Research article

From Marginalisation to Elevation: The Use of Marginalized Languages as Medium of Instruction (MOI) in Selected Institutions of Higher Learning in Zimbabwe.

Beatrice Lantern

Lecturer: African Languages and Literature Department

Great Zimbabwe University

Private Bag 1235, Masvingo

Email: bealantern@gmail.com

_____

Abstract

The debate on the use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction (henceforth MOI) seems to be an exhausted question in the linguistic circuits, what constitutes questioning currently, which deserves scholarly attention, are the strategies of their implementation. The implementation of indigenous languages as MOI in African states in general seems to be a lacking phenomenon probably, because of lack of will and expertise. The argument of this article is to discuss the practical implementation strategies that were employed by Great Zimbabwe University (henceforth G.Z.U) and Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College (henceforth J.M.N.P. College) in their implementation of the previously marginalised languages – Tshivenda and XiChangana for the former and Tshivenda, TjiKalanga and Sesotho for the latter. These four languages are now added to the multilingual and multicultural "active" Zimbabwean linguistic basket, hence promoting unity in diversity. The strategies adopted by G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College in the implementation process of these four languages in question are analysed in order to deduce how these compare with the Catherine Wheel model of preserving and strengthening marginalised languages. The implementation of African languages as MOI is of paramount importance as this might implant sound principles to other institutions or countries worldwide on

how to promote the use and teaching of African languages in their own mediums. Language revitalisation is a necessary step away from extinction towards distinction, as language plays a crucial role in society;it isa key aspect of communication which embodies a people's culture and identity. In the quest of indigenising education, the teaching of African languages in their own mediums is preferred as language plays an important role in accessing knowledge. The paper concludes by indicating that African language development is a necessary evil towards African renaissance.

Key Words: implementation strategies, medium of instruction, elevation, Catherine Wheel model, marginalized languages.

_____

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe is a multilingual country, whose linguistic situation is enshrined in the Education Acts and the Constitution, since it does not have a language policy document. According to The Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment (No. 20) Act 2013, chapter 1 section 6 (1) , there are 16 officially recognised languages of Zimbabwe which are;Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Ndau, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, sign language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa. Prior the 2013 Constitution, only English language was recognised as an official language while Ndebele and Shona being national languages. These three languages were used in the Zimbabwean education system well above the elementary levels up to tertiary level at varying degrees.

Year 2008 in Zimbabwe saw the introduction of Tshivenda and XiChangana languages at institutions of higher learning, especially, at Great Zimbabwe University (G.Z.U) and these are taught in their exclusive mediums. Tshivenda and XiChangana languages were also examined in Grade Seven (7) last year, in 2013 and currently, in 2014 these languages are being taught in selected secondary schools, in their respective areas, to Form One students who set for the subject the previous year in Grade Seven examinations. This current situation shows that the Tshivenda and XiChangana languages are adding to the already multilingual Zimbabwean education basket rising up from 3 to5. Also important to note, currently in 2014, is the budding teaching of Tshivenda, TjiKalanga, and Sesotho at J.M.N.P. College, meaning that the multilingual Zimbabwean education basket stood at 7 for now.

 The inclusion of these marginalised languages in the Zimbabwean education system is a great stride in developing these languages and of promoting unity in diversity. G.Z.U is a degree awarding institution which targets to recruit students who will offer services as secondary school teachers and lecturers at teachers' collegesupon their studies completion, while J.M.N.P. College targets to provide primary school teachers in the Tshivenda, Tjikalanga and Sesotho languages. This combined effort and multi-focused response of these two institutions in elevating marginalised languages targets to provide teachers of the languages concerned in all educational levels.

The paper seeks to spell out the implementation strategies that were employed by G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College in implementing Tshivenda, XiChangana, TjiKalanga and Sesotho languages. These implementation strategies seem to be a sound principle of empowering indigenous languages as MOI in academia. The paper discusses

briefly the origins and educational historical background of these four languages in question, the practical implementation strategies used by G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College, and also equating these against the elements of Catherine Wheel model of language preservation and strengthening. Finally, it mentions that such an empowerment drive of indigenous languages is a necessary stance towards African renaissance. The implementation strategies discussed might inform other institutions who are in the quest of empowering indigenous languages to be used as MOI on the stages to pursue.

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MARGINALISED LANGUAGES IN QUESTION.

2.1 THE ORIGINS

The Venda and Shangani people today are located in the south- eastern parts of Zimbabwe, while Sotho and Kalanga are located in the south-western parts of Zimbabwe. All these four marginalised languages in question are part of Bantu languages collectively known as Southern African languages whose origins are traced back to the Great Lakes of Central Africa.

The history of Venda people is a debatable one as it has many versions that owe to their origins (for further information refer to Lantern 2012). Inferences on Venda history disclosethat their history starts from the Mapungubwe kingdoms. The Mapungubwe kingdom stretched from Soutpansberg in the South, across the Limpopo River to the Matopo in Zimbabwe; an implication that the colonial divisions of Mother Africa into different states separated the neatly woven and intact Venda belt which stretched between these two countries, resulting in disproportion of people in either side.

The Shangani history like Venda history is obscure. Some schools of thought argue that they settled in Zimbabwe as migrants from South Africa, others indicate that they are original settlers of Zimbabwe, while others are of the idea that they are original settlers of Mozambique who later migrated to South Africa (for more information refer to Lantern 2012). Whatever their exact origins and their migrant directions might be, the only thing certain is their present existence in Chiredzi areas of Zimbabwe.

The origins of Kalanga or BaKalanga is also murky. Hachipola (1998:5) states that Kalanga is considered by some linguists as a dialect of the Shona language, which has acquired a language status. Despite these linguistic claims, and maybe for political reasons, BaKalanga consider themselves close to Ndebele than Shona. These nasty claims by linguists and BaKalanga themselves compound the obscurity of Kalanga origins. Geographically, the Kalanga belt stretches from west, south –western Zimbabwe to eastern Botswana, and in this case like the Venda one, the colonial divisions of Africa into different states disregarded the divisions of ethnic groups. In both countries Kalanga is treated as a marginalized language. If the subjections of Kalanga being a dialect of Shona are true then, the Kalanga are the original settlers of Zimbabwe, and if not, then its origins are not known.

Sesotho language is mainly spoken in south-western part of Zimbabwe mainly in Gwanda South district. Hachipola (1998) states that according to local informants, the Sotho country in Zimbabwe is called Bubirwa or Bulamba although the former is much better known. According to local history, the Sotho are not the original

inhabitants of Gwanda district as a whole. They are originally from Transvaal in South Africa. They came into Zimbabwe with Mzilikazi who used them as porters and fighters as he was running away from Tshaka (Hachipola 1998).

2.2 THE EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

2.2.1 THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Tshivenda, XiChangana, TjiKalanga and Sesotho languages before the colonial era were used in all spheres of life and they served their speakers adequately. However, with the advent of colonialism these languages were marginalised and regional languages – Ndebele and Shona were prioritised at their expense. Hachipola (1998), states that during the colonial era Tshivenda, XiChangana, and Sesotho languages were only taught through the sponsorship of the missionaries in their pocket districts where they were located.

During this time, both the human and material resources were sourced from South Africa and also Lesotho for Sesotho in order to man the programmes. This meant that the orthography used was South African and Lesothoan, which they claim was their original one before the adjustments were made, that is, before assimilating it with those of regional languages. Taping from language purists, Tshivenda and XiChangana languages were under the missionary control from 1930s and probably terminated around 1975. However, for Sesotho, Hachipola (1998:18) states that it is not very clear when Sotho began to be phased out of the school system in this country. From the information gathered it seems as if the stoppage was not a sudden one from a central command position.

Kalanga was one of the marginalised languages taught in schools during the colonial days, especially at Bulilimamangwe district and was taught up to Standard Six (6). It was phased out from the education system during various stages in the colonial history of the Zimbabwean country. However, Hachipola (1998) is silent on where missionaries sourced Kalanga human and material resources from.

2.2.2 THE RE- ENGAGEMENT IN THE POST –COLONIAL ERA.

The Zimbabwean post – colonial era, and other countries in general, saw the enactment of language policies resulting from the realisation of the key roles played by languages within societies. These policies were initiated first at United Nations levels and then down to individual countries. This exercise triggered the re-engagement of Tshivenda, XiChangana, Sesotho and TjiKalanga languages at lower primary education in selected schools where these languages are predominant and then the switch to the local national language at upper primary levels. However, the attitude towards their teaching was too relaxed, as there were no fixed slots on the timetable meant for these languages. Moreso, their teaching was also guided by the principle of numbers- if students of the language were many –were taught and if few the appropriate regional language was preferred in its place (Hachipola, 1998). In relation to the above view, the said relaxed attitude might also have been fuelled by the government which, by that time, made no efforts to implement them.

Hachipola (1998) argues that the major hindrance to the teaching of XiChangana, Tshivenda and TjiKalanga is the unavailability of qualified personnel (or at least first language speakers) to teach these languages on the

bases of poor deployment of teachers – teachers are deployed to different areas where they are not crucially needed. In an attempt to redress this problem, Hachipola says that the Education District Office has devised a scheme of swooping teachers but this has not been successful at all as the scheme is not enforceable. The complexities of teaching TjiKalanga were compounded by the scarcity of reading materials and as a result teachers tended to translate Ndebele books into TjiKalanga and use these materials to teach TjiKalanga (Hachipola 1998). There have been attempts to change the TjiKalanga orthography to suit the local national language one – Ndebele, but the Kalanga people resisted the new orthography saying it only serves to distort the language. This meant that the TjiKalanga orthography used today is revived from surviving old TjiKalanga fragments of texts.

Out of realisation and need on the importance of indigenous languages, G.Z.U. in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, identified and elevated these previously marginalised languages, that is, Tshivenda and XiChangana at G.Z.U. G.Z.U shouldered all the expenses of elevating these two languages in question. Currently, Tshivenda and XiChangana languages in the Department of African Languages and Literature have registered on the G.Z.U scene as languages of instruction. The hope is pinned on the fact that if these Tshivenda and XiChangana students at G.Z.U finish their degrees in the mentioned languages, these human resources will spearhead the teaching of these languages in schools in their own mediums as is the case currently, and Zimbabwe will eventually see the full swing of their use in their specific regions.

Driven by the same spirit of promoting the marginalised languages and the pressure of fulfilling The Constitutional closes, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture assigned two colleges to take up the teaching of indigenous languages in their own mediums. These two assigned colleges were United College of Education and J.M.N.P. College. However, the teaching of marginalised languages at United College of Education failed to kick-off the ground and only J.M.N.P. College managed to kick-start these programmes in the Teacher Training section in the Languages and Humanities Department. In the Department of Languages and Humanities, a total number of five indigenous languages are offered and these are: IsiNdebele, ChiShona, Tshivenda, TjiKalanga and Sesotho. What is interesting and crucial to note is the fact that all these five indigenous languages are offered in their own mediums.

3.0 THE CATHERINE WHEEL MODEL

There are six elements of the Catherine Wheel model, which are; perception of greater need for language, more motivation to learn and use the language, more learning, more informal social use, more demand for goods and services and finally, more supply and consumption of goods and services in the language. In this paper, the Catherine Wheel Model is used as a yardstick to measure the success of the implementation strategies of Tshivenda and XiChangana adopted by G.Z.U and Tshivenda, TjiKalanga and Sesotho adopted by J.M.N.P. College.The main essence of the Catherine Wheel model is to preserve and strengthen marginalized languages. Strubell (1997:160) in Royneland (edt) (1997:160) put forward that, in sociological terms the aim of 'strengthening' a language inevitably means trying to ensure that, just as values and norms are transmitted during socialism, the language itself and its use are equally transmitted through the usual agents: the family, the school, the community, the mass media. In so far as the number of speakers (including their role as language

consumers and users in general) increases, then the viability of the language community will obviously increase. More so, in order for a language to be living, it has to be used for creating and interpreting a worldview; otherwise it may cease to cast for itself a function into the future.

The basic tenet of the Catherine Wheel model, according to Strubell (1997) is that there is a functional relationship between competence in a language, its social use, the presence and demand for products and services in or through the language, and motivation to learn and use it, which in turns enhances competence, it works like a wheel. The rationale behind its functioning mechanism is for such a dynamic relationship to fuel itself and gain sufficient momentum to continue rotating.

The model implies that the larger the number of speakers the greater the demand for products and services available through the language, and the greater pressure on organizations of all kinds to use the language. In a more complex version, the latter will increase the number of jobs for which language competence is a job requirement.

4.0 THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

There are six systematically structured implementation strategies that were adopted by G.Z.U and these are, the major actors of founding the idea, partnerships, language awareness, the recruitment drive of students, sourcing of resources and finally the method of instruction. The implementation strategies adopted by J.M.N.P. College are closely related to those of G.Z.U. serve for only two, which are, partnerships and sourcing of resources which are not clearly spelt. The researcher applies the Catherine Wheel model to evaluate each strategy as well as drawing experiences from other countries to measure the successes of the implementation strategies that were undertaken by G.Z.U. and J.M.N.P. College.

Campbell and Gwete (1995) postulate that corpus and acquisition planning are major components of the language implementation activities. Corpus planning is language development on the body of language in order to enable it to perform certain functions in certain desired ways. Acquisition planning, on the other hand, involves efforts to persuade potential users to adopt the language or languages that have been enshrined in the language policy. Campbell and Gwete (1995:171) postulate that acquisition planning attempts to make provision for the availability of the following:

1. Competent teachers.
2. Ensure that teacher-training courses are in place.
3. Make provision for the preparation of textbooks and teacher training courses.
4. Devise ways of promoting language awareness among the population so that they embrace the language policy and not see it as an unnecessary imposition.
5. Considerations of teaching methodology are important aspects of acquisition planning.

Of the two major implementation components named above, G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College have tried to balance the two.

4.1 Founding of the idea.

The idea of incorporating the marginalized languages into the education system was one of the topical debates which gathered momentum in the linguistic scene which goes hand and glove with that of the need to make indigenous languages occupy the centre which previously they were denied. Local wisdom put forward the idea that, it was the language speakers themselves who recognize themselves in language committees who initiated the idea. Mumpande's (2006) comment tallies with the situation at hand when he postulates that these language committees' idea was a result of the government's perceived lack of commitment towards the implementation of marginalized languages since the government has taken a laissez-faire position on the question of language.

The language speakers wrote a letter to G.Z.U initiating the implementation idea of their languages and then G.Z.U took – up the idea to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education who in turn cordially welcomed it as it is reflective in their response; "...we have learnt of your programme to introduce Venda and XiChangani into the University curriculum with interest..." Although it might be said that it is the language committees who initially founded the idea of introducing marginalized languages into the institution as this is backed by written evidence, local wisdom has it that practically it was a group of six lecturers who initiated the idea in 1999 mainly driven by the University niche. Their aim was to develop African languages in a manner that no other university in Zimbabwe had done, that is, teaching African languages in their exclusive mediums, as was already witnessed in the Shona language which started in 1999 and Ndebele in 2000 at this University.

As the idea of promoting marginalized languages was topical those days, as a result many efforts were made by these lecturers such that several inter alia meetings were held about the marginalized languages issues. Among the six lecturers, a coordinator was elected and was to initiate the talks with the marginalized language representatives about the idea of teaching their languages into this tertiary institution. The coordinator stated that the talks with them made him to be aware of what these people really wanted. As a result he encouraged these language representatives to write to the university to request it to initiate these programmes. The letter was a massive tool that was used to sell the idea to the university as well as a push to the University Council to implement these ideas. It is this wonderful move which set things in motion until implementation stage. From then, several inter alia meetings were set in place in preparation of realising this idea.

Closely related to G.Z.U's founding of the idea of incorporating marginalised languages into the curriculum, is J.M.N.P. College's typical style. The latter was spearheaded by the government itself, with reference to The 2013 Constitution which officialised all the languages of Zimbabwe. In an implementation effort, the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture assigned U.C.E. and J.M.N.P. College to introduce Tshivenda, TjiKalanga and Sesotho into the college curriculum. This is an uncommon feature in the African states for the government to pass a language decree and implement it. It is true that the need for teaching of indigenous languages has been a hot issue in Matebeleland North and South Provinces where children are forced to learn Ndebele because there are no teachers for indigenous languages (ZBC News – via internet). However, it should be born in mind that despite the mounting pressure from the marginalised languages speakers in empowering their languages, the government played a crucial role in their implementation.

The enthusiastic feelings of the six lecturers and the marginalised language committees at G.Z.U's jurisdiction and that of the government at J.M.N.P. College of incorporating marginalised languages into the education system can be perfectly matched with the Catherine Wheel model element, "perception of greater need for the

language". It might be vigorously stated that it was none other than this "perception of greater need for the language" which stimulated the idea of incorporating these languages into the education system.

Closely related to both G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College's founding of the idea move, are the local initiatives within the marginalized Ikalanga and Shiyeyi cultural groups of Botswana in counteracting their languages from death (Mooko, 2006). This G.Z.U's move can be used to counteract Wolff's (2002) idea of blaming the African governments in their failure to implement indigenous languages to be used as MOI. His observations are noted as he put forward that the obvious paradox is that it is African governments who stand in the way of using African languages in education and other spheres of life. This G.Z.U stance is reflective enough to show that the language planning exercise should not be always a top-down approach; it might be a bottom-up approach as well. Therefore, based on G.Z.U's lived experienced, one might argue other African language speakers to initiate the implementation moves and not always look up to the government.

4.2 Partnerships

G.Z.U became aware of its incapability to shoulder alone the implementation exercise of these languages in question, as a result it had to partner with other institutions if this exercise is to come to fruition. In its partnerships, G.Z.U had three possible universities to partner with, that is, the Eduardo Modhlane in Mozambique, University of the North and University of Venda (henceforth UNIVEN) both in South Africa. In these universities, both XiChangana and Tshivenda were more developed than in Zimbabwe. After considering quite a number of factors of needs analysis and taking into consideration the cost-benefit-analysis, G.Z.U finally considered to partner with UNIVEN, and this saw the two institutions signing a Memorandum of Understanding.

In addition to the above view, there are many socio-linguistic relationships between the Venda and Shangani people in Zimbabwe and those in South Africa that buttress the relationship between G.Z.U and UNIVEN. For example, Zimbabwean Venda people have relatives in South Africa whom they visit frequently; these family ties probably imply that they shared the same language variety. These socio-linguistic ties are the ones which led the missionaries to seek material assistance from South Africa (Mumpande 2006) and hence the institution thought it wise to revive the once existed relationships in the colonial era.

G.Z.U intended to benefit a lot from these partnerships, the benefits being, producing appropriately qualified teachers to teach TshiVenda and XiChangana in primary schools and later on Secondary schools, producing writers of materials in both languages (as the current TshiVenda and XiChangana lecturers have already started by producing primary texts) among other benefits.

Apart from UNIVEN, G.Z.U had local partnerships with the TshiVenda and XiChangana Language Promotion Associations in their respective districts. These associations played a major role in assisting to sell the programmes offered at G.Z.U as well as recruiting the right kind of people for the programmes. This also implies that they were an effective implement of weeding out the chancers. By and large, these Language Promotion Associations were therefore welcomed by the society since they deal with these communities. J.M.N.P. College's move of initiating partnerships with other institutions which are well developed in the languages concerned is totally absent it drew its human resources locally, mostly first language speakers who

were never trained for the job save for Tshivenda language which is being serviced by a former G.Z.U degreed student well trained for the post. The Sesotho lecturer is currently receiving some training at Lupane State University. The partnerships that are only visible by J.M.N.P. College are those with local marginalised languages committees from which they consult concerning the proper orthography to be used in the implementation of these languages at college.

The partnerships move by both G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College compares well with, "more motivation to learn and use the language[s]", another Catherine Wheels' model element. It was the quest of more motivation of learning and using these languages that sent G.Z.U seeking the partnerships that have expertise in the said languages.

4.3 Language Awareness

Language awareness is defined as an explicit knowledge about the language and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, teaching and use. Language awareness includes exploring the benefits that can be derived from developing a good knowledge about the language, a conscious understanding of how languages work and also of how people learn them and use them.

Language awareness is one of the crucial components of the implementation process therefore, both G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College have undertaken the language awareness programmes. The university went to the areas concerned, that is, Chiredzi, a XiChangana speaking area and BeitBridge, a Tshivenda speaking area to lobby for these languages, alerting people that these two languages are now offered at G.Z.U. The college also undertook several field trips to Matebeleland North and South Provinces to lobby for these languages. In addition to field trips these two institutions also advertised their intended services in the newspapers. These outreach programmes and newspaper advertisements were very much successful in the sense that the students responded favourably and this was marked by their high enrolment numbers. Both the outreach programmes and the favourable responses augur well with the Catherine's Wheel model element "more learning". It is none other than the need for more learning drive which sent people to be involved in the outreach programmes, to sell the idea to the people. The high turnover of applicants needed inorder to kick-start the learning in these languages show that they are in favour of the programme, they need to learn. Again, these two involved processes are a means of sustaining the implementation as well as the running of the programme because the sustenance of the programme is determined partly by the availability of students.

The awareness strategies by G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College compare well also with that adopted by Ikalanga and Shiyeyi marginalised languages in Botswana, though the activities involved in both countries differed, they were both vying for the same goal, that is, to improve visibility. These language awareness strategies are a third move; they correspond to Mooko's (2006) first strategy "an endangered language will progress if its speakers increase their prestige within the dominant community. Mooko (2006:115) quotes Crystall (2000:130) who suggests that:

> *Prestige comes when people start to notice you. An endangered community therefore needs to make its presence felt within the wider community. It needs to raise its visibility, or profile.*

In Botswana, the language awareness strategy saw the formation of associations geared towards the promotion and preservation of Ikalanga and Shiyeyi languages. Such associations include the Society for the Promotion of Ikalanga Languages (S.P.I.L.) and Kamanakao Association (by Wayeyi people for Shiyeyi language) (Mooko 2006:116). Since in the Zimbabwean case the associations already exist the language awareness campaigns were meant to strengthen and preserve these associations, as well as increasing their visibility.

Closely related to such language awareness campaigns, is the United Nations' realised in the form of United Nations International Mother Language Day which annually commemorates the languages spoken worldwide on the 21st of February. It also observes the human right to use these languages, and such an event promotes linguistic and cultural diversity.

4.4 Student Recruitment

Student recruitment strategy was a necessary move in order to ensure the enrolment of students into the concerned programmes, and this was achieved through engaging in outreach programmes. The outreach programmes were undertaken successfully and these were marked by the high response rates of applicants. There was need to devise a recruitment strategy for students since these concerned languages were not offered at academic examinable years. As a result, this called for a recruitment strategy that was supposed to be affirmative in approach. The recruitment process involved a number of people of diverse linguistic and educational backgrounds. G.Z.U had three types of students who were eligible for these degree programmes and these were students with 'A' level qualifications and those holding Diploma qualifications (mainly teachers), and finally those recruited using the mature entry mode (a candidate with 5 (five) "O" levels plus at least 25 years of age as well as being a fluent speaker of the language). These three types of students did not have the marginalized language component in their qualification hence affirmative action was applied to these speakers. At G.Z.U the selection team comprised of the Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association representatives who knew the students well and finally the subject coordinators. The enrolment figures of the initial groups turned out to be good, at least for a pioneer project, and these were as follows; Tshivenda had 9 and XiChangana 15 students. This number surpassed that of Ndebele students which stood at 4. The recruitment strategies adopted by J.M.N.P. College were not very far from those adopted by G.Z.U. Also the college, according to the interviewed Lecturer in the languages section, used an affirmative action in recruiting these students, since the college is a diploma awarding institution it had a single type of student to enrol, that is, a first language speaker of the concerned language with 5 "O" Level passes including Maths and English. The proficiency test was used in specific subject areas to test the originality of the speaker. If the student failed the proficiency test was sent to a relevant subject area or was allowed to choose any non – languages area within the college.

This kind of a recruitment strategy that was used by both G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College in their initial selection of students was justified by the need for more motivation to learn and use of language. This 'more motivation to learn and use of the language' element in the Catherine Wheel Model can be said to have influenced the selection team of Tshivenda, XiChangana, TjiKalanga and Sesotho students to be lenient in their approach – hence affirmative, and work with the best possible facilities offered in order to kick-start this programme. The

programme, which in future will ensure the increase in the number of speakers, including their role as language consumers and users in general, as these increases, and then the viability of the language community will obviously increase. Hence Strubell in Roynneland (1997:160) postulates that in order for a language to be living, it has to be used for creating and interpreting a worldview, otherwise it may cease to cast for itself a function into the future.

4.5 Resources

The fifth implementation strategy that was used by G.Z.U was that of acquiring resources. Resources were in form of human, that is, the lecturers, and also material in form of reference texts. In language policy and planning circles, the fact-finding move is one of the crucial activities that informs the situation on language resources and probably points direction as to how to transcend on this implementation process. In Zimbabwe, there is little material on, and in Tshivenda, XiChangana and TjiKalanga languages save for Sesotho and not to mention the trained personnel to offer all these languages.

Historically, according to Hachipola (1998) it was the missionaries who monitored the teaching of all these four languages in question and they sourced their resources from South Africa and Lesotho, save for TjiKalanga language whose resource sources were not mentioned. It is also stated by Hachipola that this inflow of resources from South Africa and Lesotho to Zimbabwe was stopped as soon as the missionaries disengaged from activity. Probably it is this historical idea that informed G.Z.U about where to find these resources, hence G.Z.U revived the almost-forgotten-path to South Africa, now to UNIVEN especially, in search for these resources.

Through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which was signed between G.Z.U and UNIVEN, UNIVEN became the provider of resources and, yet some were obtained from individuals not linked to UNIVEN, and from UNIVEN lecturers in their own individual capacities. It was agreed that lecturers from UNIVEN would come at a part time basis to lecture Tshivenda and XiChangana at G.Z.U. Four lecturers come at a time, that is, two for Tshivenda and two for XiChangana. In order to try and augment on these resources, the initial stream of Tshivenda and XiChangana students who were in their third and final year were to be recruited as Assistant Lecturers upon their graduation. This envisaged idea has since been accomplished and these students were staff developed, undertook Honours and Masters Degree studies in South Africa and are now working at G.Z.U. Currently, some of these staff developed fellows are now pursuing doctorate studies while others are in the verge of Masters completion. More so, two other Temporary full-time Lecturers were employed, one for Tshivenda and the other for XiChangana, this means that each subject area is being serviced by three lecturers. As a result the number of visiting lecturers has been reduced by half since G.Z.U's own graduates have replaced the other half. Implying that as time progresses the visiting lecturers will be phased out leaving the G.Z.U's graduates to man the subject areas.

These G.Z.U's trained cadres have since been encouraged to write literature in their languages and some have done so and published with Zimbabwe Publishing House in Harare. According to the information gathered from interviews, it is said that most of the written books are for use at primary levels. The idea is to make literature available in accordance with the level of teaching of these languages that is going on in Zimbabwean education. This remarkable contribution of resources in these languages is of vital importance as these are key to language

expansion. The provision of resources strategy compares well with the Catherine Wheel model's "more demand for goods and services" element, which is a vital stage of language expansion, preservation and strengthening. This implies that G.Z.U is tactful in its approach. However, more reference texts need to be acquired possibly in order to facilitate a favourable learning environment.

At J.M.N.P. College, material resources for Tshivenda and Sesotho are not a challenge save for TjiKalanga. The interviewed Tshivenda lecturer said she obtains her material resources from G.Z.U where she did her general degree in the subject and UNIVEN where she furthered her studies as an honours degree student. For Sesotho material, there are scores of material and this is evidenced when Hachipola (1998:20) underscores that, "Sotho is a well-studied language and the materials now existing in the University of Zimbabwe library and in archives are more than adequate to be used in primary schools and higher levels". Besides these locally available materials for Sesotho, Zimbabwean Sesotho is said to be closely related to that of Lesotho. In Lesotho the language is said to be well studied since it is the only language in that nation. There is a noted serious challenge concerning the sourcing of TjiKalanga material since locally they are scarce and also in the neighbouring country Botswana, it is marginally treated and the language situation is not better off from that of Zimbabwe. At J.M.N.P. College it seems the Tshivenda lecturer is the only marginalised language lecturer who received training while for Sesotho and TjiKalanga where only recruited by virtue of being the first language speakers. Currently, the Sesotho lecturer is pursuing Sesotho studies at Lupane State University, meaning that the TjiKalanga language is still disadvantaged.

Legere (1996) in Makoni (2003:92) provides a Namibian implementation example which can be used as a measure to ascertain G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College stances of implementation, Legere (1996) captures that as a way of preparing teachers to teach African Languages, the University of Namibia has introduced a training programme for language multipliers. These courses offer promise for the future through the provision of a core of teachers who can both teach the indigenous languages and use them as medium of instruction. This noble idea by the Namibian country was also used by G.Z.U and is also being used by J.M.N.P. College since these marginalised languages students are prepared to be able to teach these indigenous languages and use them in their exclusive medium- hence multiplying language speakers. It is quite disappointing to note that, at Midlands State University, and also at the University of Botswana and the University of Zambia African languages are taught in English. While, at University of Zimbabwe they use both English and indigenous languages to teach these African languages.

4.6 Medium of Instruction (MOI)

MOI means a language variety that is used in presenting a curriculum. The MOI has a great impact in accessing knowledge. Vambe in Mutasa (2006:8) postulates that knowledge [how much?] is accessible through language [whose language?]. In African schools, the question of which language of instruction is to be used becomes an ideological and linguistic battleground for the control of human minds and imaginations, since there is a cognitive roadblock in their understanding of the use of these borrowed languages. Thus, it implies that Africans have to 'shake off' colonial languages and promote local or indigenous languages for the betterment of the African understanding in the educational field.

In Zimbabwe, G.Z.U pioneered this response of using indigenous languages in their exclusive medium in their specific departments and off late J.M.N.P. College followed suit in the department of Languages and Humanities. Currently, only indigenous languages are offered in their exclusive medium that is, teaching, writing assignments and examinations are in indigenous languages, and not the whole university curriculum. It is hoped that perhaps, in the near future, these languages will be used as MOI across the curriculum.

This final implementation strategy augurs well with Catherine Wheel's element "more supply and consumption of goods and services in the language". Once the language is used as MOI, there will be in turn need for and use of more resources both in material and human resources and this in due course will promote the visibility of the language. This move also augurs well with Mooko's (2006) two strategies which are:

> *Strategy 4* - An endangered language will progress if its speakers have a strong presence in the educational system,

> *Strategy 5* - An endangered language will progress if its speakers can write their language down.

It seems obvious that if a certain language is elevated and used as MOI consequently its speakers will be able to write it down because its extensive use also implies the developing of orthographies and terminologies of that language – a corpus planning stance. Moreso, it is this active use of the language which makes language speakers realize that they have to further bank on their language in order to preserve and strengthen it.

Prah (1998:2) say it is in language that the testimonials and character of culture, identity and pulse of people are registered. Dialectically, it is also in language (amongst other things) that the identity of people is denied. Moreso, he postulates that; they [people] can be barely creative and innovative in a language they have to struggle with in order to command expression. The above view shows that a person performs well in his/her indigenous language. Closely related to the above view is Yohannes's (2009:190), who states that, "the use of one's mother tongue in education is considered as the most appropriate medium of instruction [MOI] since the use of a less familiar language in education would be a "violation of the structure of thinking" and thus a barrier to smooth communication and discussion (Freire, cited in Brock – Utne (2000:151)). In Ethiopia, it is vividly described infamously, "it is no longer appropriate to call English a medium of instruction [MOI]; rather it has become a medium of obstruction [MOO]" (Yohannes, (2009:191), citing Stoddart's school observation report in Marrew Zewdie (1998:206)).

G.Z.U also believes in unity in diversity. The incorporation of the two languages concerned built ethnic ties among the Ndebele, Shona, Venda and XiChangana encouraging tolerance and thus reinforcing unity among the language groups on the campus. This probably makes other marginalized languages hope that their languages, like Tshivenda and XiChangana, will one day be offered in the school curriculum. This statement is supported by Fafunwa (1990:105) who points out that, "once a particular mother-tongue has been fully developed as a medium of education in a given country, it is relatively easy to apply the same principle to other languages". This is true if one considers the introduction of Tshivenda, TjiKalanga and Sesotho at J.M.N.P. College in Matebeleland. They like G.Z.U began with the teacher, who in turn will teach the students in the concerned areas.

5.0 OBSERVATIONS FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The first four implementation strategies can be bunched to reflect the language acquisition planning and the final two save the corpus planning move. These two types of language planning exercise work hand in glove to complement each other. The implementation strategies discussed show that it is possible to elevate indigenous languages to be used as MOI if only people are willing to put their efforts together. Prah (2009:103) in his concluding remarks concurs with the above reasoning when he states that:

> No language is developed from Adam. Languages develop when we make the right inputs and provide the necessary resources for their development. No language is intrinsically incapable of being developed. All languages develop because societies and communities consciously and with political will develop them. Any language which developmentally stands still has taken the first step to extinction. This is the fact which awaits most, if not all of our languages if we do not proceed to intellectualize and develop them.

The above quotation may also be used to summarize all the implementation strategies adopted by G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College, and their visions behind the implementation of these marginalised languages. Also interesting to note, is that Prah demystifies the colonised mentality of some linguistics who still believe that African languages are incapable of saving their speakers well.

The model is used as a yardstick to measure what has been accomplished in terms of preserving and strengthening Tshivenda and XiChangana languages under study and possibly might also point directions and guidelines as to what is yet to be done and how, inorder to fully achieve the preservation and strengthening of the marginalized languages in question. One of the most straightforward measures outlined by Strubell in Royneland (edt) (1997:168), which is of great importance to this study, concerns the provision of basic service, that of, education and through the language to ensure adequate production of the language. This basic service is the crux of this research with regards to its implementation strategies at G.Z.U. One may point out that what G.Z.U has achieved in terms of its implementation strategies closely tallies with the suggestions of the Catherine Wheel model's elements. Moreso, on the other hand one may also add that while J.M.N.P. College tried much to achieve worthwhile goals in implementing Tshivenda, TjiKalanga and Sesotho, it has to improve on partnership and resources strategies as these are crucial for quality student output.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The benefits of promoting the mother tongue , both as a subject of study and as a MOI in school, are well documented what has been observed to be lacking is the implementation component which is discussed in this paper. Six implementation strategies adopted by G.Z.U and J.M.N.P. College have been discussed and compared with the six elements of the Catherine Wheel model of preserving and strengthening marginalised languages. Also other implementation activities have been drawn from countries like Botswana and Namibia, though in Botswana the languages mentioned were never used as MOI their implementation was only meant to counteract the threat of their death. It is therefore in such a context that the researcher argues African states to

implement their indigenous languages, soon rather than the later, because besides that move, the use of indigenous languages as MOI will remain as an academic debate with little effect on the ground. It is noted that if the implementation exercise of African languages as MOI becomes a common phenomenon in African states, African renaissance would not be an arm's length far, but Africans would be at its door-step.

REFERENCES

[1] Campbell, R.Z.M. and Gwete, W.B. (1995). *Language Policy and Planning* (EC.S207) drated Module (ZOU), Harare.

[2] Hachipola, S.J. (1998) *A Survey of the Minority Languages of Zimbabwe*, Harare, University of Zimbabwe Publications.

[3] Mooko, T. (2006) *Counteracting the Threat of Language Death: The Case of Minority Languages in Botswana*, Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 27:2, p109-125

[4] Mumpande,I. (2006) *Silent Voices: Indigenous Languages in Zimbabwe*, Silveira House, Harare , Weaver Press.

[5] Mutasa, D.E. (ed) (2006) African *Languages in the 21^{st}Century: The Main Challenges,* Harare, SimbaGum.

[6] NgugiwaThiongo (1981) *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Harare, ZPH.

[7] Prah, K.K. (1998) *The Missing Link in African Education and Development*, in Prah, K. K. (edt) (1998) *Between Distinction and Extinction*, Witwatersrand University Press.

[8] Prah,K.K. (2009) *Mother- Tongue Education in Africa for Emancipation and Development: Towards the Intellectualisation of African Languages, p83-104,* in Brock – Utne, B &Skattum, I (2009) *Language and Education in Africa: A Comparative and Transdisciplinary Analysis*, Bristol Papers in Education, UK, Symposium Books.

[9] Royneland, U. (ed) (1997) *Language Contact and Language Conflict: Proceedings of The International IvarAasen Conference 14-16 November 1996*, University of Oslo :Volda College.

[10] Yohannes, M.A.G (2009)*Implications of the Use of Mother Tongue Versus English as Languages of Instruction for Academic Achievement in Ethiopia, p189-199*, in Brock – Utne, B &Skattum, I (2009) *Language and Education in Africa: A Comparative and Transdisciplinary Analysis*, Bristol Papers in Education, UK, Symposium Books.

Internet Sources

[11] International Mother Language Day – Time and Date www.timeanddate.com>calendar>HolidaysAccessed on 29/04/14.

[12] Teachers Train in Indigenous Languages –www.zbc.co.zw/index.php?..teachers-train-in-indigenous-languages.... Accessed on 29/04/2014 on Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation bepa.co.zw