pre-school are most unlikely to be ready to read straight away. (Neaum 2012), pre-reading activities are not a share waste of time and should not be abandoned even though the language of instruction is familiar.

At the Pre-reading stage, some learners will need the same activities repeated over and over again before they are ready to start reading, (Herlen, 2007), It is also important that the teacher identifies these learners who need more practice than the exercises given and make up more of the teacher's own exercises along the same lines. Before learners are ready to learn to read, they must have developed certain skills. However, the Pre-reading activities are divided into six different skill areas and these are language development, visual, sequencing, auditory or listening, tactile and motor skills.

Teaching And Learning Materials/Aids In Reading
Teaching and learning materials are essential to a teacher in order to effectively teach initial Reading. According to (MESVTEE 2013:3): "the success of any literacy programme also depends on the availability of suitable reading materials to sustain and reinforce literacy skills." The teacher has therefore to use a variety of teaching and learning materials, some of which are already made but, in the absence of these, the teacher has to improvise. The materials used in the teaching of initial Reading are the teacher's guide, learners' books, conversation poster, readers and the
teacher's created materials.

Teaching and learning aids are extremely useful to both the teacher and learners in a Reading lesson and Dambey (2010:67) says: "Teaching aids are an essential part of the learning process." They make teaching and learning easier. Backing up teaching with such visual support as objects, pictures and drawings, posters and flashcards and by using the chalkboard, makes it easier for the teacher to explain new words and structures, conduct activities using all the reading skills, reinforce the meaning of the new words being taught, attract attention of the learners, make lessons more attractive and interesting and enables one to teach the class well, even if there is a shortage or lack of textbooks. (Neaum, 2012), teachers in rural schools have difficulties in accessing aids and materials to improvise.

Useful teaching and learning aids for the Reading class include the chalkboard, common objects, learners in the class, posters, pictures and drawings, authentic materials such as pictures, maps, magazines or newspapers, postcards, word and picture flashcards, work cards, worksheets, and so on. These teaching aids can be used for various reading-learning activities. The chalkboard is the most obvious teaching aid but often, it is not used to its full potential. According to Hubbard et al (2010:105): "the blackboard is perhaps the most useful of visual aids and the majority of teachers would feel hampered in a classroom which did not have one."

Common objects are useful teaching aids and the teacher should not only use objects found in the classroom and on using objects, the teacher should decide in advance what objects are needed for a lesson and should also bring useful things from home such as baskets, food items and so on. Objects can be used to teach a number of lessons in Reading. A teacher should not also forget that learners are a very useful teaching aid! They can be used to show actions, to compare sizes, to demonstrate questions and answers, to introduce a new reading item, to teach parts of the body and for many other useful purposes.

Methods And Techniques Used In Teaching Reading
(Chirwa 2007), there are different approaches to teaching initial Reading and the common ones used in teaching Reading are the Phonics, Look and say, Whole Language experience approach and the Syllable approach. It is important that a teacher of Reading, more especially the one for initial Reading gets to know and familiarize himself or herself with the five of them and these are phonics, look and say, whole language, language experience approach and syllabic approach.

Steps Used In Teaching Reading
Reading is about getting meaning out of print. It is not merely calling out words. Therefore, learners have to understand what reading is and what its purposes are, (Dombey, 2010), The teacher on the other hand, should understand that teaching initial Reading involves introducing sounds to learners and showing them how to blend these sounds together to form words and eventually, learners should then be shown how words are combined to form sentences. The steps the teacher should adopt are the phonemic awareness, phonics, the word, and lastly the sentence..

Teaching initial Reading involves introducing the sounds to learners and showing them how to blend these sounds together to form words, and then show them how words are combined to form sentences. (Cremin et al 2008:127), in this case, the teacher needs to use various strategies to help the learners develop the required reading skills.

Learners should first be introduced to the daily routine and then taught specific Pre-reading skills and the teacher should in the first weeks of the first term in Grade 1 concentrate on developing Pre-reading skills. The teacher has to introduce learners to print concepts and functions, (Neaum, 2012),.The teacher should therefore, devote much time in term 1 to Pre-reading activities such as visual, tactile and motor skills and, these activities will train learners for example, to use their eyes, and so on, in the ways necessary for beginning to read.

School-Based Continuing Professional Development (Cpd)
The school-based Continuing Professional Development (SBCPD) is one of the effective ways of improving education as far as teaching is concerned as it targets self-development, group and eventually institutional development. (MOE 1977), enhancing the teaching skills is not only desirable in the interest of teaching the child, but also essential for sharpening one's personal development and each other in issues pertaining to professional development.

Continuing Professional Development is aimed at not only providing appropriate teaching skills, but also to deepen the teacher's knowledge and skills using the experience based on the school- based continuing professional development project. Furthermore, it helps in the improvement of the teaching skills for practicing teachers at school level and enhances lesson planning, lesson delivery, questioning, teaching and learning materials and aids and also, lesson evaluation. (MOE

2007), Continuing Professional Development is an important tool for enhancing the quality of education as it helps to build the knowledge base and competences of teachers.

Methodology:-
Research Design
The study adopted a descriptive survey design as this design seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behaviours or values. In addition, Kerlinger in Kombo and Trump (2006) points out that a descriptive study may often result in the formation of important principles of knowledge and solutions to significant problems. The study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative aspects of research. It was aimed at collecting information from respondents on the causes of low literacy levels in the district, to what extent do communities contribute to these low levels and also teachers, and some possible solutions to address low literacy levels. Structured open-ended interviews to be conducted and questionnaires were used to respondents such as Head teachers and teachers. The internet also supplemented data for the study.

Research Sites
The research was conducted in Milenge and Lwela zones at Malenge Primary, Lungu Primary, Kutena Primary, Mapili Primary, Lula Primary and Itimpi Primary schools as well as at Milenge District Education Office.

Population, Sample And Sampling Procedure
The population for the study consisted of all Grade 1 learners in the district, all Grade1 teachers, all Primary school Head teachers, all District Education Standards Officers and all school in- service co-ordinators.

The sample consisted of one hundred (100) respondents. A representative sample of 80 Grade 1 learners, that is 20 from two Grade 2 Primary schools which have more enrolment and 10 learners per school from the four Grade 3 Primary schools with less enrolment, were randomly selected from six schools in the two zones in the district. Then, two District Education Standards Officers, six Primary school Head teachers, six Grade 1 teachers and six school in-service co-ordinators were purposively selected because of the nature of their positions at the District Education office and in schools. Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or objects to study, Aronson (2018). Sampling procedure is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire population, Agesa (2012). The simple random sampling procedure was used to select the 80 learners while the other sample consisted of 20 participants purposively selected because of the nature of their positions at the District Education office and in schools. They consisted of six Grade 1 teachers, two District Education Standards Officers, six Primary school Head teachersand six school in-service co-rdinators that were directly involved in the delivery, administration, training and monitoring of both teachers and learners. In the sampling of institutions, the study adopted the stratified cluster random sampling technique. The schools were stratified by initial language of instruction and clustered by location (zones). Sampling was done zone by zone.

Data Analysis
In this research, data was analysed qualitatively as the semi structured interviews and questionnaires were used as data collection instruments. Thematic approach was used, where data analysis started with the categorization of themes from the semi structured interviews and questionnaires (Smith, 2013).Charts and graphs were used to analyse data. The data gathered was analysed according to the themes of the study, the order of the research objectives and questions.Data generated from the interview guide was analysed manually and also, a combination of software MS Access, SPSS and MS Excel was used to analyse data. Analysis was mainly descriptive, that is, mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation. Related statistics were applied where possible. Statistical testing took the form of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), correlation and regression both simple and multiple.

Ethical Issues
The researcher avoided pressuring respondents to take part in the research. Alternatively, permission consents, assents were be from respondents to be involved in the research and the research topic was strategically selected to ensure that there was no harm whatsoever to the research respondents. In this research, the researcher was fully conscious of the need to abide by the ethical rule of respecting the privacy of individuals taking part in the research. In the same way, all the respondents of the research were to remain unidentified to the public as all their valuable views, opinions and perceptions were only known by the researcher for use only in the research and participant's identities will forever remain hidden.

The Researcher got permission from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) and school authorities to observe lessons, interview and administer questionnaires as well as assesses respondents. The names of respondents would remain anonymous for the sake of confidentiality. However, the identity of respondents was concealed in the thesis but for identification in the thesis, eighty learners were allocated numbers 1 to 80, the six Grade 1 teachers were allocated letters A to F, the two Education Standards Officers were allocated colours Red and Blue, the six Primary school Head teachers were allocated names of fruits: Banana, Orange, Apple, Mango, Pineapple and Guava, the six School in-service co-ordinators were allocated names of important teaching and learning aids used in Reading namely, Chalkboard, Objects, Pictures, Drawings, Posters and Flashcards while the six Primary schools were allocated names of rivers and streams in th district namely Malenge, Kutena, Lungu, Mapili, Lula and Itimpi.

Findings and Discussions:-

Availability and suitability of Grade 1 teaching and learning materials in reading According to study results, teachers used the following resources to teach: chalkboard (98.6%), textbook teaching (69.7%) and learners' exercise books (68.5%) while least used or available resources were supplementary reading resources (7.7%), manipulatives or real objects (15.4%) and worksheets (7.7%). Study results also indicated that 79% of the teachers made their own teaching and learning aids against 72.6% who were able to show examples of what they had made.

Teaching and learning materials are essential to a teacher in order to effectively teach initial Reading and this is in line with literature as (Strickland and Riley-Ayers, 2006) indicates that teaching and learning materials enhance effective teaching and learning. The analysis showed that teachers did not organize the classroom to suit the teaching of Reading (34.3%), most teachers failed to create a good Reading teaching and learning environment (33.3%) and most n teachers failed to organize learners into reading groups (32.4%). During the class observation and teachers' interviews, 68.2% of teachers did not display learners' work and flashcards, word cards and posters on the wall to help build or raise learners' reading levels. This may be due to the fact that Grade 1 classrooms were also used by other learners due to inadequate classroom space in some schools.

According to study results, teachers used the following resources to teach: chalkboard (98.6%), textbooks (69.7%), and learners' exercise books (70.2%) while the least used or available resources were supplementary reading resources (14.2%), manipulatives or real objects (17.4%) and worksheets (16.1%). From the study, the six sampled schools did not have adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials for initial Reading instruction and the absence of adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials deprived learners the opportunity to learn effectively. According to (MESVTEE 2013:3):"The success of any literacy programme also depends on the availability of suitable reading materials to sustain and reinforce literacy skills".

Suitability Of Teaching Methods And Techniques In Reading

Interactive teaching methods and techniques are important in teaching and the teacher should vary the methods and techniques. Also, teaching methods and techniques need to place greater emphasis on self-initiated and self-sustained learning because teaching methods and techniques used in teaching initial Reading are critical to the success of Early Grade Reading programmes.

Regarding teaching methods, survey results as illustrated in Table 2 below, showed that teachers scored highly on look and say or whole word method of teaching (78.4%), followed by phonics or letter sound at 73.6%, syllabic method (69.7%), whole language approach at 53.6% and the least used method was the language experience approach at 49.6%. On the use of the language experience approach.

Table 1:- Distribution of methods used when teaching Reading.

Teaching method	Yes	No
Look and say or whole word	78.4%	21.6%
Phonics or letter sounds	73.6%	26.4%
Syllabic	69.7%	30.3%
Whole language	53.6%	46.4%
Language experience	49.6%	50.4%

On frequency of teaching, the results showed that the most common frequency of teaching Reading in sampled schools was daily (99.2%) and weekly (0.8%) while the frequency for specifically teaching phonics was 53% daily and 47% weekly. The most common method used to teach Reading was sounding out words (37.1%), followed by reciting words

(19.4%), reading as a group or pair (18.6%), teacher reading to learners (11.3%), other (7.0%) and lastly memorizing (5.6%).

Literature review that techniques carry out a method that is consistent with an approach whereas, an approach on the other hand, is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning, (DfES, 2007). According to (MOE, 1996:27)"teaching methodologies need to place greater emphasis on self-initiated and self-sustained learning. "Other studies (MESVTEE, 2013) advised that the teacher should use methods that encourage learners to reflect, think and do rather than reproduce from rote learning.

The common methods used in teaching initial Reading as reviewed by findings from this study were phonics, look and say, whole language, language experience and the syllabic approach. Above all, children learn more effectively if a teacher uses a variety of teaching methods and according to (Chirwa 2007:78): "before you choose a particular teaching method think about the knowledge and skills of your pupils, their ability and the kind of experience they can bring to the lessons." Teaching methods and techniques should be used according to learners' experience and must vary if effective teaching and learning has to be encouraged especially in Early Grade Reading.

Teachers reading knowledge and reading linguistic skills in zambian languages and their effect on initial reading instruction
Baseline results indicated that teachers had adequate linguistic knowledge and linguistic skills in Zambian Languages and a fair amount of knowledge on how to teach Reading as evidenced by high scores on questions related to how much they knew about sounds. For example, over 75% of teachers showed considerable good knowledge in letter sounds, letter sound blending and formation of syllables and other requirements necessary to teach Reading. Despite this knowledge, some teachers failed to sound some letters properly (46.8%) while many teachers (76%) failed to successfully transfer knowledge to learners.

During teacher interview, the analysis showed that Grade 1 teachers had ably answered questions on phonic teaching but during classroom observation of a Reading class in session, it was discovered that some of the sampled teachers could not correctly teach certain consonant sounds as (Aitchson ,2012) alludes to. For example, teacher 'E' confused some pairs of consonants whose sounds were similar, that was, /b/ and /p/, /s/ and /z/ and /f/ and /v/ while teacher 'D' was adding a vowel whenever sounding a consonant sound and the sound /p/ sounded as /puh/ while sound /b/ sounded as /buh/. This therefore clearly showed that these teachers were not well acquented with the fact that some consonants such as /b/, /d/, /g/, and so on involved the vibration of the vocal cords and were voiced consonants whereas other consonants such as /p/, /t/, and so on do not involve the vocal cords and were called voiceless consonants. In addition, teachers also seemed not to be aware that not all consonants were easy to hear, sound or to discriminate from one another. The study also revealed that teacher 'F' had no adequate ability on syllables and could not correctly identify the sounds at the beginning of syllable /ma/ as /m/ and /ta/ as /t/ and that /m/ and /a/ as these were sounds while /ma/ was a syllable.

Early Grade Reading Assessment (Egra)
Overall, Reading skills were low on the seven sub-tasks among Grade 1 learners in the six schools. Very few learners in the sample could read with enough fluency to allow for real comprehension. Most learners were unable to sound a single letter or read a single syllable or word or read words in a passage correctly. Table 4.below has more details concerning learners' performance where, reading comprehension, oral passage reading and non-word decoding had the lowest mean scores.

Table 2:- Distribution of EGRA mean scores segregated by zone.

SUB TASK	Milenge Zone		Lwela Zone		Possible Total Score
	Mean	**Median**	**Mean**	**Median**	
Letter sound knowledge	1.6	1.0	1.0	0.95	5
Non-word decoding	0.7	0.65	0.3	0.2	5
Oral passage reading	0.97	0.55	0.43	0.35	5
Icibemba vocabulary	1.97	1.5	2.1	1.5	5
Orientation to print	0.34	0.5	0.6	0.5	3
Reading comprehension	0.27	0.2	0.07	0.05	4
Listening comprehension	0.67	0.6	0.6	0.5	3

Overall Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) results reviewed that reading skills were low on the sub-tasks assessed among Grade 1 learners in the targeted schools. Very few learners in the sample could read with enough fluency to allow for real comprehension. The study also revealed learners who were unable to sound a single letter or read a single syllable or word or read words in a passage correctly (53.5%). Literature, showed that learners should be able to read early or by the end of the end of their first grade in Primary school if they were to succeed in their future education development (Townsend and Konold 2010) It should be noted that learners' inability to read was therefore, a reflection on teachers' poor pedagogical practices.

Conclusion:-
In Primary schools, especially at early grade level, teachers' linguistic knowledge and linguistic skills are critical in teaching initial Reading (Mike and Hannalis 2010). Further, teachers' pedagogical practices, use of teaching and learning materials, innovativeness and greater devotion of greater portion of teaching learners to read are essential in initial Reading instructions. Findings from the study showed that overall, learners did not have foundational skills in reading and results of the study clearly showed manifestation of low Reading linguistic skills in Zambian languages during class session which was as a result of inadequate and inconsistent practice in aspects like letter sounds and discrimination especially that of consonants. Lack of explicit awareness of the syllable posed difficulties in syllable identification and discrimination, distinction between sounds and syllables, syllables, word and sentence formations due to teachers' lack of phonological awareness and caused problems to teachers during class sessions. Most teachers showed or rather exhibited poor sounding and weak linguistic knowledge and linguistic skills specifically in letter sounding and letter decoding, identification of Zambian languages consonant clusters, letter mastery sounds, letter identification, letter sound matching, formation of long vowels from short vowels, identification and sounding of consonant clusters and many other linguistic aspects and there were inadequate and inappropriate teaching and learning materials, inappropriate teaching methods and inadequate internal and external teacher monitoring.

Recommendations:-
1. Teachers should have adequate and consistent practice in letter sounds and discrimination, syllable identification and discrimination and other phonological and linguistic aspects
2. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is needed in specific instructional strategies and methods focused on Reading,
3. Administrators should encourage team work in the production of teaching and learning materials at school and zone levels as well as hold teaching and learning aids exhibitions at these levels so as to inculcate the spirit of innovativeness in teachers
4. Head teachers should ensure that teachers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Zambian languages orthography, letters, sounds, syllables, vowels and consonants and should at all times, use local official language in the teaching of initial Reading.
5. Schools should focus on phonic based approach to the teaching of Early Grade Reading as well as re-introducing phonics based approaches to early grade classrooms to enhance early reading acquisition. Further, schools should roll out phonic-based interventions in every early grade (Grades 1-4) classrooms

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