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Indigenous Pedagogic Tools and the Development of Critical Thinking Skills of Primary School Pupils in Mbengwi Sub-Division

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Abstract: This study sought to investigate the role of proverbs on the development of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils in Mbengwi sub-Division. The study used the survey research design which comprises of cross-sectional and quantitative designs. We collected data using primary sources like questionnaires, focus group and interviews. The sample size of this study constituted 162 respondents (36 pupils, 123 teachers, selected from public, lay private and mission primary schools 2 pedagogic animators (PAs) and 1 Inspector of Basic Education (IBE)) from the schools and the Inspectorate of Basic Education in Mbengwi Sub-Divisions. The study employed the descriptive and inferential statistics using the ANOVA multiple regression approach. Findings of the study revealed that an increase in the use of proverbs lead to a moderate increase in the development of critical thinking skills. The (p-value) of .000, which was below the conventional alpha level of 0.05 This is indicative that there is a statistically significant relationship between the use of proverbs and the acquisition of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils in Mbengwi Sub-Division. From the findings, this study recommended that proverbs should be included in the primary school curriculum. The government, stakeholders and parents should reinforce them in teaching.

Introduction

Indigenous tools are the most fundamental means through which cultural information is communicated and preserved. Critical thinking skills rank among the top skills employers demand alongside with effective communication (World economic Forum, 2023). In pre- colonial Africa

most educational experiences were organized informally through agencies such as the home, community and peer groups. Despite the important role that schools now play, traditional patterns of informal education still remain relevant. We have communities across Africa, where parents continue to inculcate indigenous knowledge in their children through the use of riddles, proverbs, folktales, traditional games, and songs (Wiysahnyuy & Ngalim, 2023). These pedagogic tools helped children retain what they learned, foster creativity, decision making and improve their problem-solving and language skills.

For education to be effective, it has to respond to the needs and experiences of learners, thus aligning with their social and material environments (Dewey; 1966; Hanushek & Ludger, 2007). Traditional African education systems exemplify this approach, successfully developing individuals and contributing to societal growth. However, a significant disconnect often exists between the teaching methods of formal schooling and those of family and community-based learning in many African countries (Wiysahnyuy & Ngalim, 2023). Unlike formal education, traditional informal education in Africa is collectively designed and implemented for the benefit of the community. Families and communities continue to uphold the core principles of traditional African education, aiming to instill cultural heritage, life skills, morals and a sense of belonging to children, thereby ensuring the continuity of family and community traditions.

Hakuta (2001) has shown that traditional education enhances self-esteem, reduces anxiety, and fosters a stronger sense of self-efficacy in students. However, in most African countries, education systems continue to be heavily influenced by Western models introduced during the colonial era, primarily to train civil servants (Ngalim, 2014). Even after gaining independence, many African school systems have remained largely unchanged, failing to recognize the value of traditional African pedagogies (Shizha, 2013). Traditional teaching methods often involve observational learning, interaction, and oral storytelling, which can stimulate critical thinking, engage learners, and encourage active participation. These methods also foster strong relationships between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008; Nalim & Formutar, 2020). These indigenous pedagogical tools were well established in Africa long before the arrival of European colonialism (Achi, 2021). Highlighting the effectiveness of these systems, Mara (2006) argues that indigenous education was deeply integrated into the fabric of daily life. It was imparted through social practices such as productive activities, family interactions, and communal engagements, enabling children and adolescents to learn continuously across various real-life contexts. A key feature of this educational tradition was its oral nature. In the absence of formal writing systems, proverbs played a central role in transmitting knowledge. These succinct expressions encapsulated complex philosophical insights so much so that, as Achi (2021) notes, a single proverb could serve as the foundation for an entire textbook in societies where literacy was dominant. It conveyed profound philosophical reflections and moral lessons, reinforcing its value as a dynamic and meaningful pedagogical tool in pre-colonial African societies.

Lord John Russell (1950) stated that proverbs represent the wit of one and the wisdom of many. The term proverb is derived from the Latin word proverbium, while the study of proverbs is referred to as paremology, which comes from the Greek word for proverb and dates back to the time of Aristotle. According to Adedimeji (2005), a proverb is a concise and familiar saying that conveys a supposed truth or moral lesson. Proverbs often require interpretation and are characterized by their simplicity, widespread recognition, and frequent repetition. Mieder (1993), a distinguished scholar in the field of proverbs, defines them as short, commonly known expressions originating from folklore. These expressions encapsulate wisdom, truth, moral principles, and traditional perspectives in a metaphorical, fixed, and easily memorized format, allowing them to be transmitted from one generation to the next. Proverbs often highlight ethical values such as honesty, integrity, and respect, serving as essential guides for learners in developing a strong moral compass and making sound ethical decisions. In the Yoruba context,

educational content, including civic education, can be adapted to teach students about responsible citizenship and their roles within their families, communities, and the broader world. Yoruba proverbs that address social responsibility frequently emphasize respect for elders and authorities, along with the importance of accountability, knowledge, virtue, morality, humanity, and community.

Dewey (1910) referred to critical thinking as reflective thinking, defining it as the active, persistent, and careful evaluation of beliefs in light of the evidence that supports them and the conclusions they suggest. . According to Ennis, an ideal critical thinker is open-minded, fair, and committed to clarity, accuracy, and reasoned judgment. They also possess skills such as analyzing arguments, evaluating sources, forming reasoned conclusions, and effectively communicating their perspectives all while considering alternative viewpoints and avoiding manipulation or confusion.

In the early years of the post-independence era in Cameroon, indigenous pedagogical system virtually had no place given the silence of the government. We have different organs who have relentlessly worked towards the promotion of indigenous pedagogical tools and system. Some of them are PROPELCA (Programme de Recherche Opérationnelle pour l'Enseignement des Langues au Cameroun), which has been active since 1977 with regard to mother tongue education in Cameroon. Other actors include SIL-Cameroon, the Cameroon (Stumpf, 1979). Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) and the National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees (NACALCO). Equally another significant factor towards indigenous system is the harmonization of the writing system of Cameroonian languages in 1979, a factor that has contributed immensely to the standardization of some indigenous languages. We also have, the revised Constitution of 18 January 1996 which guarantees the pursuit of the policy of official bilingualism and the promotion of national languages which goes a long way to confirm that official and indigenous tools are important components of the Cameroonian cultural heritage and educational system (Boum & Sadembouo, 1999)

The pertinence of an educational experience to real time learning lies in its ability to develop skills that enhance initiative, creativity, good decision making and autonomous thinking.. These are critical thinking skills expected to be the outcome of any good educational experience. However today one finds pupils completing primary schools and found wanting because of inability to take initiative, make correct decisions dare in creativity and express autonomous thought patterns. These shortcomings experienced today, could be attributed the bookish culture which relegates informal learning experiences and indigenous values. The importance of basic education in enhancing critical thinking skills cannot be over-emphasized. Every educational system has to exploit the basic experiences of the learners to facilitate the proper growth and integration in the lives of the community. This testifies to the need of continuity between home and school learning experiences. The introduction of formal education during the colonial period did not seem to provide the necessary skills and learning opportunities. UNESCO statistics prove that only 24.1 % of children in Cameroon achieve at least minimum level of proficiency in communication prior to leaving school and only 11.8 have critical thinking skills and logical reasoning proficiencies (2017 as cited in Wiysahnyuy & Ngalim). The Mbengwi communities provide the learning experience where proverbs could be exploited to improve on the learning values of the pupils. It is on this basis that this study seeks to investigate the role of indigenous pedagogic tools on the development of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils in Mbengwi sub-Division.

In today’s rapidly evolving and interconnected world, the ability to think critically is indispensable across all fields of knowledge, from the sciences and humanities to social studies and beyond (Facione, 2015). With the increasing recognition of its importance, there has been a growing emphasis on cultivating critical thinking skills within educational settings. This shift

necessitates a deeper exploration of diverse and alternative pedagogical approaches that can effectively foster this vital skill. Ennis (1984) defines critical thinking as the active and skillful conceptualization, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information derived from observation, experience, or communication. It encompasses both the ability to process information and the habit of applying these skills with intellectual integrity. Halpern (2015) emphasizes that critical thinkers assess evidence, recognize biases, question assumptions, and consider multiple perspectives. As a foundational skill, critical thinking supports effective problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, and communication. In this study, critical thinking is examined through the use of indigenous pedagogic tools to enhance learners' creativity, problem-solving abilities, and innovation equipping them to make thoughtful decisions and address real-world challenges in education and beyond.

The aim of this study is investigate the contributions of proverbs to the acquisition of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils in Mbengwi sub-Division. The question sought to know whether proverbs play a role in the development of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils in Mbengwi sub-Division?

Previous studies on proverbs indicate that they have been used to enhance the development of critical thinking skills on pupils. For example, Susan (2012), carried out a study on "*Recognizing the Value of Teaching Proverbs: Multicultural Origins of Oral and Written Literacy at Florida International University, USA".* She employed a qualitative research design. She integrates personal knowledge and experience, historical and cultural understanding, values and ideas, as well as familiarity with various literary works. Susan argues that students enter the classroom with a rich heritage of personal, experiential, and acquired knowledge passed down from their families and communities. Therefore, teachers should draw upon these unique personal understandings and encourage students to share their familiar and historical perspectives within classroom discussions and readings. The objective of the study was to explore the use of multicultural proverbs in interdisciplinary and cross-cultural instruction through subjects such as language arts, history, and social sciences. The findings revealed that individuals who incorporate traditional wisdom through proverbs or express their ideas in eloquent and memorable language tend to gain greater recognition in discussions. The study concludes that proverbs are valuable teaching tools because they invite students to reflect on their own prior knowledge, connect their insights with those of their peers and educators, and foster interdisciplinary understanding. This, in turn, supports the development of critical thinking skills. Susan recommends that educators use proverbs to engage students in learning, enhance their understanding of diverse cultures and languages, and help cultivate a globally-sensitive classroom community.

The study conducted by Silvia and Muhammad (2020) in Indonesia, titled *The Use of Proverbs in Stimulating High School Students' Critical Thinking and Spatial Thinking*, investigates how traditional wisdom, particularly Minangkabau proverbs, can enhance students' cognitive development. The primary aim of the research is to describe and explain the forms of critical and spatial thinking present in Minangkabau proverbs and how these forms can be integrated into the learning process. This qualitative descriptive study employs content analysis as its research method. Data were obtained from a compilation of 1,000 Minangkabau proverbs. Through analysis, the researchers identified proverbs that contain elements of both critical and spatial thinking. These proverbs were then contextualized within the Indonesian language and geography curricula in high schools. The findings indicate that Minangkabau proverbs can be effectively integrated into classroom instruction to foster critical and spatial thinking among students. These traditional expressions serve as meaningful, culturally relevant learning materials that connect students to their local heritage while also developing their analytical skills. The study emphasizes the crucial role of the teacher in facilitating this integration, as teachers are instrumental in guiding students to interpret and apply the wisdom contained in proverbs.

In another study by Malatji and Phokwane (2023), titled *The Role of Sepedi Proverbs in Developing People's Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills*, conducted at the University of Limpopo in South Africa, the authors explore the cultural and educational value of proverbs. The primary objective of the study was to raise awareness about the importance of proverbs and demonstrate how they can be used to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The research employed a qualitative approach, using purposive and convenience sampling methods to select ten elderly Sepedi-speaking participants. These individuals were chosen for their life experience and extensive knowledge of folklore. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews and document analysis, while thematic analysis was used to interpret the data. The findings of the study revealed that proverbs play a vital role in addressing and resolving real-life problems. The study concluded that proverbs are central to life, as they offer encouragement, moral guidance, and practical solutions to everyday challenges. Proverbs were found to be deeply rooted in lived experience, making them a reservoir of wisdom that reflects a profound understanding of human life. The study recommended that young people should be taught the meaning and application of proverbs to equip them with tools for solving personal and societal problems. It also suggested that proverbs be included in school assessments and examinations to encourage both teachers and learners to take them seriously as learning content.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. The rationale for using mixed methods is to achieve triangulation, allowing the strengths of one method to offset the weaknesses of the other. This study is conducted in the Mbengwi Subdivision, which is part of the Momo Division in the North West Region of Cameroon. Mbengwi serves as the headquarters of the Momo Division, and its name translates to "a land of wild animals" in the Meta language. Historically, the area was a hunting ground during pre-colonial times before being designated as an administrative headquarters for the division. Mbengwi is located approximately 20 kilometers west of Bamenda, the regional capital. The target population comprises all teachers, pedagogical animators, and pupils enrolled in Government, Mission, and lay Private primary schools within the Mbengwi sub-division.

The accessible population for this study, from which the sample was drawn (Amin, 2004), consists of nine (9) primary schools comprising public, denominational (mission), and lay private institutions located within the Mbengwi Sub-Division of the North West Region (NWR) during the 2024/2025 academic year. These schools collectively had a total population of 1875 pupils and 181 teachers. The Mbengwi sub-division was chosen due to its accessibility and the feasibility of data collection within this region. Two probability sampling techniques were used; which included a stratified random sampling and convenience sampling. We also used a one non-probability sampling technique, which is the purposive sampling.

Data was analyzed using..

Findings

Use of Proverbs and the Acquisition of Critical Thinking Skills

Table 1: Use of Proverbs

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	SA/A	D/SD	Mean	Std Dev
1	I frequently incorporate proverbs into teaching practices	11	76	25	12	87	36	2.70	.758
2	Incorporating proverbs in my lessons helps develop my pupils' critical thinking skills.	28	58	31	5	86	37	2.89	.806
3	I have observed that pupils who engage	22	63	31	7	85	38	2.81	.792

	with proverbs analyze problems more effectively								
4	Discussing proverbs in class encourages pupils to interpret meaning beyond the literal sense.	33	66	20	5	99	24	3.03	.759
5	Proverbs help pupils develop reasoning skills by making connections between ideas.	18	80	22	4	98	25	2.91	.663
6	Pupils who regularly engage with proverbs demonstrate improved decision-making skills.	22	69	27	5	91	32	2.88	.741
7	I notice that proverbs encourage my pupils to reflect on different perspectives before forming conclusions.	27	68	25	3	95	28	2.96	.731
8	I believe that incorporating proverbs in teaching promotes creativity and logical thinking.	25	75	20	3	100	23	3.00	.677
9	My pupils are more engaged and motivated to think critically when I use proverbs in discussions.	21	70	25	6	91	32	2.87	.750
Overall Mean of Responses (Out of 36)								**26.04**	**5.403**

The data presented in Table 1 reveals significant insights into how proverbs are perceived and utilized by teachers to foster critical thinking skills among primary school pupils in Mbengwi Sub-Division. The responses to the nine items suggest a generally favorable attitude toward the integration of proverbs in teaching practices. Most teachers either “Strongly Agree” (SA) or “Agree” (A) with the statements, with the total frequency of positive responses (SA/A) exceeding the negative (D/SD) in every item. This indicates a broad consensus among educators that proverbs can be powerful pedagogical tools. The overall mean score of 26.04 out of a possible 36, along with relatively low standard deviations across the items, also suggests consistency in respondents’ views. A closer look at the item-level data further supports the role of proverbs in enhancing pupils’ analytical abilities. For example, Item 4, which states that “Discussing proverbs in class encourages pupils to interpret meaning beyond the literal sense,” received one of the highest combined SA/A response (99) and the highest mean (3.03). This implies that teachers recognize proverbs as effective instruments for prompting students to engage in interpretive and inferential thinking, key elements of critical thinking. Likewise, Items 2, 5, and 7 received high agreement ratings and low standard deviations, reflecting strong and consistent perceptions about the value of proverbs in developing reasoning, reflection, and the ability to view issues from multiple perspectives.

Furthermore, the data suggest that the use of proverbs is not just theoretical but applied in actual teaching practice. Item 1 shows that while not all teachers frequently use proverbs (with a mean of 2.70), a majority still report incorporating them in some form, indicating an operational presence of proverbs in the classroom. This usage appears to correlate with observed improvements in pupils’ cognitive abilities, such as decision-making (Item 6) and problem-solving (Item 3). The consistent patterns of SA/A responses across these items underscore a perceived cause-and-effect relationship between exposure to proverbs and the enhancement of pupils’ critical thinking capacities.

Additionally, the motivational and engagement aspects of using proverbs are also acknowledged. Item 9 highlights that pupils are “more engaged and motivated to think critically” when proverbs are used in discussions. With a mean of 2.87 and 91 positive responses, this item suggests that the

cultural familiarity and relatability of proverbs may serve as effective cognitive hooks, prompting pupils to participate actively in analytical dialogues. Teachers evidently believe that this engagement is not merely behavioural but tied directly to deeper thinking and reasoning processes. Therefore, the analysis strongly supports the conclusion that proverbs play a meaningful role in the development of critical thinking skills in primary education within Mbengwi Sub-Division. The high frequency of agreement across the surveyed items suggests that educators both believe in and observe the cognitive benefits of proverb use in real classroom settings. By encouraging interpretation, reasoning, perspective-taking, and creativity, proverbs appear to serve as culturally embedded tools that naturally align with the goals of critical thinking education.

Table 2. Model Summary on Use of Proverbs and the Acquisition of Critical Thinking Skills

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.250[a]	.063	.060	3.351
a. Predictors: (Constant), Use of Proverbs				

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.250, which indicates a positive but modest relationship between the two variables. This means that as the use of proverbs increases, there is a corresponding increase in the acquisition of critical thinking skills, though the relationship is not particularly strong. The R Square value of 0.063 suggests that 6.3% of the variance in pupils' critical thinking skills can be explained by their exposure to or use of proverbs. While this may seem relatively small, in educational research, especially when dealing with complex cognitive constructs like critical thinking, even small effect sizes are meaningful. It implies that proverbs contribute to critical thinking development, though other factors likely play larger roles.

Table 3. ANOVA on Use of Proverbs and the Acquisition of Critical Thinking Skills

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	238.341	1	238.341	21.219	.000[b]
	Residual	3571.859	121	11.232		
	Total	3810.200	122			
a. Dependent Variable: Acquisition of Critical Thinking Skills						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Use of Proverbs						

Table 3 provides results from the ANOVA test, which assesses the overall significance of the regression model. Here, the F-value is 21.219 with a significance level (p-value) of .000, which is well below the conventional alpha level of 0.05. This p-value indicates that the model is statistically significant, meaning that the use of proverbs does have a measurable effect on critical thinking skill acquisition. Because the probability of this result occurring by chance is extremely low, we reject the null hypothesis. This implies that there is a statistically significant relationship between the use of proverbs and the acquisition of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils in Mbengwi Sub-Division.

Table 4. Regression Coefficients on Use of Proverbs and the Acquisition of Critical Thinking Skills

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	21.510	.923		23.293	.000	19.693	23.327
	Use of Proverbs	.160	.035	.250	4.606	.000	.092	.228
a. Dependent Variable: Acquisition of Critical Thinking Skills								

Table 4 offers more specific insight through the regression coefficients. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for the use of proverbs is 0.160 with a standard error of 0.035. This means that for every one-unit increase in the use of proverbs, there is a predicted increase of 0.160 units in the critical thinking skills score. This indicates a positive linear relationship, where greater incorporation of proverbs is associated with higher critical thinking development. The standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.250, which allows for comparison across different variables by standardizing the effect size. A Beta of 0.250 still represents a modest effect size, indicating that while proverbs are not the strongest predictor, they nonetheless have a meaningful contribution to the development of pupils' critical thinking skills. More importantly, the associated t-value is 4.606, and the p-value is again .000, confirming that the effect of proverbs is statistically significant. The 95% confidence interval ranges from 0.092 to 0.228, and since it does not cross zero, we can be confident that the effect is not due to random variation. These values collectively affirm that the use of proverbs positively influences the development of critical thinking skills in pupils.

In conclusion, the hypothesis testing based on the regression analysis and ANOVA strongly supports rejecting the null hypothesis ($H0_1$) and accepting the alternative (Ha_1). The use of proverbs contributes significantly, although modestly, to the acquisition of critical thinking skills in primary school pupils in Mbengwi Sub-Division. The statistical results demonstrate that incorporating culturally rooted pedagogical tools like proverbs can have meaningful cognitive benefits, especially in fostering skills such as interpretation, inference, and reasoning that are essential to critical thinking. This finding has practical implications for curriculum design, suggesting that educators should consider integrating proverbs and similar traditional expressions into lesson plans to enhance higher-order thinking skills.

The interview findings reveal that proverbs are powerful indigenous pedagogic tools that significantly contribute to the development of critical thinking skills among pupils. Teachers reported that the use of proverbs in classroom instruction encourages interpretive thinking and moral reasoning, enabling learners to engage with complex ideas through familiar cultural expressions. Proverbs are integrated into lessons not merely for their linguistic value but for their capacity to provoke deep reflection on human behaviour, ethical dilemmas, and social norms. As one interviewee (IBE) noted, proverbs challenge pupils to interpret meanings, compare behaviours, and debate moral outcomes, fostering active engagement with the content. Another participant (PA2) explained that pupils are often asked to apply proverbs in resolving classroom conflicts or in discussions on ethical issues, prompting them to connect abstract moral principles to real-life contexts. Through these practices, pupils develop the ability to extract broader lessons from specific situations, enhancing both their interpretive and application skills.

Beyond encouraging interpretive thinking, the use of proverbs was found to enhance several critical thinking skills, particularly reflective analysis, inference, and hypothesis formulation. Interviewees emphasized that interpreting proverbs requires pupils to engage in deep cognitive processes, such as reasoning through ambiguous language, evaluating multiple perspectives, and making informed judgments. As PA1 observed, proverbs stimulate reflection and reasoning by requiring learners to figure out meanings and apply them appropriately to different contexts, thus promoting cognitive flexibility. PA2 further highlighted that because many proverbs possess layered or multiple meanings, learners are challenged to think critically and articulate their interpretations with clarity and justification. This process not only strengthens pupils' analytical and inferential skills but also fosters perspective-taking and moral reasoning, which are essential components of higher-order thinking. Consequently, the strategic use of proverbs in instruction plays a crucial role in nurturing reflective, independent, and morally grounded thinkers.

Proverbs and creative thinking

The results shows that proverbs can help pupils to be creative in their thinking in order to find a solution to a problem A closer look at the item-level data further supports the role of proverbs in enhancing pupils' analytical abilities. For example, Item 4, which states that "Discussing proverbs in class encourages pupils to interpret meaning beyond the literal sense, received one of the highest combined SA/A response (99) and the highest mean (3.03). This implies that teachers recognize proverbs as effective instruments for prompting students to engage in interpretive and inferential thinking, which are key elements of critical thinking.

Proverbs and decision making

Furthermore, the results suggest that the use of proverbs can help pupils to make the rightful decision in finding a solution to a problem. Item 1 shows that while not all teachers frequently use proverbs, this usage appears to correlate with observed improvements in pupils' cognitive abilities, such as decision-making (Item 6) and 3 indicates shows that pupils can develop problem-solving skills through proverbs, The consistent patterns of SA/A responses across these items underscore a perceived cause-and-effect relationship between exposure to proverbs and the enhancement of pupils' critical thinking capacities.

Results from the qualitative data shows that proverbs were widely recognized by pupils as mental stimuli that encourage reflective thought and discussion. Across all six groups, learners articulated that proverbs are not always self-explanatory and require deliberate interpretation to uncover their meanings. This process challenges learners to move beyond surface-level understanding, encouraging them to engage in inferential reasoning and to evaluate competing interpretations.

Discussion

The triangulation of findings revealed that both quantitative and qualitative data strongly supported the role of proverbs in enhancing critical thinking skills among pupils. Quantitative results indicated a significant improvement in pupils' interpretive thinking and moral reasoning abilities after exposure to lessons integrating proverbs. Focus group discussions corroborated these findings, with pupils explaining how deciphering the layered meanings of proverbs challenged them to think reflectively and apply wisdom to real-life situations. Similarly, interview data revealed that teachers deliberately used proverbs to provoke debates, ethical discussions, and perspective-taking exercises. As learners were tasked with interpreting and applying proverbs to various contexts, they developed skills such as hypothesis formulation, inferential reasoning, and value judgment, demonstrating that proverbs are a powerful indigenous pedagogical tool for nurturing higher-order thinking.

Worthy of mote is fact that results are constant with previous research by psychologist Piaget whose research indicates that pedagogic tools can foster critical thinking skills in learners. Piaget's theory posits that children actively construct their understanding of the world through interaction with their environment (Piaget, 1952). Piaget's cognitive development theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how indigenous pedagogic tools, such as proverbs, can foster critical thinking skills in learners. Piaget emphasized that children actively construct their understanding of the world through interaction with proverbs in their environment (Piaget, 1952). This aligns perfectly with the interactive and experiential nature of proverbs.

This findings is also in line with a study carried out by Achebe (1994) who argues that, proverbs through their metaphorical nature, encourage learners to engage in deductive reasoning by drawing inferences and conclusions from their core messages. This process fosters the development of deductive reasoning skills, which are essential for effective problem-solving and decision making. Achebe argues that proverbs serve as a foundation for creating objective and usable knowledge by providing a framework for encoding and decoding this information. This

encoding and decoding process involves critical thinking, observation, and decision-making. In essence, a proverb encapsulates critical wisdom derived from the tested experiences of ancestors, prompting students to think critically to grasp the underlying meanings, thereby enhancing their reasoning abilities. The study is similar to the study by Silvia and Muhammad (2020). Whose findings indicate that proverbs can be effectively integrated into classroom instruction to foster critical and spatial thinking among students. These traditional expressions serve as meaningful, culturally relevant learning materials that connect students to their local heritage while also developing their analytical skills. By analyzing they develop creative skills and learn to think critically. The study emphasizes the crucial role of the teacher in facilitating this integration, as teachers are instrumental in guiding students to interpret and apply the wisdom contained in proverbs.

Conclusion

There is evidence from the study that, the use of proverbs have a significant influence on the development of critical thinking skills in pupils. The practice of folktales has a significant impact on the development of critical thinking skills in pupils. The use of riddles has a significant impact in developing critical thinking skill in pupils. The use of songs and dance has a significant relationship in developing critical thinking skills in pupils in Mbengwi sub-Division. Worthy of note is the fact that the findings of this study are supported by sound theoretical assumptions of learning, approaches and principles. Thus, these results are in general agreement with earlier research indicating that the use of proverbs have a positive impact in developing critical thinking skills in Pupils. However, despite the challenges on the field, the respondents showed an amasing familiarity with the proverbs. Also, it is worth noting that, these results could be of specific interest to parents, education establishments and institutions of learning. The biggest challenge remains in training of teachers on how to use these proverbs in passing out knowledge to pupils. This is revealed in the focus group discussion where some pupils express difficulties in understanding when thought using proverbs .Thus professional development for teachers on the usage of these tools is highly required.