The Role of Language In Uniting Two Different Ethnic Groups: A Case Of Tumbuka Language In Chasefu District, Eastern Province Of Zambia

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the role of Tumbuka language in uniting two ethnic groups of different origins - the actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin - into one united Tumbuka ethnic group of Chasefu District. The study was conducted in Chasefu District formerly part of Lundazi District. Chasefu shares its boundary with Malawi, Chama and Lundazi. There are two major ethnic groups in this district collectively called Tumbuka-speaking people. These are the actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin. The actual Tumbukas are the majority and they were the first ones to settle there while Tumbukas of Ngoni origin are the minority group. The study had the following two (2) objectives: (i) Evaluate how the Tumbuka language has united the actual Tumbukas and the Ngonis into one (1) ethnic group (Tumbuka) of Chasefu (ii) Show specific circumstances that Tumbuka language unites different ethnic groups in Chasefu. This research used triangulation to narrate and describe the qualitative findings. The instruments used in this research are interview guides, questionnaires and digital recording devices. The sample consisted of selected members of Magodi Chiefdom. It had 101 participants involving both males and females. The participants were purposively picked. This study has shown a critical role language plays in uniting different ethnic groups of different origins. The findings show that: (i) there has been no segregation between the ethnic groups since the colonial leadership, (ii) the Tumbuka and the Ngoni have been paying tribute to ancestors during the Zengani ceremony (iii) during the ceremony the Tumbuka and the Ngoni dance common dances and songs are done in Tumbuka language, (iv) intermarriages further united by giving birth to children who belong to two different ethnic groups whose language is Tumbuka, (v) this has given two different ethnic groups a single identity as Tumbuka ethnic group, (vi) few elderly members of the Ngoni minority groups are still very attached to the cultural values of their community, (vii) in special occasions such as funerals and traditional ceremonies, they wear the animal skins, speak telegraphic Ngoni language (viii) the adoption of Tumbuka language by the Ngoni people has made them lose linguistic identity. These findings are particularly useful in the role of language in uniting different ethnic groups. Furthermore, the findings of the study may be used as additional information or as extra reference by other researchers who will be interested in carrying out further research on the role of language in uniting ethnic groups of different origin into one ethnic group.

Keywords: Ethnic group, Language, Liguistics, Zengani

. INTRODUCTION

Background

Tumbuka language is the language of identity in Chasefu District. However, this district has two major ethnic groups with different backgrounds. These are the Tumbuka and the Ngoni. The Tumbuka are further divided into two main groups namely, the Longwes of Malandula and the Dokowes and Bazas of Langwani. These are the ones referred to as actual Tumbukas

Origin of the Tumbuka

Primary data shows that Tumbukas of the Longwes originated from Nkhamanga in Rumphi under Paramount Chief Chikulamayembe of the Tumbuka people of Malawi. They entered Zambia in the early 1780s through Manda Hill and moved as far as Mpingozi. The Longwes marked boundaries with stones with the Senga of Chama at a place today known as Nyamarya. They once settled in the valley and finally resolved to settle at Katete River near Lake Beu. The Longwes did not find

any ethnic group already settled in the present day Chasefu District.

The Tumbuka of the Dokowes and the Bazas entered Zambia through Mzimba in Malawi in the early 1900s. The Tumbuka and the Ngoni waged war at Holla mountain and the former were defeated completely and incorporated into the Ngoni clan of Mumbarwa of Muzimba Malawi. However, despite being defeated, the Tumbuka did not lose their language to adopt Ngoni language but vice-versa. This is because during this war the Ngoni had already lost their language due to the fact that they had married women from other ethnic groups speaking different languages and assimilated them in their ethnic group. These marriages were as a result of the fact that the Ngoni did not come with their own Ngoni women.

The defeated Dokowes and Bazas left this place and came to settle in the present-day Zambia in a place known as Langwani in Chasefu. These Tumbukas were under the leadership of Mutambi and Kanyanyu whose uncle was Chipelepele. Chipelepele had some serious misunderstandings with his nephew Kanyanyu. It is not clearly known how far Chipelepele moved to mark the Tumbuka territory. However, it is strongly believed that he went as far as meeting the Senga of Kambombo in the present-day Chama in Mchinga Province. In Sengaland he was arrested and his hands cut off and was released after having explained that he was the leader of the Tumbuka.

The Ngoni people who settled in Chasefu came from Malawi. This is the breakaway group of the Ngoni that moved northwards and eventually settled in the area southeast of Lake Tanganyika. From there the group sent out branches northwards and to the southeast. Some of the groups settled in Northern and Central Malawi in the 1830's. Those who settled in the North settled among the Tumbuka and adopted Tumbuka as their language (Thompson 1981).

The first groups of the Ngoni to come to Chasefu were those of the Mkoko village. They came in 1901 and settled and established themselves around the area today known as Kanyanga and Emusa. This was the first contact between the Tumbuka and the Ngoni in Chasefu. Emusa is the place where Chasefu District administration is now. It was in the first place called Chalimbana. The second group of the Ngoni to enter Chasefu was the Ngoni of Kamoto who found Mkoko had already settled and established themselves in 1904. The Ngoni under Kamoto in the first place settled at a place today known as Chinkhuku. They are believed to be cousins.

The third group was the Ngoni of Chief Magodi under the leadership of Tengayumo in 1905. Tengayumo was charged by Mumberwa to collect tribute on his behalf from both the Tumbukas and Ngonis in Chasefu. This is because Tengayumo was one of the trusted Indunas and was further appointed by the colonial masters to rule over the already settled Tumbukas. It is for this reason that it was called Tumbuka/Ngoni Native Authority. These three Ngoni groups were Ngonis by origin but Tumbukas by language.

Role of Language
There is relatively higher prevalence of misunderstandings in our societies due to the ethno-linguistic fragmentation. Some languages and their ethnic groupings appear to be superior to others (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2011). This study was looking at language as a major factor in uniting two different ethnic groups. The problem investigated was how Tumbuka language, which is the language of the defeated group, became one of the uniting factors between the Tumbuka and Ngoni into one ethnic group despite having different backgrounds, when in actual fact it should have been the victors controlling the language of the defeated group.

This study investigated the role Tumbuka language plays in the unification of two different ethnic groups into one united Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group of Chasefu in Eastern Zambia. Language in Zambia is associated with tribe (Mwansa, 2007). This comes from the fact that many tribal groupings in the past were independent or semi-autonomous of other groups: they had their own chiefs, an identified territory and a common history, mythology, cultural practice and above all a well-defined territory and common variety. These facts are more important in the perceptions of members of a tribe or ethnic group because they define them; they give them identity. There is a greater feeling of solidarity, a

sense of belonging, intra-ethnically than extra-ethnicity.

There is only one annual event for the Tumbuka-speaking people of Chasefu known as Zengani traditional ceremony. It is held during the first weekend of the month of October and this has been done since 2002. The ceremony takes place at Emusa in Chasefu. 'Zengani' is a Tumbuka word literally meaning "to build" two ethnic groups of Tumbuka and Ngoni-speaking people of Chasefu. Therefore, the ceremony is one of the public activities that show that the actual Tumbuka people and the Tumbuka of Ngoni origin are one ethnic group.

Aim

The aim of this study was to show that language is one the factors that have united the Tumbuka and the Ngoni into Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group of Chasefu District.

Objectives
i. Evaluate how the Tumbuka language has united the actual Tumbukas and Ngonis into one ethnic group (Tumbuka) in Chasefu.
ii. Show specific circumstances that Tumbuka language unites different ethnic groups in Chasefu.

Research Questions

i. How has the Tumbuka language united the Tumbuka and the Ngoni into one Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group in Chasefu District?
ii. What specific circumstances show that Tumbuka langue has united different ethnic groups in Chasefu?

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the theory of constructivism. Constructivist theory perceives ethnic identity as a socially constructed and fluid entity that can be formed through various means including conquest, colonization or immigration (Wimmer, 2008). Ethnic groups are recognized to be social constructions with 'identifiable origins and histories of expansion and contraction, amalgamation and division' (Posner, 2004:2).

In the view of Brass (2003), constructivists argue that each society has historically constructed marked differences and narratives that influential people can manipulate. They also argue that social categories are not natural, inevitable or unchanging because it is not genes but the internal logic of social discourses that drives identity construction and condition individual's identities with particular groups (Ferejohn, 1991:285). This agrees with the situation in Chasefu district where two different ethnic groups with different backgrounds have regrouped and identified as one ethnic group.

Conceptual Framework
The dimensions of language, culture and ethnicity can be conceptualized in a number of ways, each providing different insights into their character (Blench, 2003). The figure below shows how these three elements can be pictured as independent but interacting.
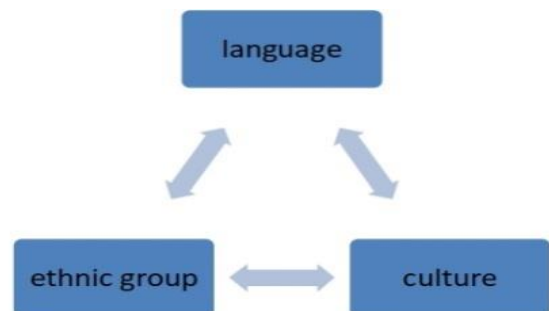
Figure 1: Interaction of Language, Ethnic Group and Culture

In this theory language, history, symbols and culture are significant in instigating and sustaining ethnic rivalry or unity among ethnic groups in a society (Kaufman, 2001). Ethnicity is thus flexible, subjective and changes with interethnic interaction and its purpose is to reinforce and perpetuate social differences for specific goals (Jemma, 2006). However, ethnic identity does not correspond directly to linguistic distinctiveness, and there are fewer languages than ethnic groupings. This study is one of the early cuts at building and rebuilding on a fortified constructivist foundation on ground that one cannot talk about culture and ethnic group without language.

This theory shows different functions that language plays and sometimes the number

of such functions a language plays can make it appear to be superior or inferior to others. Examples of such functions include unifying ethnic groups and breaking unequal access to power. Social or economic advantages lead to redefinitions of boundaries. Sometimes people will claim to belong to a different language variety and they can see advantages of belonging there.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Biblical View

> "... *Then Jehovah went down to see the city and the tower that the sons of men had built. Jehovah said, Look! They are one people with one language and this is what they have started to do. Now there is nothing that they may have in mind to do that will be impossible for them. Come! Let us go down there and confuse their language in order that they may not understand one another's language.*" (Genesis 11:1-9)

The Babylonians opted to build a tower of Babel on the premise that they were able to understand each other because they used one language and were united. This shows how critical language is in uniting human kind.

Language as Uniting Factor in Europe and Asia

Glory (2018) carried out a comparative analysis of the unifying roles of language in Russian and Nigerian States. The two countries were chosen as case studies because Russia, a monolingual state, was believed to be more united compared to Nigeria that is multilingual. The question his work was seeking to answer was on how national unity was fostered by Language. The Russian nation, as a homogeneous nation with time-honoured history and culture, was highly patriotic and strongly united. On the other hand, Nigeria suffers the misfortune of almost losing its sovereignty because of the struggle for power which was often triggered by ethnic affiliations. The study revealed that Language was the chief medium for the communication of civilizations, customs, traditions, habits, wisdom, values and lifestyles of a people, using the English language in Nigeria, while encouraging the learning of mother tongue would help to foster unity.

Husin (2011) notes in his Nation-Building and Malaysia Concept: the objective of the research was to find out whether the development of an integrated nation is difficult to achieve due to the three aspects identified, among them the bid to preserve one's cultural elements; and the elements employed to develop a national identity to unite the different ethnics under the Malaysia concept.

Research findings showed that the Malaysia concept could be reinforced if the traditional elements of each ethnic community are not threatened. This shows the importance of language, which is an element of culture, in uniting ethnicity and the nation at large. This research did not look at the role of language of uniting at national level but in Chasefu District. The study took a broad approach which did not rely on textual analysis only but employed focus group discussions, document analysis and interviews.

Language as Uniting Factor in Africa

Nzunga (2019) believes that the Berlin Treaty of 1885 has had a lot of influence on current state of the majority of countries in Africa because this is the treaty which shared the continent among European powers. Prior to this, Africa ran its affairs as autonomous communities, within a clearly understood ethnic region where language and culture stood out as most significant characteristics. Although the new foreign masters did not always clearly perceive or appreciate these social elements, the diversity and the wealth of these entities were enormous in the African continent. The greatest injustice the colonial masters committed was, undoubtedly, the imposition of their language and culture on the colonized minority groups.

Okpongette (2016) addressed the vexed issue of language question in Nigeria by exploring the unifying significance of the English language. He noted that the unifying and dividing power of language has historically been given a high-minded status. Communities world over learn to communicate what unites them through language. His research maintained that, given the prevalent and ever-increasing mutual suspicion of and linguistic rivalry among the various Nigerian ethno-linguistic groups, English was going to continue to be vibrant. Okpongette was looking at the adoption of a lingua Franca for the attainment of unity and did not look at specific circumstances in language use that have a bearing on unity. This research looked at actual linguistic items used at public gathering fostering unity among different ethnic groups of different origin and language.

An investigation was done by Mahadin and Jafari (2012) on whether there is any relationship between language and culture, and if so, what the relationship between language and culture is. The results of their study indicated that there is a very close relationship between language and culture where culture was found to have a direct effect on language. Language and culture are closely correlated. However, the study did not look at a situation where two ethnic groups in a given community have different places of origin. This is what this research brought out. For example, can ethnic groups of different backgrounds, language and cultural values be united as one tribe under one leader from the minority group whose language is not lingua franca in the district?

Chriost (2003) looked at elements such as language, rituals, clothes, science, beliefs and values that can bring people together. Culture is learnt through an individual relationship with other people. Therefore, culture is not natural, inborn and will-less; it is a social product. Some factors are considerable and momentous in this transmission such as information and knowledge in a society, social changes, social relations and mass media. Thus, culture transmits generation by generation, the elements are carried from one place to another, it is divided into some sub-cultures and it is finally the victim of crises. Therefore, culture cannot be transmitted without a language, hence language has the capacity to unite ethnic groups.

In a study by Mukuthuria (2006), the researcher pointed out that Bugandas were against the development of Kiswahili. He further noted that during the Second World War from 1939 – 1945, Kiswahili was used by the colonial forces that fought side by side with the British. The role of this language at the time was to unify, mobilize and propagate war propaganda among the soldiers and other British colonial subjects in East Africa. During this time, many Ugandan soldiers learnt Kiswahili. This is supported by Kyolaba (2018) according to whom Swahili promotes unity among different ethnic groupings, given that it stems from a combination of languages and cultures in Africa and other areas near the Indian oceans. Precisely, Kyolaba considers the fact that miscommunication sometimes results in what is called war and some few challenges related to miscommunication. Here, the point is that Swahili as a language has one great truth behind it, and that is unity; by unity it means that it gathers people together from different states.

Nikuze (2014) attributed Rwanda's 1994 Genocide to language divisions that were engineered by the colonial masters. Throughout the pre-colonial period, the Hutu and the Tutsi were one people who spoke the same language and lived amongst each other. When the Belgian colonists arrived in 1916, they treated the Hutu and the Tutsi as separate groups. They misinterpreted the existing socio-economic stratifications in Rwanda. Belgians

transformed the three existing socio-economic stratifications into ethnic groups. Referring to the Hamitic ideology (Hamitic, descended from Noah's son Ham), they divided Rwandans into a "conquering" race (the Tutsi), a Bantu race (the Hutu), and pygmoids (the Twa). The Hamitic Ideology supported the idea that the Tutsi belonged to the Nilotic-Hamitic family (Nilotic originates from the term Nile. It refers to ethnic groups mainly inhabiting the Nile Valley or originated in the Nile) while the Hutu belonged to the Bantu family. In 1931, Belgian colonial powers introduced ethnic identity cards indicating which ethnic group each Rwandan citizen belonged to. This further polarized the groups by classifying Rwandans into ethnic groups and making it obligatory for them to carry ethnic identity cards classifying people according to their ethnicity (Newbury, 1995).

However, this research is on the building of social bonds among different ethnic groups without considering the other group as foreigners using the language of the majority while the leader is from the minority. Nikuze's research employed document analysis while this study used document analysis, interviews, focus group and introspection.

When Tanzania won its independence from Britain on 9 December 1961 (*Msanjila, 2009),* there were more than 120 languages spoken throughout the country under different ethnic groups. The abolition of chiefdoms and the declaration of Kiswahili as the national language of Tanzania in 1962 paved the way for the long journey toward building a nation. Professor Yohana P Msanjila added on the tenth anniversary of Julius Kambarage Nyerere:

> *"As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the death of Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the people of Tanzania and Africa remember his great contribution toward uniting the people of Tanzania through the use of an indigenous language, Kiswahili."(Msanjila, 2009:200)*

Compared to Chasefu District, Tanzania had more ethnic groups which were brought together using language as a tool for unite,

Language as Uniting Factor in Zambia

"One Zambia, One Nation" was the motto adopted when Zambia gained independence from the British in 1964. Gordon (2014) adds that the above motto highlighted the people's desire to become a unified nation after being disintegrated during the colonial period. Following the belief that "one nation equals one language", Zambians adopted English as their only official language. English was chosen because it was a neutral language in a multilingual and multiethnic society which Zambia was.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design
This research is a case study and used descriptive designs. Case is deductive in nature. These were chosen to enable the researcher to describe the case in detail, in context and holistic and because of the nature of the research. This study used triangulation methode to corroborate narrative and descriptive research to qualitative research findings or vice versa to give a detailed account of this phenomenon.

This study was qualitative in nature and incorporated an interpretative and naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This method worked effectively as this case involved a number of other factors such as observing for a long time and interpreting gathered data.

Location of the Study
Chasefu is a newly created district in Eastern Province of Zambia. It used to be part of Lundazi before it was declared a district in a presidential address at Emusa in April 2018. Chasefu district share boundaries with Lundazi, Chama and Malawi as shown in the map below.
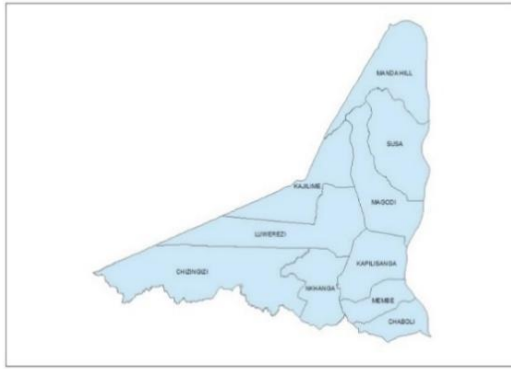
Figure 2: Map of Chasefu District
Source: Chasefu Council

Population and Sample

In this study, the target population was the entire population of Chasefu while the sample comprised 101 participants involving equal number of both males and females. Participants were purposively picked as follows: Chief Magodi, 10 group of headmen (males only), 10 headmen (males), 20 from the business community, 30 chosen from the middle-aged and another 30 from among elderly natives. It must be noted that the leadership structure of the Tumbuka at headman level comprises men only, hence the absence of women in the sample at and above headmanship.

Research Instruments

The study used a variety of research instruments, among them semi-structured interview guide and questionnaires.

Introspection
The Tumbuka and the Ngoni people of Chasefu have lived together for a long period as one ethnic group with one language. It is known that the two are from different ethnic background with different language orientations. The researcher examined this knowledge on the topic which was used as additional data.

Observation
The focus during the ceremony was on the language used, especially through the songs and praises that were cited during the ceremony.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide
A type of interview in which the interviewer asks a series of semi-structured questions to which group and then probes more deeply with open ended questions to obtain additional information (Bell, 2007). A serious of structured questions were prepared during the study.

Focus Groups Interview Guide (FG)
In this study the researcher organized three (3) focus groups of six (6) individuals (3 females, 3 males). The researcher played the role of a moderator in order to gather in-depth information.

Data Collection Techniques
Data was collected using the research instruments through observation, focus groups and interviews techniques. The already existing knowledge about the two ethnic groups gave great deal of data since the researcher is a native speaker of Tumbuka. Two other techniques for collecting data immensely required recording and transcribing the interviews as they were in Tumbuka language. Secondary data was collected through observing the proceedings at the ceremony. Additionally people were given questions to respond and responses were later collected.

Data Analysis
Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative information. The information which was collected was put into identified themes and categories after which interpretations and discussions were made. In order to attain authenticity, some direct quotations from respondents' were included in the text. Photos of letters were captured from original copies. Data analysis started during data collection whereby field notes and transcriptions were thematically arranged with respect to the research objectives and questions. Data was presented according to the research questions. Each question's data was segmented according to how it was collected.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Tumbuka Language has United Actual Tumbukas and Ngonis into One Tumbuka Speaking Ethnic Group.
With regard to the first question on how Tumbuka language has united the Tumbuka and the Ngoni into one Tumbuka-peaking ethnic group, one headman commented:

> *Tikusankhana mitundu yayi. Kufuma pa usamunda*

tilikumilira pamodzi kuba munthu yumoza. (We do not segregate each other; we are one since the colonial leadership)

Another respondant said:

Mitundu yose yibili yikuwapo pa mithulo kuti mwamba ucitike ndipo wende makola. (Both ethnic groups pay tribute during Zengani preparations)

Another headman responded:

Tose tikuvina magule yamoza nga Vimbuza, Muganda, Ngoma, Fwemba, and Citelele. Tumbukas and Ngonis share common ideas, dances such as Vimbuza, Muganda, Ngoma, Fwemba, and Citelele and sing together the songs in Tumbuka.

A senior member of the community had this to say:

Ise kuno kwithu tose tatolena ndipo ŵana mbatose ndipo ŵakuyowoya ciyuwoyero cimoza kuti tipange mutundu umoza. (Ngonis and Tumbukas have intermarried and given birth to children that belong to two different ethnic groups whose language is Tumbuka.)

A member from the business community said:

Kutorerana kwapangiska tiŵebapulikana. Ndipo ku masukulu, machalichi ndipo namalo yanchezgo nga ni Chikaya rediyo tikupulika ciyoyero cimoza. (Intermarriages have further facilitated for the Tumbukas and Ngonis to understand each other without difficulties. This is because they are in one and the same community where they use Tumbuka language to communicate in churches, schools, mass media for example Radio Chikaya)

4.1.1. Tumbuka Language has United Actual Tumbukas and Ngonis into One Tumbuka Speaking Ethnic Group.

With regard to the first question on how Tumbuka language has united the Tumbuka and the Ngoni into one Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group, the researcher administered the question during a focus group discussion with the elderly members of the community.

One of the respondents said that they are one people in that chiefdom. The respondent said:

Batumbuka na bangoni ba mu Chasefu bakumanyikwa kuŵa banthu ba moza.Ŵose ba ku cemeka kuti batumbuka. (The Ngonis and Tumbukas of Chasefu district have always been represented as one group of people. They have always been called Tumbuka Native Authority [TNA].)

Another respondent emphasized:

Magodi wausa kufuma mucilimika ca 1904. Wausa bangoni na batumbuka kwa vilimika 116 kwambula kurwa nkhondo yiliyose yayi mpaka pano. (Magodi has ruled from 1904. There has never been any physical confrontation between the Ngonis and Tumbukas for 116 years now.)

Another respondent added that:

Batumbuka nabangoni bakupakana mphaka zaminda kwambula viwawa. Kuti panji uyu ni m'ngoni panji m'tumbuka yayi. (Ngonis and Tumbukas share field boundaries without conflicts).

One of the respondents also pointed at cultural interaction. He said:

Kuyoŵoya citumbuka kwa pangiska kuti titolalana miyambo. Miyimbo iyi ikusazgirapo magule nga ni Vimbuza. Nyengo zino batumbuka ba kuvina ngoma ndiposo bangoni ba kuvina vimbuza. (The use of Tumbuka has allowed transmission of culture. These include traditional dances such as Vimbuza. Vimbuza used to be a dance for Tumbukas but now Ngonis dance vimbuza while Tumbukas dance ngoma as well which was initially for the Ngonis).

One respondent complemented:

Para tikuyoŵoya ciyoŵoyelo cimoza tikupulika kuti ndise bamoza ndipo ndise ba kukolelezgana comene naga uli

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tili kufoma kuviwa vopambana. (When we speak one language, we feel we are one and we get more united as one group of people despite having originated from different ethnic groups)

Tumbuka language and culture have dominated the Ngoni and they have finally been incorporated into Tumbuka and the two have become one. The Ngonis lost everything that includes language and culture.

The few elderly members of the Ngoni minority groups are still very attached to the cultural values of their community. In special occasions such as funerals and traditional ceremonies, they wear the animal skins, speak telegraphic Ngoni and dance the Ngoma dance. Even when their elders speak to them in mother tongue (telegraphic Ngoni, for example, when they use certain Ngoni content words when asking for common things. For instance, *amaqanda* 'eggs', *isixwembe* 'wooden ladle', *licansi* 'a mat' *isigcogco* 'hand-ring' and other content words they answer back in Tumbuka language. However, the Ngonis have lost it all in the hands of Tumbuka. In terms of language and culture, they have become one tribe.

The adoption of Tumbuka language by the Ngoni people has made them lose their linguistic identity. They adopted Tumbuka language because they had married Tumbuka women since the Ngoni did not come with their women. Secondly, they were a minority so their language did not have effect on the majority Tumbuka. The third reason is that they entered Zambia as Tumbuka-speaking group from Malawi. Therefore, the Ngonis of Magodi are not identified by the language they use because they use Tumbuka language. This has always united the two ethnic groups for a long time.

Specific Circumstances Show that Tumbuka Language has United Different Ethnic Groups in Chasefu District.
With regard to the first question, how Tumbuka language has united the Tumbuka and the Ngoni people into one Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group, interviews, focus group discussion, observation and note taking were conducted

in order to find out the views of the respondents.

The data was collected from participants through observation with the aid of a recorder. The English equivalents are not presentational of the diction, register and structure of the Tumbuka utterances but simply the meaning. The following are the findings:

"Zengani" 'to bring together'
> *Umodza withu, mwambo withu nacitukuko cithu.* (Our oneness, our traditional ceremony and our development)
> *Umodza pakati pithu.* 'Oneness in our midst'
> *Kufwaso mchalo ca magodi.* (Flourishing in the land of Magodi)

Specific Circumstances that Show that Tumbuka Language has United Two Different Ethnic Groups in Chasefu District.
There are specific words showing elements of unity in public gatherings. For instance, *Zengani Traditional Ceremony.*

The respondents stated:
> *"Tamufikirani pano bapapi ndimwe mukutidangirira. Tilikutayana kuthupi kwene ku muzimu tilipamoza Atengayumo adada ŵithu".* (Dear parents, you are the one taking the leading role in our midst. We are separated physically but spiritually we are together, Tengayumo our father)

During the proceedings of 2019 Zengani Traditional Ceremony the researcher observed, recorded and transcribed some semantics that shows unity between the two ethnic groups. The following were the data and notes gathered.

Theme of the 17th Zengani Ceremony-2019 was as follows
> *Umodza Mcitukuko Na Mwambo Withu Wa Zengani* (Oneness in Development and in Our Zengani Traditional Ceremony'
> *"Umodza withu, mwambo withu nacitukuko cithu"* (Our oneness, our culture, our development)

"Umodza pakati pithu" (Oneness in our midst)

When asked about the about names of the Tumbuka and Ngoni Indunas, one senior participant replied:

*Tilije batumbuka na bangoni tiliwaka bamoza na ciyowoyero cimoza (*We do not have Tumbukas and Ngonis. We are just one ethnic group with one Tumbuka language)

These live as one family.

"Kufwasa mchalo ca magodi" (flourishing in the land of Magodi)

Both ethnic groups use one and the same language during dances

Ngoma Dance Song

Yatiphalira nkhosi eeee " we are told by Nkhosi eeee"

kuti batichema X 2   *"that we are called X 2"*

eeeeeee Magodi X2   *"eeeeeee Magodi X 2"*

Tirutenge eeee X 2   *"Let us go eeee X 2"*

This song is in Tumbuka language while Ngoma is a Ngoni war dance. The dance reminds the Ngoni of their wars. Therefore, language is in form of speech, songs or writing can construct and deconstruct knowledge.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Tumbuka Language has United Actual Tumbukas and Ngonis into One Tumbuka Speaking Ethnic Group.

The first objective was to show how Tumbuka language has united the Tumbuka and Ngoni into one Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group in Chaseful. The findings have shown that Ngoni language was reduced to ceremonial language long time ago in Malawi when the Ngoni settled among the Tumbuka in the Northern region. Tumbuka language has removed clear cut dividing characteristics among the two ethnic groups. This is because language reflects the culture of the society where it is spoken and the thought process of its speakers.

The findings have shown that the two ethnic groups, the Ngoni and the Tumbuka, live side by side under the umbrella of one Chief to some extent under one group headman and village headman as one ethnic group and use one language. This agrees with Roohul-Amini (1989) who looked at elements such as language, rituals, clothes, traditional science, beliefs and values that connect people together. Therefore, language is not natural, inborn and will-less; it is a social product that unites different ethnic groups.

On the other hand, it is safe to say that from the data presented in this research, for the very majority of actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin, social life depends on the use of Tumbuka language, and the use of different languages would have naturally separated them into different groups. Duranti (1997) said 'to say language is to say society'. Thus, if you speak one particular language; you belong to that particular society.

The findings have shown that there is promotion of cultural heritage. The findings have additionally shown that language is the most obvious difference between cultures. It reflects the nature and values of a culture. Language defines a cultural group even though the same language may be used in different countries. Therefore, actual Tumbukas and Ngonis have shared their cultural heritage through language and become one tribe.

The Tumbuka and the Ngoni have lived together for 116 years since 1903 under Ngoni leadership of Tengayumo without any element of a civil war. This is what one of the participants said. The Ngoni have never looked down on the status of the Tumbuka. Before, after and during this period of the ceremony, they use Tumbuka language as a united group sharing the same cultural values.

It is observed and reviewed that actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin have intermarried and given birth to children that belong to two different ethnic groups united by Tumbuka language and identified as Tumbuka ethnic group. Rampton (1995) examined how ethnicity diverse peer groups and problematize its formation and maintenance. He argues that adolescents transgress ethnic boundaries by crossing into languages associated with other ethnic groups, creating 'new ethnicities.'

This time the Ngonis of Magodi dance Vimbuza while the Tumbukas as well dance Ngoma as traditional dances. The scenario is not different from what Hewitt (1986), a sociolinguistic researcher concluded. According to him, boundaries between ethnic groups are locally constituted, and ethnic identity is not a fixed property of individuals but a social achievement is produced through interaction.

This research has also shown that actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin speak one language consequently, they feel that are one and get more united as one group of people despite having originated from different ethnic groups. Language is a major symbol that reveals the identity of an ethnic group. It is not just used as a form of communication at the intra-ethnic level, but it is also inclined towards portraying an ethnic's internal values (Edwards, 1985). In this way, we see that the perseverance to defend Tumbuka language is natural, which ensures the continuity of the traditions. Therefore, Tumbuka language has reinforced integration among different ethnic groups in the chiefdom.

It can also be mentioned from these findings that Ngonis have never lived in isolation from other ethnic groups. They have always settled among already established ethnic groups. This is seen from the beginning that the Ngoni did not come with their Ngoni women. When Ngonis settled among Tumbukas of Chasefu, they married Tumbuka women and produced children who could not speak Ngoni language but Tumbuka language. In terms of numbers Tumbukas outnumber, Ngonis despite the Ngoni being in authority.

This research has further shown that despite people having different ethnic origins, they can be united through the use of one language and identified as one ethnic group. As shown in this research, Tumbukas and Ngonis are united through the use of Tumbuka language before, during and after the Zengani traditional ceremony. Tumbuka has also allowed transmission of culture such that the actual Tumbukas and Ngoni Tumbukas have redefined themselves as one. This is in line with Bible account of Genesis 11: 6-7. This Bible account shows that the Babylonians were united before Jehovah scattered their language which was a uniting factor in their construction project. On the other hand, scattering their language meant disunity among the Babylonians and that is how the project of building the tower failed. This is true even with the ethnic group of Chasefu; they are united via their Tumbuka language.

This scenario is not different from what happened in Tanzania. The use of Kiswahili and the declaration of Kiswahili as the national language of Tanzania in 1962 paved the way for the long journey toward building a nation. In one of his speeches, Nyerere likened Kiswahili to English when he boldly declared: *"Kiingereza ni Kiswahili cha Dunia."* (English is the Swahili of the World). Likewise, with the help of Tumbuka, the people of Chasefu can communicate freely with others without the help of interpreters. Like Kiswahili in Tanzania, Tumbuka language unites actual Tumbukas with Tumbukas of Ngoni origin in the chiefdom.

The findings of this research have exposed that Zengani traditional performances are embedded in music and dance. However, we have decided to discuss them separately because, on their own they are forms of traditional performances. Also, some dances contain some re-enactment of stories. A good example is the Ngoni War Dance which is re-enactment of feats/incident while others in dances mere entertainment used to communicate. This communication is done using a language that unites the two tribes together. On the other hand, dances are accompanied by songs done in both Tumbuka and some Ngoni language fragments.

This research has reviewed that Zengani traditional ceremony ancestral worship plays a key role in uniting the Ngoni and the Tumbuka. Deceased relatives, especially the elders, are regarded as ancestors and are believed to have some influence on their younger generations. For Tengayumo, the first Chief of Chasefu District, they communicate in Tumbuka and Ngoni. Tumbuka language not only reunites the two ethnic groups, but also reinforces their relationship, as evidenced in the confession that although the two are separated physically, they are spiritually together.

Data presented in this research show that to achieve unity, there is need for a common

language which will aid the communication of the factors that unites different ethnic groups like the national symbols and characteristics of one integral political entity, like the national flag, the national anthem or the national currency. It could even be said that a measure for every chiefdom's unity is embodied in its language. This agrees with monolingual nations like Russia which enjoy more stability in politics (Glory, 2012).

Circumstances Show that Tumbuka Language has United Different Ethnic Groups in Chasefu District.
The second objective was to expose the meanings of some specific terms used in Chasefu District that have united two ethnic groups. Findings from all groups of participants show that the term *'Zengani'* is a Tumbuka word literally meaning 'to build' two different ethnic groups of different origin into one of Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group of Chasefu District and, therefore, the ceremony simply promotes unity and harmony among the two different ethnic groups.

From 2002-2003 the ceremony was known as Tengayumo ceremony. This name was not inclusive in nature and not Tumbuka. Tengayumo was the first Ngoni chief hence the term was not inclusive. This change of name was meant to show social-cultural unity among the two groups. Rupert (1959) draws in the socio-cultural authenticity as a defining factor in his definition of a society describing it as "a community of people who feel that they belong together in the double sense that they share deeply significant elements of a common heritage and that they have a common destiny for the future. The actual Tumbukas and the Tumbukas of Ngoni origin may differ in their places of origin but they are one ethnic group of Tumbuka speaking people of Chasefu District today.

Observations show that the ceremony has created a platform for the Ngonis to practice their recited praises openly as it was seen in some Ngoma songs that are sung in Ngoni language when praising Tengayumo and senior chief Magodi. Secondly, Zengani ceremony has also showcased and proved that the two are one as they are able to perform dances and sing songs from both languages. For example, actual Tumbukas dance Ngoma and sing in Ngoni. Some of the words used are borrowed and incorporated into Tumbuka language. The other values that the ceremony has added are to bring these two different ethnic groups together and cerebrate as one united Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group. Therefore, the language has allowed them to communicate freely and get united as one Tumbuka ethnic group despite having different origins.

The findings from this research have shown some specific communications that happen at the *kavuŵa* 'shrine' that show that the two communities are united. This means the community of the dead plays critical role in bringing the two ethnic groups together and finally unites them all as one ethnic group speaking one language. This is an indication of oneness that language has brought as both the actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin are present at the Kavuŵa (shrine*)* as one and are represented as one united Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group.

Umodza ŵithu, mwambo ŵithu nacitukuko cithu.
This expression literally means 'Our oneness, our traditional ceremony and our development'. *Umodza ŵithu* 'our oneness' simply shows that the two ethnic groups are never two but one tumbuka-speaking ethnic group. *Mwambo ŵithu* 'our traditional ceremony' means that the ceremony is owned by all the ethnic groups present in the chiefdom that is, the actual Tumbuka and Tumbuka of Ngoni origin. *Citukuko cithu* refers to 'our development'. Here development includes having a traditional ceremony that unites the tribal groups in the chiefdom. The words are the most significant tools of cultural symbols and language is central in uniting these groups into one united ethnic group. That is to say, all the poems, stories, fictions, epics and myths told in Tumbuka are the main ingredients and components of a culture in this chiefdom (Strauss, 1976)

Umodza pakati pithu.
Umodza pakati pithu expresses the idea of 'Oneness in our midst'. This finding shows that despite the two ethnic groups having different places of origin, the two are one. This agrees with what Dorian said in Fisher (2002) "People will redefine themselves when circumstances make it desirable or when circumstances force it on them". The Ngoni have redefined themselves to unite with the

Tumbuka and be one group of Tumbuka-speaking people.

Findings from primary and secondary sources consulted show that language is an extremely important tool in any society. Its indispensable nature always necessitates a continuous development. As asserted by Nwadike (2003), language is the key to the heart of the people. If we lose the key, we lose the people. There is hardly any human activity that does not make use of language.

CONCLUSION

This paper has shown the irreplaceable role of language in unifying ethnic groups of different backgrounds into one united ethnic group speaking one language. It was observed that Chasefu District has two main ethnic groups, the actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin. The two are one Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group.

It has been shown that Tumbuka is a predominant language in Chasefu District where the Ngoni are the victors over the Tumbuka. The victors failed to control the language of the defeated group due to factors such as inter-marriage as the Ngoni did not come with the women and are fewer in numbers while Tumbukas are the majority in the district. Ngoni language is only used during praises at the ceremony by few that have recited and memorized it.

The study revealed that there are some specific words and expressions that have united the actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin into one united ethnic group known as Tumbuka-speaking ethnic group. For example, the name of the traditional ceremony itself *Zengani* 'to build' was meant to bring together different ethnic groups having different traditional cultural values.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For future studies, the following are being recommended:

(i) Studies to establish mutual intelligibility levels between the Tumbuka and Ngoni spoken in Chasefu District.
(ii) Studies to help document the nature of borrowing in terms of semantic field, word classes and source languages to Tumbuka language of Chasefu District.

(iii) The study of loanwords can give important insights into the cultural and socio-historical circumstances of actual Tumbukas and Tumbukas of Ngoni origin of Chasefu District.

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