

# Case Study 1.1: Home language in early reading

Mr Shabukali's son, Matson, has just started school in Lusaka. Mr Shabukali is concerned that Matson is being taught to read in their home language of Nyanja – he had expected that Matson would learn to read English. He has gone to the school to meet the headteacher.

Headteacher: Hello, Mr Shabukali. What can I do for you?

Mr Shabukali: Well ... Matson started school five weeks ago and I am very concerned to find that he is learning to read in Nyanja. I want him to learn English. He should be being taught to read English!

Headteacher: I see, Mr Shabukali. Can you just explain to me why you are so concerned that he should learn to read and write English now?

Mr Shabukali: Well everyone knows that to do well in education, you have to be good at English. Practically all the secondary schools teach in English; all the colleges and universities are in English. I want him to get a good job. He needs to start learning English as soon as possible – it's ridiculous to teach him to read in Nyanja and then expect him to start all over again. He will be miles behind the children who have learnt to read in English.