

Educational Language Policies in Nigeria and Zimbabwe: The Impact of EMI and Indigenous Languages on Educational Inclusion

Oris Tom-Lawyer

Department of English, Igbinedion University, Nigeria

Michael Thomas

School of Education, Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom

[Doi:10.19044/esj.2026.v22n17p77](https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2026.v22n17p77)

Submitted: 21 April 2026

Accepted: 22 June 2026

Published: 30 June 2026

Copyright 2026 Author(s)

Under Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0

OPEN ACCESS

Cite As:

Tom-Lawyer, O., & Thomas, M. (2026). *Educational Language Policies in Nigeria and Zimbabwe: The Impact of EMI and Indigenous Languages on Educational Inclusion*. *European Scientific Journal, ESJ*, 22 (17), 77. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2026.v22n17p77>

Abstract

Educational language policies in African countries are controversial because their colonial legacies continue to undervalue indigenous African languages (Sibomana, 2015). These policies, such as the Education Act (1987) in Zimbabwe, influence the future of African children as they do not always support linguistic inclusion, which in turn may impact the social, economic, and national development of a country. While this context is applicable to most African countries, few comparative studies have been undertaken to explore this subject in greater depth. To address this gap, this study examined the need for educational inclusion in the language policies of Nigeria and Zimbabwe, two of the continent's largest economies, as both have a two-language system (Anukaenyi, 2019). The study was based on the premise that detrimental medium of instruction policies at the national level can damage learning access and inclusion (Cele, 2021). The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) principles guided the critical review of 80 publications, which spanned more than two decades (2000-2024). Findings suggested that the policies have encouraged the marginalisation of indigenous languages and harmed students' linguistic development, as their learning continues to take place in an unfamiliar language. Furthermore, the language policies have also promoted inequality as they have not been

implemented in private schools. The study recommends the need for more comparative research on the importance of inclusive teaching and learning of English in Nigeria and Zimbabwe, alongside learners' indigenous languages, to improve effective and equitable policy implementation.

Keywords: Educational language policy, language of instruction, inclusive education, Nigeria, Zimbabwe

Introduction

Language policy is an essential area for research on communication, the key to social inclusion, and a hub of human activities that is vital for the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Woodbridge, 2015). Its importance in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) in particular cannot be underemphasized. The argument that everyone is entitled to quality education is a central objective of SDG 4 (UNESCO, 2015, 2023). While there are numerous examples of governments in low- and middle-income countries developing language policies to contribute to the achievement of this objective, no research studies have yet been conducted on national language policies in Nigeria and Zimbabwe, which are two of the continent's leading post-colonial economies (Hang'onbe & Mumpande, 2020; Mokibelo, Akinkurolere & Mhindu, 2024).

As former British colonies, Nigeria attained independence in 1960, while Zimbabwe followed suit two decades later (Salau, 2018). These two highly multi-ethnic countries are located in sub-Saharan Africa and have 520 and 16 indigenous languages, respectively. They have both major and minor languages: Nigeria has three major languages (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba), while Zimbabwe possesses two (Shona and Ndebele) (Hungwe, 2007). The major languages of Nigeria belong to the Afro-Asiatic and Niger-Congo language families, respectively, while Shona and Ndebele are Bantu languages from the Niger-Congo family (Bendor-Samuel, 2025). Indigenous languages are recognised as the medium of instruction in lower primary classes in both countries (NLP, 2022; Government of Zimbabwe, 2006).

This study is original in that no comparative analysis of these two countries' national language policies in relation to educational inclusion has yet been undertaken. Both countries share similar contexts as English is perceived as a symbol of national unity (Tom-Lawyer, 2011; Yusuf, 2012). English is the preferred language of education (Tom-Lawyer, 2007; Mushina, 2019), and neither country's educational policies have been fully implemented (Thondhlana, 2000; Nhongo, 2013; Mufenchiya & Mufenchiya, cited in Sibanda, 2019). Arising from this context, the objectives of this first comparative critical review of their language policies are to investigate the link between students who do not learn in their mother tongue and the dropout

rate in secondary education (Heugh, 2006); how earlier language policies in both countries were not effectively implemented; and to determine the ways in which this may have created social inequality by denying pupils access to quality education, and creating a divide in the status of languages, especially in relation to the use of minor and major languages (Obanya, 1999, Bamgbose, 2000. Ouane, 2003 & Alidou, 2004, as cited in Heugh, 2006).

Literature Review

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education policies aim to promote a just and egalitarian society. They are an essential component of peaceful coexistence and development in any society, and education is central to its achievement and associated notions of equity. UNESCO (2017, p.7) defines inclusion in education as “a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners”, while Operti (2017) regards it as recognition of every individual in the school system. UNESCO (2009, p.3) asserts that inclusion entails equity, fairness, accessibility, and therefore, every individual has a right to education:

Inclusive education is currently considered to be an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all, while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics, and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination.

Language policies have implications that can lead to the exclusion and/or inclusion of learners. UNESCO (2023) notes in this respect that in the global context, every fifth child, teenager, or young person faces inclusion challenges, such as learning in an unfamiliar language. In addition, approximately 40% of children are denied education in their mother tongue (ibid). Kart and Kart (2021) opine that inclusion in education also encompasses both disabled learners and minority-language learners.

While researchers have explored the impact of inclusion on children with disabilities extensively, more research on its effect on general education is required (Kart & Kart, 2021). Inclusion promotes the schooling of learners from diverse groups (UNICEF, 2025), and an inclusive classroom can create an enabling environment for the benefit of all learners. Some of the benefits of inclusion in education are that students develop empathy and tolerance towards one another. It can also promote learning through interaction, reduce racism, and improve educational outcomes (Kart & Kart, 2021; Pradhan & Naik, 2024).

One major factor that affects inclusion in schools is language. If students do not understand the language of instruction, they will feel

uncomfortable and potentially excluded. An emphasis on inclusion in educational language policies impacts not only the implementation of the policies but also classroom practices, demonstrating that classroom teachers are fundamental to implementing inclusion policies and the provision of quality education (Florian & Rouse, 2009; as cited in Fettes & Karamouzian, 2018), as well as the implementation of language policies at the local level. Therefore, pre-service and in-service teacher training are important and strategic factors in the development and realisation of inclusive education policies in teachers' professional practice (Fettes & Karamouzian, 2018).

Other collaborators in the achievement of educational inclusion are educational stakeholders, policy makers, educational authorities, parents, and the wider civil society (Stefanski, Valli & Jacobson, 2016; as cited in Jegede, Yusuf & Aliyu, 2024). Hence, the effective inclusion of learners from different linguistic backgrounds requires schools, universities, and the broader society to be genuinely committed to inclusion as a core value (Fettes & Karamouzian, 2018). Language policies that promote educational inclusion need to be effectively implemented for students to access and achieve quality education, and this is particularly the case in Africa, where UNESCO (2016) has linked inclusive education policy to excellence in education.

Educational Language Policy in African States

Language policy has been defined as “a set of measures adopted by a state with regard to one or more languages spoken in the territory under its sovereignty, in order to modify their corpus or status, generally to reinforce their use and sometimes limit their expansion” (Adeline, n.d, p.2). In other words, language policy demonstrates the value placed on different languages in a particular society (Liddicoat, 2023). The factors that shape a language policy are “the state of languages [sic], the structure of political power, and official ideologies in the country” (Ibrahimov, 2023, p.1). The state of languages in any country is synonymous with the structure of political and official ideologies and beliefs, as well as the core principles of that country.

Most language policies in Africa can be traced to the division of countries on the continent by the colonial powers (Awuor, 2019). The Germans, the Dutch, and the British promoted the use of indigenous languages as the medium of instruction at the lower levels of education, while the Portuguese rejected their use altogether (Abdulaziz, 2002). Since the colonial period, many African countries have maintained the status quo in relation to these inherited policies.

African policies are characterised by the use of exoglossic languages such as French and English, alongside indigenous languages (Kangira, 2016). Similarly, Heugh (2006), writing on educational language policies in Africa, asserts that the policies are at variance with the realities in various language

communities, and that they remain to this day a continuation of former colonial policies. In the same vein, Akumbu and Chiator (2022) opine that African governments are unwilling to enforce policy reforms and therefore disregard the value of indigenous languages.

According to Akumbu and Chiator (2013), whose research examined the case of six countries (Tanzania, Nigeria, Cameroon, Malawi, South Africa, and Ethiopia), language policies have been encumbered by challenges associated with implementation. Moreover, Muzoora, Terry, and Asiiimwe (2014) have asserted that educational language policies in Africa do not facilitate positive achievement among pupils. According to Bamgbose (1991; as cited in Umoren 2019, p. 197), “language policies in African countries are characterized by one or more of the following problems: avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuations and declaration without implementation”.

In the context of this study, using the characteristics stated above as a lens, while Nigeria and Zimbabwe have adopted English alongside indigenous languages as a medium of instruction, they still have the problem of implementation, as English is used across all levels of education. Students in both countries do not perform well in English in high school examinations, and research has identified how the marginalisation of minority languages remains a significant obstacle (Jegede, Yusuf & Aliyu, 2024; Kadenge & Nkomo, 2011). However, scholars are beginning to advocate for a more inclusive approach to language policy development in Africa, and opine that English should be studied alongside the indigenous languages rather than in place of them (Jegede, Yusuf & Aliyu, 2024; Alaku, Okpala & Sule, 2023; Kadenge & Nkomo, 2011; Umunnakwe, 2017).

English Medium Instruction (EMI) in Africa

English medium instruction denotes “the use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself in countries or jurisdictions, where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English” (Macaro, 2018, p. 19). English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) is highly contentious as it is viewed as both an opportunity and a bane. Numerous arguments have been advanced to justify its use, and while the majority of countries colonised by the British have implemented EMI, research favours the use of mother tongue language policies in primary schools (Opare-Kumi, 2024). Those who favour the use of English do so because they emphasize its status as a global language, thereby highlighting the opportunities for a country’s socio-economic development. Moreover, the use of English in early- years education is linked to the continuing belief among some parents that early exposure to English impacts educational

achievement and the medium of instruction positively affects students' learning outcomes (Opore-Kumi, 2024).

On the other hand, critics have argued that EMI implementation reflects the hegemony of the language and that students in EMI schools lack proficiency in English (Nyoni, Ahmed, Philogene, & Khaing, 2023). UNESCO (2006; as cited in Opore-Kumi, 2024) favours the use of the Arikel language in learning for a minimum of six years in multilingual communities. Kamwangamalu (2013) asserts that EMI policy in Africa has not succeeded in achieving its objectives of promoting literacy and providing opportunities for Africans to take part in the political, economic, and social growth of their continent. African scholars have consistently written on the hegemony of the English language in their countries' educational systems, and there is a strong tradition of advocating for the use of indigenous languages (Charamba & Mutasa, 2014; Awonusi, 2008 & Akujobi, 2019). Opore-Kumi (2024), who studied the effects of EMI on the schooling of primary pupils in Ethiopia, for example, concluded that pupils may benefit positively from mother tongue instruction. Uys, Van der Walt, Van den Berg, and Botha (2007) conducted a study on EMI to determine if subject content teachers actually taught language skills in South African classrooms, and, relatedly, if this could be the reason for the low academic achievement of learners. They concluded that the majority of the teachers did not teach these skills effectively.

Purpose

While Mokibelo, Akinkurolere, and Mhindu (2024) examined implementation challenges of language education policies in Botswana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, their focus was on indigenous languages at the primary school level. Although research shows that scholars have written extensively on language policies in Nigeria and Zimbabwe, no broad comparison of the two countries has been undertaken until the current study (Kadenge & Nkomo, 2011; Nhongo, 2020; Umunnakwe, 2017; Oyedokun, 2024). This research aims to have a broader perspective, as it seeks to determine the effects of the language policies of Nigeria and Zimbabwe on equity, access to quality education, and inclusion. Arising from the context outlined above, this study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the main features of language-in-education policies and their implementation challenges in Nigeria and Zimbabwe?
2. How has EMI enhanced educational inclusion, and what are its prospects in Nigeria and Zimbabwe?
3. What are the drawbacks of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction in Nigeria and Zimbabwe?

Methods

This study was guided by PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses) principles. A review of existing studies, which spanned a period of more than two decades, was conducted between August 2024 and August 2025 and structured according to several categories determined by the review of the existing literature. The definitions of key terms were clarified, and it was observed that while scholars had written extensively on language policies in the two countries, no comparative study had as yet been undertaken.

The categories used in the critical review entailed a division of the articles into four themes. The first was the definition of key concepts: inclusive education, inclusion, educational inclusion, economic inclusion, and social inclusion. The second category was language-in-education policies and language policies in African countries. The third category was EMI in the two countries and other sub-Saharan countries known for their multilingual nature. The fourth category concerned themes related to the challenges of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction. The databases searched were Research Gate, Google Scholar, and Academia.edu.

The studies were reviewed in light of the search terms, and some studies were rejected (a nominal fraction) based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 2). Books, journal articles, conference proceedings, and newsletters were included due to their specific characteristics and the audiences they serve, while materials arising from electronic publications, such as webinars and blogs, were excluded. Articles published between 2000 and 2024 were accepted (they were considered as relevant publications), while materials published before and beyond this time period were rejected. In addition, English medium materials on Nigeria and Zimbabwe were accepted. These criteria led to the inclusion of 80 articles. The abstracts (and in some cases, the full articles were read, and the selection criteria were applied.

Search Strategy

The search strategy used in the review was divided into four categories, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: General Search Terms

Category	Search Terms	Remarks
Definition of concepts	Inclusion, inclusive education, social inclusion, educational inclusion, economic inclusion.	It was concluded that social inclusion and economic inclusion were not major components of the study.
Language-in-education policies	Language-in-education policies in non-African countries, language-in-education policies in African countries, language in education policies in Nigeria and Zimbabwe.	Language-in-education policies in non-African countries were considered irrelevant.

English Medium Instruction	EMI in Anglophone countries, Anglophone African countries, and in Nigeria and Zimbabwe.	EMI in non-African countries was not a component of the study.
Indigenous languages as medium of education	Challenges of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction in African countries, challenges in Nigeria and Zimbabwe.	Challenges in other African countries were not considered relevant.

The search terms included language-in-education policies in Africa, language-in-education policies in Nigeria and Zimbabwe, English as a Medium of Instruction in Nigeria and Zimbabwe, the challenges of using indigenous languages as mediums of instruction, inclusive education and the challenges of using English as a Medium of Instruction in Nigeria and Zimbabwe

For the first category, the selection involved the definition of the term ‘inclusion’. With a clearer understanding of the concept, other terms such as social inclusion and economic inclusion were considered. However, it was decided that the main focus of the study was educational inclusion.

The second category examined language-in-education policies in Asian, African, and European contexts, and it was subsequently narrowed to African contexts, but later restricted to studies on Nigeria and Zimbabwe specifically.

The third category considered studies on EMI in Anglophone countries more broadly. The Anglophone African contexts were highlighted as being more relevant. Finally, studies that specifically articulated the challenges and benefits in Nigeria and Zimbabwe were included.

The fourth category evaluated the challenges of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction in African contexts. This was later restricted to Nigeria and Zimbabwe though most African countries share a similar context.

Table 2: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books, conference proceedings, journal articles, and newsletters Policy documents from Nigeria, Zimbabwe and other low-and-middle Income (LMIC) countries in Sub-Saharan Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blogs and webinars Policy documents from countries outside of Sub-Saharan Africa
Year and location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published between 2000-2024 Research on primary schools, colleges and universities in Sub-Saharan Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Published before 2000 Research on schools not located in Sub-Saharan Africa

Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written in English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written in a language other than English
Literature range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications on language policies, EMI, inclusive education and indigenous languages in Sub-Saharan Africa • Well-researched publications with a methodology and research design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications that did not address the topic on a relevant discourse • Publications without a methodology and clear research design

Data Analysis

Identification of Studies via databases and manual searches

Research publications were identified based on the subject under discussion at each stage. A thorough search was conducted on a broad topic and then narrowed to a specific context as shown in Figure 1. In all, 80 publications were included. In the detailed analysis, the papers rejected (a nominal fraction) were not within the scope of the study.

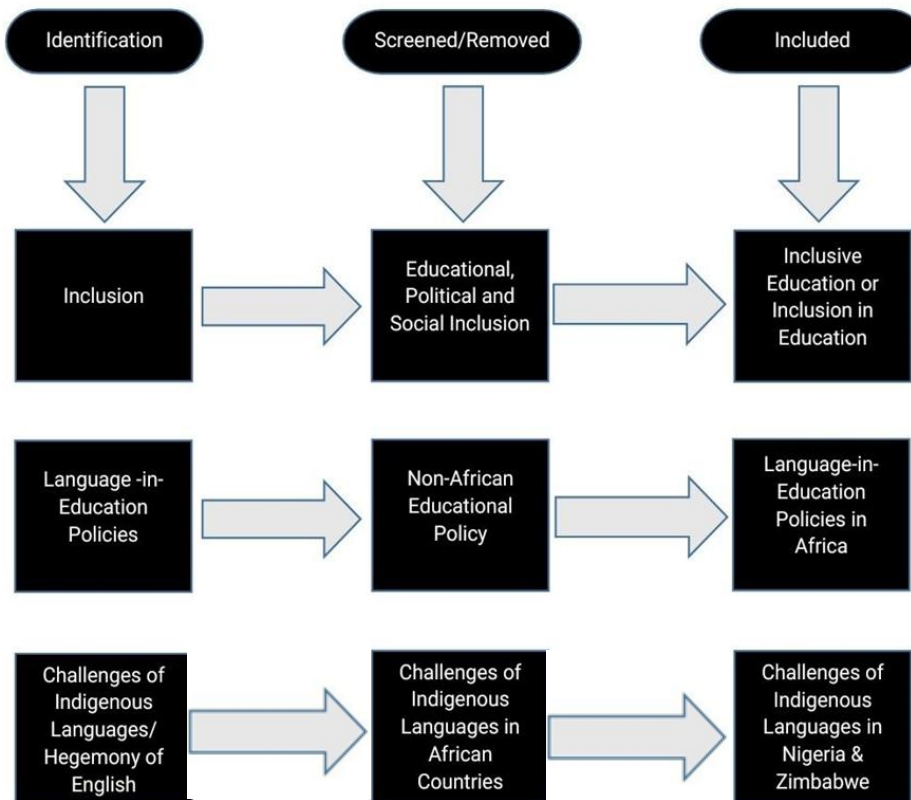


Figure 2: Identification of Studies through Themes
 (Adapted from Crompton, Edmett, Ichaooria & Burke, 2024)

Ethics

As part of the rigorous design of the study, ethical considerations were an important consideration. Most of the included studies demonstrated ethical awareness, particularly in relation to:

1. **Research Integrity:** the selected empirical studies demonstrated a significant awareness of participants' right to withdraw, as well as care and respect in relation to safeguarding the credibility of the studies.
2. **Trustworthiness, confidentiality and anonymity:** the studies indicated that there were no conflicts of interest and participants had been anonymised to protect their identities. Participants mainly provided data in their native languages thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the studies.

Discussion

What are the main features of language-in-education policies and their implementation challenges in Nigeria and Zimbabwe?

Prior to 2022, Nigeria had no official blueprint for language policy. In 2022, an official compendium outlining the use of languages in various domains of society was released. Zimbabwe also has no one official document in this area, but clauses addressing language in education policies in primary and secondary education are spread across several documents (Nhongo & Tshotsho, 2020).

Nigeria

The choice of a language-in-education policy is determined by government and educational stakeholders. The colonial era witnessed the transition to English as the language of instruction and a subject of study in schools (Adetugbo 1979; as cited in Ogunmodimu, 2015). Since then, Nigeria has had a series of language policies, with the main ones published in 1977 (revised 1981), 2004, 2014 and 2022. The 1977 (revised 1981) language policy states that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and at the later stage, English (Section 3.15, 4).

The 2004 language policy (Section 4, Paragraphs 19e) also endorsed EMI from the fourth year, stating that, "The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject from the fourth year."

The 2014 policy (Section 2, Paragraphs 20d and f), followed the same trend:

The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the immediate environment in the first three years in monolingual communities. During this period, English shall

be taught as a subject. From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of the immediate environment.

However, in 2022, the Nigerian government introduced the late exit model and English became the language of instruction from secondary school onwards:

To ensure effective delivery of instructions and attendant positive learning outcomes, Mother Tongue (MT) or Language of Immediate Community (LIC) shall be used as the medium of instruction from Early Childhood Care and Development Education to the six years of primary education (4:18, p. 17).

All the policies have been critiqued by scholars (Adeyemi & Ajibade, 2001; Anukaemyi, 2019; Adejimola, 2010, Olugbegi-Adegbite, 2022; Owojecho, 2020, Iwuchukwu, 2021, Bamgbose, 2005, Olagbegju, 2009, as cited in Olagbegi-Adegbite 2022). A consistent aspect of this sustained critique has been the current policy's lack of a designated timeframe for implementation.

Zimbabwe

Prior to independence, Zimbabwe was a British Protectorate formerly known as Southern Rhodesia. Research shows that there were four colonial governments in Zimbabwe between the period 1890-1979: the British South African Company (BSAC) (1890-1922); the White Settler Self-Government (WSSG) (1923-1952); the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (FRN) (1953-1963); and Rhodesian Front Government (RFG) (1965-1979). All these governments promoted the use of EMI (Nhongo, 2013, Nkomo, 2008, Thondhlana, 2002, as cited in Sibanda, 2019). The use of EMI in Zimbabwe was recommended by Hole's Committee in 1908. The country attained independence in 1980 and the Education Act (1987) established several key principles relating to language policy:

1. The three main languages of Zimbabwe, namely, Shona, Ndebele and English, shall be taught in all primary schools from the first grade as follows:
 - a) Shona and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority or the residence is Shona, or
 - b) Ndebele and English in all areas where the mother tongue of the majority or the residence is Ndebele.
2. Prior to the fourth grade, either Shona or Ndebele may be used as the medium of instruction depending upon which language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils.

3. From the fourth grade, English shall be the medium of instruction, provided that Shona or Ndebele shall be taught as subjects on an equal time allocation as the English language.
4. In areas where minority languages exist, the Minister may authorise the teaching of such languages in primary schools (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987).

The Education Act (1987) has been critiqued by scholars as representing a continuation rather than a break from previous colonial policy, as English continues to be the principal language of instruction, while indigenous languages remain marginalised. Other concerns raised by critics include parental and stakeholder preference for English as the language of instruction, ineffective implementation of the policy, the non-participation of teachers in policy formulation and the global status of English, which is associated with the demands of globalisation (Nkomo 2008 Chivhanga & Chimhenga, 2013, cited in UNICEF, 2017; Nhongo, 2013, Thondhlana, 2000; Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya, 2010; (Ndlovu, 2008; Mkandla, 2000; Nhongo, 2013).

While the Act was revised in 1990 and 2006 to include the use of some minority languages as mediums of education and to enable students to learn in the three main languages until secondary class 2 (13 or 14 years), these changes have not been implemented (Sibanda, 2019).

The 2013 National Constitution of Zimbabwe officially recognised 16 languages and declared equal treatment for all languages. However, three years after the declaration, the policy had yet to be implemented (Mazuruse, 2018). Researchers have found that educational language policy in Zimbabwe continues to be affected by adherence to a colonial mentality, as English remains dominant and local languages are still perceived and treated as second-class languages (Kadenge & Mungari, 2015 Magwa & Mutasa, 2007; Hachipola, 1998; Chimhundu, 1993, as cited in Hang'onbe & Mumpande, 2020).

The challenges of implementing the language-in-education policies

Nigeria

Language-in-education policy in any country affects its political, economic and socio-cultural development. Research shows that in Nigeria, as well as in several Sub-Saharan African countries, there are inconsistencies between policies formulation and implementation (Ogunbiyi, 2008; Trudell, 2018; as cited in Obiakor, 2024). Nigeria's first national policy on education was published in 1977, with subsequent policies appearing in 1981, 2004, 2014 and most recently, in 2022. While researchers have written extensively on policy implementation, the predominant view is that the Nigerian

government lacks continuity in educational policy resulting in disruption rather than consistency (Eru, Ogi & Ikpe, 2019). Moreover, the implementation rate of educational policies in private schools has been lower than in public schools (Obiakor, 2024). Akomolafe (2024) pointed out that the Nigerian Educational Research Development Council (NERDC) admitted that the major implementation challenges include a shortage of teachers, a lack of instructional resources, and inconsistencies between teachers' languages and the languages spoken within their communities of assignment.

Zimbabwe

Research shows that one of the main challenges of implementing the 1987 Educational Act has been the attitude of parents, teachers and educational stakeholders towards indigenous languages. Findings suggest that English is preferred as the medium of instruction at the lower elementary level. Furthermore, the global status of English necessitates knowledge of the language to benefit from the global economy and English is considered a symbol of national integration in Zimbabwe. In the same vein, having indigenous languages as a medium of instruction at all levels of education would hinder international employment and the government is not financing the teaching of indigenous languages at the upper level. The consensus view is that the government lacks the will or the means to reverse the hegemonic policy. Moreover, teachers were not involved in the development of the policy (Nhongo & Thondhlana, 2020; Nhongo, 2013; Muchenje, Goronga & Bondai, 2013; Ndamba, 2008; Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya, 2010; Mnkandla, 2000; Nhongo, 2013; Mufanechiya & Mufanechiya, 2010; Thondhlana, 2000; Nhongo, 2013; Kadenge & Nkomo, 2011; Nkomo, 2008; Ndhlovu, 2008; Mnkandla, 2000; as cited in Sibanda, 2020). Another challenge is "the low status accorded to African languages" (Chivhanga & Chimhenga 2013, p. 59). In other words, many African languages used at the lower elementary level have not been developed.

The Need for Inclusion

In both countries, one major criticism of the language policies is that they have not been consistently implemented. The policies have also created a dichotomy between minority and national languages. The national languages of Nigeria and Zimbabwe continue to enjoy prominence, while other indigenous languages receive less support. One example is the Ndau people in Zimbabwe who have been "excluded from the unified Shona" (Nhongo & Tshotsho, 2020, p.4).

Arising from the above discussion, it is evident that most of the language policies formulated in the two countries have not been implemented and implying that students have been denied the opportunity of learning in

their mother tongue. This approach does not promote inclusion, and consequently, pupils who are not proficient in the language of instruction may become passive learners because they cannot participate fully in class (Makoni & Makoni, 2022). The failure of government to provide relevant indigenous-language learning materials has also denied pupils access to quality education (Ndukwe, 2015, cited in Mokibelo, Akinkurolere & Mhindu, 2024).

How has EMI enhanced educational inclusion and what are its prospects in Nigeria and Zimbabwe?

Nigeria

Research shows that scholars have viewed this question from both positive and negative angles. Some argue that English has enhanced inclusion (Obiakor, 2022 & Njoku, 2017), while others contend that it has promoted exclusion (Jegade, Yusuf & Aliyu, 2024). According to UNICEF (2022), 70% of Nigerian children lack satisfactory reading ability and the ability to solve mathematical problems; this has been linked to the role of EMI. Consequently, it has contributed to an increase in the dropout rate (Sa'ad & Usman, 2014). For example, data from the National Senior Secondary Education Commission (NSSEC) indicate that in the 2023/2024 session, 127,067 students dropped out of senior secondary schools (2.51% of the learners) nationwide (Okeke, 2025). This suggests that school dropout is a major crisis. Jegede, Yusuf and Aliyu (2024) opine that the use of EMI in Nigeria has inhibited the comprehension abilities of pupils, and made them passive learners as a result of linguistic barriers.

Njoku (2017) states that English is pivotal to Nigeria's educational system, particularly because key skills and knowledge are acquired through its use. The language is instrumental to human development in the country (Obiegbu, 2015). In addition, leading cultural figures, authors, and actors have gained global recognition as a result of their mastery of English language in Nigeria (Sanusi, 2024). Other advantages are "better job opportunities, higher family income, higher productivity, access to better health facilities, improved standard of living, [and the] ability to participate in the life of the community" (Njoku, 2017, p. 219). EMI has served as a symbol of integration in Nigeria as pupils from diverse ethnic groups have been able to learn the same content, thereby promoting a degree of national unity (Obiegbu, 2015; Tom-Lawyer, 2011). Consequently, Nigerians, who have mastered the language can more easily have access to education (Njoku, 2017).

Its Prospects

English has good prospects in Nigeria as it is widely recognised as both the official and educationally preferred language of the country. English is designated the medium of instruction from secondary school onwards (NLP,

2022). However, the Nigerian government has yet to implement this policy after three years (Okeke, 2024 & Okoye, 2023). EMI will continue to dominate and remain pivotal for a significant period because it serves as the medium through which all curriculum subjects are taught (Anyanwu, 2022), except for indigenous languages taught as subjects. It is the official language and a lingua franca in Nigeria. The global status of English further strengthens its position as an international language. Consequently, it opens doors to better career prospects and serves as a pathway into higher education. In addition, it is the language of integration and Nigeria attracts direct investments from English speaking countries partly because of its widespread use (Euromonitor, 2015).

Zimbabwe

According to Khama (2021), who conducted a study on the use of English as a language of instruction and its implications for social justice in primary schools in the Chivi District, English is associated with low levels of academic achievement due to teacher and student non-proficiency in the language. The use of English promotes social injustice because it stifles multilingualism, encourages a lack of self-confidence and leads to linguistic displacement and a diminished role for indigenous languages.

Its use at the expense of indigenous languages has also resulted in an increased dropout rate, as indicated by Makomborere (2016), whose study revealed that 40,000 students left higher education institutions nationwide. Moreover, 32% of rural school students dropped out of school countrywide (Tshili, 2016; as cited in Ngwenya, 2017). This means that out of every 100 students in rural areas, 32 dropped out of school before completing their education.

On the other hand, Mufanечиya and Mufanечиya (2010) examined the use of EMI in Zimbabwean primary schools and concluded that the hegemony of English remains deeply entrenched in the minds of tutors and pupils because it is perceived as a passport to success and the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Similarly, Marungudzi (2009) investigated the perspectives of secondary school teachers in the Masvingo District regarding English as a language of learning and teaching and found that they favoured the use of EMI despite the difficulties with its use.

Viriri and Ndimande-Hiongwa (2023) examined African languages as mediums of assessment in higher education and concluded that their use compromised quality supervision. Likewise, Mukorera (2015) explored the influence of Zimbabwean teachers' and learners' attitudes towards English on language use in primary classrooms. The study revealed that parents, stakeholders, teachers, and students favoured the use of EMI, although teachers and students frequently code-switched to overcome difficulties during the schooling process.

Prospects

Though English is widely regarded as a gateway to success in Zimbabwe, there have been mixed reactions towards its use as a medium of instruction. Nevertheless, the global relevance of English suggests that it has strong prospects in Zimbabwe. Parents and teachers' perceptions indicate that the language is educationally preferred (Gudyanga, Wadesango & Dzirikure, 2015; Nkwe & Maringudzi, 2015). Moreover, it has been the medium of instruction from primary grade four upwards and serves as the official language of the country, demonstrating its central role in Zimbabwe's educational system.

The Need for Inclusion

Research has also indicated that the use of EMI denies some students access to quality education. The low proficiency of teachers and students in the language can result in code-switching during classroom instruction (Muhammad, 2017). However, because of the pivotal role of English in both countries, the language continues to enjoy good prospects (Shizha, 2008).

What are the drawbacks of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction in Nigeria and Zimbabwe?

The language policies of the two countries provide the basis for the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction. The Language Policy of Nigeria (2022) states that pupils should learn through their indigenous languages throughout the school, while the Education Act (1987) of Zimbabwe states that pupils should be taught in their mother tongues during the first three years of elementary schooling. Mokibelo, Akinkurolere, and Mhindu (2024, p. 372) conducted a study reviewing the situation of indigenous languages in language-in-education policies in Botswana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, and found that "policy inertia, resource limitations, weak parental support, high school drop-out, cultural misfit, and societal attitudes" are among the major challenges associated with the use of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction. In a related study, Fadokun (2023) in rethinking the role of language in education, noted that mother tongue education can potentially promote inclusion and improve the quality of learning.

Nigeria

The main challenges of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction include a shortage of indigenous language-teachers, inadequate government funding, a lack of resources, low motivation, and poor preparation of teachers (Obiego & Eke, 2021). Obiakor (2024), for example, assessed the implementation of the language of instruction policy in Nigeria and found that

the policy requiring pupils to be taught in indigenous languages has a lower rate of implementation in private schools than in public schools. Similarly, implementation is lower in urban areas than in rural areas.

A study conducted by Akinsanya and Tella (2019) revealed that the global status of English, the underdevelopment of Nigerian languages, the shortage of specialists in indigenous languages and insufficient commitment by the government are among the main challenges confronting indigenous languages. Jegede, Yusuf and Aliyu (2024) also highlighted challenges such as scarcity of resources and lack of language specialists. Okpala, Alaku and Sule (2023) identified the importance of the global status of English, the shortage of indigenous language specialists, concerns about the effect of mother-tongue instruction on English proficiency, and the lack of resources, teaching aids and textbooks as additional obstacles. Ozoemena, Ngwoke and Nwokolo (2021) found that the non-availability of equivalent names for concepts in indigenous languages and Nigeria's plurilingual landscape are also important challenges that should be considered.

Zimbabwe

The challenges associated with indigenous languages as mediums of instruction have been explored extensively by researchers in Zimbabwe. For example, a study on the attitudes of student teachers towards teaching mathematics through Chishona, showed that students and teachers held negative attitudes towards learning mathematics in indigenous languages. In addition, respondents in the preferred learning through English because they believed it would make them more competitive in the global employment market (Chivhanga, & Sylod, 2014). Moreover, a study conducted by Mufenchiya and Mufenchiya (2010) revealed that students and teachers were positively inclined towards EMI, as it was considered to be a pathway to upward mobility and the acquisition of skills and knowledge. In the same vein, Marungudzi (2009) asserted that teachers viewed English positively despite the difficulties associated with its use. They preferred EMI, although the government had not adequately supported its implementation.

In addition, most high-income parents prefer to enrol their children in schools where EMI dominates, a view that contradicts the language policy (Mlambo 2002 & 2009; as cited in Nkomo, 2011). Consequently, the government appears to lack the political will to enforce its own language policy (Shizha 2012). In this context, endogenous languages are regarded as unscientific, whereas the exogenous languages are perceived as scientific and associated with status and social capital (Shizha, 2010). Furthermore, the poor attitude of teachers toward indigenous languages is also a critical factor inhibiting their use in teaching and learning (Nkwe & Marungudzi, 2015). Another concern is that English is a compulsory subject at the O-Level stage

of secondary education in Zimbabwe (Hungwe, 2007; as cited in Nkwe & Marungudzi, 2015), which means indigenous languages are accorded a lower status.

The Need for Inclusion

Children who do not speak the indigenous languages prescribed as mediums of instruction may experience marginalisation. The non-implementation of the policies can hinder access to quality education and students may also drop out of school due to discouragement. According to a UNESCO report (2021), approximately 244 million children and youths were out of school globally. Similarly, a later report indicated that 33% of school dropouts were from developing countries (UNESCO, 2025). The groups most likely to experience marginalisation in Zimbabwe include Tonga, Kalanga, Chewa, Kalanga, Shangani communities (Mpofu & Salawu, 2018), while in Nigeria, the burden falls on pupils from minority-language backgrounds (Worukwo, 2023). Finally, if teachers are positively inclined towards English, they may be reluctant to implement language policies that appear to offer limited support for learners with lower levels of English proficiency.

A comparative synthesis of the above findings in relation to educational language policies, implementation barriers, and country differences between Nigeria and Zimbabwe is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparative Synthesis

Educational Language Policies		
Year	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
1908		English should be maintained as the sole medium of instruction in Zimbabwe
1977 revised 1981	The mother tongue in early primary school, thereafter English	
1987 Education Act		Mother tongues, Shona and Ndebele in the first three years, then English from the fourth year
1987 Act revised in 1990 and 2006 amendment		Mother tongues, Shona, Ndebele and some minority languages (Tong, Kalanga, Venda, Shangani and others) in the first three years , then English from the fourth year
2013 Constitution		16 languages were recognized as official. More indigenous languages were taught at lower primary school
2004	The language of environment in the first three years, thereafter English	

2014	The language of immediate environment in monolingual communities the first three years, thereafter English	
2022	Mother tongue shall be the medium of instruction throughout primary school and thereafter, English	
Implementation Barriers		
Country	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
	There is lack of continuity in policies	The attitudes of parents, teachers and educational stakeholders to indigenous languages
	The rate of implementation is lower in private schools than in public schools	Government lacks the will power to reverse the hegemonic policies
	The heterogeneous nature of Nigeria	The low status accorded to African languages
	The teachers' ignorance of the policies	English is preferred as a medium of instruction
	Inconsistencies in implementation	Teachers were not involved in the development of the policies
Effects of Inclusion		
Areas of Inclusion	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
Access to quality Education	Pupils are denied effective learning because English is often used as the medium of instruction	Learners experience difficulties accessing quality education when English dominates classroom instruction
Classroom Participation	Students who are not proficient may become passive learners	Learners with limited English proficiency may struggle to engage actively in lessons
Educational Equity	Inequity exists because language policies are implemented more effectively in public schools than in private schools	Educational inequality persists as dominant languages such as Shona, Ndebele and English receive greater recognition than other languages
Policy Implementation	Policies promoting indigenous languages exist but are inconsistently implemented	Reforms recognizing minority languages have often remained unimplemented in practice
Learning Outcomes	Learning in unfamiliar languages negatively affects comprehension and academic performance	Learners perform better when indigenous languages are included in instruction
Cultural Identity and Preservation	Failure to promote indigenous languages may weaken cultural identity and contribute to language loss	Marginalization of local languages threatens cultural preservation and indigenous identity
Country Differences		

Areas of Comparison	Nigeria	Zimbabwe
Number of Indigenous languages	Over 500 indigenous languages (about 520 identified)	About 18 officially recognized indigenous languages
Major indigenous languages	Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are the major dominant languages	Shona and Ndebele are the dominant indigenous languages
Official Language Policy Framework	Nigeria introduced an official language compendium in 2022	Zimbabwe has no single comprehensive policy document
Medium of instruction	Mother tongue or language of immediate community (LIC) is recommended in early/basic education, thereafter English in secondary school	Ndebele/ Shona may be used in lower primary then English from grade 4
Recent Policy Directions	The 2022 policy introduced the late exit model extending indigenous language instruction through primary school	Revisions in 1990 and 2006 attempted to expand minority-language inclusion though implementation remained weak
Implementation Challenges	Major challenges include lack of teachers, lack of instructional resources, multilingual urban settings and ambiguous interpretation of LIC	Negative attitudes toward indigenous languages, lack of political will and limited government support
Teacher Involvement in Policy Development	Research highlights insufficient teacher awareness and preparedness regarding implementation	Teachers were largely excluded from drafting educational language policy
Impact on Inclusion	Learners with weak English proficiency may become passive learners and experience exclusion	Learners from minority language groups may experience marginalization and reduce participation

Conclusion

The review of the research literature explored the need for educational inclusion in Nigeria and Zimbabwe, using their language policies as a lens through which to explore the main features of their language-in-education policies, the challenges of policy implementation, the consequences of using English and indigenous languages as mediums of instruction and the prospects of English as a medium of instruction.

The review concludes by underlining the key evidence identified in the research, namely, that the policies have restricted access to quality education and encouraged the marginalisation of indigenous languages. Consequently, many learners have been required to study through an unfamiliar language, thereby affecting learning outcomes and contributing to school dropout rates.

Furthermore, they have also promoted inequality, as the policies have not been implemented in private schools in either of the two countries. They have not been implemented because successive national governments have not enforced them, and parents from higher-income groups preferred to have their children taught in English from kindergarten onwards.

Moreover, the hegemony of English in many Anglophone African countries cannot be underestimated. Although some scholars regard English as a source of exclusion, this study suggests that the language can also enhance inclusion at both local and international levels because of its global status. Therefore, English should be used alongside the indigenous languages rather than in place of them.

Implications

The implications of this study relate primarily to the argument that language-in-education policies in the two countries should be more inclusive. When students are denied access to quality education, they may lose opportunities for academic success and upward social mobility, which may contribute to school dropout.

If language policies are inclusive, students have the potential to learn better, there will be greater equity in classrooms and dropout rates will be reduced. English as a medium of education is not the sole cause of dropouts in schools; if the policies are properly implemented and pupils are taught in their indigenous languages, they will also have the opportunity to effectively learn English. There will be a transfer of skills when English becomes the medium of education in upper-level classes.

The continued marginalisation of local languages may contribute to language endangerment and eventual extinction, thereby reducing opportunities for their future development. Recognising local languages and elevating their status as mediums of instruction represent important strategies for preserving and developing them. Furthermore, such measures can help African children maintain their cultural identities and linguistic heritage.

Recommendations

Arising from the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Key stakeholders should participate in grassroots consultations during the formulation of language-in-education policies. Specifically, teachers and educational practitioners as the primary implementers of policy, should be actively involved in policy development. Governments should provide frameworks and adequate resources for language-in-education policies. Without sufficient resources, such policies risk becoming ‘paper policies’. Governments should also ensure quality education is adequately funded and that policies are effectively enforced.

Teachers should be consulted throughout the policy development process and governments should provide the training and support required for successful implementation. These issues should be incorporated into both in-service and pre-service teacher education as well as continuing professional development programmes.

Researchers should continue to identify gaps in comparative studies of language policies in Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Future research should evaluate the outcome of policies and engage with policy stakeholders and practitioners (Tseng 2012). From a policy perspective, language-in-education policies should be implemented effectively and designed to be genuinely inclusive. English can be used alongside mother tongues as instructional languages rather than replacing them (Jegade, Yusuf & Aliyu, 2024).

Adherence to these recommendations has the potential to lead to improvements in the quality of education in both countries and contribute to broader economic, social and political development

Conflict of Interest: The authors reported no conflict of interest.

Data Availability: All data are included in the content of the paper.

Funding Statement: The authors did not obtain any funding for this research.

References:

1. Adeline, D. (2025). *Language policies in Africa: Practices and issues*. The 12th Iberian Congress of African Studies, University of Barcelona. <https://redestudioafricanos.org>
2. Adejimola, A. (2010). Language policy provisions and curriculum issues: The challenges for secondary schools in Nigeria. *US -China Education Review*, 7(11), 53-61.
3. Alaku, M, Okpala, N., & Sule, B. (2023). Integrating mother tongue with English for successful teaching and learning in secondary schools in Nigeria. *International Journal of Library Science & Education Research*, 29(8), 1-12.
4. Akinsanya, P., & Tella, D. (2019). Tongue in education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 6(2), 1-14.
5. Akumbu, P., & Blastus, C. (2013). Introduction: Language policy implementation in Africa: What is holding us back? In P. W. Akumbu and Blasius Chiatoh (Eds.), *Language policy in Africa: Perspectives for Cameroon*, (pp.1–9).
6. Anyanwu, E. (2022). Problems and prospects of teaching the English language in the era of digitalization. *IDOSR Journal of Communication and English*, 7(1), 1-7.

7. Anukaenyi, B. (2019, March 17-19). Language diversity and language policy in education in Nigeria: A critical review [Paper presentation] International Conference on Teaching, Learning and Education Berlin, Germany. <https://www.dpublication.com>
8. Asuru, V., & Njigwum, A. (2020). Predicting students' performance in SSCE English language from their performance JSCE English language, *Nigerian Universities Journal of Education*, 1(1), 28-38.
9. Awuor, E. (2019). Language policy in education: The practicality of its implementation and the way forward. *Journal of Language, Technology and Entrepreneurship in Africa*, 10(1).
10. Bendor-Samuel, J. (2025). *Bantu Languages*. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.Britannica.com>
11. Central Intelligence Agency. (2024) *Nigeria*. In The World Factbook. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov>
12. Chiatoh, B. (2005). Language education and development. *ADEA Newsletter*, 17(2), 3-7.
13. Chivhanga, E., & Chimhenga, M. (2013). Language planning in Zimbabwe: The use of indigenous languages (Shona) as a medium of instruction in primary schools. *Journal Of Humanities and Social Science* 12(5), 58-68.
14. Chivhanga, E., & Sylod, C. (2014). Student teachers' attitude towards the use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction in the teaching of science subjects in primary schools of Zimbabwe. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 4(4), 37-43.
15. Eru, J., Ogi, M., & Ikpe, J. (2019). Educational policy implementation in Nigeria and challenges strategies. *BSUJEM*, 1(2), 261-266.
16. Euromonitor (2015). English quantitative indicators: Cameroon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Pakistan. British Council.
17. Fadokun, J. (2023). Rethinking the role of language in education. *International Journal of Education, Library and Information Communication Technology*, 2(1), 17-23.
18. Federal Government of Nigeria (1981). *National Policy on Education* (Rev. ed). Lagos: Federal Government Printer.
19. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. NERDC.
20. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). *National Policy on Education*. NERDC.
21. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2022). *National Language Policy*. NERDC.
22. Government of Zimbabwe (1987). *Zimbabwe Education Act*. University of Zimbabwe Publications.

23. Fettes, M., & Karamouzian, M. (2018). Inclusion in education: Challenges for linguistic policy and research. In M. Siner et al. (Eds.) *Language Policy and Language Acquisition Planning (15)*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-75963-0_13.
24. Gudyanga, E., Wadesango, N., & Dzirikure, L. (2015). Parents' and teachers' perceptions on the use of language in early childhood development in Norton District. *International Journal of Educational Science, 11*(2), 177-186.
25. Hang'ombe, K., & Mumpande, I. (2020). Language situation and language policy in-education in Zimbabwe: A perspective towards Tonga learners. *Multilingual Margins, 7*(3), 84-98
26. Heugh, K. (2006). Language education policies in Africa. *Encyclopaedia of Language & Linguistics, 6*, 414-422.
27. Hungwe, K. (2007). Language policy in Zimbabwean education: Historical antecedents and contemporary issues. *Compare, 37*(2), 135-149.
28. Ibrahimov, E. (2023, 4-7 May). The main factors shaping the language policy [Paper presentation]. 6th International Scientific Conference., Manchester. United Kingdom.
29. Ibrahim, J., & Gwandu, S. (2016). Language policy on education in Nigeria: Challenges of multilingual education and the future of English language. *American Research Journal of English and Literature, 2*, 1-10.
30. Iwuchukwu, M. (2021). Language Education in Nigeria: Contemporary issues and the way Forward. *Cognizance Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, 1*, 1-20.
31. Jegede, O., Yusuf, O., & Aliyu, A. (2024). Inclusive education in the 21st Century: solving the language of instruction puzzle in Nigerian public primary schools.: A Festschrift in Honour of an Erudite Scholar, Rev. Dr. (Mrs) Oluwatoyin Abike Odeleye,(pp. 147-157). College Press.
32. Kamwangamalu, N. (2013). Effects of policy on English medium instruction in Africa. *World Englishes, 32*(3). <https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12034>
33. Kadenge, M.,& Nkomo, D. (2011) The politics of English language in Zimbabwe. *Language Matters, 422*, 248-263. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10228195.2011.581679>
34. Kangira, J. (2017). Challenges of the implementation of language policies in Southern Africa: The way forward? *Inkanyiso, Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 8*(2), 68-73.

35. Kart, A., & Kart, M. (2021). Academic and social effects of inclusion on students without disabilities: A review of the literature. *Educational Sciences*, 11(16), 1-13.
36. Khan, A. (2016). Policy implementation: Some aspects and issues. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, 16 (3), 3-12.
37. Macaro, E. (2018) *English medium instruction: Content and language in policy and practice*. Oxford University Press.
38. Manhanga, S. (2017). Results performance mismatch: Implications on English language assessment in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Advance in Social Science and Humanities*. 3(6).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15520/jassh306228>
39. Marungudzi, A. (2009). *English as a language of learning and teaching: Perspectives of Secondary school teachers in Masvingo District* [Master's Thesis]. University of South Africa.
40. Mazuruse, M. (2018). Interrogating paradoxes in the multilingual provisions of the new 2013 Zimbabwean Constitution, *The Namibian CPD Journal for Educators.*, 3 (1), 8-93.
<https://doi.org/10.32642/ncpdje.v1.1292>
41. Mokibelo, E., Akinkulolere, S. & Mhindu, A. A review of indigenous languages situation in languages-in-education policies in Botswana, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe: A comparative and critical approach. *US-China Education Review*, 14(11), 738-754.
42. Mufanechiya, A., & Mufanechiya, T. (2010). Using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the teaching of mathematics in the Zimbabwean junior primary schools: Desirable or feasible? *Journal of Asian Scientific Research*, 1(4), 194-203.
43. Mukorera, M. (2015). Exploring the influence of Zimbabwean teachers' and learners' attitudes towards English Language use in primary classrooms. [EdD thesis], The Open University, Zimbabwe.
<https://doi.org/10.21954/ou.ro.0000f0009>
44. Muzoora, M., Terry, D., & Asiimwe, A. (2014). The valorisation of African languages and policies in the African education systems: A Case of Uganda. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 2(1), 42-50. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2014.020105>.
45. Nhongo, R. (2013). A national language policy for Zimbabwe in the twenty-first century: Myth or Reality? *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(6), 1208-1215.
46. Nhongo, R., & Tshotsho, P. (2020). The problematics of language in-education policies in post-independence in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 56(5), 1-15.

47. Njoku, J. (2017). English language, the Nigerian education system and human development. *UJAH Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities Special Edition*, 18(2), 211-226.
48. Nkwe, T. & Marungudzi, T. (2015). Teachers' perspectives on the use of English as the medium of instruction in Zimbabwean secondary schools. *Journal of African Languages*, 35(1), 43-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2015.1056463>
49. Nyoni, P., Ahmed, M., Philogene M. & Khaing, T. (2023). Implementation of English as a medium of instruction policy in schools: A systematic review. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 11, 413-430.
50. Obiakor, T. (2024). Language of instruction policy in Nigeria: Assessing the implementation and literacy achievement in a multilingual environment. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 109, 1-16.
51. Obiegbo, I. (2015). The English language and sustainable development in Nigeria. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5(2), 82-86.
52. Obiego, & Eke, C. (2021). Challenges facing teaching and learning of Nigerian indigenous languages in the 21st century. *The Colloquium: A Multi-disciplinary Thematic Policy Journal*, 9(1), 243-250.
53. Ogunmodimu, M. (2015). Language policy in Nigeria: Problems, prospects and perspectives. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 5(9), 1-7.
54. Olagbegi-Adegbite, O. (2022). Language policy and early grade instruction in Nigeria: A comparative case study of policy awareness and implementation. In Francis, B and Lesly, B. (Eds). Routledge.
55. Okeke, C. (2024, June 2). 1 year after: FG yet to implement National Language Policy in schools. Daily Trust. <https://dailytrust.com>
56. Okeke, C. (2025, March 6). Abia, Kano, Ebonyi lead in senior secondary school students' dropout. Daily Trust. <https://dailytrust.com>
57. Okoye, C. (2023, January 9). Is our new educational policy a misguided idea? Vanguard Newspaper. <https://www.vanguardngr.com>
58. Opertti, R. (2017) Curriculum in Education 2030 Agenda: Latin America and the Caribbean *Reflection no. 10 on current and critical issues in curriculum, learning and assessment*. UNESCO International Bureau of Education. unesdoc.unesco.org
59. Opare-Kumi, J. (2024). English medium instruction from multilingual contexts: Empirical evidence from Ethiopia. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 105, 1-18.
60. Owojecho, F. (2020). Implementation challenges of national language policy in Nigeria: The roles of the Indigenous Languages. *International Journal of Languages*, 2(1); 270-279.

61. Ozoemena, J., Ngwoke, F., & Nwokolo, B. (2021). Prospects of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Nigerian primary level education. *English Language Teaching*, 14(4), 1-18.
62. Rose, H., Macaro, E., Sahan, K., Aizawa, I., Zhou, S., & Wei, M. 2021. Defining English Medium Instruction: Striving for comparative equivalence. *Language Teaching*, 1-12.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444821000483>
63. Salau, A. (2018, September 23). How Nigeria contributed to Zimbabwe's Independence-*Daily Trust E-Paper*.
64. Shizha, E. (2008). Indigenous? What indigenous knowledge beliefs and attitudes of rural primary school teachers towards indigenous knowledge in the science curriculum in Zimbabwe. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 37(1),80-90.
65. Shizha, E. (2010). Rethinking and reconstituting indigenous knowledge and voices in the academy in Zimbabwe: A decolonisation process. In D. Kapoor &E. Shizha (Eds), *Indigenous knowledge and learning in Asia/Pacific and Africa: Perspectives on development, education and culture* (pp.115-129). Palgrave Macmillan.
66. Shizha, E. (2012). Reclaiming and re-visioning indigenous voices: The case of the language of instruction in science education in Zimbabwean primary schools *Literacy Information*,1(1), 785-793.
<https://doi.org/20533/licej.2040.2589.2012.0116>
67. Sibanda, C. (2020). Impact of linguistic complexity in English language texts in South Africa's Primary school grade 3 to 4 transition. *Issues in Educational*, 30(2).
68. Simons, G., & Fening, C. (2018). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. <http://www.ethnologue.com>.
69. Tom-Lawyer, O. (2011) *English Language: A symbol of national integration in International democratization, good governance and education*. In Lagos State University conference proceedings (pp. 85-90). Lagos State University Press
70. Tsuarei M., & Sani, A. (2024). Indigenous languages as medium of instruction in Nigerian primary schools: Significance and implications. *Tasambo Journal*, 3(1),32-39.
71. UNESCO (2009). *Policy guidelines on inclusion in education*. UNESCO Digital Library.
72. UNESCO (2012). *The millennium development goals report*. UNESCO Digital Library.
73. UNESCO, (2015). *UNESCO and sustainable development goals*. UNESCO Digital Library
74. UNESCO. (2017). *A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education*. UNESCO Digital Library.

75. United Nations. (2023). United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Department of Economic and Social Affairs-Sustainable Development.
76. Umoren, M. (2019). Language planning and language policy in Nigeria: Implementation realities. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies*, 6 (2), 192-197.
77. Umunnakwe, N. (2017). Complementarity or conflict: The role of English in the Nigerian linguistic context. *Everant*, 7, 445-458.
78. Viriri, E. (2013). English as a medium of instruction in Zimbabwe: Inadequacies surrounding its use in rural secondary schools. Germany: Saarbrucken. Lambert Academic Publishing.
79. Viriri, E., & Ndimande-Hiongwa, N. (2023). African languages as media of assessment in the teaching indigenous languages in higher education: A paradigm shift. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 57(2), 1-20.
80. Woodbridge, M. (2015). From MDGs to SDGs: What are the Sustainable Development Goals? ICLEI Briefing Sheets. ICLEI Local Government for Sustainability.